

Efficiency of Psychotherapy involving Altered States of Consciousness

Study of literature and proposal of a new therapeutic model

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Abstract

This is a synopsis of my thesis. The thesis deals with the efficiency of psychotherapy, driven by the motive to find or form an efficient therapeutic model. The main axis of the thesis is Altered States of Consciousness (ASC), due to my belief that ASC have the potential to drive deep and thorough changes in one's personality and life. The thesis explores ASC phenomena from scientific, therapeutic and spiritual aspects; as well as various therapy methods that involve ASC techniques.

Research on the efficiency of psychotherapy is presented. Research includes mainstream methods (mainly psychodynamic) and those involving ASC (such as: meditation, breath-work, hypnosis and more).

Main conclusion is that ASC may profoundly reorient an individual's identity, emotional attitude, and sense of wellbeing and purpose in life. (Bogart, 1991)

ASC is a natural phenomena. However, therapy involving ASC has its own characteristics and implications, on the patient, the therapist and the therapeutic alliance. Body oriented techniques have the potential to induce ASC; therefore, a methodological exploration of ASC realm as part of Body-Psychotherapy is called for.

As ASC may also trigger spiritual experiences, it's my belief that embracing the Body-Spirit relation is an important evolutionary step for the Body-Psychotherapy branch.

The thesis proposes a new therapeutic model that involve ASC, as well as other therapeutic techniques. It is my belief that the proposed model is highly effective, however this assumption shall be empirically validated. Thus, a research method to assess its efficiency, in comparison with other therapeutic models, outlined as well.

As a side note: my thesis is more than a hundred pages long. The attempt to summaries it in 3000 words was a challenging mission, sure hope that main messages successfully conveyed.

Background, Purpose and Method

Some of the psychotherapy methods involve non ordinary consciousness levels, such as: hypnosis, meditation, and trance. These non ordinary levels are being called Altered States of Consciousness (ASC) in the scientific literature and Non Ordinary States of Consciousness (NOSC) in some of the spiritual writings.

The issue of therapeutic effectiveness has been a subject of quite a few researches, mainly due to the pressure of insurance companies for short-term therapy. Efficiency of therapy is also a great interest of mine for various of reasons. Firstly, is my belief that it's therapists professional and moral responsibility to ensure they have the best means to help their clients in the most efficient way; secondly, following my personal experience as a client of psychotherapy, I came to believe that being in a meditative, relaxed state during therapeutic session, enabling a deeper work and helps bypassing some rationalizations and therapeutic rejections. To my belief, this eases the expansion of conscious and therefore, promotes a positive change.

The correlation between psychotherapy efficiency and altered states of consciousness is a point of interest. The main purpose of this work is to examine the efficiency of psychotherapy treatments that involve ASC. Since research has shown quite a few benefits of ASC, I am proposing an outline for a new psychotherapeutic integrative model, which systematically and 'awarenessly' involve ASC, with no inherited transpersonal bias.

The main method for this work is a review of empirical researches currently available and the theoretical literature regarding to ASC as well as various therapeutic streams, outlining their purpose and actual results. The review includes a comparison between the therapeutic streams and a critical analysis, leading to integrative-bridging suggestions.

1. Consciousness

Baruss (1987, in (Kokoszka, 2007)) has found 20 different definitions to consciousness in literature. Out of the many definitions still currently exist, following is the one by Nader Butto (2008): Consciousness is the part that is responsible for thoughts, awareness and intentions. It's the part that enables us to look deeply and understand other people, enables us to be generous and aware of others needs and develop empathy for them. This part of the soul is the energetic source of the human soul. When the consciousness is distorted, instead of the possibility of being creative, man would feel worry, confused, over-sympathetic and so forth.

1.1. The Brain

Current research correlates consciousness mainly with the brain. In order to understand the impacts that ASC have on us and our consciousness, the thesis will quote from neuroscience research. However, this doesn't imply to any proprietorship of the brain over the mind or consciousness in a reductionist approach. Chris Frith (2007) is stating that it's clear that there is no validity to the argument that from now on we could be satisfied with measuring the brain activity and abandon the soul at all. Brain activity might be an indication that right-now there is a mental activity which takes place. It can be an objective sign of a subjective experience. But the brain activity is not a separate name for a mental experience.

