



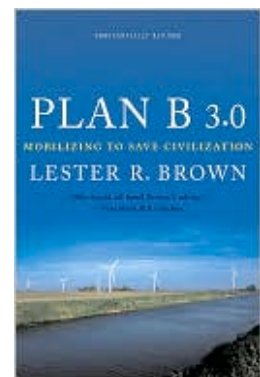
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BOOKS

Lester R. Brown, *Plan B 3.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization*, New York: WW Norton 2008
 398 pp. Notes/ Refs 80 pp \$18.95

Lester R. Brown presents an excellent, comprehensive analysis and discussion of the major ecological and social challenges threatening humanity with the possibility of extinction. These include problems with oil and food supplies; climate change and rising sea levels; water shortages; depletion of natural resources; and warnings about possible tipping points in failing social and economic systems. The most concerning factor is global heating, which could reach a tipping point beyond which it would be impossible to reverse the melting of glaciers and the destruction of life as we know it on our planet.



He proposes numerous solutions for our most serious and urgent challenge, climate change, often measured in the numbers of coal-powered electricity generating facilities that could be eliminated. This is vital to climate control because emissions of carbon dioxide from coal burning facilities is the most serious contributor to global warming on the one hand, and one of the most readily replaceable factor on the other hand.

...in plan B we propose to cut net carbon dioxide emissions 80 percent by 2020. our goal is to prevent the atmospheric CO_2 concentration from exceeding 400 ppm, thus limiting the future rise in temperature.

This is an extraordinarily ambitious undertaking. It means, for example, phasing out all coal-fired power plants by 2020 while greatly reducing the use of oil. This is not a simple matter.

We can, however, make this shift using currently available technologies. The three components of this carbon-cutting effort are halting deforestation while planting trees to sequester carbon, ... raising energy efficiency worldwide, ... and harnessing the earth's renewable sources of energy... Plan B calls for using the most energy-efficient technologies available for lighting, for heating and cooling buildings, and for transportation. It calls for an ambitious exploitation of the earth's solar, wind, and geothermal energy sources. It means, for example, a wholesale shift to plug-in hybrid cars, running them largely on wind-generated electricity. (p. 67)

The challenges that are threatening to overwhelm the capacities of various countries to deal with the pressing problems of their populations are not being addressed in anything resembling serious or concerted efforts by the wealthier nations. Brown points out that relatively modest investments in enhanced education (sums far smaller than are being spent on arms and military engagements) are key to stabilizing social and political crises around the world. These are potential human time bombs that could escalate into global problems of population migrations which would threaten other nations. With basic education it is possible to achieve birth control, reductions in population growth and reducing the spread of AIDS are achievable goals.

Plan B is shaped by what is needed to save civilization, not by what may currently be considered politically feasible. Plan B does not fit within a particular discipline, sector, or set of assumptions.

Implementing Plan B means undertaking several actions simultaneously, including eradicating poverty, stabilizing population, and restoring the earth's natural systems. (p. 20)

This book is a *must read* for anyone seriously interested in understanding the global crises that threaten the continuation of life as we know it on our planet, and wanting to contribute to preventing this disaster.

If you are not contributing to the solution, you are a part of the problem.
Anonymous

Book review by Daniel J. Benor, MD
Editor, IJHC

Is Society now too Complex for Us?

Book reviews and discussion by Andy James, B.Sc (Econ), FCA, MQT

I have been interested in the impact of complexity on human beings for several decades now, ever since practicing (and later teaching) the Buddhist-Daoist disciplines including Insight Meditation, Taijiquan and Qigong. The renowned Indian sage, J.D. Krishnamurti, wrote at length on complexity at least 15 years before formal, academic "Complexity Theory". He was emphatic that complexity could not be overcome by more complexity but only by simplicity, which made sense to me.

At the risk of being immodest, I would like to quote from one of my own books, *Ageless Wisdom Spirituality: Investing in Human Evolution*, since it says what I still want to say now:

"Complexity and stress may well be the most harmful yet least understood aspects of modern society and in particular of technology.

A fundamental and long-standing promise of technology is that it will save you time and effort, and provide greater convenience, thus allowing you opportunity for more important, meaningful, or pleasurable activities. Judging by the voracity with which we consume new technology, most people seem to wholeheartedly embrace this view of continuing progress and improvement through technology. Many even believe in the possibility of a technological paradise on earth – no work because of cheap energy and robotic labour; no pain because of miracle medical breakthroughs; happiness through virtual fantasies etc.

Studies are beginning to show, however, that one of the characteristics of advancing technology is greater complexity and that few technological innovations touted as 'time-saving', actually do. Indeed many people now complain of time shrinkage or deficit – the feeling that there is not enough time to do what we think needs to be done. We constantly feel pressured and burdened even as we continue to buy new 'tech' toys." (James, 2003, p 78)

The genius and meteoric rise of Modern Science over the last 400 years is based on its ability to break Life down into ever smaller (more specialized) parts/ compartments/ areas of study etc. and to measure the direct cause-and-effect dynamics of their inner components. We now use this quantitative cause- and-effect test of "reality" not only within the scientific, technological and medical spheres, but more broadly throughout society, especially within the business/ economic, marketing and legal systems. Our present infatuation with the Free Market is based overwhelmingly on Quantity (\$), rather than Quality. Literal "Life or Death" decisions are determined by this arbitrary standard of reality, which is rarely questioned since it has so rapidly raised our material standard of living, especially in the "developed" countries. Currently in North America, to even question the Free Market is tantamount to being "Un-American" in its various, changing guises – Terrorist, Communist, Islamist etc.

