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TRI ENERGETICS

What do you need. What do you want. What's your intention

by Rickie Moore, Ph.D.

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PREFACE

We are remarkably like one another. We cross this ocean of life, falling into love, sinking with depression, swimming in tears, and floating on waves of joy. Though each human story is unique, we all search for ways to survive the complexities of life. I've survived enough traumas, and have counselled enough people through theirs, to have learned some tricks for simplifying the terribly complicated task of growing up.

I have counselled alcoholics and drug abusers, women in prison, and paraplegics. I've worked in a rehabilitation hospital, a charity hospital, and trained with talented therapists and shamans. I concluded after these adventures that the problems that plague most people today cannot be solved by traditional talking therapies. Therapies that ignore the body, deny emotional release, or disregard the spirit are as effective as sipping tea with a toothpick: you probably won't succeed; if you do, it will surely take a long time. I searched for a system that could actually help people help themselves, a method for more easily communicating and better understanding depression, frustration, anger, and fears.

Eventually, I took the best of what worked for me from Transactional Analysis, Bioenergetics, and Person-Centered Therapy. I added Janov's Primal Therapy, Gestalt, and a bit of Jungian Psychology, and mixed them together with yoga and a dash of shamanism. As the brew began to distill into Tri-Energetics, I left hospitals and private practice. Together with clinical psychologist Henry Marshall (who happens to be my husband), I began offering workshops, which became known as Inner Peace Playshops. After a few years, a number of regular Playshop participants urged us to train them to use Tri-Energetics to help others, and to perhaps become professional counsellors

themselves. Through the counsellor trainings and the Playshops, Tri-Energetics matured into a simple, practical, powerful method for solving one's own problems and helping others solve theirs.

A couple of years ago, several students who had completed our three year training in Tri-Energetic Counselling began urging me to write a book describing the methods they had just learned. I resisted. I worried that the expediency of the Tri-Energetic system would seem like the fast food version of pop psychology. On the other hand, I wondered whether a book could do justice to its power and efficacy..

Then one morning, the phone rang. "I need to sleep," I thought. But, being curious, I reluctantly whispered, "Hello," in my best it's-too-early-to-call voice.

The woman on the other end however, was wide awake. "I have to tell you how grateful I am," she said.

I didn't know who she was until about half way through the next sentence.

"When I went for chemo therapy yesterday, I was depressed and frankly wasn't sure I wanted to survive. It was terrible. The nurse was inflexible and rude. Suddenly I remembered the Tri-Energetic formula: know what you need, say what you want, and have clear intentions!"

By now I was wide awake and sitting straight up in my bed.

She continued, "I realized I needed the nurse to be more tolerant because I know I'm not an easy patient. So I asked if she could see how afraid I was and how much pain I was feeling. I told her I needed tenderness."

"Then what happened?" I managed to ask.

"The nurse smiled and apologized for being grumpy. Then I became curious

about her. I asked if anything was wrong. She told me she was worried about her daughter, who was getting divorced. We had a long talk and even a hug before I left. The best part is that after I found the courage to ask for what I wanted, I got what I really needed: a clear intention to live, even if I'm going to die."

I thanked her for the acknowledgment, hung up the phone, and began writing this book.

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Amsterdam, 1997

INTRODUCTION

Tri-Energetics is a practical tool for managing life. It does not imply that just by pursuing your own needs and wants, everything in your life will be perfect and you'll live happily ever after. Its real power lies in simplifying complicated situations by focusing on how to act effectively.

Tri-Energetics is not a golden key to happy-ever-aftering. It will not replace the need for intimacy, affection, protection, food, a lot of love, a few good laughs, or a little peace. Tri-Energetics will not help you win the lottery. Unfortunately, life is complicated and there's no magical formula that can cancel the pains of the past or prevent them in the future.

On the other hand, two essential features of Tri-Energetics can make it easier to understand and overcome problems, discover simple ways to resolve conflicts, learn more about human behavior, and become more peaceful.

First, there is the Tri-Energetic formula: know what you need, say what you want, and have clear intentions. When you are at a crossroads in life, you pave the way to clarity of mind by taking time to stop and ask yourself, "What do I need? What do I want? What are my intentions?"

To give an example of this, when a friend began a new career as a writer and simultaneously starting a new relationship, he used these Tri-Energetic questions to overcome stress and maintain his composure. He consciously stopped himself every hour on the hour, and asked himself, "What do I need? What do I want? What are my intentions?" To discover the answers to these questions he would ask them in different ways. Sometimes he'd breathe deep before answering. Sometimes he would emphasize a

different word in the question (What *do* I need? What do *I* need?) Sometimes he would vary the question (What do I *really* want right now?) He found that using Tri-Energetics in this simple way helped him focus on what was really important, and eliminated the rest.

Second, Tri-Energetics emphasizes the qualities of flexibility, tolerance, and curiosity. They magically blend to help us see who we are, what roles we're playing, and what choices we're making. By employing these qualities, they can become habits that determine our destiny.

When we're physically flexible, not rigid, we can bend. If we're not flexible, we can become brittle and easily break. Flexibility keeps us flowing, physically and emotionally. Yogis say age is measured by the flexibility of the spine. When we're tolerant, we're more openhearted, merciful, and compassionate. When we're not tolerant, we tend to become impatient, aggressive and violent. When we're curious, we're open to life and all its possibilities. When we're not curious, we become defensive. We blame and assume. Curiosity is the central core of spirituality, because if we simply believe, without questioning, we miss out on the joys of discovery. Our beliefs become dogmatic. Besides, true believers start wars.

By pausing to ask, "Am I being flexible? Am I being tolerant? How curious am I?" we begin to develop those qualities.

This book is primarily intended to help you use these two essential features of Tri-Energetics to turn problems into challenges and to overcome them. It will accomplish this if you learn to ask these simple questions: *What do I need? What do I want? What are my intentions? Am I being flexible? Am I being tolerant? Am I being curious?*

The book is also intended as an introduction to the use of Tri-Energetics as a tool for counselling others. Although counselling is as ancient as advising the kings and queens of yore, and is emerging today as a valuable addition to health and healing services, it can be as informal as helpful words to a neighbor or colleague. In other words, you don't have to be a professional to counsel others.

While it is quite possible for this book to help you use Tri-Energetics to better understand yourself, improve your personal relationships, and solve problems more easily, it is also true that reading about a tool is like taking a shower with a raincoat: it misses something essential. To get the full benefit of what is written here, I encourage you to *use* Tri-Energetics yourself. Find a few folks to try it on. I trust you'll discover ways to survive...even if you find yourself with an onion in your ear.

Let me explain. While working as a staff psychologist in a rehabilitation hospital, I got an earache. I was determined to go to work despite the painful infection.

A holistic doctor suggested that the vapors of an onion were the most effective way to heal the infection, and soothe the pain. "Just wrap a small piece of onion in some gauze, stick it in your ear, and go to work."

I needed to heal my earache, I wanted to do the best thing I could do for my ear, and I intended to go to work. I was flexible enough to try this unorthodox method for curing earaches. I got to work with a chunk of onion stuffed in my ear, neatly disguised under a headband.

However, because I couldn't hear very well at the staff meeting, someone asked if anything was wrong with my hearing.

"Oh, nothing's wrong with my hearing," I smiled brightly. "I just have an onion

in my ear.” I began to laugh. The stodgy chief-of-staff laughed, encouraging the prim nurse to laugh, and soon everybody was roaring. My ear began to pop and the painful pressure eased up. My tolerant and curious colleagues even learned something about the curative power of onions—and laughter.

If you ever find yourself in a position of having to get around with an onion in your ear, it might help to remember: if you know what you need and have clear intentions, you’re more likely to get what you want.

CHAPTER 1

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

However unique each of us may be, our basic survival needs are universal: air, food, water, and shelter. It's simple. We can't live without them.

The essence of a need is that it is necessary. It must be satisfied or there are consequences. The severity of the consequence depends on the need.

Our physical needs are not so different from those we need to survive. We need stimulation, in all sensory modalities, especially touch. We need warmth, movement, and cleansing. We need boundaries that define our limits, and space enough to explore and feel free. It's pretty simple. We may survive without them, but what would be the use?

On an emotional level, we also share a commonality of needs, but the consequences of deprivation are somewhat more complicated.

Tri-Energetics offers the following six primary emotional needs to help you discover what may or may not be missing in your life. The range of emotional needs is enormous. This list is intended to stimulate your imagination, not to limit it.

- (1) Security. Without security, we are unable to make commitments. Relationships are unstable, and we become dissatisfied, nervous, unstable, ungrounded, and distrustful.
- (2) Passion. Without passion life lacks diversity, excitement, and adventure. We become bored and restless, and lose the urge to create.
- (3) Power. We need to feel that we can make a difference and that we matter. Power lets us feel important. Without it, we are apt to feel helpless, insignificant, and hopeless.
- (4) Love. It's both an emotion and an energy. No love—no heart—no feelings of joy—emptiness. Without love we lose our connection to others. We suffer from a lack of

belonging. We can become isolated and lose our lust for life.

(5) Growth. Nothing stays the same. In every area of life, we are either growing or dying. When we don't feel we're growing, we feel that we're dying.

(6) Service. Nobody wants to feel as if she has nothing to offer. We want to know we're needed. Service is the key to feeling love for ourselves. It brings acknowledgment, recognition, and self-respect. It is the cosmic connection with a higher power that can open us to trust in guidance. Without being of service, we can perceive ourselves as useless, and we're probably lonely.

To make these primary emotional needs easy to remember, they can be related to the chakra system of eastern metaphysics. Chakras are energy centers in the body that regulate biological and emotional issues.

CHAKRA	LOCATION	ISSUE	NEED
6 & 7	brow & crown of head	intuition & spirituality	service
5	throat	communication	growth
4	Heart center	love	love
3	Solar plexus	power	power
2	genitals	sexuality	passion
1	anus	survival	security

If this is no help at all to you, I suggest taking the first letter of each need, and making up a sentence you can remember. For example, S-P-P-L-G-S could form the sentence, "Some People Prefer Long Green Socks." Have fun—it's also an emotional

need!

When one or more emotional need isn't being met, we have trouble. We become emotionally disturbed. This was the situation of a client of mine, who was so busy trying to survive a relationship she hardly had any time for daily life.

Alice, a divorced woman with two young children, was miserable. I asked her what was wrong.

"I'm dating someone now, but he's not willing to make a commitment."

"What else?" I asked.

"We're not even married, and he's already begun to take me for granted. Even though we have great sex from time to time, we never seem to do anything exciting anymore. He watches too much television. Frankly, I don't feel as if I'm important to him. Lately, he hardly notices me. I'm not even sure he loves me."

"Have you told him how you feel?" I asked.

"I told him we needed counselling because we can't seem to communicate with each other, but he's refused to come with me. I feel like it's up to me to save the relationship. I hate to break up because I think my kids love him, but I don't even know for that for sure."

Consider Alice's situation in terms of her emotional needs. When you use the primary emotional needs as a framework to identify what was missing in her life, you can easily see why she was unhappy. Her need for passion was being satisfied to some extent by "great sex from time to time." None of her other emotional needs were being met. No amount of passion could satisfy her needs for security, power, love, growth, or service. Satisfying one primary need can't compensate for dissatisfaction in all the

others.

Take Alice's unfulfilled need for security. A good way to begin to satisfy an unfulfilled primary need is to work with secondary needs that relate to it. A commitment is a secondary need that can help satisfy a primary emotional need for security. Secondary needs are acts, behaviors, or things that are necessary to satisfy a goal. Examples of secondary needs in other situations would be, "I need my boss to give me a raise because I need to feel secure and important." "I need a car because the trains are on strike, and I need to get to work on time." "I need a toothbrush because I need sweet-smelling breath when I kiss my lover." If feeling more secure was Alice's goal, she could focus on a secondary need, such as commitment, as a step toward becoming more secure.

Alice needed a clear commitment in order to feel secure. Kept commitments are the building blocks of trust. They join people heart to heart, soul to soul. They range from day-to-day agreements like calling if you're going to be late, to major commitments like promising never to abandon each other. No matter how simple the commitment, before making it, ask yourself what the benefits are. Do you really need it or are you being pressured into making it? Are you ready and prepared to make the commitment? What's the intention of the commitment? Will the commitment add to your stress level, or reduce it?

Acknowledgment is another secondary need that reinforces the primary need to feel important, accepted, and worthwhile. That's why it is crucial to harmonious relationships. In my experience as a counsellor, more dissatisfaction and unhappiness stems from an unfulfilled need for acknowledgment than any other single issue. This is true in love relationships, and in business, education, etc.

Consider the need for acknowledgment in the situation of Andrea and Michael who have been married for thirteen years. She is a beautiful, intelligent woman with a high-stress job in management. Michael is a successful advertising executive. They have a twelve-year-old daughter.

One evening, they were dressing for a lavish cocktail party being given by Michael's boss. Andrea put on an exotic gown, her hair had been creatively cut, and she looked great! She stood poised in front of Michael, waiting expectantly for him to comment on her appearance.

Michael looked at her and said matter-of-factly, "Ready honey? It's time to go."

Andrea exploded! She tore at the front of her gown, ripped it open and screamed, "I hate you."

Michael was stunned. He thought she'd gone crazy.

Michael had no idea how starved for acknowledgment Andrea had been. How could he? She hadn't told him. She'd hinted, insinuated, but never made it clear that she was desperate for his acknowledgment. This evening his lack of acknowledgment overwhelmed her.

They didn't make the party. But they did decide to come in for counselling. After hearing how important it was for his beautiful wife to hear his acknowledgment, Michael learned how difficult it was for him to give it to her. Further, Andrea learned how seldom she acknowledged Michael for what he needed to hear—that he was brilliant and creative at his work.

It's good to be aware of the difference between acknowledgment and approval. Approval is akin to permission from a parent or an authority figure. Acknowledgment is recognition of another person; it is non-judgmental, and not necessarily complimentary.

The need for a partner's approval can cause big problems. Children need approval because it makes them feel accepted, and loved. Disapproval may mean punishment, either physical or through the withholding of favors and attention. If we think we need a partner's approval, we're probably projecting parental images onto her and likely to resent her for it.

Acknowledgment, on the other hand, is adult-adult interaction. It is simply letting someone know that you notice that she* exists, that you have heard what she's said or done. It's often linked to expressions of gratitude, as opposed to approval's judgment. In Transactional Analysis, acknowledgment is defined as a "stroke," which is actually a unit of recognition. Strokes motivate us, because everything we do is for some kind of reward. If we don't receive enough positive strokes, we settle for negative ones.

If you need acknowledgment from your partner, your boss, or a friend, don't wait until you're about to scream, divorce, quit, or go crazy. Ask for it! But please, don't demand it because most of us resist being told what to do.

If an important "other" is unable to give you the acknowledgment you need, you might remember the Tri-Energetic formula and ask one or more of the following questions: "Do you know that I *need* acknowledgment from you?" "Do you know *how much* I need acknowledgment from you?" "What do you *need* in order to give me what I need?" Or, "What do you *want* me to do, so I can be acknowledged by you?" Or, "What's your *intention* when you withhold acknowledgment from me?" You might also

ask yourself, “Am I satisfying my loved one’s *need* for acknowledgment?”

Acknowledgment goes a long way towards helping us feel important.

If you think that the need to feel important is narcissistic, you may want to reconsider. We all need to feel important. To that extent it is a healthy narcissism. A five-year-old girl, about to leave her home for her first dance recital, suffered a wound to her sense of self worth on what was for her a momentous occasion. As her mother put the finishing touches on her pink hair ribbon, the child turned and asked, “Where’s Daddy? He’s going to be late for my show.”

The mother held the little girl close to her and said, “Daddy’s not going to make it, Sweetheart. He has something important to do tonight.”

The child’s tears stained more than her new dress. She carried the feeling of being unimportant straight into my office twenty-eight years later. You might ask yourself how important are you to yourself? Do you bother to cook a decent meal when you’re alone at home? Do you treat yourself to surprises or reward yourself for a job well done? Do you give yourself enough private time to relax or meditate? Is it easy for you to let someone give you the feeling that you’re less than beautiful? How well do you receive compliments? Do you ever underestimate your importance to others? Have you ever cast aside an invitation to someone’s birthday party, thinking you’d never be missed, only to learn your friend was dreadfully disappointed?

