



September, 2012

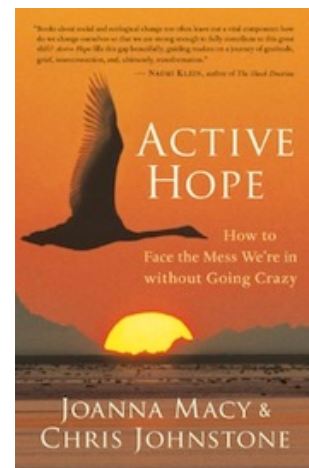
Volume 12, No. 3

BOOK REVIEWS

Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone. *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in Without Going Crazy*. Novato, CA: New World Library 2012. 272 pp 15 pp Notes/References \$14.95

This is an outstanding book that helps to reconnect us with our awareness of our oneness with our world and invites us to explore ways in which we can bring healing into this ravaged and endangered world. It is written by Joanna Macy, a renowned ecophilosopher, and Chris Johnstone, a medical doctor specializing in the psychology of behavior change, resilience and recovery for addiction.

Of particular help are the suggestions for ways in which we can overcome our feelings of being overwhelmed and helpless in the face of the massive challenges to our personal survival and to survival of all life on our planet as we know it.



When the stories a society shares are out of tune with its circumstances, they can become self-limiting, even a threat to survival. That is our current situation.
- David Korten

Macy and Johnstone point out that facing our helplessness is actually an excellent way to start working to overcome it. Next, the authors suggest varieties of ways we can build hope.

The word *hope* has two different meanings. The first involves hopefulness, where our preferred outcome seems reasonably likely to happen. If we require this kind of hope before we commit ourselves to an action, our response gets blocked in areas where we don't rate our chances too high...

The second meaning is about desire...It is this kind of hope that starts our journey... It is what we do with this hope that really makes the difference. Passive hope is about waiting for external agencies to bring about what we desire. Active Hope is about becoming active participants in bringing about what we hope for.

Active Hope is a practice... and it involves three key steps. First, we take a clear view of reality; second, we identify what we hope for in terms of the direction we'd like things to move in or the values we'd like to see expressed; and third, we take steps to move ourselves or our situation in that direction.

Since Active Hope doesn't require our optimism, we can apply it even in areas where we feel hopeless. The guiding impetus is intention; we *choose* what we aim to bring about, act

for, or express. Rather than weighing our chances and proceeding only when we feel hopeful, we focus on our intention and let it be our guide. (p. 3)

Reconnecting with our oneness with all of our planet – with all the living beings, as well as with the earth, waters and air – and feeling their predicaments as though they were our own, we can find ways in which we resonate with particular parts of our planet that can benefit from our personal inputs.

Because this approach helps us restore our sense of connection with the web of life and with one another, it is known as the Work That Reconnects. Through helping us to develop our inner resources and our outer community, it strengthens our capacity to face disturbing information and respond with unexpected resilience... four stages of the spiral it moves through: coming from Gratitude, Honoring Our Pain for the World, Seeing with New Eyes, and Going Forth. The journey through these stages has a strengthening effect that deepens with each repetition. (p. 6)

In reconnecting with the need to take action, we encounter the prevalent beliefs and attitudes of “The Assumptions of Business as Usual:”

- Economic growth is essential for prosperity.
- Nature is a commodity to be used for human purposes.
- Promoting consumption is good for the economy.
- The central plot is about getting ahead.
- The problems of other peoples, nations, and species are not our concern. (p. 16)

By confronting and challenging these beliefs within ourselves, we can find ways to overcome them. Doing this important inner work is often made easier in a group of like-minded people, where we can safely explore the problems and seek solutions to them.

At the core of our consciousness is a wellspring of caring and compassion; this aspect of ourselves – which we might think of as our *connected self* – can be nurtured and developed. We can deepen our sense of belonging in the world. (p. 30-31)

When sufficient momentum is built by groups of people working together in these directions, we come to participate in the ‘Great Turning.’

Right now a shift...is occurring... we call it the Great Turning and see it as the essential adventure of our time. It involves the transition from a doomed economy of industrial growth to a life-sustaining society committed to the recovery of our world. This transition is already well under way. (p. 26)

This book is packed with wonderful observations and suggestions for how we can make a difference in this ailing and imperiled world of ours. Examples include discussions of

- “affluenza” – the infection of people with the craving for ever more consumer products
- hyperindividualism – a selfish focus on ‘me first,’ to the detriment of anyone else
- “endosymbiosis” – a networking between species to create a new and greater organism
- distributed intelligence – where the sum of the parts of collective wisdom is greater than the individual contributions of participants
- Power-with – lending our individual energies to the collective, so that the synergistic total our efforts again is greater than the sum of the parts

Macy and Johnstone recommend five vows:

I vow to myself and to each of you:

To commit myself daily to the healing of our world and the welfare of all beings.

