



FIRST CONTACTS WITH PEOPLE IN CRISIS & SPIRITUAL EMERGENCIES

COURTENAY YOUNG

AuthorHouse Books, 2011; 230 pages; pbk.
ISBN: 978-1-4567-7039-6

RRP: £19.99; \$37.60; €56.99
Amazon (Sept-2021)

New Prices (including postage):
UK £ 16.00; EUR € 20.00;
USA \$ 25.00; CAD \$ 30.00;
AUD \$ 35.00; NZD \$ 35.00;
CNY 150.00; JPY 2,500.00

Dear Colleagues, dear Friends,

This book is now available from BPP as well as from AuthorHouse and Amazon. We have decided to start selling copies at a discounted price and would like to pass this opportunity on to you.

- For those of you who live in UK or Europe, we can now offer you the following: single printed copies at **£16.00** (or **€20.00**) each (inc. postage).
- For those of you who live in the USA or Canada, we can offer you the following: **USA \$25.00** (**CAD \$30.00**) each (inc. international AirMail postage).
- For those of you in other countries: China & Japan, Australia & NZ, non-European, Middle East, Africa, South America, etc.), we can now offer you: single printed copies at either: **CNY 150.00**; or **JPY 2,500.00**; or **AUD \$ 35.00**; **NZD \$ 35.00**; or similar for each copy (inc. international AirMail postage).

If you would like to purchase a copy, please place an order: please use **PayPal** and the “Pay, Send money” function to: sales@bodypsychotherapypublications.com, with your proper postal address. The book will be dispatched to you – by post – within a day or so of receiving the payment.

We thank you very much for your interest in this – our – collection. Details of this book are described overleaf. Happy reading!

With best wishes,

Courtenay Young

DESCRIPTION OF THIS BOOK

“This is a practical handbook about and for people who are experiencing various sorts of psychological, emotional & spiritual crisis; spiritual emergence processes; Spiritual Emergencies; and, especially, is also for their carers, family members & therapists. It is open-minded, pragmatic, occasionally humorous, well-researched, and is based on 30 years of personal and professional experience in the field. As a compilation written over about 10 years, and covering many aspects of the field, both psychological and transpersonal, it is an absolute ‘must’ for anyone working in, or anyone with friends or family going through one of those processes.”

Publisher’s Cover Description

Introduction:

Our Western society does not fully acknowledge the process of spiritual maturation, to the extent that there is hardly even a proper language for much of this material, and to the extent that people who have experienced problems with this maturational process are often seen as unstable or insane, and are thus discriminated against, or even condemned. The actual process of spiritual maturation or emergence has itself long been marginalized in the West: it has also often been removed from any 'normal' realms by sanctification or beatification.

But, at least in the last 100 years or so, the process of emotional and psychological maturation has developed its own particular language, and many of the concepts from these processes have been relatively well accepted, if little understood, by society at large. Jung's concept of 'individuation', for example, is the concept whereby an 'individuated' person has worked through most of their childhood dependencies and neurotic attachments and has emerged as a reasonably functioning adult individual. However, in the arena of spiritual maturation, we are unfortunately still pretty much in the Dark Ages.

Many of the symptoms of a spiritual maturational process happen unnoticed: a gradual loss of interest in the religion of one's original family, followed by a growing interest, as an adult, in something that feels more meaningful. This may, or may not, be another established religion, or a belief system. For some, however, the changes are much more dramatic. The symptoms may be similar to a psychotic episode, or it may take a major crisis for us to understand that the old familiar ways of doing and being are becoming increasingly dysfunctional; or the person may suddenly make significant changes their whole lifestyle. This handbook is written for these people, and their families and friends.

More primitive societies more readily acknowledge that when a young man or woman has a "big dream" for the tribe, or falls into a coma and then awakens with wonderful tales of what has happened to them whilst asleep, or shows particular aptitudes for divination or healing, that these 'symptoms' are indications that their spiritual maturational process is starting (their spirit is emerging) and they are then given the appropriate training from the elders, shamans, priestesses, and so forth. If the societal structure has been destroyed, or the society is largely secular, and these symptoms are not recognised as such, then they can be misinterpreted as aberrations.