1.2. Altered States of Consciousness

The concept of altered states of consciousness (ASC) was introduced by Ludwig 1966 in (Kokoszka, 2007)), and it is still the most popular notion used to describe states of consciousness that are considered unusual, but not abnormal. Altered states of consciousness (ASC) were defined by Ludwig (1966, p. 225 in (Kokoszka, 2007, p. 5)) as "any mental state(s) of consciousness, induced by various physiological, psychological, or pharmacological maneuvers or agents, which may be recognized subjectively by the individual himself (or by an objective observer of the individual) as representing a sufficient deviation in subjective experience or psychological functioning from certain general norms for that individual during alert waking consciousness". Ludwig (1966 in (Kokoszka, 2007)) gave the following characteristics of the states: alterations in thinking, disturbed time sense, loss of control, change in emotional expression, body image change, perceptual distortions, change in meaning or significance, sense of ineffable, feelings of rejuvenation and hypersuggestibility.

ASC is a natural phenomenon, a biological necessity for our mental and physical wealth. (Rolef Ben-Shahar, 2010). Following are a few ways to induce such states.

1.2.1. Relaxation Techniques

There is a wide range of techniques by which relaxation and ASC can be induced. The commonly applied and clinically established methods for body relaxation are progressive muscle relaxation, biofeedback, and meditative practices. Neurophysiologically, the relaxation response is most frequently accompanied by changes in EEG indicating reduced cortical arousal. (Vaitl et al., 2005)

1.2.2. Meditation

Meditation refers to group of techniques which have in common an attempt to concentrate in non-analytical activity. There are many types of meditations, some more active and less. (Vaitl et al., 2005). Vast research has been done in regards to the electrical activity in the brains of meditation practitioners. It shows that during the first stages of the meditation the brain is at alfa waves, as suits relaxed alertness. In deeper stages, when the mind might be open to special deep insights, it shows major increase in 40 Hz waves across vast majority of the brain areas (Zohar & Marshall, 2000)

1.2.3. Music and Dance

Music and dance has been associated with ASC for hundreds of years across the world. In many cultures trance experiences are tied to spiritual experiences. (Cousins, 2002 in (Becker-Blease, 2004)). Maxfield (1990, in (Vaitl et al., 2005)) found more theta EEG activity while listening to rhythmic monotonous drum beats, leading to experiences resembling descriptions of a shaman's journey.

1.2.4. Breathing

The simplest forms of meditation involve attending to our breath (Smith, 1985 in (Rolef Ben-Shahar, 2010)): the rhythms and flow are reminders of the ocean that we are, and so we can easily find ourselves following our breath into surrender. The focus on a non-thinking and pulsating aliveness within us is an excellent bridge into the very principle of pulsation and aliveness. (Rolef Ben-Shahar, 2010)

1.3. Brain Activity During ASC

Using Electroencephalography (EEG), scientists found that the brain is experiencing various electro-magnetically frequencies.

Following is a list of the frequencies and when observed: (Zohar & Marshall, 2000)

- Delta (0.5 – 3.5 Hz) - Observed during deep sleep or coma, frequent in baby brain
- Theta (5.5 - 7 Hz) - Observed during deep sleep, frequent in children at 3-6 years old
- Alfa (7 – 13 Hz) - Observed during relaxed alert
- Beta (13 – 30 Hz) - Observed during mental work, while concentrating
- Gama (~40 Hz) - Typical to conscious mind, during awake or during dreaming

40 Hz brainwaves can be found throughout the brain and responsible to communicate and coordinate the cognitive and intellectual processing across the brain. Researchers conclude that these waves are the neurological base for the conscious itself and every unitary experience, therefore the neurological base for high spiritual intelligence. (Zohar & Marshall, 2000)

1.4. Spiritual Experience During ASC

During ASC, 'Peak Experiences' (a term by Maslow, 1964 in (Cunningham, 2011)), in which the universe is perceived as harmonious and unified (Hastings, 1991 in (Cunningham, 2011)), may occur.

