Altered States of Consciousness & The Creative Individual: Breaking the Affective Thinking Skills Paradigm

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5-2012

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A Project in Creative Studies
by
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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

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Dates of Approval:

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Project Advisor

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Candidate
Abstract

This project focuses on the affective side of creative thinking and creating a bridge to the cognitive side. It presents the personal transformation of the author using non-drug induced altered states of consciousness. The finished project includes the beginnings of a holistic creative problem solving model and a workshop which will assist those wishing to become more creatively productive or are looking for a way to creatively self-heal.

Keywords: Creative healing, shamanism, psychedelia, holistic creativity, creative problem solving, Thinking Skills Model, altered states of consciousness, affective thinking skills.

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I dedicate this paper to my faithful editors and biggest fans – Mom and GiGi. I honor your strength and have found resolve in it. Your wisdom, kindness and love in this endeavor is greatly appreciated. You are a part of this as much as myself. And, to my nephew Declan, remember to always sing your soul song as you forge new paths.
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Section One: Background of the Project

Altered States of Consciousness & The Creative Individual: Breaking the Affective Thinking Skills Paradigm

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi is quoted as saying, “Creativity is any act, idea, or product that changes an existing domain or that transforms an existing domain into a new one” (1996, p. 28). I propose that delving more deeply into the affective side of creative thinking, though a bit less mainstream, could prove to be a highly effective pathway toward transforming the current paradigm and oneself. This is what has occurred for me.

Description

The purpose of this project is to harmonize the connection between the cognitive side of creativity and the affective side in order to further develop a groundbreaking, truly holistic creative problem-solving model. In order to do so, I sought to enhance my effectiveness as creative leader through evolving myself to a higher level of mindfulness and by fostering the necessary domain skills. Hence, what I needed to do first was break my own paradigm.

I decided to immerse myself in creativity and spirituality in order to achieve my dual goals. To do that, I traveled twice in 2012 to enrich my holistic skills and knowledge base. I first went to Boulder, Colorado, for the Foundation of Shamanic Studies: The Way of the Shaman workshop. It is the introductory course in Core Shamanism as researched by Michael Harner. Next, I ventured to Vernonia, Oregon to attend The Journey, the first conference specifically geared toward the combination of creativity and spirituality-based endeavors.
In all, I attended a dozen workshops geared toward personal growth and enlightenment. I cannot credit these experiences enough for the value they have added to my education, as well as the expansion of both my intellect and my soul. As a result, I have a more solid foundation for an introductory workshop, tentatively entitled *Creative Healing*. In addition, it has also given me the confidence necessary to present my research this December 2012 at *The Journey II*, and to submit a workshop proposal to *Mindcamp* 2012, among others.

**Rationale for Selection**

More than 20 years ago I began questioning my heart’s desire and life’s purpose – to live authentically. My path has most definitely involved expanding my horizons by using imaginative thinking. According to Osborn (1953), “As to truly creative imagination, its functions are mainly twofold. One is to hunt, the other to change what it found” (p. 115). In effect, I have been reinventing myself and forging new paths toward my growth by using a wide-range of self-improvement modalities, including but not limited to: guided meditation, binaural beats, Network Spinal Analysis (NSA), Reiki, energetic healing, shamanism, yoga, Pilates, Lomi-Lomi and mediumship.

Just months before I began my master’s program, I spent several weeks living in Hawaii. I felt a calling from my inner self to island hop and my travels took me from Oahu to Pahoa, on the Big Island. This required a huge tolerance for risk, a skill that involves “not allowing yourself to be shaken or unnerved by the possibility of failure or setbacks” (Puccio, Mance & Murdock, 2011, p 222). I followed my intuition and it led me straight to a Hawaiian shaman. During my ten days in the papaya-laden jungle, we
worked together in releasing the dis-harmony from some of my past traumas, he using Lomi-Lomi and NSA, and I setting intentions and visualizing myself well. It was beyond transformational. I learned that I, too, had the gift to heal not only myself but to lead others in their own healing process.

This successful breakthrough has spawned in me both a more serious mindset and inquisitive determination to integrate alternative forms of mind, body, and spirit based healing practices with the more traditional creative problem solving models. With my hypothesis in mind, I dove right in and created two independent studies that together synergized the inward-looking practices, often called affective, with those referred to as cognitive, an outward-looking approach. “Through the inward-looking processes, we are better able to sense problems or challenges – to become more aware of our lives; the outward-looking processes that lend assistance in coping with these problems or challenges” (Parnes, 1992, p. 144).