To live on Earth more lightly and less violently in the food, products, and energy I consume.

To draw strength and guidance from the living Earth, the ancestors, the future generations, and my brothers and sisters of all species.

To support others in our work for the world and to ask for help when I need it.

To pursue a daily practice that clarifies my mind, strengthens my heart, and supports me in observing these vows. (p. 202-3)

This book is a must read for anyone interested in developing and promoting the survival and healing of our planet.

Review by Daniel J. Benor, MD, ABIHM
Editor-in-Chief, IJHC

Ozzie Zehner. *Green Illusions: The Dirty Secrets of Clean Energy and the Future of Environmentalism*. Lincoln, NB and London, England: University of Nebraska Press 2012. 436 pp. 60 pp. notes/refs \$29.95

This book is a must read for anyone interested in green energies and global heating ('warming' is an unacceptable euphemism!). Ozzie Zehner critically examines popular approaches and points out problems that are often overlooked with each.

For example:

1. Windmills have hidden carbon footprints:

... what about the total carbon footprint of the mining, building, transporting, installing, clearing, maintaining, and decommissioning activities supporting them? Fossil fuels (including, especially, toxic bunker fuels) supply the power behind these operations. The largest and most efficient turbines rest upon massive carbon-intensive concrete bases, which support the hulking towers and (usually) prevent them from toppling in heavy winds. Any thoughtful consideration of the carbon implications of wind turbines should acknowledge these activities. (p. 41)

Wind turbines are also erratic in their outputs of electricity into the electrical grid that supplies power to customers. A solution to this is to use smart grids. "A smart grid coordinates electrical sensors and meters with basic information technology and a communications network akin to the Internet that can transform dumb power lines into a nimble and responsive transmission system," (p. 47)

2. Biofuels appear to be attractive because they are renewable. Corn is the principle crop used to produce the alcohol that is now commonly found as ten percent of the fuel at local gas pumps. Unfortunately, using corn in this way raises food prices. "World Bank president Robert Zoellick



acknowledged that by early 2008 it was evident that biofuel demand had become a “significant contributor” to grain price escalations, which put thirty-three countries at risk for social upheaval.” (p. 63)

3. Solar cells are expensive, are not very efficient at converting sunlight to electricity, have high costs for production, considerable maintenance and repair costs, produce considerable amounts of carbon dioxide during their production; and leave a heavy environmental footprint when they reach the end of their useful lives.

The depressing absolute bottom line is that any increase in energy availability that lowers cost leads to increased consumption. It has been demonstrated again and again that any cost savings in production of energy leads to rapid rises in usage. Similarly, “Increase in energy efficiency make energy services relatively cheaper, encouraging greater consumption.” (p. 174) So these do not appear to be a helpful approaches, in and of themselves. The problem is that people focus on their own needs, comforts and pleasures and will not take broader views into their consideration when making decisions about energy use.

Industrial and corporate interests have heavily influenced governmental decisions in all matters concerning energy use and carbon emissions. The media have also become complicit in these matters, as they are more sensitive and responsive to corporate advertisers’ views than to issues of public welfare.

Energy efficiency can actually lead to negative environmental impacts unless regions institute taxes, caps, or regulations to prevent growing consumption patterns from smothering efficiency gains...

Efficiency efforts will only prove effective as long as we institute contemporaneous reforms to move from a consumption-based economy to one grounded in sufficiency. (p. 174-175)

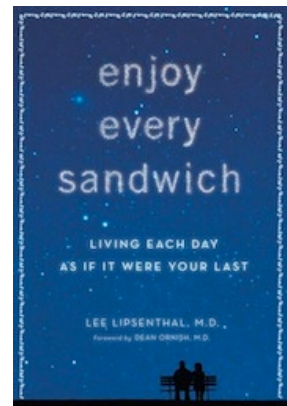
Zehner suggests that the only ways forward are: 1. to raise prices on fuels to the point that people reduce fuel use. This has been effective in Scandinavia; and 2. Reduce energy consumption, developing ethics of living modestly. He makes a variety of cogent, helpful suggestions for instituting these approaches and achieving sustainable goals.

