

Transpersonal Psychology

Everyone has two journeys to make through life.

There is the outer journey, with its variety of incidents and the milestones...

There is also an inner journey, a spiritual Odyssey, with a secret history of its own.

(William R. Inge 1869-1954)

Transpersonal Psychology embraces and draws upon the wisdom of the world's spiritual traditions and developments in modern psychology. It includes theories and approaches pertaining to the development and health of the personal ego. It seeks to understand our human ambitions, our worries and loves, as we make our passage through this worldly life with its inevitable ups and downs. Importantly, it places these within a larger perspective. It draws upon spiritual traditions which point us towards intimations of an enduring reality beyond the world of impermanence and changing forms; a reality which beckons us to uncover a deeper meaning and purpose to our lives along with the discovery of our deepest Self.

Transpersonal Psychology has been called the Fourth force in psychology, complementing the first three forces of Behaviourism, Classical Psychoanalysis and Humanistic Psychology. In truth, it is an umbrella term under which a range of transpersonal perspectives have developed as a result of attempts to integrate ancient wisdom with modern knowledge. Its formal establishment is relatively recent; its roots lie in the distant past. It includes, for example, Psychosynthesis, the Jungian stream, Core Process therapy and all those psychologies and psychotherapies influenced by the eastern contemplative traditions of Vedanta and Buddhism, Sufi and Christian mysticism, systems of yoga, meditation and mindfulness, mystery schools and esoteric movements, symbolic systems such as alchemy and more.

All transpersonal perspectives affirm the spiritual potential of human beings to move beyond the ego to both heights and depths of the human psyche. Such perspectives acknowledge the importance of both transcendent and unitive states of consciousness, cultivated and nurtured

over thousands of years by traditions which, until relatively recently, were ignored by traditional psychology and psychotherapy.

Transpersonal Psychology is concerned, therefore, not only with understanding 'breakdown and repair' or with restoring healthy functioning to the personal ego. Its primary concern is exploring those aspects of consciousness and being that are to do with realising humanity's highest potential – a potential which is released as we discover and reveal the source and depth of our own Being. It provides an opportunity for us to recognise and value our true worth and that of all individuals, indeed of all forms of life.