During the first, Creative Healing I, I designed an exercise routine for myself that blends mind, body and spirit practices into a singular session. Each session ended with a creative product, for example, journaling, mandala making, vision boards, even sewing and so on. In all, I completed in this phase a total of 42 hours. I performed this routine three times a week, an hour at each session.

The following semester, I developed Creative Healing II. In this self-designed course I focused on the cognitive side of my concept by researching journals in the field of medicine, for instance those relating to, but not limited to neurophysiology, neuropsychology, and holistic nursing, and the like. Along with this type of research, I also looked to the standard creativity journals to support my position that the effects of
using mind, body and spirit connections could make it possible to fulfill one’s creative potential. I had always suspected the connection to be valid and at the end of the two fruitful semesters, I came to this conclusion (Calanan, 2011):

“My personal research suggests a strong correlation between mind-body-spirit and creativity, in both the affective and cognitive arenas. When I was well enough to perform at my optimum levels physically, I was happy, healthy and creatively fluent. My ill health presented a direct correlation with the lack of my creative output and overall well-being. I found that professionals in the medical and spiritual fields have also come to the same conclusion in exploring the nexus between creativity and healing.”

**What this Project Adds to Creativity**

The creative arts and alternative healing practices are two distinct trends that have been growing exponentially over the past few years. Bookstores are flooded with self-help books offering programs which employ traditional creative arts, such as writing, painting, music and the like for the use of art therapy. There are also those which specialize primarily in the healing arts, for example yoga, energetic healing, shamanism and Reiki, in order to activate a person’s healing powers from within. In *Using the Creative Arts in Therapy* (1984), author Bernie Warren states, “The concept of creative therapy is a relatively new one. It is based on the timeless and ever changing relationship between culture, artistic activity and social development” (p. 3).

Almost 20 years later, there are still but a few texts which have truly imparted the fundamentals of creativity and the reasoning behind the benefit of applying them to these
alternative healing practices. The field of creativity could benefit by taking a step back into some of the seminal research in the theoretical family of psychedelia. I have found that altered states of consciousness occur when applying and truly looking more deeply at this ultimate affective thinking skill. This project is my attempt in leading the way.

**Section Two: Pertinent Literature**

Creative healing relies heavily on the meta-cognitive skill of intuition, something we all possess according to Dorfman, Shames, & Kihlstrom (1996, p. 7). It involves consciously using *all* our senses in a preconscious way. Using mind, body and spirit as one is crucial. An early researcher in the psychedelia family of creativity, John Gowan posits in *Trance, Art, and Creativity*, that the preconscious mind is integral to the creative process, and that “…creativity represents an intuitive relationship between the conscious ego and the collective preconscious which not only conduces to mental health, but is very desirable for psychedelic progress” (1975, p. 278).

**Psychedelia: The Ultimate Affective Thinking Skill**

For the purpose of this project and paper, the term psychedelia refers to non-drug induced states of altered conscious such as lucid dreaming or out-of-body experiences, to purpose driven activities, for example, mediumship and Transcendental Meditation. Gowan (1975) determined that psychedelia -- in other words altered states of consciousness - follows creativity as a developmental stage in the growth of the creative individual. He termed it as the *supraconscious*.

Maslow (1965) said this about self-actualization: “First of all, self-actualization means experiencing fully, vividly, selflessly, with full concentration and total absorption” (p. 111). Gowan’s work took Maslow’s statement to the next level, and it was such a
new and vital of information at the time that some even referred to it as super self-actualization (Groth, 1975, p. 273). The psychedelic stage and its encompassing psychic powers were thought to be valuable, perhaps even essential, to the creative development of an individual. Even today, Gowan’s work is thought to be the “5th P” by some (Fox, 2012, personal communication). Gowan assisted in laying the groundwork for consequential researchers of this supraconscious, however for the past 30 years his work seems to have unfortunately fallen off of the radar. That is until now.

As I look at the Thinking Skills Model as depicted by Figure 1, it denotes the affective thinking skills as, sensing gaps, playfulness, avoiding premature closure, sensitivity to the environment, and tolerance for risk.

Figure 1. Integrated CPS Creative Problem Solving Thinking Skills Model with the cognitive and affective skills. Adaptation made by Francisco & Burnett (2008) from Puccio, Mance & Murdock (2011).
As defined by Treffinger, Isaksen & Firestien (1992) “Psychedelic approaches to creativity emphasize the importance of expanding the awareness or consciousness of the mind, helping the person to be more creative by opening vast new horizons of untapped resources and experiences” (p. 93). When considering the affective skills as outlined by Puccio, et al (2011) in Table 1, and that of Francisco, et al (Fig. 1), the psychedelic approach to problem solving amplifies these affective thinking skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Assessing the Situation (executive step)</th>
<th>Exploring the Vision</th>
<th>Formulating Challenges</th>
<th>Exploring Ideas</th>
<th>Formulating Solutions</th>
<th>Exploring Acceptance</th>
<th>Formulating a Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To describe and identify relevant data and to determine next process step</td>
<td>To develop a vision of a desired outcome</td>
<td>To identify the gaps that must be closed to achieve the desired outcome</td>
<td>To generate novel ideas that address important challenges</td>
<td>To move from ideas to solutions</td>
<td>To increase the likelihood of success</td>
<td>To develop an implementation plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1. Key affective thinking skills. Adapted from Puccio, Mance & Murdock (2011).**