This book is a must read for anyone concerned with sustainable living.

Review by Daniel J. Benor, MD, ABIHM
Editor-in-Chief, IJHC

Lee Lipsenthal. *Enjoy Every Sandwich: Living Each Day As If It Were Your Last*. New York: Crown Archetype 2011. 195 pp. \$22.00

Lee Lipsenthal was a wonderful wholistic physician, whom I had the pleasure of meeting on numbers of occasions at meetings of the American Holistic Medical Association. Lipsenthal was a caring, wholistic physician who, among other positions, worked as medical director with Dean Ornish of the Preventive Medicine Research Institute in California. He describes through lovely vignettes how he learned to help people on every level of their being – body, emotions, mind, relationships and spirit. His personal understanding of how to deal with life issues stood him in good stead in helping others deal with their issues.



I... learned something profound. I couldn't "manage" stress. Stress was just my response to life's events. Stress wasn't something to be managed. Once it happens, it has happened. My parents taught me to look for stress in life. I now realized that looking for stress creates stress. The harder I looked, the more I found. What I could begin to do now was to shift my perspective on life events. (p. 47)

Through working on his own issues and through helping patients to work on theirs, Lipsenthal developed many ways for dealing with difficult situations. Here is but one of numerous examples he details.

Unconditional love can also be made into a practice. This has been very potent for me over the last few years. Whenever someone I love is doing something I don't like, I breathe in, remembering all that that person is to me in my life. This makes the action of the moment seem small. Now, I even do this when it's not based on a situation that is bugging me. I just sit, breathing deeply, and think of the people in my life I love, a nice reminder of this tasty life in the middle of a busy day. (p. 86)

In this gem of a book he shares his odyssey of dealing with cancer. When he received the diagnosis of esophageal cancer he knew he only had a ten percent chance of surviving a year. He thoroughly explored his conventional and complementary therapies options, with the help of his wife (also a physician), his medical and his holistic therapies colleagues.

Readers will find many gifts on the pages of this book. Among the highlights that I found were Lipsenthal's honesty in dealing with his psychological issues – both within himself and with family and friends; his choices to seek joy in his remaining days; the ways he developed to deal with physical pains; his making peace with the limited time he had left in his physical body; and his awareness of spiritual dimensions (which he had already explored during his life) awaiting him when he moved on to other realms.

Review by Daniel J. Benor, MD, ABIHM
Editor-in-Chief, IJHC

Clinton Ober, Stephen T. Sinatra and Martin Zucker. *Earthing: The most important health discovery ever?* Laguna Beach, CA: Basic Health 2010. 260 pp \$18.95 4 pp Notes

Earthing is a fascinating discussion of the energizing, restorative and healing potentials in earth energies. Reading this book gave me a strong sense of déjà vu. When I discovered in 1980 that I had a biological energy field that I could sense with my hands, I was startled because this had obviously been there all of my life and yet I had never known to look for it. Similarly, *Earthing* points out an energetic aspect of my life that had eluded me for a much longer time.

The authors present a broad spectrum of clinical reports of benefits from spending time in physical or energetic contact with the earth. This can be achieved by walking barefoot on the ground, by using conductive shoes, or through spending time with one's skin connected to the earth through grounding wires. Varieties of products with wired connections to the ground wire of an electric socket are available to enable us to do this. These



include bedsheets, throw blankets, foot pads, mouse pads and earthing pads for when we are driving.

Problems responding to earthing have included:

Advanced rheumatoid arthritis – An elderly man was bedridden with hands, elbows and feet inflamed and misshapen, in chronic, severely debilitating pain. Benefits were seen within a week, with increasing mobility enabling him to become self-sufficient again and continuing over several years. Improvements in several other people with arthritis are detailed.

The authors find that people with broadly related physical issues have shown similar responses with problems associated with inflammation, including allergies, asthma, cardiovascular disease, fibromyalgia, lupus, multiple sclerosis, various pains and other disorders. My sense is that these have common denominators of immune system disturbances.

Decreases in skin heat are illustrated with infrared imaging, following earthing. The pictures shown, however, are not clearly labeled, nor are all of the problems addressed clearly described.

More impressive are the illustrated cases of people's legs with pain caused by skin ulcers and diabetic neuropathy. Pains were markedly improved.

- *Wound healing* – David Gersten, MD, reports a serious cut on his forehead closed within two days and was completely healed in a week. Others have reported similarly impressive effects on wound healing.
- *Autism* – Calming effects are demonstrated.
- *Back pains* – Rapid clearing is often seen, even when these have been present for years.
- *Fibromyalgia* – Sleep and pains were markedly improved, along with varieties of other symptoms.