Although this conventional functioning and approach is undeniably powerful, it is also undeniably limited and entails certain negative characteristics, which are not yet widely recognized, but which seem to me to be surfacing at both the individual and collective levels.

I find it helpful to look at our individual functioning in order to understand our collective dynamics, because our external actions and words all emanate from within ourselves. One of the side-effects of a predominantly analytical approach to life is that we tend to see issues or problems almost as separate conceptual boxes, within which we seek resolution in simple "either-or" dichotomies...instead, for example, of inter-connective and even multi-level "both-and" dynamics. As the analytical process progresses, it creates ever more boxes and sub-boxes, which we struggle (often unsuccessfully) to juggle and reconcile. Krishnamurti called this process "fragmentation", and explained how it leads to increasing complexity, confusion, division and alienation.

The individual "I" or self, for example, creates endless dichotomies with the "Non-I" or "The Other" in innumerable guises: God and Man, Man and Woman, Good and Bad, Man and Nature, Man and Animal, Black and White, Progressive and Conservative, Christian and Muslim, East and West, Rich and Poor, Old and Young etc. We create conceptual divisions even within our "self" like body, emotions, mind, soul, spirit etc. All of these are valuable individual notions/ theories of specific functioning, but in fact, none of the parts is ever really separate, but remain interconnected within greater wholes. Having been trained to break life into ever smaller pieces, many find even the concept of reintegration and wholeness extremely difficult to grasp much less to actualize. Our attention and energy are continually channeled towards the "external" world, resulting in common neglect and ignorance of our "internal" potential.

Many people I meet in my professional capacity (hundreds each year), even if relatively wealthy and privileged, are finding it difficult to cope with the demands of their every-day lives. They seem to be stressed, over-whelmed and generally confused. They carry the burden of too many responsibilities, choices, and decisions.... with society constantly urging and enticing us to want/ consume ever more. Many are enticed into running the treadmill ever faster, but others respond by withdrawing and "cocooning", just getting by day-to-day, without any energy left to think about the longer term meaning and direction of their own lives or society in general.

To me, it has long appeared obvious that all the personal dynamics described above, also manifest at various collective levels: complexity, confusion, lack of real vision and purpose beyond the consumerism being pushed by the Market. We continually create new inventions, technologies, fields of study, regulations, bureaucracies etc., yet it seems like we are running on the spot. We ought to be feeling happier but we're not. We seem overwhelmed and paralyzed by the complexities and planetary problems we have created in our search for a material paradise - global warming, pollution and degradation of the natural environment, depletion of scarce resources (especially oil and water), the vast and ever-widening gap between the rich and poor, the proliferation of weapons and powerful new technologies without adequate control, the threat of pandemics etc. Even our most specific threat, the so-called "War on Terror", is far too complex to be wiped out by crude military force and a big budget, even when wielded by the world's most powerful (for now) country, the USA. If our technological advances teach us one new lesson, it is that we live in a globally interconnected world. We need a more evolved and interconnected consciousness to cope with our creations.

I was pleasantly surprised to find that several of these global dynamics feature in two (Canadian) "bestsellers" by Thomas Homer-Dixon. I had come upon these global processes from my observations of individuals, including myself. Homer-Dixon is a Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto and Director of the Peace and Conflict Studies Program there. His academic research on global issues has led him in the opposite direction - to the conclusion that individuals somehow need to radically change their perspectives and behaviour in order for humanity to rise to its unprecedented challenges.

The first book by Homer-Dixon to attract widespread interest was *The Ingenuity Gap: How Can we Solve the Problems of the Future?* He writes:

"Most of us suspect that the world we have created is too complex and fast-paced for us to understand, let alone control. Most of us sometimes guess that even the 'experts' don't really know what's going on, and that as individuals and as a species we've unleashed forces that we cannot manage. The challenges facing our society range from international financial crises and global climate change to pandemics of tuberculosis and AIDS; they cross the spectrum of politics, economics, technology, and ecological affairs.....Complexity, unpredictability, the pace of events in our world, and the severity of global environmental stress, are soaring. If our societies are to manage their affairs and improve their well-being they will need more ingenuity – that is, more ideas for solving their technical and social problems" (Homer-Dixon, 2000, p 1)

"Looking back from the year 2100, we'll see a period when our creations – technological, social, ecological – outstripped our understanding and we lost control of our destiny. And we will think: if only we'd had the ingenuity and will to prevent some of that. I am convinced that there is still time to muster that ingenuity, but the hour is late." (Homer-Dixon, 2000, book jacket)

I corresponded with Homer-Dixon intermittently after *Ingenuity Gap*, but lost touch with his work until I noticed his 2007 bestseller, *The Upside of Down: Catastrophe, Creativity and the Renewal of Civilization*. Again I was struck with the thoroughness and scope of his academic research and the resonance between his ideas and mine, especially as expressed in *Ageless Wisdom Spirituality*. He uses two parallels throughout his latest book: The Roman Empire and volcanoes. He identifies five "tectonic stresses" building beneath the surface of our societies:

1. Population stress, arising from the overall increase in global population and also the differing population growth rates in rich and poor societies. More megacities are expected

to sprout in poor countries even as their populations en masse try to get into the rich countries, legally or illegally.

2. Energy stress, especially from the dwindling, harder to tap, oil resources.
3. Environmental stress from damage to land, water, forests and fisheries.
4. Climate stress resulting from changes in the makeup of our atmosphere.
5. Economic stress resulting from instabilities in the global economic system and the vast and widening gaps between rich and poor people.