**The Shaman: The Original Creative Leader**

Between working with a Hawaiian shaman, reading the *Urban Shaman* and attending *The Way of the Shaman*, I quickly realized the similarities between the shaman and the creative leader. The word *shaman* “one who sees better in the dark” originates from Tungusian tribes, as heard and recorded by Russian explorers (Laufer, 1917). Yet, *Merriam-Webster’s* describes a shaman as such: “1. a priest or priestess who uses magic for the purpose of curing the sick, divining the hidden and controlling events.” Unaware
of the history and basics of shamanism this definition may conjure an image of a witch or warlock hovering over a boiling cauldron all the while scheming. However, a shaman’s true intention is to alleviate pain and suffering by working with compassionate spirits. This gentle, yet powerful force of nature does so by using a variety of holistic and creative approaches.

As the oldest form of spiritual practice, every culture has had some form of a shamanic healer for some 30,000 years, and counting (Harner, 2012). The shaman is a facilitator who knows how to walk in more than one world. He or she must be well grounded in this reality in order to journey to others. It is critical to be able to remain in both states of consciousness that is, staying in the present moment while traveling at the same time to upper or lower worlds. There are three types of reality for the shaman. First is the reality in which we live, in the present moment. The other two are the upper and lower worlds. In lower worlds, the shaman travels to acquire messages from an animal spirit. These messages are generally regarding solutions to a problem. Venturing to the upper world is used for healings, perhaps soul retrievals from a spirit guide.

A basic tenet of core shamanism is that every individual has a right and a responsibility to restore his or her own authority and autonomy and the shaman’s role is to facilitate the transformation (Harner, 2012). True creative leaders offer an enormous and valuable asset in the journey toward fulfilling one’s potentiality and, to me the shaman is the epitome of this leadership concept. In short, the shaman acts as a psychic, releaser of blocks, a manifestor, shape changer, peacemaker, teacher and adventurer. He or she must be able to embrace wholeheartedly a tolerance for complexity, a tolerance for ambiguity and have openness to novelty in order achieve his or her life’s mission.
Section Three: Method

Humanistic psychology and the psychedelia theoretical family of creativity are both strong interests of mine. During the course of my studies I have been attempting to synthesize the two into my creativity education – input as well as output. I was told by Mike Fox at the beginning of this semester that this class was “all about doing.” So, I did. I was also told to “tell your story.” So, I am.

Within the span of six weeks in 2012, I travelled to two different states and attended a dozen workshops that relate to these esoteric concepts. I learned a wide variety of new and useful skills and gained an abundance of wisdom relating to my chosen field of endeavor.

The Way of the Shaman

In this course, I learned core shamanism techniques which do not belong to one particular culture, but through nearly 30 years of Michael Harner’s research have come to be the common thread among a multitude of cultures (Harner, 2012). A shaman is always experimenting. Yes, shamans innovate. They work with myth, dreamtime and the spirit world, and see with their heart to do so. In this workshop, we collaborated with the spirits of the upper and lower worlds by going on journeys. A journey can last as short as fifteen minutes to hours, even days in some cases.

I completed approximately six journeys, the longest lasting one half-hour. A more detailed list of the shamanic healing techniques that I am now able to perform is provided in Appendix A: The Way of the Shaman. The way I can enter both the upper and lower worlds is through visualization which leads to an altered state of consciousness. So, how did I achieve this altered state? Drumming. The purpose of
drumming in rituals is to enable the practitioner to vibrate to a higher state of consciousness. Here, he or she can appeal to the powerful, yet benevolent spirits that surround each of us. Surprisingly, it takes only nine seconds, with three to seven beats per second to automatically raise the brain’s consciousness (Harner, 2012).

My main challenge during the majority of my journeys was this: “How to know what my career looks like after graduation?” Both myself and my workshop partner came back with messages that validated one another. A fascinating fact is that my partner had no prior knowledge of my scholastic endeavors. An even more profound experience occurred when I actually met a spirit guide. She helped me to heal myself from the residual effects of a traumatic and life-threatening experience.