Emotional needs are not just the wants of a needy child. They are necessities for fulfilling our destiny. If we can’t satisfy our basic needs through positive behaviors, we manage to get them in destructive ways. Do you sometimes have the need to distort, lie, cheat, or steal? Do you over-eat, drink too much, or complain a lot? Do you take

* Throughout the text I’ve used the female pronouns *she* and *her* because they both contain the word *he*.

unnecessary risks?

I used to be naive enough to believe that the people who loved me should and could satisfy all my needs. I hadn't learned that I was responsible for my own body, mind, and spirit. Now I know that expecting someone else to satisfy my needs is as ludicrous as expecting the pope to open a condom shop.

As important as it is to care for ourselves, and to tend to our own needs, we still need support systems. Life lived in isolation is painful. Community brings comfort. People often turn to counsellors or go to workshops because they are lonely and isolated. And we can't confuse isolation with privacy. Just imagine telling a prisoner, "We're just giving you some privacy," as they lock her up in isolation. Privacy gives us an opportunity to refresh ourselves, to rejuvenate, and become creative. Isolation is *not* something we readily choose because our need to belong is so strong; I wouldn't be surprised if it was based in our DNA.

My own intention to create a supportive community was born out of the despair of isolation when one freezing, lonely night, I felt so alienated I thought nobody cared if I lived or died. Too cold to sleep, I had an awakening: I needed to belong.

I'd just returned from India. No one met me at the airport. My rented flat had no heat, and I knew if I didn't freeze to death, I had to go back to work at the rehabilitation hospital in the morning. As a psychologist, I was supposed to work with known and approved methodologies, but I had strange ideas. My visions of therapeutic techniques were so different from those I'd been trained to do, I didn't know if I belonged.

I lay shivering in despair when suddenly, through the ethers, I heard a whisper, "You just want to help people. Go to the hospital and expect a miracle." I realized how

desperately I needed to feel accepted by my colleagues. I also knew claiming to hear voices in a psychiatric hospital could get a person locked up and labeled.

I was amazed at what happened at the hospital the next morning: I was greeted with warm hugs! The loving welcome gave me the courage to tell the team about the dreadful night before. My colleague's curiosity about mysticism, magic, and spirituality inspired me to share how lonely I was. It was indeed a miracle. Not only did my co-workers want to hear about India; they wanted me to teach them some of what I'd learned. The joy of belonging helped me understand the *need* to belong.

Beginning to satisfy basic emotional needs lets us notice we have higher needs, like finding enough "soul"-food to nourish our souls. Spirituality is what nourishes the soul.

Spirituality has been flagrantly missing from psychological approaches to health and healing. Few counsellors even discuss the spiritual needs of a client or patient. It's taboo. It's like talking about religion. But spirituality and religion have little in common. Believing that going to a church or synagogue makes you become spiritual is like believing that running along a railroad will make you become a train. In graduate school, when I announced my intention to use "love" as the energy for working with clients, my professors looked at me as if I was brain damaged. Still I know that counselling without heart is like sex without love—it may help, but it can't heal.

The word "spiritual" has been so over-used and ill defined that it often conjures images of new-age bimbos fluffing chakras. Spirituality is simply acknowledging that there's more in and around you than you can see or hear. You don't have to name it, analyze it, or wrap it in red ribbons. You just have to *feel* it. Spirituality, like orgasm, has

to be experienced to be understood.

You can create spiritual experiences simply by having a clear intention to do so. Imagine you're sitting in a dark, empty room. Just as you realize you're feeling sad and lonely, a charismatic child comes bounding joyfully into the room. She stands in front of you, her arms outstretched. "I love you from here to the moon," she says, inviting you into a full-hearted embrace.

With this visualization, you have two choices. You can focus on the mundane details of the scene; you can notice the child's hair color, or the clothes she's wearing. You can even wonder why she loves you. Or you can perceive the spirit of love which the child offered you—and have a spiritual experience.

It is the spirit that lives in all things, always, and in all ways, that animates life. It's our perceptions that influence our ability to recognize the spirit. Once we become conscious of that all-prevailing spirit, life itself becomes a spiritual experience.

Spirituality is every simple act of kindness you perform, every smile you give a stranger, every tear you shed for those in pain. As you become more spiritually aware, you become more curious, and your interest in others tells them you care. As you develop your sense of spirituality, you automatically become compassionate, you can open your heart and forgive. Forgiveness brings grace (I'm grateful for the profound effect it's had upon my soul, not to mention the furrow it took out of my brow).

There's no better way to cultivate a spiritual component in your daily life, than to become grateful. The most sophisticated psychotherapeutic techniques cannot compare to the efficacy of someone with an open heart. And there's no easier way to open a heart, than to fill it with gratitude.

You may not have an abiding sense of spirituality, but chances are you know a spiritually homeless person when you see one. So to help you focus on your higher “spiritual” purpose for living, ask yourself, “How can I be of service?” Because it’s difficult to be of service if your basic needs are unsatisfied, Tri-Energetics says, “know your needs,” so you can satisfy them.

In order to help you identify unsatisfied needs, Tri-Energetics uses concepts from Bioenergetics, a diagnostic system based on the theory that deprivation of needs in childhood determines the way body/mind and emotions develop. Specifically, Bioenergetics hypothesizes that the age at which deprivation occurs and the intensity of the traumas involved determine the structure of the body and the corresponding emotional issues. By looking at the body from a Bioenergetic perspective, it’s possible to discover our chronically unsatisfied needs. Then we can use Tri-Energetics to begin to satisfy them.

Imagine that as an infant you reached out, crying to be fed or touched. Nobody responded. You sobbed, screamed, wailed, and still your most important needs were denied. Nobody picked you up. Nobody fed you. If this intense deprivation happened repeatedly during the first six months of life, Bioenergetics says that to survive the pain of that deprivation, you might ultimately stop reaching out. You’d stop putting energy out to an unresponsive world. Your arms would become limp and lifeless. Your wrists and ankles, deprived of energy, would remain very thin. When you began to walk (on the outside of your feet), your head would hang over to one side, and your feet would barely touch the ground. You’d have trouble making eye contact. You’d assume you have no right to need anything. You might feel you had no right to exist at all. Ultimately you

would develop a Schizoid body character type.

A Tri-Energetic intervention with a person whose arms hung limply at her side and who had trouble making eye contact might first involve asking, “How would you like to meet your need to get some energy into your arms so you can reach out to people?” Therapeutic activities might include activities from swimming to using a punching bag.

If, however, deprivation were most severe at around two years of age, the effects would be very different. Imagine that as a toddler, your need for limits, boundaries in which to feel safe, we’re not satisfied. Imagine that nobody said no. Imagine having had a rejecting, seductive parent (albeit covertly), and your need for support and physical contact was never satisfied. You may become distrustful, deny your own feelings, and physically develop significantly more in the chest area than below the waist. Your eyes may have an intense brightness. You either need to control people, or seduce them into needing you. Ultimately you would develop a psychopathic body character type.

A Tri-Energetic intervention with a barrel-chested, bright-eyed Psychopath, may include questions like, “Do you know you have a need to control? Do you want to change the way you deny your feelings? Are you curious to experience what it feels like to lose control?”

Al Lowen, developer of Bioenergetics, defines five basic body character structures using traditional psychiatric language (don’t panic, they all sound awful): Schizoid, Oral, Psychopathic, Masochistic, and Rigid (Lowen, 1975).

To illustrate how people with essentially different body character types might relate to each other, imagine this scene in which five co-workers have ordered lunch. They begin arguing about who should go to pick up the food.

The Schizoid, her head tilted to one side, her arms dangling, looks at the floor and says, "I don't care who goes. I don't need to eat."

The very tall, long-armed hungry looking Oral character type looks at the schizoid and says, "That's because you're out of touch with your feelings. Well I'm starving. I can never have enough to eat. I'll get the food because I don't want to become dependent on anyone in this group."

The buxom Psychopath shoots an intense look at the oral and winks, "I'm going to get the food because I know how to get the chef to fill up those sandwiches."

The Masochist (with her flat ass, short neck, thick waist, and muscular legs) smiles at the psychopath and says, "You always have to be in control over everyone. Well, my need to please makes it easy for me to run right out and get the food."

The well-proportioned Rigid with harmonious looking features stands balanced on both feet. He put his hands on his hips and says, "Rubbish, I may have a hard time saying yes to love, but I feel free enough to get out of here and pick up the food."

The unsatisfied needs of the body character types are different because of the different deprivations they've endured. According to Lowen:

- . the Schizoid needs to know she has a right to exist;
- . the Oral needs to know it is safe to need and still be independent;
- . the Psychopath needs to feel in her power; trying to balance autonomy and independence with closeness;

- . the Masochist needs self-esteem, and with a need to please, struggles between closeness and freedom; and
- . the Rigid struggles with the need to surrender to love, while fighting for the feeling of freedom.

Now that you've had a close-up look at body character types, perhaps you'll recognize your own. We all endure traumas at practically every stage of development. So when identifying your body character, please remember that nobody is solely one character type. We're composites of all the events we suffer and survive.

When you feel confused, frightened, or frustrated, a simple way to discover what you need physically, emotionally, or spiritually is to take a breath, and ask yourself, "What do I really need right now?" If you're having trouble with someone ask, "What do you need from me now?"

Take a moment. Sit down. Breathe deep and ask yourself how you manage to meet your needs. Are those basic needs being satisfied? Tri-Energetics encourages:

Satisfy needs, simplify wants, clarify intentions.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Knowing the difference between what we *need* and what we *want* simplifies our lives, and makes it a lot easier on the people around us. Fulfilling needs—physical, emotional, and spiritual is necessary. Wants, on the other hand, vary, change, and are usually limitless.

One young man helped me distinguish the difference between needs and wants when he was admitted to a drug abuse hospital.

During the intake, I asked the boy a routine question, “Do you need anything special?”

“I *want* to go home to my family,” he said shaking, obviously frightened.

“I hear you,” I said wanting to comfort him. “But right now you *need* to be here to detoxify. It’s not safe for you to be home.”

The boy’s eyes searched mine. “If I stay here and get what I *need*, will you help me go home when I *want* to?”

Needs are necessary. Wants, however understandable, may or may not be what’s best for us. Once we’re clear on the difference between what we need and what we want, we have to be able to express and understand our wants clearly.

The problem is most of us don’t know what we want.

This year I had the privilege of helping a group of men who wanted to live more harmoniously with their partners. The men were sitting in pairs, facing each other. I asked them to share what it was they wanted from their female partners. One was to listen carefully while the other spoke. After ten minutes or so, the listener was asked to

state what he'd heard the speaker say he wanted. At least three-quarters of the listeners had no idea what the speaker wanted. Perhaps the listener didn't really listen, but the fact is, the speakers had either been too vague, too complex, or simply didn't know what they wanted.

Many people don't know what they want because the right to want *anything* was denied them at a very early age. Children are often told, "You can't have that," "Who do you think you are?" "Don't be greedy." Consequently, just wanting something is unconsciously associated with guilt or fear. When we're refused what we want, we feel rejected.

Recently a client was lamenting, "My wife wants..."

I stopped him, "What do *you* want?"

He looked at me for a moment in shocked silence. "Nobody has ever asked me that question," he said sadly. "I have no idea."

To avoid feeling rejected, most adults stop themselves from wanting things without knowing it. I wonder if that's the reason most of us get tongue-tied, cross-eyed, and pull our hair when we're trying to explain what we want. Whatever the inhibiting force, the fact remains—saying what we want is not always easy.

Even when we know what we want, saying it can be very difficult. For example, I consider myself outspoken and uninhibited. Yet recently at the hairdresser I was amazed at my inability to simply say, "I want you to rinse my hair again, I don't think you got all the shampoo out." Perhaps it's my fear of not being the perfect client. Maybe it's my fear of rejection.

I learned a lesson about saying what I want when I became a stepmother (not an

easy role for anyone to *step* into). When Henry and I met, he had two young sons. Despite the fact that we'd met long after Henry had divorced their mother, the boys' feeling, "You took Daddy away from Mommy," was an unconscious resentment that kept them from being close to me. It was easy for them to feel this way because the boys lived in Texas with their mother, and Henry and I worked most of the year in Europe. I had in fact taken their Daddy away. We remained pleasantly polite for many years until the dike finally broke one afternoon while we were having pancakes during their summer holiday with us in Amsterdam.

We were seated at one of our favorite restaurants. When his third order of pancakes arrived, I asked David, Henry's younger son, if I could have a bite. He quickly covered his plate with his arms and said, "No, they're all mine." He wasn't kidding!

My tolerance and flexibility jumped out the window, taking my humor with them. I yelled, "You're acting like a selfish, little brat," and I threw his last pancakes on the ground.

At the yoga center where we were living, yelling was seen as a degenerate's loss of control. Taking someone's food from his plate and throwing it on the ground would have unraveled their turbans. After a dreary walk home, Henry and I encouraged both boys to express their feelings until finally David hollered, "What do you want from me?"

I shouted back, "I *want* us to have a deep, loving relationship."

He yelled about his issues, I yelled about mine, and we all kicked and threw pillows until finally, exhausted and relaxed, we literally rolled on the floor with laughter.

It's been many years since that showdown. Now we have disagreements, but we remain close, caring, and honest. We not only love each other; we have fun together too.

The boys are part of the heart and soul of my life. Our ability to say what we want helped us transcend the stepparent role. I learned if you love someone, tell her what you want. Conversely, if you don't ask for what you want, you're setting yourself up for disappointment, and you'll likely find someone to blame.

A depressed woman sat in my office sobbing.

"It's the same every Mother's Day. My son forgets he has a mother!"

"What do you want him to do for you on Mother's Day?" I asked.

"I'd like to get a phone call, or a card from him, that's all," she said, blowing her nose.

"Have you ever asked him for what you want?"

"No. He should know every mother wants to be acknowledged on Mother's Day."

We may not always get what we ask for. But if we don't say what we want, we may never get it at all.

Think about it. Do you know what you really want? Keep in mind that sometimes we need the things we want. Love, touch, affection, inspiration are necessary.

So is a good night's sleep. Recently a friend wrote:

My job was going well, my partnership was growing healthier and I was getting sick. Regularly. I asked myself, "What do I want?" I realized I wanted more sleep! My partner is a night owl, and it is fun to stay up with him because that's also when we make love. My first reaction was to become

angry and blame him for my lack of sleep. Then I used the Tri-Energetic formula. I need to say what I want. I want more sleep, and I want to make love. I intend to have a satisfying sexual relationship.

We discussed the problem and he agreed to keep the volume down when he listened to music or watched TV. We agreed to change our habit of only making love at night. Now, we also make love in the morning. So happily, I'm enjoying enough sleep—and more sex, too.

It's also important to say what you do *not* want.

A couple was unhappily married for twenty years. When the angry husband finally applied for a divorce, the judge asked him, "What are some of your complaints, sir?"

"Every Friday night my wife bakes a terrible chocolate cake, which I have detested from the first time she served it twenty-five years ago."

"What did she say when you complained about the cake?"

"Oh, I never actually told her I didn't like it until last Friday."

"Why didn't you tell her all those years?"

"I didn't want to hurt her feelings. Besides, I never dreamed she'd keep on baking the same damn cake for twenty-five years."

Wants are non-essential and are sometimes neurotic illusions stemming from our belief systems, like, "I want a new dress because I'll feel better about myself wearing something new." The desire for material things is endless (personally, I'm a recovering

shop-aholic).

Consider asking yourself, “Is this really what I want, or am I motivated by something else? Fear? Guilt? Insecurity? Habit? Is this what *I* want, or is it what someone wants me to want? Am I just doing this because I’ve been brainwashed by advertising?”

Tri-Energetics suggests, “Simplify wants.” To do this, you may want to become mindful of mass media, which has whipped the unsuspecting viewer into a consuming frenzy. Even sex experts advertise.

For example, if you want good sex, you don’t have to be a tantric master. It may be important to see a sex counsellor, take a course, or read some books because sexual expertise, like brain surgery or scuba diving, needs knowledge and practice. But in any case, you do have to say what you want, be curious about what your partner wants, and have a clear intention to please and be pleased. Intimacy requires the ability to ask your partner, “What do you really want, Sweetheart?”

It’s not just what you ask your partner or when, but “how” you ask. Asking her what she wants while sounding like a nurturing parent, or a rebellious child, can easily turn her off, before turning her on. Getting what you want is a lot easier if you understand how three ego states determine how you express what you want.