He sees “Energy Stress” playing a pivotal role, since energy is the Master Resource on which all empires/ civilizations are built. For the Roman Empire and its dominance of the greater Mediterranean area, it was food/ agriculture, which fed its military armies and prolific builders. For modern global civilization, it is OIL. The days of cheap oil are over and from now on, it will cost us ever more effort/ energy for each barrel of oil produced and consumed. In formal economic terms, we have entered the phase of “diminishing marginal returns”.

As we work ever harder just to maintain our lifestyles, there is less and less resilience in society to absorb any “unexpected” natural disasters, pandemics or attacks, even by relatively small groups. Indeed Homer-Dixon points out two “multipliers” which give the “tectonic stresses” greater force and speed. “The first multiplier is the rising speed and global connectivity of our activities, technologies and societies. The second is the escalating power of small groups to destroy things and people”. He points out warning “foreshocks” like 9/11, the 2003 black out of America’s (and Canada’s) east coast, SARS etc. and why they have been ignored by our embedded denial systems.

Homer-Dixon also explains a puzzling dynamic which I have long pointed out in my writings and talks, but which no economist, entrepreneur or politician has so far been able to justify: What is the logic of society persevering with an economic system which stresses ever more consumption and “growth” (irrespective of what products are consumed) in the face of dwindling vital resources, degradation of the natural environment and the growing gap between the rich and poor? Why, for example, does Canada (where I live) need to continually grow and compete with other countries, when it is in the uniquely fortunate position of having abundant natural resources, geographical advantageous borders (except in cases of extreme ill-will from the USA) and a highly educated and inventive population? He writes:

“In essence then, the logic underpinning our economies work like this: if we are discontented with what we have, we buy stuff; if we buy enough stuff, the economy grows; if the economy grows enough, technologically displaced workers can find jobs; and if they find enough jobs there will be enough economic demand to keep the economy humming and to prevent wrenching political conflict. Modern capitalism’s stability – and increasingly the global economy’s stability – requires the cultivation of material discontent, endlessly rising personal consumption, and the steady economic growth this consumption generates”. (Homer-Dixon, 2007, p196-197)

“Why? There are many reasons. But a central and often overlooked one is that consumerism helps anesthetize us against the dread produced by empty lives – lives that modern capitalism and consumerism have themselves helped empty of meaning.” (Homer-Dixon, 2007, p197)

As most of us will have guessed, in spite of the “Free” Market Democracy rhetoric, we do not really compete on a level playing field:

“Our economic elites don’t just encourage consumerism. Through their influence on the media and on society’s political process, they create, reproduce and justify a pervasive and interlocking system of rules and regulations.. that promotes growth and that, in the process, buttresses their power and privilege.” (Homer-Dixon, 2007, p216)

“For the vast majority of us who sell our labor in the marketplace, our economic security and relative powerlessness impel us to play by the rules. And in capitalist democracy, playing by the rules means not starting fights over big issues like our society’s highly skewed distribution of wealth and power”. (Homer-Dixon, 2007, p217)

He warns that if we try to overextend the growth phase of our civilization, ignoring warning signs, it is like bottling up a volcano – the eventual explosion may lead to deep, devastating collapse, from which recovery will be painstaking and slow. Among the alternative options open to us is a no-growth/ steady-state economy.

Although Homer-Dixon’s analysis of our present collective challenges is insightful, detailed and thoroughly researched, he offers no detailed suggestions in either of his books as to how the required change in human behaviour can or will occur. In his last chapter, he rightly remarks, “In Western liberal societies, public discussion of values is dreadfully impoverished.... Because we’re reluctant or unable to talk about moral and existential values – and these values remain largely unexplored – utilitarian values fill the void”. (Homer-Dixon, 2007, p300-301) He wonders about the possibility of a new Axial Age, “a transformation, simultaneously around the world, of the deepest principles guiding mankind’s diverse civilizations.” (Homer-Dixon, 2007, p300)

My book, *Ageless Wisdom Spirituality*, focuses on precisely this subject – not only like Homer-Dixon, pointing out the specific warning signs/ foreshocks in our collective lives, but explaining why collective change depends on individual change and what such change necessitates. It is beyond the scope of this article to adequately summarize *Ageless Wisdom Spirituality* and its implications, so I will just make a few points in conclusion:

1. Based on my personal and teaching experience, Simplicity can indeed overcome Complexity as Krishnamurti has asserted. If we are completely aware in the present moment, then we create Space/ Emptiness wherein the apparent opposites (Yin-Yang) are reconciled, whether Empty/ Full, Active/ Passive etc. In this space, understanding, wisdom and compassion can emerge. The Tao Te Ching states: “Non-existence is called the antecedent of heaven and earth; Existence is the mother of all things. From eternal non-existence, therefore, we serenely observe the mysterious beginnings of the Universe. From eternal existence, we clearly see the apparent distinctions. These two are the same in source and become different when manifested”. (Chu Ta-Kao, 1972, p 11)
2. I see Simplicity Overcoming Complexity as an integrative and transformative spiritual process, which includes the Individual beginning to overcome Separateness (and thereby moving into Oneness), whether seen in terms of My religion Vs Your religion, Human Vs God, Rich Vs Poor, Black Vs White, East Vs White etc. Differences are not denied but understood in a different context, which may include different levels of reality or consciousness.
3. Our collective crisis is occasioned not so much by inadequate resources, information and technologies, but by the fact that we waste so much in competition, conflict, war and sheer confused bungling. The necessary Collective Will to cooperate, trust and share will only

come about through an expanded and deeper understanding of “I” and “We”. This of course will change our relationship with those we view as “The Other/ Them..