So, how do I know I actually made it to these other worlds? It is a whole-being experience that is difficult to describe. Each person has different physiological changes which occur when journeying. For myself, my body tingles, my eyes flutter and my heart begins to race. The key principle to remember is that when you aren’t judging, you know that it is an authentic experience.

**The Journey: My Paradigm-Breaking Experience**

Not be confused with shamanic journeying, *The Journey* is a conference and retreat “...for those already using or now seeking the awareness, principles, practices, tools…and the AHAs, from Creativity and Spirituality, in the journey of their life and their life’s work” (2012, www.journeycreatively.com). It was one of the most incredible experiences of my entire life. “It is quite natural that the most clearly creative aspects of the climate carry the power in regard to change processes” (Ekvall, 1999, p. 412). The environment was the perfect creative climate for a colossal change to follow. All in all, I
attended eleven workshops as described in further detail in Appendix B: The Journey. A brief listing is shown below in Figure 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Journey: Workshops Attended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awakened Imagination with Keith Allen Kay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create Powerful Relationships and See Your Dreams Unfold with Kathy Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shamanic Sound Journey with Bob White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friday</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Energy Painting Journey with Nikki Shannon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming a Sacred Athlete – Align, Balance and Explore with Michele Beucler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflexology Release with Kimmer Goldblatt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Saturday</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine Beloved with Kimberely Arana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mapping Your Journey 1D – 3D with Bill Olsen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Artist Within Journaling with Whitney Ferre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving Beyond Words: A Whole Self Approach to the Creative Journey with Tamara Christensen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sunday</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Big Beautiful Bagua with Nikki Shannon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We are larger than we ever imagined – it is infinite. When life transforms, it’s magical – awakening your imagination” (Kay, personal communication, April 19, 2012).

This quote is from the first workshop I attended, Awakened Imagination, with Keith Allen Kay and it truly set the tone for the entire week. Becoming aware of our own energy as well as that of the surrounding energies of things and people is beneficial when tapping into one’s imagination. In order to pique our imaginations and heighten the energy field we used electromagnetism, meditation, play through body movement,
exchanged energy between partners using magnets and pendulums, and also viewed participant’s fractal energy mandalas.

*Create Powerful Relationships and See Your Dreams Unfold*, with Kathy Brown, built upon the topic of energy even more (see fig 2). Here she, too, presented on the topic of energy. Brown’s theory is that there are five energies we must work with and create harmony among in order for harmony to occur outwardly. These energies are:

1) Spiritual – Inspiration and imagination.
2) Intellectual – Facts and strategy
3) Physical – Experiential and implementation
4) Psychological – Relationship and story
5) Emotional – Passion and expression

We were led via different styles of music and dance to *feel* what these energies are like and how we relate to each of them. Just as in FourSight one has a preference to approaching creative problem solving, so too does Brown’s SIPPE team. After much dancing, we were led through a journaling exercise that touched on each of the SIPPE styles. We ended the session with putting our dreams into a plan of action.

The end of the evening brought a powerful *Shamanic Sound Journey* facilitated by Bob White and with it, a much needed release of stuck emotions. This particular issue was first dealt with on the shamanic journey I traveled during the *Way of the Shaman* workshop, which I believe allowed my inner self to be open to the transformations that were lying ahead.

Although I have been a fashion and costume designer and believed to be highly creative, the thought of painting has always intimidated me. Nikki Shannon’s *Energy Painting* workshop changed my thinking and behavior regarding that. She explains that “…a painting which is created with intention continuously emanates that specific energy
into the space where it is displayed” (Shannon, personal communication, April 20, 2012). My intention, the crucial element in energy painting, was surrounding this project and my concept of creative healing. In total, I left the conference with four paintings and one of the first things I did upon arriving home was purchase a slew of painting supplies. While working on this paper, I have been using her methods to assist me in breaking through times of *writer’s block*.

I have also been concentrating to improve my agility and strength via body movement. The *Sacred Athlete* workshop with Michele Beucler was beyond rewarding. Not only did I gain confidence in my ability to push past physical limitations, the focus of using chakras during the workout released another stuck energy that had been plaguing me for nearly 30 years. This workshop certainly broke barriers in my consciousness regarding my physical body and continues to do so.

Another area that has been a troubling issue for me is physical touch. Certain traumas had left me with distrust and a wall that I established with regard to touching others, even family at times. Even before said traumas, I would *never* touch anyone’s feet. However, I was able to move past this aversion and attend *Reflexology Release* with Kimmer Goldblatt. I would say this is mainly due to the friendships I was creating and the release of negative energy that had been occurring since the first workshop. I enjoyed this new skill so much that the night I returned, even after not having slept in over 24 hours, I gave my mother a shamanic healing that *included* reflexology. She said, “I know something good must have happened for you to touch my feet!” She was right.

