

## **Preface**

This book deals with the praxis of psychotherapy, a healing art, which proceeds with all the ambiguities that come from encountering another person in the here and now and which is never far away from the challenges of life outside the consulting room, from sanity, madness and human irrationality in all its manifestations. A key question for all in the field is in whose name do we practice? Who do we ask if we don't know the way? Which facilities do we bring into play from the great repertoire of our souls healing capacities, which is as strong as our bodies? The soul's resourcefulness on which the body depends is a fact of life.

The Tao of healing is a gradual process. Step by step. It needs what we call "patience". The way leads towards clarity of the real, the imaginary, the plausible and the wisdom of the heart. At the centre of the psychotherapeutic and psychoanalytic encounter is rhetorical honesty and emotional truthfulness. Most of the time, this meeting of two persons in the same room at the same time, occurs within the common bounds of embodied self and souls. Content and context coexist in this task. So how do I do it? I entered the mental health field back in 1974, joining the London based Richmond Fellowship, running half way houses, where folks could stay after they either left a mental hospital or us before they needed to enter one. While studying social and clinical psychology I undertook an apprenticeship with the Philadelphia Association (Chair: R. D. Laing) in London. As a psychoanalytic and integrative body psychotherapist, I have endured my own visions of sickness, woundedness, scarring of the soul, shepherding and providing an environment for healing to come to pass. The vulnerability of both patient and psychotherapist are important to acknowledge, remaining truthful to the creative potential of the unconscious. Thus, the motto 'Never against the Unconscious'. The musical enchantments of emotions, finding their way into words, which leave the core, of the yet unspeakable silence, at the centre of our true being.

Dreams, imaginations, sensations, awareness of life as a somatic experience are the basis of what it is all about. Psychotherapy is after all an experiential encounter with another's feeling, seeing, hearing, sensing, thinking and intuition. The essence of transformation, of effectiveness in aiding change in how we live our life's grand adventure, conditioned as we are in our ambiguous naked alienation, is the feeling suffused therapeutic relationship. The music is played within its meaningful transference and sense making countertransference.

These essays, written over many years, speak to a politics of experience. They are a document of our contemporary psychotherapeutic wisdom in a troubled world.