The list goes on – more extensive than can be fairly covered in this review.

Books and products available through

US: <http://www.earthing.com/>

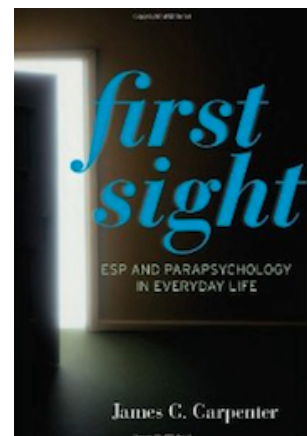
Canada: <http://www.earthingcanada.ca>

Review by Daniel J. Benor, MD, ABIHM
Editor-in-Chief, IJHC

James C. Carpenter. *First Sight: ESP and Parapsychology in Everyday Life*. Landham, MD: Rowman Littlefield 2012. 489 pp. 52 pp.
Refs Notes after each chapter. \$39.95

This is a helpful but peculiar book. James Carpenter, a clinical psychologist for 30 years and Research Associate at the Rhine Research Center for Parapsychology seeks to bridge the unacceptance gap between parapsychology (psi) and conventional science.

To his credit, Carpenter goes further than many parapsychologists in assessing the interconnectedness of all consciousness that is an obvious extension of our understanding of our world, given that everyone appears to have a measure of psi abilities.



...we propose that organisms exist and transact continually in an extended, nonlocal universe, that the mind thinks unconsciously about all of these transactions along with other unconscious transactions, that this unconscious thinking produces consciousness and other goal-directed experience, that all such thought serves the need to predict and control a personal future, and that empirical elucidation of the rules of unconscious thinking must include an articulation of the patterns governing psi processes.

While I assume that at least many nonhuman organisms as well as humans can be characterized in these terms, I will focus primarily on human beings in this discussion. (p. 8)

Carpenter summarizes much of the psi research in the basic areas of telepathy and psychokinesis (PK/ mind directly influencing matter). He points out that despite a very robust series of studies, meticulously performed and with meta-analyses that are truly impressive, conventional science has refused to accept psi phenomena as real and legitimate aspects of human experience.

This book builds bridges: between psychology and parapsychology, between common sense and miracles, and between today's science of the mind and a larger science that must be created. It will help us to build still another bridge: one spanning the distance between what we now believe ourselves to be and much more that we unconsciously are and can consciously become. (p. 9)

Carpenter does an excellent job of pointing out that there are extensive bodies of research confirming that humans have a wealth of information and thought processes that exist for the most part in portions of our awareness that are unconscious, and that their participation in our awareness is often subliminal. He also provides excellent individual examples of psychic experiences that illustrate his points. His main thesis is that psi is simply a part of this unconscious, subliminal process – and therefore ought to be more acceptable, as such, to conventional science than it has been to date. The bulk of the book examines psi from this perspective.

If extrasensory perception is like subliminal perception, then it, too, works as an unconscious prime, affecting our experiences and behaviors but never being consciously available as such. The main difference is that in an extrasensory perception the intensity of the stimulus has dropped down to zero, as far as the sensory system of the person is concerned. Like a subliminal perception, it will not be conscious, not be known, and not in fact be any sort of perception at all... (p. 13)

Were Carpenter to consider this as one of the many ways in which psi can be experienced, I think this book would be far more valuable. Unfortunately, he proposes that no psi experiences are conscious. He goes to the extreme of labeling psi perceptions that are quite clear in people's awarenesses and consciously reported as being "almost aware" perceptions. This produces the strong feeling of a failed attempt at cramming experiences of widely varying shapes into one standard, square hole that is cut in carbon steel. A striking example is the following (one of many) titles of subsections:

When the patient seems to almost know something pertinent about the therapist that the therapist wishes to be secret. (p. 355)

If we lived in a world that was carefully defined and circumscribed by the conclusions drawn from psi research, with research hypotheses guiding our perceptions and our inner experiences of the world, this would be a most valuable book. However, most of us live in a world of our more loose

ways of sensing our place in the world and interacting with it. We presume that when a creature has black and white stripes and an equine body it is indeed a zebra, not an “almost zebra.” When we sense information via psi, we make similar leaps of faith. Those who are new to psi experiences may hold reservations about the validity of their psi awarenesses. As we grow more familiar with psi experiences, we learn to trust our inner perceptions with greater certainty.