One of the biggest stretches for me was attending the *Divine Beloved* workshop with Kimberely Arana. Having to rely upon myself due to family dynamics as I grew up,
I have never thought that combing my inner masculine and feminine energies were important, until the day of Arana’s class. In this session we traveled to meet our opposite Divine Beloved, and it was an inspirational and welcoming experience. Again, I was able to heal the past trauma that has been impeding my joy and happiness in the area of personal relationships and romance.

Bill Olsen’s *Mapping Your Journey 1D – 3D* is exactly what I needed. His approach takes the dreaded to-do list to the next level and expands it into a truly effective visual experience, one that will lead me to success. He suggests you must look only where you are at now and then at your vision. From here, you can identify and compile those things which are obstacles or barriers on your path. He calls barriers “Critical Success Factors (CSF) --What absolutely MUST occur in order to be successful” (Olsen, personal communication, April 21, 2012). These obstacles are grouped by similarities as in highlighting, and you look for ways around them. Just as you would look at the options for crossing a river, for example, you will find options for overcoming your barrier. You then create a map for yourself that represents all these parts. It can look like an actual map or another metaphor of your choosing. For example, Bill’s map is the Journey logo which integrates the infinity symbol with a lotus, as well as the seven chakras. My personal map is actually a tree. The roots represent where I am now, the top of the tree and leaves is my vision – a Creative Healing program, and the trunk is where my options for overcoming obstacles lie. Now, I am ready to sprout!

These experiences I have shared are merely a small a portion of what occurred for me and for the entire group over the course of a few days. Halfway into my Journey, the mind and soul-expanding occurrences began to accelerate so fast that I could not keep up
with my journaling, and I am still processing the effects of such a massive and exciting experience of super self-actualization.

In between all of these engaging scheduled events, we interacted with one another more casually, but equally awe-inspiringly. With one-on-one conversations to bringing in the new moon and setting intentions into the sky on lanterns, I was in a constant, non-drug induced altered state of consciousness. I was surrounded by like minds and souls. The connections made within myself and with the others have continued after we departed one another. Messages in the form of songs on the radio, metaphors in nature and man-made items, and other signage have validated the synchronicity that emerged from integrating my body, mind and spirit.

**Section Four: Outcomes**

At the core of creative healing are three major elements: mind, body and spirit. The goal is to achieve an optimum state of wellness by integrating the healing arts, art therapy techniques and the foundational theories of creative thinking, in order to produce harmony within this trio. As stated previously, the focus here is on the affective side, which in this case I refer to as the spirit portion of my proposed model.

When healing occurs in body and mind, the possibilities of becoming more creative greatly increase, allowing one to function at peak performance. This symbiotic and all-inclusive approach could surely be beneficial to someone who is seeking to become more creatively productive and/or is looking to creatively self-heal. Moreover, by embracing these concepts into a singular, complimentary process, one can then fully
understand one’s own innate creative ability and its relationship to the mind-body-spirit connection, as I have.

**Heal Thyself**

One thing about my adventure in the Hawaiian jungle and subsequent knowledge of Huna that really struck a chord in me is that “...while you are healing others you are healing yourself” (King, 1990, p. 16). Every act during all the workshops I attended revealed to me the relevance of this quote. My own process during my entire time enrolled in my master’s program has included balancing the desire to serve others by helping them heal, while maintaining my own health and growth.

The investigation of the supra conscious and its relationship to creativity is immensely intriguing and very promising in enlightenment. “Studies show that creativity and spirituality can heal by changing a person’s physiology and attitude from one of stress to one of deep relaxation” (Rockwood-Lane, 2005, p. 122). I can testify from personal experience whether facilitated by myself or by others that indeed, creativity and spirituality can promote healing, on both a physical and spiritual level. Each program from both *The Way of the Shaman* and *The Journey* precipitated an inner shift of consciousness that allowed for influx of change.

Due to the enormous acceleration in my healing and growth, I am now better able to disseminate my own positive energy onto others via healing affirmations, energetic and shamanic healing, and to the best of my ability, just being able to view others as sources of energy and not as ego. This is not an overnight change, but instead more like the centrifugal force you feel after climbing up a steep hill on a bike and then being able to coast three to four times your distance. As I further develop a system of delivering
creativity education turning to altered states of consciousness, it in turn enables me to continue to grow and move forward through life’s ever-changing currents.