Kokoszka (2007) mentions that masters characterize higher states of consciousness, by liberation from psychological, social, and biological conditions. These higher states of consciousness and mystical states are perceived to occur during religious practices in other [non western, R.S.] cultures. Dean (1973, in (Kokoszka, 2007)) defines it as level of mental activity that transcends all human experience and creates a sense of one-ness with the universe.

Use of ASC may be one way of approaching the integration of spirituality and religiousness with psychotherapy in order to assist persons whose belief systems and values are aligned with this subjective instance. Transpersonal psychotherapy, to take one example, works with subjects such as the importance of spirituality for regaining health and well-being, as well as the use of ASC to promote relaxation and visualization to obtain therapeutic impact (Walach et al., 2005 in (Peres, Simão, & Nasello, 2007)).

2. Psychotherapy Involving ASC

Various psychotherapeutic methods involve ASC, such as: Hypnosis, Past-Life-Therapy, Psychedelic therapy & LSD therapy, Holotropic Breath-work, Relational Hypnosis and more. The most common technique to induce ASC is by Meditation, which will therefore be further reiterated.

2.1. ASC as a Neutral Method

ASC methods are majorly identified with Transpersonal psychotherapy. However, it is suggested that ASC will be considered as a neutral tool with no inclination to any school of thought; so any arising experience will be welcomed, whether involving the 'higher/transcendent self' or regressive, 'pre-transpersonal' (as Wilber named them (1995, in (Jackson, 1996))).

More than that, there seems to be a major flaw in transpersonal philosophy: as it's heavily influenced by Buddhism, and following the Buddhist notion of 'No-Self', the 'self' as the therapeutic subject has been lost. "The absence of

the transpersonal category of the self, ... prevents transpersonal psychotherapy from developing a congruent clinical theory. Genderless, disembodied states of consciousness cannot be subjects for therapy; only a living person can be that.” (Louchakova & Lucas, 2007, p. 6)

2.2. Meditation

Meditation brings about cognitive shifts that can be applied to behavioral self-observation and management. Meditation, through its capacity to awaken altered states of consciousness, may profoundly reorient an individual's identity, emotional attitude, and sense of wellbeing and purpose in life. Meditation's ultimate goal is to evoke the higher potentials of consciousness, and experiences of a spaciousness beyond the cognitive structures and constructs of the self that conventional psychotherapy seeks merely to modify. (Bogart, 1991)

It's important to point out that in order to achieve the full potential as described above, merely meditation as a stand-alone technique is not enough. Psychotherapeutic setting and methods help processing and achieve the full penetration of the materials that emerged.

3. A Change Owed to Psychotherapy

Clients seek a change in their lives; As therapists, we strive to create an inner shift in our clients, hoping for a biological immanent one. How can it be achieved? A few factors promote change of personality, self-identity and consciousness during psychotherapy. Some of them will be presented below.

3.1. The Flexible Mind

Research from the last years has shown that the brain structure has the capability to change also during adulthood. Norman Doidge (2007) in his book 'The Brain That Changes Itself' presents the idea of neuroplasticity and reports that people were able to restructure their neurological web in their brains and heal from obsessions and traumas by the power of their thoughts.

This may ascertain to us that immanent neurobiological change can be achieved.

3.2. Altered States of Consciousness

Tart et al. (1990 in (Peres, Simão, & Nasello, 2007)) and Metzner (1995 in (Peres, Simão, & Nasello, 2007)), studied ASC and its use in psychotherapy to show that experience of such states may influence changes in behavior. Several authors show that using ASC in the perception of mental images may be an effective tool for forming new patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving (Kasprow & Scotton, 1999 in (Peres, Simão, & Nasello, 2007)).

Different states of consciousness may lead to new perceptions of the same phenomenon, and so to new more favorable emotional states for coping with or overcoming difficulties and suffering in the psychological ambit (Dietrich, 2003 in (Peres, Simão, & Nasello, 2007)).