In my practice of psychotherapy I experience intuitive/ psi awarenesses (telepathy, retrocognition, precognition – including past life perceptions). These usually arise spontaneously and are mostly perceived as an inner ‘knowing’ of information (intuitively perceived) – with healing potential for my clients and myself. In my interventions I include muscle testing (to activate and enhance intuitive awarenesses in clients); spiritual (psi/ non-local/ bioenergy/ consciousness) healing; and many varieties self-healing,

All of these are for the most part conscious experiences on my part that are validated by clients. They are not “almost knowings.”

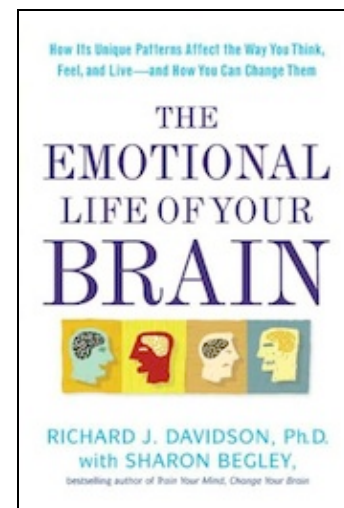
In summary, I found this book both fascinating for its helpful suggestions and excellent review of basics of psi research, but limited in its scope of understanding of psi experiences and of the richness of some extremely important aspects of our world – which if found are experienced far more consciously than does Carpenter.

Review by Daniel J. Benor, MD, ABIHM
Editor-in-Chief, IJHC

Richard J. Davidson with Sharon Bagley. *The Emotional Life of Your Brain*. New York, NY: Hudson Street Press/ Penguin 2012. 257 pp 22pp. references. \$25.95.

This book is very readable and highly recommended. Because of the conversational and personal style, both professional and lay audiences would enjoy and greatly benefit from reading it. At times it reads like a novel and is hard to put down.

Although it does have some technical information in it, the book also reads like an adventure story and includes helpful diagrams. It describes 6 Core Emotional Styles of the brain and includes a series of 6 easy to fill out questionnaires to assess your own emotional style.



Richard Davidson is the founder of affective neuroscience; a full professor at the Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison and the Director of the Center for Healthy Minds. Begley is a highly acclaimed science writer. Davidson worked closely with the Dalai Lama and his monks, especially to assess compassion and other positive states in the brain. According to Davidson, all emotions, positive and negative are first processed through the prefrontal cortex (left or right), which in turn activates the limbic system and amygdala.

Davidson became a regular meditator while a graduate student at Harvard University in the early 1970's and often plugs mindfulness from his research (he worked with Jon Kabot-Zinn and others). During that time at Harvard he became close friends with Dan Goleman and participated in weekly meditation sessions led by Ram Dass himself. At the end of his second year at Harvard

he travelled to India for 3 months. Davidson is known as a neuroscientist who does neuroimaging, MRI's and much creative, sophisticated psychological and brain research.

The six Emotional Styles of the Brain are: 1. Attentive Brain; 2. Socially Intuitive Brain; 3. Self-Aware Brain; 4. Outlook Brain; 5. Resilient Brain; 6. Socially Context Sensitive Brain – which includes Attention (Ability to focus attention), Social Intuition (Attuned to Social Cues), Self-Awareness (Conscious of one's thoughts, feelings and body messages), Outlook (Capacity to sustain positive emotion), Resiliency (Fast to recover from setbacks) and Socially Sensitivity (Awareness of Social Surroundings).

Each of the six Emotional Styles of the Brain has specific neural pathways: e.g. greater activation of the left side of the prefrontal cortex inhibits and shortens the activation of the amygdala; and quiets down negative emotions such as anger, fear etc allowing the brain to bounce back from upsetting experiences, which enhances resiliency.

Activation of the left prefrontal cortex also underlies positive emotions while greater activity in the right prefrontal cortex is associated with negative emotions. When the prefrontal cortex is activated and sends greater signals to the nucleus accumbens which is inside the ventral striatum in the middle of the brain, the ability to sustain positive emotions, such as happiness and a Positive Outlook is sustained. Lower activity in the nucleus accumbens, which is part of the reward center of the brain, leads to a Negative Outlook according to Davidson and a marked tendency toward depression.

When a person is focused and attentive, the prefrontal cortex of the brain exhibits strong "phase locking" in response to external stimuli, i.e. brain activity can be entrained to external stimuli.