**The Power of the Collective Conscious**

I had a strong feeling of arriving back home after a really long and strenuous trip when I encountered this particular group of people at *The Journey*, all of whom were on the same wavelength. I have joked about it, but am serious when I say, “I have never before been around a group of this many people and absolutely liked each person.” Not only did I like them, I was completely engaged. I did not find myself thinking of my to-do list or some other distracting thought due to boredom. Each individual, not just the presenters, was genuine in the quest to better themselves in order to transmit positive energy toward others. And each of them had his or her unique way of doing so.

There has been a recent hot debate with regard to brainstorming on its effectiveness in problem solving. I beg you to challenge the perspective of one author, Jonah Lehar, who emphatically states in his recent article in *The New Yorker* (2012) entitled *Groupthink: The Brainstorming Myth*: “But there is a problem with brainstorming. It doesn’t work.” If you think about brainstorming in the *affective* sense via meditation, intention setting and the like, you will find some serious shifts in consciousness occurring. Aside from offering a nurturing physical and emotional environment, being part of a group while exploring altered states of consciousness give rise to a new way to look at the concept of *brainstorming*. The time spent around my fellow *journeymen* and being nourished by their immense creative spirits and genuine hearts has certainly been the amplification of all the creative problem-solving tools I have been developing for my own healing.
The Creative Healing Model

The path to self-actualization – the need for personal growth and expansion (Maslow, 1943), is not always easy, as obstacles can prove difficult when trying to find one’s way. The shaman seeks to heal this dis-harmony; therefore it would seem that the way of the shaman can open the door to authentic achievement. This in mind, many of the ideas I present herein are based on esoteric conceptions that are meant to expand one’s perspective beyond what may he or she may deem possible, while being combined with established creative thinking frameworks in an effort to keep them tethered to valid sources of research.

![Creative Healing Model](image)

In this master’s project, I aimed to form a basic model and method of creative healing based on this concept. Now that I have been firmly rooted in both cognitive and affective thinking experiences, I can better see the massive benefit that could happen if the two were to marry. The basic model is represented in Figure 3. At the core of the model is the body. I propose to use the body as a way to bring clarity to the mind, as paying attention
to what is happening within and around one’s body can act as the first step to mindfulness. As one becomes centered and mindful, he or she can move outward to the spirit aspect into altered states of consciousness.

Just as the Thinking Skills Model has a dynamic balance, so too, does Creative Healing. The act of consciously breathing in and out is both the balance and centering factor and is used throughout. I will be looking to other CPS models to fuse with my own. For example, I wish to integrate FourSight into this method and future development efforts will go into blending its four preferences and accompanying steps and tools with those I am currently designing.

Based on my Creative Healing model, workshop participants will be guided through a series of meditation, low-impact body movement and art journaling as a form of creative problem solving. As a shaman who merely acts a conduit for change, I wish to use this model as a guide for self-healing, and allow it to become a part of his or her process in tackling goals, wishes or challenges, or anything else they may have thought to be out-of-reach or even impossible.

Section Five: Food for Creative Thought

As I continue my exploration into the concept of Creative Healing, I harken back to Sidney Parnes (1992) when he expresses an imagined future for the beliefs I am presenting here with this notion (p 152):

“As third generation processes mature, I contemplate a fourth generation of deliberate creativity development processes by the turn of the century. My vision of it is the blending of the third
generation (spontaneous imagery supported with in the solid CPS structure) applied together with self-healing technology toward the goal of high-level wellness – not merely physical wellness, but psychological, sociological political, and spiritual wellness as well – moving toward what Maslow meant by the self-actualizing person."

We are now a dozen years into the turn of the century of which Parnes speaks. I believe the time is now ripe to integrate the aspects of using intuition, the supra conscious and even parapsychology to the weighty cognitive methods for creative problem solving. It seems to have initially sparked much interest, but fell by the wayside over time. That and the unfortunate black eye it received during the 1960’s when the world was introduced to LSD and Psilocybin via Timothy Leary.

Gowan was an opponent of drug-induced psychedelia and relied on the powers of the mind to enter altered states of consciousness. “The great genius of Gowan was that he had the ability, desire, and fortitude to go beyond the structured mindset of everyday life” (Parnes, 1992, p. 217). Going forth with the vision that Sidney Parnes so deeply anticipated, not only for the field of creativity, but for each an individual who is inspired and motivated for super self-actualization has infinite value.

Section Six: Wrap-Up

My interest in this topic is driven by my desire to self-heal using creativity. I was able to push past both emotional and physical boundaries and experience sheer bliss under complete and utter trust in those around me, and myself. I am still feeling the ripple effect of the energy vibration that occurred weeks ago. Many of my discoveries were
not merely in research, but in \textit{living} the concept of balancing mind, body and spirit. They reflect a similar proclamation I made when applying to the ICSC in January 2010: “I have overcome these obstacles myself and know that rebuilding self-esteem through creativity can be a major force in altering the course of an individual’s future.” Each one of us is born with a purpose, and it is when we are an active seeker in unearthing what that purpose is, that we are more likely to fulfill our potential.