Eric Berne, the intuitive genius who developed Transactional Analysis, (TA) was a psychiatrist who wanted to bring psychology out of the ivory tower where it was mysteriously veiled in elaborate words and cloaked in foggy theories. He clarified the organization of the ego into three discrete psychological and behavioral entities: the Parent, Adult and Child. Then he focused on which ego state a person is in during a

transaction (Berne, 1974). For example, a wife may say to her husband, "Get your dirty shoes off my clean floor," sounding like a critical Parent. The husband would likely respond from his rebellious Child, and say something like, "Don't tell me what to do." It's the Adult ego that processes information and makes rational decisions. So if the woman would say, from her Adult ego, "Honey, I want to keep the freshly washed floor clean, so will you please leave your shoes off until it dries?" her husband would be more apt to respond from his adult with, "Of course, no problem."

Tri-Energetics recognizes that different ego states have different needs, wants, and intentions. Simply understanding that the Child in us has different wants from our Adult ego simplifies decision-making. For example, someone says, "I need that job but I want to sleep late." Perhaps it's the demanding Parent ego that's saying, "You'd better take that job, or else." This forces the rebellious Child to say, "I'd rather sleep in." Understanding the conflict gives the Adult ego a chance to process the data. Then the person's free to decide whether or not to take a job that requires getting to work early.

To use this theoretical information, take a breath and relax. If you notice that you interact primarily from your Parent ego, which is a common occurrence especially when you're really a parent, perhaps you can improve your relationships by being more playful and interacting from your free Child now and then. If childish clowning-around gets you into trouble, try focusing on your Adult ego and see if your relationships improve. Awareness of our ego states makes it easier to be peaceful.

Practically everyone, regardless of which ego state they're in, wants to feel peaceful. I've never met anyone who wakes up in the morning, grateful for the stress in her body or the worry on her mind. If you want to start the day peaceful, consider

focusing on things you can be grateful for. Gratitude brings inner peace, and at any moment we're either grateful, or complaining.

Another way to feel inner peace is to pray. Praying is like having a talk with God. However you perceive a higher power, it's a wonderful way to satisfy the need to worship. Prayer, like meditation, is a time of spiritual reflection. People pray to confess, to thank, and of course to request. Another way is to chant a mantra.

Chanting mantras is a wonderful way to transcend negative thoughts and emotions. Mantras are words and sounds that give practical help and healing. As prayers, they connect to us to a higher power; as power syllables, they protect and heal. Mantras have been used in the East as a form of healing and Self-Realization for thousands of years. All cultures have some form of devotional chanting. It's form ranges from African tribal drumming and singing, to Gregorian chants in the Catholic Church. Singing soul-stirring sounds awakens the life energy, quiets the mind and emotions, and can fill the heart with love.

There's a mantra for almost anything you need, want, or intend. So most of the mantras we chant in Playshops deal with the same issues that people are searching for help with. For example, there's a mantra for making peace with our parents, for radiant masculinity, and communication with spirits. There's a mantra for wisdom, wealth, protection, health, and healing. There are mantras for finding a partner, love, inner peace, and gratitude. (Marshall, 1994, 1995, 1998, 1999).

Tri-Energetics encourages you to become more peaceful by saying what you want. When you clearly express yourself, you give others a chance to give you what you want, as well the chance to refuse you. Just remember the difference between what you

need and what you want.

If you don't know what you want, consider making a list of things that might add pleasure to your life. Check your list to be sure you're not setting yourself up for disappointment, or that you're not too greedy. Also check to see if there is anything you want that you would ask for if you had more courage? What prevents you from asking for what you want? Is your partner free to tell you what he/she needs or wants? Don't delude yourself that life would be better if all your wants were satisfied. A clear intention to simplify your wants helps bring inner peace.

CHAPTER 3

WHAT'S YOUR INTENTION?

Intentions are the plans that guide our actions. It's not enough to "decide" to change something in us or in our lives. The decision has to be backed up with an intention to act. To *do* something. Even though most of our actions are habits and we usually act unconsciously, it's difficult to improve the quality of our lives without clear intentions.

When a dentist complained of stress at work, I asked, "What do you need?"

"I need to get more cooperation from my staff," she responded spontaneously.

"Good! What do you want them to do?"

"I want them to be nicer to each other, to stop bickering, and to answer the phone promptly and politely."

"So what's your intention?"

"I intend to schedule a meeting for my staff on Friday and tell them what I want."

Articulating this plan relieved much of her stress, and started her on the road to getting what she wanted.

A couple with serious marital problems came to a weekend group for partners. Standing in the middle of the group the woman began shouting at her man, "You never understand a damn word I say."

Her husband became visibly disgusted. He rolled his eyes, turned his back on her and sat down.

"What's your intention right now?" I asked her.

"To get him to listen to me when I speak to him."

“Oh,” I said winking, “Then I suggest you keep that intention in mind, but find a different way to get what you want.”

The woman went to where her partner was sitting, knelt down, and took his hands in hers. “I’m sorry,” she said sincerely. “I didn’t mean to shout or hurt your feelings. I love you. I really want you to understand my feelings. I intend to explain without shouting at you.”

They embraced. The group cheered. Everyone became aware of the importance of having clear intentions.

Sometimes intentions get clear when an angel whispers in our ear, pushes us off a mountain, or guides us to a computer. Angels have helped me clarify my intentions. When I’m quiet, meditative, or in touch with nature, I sense their unseen presence. One was in an operating room, when I really needed him.

During my first marriage, I played the role of traditional wife for thirteen years. I was like an obedient little girl obeying her dominant father. It wasn’t totally unpleasant. I accepted myself as a culturally law-abiding wife and mother, who knew her place and stayed there. I prided myself in maintaining an IQ low enough to tolerate the superficiality of the suburbs. There was security in knowing he would come home with enough money to pay the rent and feed the family. But for a myriad of reasons, I didn’t love or respect him.

Shortly after my third daughter was born, and died, I was rushed to a hospital for emergency surgery. During that operation my heart stopped. In that near-death experience I entered a new reality. I saw the face of a guardian angel and heard him whisper, “You deserve to live.” I knew then I was destined for a new way of living. To

do that, I had to leave my husband. I came back to earth with a clear intention to get divorced. Without that clarity, I might have remained in a relationship that would have prevented me from ever developing myself, or finding the true love of my life.

I cannot make contact at will with Charlie, a guardian angel who's been hanging around me for years. Nor can I make contact with any other guiding light or messenger at will. I wish I could. But when the need is greatest, and my intention to contact spiritual allies is clear, I feel their nearness. I've encountered magical messengers in the form of everything from dogs to belly dancers, from bag ladies to singing saints. When I'm confused or fearful, my clear intention is to trust that sometimes the demons I fear are angels in disguise.

Perfectly clear intentions can have an incredible impact on the physical body. Two distinguished American ophthalmologists had a patient who suffered from an opacified reticular capsule, which in lay terms is simply a clouding of the bag, which contains the lens of the eye. Normally, this can be easily corrected with surgery. But this patient had other problems, which caused the operation to be risky. They explained the risks involved, and when the patient asked if postponing the operation would cause a greater problem, they said no. They also admitted that they had never seen a clouded bag clear up without surgery. They then explained what the anatomy actually was, and that his choices were to polish the capsule in surgery by scraping away cells that blocked the light, or use a laser to puncture the clouded capsule. After the patient had been counselled extensively, he opted to meditate for a few months.

The doctors were astounded when he came back. He had gone from a 20/70 vision to 20/25 (virtually normal). He had accomplished what they would have done surgically through visualizing scraping away the cellular buildup.

Visualizing is a great way to manifest an intention. Years of amazing experiences have taught me to never underestimate the power of visualization. Recently, I needed a Dutch female singer who could play guitar and assist with the music in an up-coming weekend for women. While chanting with a large group of people, I consciously visualized a female guitarist who could fill the bill. During the intermission, Henry came to me and said, "Honey, a young woman is waiting to talk to you outside. She's a musician and she's interested in working with you."

I deliberately resist taking these miracles for granted. Visualizing doesn't always work, but when it does, I'm grateful...and I celebrate!

Clear intentions help us make enlightened choices. Alice had been in counselling for about a month when I asked if she knew what she wanted to change.

"Just my life," she said offhandedly.

"Say more," I encouraged. "That's too global."

"Well, I've been divorced for three years, my two kids are driving me crazy, I hate my job, and..."

"Do you know what you want?" I asked.

Alice paused and hesitantly said, "I want to meet a man I can enjoy."

"What exactly does 'enjoy' mean to you?" I asked.

"Oh you know, just to have some fun, maybe have a fling with."

"When you say you want to meet a man and have a fling, is it your intention to have a series of very short-term affairs?"

Alice flushed with anger. "I don't know what I intend."

“So it seems you’ve been convincing yourself that what you want is what you think men want from you: a one-night-stand, or a weekend or two.”

“That’s it, damn it,” Alice yelled. “I don’t feel entitled to a real relationship.”

Alice worked on her insecurity and lack of self-esteem, and after several sessions, finally reached the conclusion, “I deserve to love and be loved, and I intend to find someone who’ll love my kids, too.”

As soon as her intention was clear, she began going to places where she met men who were also seeking permanent partners. She went to groups like Parents Without Partners, social dances at her church, and even enrolled in a language school where she met and married her French teacher. Her intention was clear, and she got what she wanted.

Not every clear intention brings the results we want. But I share some of these success stories because what would be the intention of telling you about the failures?

Clear intentions help turn problems into challenges. For example there are predictable stages in relationships: attraction, excitement, projection, expectations, disappointment, blame, separation, attraction (usually to someone new). Even in long-lived relationships, this pattern repeats itself. With a clear intention to stop blaming, you can return to attraction. Even to the same person.

Sometimes, we have to be flexible and let intentions change. Years ago, on my way to the hospital to see my mother, I drove through a storm, leaning over the steering wheel, squinting to see. Determined to be strong, I kept repeating, “I have a clear intention. I have a clear intention!”

I’d done the best I could. I’d searched for solutions, argued for options.

“She’s too sick for me to manage her at home,” I’d cry to doctors, friends, and hospital administrators.

From the doctor I heard, “She’s not sick enough to remain in the hospital.”

From the hospital administrator I heard, “She’s exceeded her allowable stay.”

From the hospice, “She’s not close enough to death for us to take her in.”

I prayed for help, guidance, answers. Friends had offered tales of similar struggles, but their stories brought little solace. They didn’t know my mother.

The elevator took a year to get to the fourth floor where my mother lay helpless in her bed. The nurses greeted me with their familiar waves and friendly faces. As I walked along the corridor to her room, my head bowed in grief, I thought, “Now I must perform the worst of all possible atrocities: I will admit my mother to a nursing home!”

I had absolutely made up my mind. My intentions were clear. I ran the script in my head, “I’ll hold her in my arms, massage her shoulders, brush her hair. She’ll smile and we will cry together.”

Her room was cold. She lay huddled beneath her blankets. Her frail child-size frame barely raising the covers. I tiptoed toward her. Instinctively she turned and faced me.

“I’ve been hoping you’d manage to get here through this storm,” she said trying to sound cheerful for me.

We talked about her frighteningly swollen feet. A white-coated angel who winked at me supportively, knowingly, replaced the oxygen tube as she went about the business of keeping my mother alive.

I caught my breath when my mother asked, “When are you taking me home with

you?"

Her moist eyes locked onto mine. I felt her need in my bones.

"Soon" I said, knowing she had my heart wrapped in an invisible cord that survived years of pain. Her misery tore into my soul.

"Soon, Mom," I said, "soon."

I walked to the nurses' station holding back my tears. My voice was barely audible as I said, "I'll take my mother home...tomorrow."

If we follow our hearts, intentions can change.

Concentrate on something you need or want in your life, and visualize taking actions that will fulfill your intentions. If you have difficulty visualizing, consider drawing (or painting) while concentrating on your needs or wishes. Knowing what you need and want makes it easier to have clear intentions. For example, selecting a mate, before knowing what you need or want, is like shopping for shoes when you don't know what size you wear. Tri-Energetics suggests that having clear intentions while remaining flexible and tolerant, will help you simplify and direct your life.

CHAPTER 4

ARE YOU FLEXIBLE?

The following poem from the *Tao Te King* sums up the value of flexibility:

A man is born gentle and weak
At his death he is hard and stiff.
Green plants are tender and filled with sap.
At their death they are withered and dry.
Therefore the stiff and unbending is the disciple of death.
The gentle and yielding is the disciple of life.
A tree that is unbending is easily broken.
The hard and strong will fall.
The soft and weak will overcome.
If we're not flexible, we break.

A doctor came to a workshop with severe back pain. We were doing yoga early in the morning, but he was so stiff and inflexible that it wasn't even possible for him to sit on the floor. Doing yoga seemed out of the question. But with a lot of encouragement, and being an emotionally flexible guy, he decided to give it a try. He reluctantly got on a cushion and tentatively began to stretch. The next morning, he was even more courageous, and did a little more. By the third day, he was able to do almost all the exercises. By the end of the five-day workshop, he was able to flex his spine, touch his toes, and to his amazement, his back pain was gone. Now, fifteen years later, he's a yoga enthusiast.

To be physically flexible, we need to let energy flow throughout the body. Blocks,

or holding patterns of chronic tension, restrict the flow of energy. When we experience a traumatic event, the memory of that trauma can remain buried deep in the cells of the body. These cellular memories cause muscular tensions—armor that keeps us inflexible. We can release these blocks in several ways. We can scream, cry, laugh, or massage them away. We can even consciously dance or sing them away. But regardless of how, it's important to release these impediments to flexibility.

The suppleness of youth disappears rapidly if we don't consciously stay flexible. That's why yoga is a fundamental part of Tri-Energetics. Yoga is a sophisticated technology for staying healthy, and an integrated holistic system of energy management. Yoga has also helped me stay sane. There are many schools of yoga, and it's important to find one that's right for you. Although I don't consider myself a yoga teacher, I have taught a combination of Kundalini and Hatha Yoga for many years in hospitals, in Playshops, and at home.

There are many fruits on the great tree of yoga, which we integrate into Tri-Energetics—meditation, mantras, service, inner peace, body awareness and flexibility—the list goes on. But the yogic teaching of proper breathing is a tool we use in all aspects of daily life. Taking a deep breath during a counselling session can clear the mind, open the heart, and relax the body. Taking a breath while stretching, oxygenates the blood, detoxifies the muscles, and lets us stretch until we're flexible. Besides, you can breathe anytime, anywhere.

There's no time like the present to take a deep breath. Try this: inhale through the nose letting the belly expand. Bring the air up into your lungs and then your chest. When the lungs are full, gently begin exhaling through the nose. Don't hold the breath.

Let the belly contract as the air flows out, until the lungs are empty. Without pausing or holding the breath out, begin again with an inhale. The only thing better than one deep breath, is two deep breaths.

Stretching, of course, is the other essential feature of yoga, and is the single most important feature of flexibility. In fact, almost all formal forms of physical activity begin with some form of stretching as a warm up. Yoga teaches how to relax muscles and how to extend their normal elasticity so that the body becomes progressively more supple. Without some form of stretching, the muscles of the spine shorten and stiffen. Then, any abrupt movement may cause an accidental displacement of one of the vertebrae.

Yoga is a rich and complicated system that few people do outside of a yoga class. And sometimes we just need to stretch. That's why Tri-Energetics teaches seven stretches that keep the body flexible, and relatively toned, in seven minutes a day (Moore, 1990). But whether you do these seven stretches or not, if you stretch and breathe regularly, you'll be a lot healthier than if you don't. Like a comedienne once said, "If I knew I would live this long, I would have taken better care of myself."

Physical flexibility helps us stay fit. When we feel good about bodies, it's easier to stay in good spirits and become emotionally flexible.

I was a teenager when a friend and I got tickets for a musical show in a local theater. It was the first time either of us was going to see a popular singer...in person. We were really excited. We arrived at the theater, only to learn that the headliner we had expected was taken ill. We could either have our money back, or be flexible and stay to hear a newcomer...named Otis Redding.

Being flexible often allows for surprises. Like Herman Hesse said, "Strange

travel suggestions are the dancing lessons of the gods.” If we’re not flexible, how can we “travel” at all?

Flexibility in our relationships makes it easier for people to tolerate us. Nobody enjoys someone whose inflexibility keeps her from being spontaneous. Besides, life’s unpredictable. The more flexible we are, the easier it is to accept change.