In the 1970's & 1980's, a Czech psychiatrist, Stanislav Grof, working with his wife Christina at Esalen, a community in Big Sur, California, coined the phrase "Spiritual Emergency" to describe these 'normal' spiritual emergence processes that seemed to be going wrong. This does not mean to say that there is something wrong with the person involved; often it is the society around them that has not been recognizing what is happening to that person. In an increasingly materialistic society, the echelons of that society, the priests and especially the medical profession, doctors and psychiatrists, see the signs and symptoms of these spiritual maturation or emergence processes nowadays, not as signs to be recognised, but as a threat to the 'stability' of the society, or to their 'power positions. So, they 'diagnose' them (because of their ignorance of these processes) either as signs of demonic possession (needing their powers of exorcism) or as symptoms of potential pathologies.

Imagine if we – as a culture – did not acknowledge the symptoms of the physical maturation process of puberty and adolescence, so that facial hair and growing breasts were seen as aberrations, fashion demanded bound chests and underarm shaving, or, in extreme cases, as medical interventions requiring depilation or mastectomies. Something similar quite often happens to people in these situations of Spiritual Emergency whose symptoms are not recognised.

*In James Hillman's book, *The Soul's Code*, he theorizes that we all have this innate potential. But if you have been brought up to be 'safe' and 'conventional', then you will not allow the symptoms to emerge as even possibilities. You might worry about being 'different' and go to a conventional psychotherapist, to have this problem analysed or to learn, cognitively, how to change your behaviour. This way you might stay safe a little bit longer. But then – you 'world' changes and nothing is ever the same again. The 'symptoms' have overwhelmed you. Resisting the process, like damming a river, doesn't always work.*

This handbook was originally written, in a much shorter format, as a manual for the staff of the Findhorn Foundation, an international spiritual & educational community in Northeast Scotland. It has been re-written and developed over the last 17-20 years, based on a great deal of practical and professional experience, rather than being based on abstract theory. I have also based this material on the experience of teaching this many times to psychotherapists, trainees, workshop participants and community members. The material tries to be pragmatic, always, and (of course) is always changing and being added to.

Part One describes & defines what is meant by a crisis, any crisis, and gives some ideas as to what to do if or when someone you know or are working with goes into such a crisis. Much of this material is traditional, mainstream and fairly pragmatic. Because of the fear of these 'unknown' areas in the general collective; because of the discrimination against mental illness; because of our lack of understanding of altered states or the world of spirit; so people generally do not know what to do with a person in crisis unless they have

been specifically trained, as a clinician, or in the mental health field. Some of this section helps to demystify these processes and can act as a sort of manual for carers, etc.

Part Two goes much deeper into the concept of Spiritual Emergence processes and some of their ramifications. I have separated the two aspects out this way as, if someone is in a crisis, psychological, relationship, financial, spiritual or otherwise, then the pragmatic material in Part One is probably necessary, first and foremost. However many people will be more interested in starting to read the slightly more theoretical, or possibly attractive, aspects contained in Part Two. However, don't do any work with people until you have also read Part One. They do hang together and complement each other.

It is very inspiring to work in this field in these different ways. It is also an incredible privilege and opportunity to be, in some ways, both selected as a channel for this material and has also discovered a way of making it more ordinary and 'normal'. I believe this material, and the whole process of Spiritual Emergence, is our normal human birthright, our spiritual heritage, and is not limited to any particular religion, sect, community, or to people who go into crisis. It should be part of normal and healthy development for everyone to open up to these realms, even though, in the moment, sometimes we have to have a bit of a crisis in order to drive out any old and redundant material that the world requires us to "know" in order to "do", and allow in the new, very personal, and unique material that allows us to "be" different and truly ourselves.

Some of this material forms the basis for training modules that I have given internationally, mainly to psychotherapy trainees, on Spiritual Emergencies and crisis work, and in seminars and workshops that I give at psychotherapy conferences. Some of it is very newly written material, and deals with basic spiritual principles, many of which are very old and fundamental truths. My wife, Laura Steckler, a Clinical Psychologist and Body-Oriented Psychotherapist, as well as a dancer & performance artist, and I together have developed some of this material into a residential workshop format for members of the public, which we call *The Spirit of the Body*. The Findhorn Foundation also works with some of this material, in this way of thinking, and with similar material in its own particular method of spiritual practice, as a fairly well defined spiritual and educational path. I whole-heartedly support this method of 'normalization'. Anyone who wants to can come and do a programme, work alongside members of the community, and see and feel how this material can be applied on a day-to-day basis.