3.3. The Therapeutic Alliance

Given a good therapeutic relationship and the client trust in the therapist, the capability of the client to relax safely and dare change increases, using the therapeutic situation as a safe play-ground for a new self emerging, one step at a time.

Hubble et al. (1999, in **Fout! Verwijzingsbron niet gevonden.**) asses that therapeutic change is around 30% due to relationship factors. Erikson view on the importance of the relationship is intriguing. Bill O'Hanlon (1987, p. 133 in (Rolef Ben-Shahar, 2010, p. 271)) reiterated Erickson's position: "Change occurs in relation to the therapist. The therapist creates an intense relationship and then uses that relationship to get the person to cooperate or therapeutically rebel or prove the therapist wrong".

3.4. Love

A therapeutic relationship that includes love will even increase the chance for change, as Stanley Keleman (1985, p. 160 in (Rolef Ben-Shahar, 2010, p. 182)) wrote: "Love and intimacy change emotional expression by permitting the experiences that lower defenses". Fromm (1956) is claiming that a clear outcome of psychology is love. The passion to know everything about a person will never be satisfied by the regular knowledge of our thinking and the only way to a complete knowledge is in the act of love.

4. Psychotherapy Effectiveness

4.1. The Purpose of Psychotherapy

Any measure of effectiveness has to be done against its purpose. In search for an effective psychotherapeutic model, I have summarized the targets of the main psychotherapeutic streams. What comes up is that each stream is focusing on another aspect of the human difficulties and needs, thus, a variety of therapeutic targets has been defined. In spite of this, I wish to propose a proposal that might be valid across all psychotherapeutic situations: 'Providing the terms and conditions which enable a healthy movement within the client and his life, towards continuous personal growth'. This suggests that the actual developmental process itself is the ultimate super-goal of the psychotherapy, in a similar way to life itself.

4.2. Psychotherapy Effectiveness – Research Results

The issue of therapy effectiveness has been an issue of great interest for the therapists as well as clients. Quite a few researches have been done so far. Researches done for the traditional therapeutic streams show that psychotherapy works, as most clients were content with results of psychotherapy and felt that they gained significant benefit from it. (Seligman, 1995). The question arises is whether ASC has any additional value or brings better results.

4.3. ASC Psychotherapy Effectiveness – Research Results

ASC is a technique which is majorly identified with Transpersonal Psychotherapy. Therefore, the body of research pertains to Transpersonal therapy. "It appears that humanistic and transpersonal psychologies are contributing considerably less to the growing scientific interest and evolving research". (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.7 in (MacDonald & Friedman, 2002, p. 103)). More than that, there is no consistent method for measurements. "We have observed a virtual absence of shared measures and/or methodologies across investigations" (MacDonald & Friedman, 2002, p. 103).

Yet, although not systematically and scientifically proven yet, some important conclusions can be researched. Following are two conclusions, out of many others, reached by researches:

Vitor Rodrigues has done a thorough review of the research results concerning the effectiveness of ASC therapeutic methods and summarized his conclusion (Rodrigues, 2010, p. 58): "A number of research areas, experience with practice, case studies and mere logic come together showing that the Transpersonal approach to Psychotherapy is effective, powerful and necessary as human beings are mostly conscious beings and a psychotherapeutic model that states this and works directly with the most fundamental defining variable of Humanity – Consciousness – is obviously to be welcomed". "Neuropsychology is now familiar with the idea that consciousness-changing procedures can induce healthy, therapeutic brain activity and even brain structure changes. The fact that general regulating entities (both Government or private) will just acknowledge this is of utmost importance."

Peres, Simão & Nasello (2007, in (Rodrigues, 2010)) assert that the use of modified states of consciousness in therapy is highly relevant as it promotes both voluntary and spontaneous recall of traumatic memories, and can also help reframing them in more positive ways.