Emotional flexibility keeps us open to new possibilities and prevents us from “cracking” or “snapping” with stress. Being emotionally flexible means not getting angry every time things don’t go your way, or when people don’t do what you expect. If you want to know how enlightened you are, just count how many times a day you get upset.

My younger daughter taught me the necessity of a flexible attitude.

She was no longer my baby girl. She was a grown woman with children of her own. A woman who like grown-ups everywhere, had outgrown the need for mothering. She wanted nurturing and acknowledgment, not criticism or advice. Mostly, she needed me to be flexible. Part of her, the angry child part, resented the authoritarian rule-maker, the one she perceived as having all the power—the mother.

I sat on the kitchen chair and watched as she stood at the refrigerator door, holding it open long enough to cool the room. I sounded just like my own mother, only worse—like a drill sergeant in an army.

"Can you please shut that refrigerator door, it's getting cold in here!"

"I'm over thirty and I don't need my mother telling me what to do."

The mood grew as sour as the look on my face.

We’re too much alike, my daughter and I. Whenever we focus on the things we

dislike about each other, we manifest them like mechanical tin soldiers. We wind them up, bring them out, and let them fight. We bring out the worst in each other, then complain about bringing out the worst in each other.

She grabbed her pack of cigarettes from the table and headed out the door for a smoke.

The guilty feeling I'd worked so hard to overcome came back with a vengeance. I felt responsible for her nicotine addiction because I smoked during my pregnancy with her. Before she made it out the door I said, "Stop smoking, you're killing yourself." My voice sounded harsh, and just like my own mother's.

"Stop telling me what to do," she yelled back.

"I'm sorry," I managed to mutter, wondering what I could say or do to offer comfort, not complaints.

"Just accept me as I am," she pleaded. "Be flexible, Mother. It's my body."

"I love you," I said passionately, trying to hold back my tears. "I just can't be flexible about smoking."

"Mom, can't you see I'm doing the best I can! Can't you understand that?" She slammed the door on her way out.

It was obvious I had to be more flexible. It was her life, her body, and her choices. She had the right to be herself without having to worry about how it affected me. That's what I had struggled for with my mother. It's what we all struggle for in the end. God, I wanted to comfort her. I sat alone, wanting her to come back in and dreading what might happen next. I feared the whole idea of a flexible mother/daughter relationship was hopeless.

She came in without warning and said brightly, "I promise to shut the refrigerator door, and I'll only smoke when you're not looking."

I jumped up from the kitchen chair. "I promise to watch my tone of voice and I'm going to..."

Before I could say another word she smiled and said, "Just stay flexible, Mom. Just stay flexible."

Tri-Energetics views flexibility primarily as a need of the physical body in order to be healthy and strong. Physical suppleness helps us be emotionally and spiritually flexible. Emotional flexibility lets me get along with my daughter, and spiritual flexibility lets me chant Sanskrit mantras with Buddhist monks in a Catholic Church.

Recently, during a Playshop, I asked people to think back to a time when either a parent or some authority figure was not flexible with them. One man remembered how his parents accused him of being a coward because he wanted to be a conscientious objector. His motives were honorable. He didn't believe in killing. But the effect of his parent's inflexibility to even try to understand his intention left him insecure about himself. A middle-aged woman recalled being severely punished as a teenager because she came home thirty minutes after she was expected. As a result of her parent's inflexibility, she became belligerent and spiteful.

To see the effect an inflexible attitude has had on you, think back to a time in your childhood when someone important was inflexible with you.

Who was your role model for being flexible? Think about yourself now: do you lose your composure if your expectations are met with disappointments? Are you flexible enough to flow with them? If you asked your family or friends, "Do you think

"I'm flexible?" what do you think they'd say? How well could you tolerate the answer?

CHAPTER 5

ARE YOU TOLERANT?

Tolerance is the attitude of an open mind, which leads to an open heart. In a physical sense, tolerance is the space between objects that allows them to move and to function in a system. It is the space between our boundaries that allows us to live with other people.

Becoming tolerant requires raising our consciousness. Tolerance implies being broad-minded, more patient, and receptive.

Henry is one of the easiest-to-live-with people I know, and he resists change with radical enthusiasm. Recently, I wanted to buy two chairs for our kitchen. Henry did not. He resisted.

One day, while friends were visiting, they happened upon two chairs exactly like those I wanted. Henry was less than enthusiastic. “Why change the way the kitchen looks now?” he grumbled. But he was tolerant and we discussed the pros and cons of having the chairs in the house.

I didn’t get annoyed at his resistance because I had learned how to tolerate it. I remained nice and encouraged him to be flexible.

He agreed to have a look at the chairs at a flea market around the corner. We bought them, had them refinished, and now Henry likes them better than I do.

Tolerance is the corner stone of compassion, and forgiveness is a synonym for compassion. For years I couldn’t tolerate my mother’s behavior, and it wasn’t until I could feel compassion for her, that I began to understand that I needed to forgive her. It was years after my mother had died and time to forgive her. I needed some help. I lay on a mattress surrounded by friends and colleagues. I was having a good scream when I saw my

mother laughing. She looked lovely and sexy, even though sexy was not my mother's middle name. The image was clear: a young unmarried woman with no children. It was the first time I'd seen my mother as a woman. I had never before seen her as anything but my mother.

The louder I cried, the clearer the image became. Though her face remained young and innocent, I saw her as a frightened, frustrated woman caught between a culture she didn't understand and a career she didn't select. Until this moment I'd only known her as a kind-hearted woman with a grumpy, authoritative voice. Now I saw her as a beautiful woman who'd forfeited her childhood dreams to keep her children, her home, and her husband together during depression, bank failure, and the ongoing saga of my sister and me. As I sobbed on the mattress, nearly drowning in sadness, someone picked me up and held me in his arms, like a mother would. I saw flashes of myself furiously reacting to my mother: slamming doors in her face, insulting her, attacking her verbally. I'd been a lousy daughter. I blamed my mother for all my inadequacies and expected the impossible from a woman who was doing the best she could.

“Oh God, I wish I had been more tolerant,” I cried.

Then, for the first time in my life, I understood and accepted my mother. I forgave us both. Now I encourage clients to make peace with their parents—dead or alive.

Forgiveness also needs to be directed to one's self. Like most mothers, I've had to learn to forgive myself for my mothering mistakes or I couldn't survive the ache in my heart.

The spirit of tolerance is essential in Tri-Energetics because it implies becoming kind-hearted, humane, and accepting. These are not only attitudes that help us become more peaceful; they are spirits that could make the world more peaceful.

In 1972, Pham Thi Kim Phuc was a child in Vietnam when her village was attacked with napalm. Stripped of her burning clothes, and screaming in pain and terror, she blindly ran toward a camera. That subsequent photo raised the consciousness of the American public about the horror of the Vietnam War. And it broke the heart of a man named John Plummer. Believing that the area had been cleared of civilians, he was the man who led the air strike and burned the villagers.

Twenty-five years later, at a Vietnam Memorial, Pham Thi Kim Phuc said, “We cannot change history, but together we can do good and work toward building the future.”

John Plummer stood and walked bravely to her. “I am the man who did it,” he said.

When she saw the pain in his eyes, the sorrow and grief, she held out her arms and embraced him.

“I’m sorry, I’m so terribly, terribly sorry,” he sobbed

They forgave each other. Not only were their lives changed, but many others as well.

Take a look at whatever makes you feel guilty. Make reparations to those you’ve injured, and forgive yourself. Every time! Forgiveness brings grace. You will applaud the profound effect it will have upon your soul.

If someone who’s injured you asks for forgiveness, take a breath and feel the power you have to make a difference by being tolerant.

In simple day-to-day activities, tolerance can make the difference between having a hard time or enjoying yourself. Ask yourself: “Do I tolerate disagreements, or

do I need to be right? During an argument, do I respect the values and beliefs of my opponent? How well do I tolerate noise or music from my neighbor's house? Am I tolerant of my children's friends? Or my partner's snoring? How well do I tolerate criticism?"

Flexibility can help us become more tolerant. A client of mine was dining in a restaurant. A man at the table next to hers was smoking and about to ruin her meal. She asked if he would mind putting out his cigarette. He politely, but promptly, refused. He did however, look as if he were under enormous stress. She suggested they exchange tables, since the smoke was blowing in her direction, and he happily agreed. She was flexible. He was flexible, and they both got what they wanted.

This otherwise insignificant episode was an important event for her because she had just recently formed a clear intention to become more tolerant.

Curiosity can help you become tolerant by letting you understand the reasons for what appear to be obnoxious actions. When you cannot agree with an opponent on a want level, check if some other wants would fulfill each other's intentions. That's the basis of healthy compromise and of peace between people, organizations, and nations.

Recently, at the post office, I'd been waiting for ten minutes when a man came in and walked right up to the front of the line. I was incensed. I found it equally intolerable that nobody but me seemed to care. "Excuse me," I said trying my best to be rational, "I think you should be at the end of this line."

The man looked me straight in the eyes and said, "My wife's critically ill and I need to get this special delivery letter to our daughter."

I definitely became more curious about people's reasons for doing whatever it is

I find offensive.

To discover whether or not you are tolerant, take a deep breath and a good look at yourself. How judgmental are you? How often do you criticize or complain?

Awareness is the key to change.

If you need to be more tolerant, try accepting yourself as you are. Because the moment you accept yourself as you are, you're already more tolerant than you were.

However, it's important not to tolerate the intolerable. For example, it's probably better to protest a poorly built nuclear power plant than to tolerate it. On a relationship level, it's not uncommon to love someone whose behaviors we cannot tolerate.

Betty and Joe had been living together for several years when Betty decided either Joe had to change his ways, or she would leave him. During one counselling session, Joe asked Betty what she wanted from him.

"I want you to change your habits," she said firmly.

"You mean you want me to change?" Joe bristled back.

"I mean I love you, but I cannot tolerate some of your habits! Either you change them or I'm leaving."

Joe was defensive and said, "You have a few habits that could use changing yourself."

I suggested they each make a list of the habits they wanted the other to change, and bring them to their next session.

Joe's list consisted of two items: don't leave the beds un-made before you go to work in the morning, and stop serving frozen dinners every night.

Betty wrote: stop spitting in the sink and leaving it there for me to wash out; stop leaving your pee-stained toilet seat up; stop leaving your poop-crumbs in the toilet; stop leaving your wet towels on the floor in the bedroom; stop calling me stupid when I don't agree with you; stop expecting me to have instant orgasms.

Joe sat and stared as Betty read her list aloud. Then, looking like a whipped puppy, he said, "You see, you do want to change me."

"No," Betty said with compassion, "You are not solely your behaviors. I really love you. It's just some of your habits I can't tolerate."

"I love you, too," Joe said back, "and I guess I can't really tolerate those frozen dinners anymore."

I suggested they convert their negative requests into a positive form, i.e., "I want you to take more time with me sexually," instead of, "Stop expecting me to..." After going through their respective lists, each had the right to either refuse to change a behavior, or to make a commitment to change it. Betty and Joe discovered there was no need to tolerate the intolerable.

Think of some things you find difficult to tolerate. For instance, I am intolerant of nuclear power plants that contaminate whole continents, and I'm intolerant of people who unconsciously waste exorbitant amounts of food, while millions die of starvation. It's difficult to tolerate cultures where, despite their screams for mercy, young girls suffer the agony of having their clitorises amputated. Personally, it's difficult for me to tolerate men who view women as inferior, and it's just as intolerable to watch women allow themselves to become subservient.

But to survive in the world, and for the world to survive, we have to learn to

tolerate people whose ideas, values, mores, and general philosophies differ from our own. Flexibility, tolerance, and curiosity may be the ingredients that unite us all.

CHAPTER 6

ARE YOU CURIOUS?

Curiosity is openness to experience. It is the quality of being awake and interested. It keeps us connected to truth. Without it the world seems dull, and it's easy to become dogmatic. If you're curious, you're not likely to be defending yourself. How many times does someone say something that either hurts your feelings, or makes you angry? If you can become curious about the intention behind the statement, chances are you won't respond negatively.

Alan is a young actor who was visiting Henry and me in Amsterdam. During dinner I asked him, "Do you have any performances lined up in the coming months?"

Alan sounded hurt and defensive when he asked, "Why do you ask? Don't you think I'm talented enough to be working in theater?"

I was astonished at his emotional response. Instead of defending myself, I became curious and asked, "Why do you think that?"

"Well, I just auditioned for a part and didn't get it, so my self-confidence is at an all-time low. Sorry I snapped at you. Now I'm curious, why *did* you ask?"

"Because I think you would be perfect for a role in a show a friend of mine's producing, and I want to introduce you to him."

Our curiosity kept us from being defensive, and we understood each other. Sometimes, curiosity can keep us out of trouble.

A friend who'd been traveling in the Far East brought me a present. It was a splendid, ornate medallion with Japanese letters etched into a metal sculptured circle. It hung on a tasteful golden chain. Honoring my friend's impeccable taste, and appreciating the fine craftsmanship of the jewelry, I wore it with great pride.

One evening on a dinner date, I strutted into a Japanese restaurant wearing the medallion. The waiter kept staring at me. Finally his intensity became too obvious to ignore and I became curious.

“Is anything wrong?” I asked.

“Madam,” he asked, “do you know what your medallion says?”

“Not really,” I said, getting even more curious. “Would you please read it to me?”

“Certainly,” he said, lowering his eyes and clearing his throat. “It says, ‘I am a registered prostitute of the state of Japan and have received my physical examination.’ That time, curiosity kept me from getting into trouble.

A student recently discovered that curiosity brought him into contact with his spirituality. He had a clear intention to remain consciously curious while meditating. After a few sessions, he began to understand the importance of asking the right questions. Then during one meditation, he questioned what it was that kept him searching for material things, and he realized that his *wants* were mostly influenced by illusions. He’d been brainwashed into believing that objects could bring him satisfaction. With that awareness in mind, he breathed deep into his heart, and was flooded with the spirit of gratitude. Feeling totally satisfied and desire-less, he transcended the mundane.

We’re either curious or defended. When we’re defensive, we blame, lie, hide, or feel guilty—and block ourselves from spirituality. Curiosity opens us to truth and thus to the spirit. It lets us go beyond form to substance—beyond blind beliefs to direct experience.

A woman came into a Playshop looking a bit odd. She was not unattractive, but she had so much makeup on, it was difficult to look at her. I tried not to be judgmental,

but I found myself avoiding her. Instead of being therapeutic, I was defending myself against her. Eventually, I became curious and asked, “May I ask why you wear so much makeup?”

“Thanks for asking,” she said softly. “I was critically burned several years ago, and if you think the makeup looks terrible, wait until you see me without it.”

If we’re curious, we can listen to each other’s problems with interest without feeling responsible for them.

A woman in another Playshop came to the center of the group for help.

“What do you want to change?” I asked.

“I’m so shy,” she mumbled, “that it’s hard for me to integrate into the group. I can’t seem to find the words to initiate conversations with people.”

“Curiosity can cure shyness,” I said in my best believe-me-it’s-true voice. “If you approach people with genuine curiosity and ask questions, you’re likely to forget about yourself, and focus on the other person.”

With the suggestion tucked neatly into her brain, and a shy smile on her face, the group watched as she walked up to one of the best looking men and asked, “Where did you get your T-shirt?”

“Do you like it?” he asked playfully.

“I think it’s beautiful,” she answered, burying her chin in her chest.

“Here,” he said, dramatically lifting up the shirt and pulling it over his head. “It’s yours.”

The group loved it. They laughed and clapped. The shy woman laughed the loudest. And for the remainder of the Playshop, she continued to ask questions to people

in the group. She was so busy questioning people about themselves that she traded her shyness for curiosity.

The English word curiosity stems from the same root as the word cure. The Latin word *curiosus* comes from *cura* (care, treatment, healing). However the German word for curiosity *Neugier* connotes greediness for new things. Tri-Energetics uses curiosity in the sense of openness to new things. With these differences in connotation in different languages, it is no wonder political leaders defend their positions. Can you imagine what would happen if they stopped defending their positions and actually became curious about each other?

Once while trekking some mountains in Mexico, I met a shaman. We sat and talked. He, with his best broken English—I, with a spattering of Spanish. During our conversation the wise old man gave me a treasure when he said, “Breathe deep and stay curious.”

His words made a wrinkle in my brain and became a part of Tri-Energetics, because one of the goals of counselling is to get to know ourselves. It’s virtually impossible to know ourselves if we’re not even curious to find out who we are. Or why we do what we do—or need what we need.

