

# Connections

The Newsletter of the Connections Program

A Partnership between the Health District of Northern Larimer County and the Larimer Center for Mental Health

## Imagining Images of Light

By: Daniel A. Anderson, Ph.D.

In a letter I sent to area therapists a few months ago, I ended with a quote from Carl Jung—"One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious." The fuller statement that he made is, "Filling the conscious mind with ideal conceptions is a characteristic feature of Western theosophy, but not the confrontation with the shadow and the world of darkness. One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious. The latter procedure, however, is disagreeable and therefore not popular."

This does not say that "imagining figures of light" is without value. Many spiritual traditions include contemplative practices using images of the saints, sages, or God. Of a similar nature are the Buddhist *metta* (lovingkindness) meditations in which the focus is not on an image, but on statements of qualities that one desires to develop. There is a corollary to these practices in psychosynthesis that its founder Roberto Assagioli developed and practiced. Using a set of cards upon which he printed words for various positive qualities (e.g., understanding, compassion, serenity, courage, etc.), he would choose a card for whatever quality he felt needed to be evoked more within himself. With the card as a reminder, throughout the day he would contemplate the quality he wished to strengthen. Many similar practices exist, all functioning along the lines of "positive thinking."

Contemplation of a positive quality (or an image of such) acts to move one's attention from an habitually problematic state of mind (SOM) to intentional states that contain qualities (or, initially, maybe just the idea of qualities) that can be comforting and reassuring. In

doing so one can obtain some relief from distressing SOM's, be they states that contain severe distress such as trauma memories or less severe (but still troubling) distress such as an experience of low self-esteem. Contemplation at this level may be seen as a type of stress management practice.

This can progress to further skill development when a client accesses a SOM with specific positive qualities and then practices acting in the world from that SOM. For example, a client with performance anxiety who practices public speaking from a SOM that contains self-confidence, rather than self-doubt or self-criticism. It is important to note, though, that while both of these two practices help a person function better, they do not necessarily result in experiences of actual psychological healing. Healing involves the transformation of a distressing SOM, not the mere development of additional SOM's that one can experience or act from.

The deeper purpose of developing healthier qualities is to integrate them with the unhealthy aspects of oneself. This always involves what Jung refers to as "making the darkness conscious." This can be neglected in therapies or with clients that are focused merely on symptom reduction. And as Jung noted, it "is disagreeable and therefore not popular." Most people avoid this work because of the pain that's evoked when they enter into their "darknesses." With an appropriate psychological foundation in place, though, even the most severe trauma experience can be healed on the deepest levels (the one's that bring about the experience of synthesis and transcendence) with little or no pain.

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We encourage you to submit short articles (50-500 words) on therapeutic approaches, mental health topics, case studies, or therapeutic book/movie reviews, etc., & will publish them as space allows. We reserve the right to edit all submissions.

May-June 2008

## Connections

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Professional Bulletin Board online:  
[www.healthdistrict.org/connections](http://www.healthdistrict.org/connections)

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*Connections* is published 6 times/year. The purpose of *Connections* is to offer information on current therapy groups and services in the community; provide updates on services available through the Connections Program; and offer a place where information on community happenings of interest to mental health and human services providers can be shared.

Submissions are welcome. E-mail them to [chusted@healthdistrict.org](mailto:chusted@healthdistrict.org) by the following deadlines:

**NEXT EDITION:** July/August 2008  
**Article Deadline:** June 15, 2008

Submissions printed in *Connections* do not necessarily reflect the views of the Connections Program. Our editorial staff do not check the credentials of individuals wishing to submit groups or other listings. If you have concerns regarding credentials or other issues, please contact the group leader or author of the article directly. Thank you.

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However, if the fruits of "imagining figures of light" are not used to make "the darkness conscious" and the process doesn't progress to synthesis, the benefits of positive SOM's usually remain essentially temporary because unhealed issues almost always reappear. There are also further complications that can arise, but that awaits a future discussion.

For further information, you can contact Dr. Anderson and the Abintra Psychosynthesis Center at (970) 663-5733.

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### Book Review By: Shanna Germain

#### *Dying: Finding Comfort and Guidance in a Story of a Peaceful Passing*

by Judy K. Underwood, Ph.D.  
ISBN: 978-0-9794315-1-7  
\$16.95, softcover  
[www.passingpeacefully.com](http://www.passingpeacefully.com)



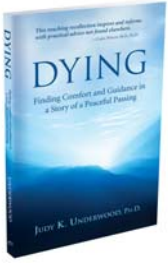
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Despite its title, *Dying: Finding Comfort and Guidance in a Story of a Peaceful Passing*, by Judy K. Underwood, Ph.D., is not a book for those who are dying. It is, instead, a book for those who are determined to live with joy and hope, right to their very last day.

Part memoir of a life well-ended and part guide to the dying process, *Dying* tells the story of three women: Therapist Dr. Judy Underwood, her patient, Kris, who is diagnosed with terminal cancer at a young age, and Kris's partner, Sally. The book takes us through the last eleven months of Kris's life as she works with Dr. Underwood, Sally and her friends and family to create what Kris called a "good death."