Whether you are recycling your glass and cardboard, or eating organic food, or trying to save the world, or working with someone in crisis, or in a crisis or emergency, the principles are still very relevant. But for some people, either it is important or necessary, or maybe it just happens, that they are on a different life path, or they jumped the "Spiritual Maturation101" and found themselves in the wrong grade, and need a "crash course" to catch up; or maybe they are just in the wrong school., or they feel that they are even on the wrong planet. They are experiencing a crisis instead of the regular steady developmental programme of a gently unfolding spiritual emergence process. And they are in a different process; their world has changed – and the process of change can sometimes be dramatic and painful, as well as incredibly beautiful.

There are no particular rules of "how" to go through these processes; we just work with each individual situation as we find it. More and more, people are having these situations at home and in their own environments, without coming to Findhorn, or Esalen, or going to India, or taking drugs, and also without getting taken off to their local psychiatric ward. Thankfully, it is becoming much more "normal", and this is the new way that we must, I think, all begin to look at all these processes.

Unfortunately, there are still tendencies to hang on to the feelings of 'specialness', the mystery, or to consider oneself as blessed, privileged or, in some way, superior by having access to this material, or to charge large amounts of money for a particular form of initiation. In the past, people have made a 'mystery' out of it and only 'initiated' certain people into these mysteries. This should not be the case any longer, even if it was appropriate or legitimate at some earlier time. We have to make this material, this 'stuff', much more normal and accessible. It is our spiritual 'birthright'.

Our Western society also needs these particular energies in order for it to change; in order for it to mature; in order for it to redress the balance between "doing" or "having", and "being"; the balance between hatred and acceptance; the balance between war and peace; the balance between hopes for sanity and acts of insanity.

We need to disseminate the essential spirituality embedded in these processes and to find these being reflected in our social lives, as we try to cope with these new spiritual technologies and a new world order, especially as a result of the processes of increasing globalization and the more recent events of September 11, 2001, the Gulf Wars, and the global warming and resultant desertification of the planet. This sort of esoteric material needs to become the "norm" rather than the exception. Archbishop Desmond Tutu says: "The wonderful thing is that God has placed in each of us a hunger, a hunger for transcendence. A hunger for the thing your heart is restless for until you find it."

The increasing acceptance of 'spiritual' people into mainstream society like Carl Jung, Rudolf Steiner, the Dalai Lama, Mother Theresa and even Eileen Caddy, one of the founders of the Findhorn Foundation

recently awarded the MBE for “services to spirit”, gives us all hope. There are many things wrong with the present, and with the New Age movement that seems to epitomize this search for spirit, but it also reflects a growing need for material, which is relevant today, rather than a religion that became codified many hundreds of years ago.

These processes also have great power – the power to change, to awaken the inner spirit, the power to transcend, or the power to wreck people’s lives. This power can be awesome. But then so is electricity, and nowadays we think nothing of turning on a light switch, when to have this facility, this instant power, would have been considered a miracle to our cave-dwelling ancestors. Maybe it is all to do with how we perceive the light, or how we relate to that which casts those shadows that dance on the wall. Often these shadows are just problems within ourselves, and we are facing the wrong way: we are just not looking at “The Light”.

Please don’t make the mistake of thinking that this is all to do with someone else. Yes, they may be having a crisis, even a spiritual one, but it will almost inevitably affect you as well, and thus some of this material will become part of your process, your life, your transformation. Your reactions will reverberate with them and facilitate or hinder their process; and you will also affect others. The ripples spread once the stone has been dropped in the pond.

And how we use this material is also very important. We can view our glass as half-full, or half-empty. A crisis can be an opportunity, a side-track, or a disaster. Here is the story about the Four Rabbinim:

One night, four rabbinim were visited by an angel who awakened them and carried them up to the Seventh Vault of the Seventh Heaven. There they beheld the sacred Wheel of Ezekiel. Somewhere in the descent from Pardes (Paradise) to Earth, one Rabbi, having seen such splendor, lost his mind and wandered frothing and foaming until the end of his days. The second Rabbi was extremely cynical: “Oh I just dreamed Ezekiel’s Wheel, that was all. Nothing really happened.” The third Rabbi carried on and on about what he had seen, for he was totally obsessed. He believed he had been especially ‘chosen’. Think he was particularly special, he talked and lectured, and would not stop with his theories about how it was all constructed, and what it all meant ...and, in this way, he went astray and betrayed his faith. The fourth Rabbi, who was a poet, took a paper in hand and a reed and sat near the window writing song after song praising the evening dove, his daughter in her cradle, and all the stars in the firmament. And he lived his life better than before.