One specific way to understand who we are is to be curious about our personality styles. Personality is like the clothes we wear. It’s fine to have a style, any style, but if we always wear the same clothes, we’ve condemned ourselves to a uniform. Besides, who wants to wear a wet suit in the bathtub? Flexibility lets us feel free to experiment with new behavior, tolerance allows us to laugh at our selves, and curiosity helps us discover our options.

Tri-Energetic counsellors learn about personality *disorders* used in standard psychiatric diagnosis, and their benign counter-parts—personality *styles*. As personality styles become rigid and intense, they become disorders. For example, someone may pay attention to details, make plans, and keep herself immaculately clean. If that style is so extreme that she spends hours folding kitchen towels, is unable to be spontaneous, and washes her hands thirty times a day, she's got a disorder.

Because learning is easier with playful curiosity and humor, here's a chart to help you see how certain personality types are likely to act during a group session...or in bed. Do any of these people look familiar? Can you recognize yourself?

Personality style	as a group member	in bed
dependent	enjoys being cared for; constantly asks for help	asks the other to decide when and where
passive-aggressive	late for appointments; misses meetings, ignores birth- days, is legalistic and argumentative	whispers loving words too softly to be heard; Has trouble to say, "I love you."
paranoid	thinks others talk about them; is afraid of being verbally or physically attacked	wonders if you're cheating & with whom
obsessive- compulsive	is overly involved in plans; concentrates on minor details; has trouble being spontaneous	spends ten minutes folding clothes, while you pant impatiently in bed
narcissistic	knows all the answers; demands excessive attention; worries about appearance	Spends more time looking in mirror than at you
anti-social	makes inappropriate jokes; disregards other's rights; does "weird" things; wears outrageous clothes	Good in bed...but is it only with you? likes "kinky" sex and/or sex in strange places
schizoid	stays away from the others; remains in a fog; out of touch with feelings	Would just as soon do it alone
depressive / self-defeating	moans and complains; brings down the group energy; wonders why bother to attend	Wonders why you're there and when you're going to leave them
histrionic	acts out their emotions; doesn't listen to others; wears wild, sexy clothes	Screams so loud during orgasm, that neighbors get turned on

Understanding personality styles can help you not take it personally when someone does something that bothers you. For instance, if somebody was paranoid before she met you, it's not your fault if she doesn't trust you. If a passive-aggressive lover doesn't acknowledge your birthday, it doesn't mean she doesn't love you; it's likely this is normal for her.

Keep in mind that we're all combinations of styles, and probably have at least some characteristics of each personality. It's a good idea to identify your own style before

guessing at anyone else's. Should you discover anything you might consider changing, don't panic...plan!

If personality differences make it difficult to communicate, Tri-Energetics simplifies communication with the formula "Know what you need, say what you want, and have clear intentions." Simplifying communication bridges the gap between the very different ways that people perceive the world. C.G. Jung describes this difference of perceptions in terms of four functions in the human personality: thinking, feeling, intuition, and sensation.

Thinking refers to rational intellectual functioning, in other words, how we logically think about things.

Feeling has to do with our values, and how we feel emotionally about a situation.

Intuition is a nonverbal perception of ideas and situations.

Sensation has to do with sensate perception of physical objects—their size, shapes, colors, smells and sounds.

To simplify Jung's explanation of personality styles based on their superior and inferior functions, let's say that your superior function is simply what you do first. Your inferior function is what you probably have trouble with.

For example, if you're a thinker you probably need sufficient data to make a rational decision about something. You're not likely to form spontaneous opinions based on your feelings.

. If you're an *intuitive*, you form generalizations easily, and come to conclusions without having any facts. You probably have difficulty handling physical details.

If your superior function is *sensation*, you probably walk into a room and notice

details such as the color of the walls, where the flowers are located, etc. You're likely to have trouble accepting an intuitive explanation that lacks concrete facts.

If your *feeling* function is superior, your perceptions are based on your emotional reaction to how something feels in the moment. Something is good or bad depending upon how it makes you feel. You probably can't think nearly as well as you'd like to.

Inferior personality functions develop as we age. So if you're not yet middle age (and according to my perspective on aging, middle age is between seventy-three to eight four) relax—you're still in process.

Communication is easier between two people who share the same primary personality function. Henry is a *thinker*. I am a *feeler*. We have totally different personality styles—he is obsessive-compulsive, I'm histrionic; he's detailed oriented, I don't care about the facts. If we didn't stay playfully curious, we'd never understand each other.

Please close your eyes. Take a breath. Visualize yourself and determine which is your superior function and which is inferior. Once you have an idea, feeling, sensation, or intuition of your functions, proceed to the next paragraph.

If your parent, partner, boss, or friend is someone with a totally opposite personality type, you probably express yourselves so differently that you may feel as if the other person is speaking in tongues. If this rings a bell with you, imagine typical things the other person says and does. What does this tell you about her personality type? What's her primary function? Be curious. Is this an expression of mental preoccupation? Is it an evaluation of a feeling? Is it an intuitive impression? Is it a focus on the sensory qualities of things?

Relationships work better when people stay curious about what each wants from the other. Consider this conversation between John and Mary:

John: "Tell me one thing you really want."

Mary: "I hear you. But I don't understand. Can you be more specific?"

John: "I don't want..."

Mary: "Can you put it in a positive statement and tell me what you *do* want?"

John: "I want you to..."

Mary: "You want..."

John: "Hooray! You got it."

Even if you do not actually understand what the person wants, acknowledging that you've heard her, and repeating the message can begin to satisfy her need to be understood.

Willingness to remain curious about each other's needs, wants, and intentions makes it possible to understand someone whose primary function, personality style, and character type are completely different from your own.

Curiosity stimulated the growth of civilization. It is the perspective that promotes growth. It keeps us awake, stimulated, and prevents us from being defensive. Try it yourself. Think of someone with whom you have some difficulty—a parent, perhaps? Invite that person to share some quality time with you and ask as many personal questions as possible. You're likely to discover that a sincere interest in someone can change the face of a relationship. A genuine curiosity about the world we live in can ignite the spark that illuminates the magic and mystery of life.

CHAPTER 7

CREATIVE COUNSELLING AND THE BIRTH OF PLAYSHOPS

Creative counselling in a group demands awareness of the needs of the group and each individual in it. It culminates in the creative ability of the group leader to facilitate meeting those needs. This ability depends on the group leader's intention as well as her knowledge and skill (otherwise known as a bag of tricks). This awareness and ability developed over many years in the context of rather traditional treatment settings, and in the broader context of a woman learning to trust her personal power.

I never intended to become a counsellor or a group leader when I grew up. I just wanted to help people. But nobody listens to a big-mouthed woman unless she has credentials. So I took a two-year course at a local university and became a Certified Alcoholism Counsellor. Then I went to graduate school in search of more knowledge and skills, and a diploma that would allow me to help more than just alcoholics. During this process, I began working with groups, and the role of group leader found me, lifted me up, and started me on the road to Tri-Energetics.

In 1979, I kissed my kids, my soon-to-be-ex-husband, and my dog good-bye and left for the Baptist Medical Hospital in Little Rock, Arkansas, to research the effects of a holistic psychotherapy program I called Triaditic Therapy. This was the unappealing name I used before coming up with Tri-Energetics. Doing research in holistic psychotherapy in an institutional setting is like looking for vegetarian food in a sausage factory. Nowhere is the split separating body, mind, and spirit more apparent than in traditional institutional settings. However, six weeks, and twenty-two alcoholic and non-alcoholic subjects later, I was able to scientifically demonstrate the positive effects of a

combination of yoga, aerobics, dance, guided imagery, and emotional release. The research proved that people can change, and I discovered the tremendous potential of creative counselling in groups.

With my new Ph.D. in hand and some fresh ideas in mind, I began working as a counselling psychologist in an alcohol and drug rehabilitation hospital. I simultaneously began a private practice. Although I was enthusiastic about the value of group support, getting private clients to attend group therapy was like convincing a brain surgeon to wear boxing gloves.

One afternoon a client came raging into my psychotherapy office. She'd been working in a medical research facility and had done an experiment that showed that cardiac patients who had learned how to relax had significantly fewer second heart attacks and deaths from heart disease than patients who only had cardiac rehabilitation. She'd scientifically documented an important fact, but to her amazement, her study was not going to be published.

"Why, why, why?" she pleaded.

The answer became clear the following week. My client was fired because according to the church-sponsored hospital where she worked, she'd committed a crime. She was living in sin because she was gay.

I was angered and hurt to see this intelligent, creative woman persecuted because of her sexual preference. I needed support to be able to support her. So I managed to arrange a group session.

About ten clients gathered and together we created an environment safe enough for everyone to release their pain and frustration. We made commitments not to discuss

what went on in the group, or to say anything negative behind each other's backs. I gave everyone a chance to be counselled, while the rest of the group participated by giving feedback or expressing ideas. Then I encouraged my clients to help me release my own anger and sadness. I stood with my feet firmly planted on the ground. Then I raised my arms in the air, and had two people hold each of my hands, providing enough pressure and tension to let me pull down with all my might. With four people providing the necessary physical support, I could scream out my rage and despair.

After releasing our negativity, there was such a light-hearted feeling that we spontaneously began to play. And we were able to laugh at the absurd prejudices of society.

I realized I was among peaceful, open-hearted people who had jumped at the chance to show themselves at their best, and had gotten more therapy out of that experience than I could ever have facilitated during twenty individual sessions in my office. That experience changed forever the way I approached therapy. I realized that in order to become peaceful, people needed to play, laugh, dance, and sing, as well as cry, scream, and talk through problems. I also saw that this could happen quickly. People could get help, therapy, support, and friendship without having to spend untold hours in therapy. I decided not to prescribe fun for my clients anymore. I wanted to provide it—and the intention to begin offering Playshops was born.

As the intention grew, I became increasingly frustrated with counselling in hospitals and office buildings, where I had to charge high fees to pay the rent. The workshops I visualized needed to be offered in places where participants could relax, preferably in nature where people often realize the triviality of their problems in the

grand scheme of things. They needed to be residential so that people could have enough time to separate from their normal “city-self” routines and develop new behaviors. The cost needed to be affordable, so people from many walks of life could attend. I envisioned groups of thirty or more people feeling free to be themselves, being spontaneous, trying out new behaviors, releasing the pains of the past, and celebrating visions of a brighter future.

I started with a few weekends in Texas, progressed to three days in Oklahoma, and then offered a weekend in Germany, thanks to an invitation from a colleague who I met at a conference in Austria. That weekend led to a five-day workshop, which was the start of workshops throughout Europe. Henry, steady clinical psychologist that he is, covered my practice in Houston whenever I left town to lead workshops. Soon I realized I didn’t want to do them without him.

From their inception, the workshops were designed to help people experience inner peace, which I saw as the intention of therapy, counselling, and personal development. Soon we began to call the workshops “Playshops,” to emphasize that personal growth can be fun. The holistic therapeutic methods I’d researched, coupled with creative counselling techniques I developed, found a home in the Playshops and mellowed into Tri-Energetics.

Naturally, the atmosphere of a five-day residential group is more relaxed than a therapy room in an in-patient facility. But I believe the methods described here can be applied in traditional settings, as well as in self-help settings—especially if they’re viewed with flexibility, tolerance, and curiosity. Take, for example, one of the most important therapeutic elements in Playshops—humor.

A terribly depressed man in a Playshop complained that nothing was going right for him, and used his childhood traumas as an excuse. Ted may have had good reasons for his depression, but his personality style was certainly causing the group to become restless and impatient with him. They needed a release and he needed to stop taking himself so seriously.

As Ted sat in the center of the group, I asked him if he would take a risk. He said he'd love to.

"Just tell us your whole life history," I said flatly. "Start from your horrible birth experience, and give us the headlines of your pathetic childhood. Only make it funny! In fact, make it a real comedy routine."

He smiled warily at first, but immediately got into the role of comedian. He joked about having been beaten by a cruel stepfather, giggled at having been made fun of as a schoolboy with thick-rimmed glasses, and actually laughed at his first rejection by a girlfriend.

By the time Ted finished his routine, his depression had vanished, along with the anger and resentment that kept him attached to his past. The group rewarded him with uproarious laughter and applause, and got the release they needed. Ted was not over his depression, and had not changed his depressive personality style, but he caught a clear and lasting glimpse of himself in the light of humor. Moreover, this magic moment was witnessed and acknowledged by thirty people who could continue to support his "other" view of his life.

Sometimes during a Playshop someone will take the "talking stick" (a device we use for letting one person have the attention of the whole group), and begin to speak

from a “victim” role. When this happens, I often ask an assistant to imitate the person. By playfully exaggerating the person’s posture, whiny voice, or unnecessarily gloomy complaint, the participant often sees how awful that victim role looks, laughs at herself, and decides to change it.

When we see ourselves in a larger social context we can stop taking our mistakes, worries, pain, or ourselves so seriously. We need each other for survival, support and fun. In the intensity of the Playshops, people have a chance to act themselves into a new way of being. I am continually amazed at how much can be learned by groups of normal healthy neurotics (like me) in a safe environment. Genius often comes in groups, because groups produce the friction that generates light.

In one Playshop, a father of two boys was suffering from low self-esteem. He saw himself as heartless, mean, and arrogant and he said so. Though he loved his children, he was guilty of having hit them, and his wife was threatening to divorce him.

Throughout the five-day workshop he was purposefully acting like a “nice guy.” He wasn’t deceiving the group; he was genuinely flexible, tolerant, and curious. Finally, he began to act self-assured. He received such positive feedback, he actually wept with joy. He’d never imagined himself as a lovable guy. His heart opened, and he realized he was indeed a loving human being. After the workshop, he went home and asked his children to forgive him for mistreating them, and promised to never hit them again. His wife began to see him in a different light. He began to act his way into a new way of being.

The moment people experience themselves as they *want* to be, they have a tremendous potential for change. Creative counsellors can use Tri-Energetics with

groups—no matter the setting—to help people discover and satisfy their needs, simplify their wants, and clarify their intentions. This makes it easier to experience ourselves as we want to be. Non-professional counsellors can create similar opportunities within the safety of a group of friends.

CHAPTER 8

COUNSELLORS, THERAPISTS, AND SHAMANS

If you live on planet Earth today, you have problems. That's why it's important for ordinary people to learn how to help each other. Most of us have turned to a friend, colleague, or family member for advice or counsel. And many of us have had someone come to us for help.

To be helpful we need to become therapeutic. The word therapeutic describes anything that helps someone feel better about herself, others, and the world she lives in. A sunset is therapeutic, so is a good cup of tea, acknowledgment, or a hug. So is a smile from a stranger.

Jane walked down the street one afternoon, tears streaming down her face.

"What's the world done to you?" asked a man she'd never seen before.

"I just had a fight with my boss and he fired me," Jane answered automatically.

"That's the life, sister," he said with a smile as wide as the Grand Canyon.

Jane couldn't help but smile back.

His smile was as contagious as his energy and she immediately felt better. This was a therapeutic interaction.

Tri-Energetics was developed as a tool to simplify therapeutic interventions. It was developed for use in both psychotherapy and counselling. And what, you might ask, is the difference between counselling and psychotherapy? The distinction we find most useful has to do with the severity of disorders and the methods used for treatment.

Psychotherapy extends into treating severe clinical disorders, such as psychoses, borderline personality disorders, and severe character disorders. It may utilize regression

as a therapeutic method, to guide the client back to less mature levels of behavior and consciousness. Therapists often regress clients from a normal daily adult ego back into a child ego state. Counselling, on the other hand, is for relatively stable clients and maintains an adult-to-adult level of interaction. Therapists rely heavily on regression, while counsellors use simple regression techniques, and only in connection with a practical problem.

Here is an example of how I used Tri-Energetics as a counselling intervention to help someone re-decide an emotional issue.

Diane was a fifty-six year old normal neurotic woman. She opened the session saying, "I don't know whether I want to leave my husband or not. I'm depressed. I feel old and fat."

I suggested an often-used Gestalt technique, "Put him on that empty chair and talk to him about your feelings," I said.

"John, I'm fed up with always having to look pretty for you," she said angrily.

"Switch back and answer for John," I suggested.

Diane switched chairs and, talking for John said, "You damn well don't have to look pretty for me."