5. Body and Consciousness

5.1. Body – Mind – Spirit

I'm a great believer in the body: amazed with the intelligence and wisdom of our body, acknowledging the role it plays in mental and emotional processes, and trusting the intuition and vast knowledge which arises from the concentration in the bodily sensations. BodyMind as a union is obvious to me and as a body oriented therapist, I use body related techniques to drive change. However, as the thesis is referring also to scientific research, which these days identifies the consciousness with the brain - there is a slight inclination towards the brain. This paragraph makes justice with the body and presents a wider view of the consciousness.

Spinoza explains that the mind is the body as sensed, as being aware of, as being thought and the body is an object of the emotion, the consciousness and the thought. (שלמה, 1996) (בן)

Butto (2008) expresses Reich's position that body, mind and soul are different expressions of the same energy (Orgone), while differing in their vibration. High vibrations include the lower ones, so everything that happens to the human body is previously encoded in the soul.

Deepak Chopra (2004, p. 9) states: "Although completely invisible, the body's wisdom is undeniably real - a fact that medical researchers began to accept in the mid-1980s", and further explains that previously it has been assumed that the intelligence is a unique attribute of the brain, but then signs have indicated that there is intelligence also in the immune system and in the digestive system. It occurred that the cells precede our thinking in million years. Their wisdom, ancient than the wisdom of the cerebral cortex, can be seen as the best model of the universe.

Reich (1973), was even more explicit, in correlating between the body and the Universal Spirit / God: "As is well known, the spirit, the soul, the "something" within man that feels and laughs and cries and loves and hates appeared to be connected with an immaterial world spirit; it represented in more or less clear terms men's connection with the creator of the universe, with "God"." (ibid, p.174) "There is no longer any barrier between a human organism and its cosmic environment, which, of necessity, is and always has been, its origin." (ibid, p.167)

5.1.1. Body-Psychotherapy and Spiritual Experience

If we accept the potential link between conscious states and openness to spiritual powers, and the idea of intelligence/ consciousness that resides in the body cells, we may accept the notion that body may also link us to the universal conscious; if we acknowledge the fact that many of the body-oriented therapeutic methods are somewhat ASC inducing and that ASC promotes experiences beyond time, space or ego and are a gate to spiritual realms – we may realize that body oriented psychotherapy triggers and "touches" spiritual experiences.

Then, a few questions might rise in regards to our therapeutic stance: Shall we segregate Body Psychotherapy from Spiritual psychotherapy? Can we do so? What is the price paid by doing so?

Many schools of psychology "adhere to an unnecessarily restricted view of the psyche [and refuse to] work therapeutically with spiritual experience and experiences of nonordinary reality" (Scotton, 1996, in (Lukoff & Lu, 1996)). I wonder, is Body-Psychotherapy one of them?

From the Transpersonal side, Cortright claims: The unexamined assumption of a mind-body dualism limits transpersonal psychology in addressing psychosomatic conflicts that frequently happen in spiritual awakening, and prevents the discipline from a dialogue with the other disciplines that study human consciousness. The welcome departures from dualistic thinking (2007, in (Louchakova & Lucas, 2007)) need to be grounded in the transpersonal theory of the human subject. (ibid).

Here I might suggest a similar call, from the Body oriented side:

The unexamined assumption of a spirit – body dualism limits Body-Psychology in addressing spiritual awakening that may happen in the context of bodily centric methods.

My sincere belief is that it's our role – as the stream who struggled for the union of body & mind and for the inclusion of the body in the therapeutic alliance - to take one step further and promote the embodiment of the spirit in the Western culture. Or else, spiritualism is left ungrounded, subject for the intellectual and theological domains only.

Reich has made the following remark: "Without wanting to, I found myself outside of limits." (Reich, 1973, p. 6). I sure hope that we won't limit ourselves while adopting Reich's ideas, accepting only bodily aspects and leaving the spiritual, cosmic aspects outside of our consciousness borders and outside of our psychotherapeutic theory.

