

# Uses and Applications of Psychosynthesis

## Some Ways that Psychosynthesis is Used in the World

The following selection of responses speak for themselves and clearly show how psychosynthesis can be applied successfully in numerous different fields. The list here is not, of course, exhaustive and psychosynthesis can be used by an individual in any situation. Often the most relevant uses are with the person's own process rather than the actual work itself, and in most areas where psychosynthesis is applied some techniques are of more use than others. At the very least, however, by personally applying the principles and practices of psychosynthesis, the individual contributes to the harmony and well-being of the other people with whom they come into contact.

### Social work

“In my job as a residential social worker I use the more direct interventions of psychosynthesis, but have little use for visualization. I feel I am much more aware of my needs, strengths and weaknesses. I can come from a much more aware position in a variety of interpersonal relationships than before.”

“If I am finding a particular client difficult to work with, I sometimes use imagery to understand the process evoked in me by the client. When I can find some way of understanding and dealing with what is happening in me, I can better deal with it in the client. I also quite often use the disidentification, again for myself, to give me more perspective. I find psychosynthesis more helpful in a diagnostic sense than therapeutically, but I find then one has to work with the therapeutic relationship, help the client work through the issues.”

“Psychosynthesis relates to my ideas about the brotherhood of man. Humanity is one family. It is difficult sometimes to relate these ideas to my present work which tends to be with those families in the most difficult circumstances where political and economic factors become more pressing, but I can hold the vision while I work.”

### Medicine

“I keep the egg diagram in mind even if I am not overtly using psychosynthesis. I am aware that the patient in front of me is more than his or her problems. As I work in an NHS psychiatric clinic, I usually do not discuss concepts such as ‘higher self’ with patients and there is no need to unless people asked me questions and want to know more.”

“Growth, healing and transformation are a grace that may follow on the willingness to experience the pain of limitation. Conversely trying to change or avoid the pain prevents growth.”

"I use it every day, by finding the I-Thou in every relationship, it is very hard at times. It allows me to work in a more real, direct and worthwhile way with the dying and grieving. I use the meditative techniques as teaching aids and attempt to mobilise my patients choices. I find that connecting with the patient's transpersonal experience deepens, broadens the relationship I have with them. Subpersonality work is particularly rewarding as patients connect with this idea instantly."

"I have learned through psychosynthesis to care for myself a great deal better than I used to. I have learned that I have needs to, which is quite a discovery for an obsessional, professional carer."

## Business

"I run training courses for local government organisations. These courses are usually involving interpersonal skills, service delivery, supervisory and management skills, and I have found the application of psychosynthesis principles fundamental not only to what I teach, but how I teach it. For example, when teaching the basics of good communication I stress the importance of accepting the other person, even if you reject what they say, think or do; that the essential person exists apart from, and is more important than, their words, thoughts or actions, which are much more ephemeral. In the same spirit I accept and value everybody participating in my courses, even if I feel saddened, angered or frightened by their behaviour and words."

"My work broadened out into training programs on counselling, teamwork, assertiveness, stress and very importantly the training of trainers. Also I work a lot with the "change process" in organisations. It is made me a more resilient person, able to ride the waves more easily. On the other hand, my frustration with the word out there is become more total. If I had to name one thing, it is given me a sense of community with people who can share a common enough language."

"Work is a place we create in order to grow. It is as much a growth point as many one-to-one relationships or crises. Psychosynthesis helps in making it okay to express fear, destructive feelings, conflicts, confusion, inconsistency, doubts, low self-esteem, which are all otherwise unacceptable things to express in the business environment."

## Parenthood

"Being a parent is undoubtedly a full-time optical occupation even if we are doing other work at the same time. Psychosynthesis is with me without my using it - however I did use it during the delivery of my son last year. I had a very long labour of 25 hours. The various stages I use visualisation, disidentification and my will to bring my son into the visible world."

"In my relationship with myself and others, especially my 2 teenage children, I

remember that they are souls and personalities in their own right. I attempt to help them to express themselves even when I don't find it easy."

"Psychosynthesis is a psychology and philosophy of the living, it is fundamental to my life. It helps you deal with the notion of life is a journey, and how the individual and collective are empowered and brought into right relationship is vitally enacted in the family situation."

## Teaching

"As a personal level it empowers me to express and operate more successfully and effectively. At a deeper level, it enables me to stay in touch with who I am. To work more through my intuition and to express and experience my life as a traveller on a path with many other selves, who may really be me. Using psychosynthesis in the classroom, I experimented initially with various techniques and this was successful particularly from the point of view of the children's response and the academic work it stimulated. I worked with feelings, encouraging each child to express them through painting, written work and talking... I also use reflective meditation and visualisation to help develop concentration and observation, getting the class to visualise numbers, shapes, objects and complete pictures. I use reflective meditation in a much less focused version: choosing a quality such as 'cooperation', the class write it down and then they spend 10 mins writing words and phrases that come into their minds. I direct the process by bringing their attention to each of the senses, for example, what colour is cooperation? What sounds music remind you of cooperation?"