This session went on with Diane talking with her husband until she finally looked at me and said, "It's not just John. I flirt with men all the time. I guess I have the feeling that if I'm not sexy, I can't get any attention, or closeness. I remember parading around looking sexy for my father. I'd sashay around in a new skirt, or a new hairstyle, and he'd smile and clap for me. It was the only way I got his attention." Diane became teary.

“Stay in your adult consciousness,” I said, “and pretend your father is on that chair. Now, tell him what you wanted when you were a little girl.”

Diane began, “I wanted to be close with you, without having to look cute and sexy. You never even looked at me unless I dressed up, or acted out some routine that got you to notice me. I guess I decided that to be loved, I had to look sexy. Now I think I have to look sexy for John, even when I don’t want to. Even when I don’t feel like it.”

“Want to change that?” I asked Diane.

“Yes,” she said enthusiastically.

“Good! What do you want now?”

“I want to be close and intimate with my husband, without having to be sexy.”

“It sounds simple and wise. To get what you want, you need to re-decide that you don’t have to be sexy to be loved.”

Diane nodded in agreement, and I continued. “Okay, let’s do it. Close your eyes. Take a few deep breaths. That’s it. Now, staying in your adult consciousness, can you imagine a scene with you and your dad when you were a child?”

Diane smiled, “I can see myself in my mud-spattered blue jeans and a baggy shirt. Daddy’s looking at me”.

“Good.” I encouraged her to go on. “Tell your father what you want.”

Diane said simply, “I don’t want to have to look sexy for you to love me, Daddy. I want you to love me for who I am. And I want your attention even when I’m in my old mud-covered jeans.”

“Can you hear your Dad giving you permission to look like a mess? Can you hear him telling you that you’re loved no matter how you look.” I asked her.

Diane spoke as if she were her father. In a deep, bass voice she said, “Baby, I love you when you look like a mess. You don’t have to be sexy for me to love you, Deedee. I love you for who you are.”

At this point Diane was laughing and crying simultaneously, “I don’t have to be sexy, to be loved.”

As her emotions settled a little, she processed the consequences of her re-decision. She knew what she wanted from her husband. She described what she intended to do differently now that she didn’t have to be sexy to be loved. And she learned that it’s never too late to re-decide (Goulding & Goulding, 1978 and 1979).

For the most part, therapists concern themselves with the workings of the inner world, while counsellors concentrate on more external, or worldly issues. Psychotherapy often addresses unconscious issues, and deals with helping clients make personality changes. Counsellors help clients more effectively deal with reality by changing behavior, (personality style, and not personality type). From this perspective, most problems of daily life are more in the domain of counselling than of psychotherapy. However, there are times when a counsellor should not treat a person, because her issues are too deep or too severe. In that case, thank heaven for trained psychotherapists.

Today counselling is evolving from a subsidiary position under psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy to a more equal status. The counsellor is becoming an independent practitioner. In the United States and Great Britain, thousands of certified and licensed counsellors are offering much needed services. Skilled, caring people throughout many European nations are currently establishing standards and procedures for certification and licensing. Bayne, Horton, Merry and Noyes, 1988). It’s not an easy

task, because the medical and psychotherapeutic communities naturally view counsellors as intruders into their heretofore exclusive, lucrative domain. But happily, counselling is growing up! In my opinion, so are the people doing it.

There are probably as many different types of counsellors as there are people who need counselling. There are grief counsellors, and school counsellors; there are peer, career, substance abuse, speech, spiritual, sex, pastoral, and multi-cultural counsellors. There are those who counsel emigrants, refugees, and criminals. There are counsellors for those who've been robbed, raped, abandoned, abused. Some counsellors work with individuals, and some with groups. Some work individually, others work with another counsellor in what's called co-counselling.

Creative counselling techniques are like trees: you can't have too many. If you're curious, you can learn from everyone. Healers come from a variety of traditions. Personally I have learned more from shamans than from counsellors or therapists. The similarity between shamans and counsellors is in intentions: both intend to empower the person who comes for help. The shaman acknowledges the power in all life— plants, rocks, trees, the elements, animals and humans. Every one of us has power, but most of us have forgotten that power comes from within. When I, as a counsellor, ask a client, "What do *you* need, or what do *you* want, or intend," I'm reminding her of her power to decide, to choose, to change.

The biggest difference I see between the counsellor and the shaman is that most intelligent, willing people can be taught to counsel, but shamans are born, not made. When someone learns counselling techniques, she can become a counsellor. Learning shamanic techniques does not make anyone a shaman. People who think using shamanic

interventions will make them a shaman, probably think swimming will make them a fish.

In our culture, the use of drugs for mental or emotional healing is the responsibility of psychiatrists (medical doctors). The biggest difference I see between shaman and psychiatrists is that although both use psychotropic (mind-altering) substances, psychiatrists prescribe the potions to alter the consciousness of their patients, and shamans take the substances to alter their *own* consciousness.

Although many people are opposed to the use of mind-altering substances, there's a significant number of those who find the use of mushrooms, plants, and various vines essential for the advancement of civilization (McKenna, 1991). So it's important to stay curious and not blindly judge or underestimate their value. When used in a ceremony as a sacrament, or under proper environmental conditions with a knowledgeable guide, psychedelics can be tremendously important agents for mental and/or spiritual growth. Obviously, this is not the kind of activity to be undertaken frivolously. But then one might ask, "Is it better to have had a life-altering transformation through drugs than never to have had one at all?"

Shamanism is an ancient tradition that continues to be responsible for the health and well being of millions of people around the world. I have experienced my share of miraculous (otherwise inexplicable) shamanic healings. Some have proceeded according to the shamanic cookbook, and others were frankly quite bumbling. It's one thing to have phenomenal results when you have some idea that what you are doing could produce the desired effects. It's another when the results come totally out of the blue. For this reason, I'm not going to presume to offer shamanic techniques in this book. Instead, I encourage you to remember what the Mexican shaman taught me, "breathe deep and stay curious."

Stanley Krippner, psychologist, author, healer and friend, probably knows more about shamanism than most shamans (Krippner, 1990). He contends that shamanic wisdom has an important role to play in saving the natural environment, in discovering sacred experiences, and in facilitating self-healing.

We all need healing from time to time. Tri-Energetics can help you make enlightened choices about who to call for help when you need it. Asking the question, “What do I need?” makes it easier to decide whether to see a well-intentioned friend, a counsellor, psychotherapist, psychiatrist, minister, or a shaman. If you don’t know what you need, just asking the question to the right person can get you started. The next step is to ask yourself, “What do I want to change?”

CHAPTER 9

ROLES PEOPLE PLAY

There's no better way to see how we've changed than to look at the roles we've played and why we played them. In Tri-Energetics, we help clients change old roles that no longer serve them. We help them choose new, more satisfying, life-affirming roles.

We all play roles; we have to. Playing roles is essential to social interaction. In a single day we play more roles than we realize. Yesterday, Henry awoke and taught a yoga class and played yogi. He worked on his manuscript, and played author. He saw a client—as counsellor, fixed a leaky faucet as plumber, and talked to his son as father. Henry cooked dinner as chef, talked to my daughter as confidant, and to our granddaughter as grandfather, then he went to bed with me as lover.

Some roles we simply accept. For example, I'm a passenger on airplanes, not the pilot. I am a wife and mother by choice, and a psychologist by degree. I became a partner, a stepmother, and a grandmother by luck. Now and then an angel has taken me by the hand, pushed me off a mountain, or shoved me in front of a computer, and I've found myself in a role I couldn't refuse. Finally, in the exquisite sweetness of silence, I realized that the essence of the human being remains the observer, the audience, while the actor plays roles.

Discovering the distinction between our essence, which observes, and the role-playing actor, we can distance ourselves from the roles we play and more easily choose new ones.

A woman I worked with in counselling had been identified with the role of persecutor in her family. Constantly critical, and sounding like her own mother, she had

successfully managed to lose the love and respect of her husband. Her kids barely tolerated her. During a weekend for women, she announced that she'd never had an orgasm. Several women were sympathetic, and during the course of the weekend she was given a vibrator and instructions for using it. On the last morning, she had a smile on her face that changed her whole appearance. Her jaw was looser and she actually looked years younger.

"I'm not going to play that damn persecutor role anymore," she said holding the talking stick in one hand and the vibrator in the other. As the group applauded she added, "I'm going to enjoy playing the role of a very sexy, loving woman."

The intensity of orgasm revealed a dimension of herself far more essential than the role she'd been playing, and pointed toward new possibilities and more rewarding roles. However, taking distance from roles can also be accomplished by affirming qualities, which supersede role-play. Love, for example, can be expressed in many forms and through many roles.

Henry and I focused on our love for each other to design a realistic relationship by re-defining the traditional male/female roles. We consciously acknowledged our equality by sharing household chores. When I began leading workshops on my own in Europe and needed help, Henry became my assistant. Besides the fact that this worked perfectly for us, we broke the stereotype of the woman following the man's lead. Role modeling the woman as leader is an important example for many people.

I've watched hundreds of people relinquish ridiculous roles and at least "try on" new ones. Role changes don't have to be tremendously dramatic, like Mahatma Gandhi for example, who changed from a skinny ineffectual lawyer to a skinny world-renowned

spiritual leader. Just changing from a prima donna to a nice person has helped me personally turn the agony of alienation into the ecstasy of loving relationships.

Which roles we play, and how we play them, depend upon whom we're imitating. The whole cultural web is held together by the thread of imitation, and most of us live our lives copying the people closest to us. Just as imitation can lead us into negative roles, conscious imitation can help us play positive ones.

If the world were a perfect place, children would have wonderful role models. A Tri-Energetic counsellor who teaches conflict resolution in kindergarten helps those children get off to a good start. When problems occur, everyone sits in a circle, a talking-toy (in lieu of a talking stick), is brought out, and each child is given a chance to express herself until a consensus is reached. The kids imitate the counsellor's calm manner and learn to respect each other.

Counsellors don't have to be perfect to give clients a chance to imitate them. But it is important for the counsellor to be able to demonstrate behavior that's different and even difficult for the client. This is called "role modeling." For example, a person who has difficulty hearing negative feedback needs a counsellor who can tolerate it. Someone who has trouble with spontaneity needs a counsellor who can act without thinking. A person who can't endure periods of silence needs a counsellor who can teach her how to enjoy it. Freedom is choosing our roles; wisdom is choosing lovable role models. A person playing the role of counsellor needs to have certain qualities and qualifications, just as anyone needs certain skills to do a job.

A man went for a job interview. On the way he met a friend.

"Where are you going, Dave?" the friend asked.

“I-I- I’m g-g-going t-t-to g-g-get a-a-a j-j-job at the t-t-t-television s-s-station as an a-a-announcer,” Dave stuttered.

“Good luck, buddy,” said his friend, warily.

The next day they met again and the friend asked how the interview went.

“I-I-I d-d-didn’t g-g-get it. They d-d-don’t h-h-hire g-g-guys with g-g-glasses.”

All professions require certain talents.

As people who train counsellors, Henry and I look for certain qualities that we think a person needs to have in order to help others. Just imagine seeking help from someone who was unwilling to work on themselves. How about a person who refused to admit her faults, or to commit to personal growth? Can you visualize seeking help from a counsellor who was emotionally unstable? What if she was judgmental, and moralized about your choices? Just imagine if the counsellor was terminally serious and had no sense of humor? Now think what it would be like to go to someone who lacked self-confidence, or was unintelligent? Just visualize going to a counsellor who had no capacity to empathize, sympathize, or love. And what if your counsellor had such limited life experiences that she couldn’t possibly identify with even one of your problems?

To really know something, you have to experience it. The more you’ve lived and the more you’ve suffered the greater your capacity for compassion and empathy. Divorce can help prepare you for a deep understanding of the process of separation. Who, but a parent who’s raised children of her own, can understand the aching regrets of parenting mistakes? If you’ve never suffered from an addiction, can you know the torture of withdrawal? Fortunately, you don’t have to live through everything to gain the life experiences that let you be empathetic. But there’s no better way to empathize with

someone who's going through hell than to have been there.

One afternoon, as an insecure young adolescent I was trying with all my might to make the whole world disappear, forget my loneliness and my fears, and have a mystical experience that I later identified as an orgasm. There I was, skirt pulled up to my flat little chest, bony knees wide apart, when our handsome, curly-haired college-student neighbor appeared out of nowhere and stood right in front of me. My mother had given him the key to our house so he could study in peace, but she forgot to tell me he might come over.

As the young man stood frozen in shock, I jumped up and shrieked, "Don't go! Stay and study me!" (I meant to say, "Stay here and study").

Poor guy! He turned on his heels and rushed out the door.

I was so embarrassed I wanted to die. I began to cry, and as the tears spilled down my face, I knew I would never, never, never forget something so terrible.

A lifetime later, as a seasoned therapist, I sat in my comfortable counselling chair listening to a pimply, gangly, adolescent girl crying her heart out.

"My father walked right into my room when I had my mother's vibrator going full blast," she wailed and reddened, while simultaneously searching my face for comfort.

"Oh, I can really understand how you felt," I said with heartfelt compassion nobody could pretend.

After forty years, I was finally grateful for my traumatic experience because I could really empathize. After all is said and done, it's empathy that makes a good counsellor.

Life's a play. You may not have a major role in the tragedies being played in global conflicts, or the melodramas being acted out in your own family feuds. You may not play starring roles that enable you to save, protect, or heal those caught in the nets of

poverty, hunger, or despair. But you do have the capacity to transform yourself by choosing roles that enable you to shine with bright intelligence and creative imagination. Tri-Energetics can help you improve the quality of life by guiding you to the right questions.

Take a moment to close your eyes, take a deep breath, and visualize yourself together with an important person in your life. Now see yourself interacting with this person. Do you play the “poor me” *victim* role? Are you the aggressive *persecutor*? Or do you play the perpetual *rescuer*?

Ask yourself, “Do I want to change a role I’m playing? What do I need in order to change a role that no longer serves me? What roles do I want to play? Is it my intention to change a role? Who can help me change a role? Are there people in my life who want me to change a role? What roles are played by significant people in my life? Do I want to continue playing the roles I play opposite them? Is there anything I want to change? Just asking the right questions can help us discover the courage to change.

CHAPTER 10

THE COURAGE TO CHANGE

It takes courage to change. Consciously choosing to change ourselves can alter our destiny. The well-known virtues of the alcoholic's prayer—the courage to change what we can change, the serenity to accept what we can't, and the wisdom to know the difference—can be developed in all of us with the use of Tri-Energetics. It focuses on creative ways to overcome resistance to change.

Laura was on a mission to get rejected. It was part of her homework between counselling sessions. Her fear of being rejected kept her in the role of a shy, unassertive woman, so I suggested she deliberately manage to get at least one rejection a week.

Late one afternoon, she was riding in an elevator of the bank where she worked as teller. Standing next to her was an attractive looking man. She thought, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if I could get to know him." Then, remembering her intention to get rejected, she smiled at him and said, "It looks as if you've been working late, too. Any chance you'd like to have a glass of wine and a chat before going home?"

Instead of refusing, he smiled back and accepted her offer. He just happened to be the vice-president of the bank, and just like the fairy tale, they fell in love and....

Laura overcame her fear of rejection, and here's some background on how she did it.

Fear of rejection is one of the most common fears people suffer from today. But when someone deliberately sets herself up for it, expects it, looks forward to it, and actually experiences a few, she usually realizes that the fear of being rejected was worse than the rejection itself. Laura's lack of assertiveness stemmed from her poor self-

esteem. She began building a positive self-image by doing a Tri-Energetic exercise to help her focus on her positive characteristics and minimize her negative ones.

She asked herself, “What do I want? What do I need in order to get what I want? What’s a plan (intention) that can help me get it?”

Her answers were, “I want to feel comfortable to make eye-contact, to ask *why* without feeling uneasy, to argue without guilt, and to accept compliments without being embarrassed. I want to feel free to express my feelings. To get what I want, I need to build my self-esteem.”

Her creative plan was to buy some blank index cards and write something she liked about herself on each one. Then she spread the cards around her house. She put one beside her bed, hung one on the bathroom mirror and kept another on the dashboard of her car.

Eventually she began to focus on the things she did like about herself, instead of focusing on her faults. Satisfying this need added to her courage, and she began to work on trusting herself.

She had never been encouraged to trust her intuition, but was intuitive enough to recognize that living without intuition is like driving a car without a steering wheel. Here are some exercises she did to build trust in herself by awakening her intuition. Try them yourself. Whether or not you’re correct, the trick is to acknowledge your courage for trusting your intuition every time you do one of these exercises.