As the thesis shows, ASC are natural phenomena, which is relatively easily induced by relaxation, meditation and touch. Therefore, clients may commonly find themselves in different conscious realms, undergo spiritual experiences. Body oriented psychotherapists must be aware that they may arouse experiences that are beyond the ordinary consciousness and be well informed and trained, so they are able to support this at their Clinique. If such an experience of a client, finds the therapist astonished, there is a potential risk of shutting off a delicate and deep curing process, which might have started.

Rolef Ben-Shahar wrote that all affect-based psychotherapies incorporate forms of altered-states of consciousness, whether these are induced formally or occur spontaneously. Many techniques and skills in body-psychotherapy

involve the use of trance-like states (Rolef Ben-Shahar, 2008). It is my belief that a methodological exploration of altered states in Body-Psychotherapy is called for.

6. A New Therapeutic Model Suggested

Following my quest for an efficient therapeutic model, I suggest an outline of a new model. The model encompasses a few ideas, methods and approaches that were thoroughly examined in the thesis. The model is not an invention, as it's based on the therapy I have gone through as a client; but rather is an attempt to structure and conceptualize it on spiritual as well as psychological basis. The model I envision is enabling a safe space for expression of the whole human experience; a holistic therapy that respects and supports the inner being, spiritual self, as well as the persona with its plentiful facets.

6.1. Main Concepts

Following are a few principles and concepts underlying the therapeutic approach, each of them has been extensively presented in the thesis.

- Following the Humanist and spiritual approaches, the human is perceived as a being with a positive potential and developmental urge which seeks expression, as mainly manifested by Maslow in his 'Self-Actualization' (George, 2000) and 'Transcendent Self-Actualizers' (Cunningham, 2011) ideas.
- Spiritual awakening is an ontological, inherently human process of maturation, it happens to people spontaneously. (Louchakova, 2004).
- Spiritual concepts expressed in the 'Pathwork' chosen as the ontological foundations for this model. (Pierrakos, 1990).
- The therapeutic value of meditation and altered states of consciousness is vast, also is the value of experience at the 'here and now'.
- The 'self' is an ever existing entity, and is the subject of the therapy (Louchakova & Lucas, 2007) though therapy involving ASC might encounter the "lower-self" and the "higher-self" altogether.
- There's a great value to self knowing based on sub-consciousness contents, including figures of past lives, for abreaction and integration.
- Alchemy type of transformation, from low-self and repressed energy to higher-self and free energy flow, has been suggested as the transformative movement that underlie psychotherapy. Concept also appears in (Chopra, 2004) and (Bennett-Goleman, 2001).
- The therapeutic relationship and alliance is a major factor in therapy success (referred to as 'common factors') (Lambert & Barley, 2001), therefore shall be related to as well.

6.2. Model Main Characteristics

Following are a few attributes of the proposed therapeutic model:

- The model is an integrative model that makes use of a few therapy methods and tools.
- It's founded on a spiritual platform geared towards empowerment and holistic growth.
- It can support clients in diverse psychological and spiritual stages.
- In order to be able to respond to clients in various psychological/ spiritual developmental stages and conditions, the therapist shall master a few therapeutic methods and be flexible to shift from one to another per the specific need at a given moment. Approach is geared towards supporting the client with his ever-changing needs.
- ASC related techniques might be used with no bias to transpersonal experiences to come up; enabling and supporting regression (into a 'lesser psychic state' or 'pre-transpersonal') as well as encouraging a breakthrough towards spiritual growth and self actualization, upon client maturity.

- Use of variety of therapeutic methods, which may include: cognitive work such as discussion and analysis; psychodynamic work, relational based; consciousness oriented work involving ASC and creative imagination; body oriented work such as body awareness, breathing, movement, touch and healing; and behavioral guidance supporting the desired change.

6.3. Therapeutic Flow

The therapeutic flow includes investigation of the issue at hand, as well as expression of it at the ‘here and now’, targeting towards reconciliation which is achieved once the client makes a movement from the “problem domain” or the consciousness level which originally caused this, into a new one, which may involve: wider understanding, greater responsibility, acceptance and more.