4. I do not think we need a new Axial Age so much as interpreting and actualizing the wisdom of the first Axial Age (twenty-five hundred years ago) at a deeper level, far beyond the religious polarization and fundamentalism which is now being paraded as spirituality. The Vedanta and the Buddha in India, Laozi and Confucius in China, and the early Greek philosophers all point to a possibility of human consciousness far higher than our present average consciousness. Over the last 400 years we have invested in the external world, while neglecting the internal and this has opened up a gap between the power of our technologies and our ability to use them wisely.
5. In order to embark on such a widespread journey of personal transformation of consciousness, we firstly (and urgently) need to talk about it in ways which are not yet broadly manifesting. At the moment, the mainstream media seems mesmerized by extremism, which makes more exciting news .. and in some cases, the “extremists” also control certain media outlets. On most TV networks, shows discussing religion, in trying to show “balance” and “fairness”, usually feature representatives of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, with Islam put forward as representing the East. In fact, all three are essentially the same Abrahamic religion, while the rest of the world’s spiritual treasure trove is ignored.

I would like to end on a personal, positive note. At the end of *Ageless Wisdom Spirituality*, I passionately called for such a public discussion (as in # 5 above). Shortly before the book was launched, I received a synchronous phone call from an old friend inviting me to join The Forge Guild, an international organization of trans-traditional spiritual teachers and leaders. Around about the same time, I built and opened a sustainable energy off-grid retreat centre and since then, my life has been filled with spiritual teachers and groups from many different global traditions!

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Books discussion by Andy James, B.Sc (Econ), FCA, MQT

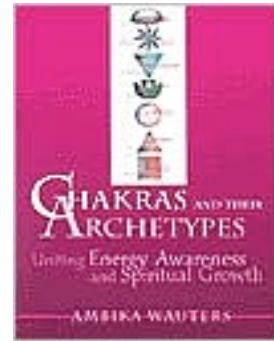
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March, 2008.

Andy James is the Founder of the Tai Chi & Meditation Centre (www.powerofbalance.com) in Toronto and Harmony Dawn Retreat (www.harmonydawn.com). He is an internationally recognized teacher of the Chinese “internal” martial arts as a well as a certified Medical Qigong Therapist. He has written three books: *Conscious I: Clarity & Direction through Meditation* (Somerville House Publishing, 1992), *Ageless Wisdom Spirituality: Investing in Human Evolution* and *The Spiritual Legacy of Shaolin Temple: Buddhism, Daoism & the Energetic Arts* (Wisdom Publications, 2004). Andy is one of the authors of the Forge’s “Call to Global Spiritual Citizenship”, which will be formally launched this year.

Wauters, Ambika. *Chakras and Their Archetypes: Uniting Energy Awareness and Spiritual Growth*. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press 1997. 163 pp. US\$26

Wauters has written a very engaging and insightful book about the role archetypes play in the progression of human spiritual development. The author spent many years working with archetypes in her own personal development and in her private healing practice, after reading Carl Jung's *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* some twenty-five years earlier and subsequently studying at the Jung Institute in Zurich, Switzerland.



The author states that archetypes are universal patterns of behavior which have both positive and negative qualities and are mirrors of the unconscious. As such, they help us understand our behavior (p.2-3).

Wauters uses “archetypes as a model for self-awareness and as a ladder towards spiritual growth.” (p.1) Using fourteen archetypes chosen for their compatibility with the emotional issues and vibrational frequencies found in the chakras, the author connects two archetypes, one functional and one dysfunctional, with each of the seven major energy centers (chakras) of the body. A diagram of the seven chakras and their location in the body is provided, as well as a simple chart which incorporates specific archetypes, both positive and negative, and the emotional issues associated with each level. (p.8)

The purpose of this book is to guide the reader through the shadow or dysfunctional patterns of behaviour towards awareness and spiritual healing and growth. Wauters advises that we must pass through each archetypal/chakra stage of development sequentially, but that we do not leave the previous stage behind. Rather, these archetypes change in their quality and may reappear from time to time. Wauters acknowledges that while humans are three-dimensional, archetypes are only two-dimensional and readers must not attach themselves to any one archetype, either functional or dysfunctional because archetypes only assist us in identifying our behavioural patterns. We are more than any archetype which presents itself in our lives.

Each archetype/chakra constellation has its own chapter in which Wauters introduces the function of that individual chakra, the negative and positive archetypes attached to that chakra, the myths of these archetypes, mental and spiritual exercises, meditations and affirmations, and guidance for us to take responsibility for personal spiritual growth. For instance, the first energy centre, or base chakra, is located at the base of the spine and is identified with the Victim Archetype (negative) and the Mother Archetype (positive). This is our connection with the earth and reality. In this chapter, Wauters explains the importance of grounding our energy, “to get out of our heads and into our bodies.” (p. 29) She explains that when we lose contact with reality, we can become victims. When we take responsibility for ourselves and change mental attitudes of living as a victim, we learn about the nurturance of the Mother Archetype and ultimately we become capable of nurturing ourselves and others.

Wauters explores each chakra in the same manner. Consistently, she provides directions for changing readers' mental attitudes and encourages readers to forgive and release the past. For example, when discussing the heart chakra, the Lover Archetype, is affirmed to be fully capable of loving oneself with total acceptance. Wauters writes, “love it all...be with it and be one with it. Learning to love it as it is is part of our awakening, and as we experience this we make our lives a unique expression of the love within us.” (p. 101)

The final, seventh, chakra is located at the crown of the head. It is related by Wauters to the Egoist Archetype and the Guru Archetype. Wauters suggests that individuals have everything they need

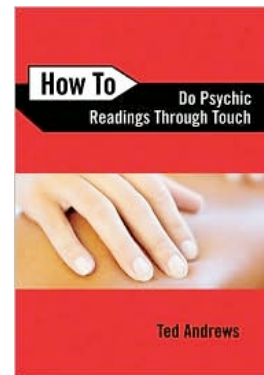
within themselves for true spiritual awakening and have the capacity to become their own Guru. By working through the chakras and corresponding archetypes she has presented, readers will come to a place of freedom, trust and love.

