

Relational Spirituality Training



The transformation of hidden narcissism in self (& other) realization

Dear Prospector,

We are delighted that you are engaged in making an *informed decision* to join our meeting and learn its approach to psycho-spiritual transformation. We suggest you take some time to absorb the following information about the orientation and motivation of our group's life before engaging in our work. This is because almost everyone will go through some sort of transformative or developmental 'moment'—and this is not always easy to get through. If you genuinely feel you have the right motivation then we'd love to have you join us in our endeavour—when it comes to transformation (great or small) we are an oasis of generosity.

Spirituality

Central to our work is a simple definition of 'spirituality' – as *the reduction of narcissism*. What is narcissism? It is a psychological system of subtle self-enclosure and self-separation; an egoic-cage that closes down the flow of openness and love, and disconnects us from our Presence. It is a closing down on the Other (God, Angel, person, lover, plant, and planet). Love is narcissism's shadow—the ground of what we do is to recognize and let go of our self-centeredness so as to embody the feeling of love ... often trans/personal Love.

Our Orientation

At its most basic level, our work is a radical relational inquiry into individual and group Presence (respectively: *charisma & sheikina*) and, therefore, whether we are 'Open' or 'Closed'. When we are genuinely *open* there is a felt sense of mutual care and communion; we flourish; we are open to our bodies' pleasurable élan'; we are open to our deep inner wisdom and wellness, spontaneity and creativity; we are open to our companions; and we are open to the immanent prompts from nature and All-Being/s. Nothing feels better, more natural, organic or true, than simple Openness.

When we are *closed* we retreat from these inner and outer riches and we move toward self-enclosure with subtle protecting and controlling behaviours - these signal our loss and premature foreclosure of relationality, authentic presence and Love. How do we change these hidden egoic habits and patterns - that we may feel more love, joy and empowered presence?

The answer is in our orientation, which must be, can only be; *ego-transformation* in the service of Spirit. This is to deepen our personal and group wellness – we call this being and becoming *charismatic* or realizing one’s Perfect Nature - we de-repress and allow an easy flow of life/love energies toward the Other. At the higher stages of transpersonal growth we are oriented toward meeting our own individual Angel and we inquire collaboratively into this Reality... which speaks to us in dreams, rituals, signs, imagery and presence.

Our Motivation

There are few spiritual universals - but one area where all of the great spiritual and transformational traditions converge is that something has to be done to transform the ego; something has to be done to transform our narrow self-centeredness—or what is now called *narcissism*. Our motivation in joining the group is to transform, change, grow and get ‘out beyond the breakers’ of our compulsive fear, rage, self-pity, possession, resentment, jealousy and our preoccupation with *comparative power and status* and the competition it breeds. Here is another spiritual universal: ‘change’ (deconstruction of the cognized self) can be painful and frightening even when invited. It almost always arrives unexpectedly and when it does, it is often on the edge of old wounds and traumatic memories – the archaic wounds that shaped our compulsive-self. Paradoxically , the safer the group becomes, the more likely are these unsafe memories from childhood going to seek the surface – they can only come to the surface through the mechanism of psychological projection ... which means the group will be perceived as unsafe ... wellness occurs when these projections are recollected, and owned by an aware self-creative adult. We celebrate this process of becoming who we are.

The Grist of Relationality Inquiry

Simply put, to transform our narcissism is part of our self-other realization and individuation. Narcissism is self-sufficiency born out of pain and somewhere we foreclosed on relationship – to go it alone. Traditional meditation, satsang, and other practices certainly reduce *some* narcissism, but they also conceal self-centeredness because these religious structures are not *relational* practices and narcissism shows up mostly in what we do in relationship to (not with) Others. So Relational Spirituality Training is a relational and reciprocal, peer practice and it is geared for the participant to gain greater awareness about how they operate on the group/world.

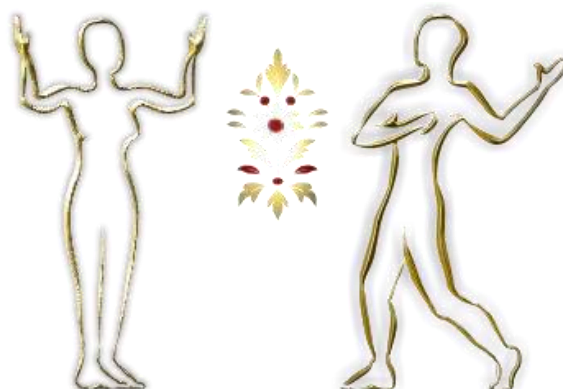
It works like this: The movement from closedness to greater openness is very frightening. Instead of enjoying the relative security of a secretly self-sufficient way of life, we begin to expose our strengths, charisma, and innate magnificence—but we also show our vulnerability and wounding. For us, practiced as we are at self-sufficiency, *collaboration* can feel like a scary, headlong plunge into dependence. Surely I will be overwhelmed, swamped, swallowed, engulfed, and taken over. The transferential relationship kicks in (see The Lahood Model of Relational Inquiry www.relationalspirit.com) – and with it the closed position, I imagine

that if I am not controlling those around me – then they will be controlling me (I am silently at war but I don't really know it).

If I am open to others as distinct others, mutual, receptive, relational—then I am not controlling them. But now I am visible, seen, exposed, and now here is collaboration, cooperation and interdependence which feels to me like absolute helpless dependency. I am so used to running my show (with my hidden-secret individual motivations) in isolation it feels like pooling my precious energies with others will result in everything being taken over by others and ultimately taken away (and somewhere once it probably was). So now there is Terror: fight/flight/f#@k and host of subtle versions of these armoured defences.

One great fear of letting others in is that we project on to others our own longings and yearnings. When we are closed I want so much for myself, I want the whole cosmos, no less and I imagine others want this too. Instead of yearning for mutual relationship, I want to possess, devour and absorb everything I can get my hands on. When I project this craving onto others, it seems as if opening up to their influence would mean I would disappear. There is nothing more terrifying. So I protect myself, I remain at some inaccessible level deep within me, independent and aloof. People can penetrate only so far and no further; they are then turned back by my protective armouring; my dependable cage. In as much as I am closed I *am* my armouring. And make no bones about the truth of this - this is the narcissism we must transform on the way to our charisma, our angel and our beautiful personhood.

So please, be gently forewarned gentle prospector, about the nature and subtle power of the work before you decide to join – if it's not for you then we support you in not attending. If it is, then read the website and especially the essays on relational spirituality and have an meeting with Gregg and co and then come at least half-a-dozen times (consecutively) to settle in. If you can manage your feelings, open to your potentials, and own your stuff (to some degree) then our group will be a vehicle of Great Liberation, Light and Love for you.



Yours sincerely, the co-secretary, on behalf of The Inquiry Group and Dr G. Lahood

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The Centre for Relational Spirituality and Inquiry - Relationalspirit.com