Saldanha (1997, in (Rodrigues, 2010)) described seven steps that usually unfold during a therapeutic session resorting to transpersonal techniques. I find them well appropriate:

1. **Acknowledgement** - The client gets in touch with his symptoms or troubles with the help of the therapist.
2. **Identification** - The client expresses the suffering with the greatest possible intensity.
3. **De-identification** - The client starts opening for new possibilities.
4. **Transmutation** - The client gets insights, as super-conscious levels or energies get more help finding new meanings, creative solutions and postures.
5. **Transformation** - The client feels differently about his previous conflicts, finds a new perspective.
6. **Elaboration** - A global (or wider, R.S.) vision of the situation emerges, the client gets into a different mindset.
7. **Integration** - The client integrates the therapeutic gains into his personal life and his worldviews, even changes his values.

6.4. Efficiency Research

As I support the need and importance in measuring psychotherapy efficiency, following are guidelines to measure the proposed therapeutic model, in comparison to mainstream psychotherapy, such as psychodynamic therapy.

6.4.1. Research Framing

- **Therapy clients:** Mentally healthy, at a developmental state which is suitable for ASC work (criteria detailed in thesis).
- **Therapy duration:** Long term, natural end of therapy or no longer than a pre-defined period.
- **Therapy protocol:** Aligned protocol will not be applied, for the therapies to simulate ‘real world’ therapy.
- **Index:** The measured progress made in reality as well as in client stance.

6.4.2. Method

- **Method:** Questionnaires filled prior, during, after therapy and after another period; brain scan (EEG, fMRI) prior and after therapy.
- **Questionnaires to include:** Description and quantification of the problem, therapy goal, diagnostics and therapist assessment; intensive questionnaire on life status and well being in various life domains; values and stances questionnaire. An opinion from a life-partner is a potentially addition.

6.4.3. Results Analysis

- **Questionnaires Analysis:** Grading the client problem according to severity and prognosis, ranking the client's self-actualization level, spiritual and psychological development stages.
- **Results Evaluation:** Shall take into account the objective progress per the problem evaluation, the change in clients' grading as well as well being and stances. Efficiency will be measured as a proportion of the inclusive weighted progress made vs. the therapy duration.
- **Methods Comparison:** Each therapist will report on the techniques that were used during therapy. Efficiency could then be compared in accordance to therapeutic method.
- **Multi-Dimension Correlations Analysis:** Various correlations might be examined, such as: the nature of problem reported versus the progress made (for better prognoses and method matching to problem); client's profile versus the techniques applied by therapists; examination of the various therapy methods implications on domains beyond the direct therapy goals, such as: well being, self actualization and spiritual development; etc.

7. Summary

The thesis explored evidence for the notion that psychotherapy involving altered states of consciousness may have a great potential to drive deep and thorough changes in clients' personality and life, through review of research and literature. However, additional empirical/ methodic research has to be done in order to clinically prove so.

The connection between altered states of consciousness, consciousness change, spiritual experiences and body work has been shown, suggesting that Body-Psychotherapy will not segregate itself from potential spiritual growth, as a result of psychotherapy.

An outline of a new psychotherapeutic model has been proposed, aimed to be applicable and efficient for a wide variety of clients. The model combines the strengths of the psychodynamic therapy with the powerful consciousness exploration and changing techniques, as well as body centric methods. The model is founded on a spiritual platform geared towards empowerment and holistic growth.

Personal Note

I would like to share a personal hope:

If only each one of us will aspire to reveal, dare search, and then – dare find his inner latent potential.

If only each one of us will dare fly high beyond the collective consciousness, thus - all together, will rise it up.

If only each one of us will get the conditions for self fulfillment; but as long it's not commonly so -

May us, therapists, be the spearhead to support it; just like the philosophers and the Shamans in human history.

It all depends on us, on each and every one of us - let's set forth, keep moving along the path –

Acknowledging the power as well as responsibility ahead of us.

“Love is the way, Happiness is the sign, Light is the goal.”

ברוט, 2008, עמ' 533 () Nader Butto

Writing the thesis has been a journey for me, an important journey of clarifying and establishing my own therapeutic stance and positioning. May God lead my path.

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