While *Chakras and Their Archetypes* contains neither a reference or bibliography section nor an index, nevertheless valuable information is presented to readers wishing to explore their spiritual world. Wauters has simplified and linked chakras and archetypes. Readers require no prior knowledge of chakras or archetypes to comprehend and enjoy this inspiring book.

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Ted Andrews. *How to Do Psychic Readings through Touch*. Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1994. \$7.95.

Have you ever walked into an Antique store and wondered what kind of story each item could tell you? Or perhaps you have held an old ring and instantly received a message or an image of a time long ago and wondered what it meant? *How to Do Psychic Readings through Touch* teaches Psychometry – how to read the energy of objects, places, and people, tuning into the world in a fascinating new way. Ted Andrews presents his instructions in a factual, simple style; the explanations are straightforward, clear and easily understood.



Ted Andrews is a full-time author in the field of metaphysics and spirituality. Being a clairvoyant he is able to perceive events beyond the ordinary range of perception, in addition he works with past life analysis, auric interpretations, and numerology. He is certified in basic hypnosis, acupuncture, spiritual mediumship, and conducts seminars on ancient mysticism.

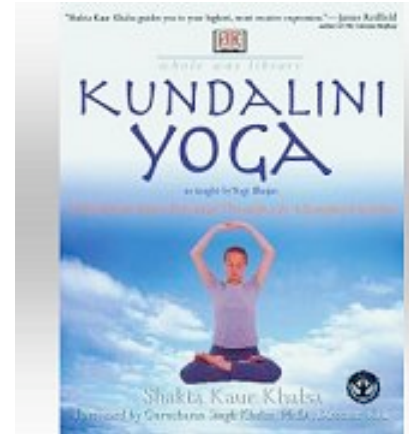
Andrews claims that psychometry, the art of using touch to sense the vibrations of a person, place or thing, is one of the easiest psychic abilities to develop and can be used to locate lost items, missing persons and detect imbalances in the body. (p.103) He claims that all psychic ability is natural, innate and within reach of every human and only requires practice and exercise to learn. (p.104) The easiest of these faculties, according to him, is clairsentience because the human skin serves as a sensory system giving off and absorbing energy fields. These fields are called auras and it is through the aura that impressions of objects are imprinted and sensed. (p. 9) This sensory system, or aura, becomes the bridge between ordinary perception and intuitive perceptions and by touching an object or person, information will be perceived through that touch. It is Andrews' premise that by understanding and using our senses to their fullest capacity, we are able to integrate and open up to awareness's beyond what our physical senses tell us. (p. 6)

This book offers explanation for five different intuitive levels of perception: 1) Clairvoyance: Auric sight, spiritual vision, dreams, and imagination; 2) Clairaudience: Hearing spirit voices, music, and telepathy; 3) Clairsentience: Psychometry and healing; 4) Clairaroma: Psychic faculties associated with smell; and 5) Clairgustus: Psychic faculties associated with taste. (p.8) This is a "how to book" with practical explanations and exercises in most of the chapters. Andrews directs the reader through all the steps necessary to become proficient in psychometry.

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Khalsa, Shakta Kaur. *Kundalini Yoga: Unlock Your Inner Potential through Life-Changing Exercise*. New York, New York: Dorling Kindersley Publishing, Inc., 2001. 215 pp. Ref 8 pp. \$13.95

Unlock Your Inner Potential informs readers on the subject of Kundalini yoga as taught by Yogi Bhajan, Ph.D., who brought this practice from India to the West in 1969. "Yoga focuses on the need to control the 'waves' of the mind." (p. 9). Kundalini comes from the word kundal, a "lock of hair from the beloved." The author explains, "The uncoiling of this 'hair' is the awakening of the Kundalini, the creative potential that already exists in every human." (p.9). Energy that is coiled at the bottom of the spine is stimulated through the practice of Kundalini yoga and rises up through the spine into the skull where the pineal gland is activated. The pineal vibrates and releases chemicals that lead to a major change in consciousness. (p.11).



Shakta Kaur Khalsa examines several aspects of Kundalini yoga; what it is, the myths surrounding it; how to start by preparing oneself; and then proceeds from beginning to more advanced techniques to show how to meditate in a way that raises consciousness. She explains that the myth stating Kundalini is dangerous only becomes truth when extreme wrong practice of the techniques is used. This is why the practice as given by a master of Kundalini yoga is essential. Proper technique and preparation are necessary for the proper flow of Kundalini energy. (p. 10). Although the author minimized the danger associated with Kundalini rising, this reviewer found several other sources stating the possibility of a spiritual emergency occurring spontaneously in an unprepared person or even in a spiritual seeker. Gopi Krishna, who meditated for three hours every morning for seventeen years, describes experiencing a Kundalini awakening one day, which resulted in twelve years of misery both mental and physical. In a portion of the *Shared Transformation Newsletter*, Puran Bair, the founder of the Institute for Applied Meditation, writes that Kundalini is too dangerous for ordinary people and can lead to a variety of mental disorders. An awakening of Kundalini energy could be accompanied by years of physical and psychological upheavals. El Collie in "Kundalini Signs and Symptoms," reports that some have found that the risen Kundalini not only opens mystical and paranormal visions, but also may dramatically impact the body with long bouts of strange illnesses and extreme mental, emotional, interpersonal, psychic, spiritual and total lifestyle changes. On the website www.kundalinicare.com, the features of a Kundalini rising include spontaneous bodily movements, emotional fluctuations, and atypical sensations. Khalsa is a master yoga teacher as well as a writer. She has written other books and many articles on yoga. The purpose of this book is to demonstrate that anyone, who is in any physical shape, can perform this type of yoga, and that readers' lives can be enriched and deeply changed by approaching Kundalini yoga with respect and following the steps outlined.