- Before going to sleep, intuit what you’ll dream about
- When you’re shopping, intuit how a salesperson will act towards you.
- Intuit who’s calling before you pick up the phone.

- Buy someone a surprise, and intuit his/her reaction.
- Before reading tomorrow's newspaper, intuit the headlines.
- Intuit the first words you will hear the next time you turn on the radio.
- Close your eyes, take some deep breaths, and ask yourself what your friends wish you would change about yourself. Then ask them.
- When you can't find a solution for a problem in your life, intuit what advice a tree, a rock, a gem, a bird, or an angel would give you—and act accordingly.
- Close your eyes, breathe deep, and see if you can determine exactly how much money you have in your wallet.

Every time Laura successfully intuited something, she built trust in herself. When she guessed and failed, she celebrated her courage to try. What worked for Laura works for most of us. A willingness to fail, to make mistakes, and to look foolish lets us overcome the fear of failure.

The need to be perfect is something else. It has its roots in a fear of not being loved unless we *are* perfect. I struggled for years to overcome this need. The realization that people would love me, and I could be of service even if I wasn't perfect, came after a session I'd done with a couple who wanted to stop smoking.

Martin and Elizabeth arrived in my office for hypnotherapy. They were enthusiastic, each carrying the full pack of cigarettes I'd asked them to bring. They lay upon on the specially prepared couches, closed their eyes, and began to breathe deeply. I put on a tape of relaxing background music.

What they didn't know was that smoking had been a way of life for me for years. Quitting the habit and curing the addiction were two of the most difficult things I had ever

done. They didn't know that although I'd been smoke free for fifteen years, I feared I was on the verge of becoming re-addicted.

I began to speak in a slow, hypnotic tone. "You're feeling pleasantly relaxed. You are feeling as though your eye lids are made of lead."

Then suddenly, from the corner of my eye, I spotted their cigarettes lying on my desk. Two whole packs of Marlboros—my old brand.

As I took them deeper into a trance, I began to obsess about wanting to smoke. At first it seemed totally insane. How could I possibly smoke while hypnotizing people to stop smoking? Then it became more than a challenge. Like an alcoholic at a wine tasting party, I was losing control.

I reached out and grabbed a pack. Still speaking like a hypnotist, but clutching the pack, I opened it. Slowly, as if possessed by the spirit of nicotine, I withdrew a cigarette.

Like a sleepwalker, I rose, took a breath, found matches, methodically struck one, lit the cigarette, inhaled, and nearly fainted. I reeled for a few seconds but quickly regained my composure.

Then I blew the smoke directly at my entranced clients while saying things like, "You're going to smell the nasty, ugly, poisonous smoke that's deprived you of your right to breathe. This is the disgusting, irritating, noxious smoke that keeps you a prisoner." I kept providing them with realistic reasons for the smoke in the room.

I smoked half the cigarette before opening the office window. Then I brought them out of the trance.

After the session Elizabeth said, "I can't believe how far you went to help us quit. I know how you hate cigarette smoke and I'm really grateful."

I felt ashamed of myself. I was as deceitful as an arms merchant at a benefit for war orphans. But even being “imperfect,” I had helped two people I cared about. They stopped smoking sometime after that session. And I changed the way I condemned myself for not being perfect.

Carl Rogers, humanistic psychologist and developer of Person-Centered Therapy said, “It is not expected that personal therapy will permanently remove all likelihood of conflict in the therapist. Nor is it felt that therapy will permanently rule out the possibility that his own personal needs may interfere with his work as a therapist” (Rogers, 1965).

I have come to know in my life and work that personal growth means changing what we can change, accepting what we can’t, and being flexible, tolerant, and curious about the difference.

Changing our basic outlook on life can start with changing our view of aging. Barbara was thirty-three years old, beautiful, and well educated. During a counselling session she asked, “Aren’t you afraid of aging?”

“Are you?” I asked, keeping the focus on her, and not wanting to lie. In today’s youth-oriented culture, many people have a fear of aging. It’s understandable. Aging is both a biological and political process. It is not fun to grow old in an anti-age culture. It’s a tremendous challenge.

“I’m terrified,” she said seriously. “I’m already horrified by a few laugh lines around my mouth and the crease in my forehead.” Then she asked, “I know this is impolite, but how old are you?”

“I’ve stopped counting because it’s dangerous to keep images in our heads of how we’re supposed to look and feel at a certain age. The power of visualization helps the body conform to the mental picture we see of ourselves.”

“That’s exactly my problem! The images I have of my age fit what my mother looked like. They don’t fit me,” Barbara said excitedly. “How can I change them?”

“I can tell you how Henry and I changed the ridiculous images imposed by mass media. Perhaps it can help you find the courage to change the fear of growing—uh, older.”

Her enthusiasm prompted me to share the following paradigm in which we applied Western theories of human aging and development to the Tibetan Wheel of Life. The wheel has twelve sections and it takes a hundred forty-four years to complete one life cycle.

Cycle	Cycle Name	Beginning Age	Ending Age
1	Baby	0	12
2	Child	12	24
3	Adolescent	24	36
4	Pre-adult	36	48
5	Young adult	48	60
6	Adult	60	72
7	Middle-age	72	84
8	Elderly	84	96
9	Old	96	108
10	Wizened	108	120
11	Ancient	120	132
12	Legendary	132—144+	

Check where you are and tell your friends and family. If you’re under thirty-six, you’re still an adolescent. Not yet sixty? You’re not even an adult. Most of all create a change in your mental image of yourself. And if you want to change the way you face

the challenge of aging, consider these role models: Grandma Moses was seventy-two when she started painting; Goethe wrote *Faust* past eighty; and Michaelangelo did some of his best works at eighty-six. When Maggie Kuhn, leader of the Grey Panthers, turned eighty, she made a resolution to do something outrageous every week. Then when she turned eighty-six, she decided to do something outrageous every day. She had a passionate love affair at eighty-eight.

Changing the way we relate to someone we love can make the difference between living in harmony, and divorcing in rage. Jon and Carol came for counselling complaining that their fights were disrupting their lives.

“Whenever Jon gets angry or disagrees with me, he calls me names, insults me, and leaves the house,” Carol said angrily.

“When Carol gets angry, she throws things...at me,” Jon said sounding even angrier.

“Good for you both,” I said, hoping to break the tension. You’re being honest about your feelings, and you’ll probably be happier than a lot of couples who deny their feelings and play at politeness.”

Jon and Carol looked at each quizzically.

“Now all you two need is a clear intention to change the way you fight.”

Jon was curious. “I’m all ears.”

“Fighting fair means not hurting each other’s feelings or insulting one another.”

Carol’s said, “That’s what I want more than anything else, Jon. I want you to stop trying to make me feel bad.”

“At great risk of repeating myself,” I said, “try using the Tri-Energetic formula and

stay curious about what you each need or want, instead of being insulting or defensive.”

“I need to know it’s okay to fight,” Carol said looking at Jon hopefully.

Jon explained that Carol’s screaming intimidated him.

“Do you want to change the way you react to Carol when she screams?” I asked.

“You bet I do....” he began.

Before he could go on, Carol interrupted, “Sometimes I just *need* to yell.”

To make Carol’s screaming tolerable for Jon, I suggested she practice shouting compliments instead of insults at him. Just yell, at the top of your lungs, “I adore your blue eyes!” “You’re a great lover!”

Jon laughed, but didn’t look convinced. So I spoke to him reassuringly.

“You might consider ‘ritualizing’ your fights. That way you can even enjoy the art of debate. It’s like the martial arts: set a time limit, then bow to one another before and after the argument.”

Jon smiled, and I played with the power of paradox.

“An alternative might be to wait until nighttime, then burn your best furniture in the middle of the living room. You can stand separated by the fire and shout and scream your grievances until you’re more afraid of the flames than of each other’s words. Then, if you haven’t burned the house down, put out the fire and go to sleep. By sunrise, you’ll have released enough negativity to forget what you were fighting about.”

Shocked by this absurd paradoxical suggestion, they laughed and Jon took Carol’s hand saying, “I think I’d rather just say what I need and want.”

From a Tri-energetic point of view, the essence of our humanity lies in our ability to develop ourselves and increase our capacity to give and receive love. Change

is inevitable because life *is* change. But it's comforting to know we can have some influence over changes. If we remember to be flexible, tolerant, and curious, changing can be an artful, passionate journey to inner peace.

CHAPTER 11

WHAT TO DO 'TIL THE COUNSELLOR COMES

The road to inner peace is paved with clear intentions and a big bag of tricks. In counselling, a trick is a device, maneuver, or technique that's used to help facilitate changes. It's important for non-professionals to learn to use some of the techniques professional mental health workers use with their clients. Knowledge about human behavior, and skills to promote personal growth should be available to everyone. If we're curious about each other and ourselves we can use them for the good of all.

Tri-Energetics takes the position that there is no substitute for wide-based, integrative knowledge. In other words, being trained in only one therapeutic modality is like teaching an octopus to swim with just one leg. This is not to advocate a fragmented eclecticism. Professional counsellors who use Tri-Energetics have acquired practical knowledge and skills from a wide variety of teachers and modalities. Consequently, they are free to employ techniques that intuitively appeal to them. If you're not a professional, you're more limited in what you can do to counsel, but let's take a look at what you *can* do to help someone feel better.

A word to the wise before you begin: counselling someone who doesn't want to be counselled is like trying to teach a dead dog new tricks.

Tri-Energetics advocates the use of touch as a basic physical intervention. So you might begin with a clear intention to hug someone who's hurting. Remember: hugs heal! As a therapeutic intervention hugs offer non-sexual body contact. Relax and breathe.

A more advanced Tri-Energetic intervention, stress-reduction body work, removes tension from the physical body, allows emotional release, and brings inner

peace.

Everyone needs to reduce the stress that accumulates in the body. This Tri-Energetic technique reduces stress in as little as ten minutes, and allows people to enjoy being massaged without being naked.

To help take the stress out of someone's body, have her lie on a bed, floor, or mat. Then encourage her to take some deep breaths.

Sit beside her. Kneeling on your heels works well for many people, but do what feels comfortable. Take some deep breaths too. Center yourself by quieting your mind and bringing your full attention to the task at hand. Then rub your hands vigorously together to warm them and get some energy going.

To begin, take the top and back of the shoulder of the person and massage deeply into the muscles (trapezius) to loosen them. Slowly go deeper into the muscles and encourage the person to make some sounds to let you know if it feels good, if it's too hard, or not hard enough. This is an important part of the stress reduction process, so if the person stops making sounds for any period of time, encourage them by saying, "Breathe deep and let out some sounds."

[Insert Illustration]

Move down from the shoulder and firmly grasp the upper arm with your two hands, by making a ring around it with your thumbs and forefingers. Using as much pressure as is comfortable for your client, draw this ring down the arm to the fingers in a long, slow stroke. Feel that you are scraping stress off the arm as if it were a thick, sticky cream. When you reach the fingers, hold the client's hand with one hand, and with the other, pull the energy (stress) off each finger, by holding the finger between your thumb and forefinger. When you pull the energy off the fingertip let your thumb and forefinger

snap together, and shake off the energy you've accumulated on your hands by carefully disposing of it beside your client. Note: plants and pets love this energy, but it's not good to throw it on people.

[Insert Illustration]

Repeat this process several times. You may also go down the arm doing an "Indian burn," in which you wring the arm the way you would squeeze water out of a wet washcloth. When the arm feels cleaned of excess energy, take the hand in your two hands and pull it firmly and steadily parallel to the body. Stretch the arm with a vibrating motion, so that you pull the shoulder away from the neck. Then begin increasing the vibrating motion, shaking the hand and arm with a small, rapid up and down movement, as you continue to pull and stretch the arm. Continue for at least half a minute. Then, holding the hand firmly, lift it above the person's body and move the hand so that the elbow is bent at about ninety degrees. Move the hand so that the elbow swings loosely (like a wet noodle), insuring it is totally relaxed. Then place the arm gently at the person's side.

[Insert Illustration]

Move around to the other side of her body and do the other arm in a similar way.

When both arms are complete, sit behind the person's head and using both your hands; gently but very firmly press the thumbs into the brow at the center of the forehead, slightly closer to the eyebrows than to the scalp. Spread your thumbs apart, as if you were opening her third eye, using a very deep, firm, slow movement. It should take at least thirty seconds to go from the center of the forehead to the temples. As before, carefully shake off the energy.

[Insert Illustration]

Slowly and carefully, grasp the earlobes. Massage and squeeze them firmly (they can take a good bit of pressure). Then move your fingers so that you firmly massage every centimeter of the outermost portion of the ears. Again, shake off the energy.

Let your hands go onto the person's head and begin deeply massaging the scalp, as if you were washing her hair. Begin with slow movements, and gradually build up speed until you are using a very rapid back and forth stroke in which your hands move a few centimeters in each direction. When you have covered the entire head with this energetic shampoo, gently lift the head by taking the neck in your two hands. Gently and firmly stretch the neck and head away from the body. Be careful not to put pressure on the ears as you stretch the neck. Then, draw the hair together at the top of the head, as much as possible (depending on their coiffure). With a firm, gentle movement, pull bunched up hair through your fingers. You will be pulling off the last remnants of unwanted energy from the body (don't forget to shake off the energy, as before). Do this hair pull more than once, if it feels right. This is the closing movement, so when you do it for the last time, gently trail your fingers off the ends of the hair, dispose of the energy, and sit quietly beside your partner. Remember to take a moment to be grateful for the privilege of helping someone feel so peaceful. If you do this properly, you may be almost as relaxed as the person you've helped.

[Insert Illustration]

In the aftermath of this intervention, it is a good idea for both the client and counsellor to tune in to your inner dialogues. This can provide often-illusory information about what's going on inside you. Literally listen to your inner thoughts.

Listening is an art and a science. It's not as easy as it sounds. A good counsellor

listens with curiosity. To herself, and to her clients. If you're really involved in listening, you leave space for people to philosophize, think, discuss, choose, and analyze their thoughts. A good listener is less apt to give too much advice, or to presume she knows what's best for someone else. If someone needs your counsel, listening to what she wants is the first step on the way to help.

The next step may easily be to let someone release some tension. Screaming is a natural, healthy, normal process. It's as functional as a sneeze or an orgasm. Spontaneous expression of emotion is exquisite. Uninhibited release of pent-up negative energy is a great way to stay sane. The problem is not only where to do it, but with whom. Checkout lines in supermarkets are risky; waiting lines at the post office are out of the question. A good, full-out temper tantrum is cathartic but don't try it on an airplane. A deep belly laugh or a full, sobbing cry can be just what the doctor ordered. Please note: mental health workers who claim that allowing people to ventilate their anger is unhealthy, and only tends to increase negativity, are probably too afraid of their own emotions to listen to anyone's expression of anger or rage.

A good counsellor should be able to encourage the release of emotions, and know how to handle them. It's healthy to ventilate, and it's also important to help someone process what she has experienced. It's also necessary to help her relax and be comforted after a powerful release. In my opinion, knowing how to allow someone to constructively release negativity is a valuable contribution to the health and harmony of relationships. If parents know how to help their children release anger and frustration, the whole family can enjoy the laughter that usually follows. The old tried-and-true method of hitting pillows is still an effective way to avoid hitting someone. However, though it may be important for you to help a spouse, parent, child, or friend get rid of their pent-up emotion, unless you're

comfortable hearing someone yell, scream, or cry, don't even think about helping them do it.

Arthur Janov made a great contribution to the field of mental health when he legitimized the therapeutic value of screaming (Janov, 1991). He claims that the number one killer in the world today is neither cancer nor heart disease. It is repression. Repression means defending ourselves against our emotional pain.

Think about it. Do you repress feelings by denying them, rationalizing them, or projecting them onto others? When you scream, or weep from deep within the belly, you can actually touch that pain, release it, and dignify the sounds of your soul.

Life goes better with a lot of love, a few good laughs, and the freedom to scream. To help someone scream or shout, Tri-Energetics offers these two techniques.

(1) A hand squeeze: Cup your hands, interlock the fingers, and place the thumbs inside. The client squeezes your cupped hands. Amazingly, even the strongest person can squeeze your hands and it won't hurt. This technique provides the tension needed to really let go of repressed sound. (2) Alternatively, if you or someone else needs to scream and you don't want to be run out of your neighborhood, scream into a pillow. It blocks the sound.