I believe that by introducing the foundations of creativity, an essential life skill to the alternative medicine and art therapy fields, \textit{and} by accentuating the infinite possibilities of the affective skills to the more cognitive schools of thought, one can truly begin to understand the mind-body-spirit connection. And this symbiotic approach would benefit those seeking to become more creatively productive or looking for a way to creatively self-heal. A workshop of this nature will certainly serve as a springboard to further research and hopefully a complete personal growth program. One can be enriched with a deeper sense of self and the confidence to move forward in their lives with autonomy and authority.

Aside from the wonderful memories and life-changing transformation that have positively affected me inwardly, I am better able to express my outward vision of creative healing as creative problem solving model, and can begin to design an engaging and effectual workshop. My experiences act as the bridge that I needed to cross from the mostly cognitive to the wildly affective.

The highlight of my journey was shedding years of unwanted Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms and a cloak of sadness that has weighed me down for years. The sheer delight of literally rolling down a steep, grassy hill physically assisted me in
letting go of said layers. It was an exercise in rekindling the freedom of feeling like a child again; something that I am almost certain would not have happened had I not attended *The Journey*.

My transformation was not only seen and felt by myself, but to those around me. Appendix C: Testimonial, is an acknowledgement from one of the founders of *The Journey* and I find it inspiring and motivational. I liken this semester to that of a shaman journeying to a lower or upper world. He or she must have a familiar starting point, be able break through known and unknown barriers and return back from whence they came. That is what this master’s project has been for me.
References


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Appendix A: The Way of the Shaman

This list represents the shamanic healing skills acquired at *The Way of the Shaman* workshop, March 31 – April 1. In all, 16 hours of training were acquired. The introductory workshop in the *Foundation of Shamanic Studies* core shamanism training.

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**Acquired Shamanic Healing Skills**

- Object divination for self.
- Object divination for a partner.
- Lower world journey for own animal spirit.
- Lower world journey for a partner.
- Upper world journey for self.
- Upper world journey for partner.
Appendix B: The Journey

The following list denotes descriptions of the workshops that I attended while on The Journey, the first conference specifically geared toward combining creativity and spirituality. During April 19 – 23, I attended 11 workshops totaling approximately 26 hours, as well as one-on-one learning that total approximately 12 hours.

Thursday

unted Imagination with Keith Allen Kay

Our imagination is the gateway to a new reality. When unlocked, this powerful tool can open our potential for manifesting the most fulfilling of lives. Each one of us has within us the power to create: passionate love, intimate, relationships, abundant overflow and exceeding joy. The Power of Make Believe – (Thursday), here we will play with the rules of what is real and what is not. Through fun games and creative exercises, we will challenge old patterns and create some new ones.

Create Powerful Relationships and See Your Dreams Unfold with Kathy Brown

How would you like to creative a deeper connection with others? Learn how to create synchronicity with anyone you meet as well as someone with whom you already have a relationship. I will share with you five steps that will allow you to forge deeper connections with each other. These tools will support the continual evolution of your personal and business life. Attaining and sharing this knowledge will guide you toward becoming a powerful leader in your world.

Shamanic Sound Journey with Bob White

Bob will join us Thursday for an evening of transformation and celebration. He will lead a Shamanic Journey calling in the sacred healing energies. Bob uses a variety of sacred instruments from crystal to Tibetan bowls to rattles, drums and his voice creating a vibrational sound meditation to facilitate the journey.

Friday

The Energy Painting Journey with Nikki Shannon

Nikki will introduce you to the potential within the creative painting process to create and store specific energy with intention, imagery, symbols, color, etc. Each layer in the painting will add energy to the “energy painting”.

**Becoming a Sacred Athlete – Align, Balance and Explore** with Michele Beucler

Being a sacred athlete is about being dedicated to fully living in your body and being guided by the sensations of joy and pleasure. Becoming a sacred athlete is a journey of discovering and exploring your creative and spiritual potential through movement. Energetic, physical, or emotional blocks within the body can limit or inhibit exploration. In this 2-hour experience, you will learn how to align and strengthen the seven energy centers (chakras), balance polarities in your body, and explore possibilities by understanding the body’s potential and building awareness of your movement tendencies.