Each of the nine chapters builds on the ones preceding it. Readers are instructed on what to do before starting yoga in order to focus. The basics of Kundalini yoga are then given, including breathing, visualization, sitting poses, hand positions, mantras, body locks (muscle contractions), chakras, and kriyas (postures linked to mantra and breath). The glossary is most helpful for readers unfamiliar with the terms used.

Khalsa describes how yoga exercise and meditation have moved from the fringe in the early 1960s to the mainstream now. (p.6). She demonstrates that yoga is not a religion but an ancient science, which includes the care, maintenance and preservation of the body/mind/spirit. She further relates that yoga was originally passed on through the centuries from individual masters to select students, who were thought to be worthy. (p.8). These select few included monks, yogis and others

who withdrew from the world to become more conscious spiritually. Kundalini yoga is designed for ordinary people who desire the health, happiness and a sense of holiness that the ancient practice of yoga has imparted to practitioners.⁷ Today it is practiced without leaving one's everyday world, and thus is a fast and powerful way to give strength and integrity to anyone desiring it.

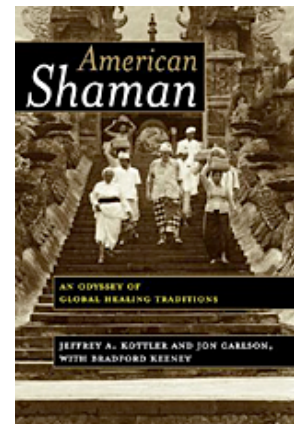
Unlock Your Inner Potential through Life-Changing Exercise is presented in an enjoyable and easily understood manner. Not only are instructions plainly and thoroughly written, but there are also pictures of the various yoga poses for additional clarity. When mantras are given, the musical notes are included. Other beautiful illustrations are included in each chapter, a pleasurable complement to the text throughout the book. Of particular beauty are the whole page picture of Kundalini rising through the body, mostly in shades of blue, and the following two pages with smaller pictures of the Kundalini energy in each of the eight chakras. These contain a description of each chakra by location, function, what it looks like when unbalanced, and how a balance in that area might be beneficial to the corresponding functions aligned within it.

This book is comprehensive, ending with descriptions of the noticeable changes in the body and psychological benefits produced by just a few minutes of daily practice. Finally, the deepening changes when Kundalini yoga is practiced regularly are explained, enticing readers to integrate this practice into their lives.

Review by: Liz Donnelly
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Kottler, Jeffrey A. and Jon Carlson with Bradford Kenney. *American Shaman: An Odyssey of Global Healing Traditions*. New York and Hove: Brunner-Routledge, 2004. 260 pp. 4 pp.Ref. US\$16.95

The collaboration of three learned, well-qualified men has resulted in a complete textbook on the healing traditions of the shaman. These men present an informative, biographic adventure story, showing readers the mystery and playfulness of shamanism. Kottler and Carlson teamed up with Kenney to document his work as a shaman and his visits with some of the outstanding healers in the world. Realizing that science has not adequately answered many of life's hardest questions, these three embarked on a journey to answer the questions of how people transform themselves and stay transformed. They do an amazing job exploring this topic. The book is well organized, one part describing concepts, and one part applying concepts to helping and healing.



Explaining his fundamental belief in the power of love for transforming pain, Keeney acknowledges his roots, which enabled him to embrace shamanism with the following testament,

There is an ancient custom, practiced by most indigenous cultures, that begins or ends a story by recognizing those who are an inseparable part of it. As a former family systems therapist, I, too, enthusiastically underscore the importance of my family context. Raised by a country preacher father and grandfather; a school teacher mother; a farmer, inventor, and construction worker grandfather; and hard-laboring grandmothers, I was taught to see how the suffering of everyday life could be embraced with an open, caring heart and become transformed into

soulful grace. They, like the global shamans and healers I met throughout the world, emphasized that love is the greatest teacher. (p. 257).

Kenney attended MIT to pursue a career in biomedical research, but became interested in psychology. Subsequently, he dropped out of MIT, played jazz piano, and read voraciously on the subjects of philosophy and cybernetics. Kenney became a therapist, was the innovator of resource-focused therapy, and taught and wrote on this subject, while producing videotapes demonstrating psychological theories in action. Kenney remained an academic while studying indigenous healing, and became a shaman. He traveled around the world to document the practices of prominent healers, and founded the Ringing Rocks Foundation to further the knowledge of alternative healing in diverse cultural settings. (xiii.).

Of healing in the Western world, Kenney suggest that psychotherapy and psychology are exclusionary and arrogant. (p. 120). He believes them exclusionary because healing is reserved for the privileged who use the standard methods that stifle creativity and imagination, and arrogant because the therapists consider themselves separate from and above the clients, and because other cultures' wisdom is not acknowledged, much less respected.

Some revealing observations about shamans are mentioned in the book: Shamans disagree among themselves and express many different points of view, (p. 125); shamans have great reverence for play, (p. 127); the world of spirits is considered sacred, and not to be understood, but to be honored, (p. 133). These ideas are thought provoking for readers and offer many insights to ponder.