Sometimes, when you're totally absorbed in someone as she expresses repressed feelings from childhood, or after she's had a good cry or scream, you may suddenly begin to understand the essence of her struggle and pain. Nothing I ever studied prepared me for the inexplicable things I cannot hear with normal ears, or see with ordinary eyes. Sometimes during a therapy session, especially in a group, I see scenes from the client's past. I hear messages from behind the curtain of illusion. What I perceive often amazes me, and just as often astonishes the group. You don't have to be a psychic, mystic, or

shaman to “see” what’s going on with someone you intend to help. Some people see images from the past, others from the future. Some counsellors need empirical data to perceive the totality of the situation. Others don’t. Remember, different personality functions, styles, and types perceive the world differently. The point is, you may not see scenes or hear messages, but if you trust your intuition and your intentions are noble and clear, you’ll probably discover the truth in your own way and you’ll be able to help a friend.

A word of caution: it’s important to know when you should not even attempt to offer help to someone. Without sufficient knowledge of psychopathology it’s dangerous to encourage a person to release emotional pain, or to engage in physical stress reduction techniques. The trained professional knows the uses and limitations of therapeutic methods. Consequently, she’s watchful for physical symptoms that require medical attention, or mental problems that may require medicines to control psychotic episodes, stabilize moods, or reduce clinical depression. So unless you know someone well enough to feel comfortable offering assistance, it’s best to suggest a professional.

After a good healthy scream, cry, or laugh, another therapeutic activity you can do ‘til the counsellor comes is listen to music. Music relaxes the mind, opens the heart, and nourishes the soul. If you’re intent on helping someone feel better, consider suggesting they discover the curative effects of music, drumming, dancing, singing, or chanting. You don’t have to be a professional drummer to drum, or a trained singer to sing. As the great American writer Henry David Thoreau said, “if only birds with beautiful voices sang, the woods would be silent.”

The Sufi tradition is amazingly effective at teaching through song and dance. Singing simple positive messages engages the inner child (without regressing us) and can

re-program unconscious negative messages (Moore, 1997). Try writing some songs yourself. Think about a problem, or something you want to change. Then ask yourself, “What do I need to change this situation?” Relax, and let whatever comes into your head be the answer.

Here's what happened for one woman who had a problem with her drug-addicted son. She went into her garden and took some deep breaths to calm herself. Then she asked, “What do I need to do to help my son?” Immediately, spontaneously, she sang out, “Live and let live!” She began to sing this affirmation so often, it became a part of her philosophy. Her son was thirty-five years of age, and apparently did not need, or want, her interference.

Don't let it get too complicated. A simple sentence works best. Write it to the tune of an old favorite song, then sing it aloud. You may be amazed at the results.

Another way to add pleasure to your life and to the lives of those you care about is to acknowledge the value of rituals and celebrations. The daily rituals of our lives often slip into oblivion because we fail to notice them—brushing teeth, hugging hello or good-by, walking the dog, taking a shower, setting the table. Some infrequent rituals like family reunions, seasonal celebrations, and paying income taxes—are often events we find difficult to celebrate. There are ritual events in life to which no invitation is made: the passage of power from parent to offspring, or the ritual of reconciliation that hopefully follows the ritual of rebellion. When you're conscious of the rituals in your life, you can discover ways to celebrate them.

Ceremonies are an excellent way to celebrate. They mark the passage of time. Ceremonies honor and initiate people's entry into new stages of life—and death. Ceremonies are an opportunity to give voice to our intentions. In Playshops, for

example, we often have fire ceremonies during which people clarify their intention to either give up something—or take something they need or want. I've seen people throw away their desire to smoke cigarettes into the fire and take the power of their conviction to keep from smoking. I've watched with awe as people take everything from their freedom to make mistakes, to their right to take money from clients for their services.

The art of celebrating affirms our respect for life. What better way to focus on the sacredness of life than to celebrate?

If you don't celebrate regularly, perhaps you can create reasons to celebrate. Then you can ritualize the celebrations. In other words, make celebrating a habit. Celebrate Tuesdays! Full moons. The changing seasons. Consider celebrating your sadness.

When you include loved ones in your celebrations, you help them discover that life is meant to be lived with passion and pleasure. A couple I know celebrate each other every morning during a coffee-drinking ritual. Remember: the best time to celebrate is anytime you can. When your rituals become meaningful, and help satisfy your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs, life becomes a celebration, and you're less likely to need counselling.

However, there may be times in life when you need professional help. If you're seeing a professional counsellor, or intend to see one, please remember that as a consumer you have a right to expect quality service. Tri-Energetics incorporates the use of client-counsellor "contracts" developed in Transactional Analysis. A contract between a client and counsellor clarifies a specific intention to change something.

To guide you through the illusive task of determining whether your counsellor is helping you satisfy needs, simplify wants, and clarify intentions, here are some simple

questions to ask yourself after a session:

1. Did the session end within the agreed upon time?
2. Are you more aware of what you need or want?
3. Do you have a clear contract for something you want to change?
4. Do you have any homework until the next session or group?
5. Did your counsellor talk too much, or give too much advice?
6. Was the counsellor flexible, and tolerant (compassionate)?
7. Was she genuinely curious? Did she listen well?
8. Was she judgmental or moralistic?
9. Did you have a chance to laugh, scream, or cry if you needed to?
10. Were you able to re-decide something during the session?

The diversity of human situations is so vast that there will always be a need for therapists, counsellors, shamans, priests, etc. But with Tri-Energetics, you'll know what to do 'til the counsellor comes. After all, we're all in this together.

CHAPTER 12

WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

There comes a time in life, whether through personal growth or simply the passage of time, when we become less self-absorbed and more other-concerned. Once our needs are satisfied and our wants simplified, our intentions change. That's usually when we begin to realize that there is no therapy, medicine, or magic that can take the place of a caring community.

After all, what good are changes in roles, personality, character, or eating habits if nobody notices? Where's the joy of celebrating a success if there's nobody to celebrate with? How can we delight in a heart-to-heart talk if nobody's listening?

Communities, like all groups, are as varied as we are. Some are spiritually based. Others share knowledge and skill areas, such as hobbies or professions. They range in size from a three-person support group, to networks with thousands of people.

If you need some friends with whom you can really be yourself and to whom you can turn in times of crisis, consider starting a support group. For many people support groups have become an integral and vital part of life.

About twelve years ago, ten women who'd been using Tri-Energetics in their daily lives began a support group. I was one of them. Every three months, we meet in someone else's home. We use Tri-Energetics to stay aware of our own needs, wants, and intentions, to honor each other's. We take turns saying what we want, and what we don't want. We use flexibility, tolerance, and curiosity to give and receive feedback, even if it's negative. We don't gossip behind each other's back.

The support group satisfies our emotional needs. The safe environment, where we know what's said in the group stays in the group, promotes a sense of *security*. There's room for *passion*, because we're able to let go, be ourselves, and speak from our hearts. We reinforce each other's feeling of personal *power* by taking one another seriously. We each feel *loved* every time we are listened to and feel understood. We know that when we need it, we'll be held and healed. It's easy to feel we're *growing* because we've recently invited three new members into the group. Our honest feedback helps us grow individually, and as a group. And whether we take on environmental issues, or stay focused on helping each other with personal problems, we're satisfying the need to be of *service*.

If your needs for closeness, intimacy, and mental stimulation are not satisfied, and you want a support group, why not formulate a clear intention to start your own? You might begin by inviting someone you know well, but would like to know better. The only thing better than inviting one person, is inviting two. Set a time and place. Don't make it a party. Discuss the intention to start a support group. Then, each of you shares what you need and want from the group. Before you know it, you may be off and rolling.

Don't be discouraged if it starts slowly. One Tri-Energetic counsellor decided to start a support group for women. After a couple of months, I asked how it was going.

"Great," she said brightly, "There are just two of us, but we're sure having a good time when we meet."

Humans are group animals with a need to belong. Ask yourself, "Is my need for a group being satisfied now? Am I lonely? Does my community help me satisfy my needs and get what I want?" Note: in some communities, asking for what you want is

considered rude—even selfish; in others, curiosity is akin to nosiness and is seen as ill-mannered. Do these norms apply to your group or community?

Think about your neighborhood. Do you have a sense of belonging? Do you know the local shopkeepers, the post-person, or the folks next door? If you suffered an illness, or there was a death in your family, would your community be there to help you? What do you do to contribute to the safety, beauty, and general environment of your neighborhood? Have you ever noticed that the more time you spend concerned about others, the less time you spend worrying about yourself?

Tri-Energetics can and does play a vital role in helping to organize, maintain, and create a sense of community in a variety of social settings. Naturally, people who have shared transformative experiences—who have held someone as they cry out the pain of the past, or shared overflowing joy—have an inclination to befriend each other. Friendships formed in most therapy groups tend to grow and mature in an environment where it's not necessary to hide or deny feelings. But you don't have to go to group therapy to form a support group or develop a sense of community. It can happen in groups formed around shared interests and goals. Note: if you feel the need for people you can be close with, consider joining a group in which you can share your passion for something.

Bob lived in a rural community that didn't meet his needs. He was lonely, and wanted to meet new friends. When he became concerned about the contamination of the river that flowed near his home, he found a group of citizens who were actively involved in stopping the pollution. Though Bob had little else in common with most of his neighbors, he did meet a few with whom he felt a kinship. Three of these folks became close friends, and together they began a much-needed support group. Bob's

neighborhood did not change. But his need for community was satisfied. Furthermore, one of the men in Bob's support group was the lawyer who was representing the citizen's coalition against the company that was polluting the river.

One afternoon, while Bob and his lawyer friend were discussing the complexities of the lawsuit, Bob summarized the issues by suggesting, "We residents of this community need our river. We want the company who is responsible for contaminating it to pay for the damage they've caused. We intend to use the money we receive to restore it to its natural beauty."

Bob's newfound buddy said, "I'm going to use this need, want, and intention thing when I make my arguments to the jury."

Applying Tri-Energetics to one person or one issue at a time can simplify complicated situations in the world of law, big business, and education, and thereby pave the way for positive change.

Edward is a consultant to a major corporation. He functions as a liaison between the union workers and management. He uses Tri-Energetics without anyone knowing. Edward keeps things rolling well, and avoids endless hours of dispute by continually insisting each side stay focused on the need, want, or intention behind it's demand.

Joan, a counsellor with a degree in education, decided to organize a special school with unique programs for poorly motivated children. She was motivated by her two sons' resistance to go to school. It was more than a lack of enthusiasm. The fact is that she had a hard time just getting them out of bed in the morning. It was understandable, because the school they attended served uneatable food, was rampant with racism, and according to the boys, had no cute girls.

During one of the first meetings to discuss the proposed curriculum, when bedlam broke out as each parent's voice escalated in an attempt to be heard, Joan interrupted the free-for-all with a suggestion she'd learned from Tri-Energetics: "Let's start by getting clear on what the kids really need."

Someone responded, "They need some fun so they're motivated to go to school."

Joan said, "Let's differentiate between what they need and what we want them to have." To make the difference clear, she suggested the parents list the subjects that were absolutely necessary in the children's education: reading, writing, arithmetic, music, etc. Then they listed what they each thought the children would want—sports teams, an orchestra, drama classes, liberal dress codes, free time, etc. Finally, the parents were asked to go home and write a short paragraph about what they wanted for their children—and their intention for the school's philosophy and protocol. Joan's use of Tri-Energetics helped clarify the intentions of a new and innovative school program, which is finding its way into the schools in her area.

As I write this book, the Netherlands Association for Counselling has begun to qualify people for certification as professional counsellors. Having already been granted professional status here, I was asked to help the first group of applicants survive a day of filling out forms, and making themselves known. It was a great privilege. At one point during the day, I looked around the circle of fifteen applicants, most of whom were already seasoned counsellors, teachers, or therapists. Although we'd tried to keep the atmosphere relaxed, I noticed how tired and tense everyone looked. I asked myself, "What do these people need right now?" The answer was obvious—nothing relieves tension like a good laugh.

“Okay,” I said to the group, “officially you’re supposed to break into pairs and discuss whichever point in the accrediting process is most important to you right now. Or maybe you just want to talk about sex and politics.”

Everyone laughed, and the tension was eased.

Tri-Energetics promotes the simplification of psychological constructs, and the unity of soma, psyche, and soul. From a global perspective, a unity of spirit is easier to grasp if we understand one major, critical aspect of all groups—group identity. It’s almost impossible to identify with a group that won’t allow you membership, and conversely, it’s probably not possible to feel a sense of belonging to a group of people you can’t identify with.

To identify with a group, we have to tolerate its philosophy, symbols, rules, and norms. For example, I love America. She is a land of unsurpassed diversity: majestic mountains, arid deserts, alligator-rich swamp lands. America is a country of endless contradictions and indescribable beauty, but I couldn’t identify myself as “American” because I am intolerant of nationalism, guns, and work-a-holism. By "nationalism" I mean the act of identifying myself with a nation and placing it beyond right or wrong, good and evil. Nationalism shouldn’t be confused with love of country.

It’s imperative, in my opinion, to become conscious of which groups we identify with because group identity is crucial to the survival of the planet.

Group identity is a complicated psychological issue. It leads to group loyalty, and group loyalty leads to inter-group warfare. That’s a well-established phenomenon in social psychology; it’s not my fault. If we think our group’s different from other groups, we’re destined to fight. If we believe our group is better than another group, we’re destined to fight. One of the problems with men’s groups and women’s groups is that if

we identify with one, we find ourselves in a war with the other. I've never seen a group of alcoholics welcome drug abusers into AA. This is why identifying ourselves by our nationality, race, or religion is a natural but risky business. Personally, I avoid identifying with organized religions, because like any cult or sect, most organized religions create group identity, group loyalty, and have therefore (in my opinion) been the primary cause of hatred and wars.

The only thing that brings two warring groups together is a super-ordinate goal, like a disaster that threatens both groups simultaneously.

This is exactly what is happening on the planet now. We are all threatened with extinction. That's the curse and the blessing of the super-ordinary catastrophe we face today. The threat to the earth's environment may drive warring groups to identify themselves as members of one group...the human race.

Loyalty to the planet could unite us all. A sense of unity would make it possible to love and support our individual tribes, religions, cultures and communities, and still identify ourselves as Earthlings.

There is no doubt that comfort, joy, and knowledge can come from an understanding of one's own culture. But richness fills the soul when one's perspective encompasses the vast expanse of human diversity.

Tri-Energetics reminds us of the universality of human needs. We are wonderfully alike and miraculously unique.

Most of us want love, laughter, and inner peace. But rare and wondrous moments of inner peace are experienced by far too few. Most people have trouble just trying to relax.

Asking a stressed-out person to visualize world peace is like asking a Buddhist to visualize Armageddon. The Dalai Lama put this a little more elegantly when he said, "Although attempting to bring about world peace through the internal transformation of individuals is difficult, it's the only way."

Tri-Energetics suggests, "Inner peace, then the world." It envisions us living in a web of interconnectedness in which every charitable act, every unconditional gift of love, has tremendous unseen ramifications. Chaos theory calls this the "butterfly" effect: when a butterfly flaps its wings in a forest, it can effect changes in the weather several thousand miles away. Every time we extend a helping hand, we're committing a political act—we're creating changes in the universe. Contributing to the health and well being of local neighborhoods can make a major contribution to the human community. No one yet knows the full effect of human acts of kindness.

If you know what you need, say what you want, and have clear intentions, you're likely to be more peaceful. If you're flexible, you can see new options and break boundaries. Tolerance helps you open your heart. Curiosity lets you search your soul. When you do, you're likely to see that we need each other. We're all family on this little endangered planet. We are not only tangled in each other's dreams; we're colliding with each other's karma. We're all in this together.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR by Henry Marshall

Meeting Rickie Moore was a turning point in my life for which I am infinitely grateful. She's a group leader, whose electrifying presentation has inspired thousands of people to open their hearts and change their lives. She's a therapist and counsellor with an amazing ability to cut through tangled problems, and empower her clients to live with joy and dignity. She's a teacher with a huge bag of tricks who trains students to enrich their own lives and the lives of others. She is an innovative mental health professional who has formulated her own magical way of helping others into a system called Tri-Energetics, which promises to bring creativity and spirit into the therapeutic arts. She's a woman, mother, partner and friend who lives her truth, and loves so deeply that others are transformed. I know. It happens to me all the time. I'm her husband.

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