So, in this new landscape of the spirit, I can only wish that you “Journey Well!”

*Courtenay Young
Findhorn & Edinburgh*

About the Author

Courtenay Young is an experienced Humanistic, Transpersonal & Body-Oriented Psychotherapist, who has worked in various different locations in the mental health field for about 40 years. He has worked in psychiatric hostels, and with psychiatric & socially disadvantaged adolescents. He has been the resident psychotherapist at the Findhorn Foundation, an international spiritual community located in north-east Scotland, for over 17 years, and, since 2003, he has been working in the NHS around Edinburgh as a Counsellor, Psychological Therapist and in departments of Clinical Psychology. He was the Regional Co-ordinator for Scotland of the Spiritual Emergency Network and writes books and articles, gives training seminars, conference lectures and workshops on Spiritual Emergencies for psychotherapists in the UK, Europe and the USA, and works individually with people in spiritual crisis and emergencies. He and his wife, Laura Hope Steckler, a Clinical Psychologist and Psychotherapist, have run weekend and week-long residential workshops at Findhorn, Germany and elsewhere, entitled *The Spirit of the Body*, a combination of spiritual emergence work, movement exercises, and body-psychotherapy. Courtenay has already had one book published *Help Yourself Towards Mental Health* (Karnac Books, 2010); has co-edited a book on *R.D. Laing: 50 years after ‘The Divided Self’* (PCCS Books, 2012) and *The Handbook of Body Psychotherapy & Somatic Psychology* (North Atlantic Books, 2015), and has produced a series of edited books under his own imprimatur of Body Psychotherapy Publications; as well as having written many other published chapters and articles, all of which are on his website: www.courtenay-young.com. He is currently the Editor of the *International Journal of Psychotherapy* (www.ijp.org.uk) and has also been heavily involved in the European Association of Psychotherapy (EAP’s) work in the establishment of psychotherapy as an independent profession in Europe. He can be contacted by e-mail: courtenay@courtenay-young.com

CONTENTS

PART ONE

TYPES OF CRISIS
CRISIS OR EMERGENCY
IDENTIFY A PERSON IN CRISIS
POSSIBLE INDICATIONS OR SYMPTOMS OF PEOPLE IN CRISIS
LEVELS OF CRISIS
MAKING CONTACT & STAYING IN CONTACT
WHAT TO DO AT FIRST
USE OF PSYCHOTHERAPY
APPROPRIATE ACTIONS
OTHER WAYS OF WORKING WITH A CRISIS
FORMING A CRISIS GROUP
FORMING A COMMUNITY AROUND A PERSON IN CRISIS
SOME BASIC STRATEGIES
A “ZEN” SPACE
MEDITATION & MINDFULNESS
TRANSFORMATIVE PROCESSES

PART TWO

SPIRITUAL EMERGENCE & EMERGENCIES
CRITERIA TO HELP DEFINE A SPIRITUAL EMERGENCY
SYMPTOMS OF / TYPES OF SPIRITUAL EMERGENCE PROCESSES OR SPIRITUAL EMERGENCIES
CRISIS AS SEEN IN TRANSFORMATIONAL TERMS
SPIRITUAL TECHNOLOGIES AND TOOLKITS
'MADNESS' SEEN DIFFERENTLY
SOME SELF-HELP EXERCISES
 Meditation: The Body That Brought Me Here
 Meditation: The Castle of the Spirit
 Exercise: Rebuilding your Auric Boundaries
 Meditation: Dynamic Meditation
 Exercise: Death Fantasies and How They Stop You Living
 Exercise: The Felt Sense of Self
 Meditation: A Descent into the Dark
 Basic Spiritual Principles
 Recovery & Integration
 The Spirit of the Body & The Body of the Spirit
 Critical Support Issues
 Some Caveats
 The Rainbox
 Transformation & Enlightenment
 Useful Quotations
 Resource List
 Spiritual Emergency Book List
 Appendix 1: Internet Article
 Appendix 2: Different Facets of the 'Sense of Self'
 About the Author