Kenney proposes that helpers and healers create certain rituals for their clients, which expand their sense of awe, wonder and surprise. (p. 154). In addition, Kenney suggests tips on how to activate and nourish a sense of mystery in individuals' lives:

1. Introduce more rhythm, or natural flow into your life;
2. Learn to gently (and sometimes wildly) rock your body;
3. Dance, think, and pray in the dark;
4. Bring on the music;
5. Faithfully write down a request for guidance and carry it with you;
6. Bring more absurdity into daily rituals;
7. Be irreverent with the why questions in your life; and
8. Remind yourself, constantly, that you will never understand the big things in life (p. 154).

In the indigenous traditions, the shaman is considered a person with knowledge of botany, physiology, theology and performing arts, as well as social work, psychiatry and counseling. (p. 159). Pointing out why this would not work in the United States, Kenney explains that licensure and certification, ethical guidelines, standards of practice, as well as state and federal laws that tell practitioners what they can and cannot do as part of their job limit the scope of practice. (163). The book shows readers how to step outside set ways of thinking to examine the potential of the indigenous healing practices for use in therapeutic settings in this country. Kenney beautifully sums up our creativity in this area, "We should be aware of the wind, and how it reminds us of the inventiveness that flows naturally when it is evoked by another who cares enough to call it out." (p. 253). Healers and helpers are the ones meant to care sufficiently to summon imagination from their clients, and Kenney's focus on the client's strengths and resources, invites those professionals in the Western culture to summon the mystery and originality from others that is inherent in everyone.

This book is technical, yet artful, graphic in detail, and sensitive in analogies. It tells the tale of a traditional shaman's powerful wisdom, and can be used by professionals or any readers looking for

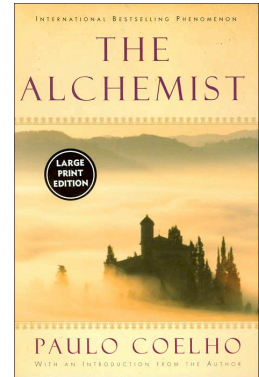
adventure. It is an entertaining book because of the spellbinding stories it contains, and informative by its discussions on how to use creativity in one's practice to infuse fascination with life into the therapeutic setting.

Review by Liz Donnelly, Doctoral Student,
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Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist*, New York: Harper Collins, 1993. 197 pp
\$15.95

The Alchemist is Paulo Coelho's second book and one of numerous bestsellers. When Coelho was a young man, he traveled Latin America seeking spiritual experiences in the footsteps of Carlos Castaneda. The theme of his book centers on the main character Santiago discovering how to have faith and courage while confronting obstacles on the path of following his heart. The search for worldly goods turns into Santiago's discovery of his personal inner treasure and the transforming power of dreams. Coelho suggests people experience four obstacles when pursuing their personal dreams: 1) Learning that nothing is impossible; 2) Knowing what to do and following that knowing

despite what others who love us might say; 3) Fear of failure along the way; and 4) Having a sense of guilt that we have achieved our dreams when others have not. The story of *the Alchemist* is centered on these four obstacles as the main character, Santiago, struggles to listen to his heart while pursuing his personal dream.



The Alchemist is a story about a young shepherd called Santiago who is herding sheep in the Andalusia countryside. Santiago has a repetitive dream about a treasure hidden in the Pyramids of Egypt. Along the way, he meets a Gypsy woman and an old man calling himself the King of Salem, who tells Santiago that his only obligation is to realize his destiny by following his dream and the omens God left for him. By following his dream and nourishing his soul, he will also nourish the Soul of the World. "And when you want something, all the universe will conspire in helping you to achieve it." (p 22) Santiago sells his sheep and strikes off to find his treasure so that he can afford to marry the merchant's daughter. He travels to Tangier in Africa and meets a young man who steals all his money. He meets a crystal merchant who gives him a job and together they unintentionally teach each other about lessons in life and unfulfilled dreams. After a year, Santiago has enough money to return home when he meets an Englishman searching for a famous Arabian alchemist living in a desert oasis. The Englishman's quest inspires Santiago to continue to pursue his dream of hidden treasure in Egypt. While at the oasis, he meets a young desert woman called Fatima and they fall in love. Santiago thinks he has found his treasure. However, destiny intervenes and Santiago is given an omen of warriors preparing to attack the oasis. In the middle of the battle Santiago meets the Alchemist who tells him to continue to pursue his dream. Together, they strike out into the desert where the Alchemist teaches Santiago to listen to his heart, to use his intuition and to pay attention to omens and dreams. The two are taken captive and charged with being spies. The Alchemist hands over all of Santiago's money to the general, who captured them, and tells him that Santiago is a great Alchemist who could turn himself into the wind and destroy the general's camp. The general gives them three days to prove such a task. The Alchemist tells the frightened Santiago not to give in to his fears. He tells him, "There is only one thing that makes a dream impossible to achieve: the fear of failure." (p. 141) Santiago is forced to let go of his fear and listen to his heart in order to hear the Language of the World. The Alchemist tells him, "Every search begins with beginner's luck. And every search ends with the victor's being severely tested." (p. 132) Santiago reaches with his mind into the web of the world and finds the

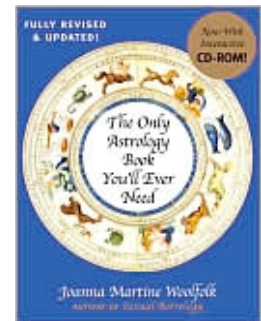
faith he needs to become the wind. He continues his journey to the Pyramids only to find that his treasure was in a place he least expected, the place where he first started.

Paulo Coelho writes in a descriptive style that is charming, dramatic and thought provoking. The reader is guided lovingly into the story and learns along the way the alchemy that can be achieved, personally, when following a dream. He is a first class storyteller, spinning his tale into an intricate web of wisdom about life, love and the pursuit of happiness. *The Alchemist* is brief and persuasive and will appeal to a general audience of readers, from the young to the more mature adult. This is enjoyable light reading, full of wisdom and magic.