Davidson emphasizes that the circuitry of the emotional brain overlaps with the rational thinking brain and that emotion works with cognition in an integrated and seamless way. He says there is no clear distinct dividing line between emotion and other mental processes and they blur into each other. He also emphasizes that sometimes being very high on the positive poles of each dimension is detrimental and being low on a particular dimension can sometimes be an asset.

In addition to the chapters describing the six Emotional Styles of the Brain and how he discovered them some other fascinating chapters in Davidson and Begley's excellent book are:

1. Assessing Your Emotional Style; 2. How Emotional Style Develops; 3. The Mind-Brain-Body Connection; 4. Normal and Abnormal: When "Different" Becomes Pathological; 5. The Plastic Brain; 6. The Monk in the Machine; and 7. Exercises to Change Your Emotional Style. In the latter chapter he focuses especially on mindfulness meditation, gratitude and compassionate meditation as well as well-being therapy. In other words, he emphasizes the benefits of spiritual and positive psychology interventions. This chapter is the most practical of the chapters and will be of much benefit to therapists and the public alike.

The author currently says there are no more than six neural pathways of the brain. Personally, I found it helpful and insightful to use the self-report scales he provides in the book to assess where I was on the six Emotional Styles of the Brain and many readers most likely will as well. Davidson, moreover, says that the neuroscientifically grounded emotional style continuum he has discovered is a much better approach to assessment than the 365 or so diagnostic criteria developed in the DSM system.

Davidson's and Begley's book, "The Emotional Life of Your Brain" has been described as visionary, pioneering, mind opening, fabulous and very clear. I would agree with all these statements. Again

I highly recommend it.

On a personal note. I received my Ph.D from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. One of the 3 professors on my Ph.D committee was the esteemed Peter Lang, PhD, a very early neuropsychologist. When Lang left the Univ. of Wisconsin in 1984 the psychology department went looking for a replacement. The replacement for Lang was a young psychology professor named, Richard Davidson.

Review by Philip Friedman, PhD, [Editorial Panelist, IJHC](#)

Alexander Moreira-Almeida (Editor) and Franklin Santana Santos (Editor). *Exploring Frontiers of the Mind-Brain Relationship*. NY: Springer Science Business 2012. 245 pp. Many refs after each chapter. \$129

This is an excellent series of discussions, heavily referenced from relevant research publications, considering diverse views of the relationships between mind and brain. It includes sections on Philosophy and History; Physics; Functional Neuroimaging; and Human Experiences.

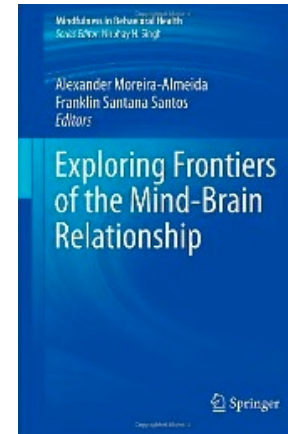
The strengths of this book are in its careful dissection of dualistic theories of consciousness, demonstrating their limitations and deficiencies and in its consideration of consciousness transcending the physical body. The well argued and well referenced analyses of reductionistic theories of mind-brain relationships would be helpful to anyone seriously asking questions about whether mind is anything more than a manifestation of the brain. The exorbitant price of this book suggests it is intended for academic libraries where such seekers might find it.

The most telling deficiencies are in the absence of reviews of other transpersonal phenomena, including: parapsychology research; of reports of transformative experiences with channeled communications; and research on varieties of reincarnation phenomena, including again transformative experiences with past life therapies. The missing materials and much more can be found in *Healing Research, Volume 3, Personal Spirituality: Science, Spirit and the Eternal Soul* (Benor, 2006).

Reference:

Benor, Daniel J. *Healing Research, Volume 3, Personal Spirituality: Science, Spirit and the Eternal Soul*. Bellmawr, NJ: Wholistic Healing Publications (2006)

Review by Daniel J. Benor, MD, ABIHM
Editor-in-Chief, IJHC



TERMS OF USE

The International Journal of Healing and Caring On Line is distributed electronically as an open access journal, available at no charge. You may choose to print your downloaded copy of this article or any other article for relaxed reading.

We encourage you to share this article with friends and colleagues.

The International Journal of Healing and Caring – On Line

P.O. Box 76, Bellmawr, NJ 08099

Phone (609) 714-1885 Fax (519) 265-0746

Email: center@ijhc.org Website: <http://www.ijhc.org>

Copyright © 2012 IJHC. All rights reserved.

DISCLAIMER: <http://www.wholistichealingresearch.com/disclaimer.html>