"In my polytechnic teaching, psychosynthesis has been a useful tool for taking some of the stress away around my relationships to superiors and colleagues. It has to some extent being helpful in altering the fundamental basis of education, the relationship that we have with students, to one demonstrating less of an imbalance of power. I do not see Psychosynthesis as a science. It is a poetic vision. I make no effort to apply it, in the same way I do not apply Shakespeare, though both inform me of what it is to be a human being more than the psychology in our universities."

"One particular way in which change takes place lies in a greater capacity and willingness to accept nastiness – in other words, in myself and in events this does not mean accepting in the sense of liking or approving but in understanding there is an ultimate purpose and value behind the 'bad' as well as well as the 'good'."

## Counselling

"Psychosynthesis in the last analysis is about life. If it is not lived in life then what is the point of working with it? Psychosynthesis is nothing out of relationship except a series of maps and models. Its great contribution has been through applying it experientially, giving it context and meaning."

“Psychosynthesis is a way of seeing and of remembering the wholeness from which we have separated ourselves. It is a psychology that includes the dark depths of our being as well as the spiritual heights. The spiritual path alone can lack both substance and rootedness, and psychology alone lacks vision and meaning. Psychosynthesis speaks to the inner journey.”

“I use psychosynthesis in my work as a counsellor to help people see the choices that are open to them in their everyday lives and how marginal changes in their behaviour can widen their horizons.”

### Administration

“Psychosynthesis is not applied directly in my paid work, but it is one of a number of approaches that help to make sense of things and give tools for decisions and handling issues.”

“At present I do computer administration work so I do not apply psychosynthesis as a psychotherapist would. However it has given me an awareness of group, team, and individual dynamics and enables me to be more tolerant and understanding and assertive when I need to be. I also have to train people occasionally and have a better intuition about pupil’s learning patterns I would have had before.”

“As a person in my late 50s, I find as I review my life there is a tendency to regret the apparently missed opportunities. Psychosynthesis has helped me see the value in the past I have trodden and also to make full use of my life's experience rather than to devalue what I have been.”

### Art

“In my art workshops I focus on the creative process more than the product. It is engaging with the material world and investing it with the persons imagination and vision. It strengthens the senses other than words and can give a new perspective on life. I handle the materials as well as the structure of the courses through my psychosynthesis spectacles and will talk of harmonising aspects of self and working in contrasting media as different subpersonalities might. I use the guided imagery of journeys, and work with painting through obstacles by feeling the obstacle from different perspectives.”

“As a writer, the value of inclusiveness and an awareness of what is beyond myself or my subject is enormous. The principle that I am part of a greater whole and I must fulfill the purpose by taking my place in the whole is a sustaining life principle for me. From it comes the quality of acceptance and a willingness to not always know. Having struggled and tried so hard to know, I give in and trust and suddenly the way becomes clear.”

“Psychosynthesis gives me enjoyment and fun in learning and developing. Weaknesses are stepping stones for growth and development.”

## Healing

“I work by getting an image of the pain and finding out what it is saying. Sometimes it's enough to learn simply to acknowledge and include the offending painful part, instead of cursing it.”

“I see no division between my life and my work. Gradually the psychological wholeness and healing which is my understanding of psychosynthesis means that I am responsible for lack of harmony and destruction. There is a choice to perpetuate this situation or to live my life and work through my truth, evoking and initiating wholeness and healing.”

## Astrology

“Astrological psychosynthesis uses the birth chart as a tool to explore an individual's potential. It is a path to greater self-awareness and so provide an opportunity for living a fuller life, in harmony with the energy of the environment. The birth chart can provide valuable clues to subpersonalities, how they interact with one another, which will shout loudest, and which are underdeveloped as a result of childhood conditioning.”

“I was trained in astrology and I certainly apply the theory and practice of subpersonalities, for example, polarities such as the mystic and pragmatist, love and will. Transits indicate the kind of transpersonal or personal energies that want to be integrated.”

## Psychotherapy

“Mostly I think the application of psychosynthesis in my work is subtle and subliminal! I am often aware of the triangle psychosynthesis presents so well –the third place or level which is somewhere other than, and more than, the sum of the polarities being explored. I envisage psychosynthesis as a kind of building block in my discovery of my inner resources... So it is now an integral part of who I am and my experience.”

“Psychosynthesis has encouraged me to learn how to begin to know and accept myself as I am. This has enabled periodic moments of contact with my own deep personal integrity which admits and accepts my dark and distorted side. These excruciatingly painful moments have borne the fruits of the spirit: compassion, understanding and lightness of heart. Also the insight that the ‘burning bush’ is not out there in the wilderness but within my own heart, so that the voice which says ‘I am that I am’ quotes within myself when I fall silent and listen.”

“As well as working as a psychosynthesis guide I also run groups. The psychosynthesis model is a flexible enough to be useful in all the group work I do. The techniques are simple and practical and allow the wisdom of each

individual to be the real guide. We cannot grow as human beings whilst continuing to ignore the fact that we pollute our nest, destroy the oceans and rainforests and species are becoming extinct at an alarming rate. We do not exist in isolation. Growth in a purely human context is meaningless."

*All of these quotes are from questionnaires to graduates of English psychosynthesis centres researching for the original Elements of Psychosynthesis book. Respondents described how they were applying psychosynthesis in their work and (somewhat edited for space) these are a selection of the responses from the engaged and engaging people who contributed.*