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Joanna Martine Woolfolk. *The Only Astrology Book You'll Ever Need*,
 Lanham, MD: Madison Books, 2001. 461 pp \$18.95.

Woolfolk delivers what she promises. This publication lives up to its description on the back cover that states “this new edition is an indispensable sourcebook for unlocking the mysteries of the cosmos through the twenty-first century and beyond.”. Readers who are new to the topic of astrology or who are seasoned veterans will find information easy to understand and quickly accessible due to several charts and a detailed, cross-referenced index. Using former president Bill Clinton as her main example, the author shows how the sun, moon, and eight major planets reflect the lives of human beings.



Woolfolk is the monthly horoscope writer for magazines such as *Marie Claire*, *Redbook* and *Nick Jr.* and for special issues of *Family Circle*. She is a former astrology columnist for several other magazines and the author of *Sexual Astrology* and *Astrology Source*, an interactive CD-Rom. She writes and records weekly astrological forecasts for *Marie Claire*'s astrology hotline and provides extended horoscope forecasts for *StarScroll International*. Woolfolk's experience with writing for popular magazines serves her well in her current work. For instance, the author engages the reader by asking direct questions in each chapter and gives examples of famous people with specific Sun Signs. She provides a glossary, an extensive bibliography, a list of recommended books for further chart casting and interpretation, and a list of computer services for computerized charts.

In the introduction, Woolfolk notes, “We all want to know about ourselves” (xvii). The reader immediately learns about Sun Signs, Moon Signs, Ascendents, Planets and Houses, and how these factors interact to shape human lives. Although Woolfolk points out in her Introduction that “Astrology cannot transform your life – only *you* can do this” (pxvii), she does emphasize that astrology can provide insight and guidance to readers wishing to understand or change their lives. The author devotes an entire chapter to health. For each of the twelve signs of the zodiac, there are diet and health tips and information on parts of body ruled by that particular sun sign. She leaves historical and general information about astrology until near the end of the book.

Each chapter proceeds in order from the most basic interpretation to the next level of teaching and understanding, until the author has provided sufficient information and illustrations for readers to develop and interpret their own charts. She explains the difference between a natal chart and a solar chart and provides instructions for readers to draw their solar charts if the exact birth time is

not known. In several instances, the page reference for the appropriate astrological table is provided at the end of a chapter, so that readers can quickly locate personal information from the teachings in that chapter.

Chapter by chapter, Woolfolk provides simple yet detailed information on each sign of the zodiac in relation to the sun, the moon and the eight major planets. Besides the example of Bill Clinton, the author makes references to the astrological charts of severable public figures and personalizes the information by providing photographs of these people.

Woolfolk asserts that each sign is unique and each individual is unique. For instance, the Sun Sign Scorpio is described as: a feminine sign; a water sign; and a fixed sign. No other sign has those exact characteristics. The author contends that it would be 4,320,000 years before another individual has the same horoscope with the Sun, Moon and planets in that particular arrangement. (p. 191) There would still be differences between the individuals due to genetics and environment. Indeed, each individual is unique!

While the author provides detailed information regarding various aspects of astrology and its interpretation along with numerous tables for everyone born between 1900 and 2100, this information is not overwhelming due to the organization of the material. By following Woolfolk's instructions and selecting personal information, readers will indeed have tools to know themselves. By examining one's birth or solar chart and the alignment of the planets at that moment, and, subsequently, at any moment in time, readers can discover not only their history but receive guidance for the present moment. This kind of consultation provides the opportunity to live in harmony with the cosmos and fellow man. This is a great resource for anyone interested in learning about astrology. Often, books about astrology focus on one aspect of astrology. Woolfolk combines a great deal of information in reader-friendly language that teaches readers to cast their own astrological charts and learn about the cosmos at the same time.

Review by Lynn Wills, Graduate Student
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Nancy Hopps, *Surgery: Mindful Mending*, Synergetic Systems 2006
CD and 16 pp booklet \$19.95

Nancy Hopps has created a series of Relax into Healing CDs. This one focuses on ways in which imagery, relaxation, affirmations can be helpful as self-healing in preparation for, during and following surgical procedures. Solo harp music accompanies Nancy's calming guidance. The booklet contains portions of the voice presentation, and is helpful in recapping what one has heard. The CD can also be played during the surgery to strengthen its effects.

I found the presentation clear and soothing, and am certain this can be helpful to anyone undergoing a surgical procedure.



Other CDs in this series include:

Healing Affirmations & Harp

Chemotherapy – A Healing Solution

Radiation: Removing the Dross

Pain – Softening the Sensations

Cancer – Embracing the Healing Journey

Highly recommended for anyone wanting help in these areas.

See article by Nancy Hopps in this issue of IJHC. “AND THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE”: Impressive results of non-traditional healing methods in treating Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy/Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (RSD/CRPS)

Review by Daniel J. Benor, MD, ABHM
Editor, IJHC

Barbara Ann Hubbard, *Humanity Ascending...a new way through together*, Foundation for Conscious Evolution CD \$24.95

Barbara Ann Hubbard has produced an interesting brief visual review of human evolution. While I did not find much that was new in this presentation, one gem was worth the whole viewing. In the anxieties and despair over global heating and all that surrounds this impending tragedy, it is difficult to hold onto a positive mindset. Hubbard points out and documents that prior to any major shifts in our world, there is a period of chaos. We can certainly confirm that this is our current state, and it is helpful to consider the possibility that this could augur positive changes to come.



Review by Daniel Benor, MD, ABHM

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