**Reflexology Release** with Kimmer Goldblatt

This is a fun and relaxing workshop for couples or friends! Kimmer will provide a quick overview of how reflexology sends messages like road maps to the whole body. Then you will pair up and learn how to be comfortable while working on feet and how to relax and focus on the body parts that are being treated to get the full benefit. The mind, body spirit connection will be highlighted and inspired. When you take this new reflexology insight home, you will be very popular!

**Saturday**

**Divine Beloved** with Kimberely Arana

Whether still searching or in a relationship, we often find ourselves struggling and unfulfilled, longing for True Love. This search is an ancient quest depicted throughout time in the romantic myth and lore of every culture. There is a reason for this: such tales are often maps, guiding us towards the powerful transformation that comes from the sacred marriage within of the masculine and feminine. This holy union speaks to the modern evolution of our consciousness and is needed more today than ever before. Join us as we explore the mayhem that comes from ignoring our inner God or Goddess and projecting them onto others…or the magic that comes into our life and relationships when we acknowledge and honor them instead. Stop the searching: your True Love, the Divine Beloved, is waiting for you deep within. Come prepared to engage and participate! There will be active audience participation and a guided meditation before we dive into the creative experience of manifesting our Divine Beloved.
Mapping Your Journey 1D – 3D with Bill Olsen

Following a Strategic Planning session, a client gets a report with layers of spreadsheets and action steps, but can they “see” the way ahead? At a personal development retreat, a seeker dreams of success, capturing their thinking in a journal, but can they “see” the route ahead? If they can’t see it, will they implement it? What helps each is a map and the tools to navigate. The mind can more readily navigate if it “sees” the map. This hands-on workshop will clarify the planning process create your personal map.

The Artist Within Journaling with Whitney Ferre

Your “Artist Within” is perfectly aligned with your Higher Self. It is a part of your being that can detach from your “reality and CREATE newness.” It is the part of you that is connected to the infinite and has access to an unlimited ocean of awareness and potentiality. In this workshop, Whitney share her (r)evolutionary approach to personal empowerment and spiritual growth. Watercolors, pastels, shapes, and texture become a portal to your infinite mind, the infinite, and a world full of potential. NO art experience necessary – in fact, the less the better!

Moving Beyond Words: A Whole Self Approach to the Creative Journey with Tamara Christensen

Bring two things to this workshop: Your discomfort (a challenge, problem, issue) and your whole Self. Join me on the journey from existing to preferred, from real to ideal, from problem to solution, from practice to perfect. Walk through discomfort along a guided tour of seven chakras. Each stop on the journey will give you pause to reflect through a different colored chakra lens. Capture responses to each creative inquiry in words and color and weave the perfect outcome into a prism of possibility. This quest is designed to transform your whole Self on the path from where you are to where you truly want to be. It requires your right brain, left-brain, mental, physical, spiritual, imaginative, logical, visual, auditory, olfactory, oral, tactile, kinesthetic, thinking, feeling, moving, stretching, shining Self. All you have to do is bring it. You’ll walk away with new thinking about past discomfort and new lenses for moving through your creative journey.

Sunday

Your Big Beautiful Bagua with Nikki Shannon

What if the energetic environment of your home is short-circuiting your attempts at healing mind, body and spirit? Nikki walks you through the process of becoming aware of the energy flow in your home by applying the basics of Feng Shui. You’ll leave the workshop with a new understanding of your home’s role in your wellness. Action items to improve the energy flow, and nine energy powerhouse paintings created by you, to shift your home into a positive life-force generator!
Appendix C: Testimonial

The following is a testimonial from the co-host and co-creator of *The Journey*, the first conference specifically geared toward combining creativity and spirituality that occurred during April 18 – 23, 2012.

“Dana's Aha moments gave me Aha moments! Like many of us, we go through life craving everything from knowledge to happiness. It's cool when they both strike simultaneously. I was facilitating the Journey's map-making, to teach the map techniques while attempting to map the Journey itself. Dana was my only participant that session. But it transformed both of us, and it transformed each of our respective thinking about our own projects. Together, we learned, brainstormed and contributed to each other's project, applying the map theme. Hers became a tree of growth, rooted below and reaching and blooming above. Mine became layers of infinity with chakra-based Journeys, interwoven onto the Journey's logo. Yowzah! As the retreat progressed, we would ask each other about each other's projects. Dana was as excited and motivated about my map as I was about hers. Her ideas, her project and her map accelerated, and with time, her outcomes and results will accelerate as well. Seeing her enthusiasm and transformation in real-time, I've already invited her to present the accelerated results of her project at our next retreat, Journey II Consciousness.”

~ Bill Olsen, Olsen Innovations, Inc & co-host of *The Journey*
Appendix D: Bibliography of Recommended Reading

In addition to the works cited, the subsequent list has arisen from the research leading up to this project and the concept of Creative Healing.