Comments from all three women, as well as family members and friends, give the book an intimate personal touch that welcomes readers to listen and learn without ever feeling like they're invading these women's lives or privacy.

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Told in a style that is engaging, heart-breaking and inspiring, the prose never crosses the line into maudlin, making it so easy to get lost in the story that you don't notice all of the things that you're learning. It is only after you've put the book down that you realize how much practical information is included, from writing an obituary and benefiting from hospice care to a list of tools and techniques that can make the process more comfortable for everyone involved.

In addition, *Dying* takes into account the way the process affects not just those who are dying, but everyone involved, from family and friends to caregivers and hospice workers. Throughout, the book offers tips for creating a culture that allows everyone involved to "grieve well," even before death occurs.

While many books about dying give us a medical perspective or, at the very least, the perspective of someone who deals with death on a regular basis, *Dying* takes us on a death journey similar to what most of us are likely to experience: it will begin before we are ready and we'll suddenly realize that we are not properly packed, we don't understand the language and we have no real idea of how to arrive at our destination with our dignity and desires intact.

By allowing us to ride along on this journey, *Dying* helps us to understand and confront our own emotions and fears about death. And as we go on this painful, humorous, bittersweet, joyous journey with these women, we learn many things. Perhaps most importantly, we learn that there is no right or wrong way to go about the process. *Dying* doesn't offer falsehoods, or promise a process without pain or grief. What it does offer is compassion, understanding and, most of all, hope. Hope that we can prepare for the inevitable with courage and even joy. Hope that there is another way, a better way. Hope that we can keep on living, right up until the end.

*"This book has helpful suggestions on an important topic."*

Christiane Northrup, M.D.  
Author *The Wisdom of Menopause* and *Mother-Daughter Wisdom*

## Taking Strides to Save Lives

An annual benefit for the Suicide Resource Center of Larimer County.

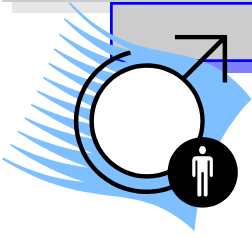
- Date:** Friday, May 2, 2008
- Time:** 6:30 p.m.—Sign in and registration  
7:30 p.m.—Walk Begins  
8:00 p.m.—Candlelight Vigil
- Place:** Old Town Square  
(the N.E. Corner of College Avenue and Mountain Avenue)
- Entry:** \$25 Walk Day Registration

For more information and to register please go to [www.SuicideResourceCenter.org](http://www.SuicideResourceCenter.org) or call the Suicide Resource Center at (970) 635-9301.

**Suicide  
Awareness  
Walk and  
Candlelight  
Vigil**

## Resources for the Community

### Men's Sexual Addiction Recovery Therapy Group



**Locations:** 19 Old Town Square, #238  
Fort Collins, CO

**Day:** Wednesday

8771 Wolff Ct., #210  
Westminster, CO

**Day:** Thursday

**Commitment:** 3 months with an option at that time to continue.  
Homework: reading and written work.

**Cost:** \$45.00 per session

**Group Leader:** Renee Madison, MA, LPC

**Purpose:**

- \* understanding of sex addiction;
- \* understanding of intimacy disorders;
- \* support system while stopping the behavior;
- \* dealing with the feelings of deep hurt;
- \* a safe place for sexually addicted men to discuss this sensitive subject matter and have support as they learn to deepen friendships;
- \* shame reduction with men who know the struggles;
- \* learning to have healthy relationships.

For more information please call (970) 324-6928 or (303) 257-7623.

### Group Supervision

This is an ongoing group providing supervision for people who need hours for licensure. This group has recently been formed. Space is limited. This group meets two times per month for an hour each time.

The cost is \$35.00 per session. The location is in Old Town. There are two facilitators: Rachel Isenberg, LCSW, ACSW and Maggie Tibbitts, LCSW.

If you are interested in participating in this group, please call Rachel at (970) 490-6851 or Maggie at (970) 988-4173.



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## Resources for the Community

### Weekend Lunch Group



- When:** The first Saturday of each month from 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.
- Place:** Meet at the Restaurant then back to Beyond the Mirror (1304 S. College Ave., Suite 12)
- Cost:** \$15 plus the price of your meal

Many individuals who struggle with disordered eating experience avoidance of restaurants, planned meals and/or social events. Eating out can be very difficult for someone who struggles with food issues and body image. Some struggles that may occur during restaurant dining include: choosing menu options, feeling fat, comparing their selection to the selections of others, eating enough, eating too much, difficulty paying attention to conversation, struggle with negative self-talk and eating while feeling like they are being watched by others.

This group is designed to practice the skills of mindful eating and identify the individual skills needed for a successful lunch experience. Group members will spend an hour at a local restaurant and then meet at Beyond the Mirror to have a discussion about the process.

#### Schedule:

- May 3, 2008: Mad Greens (2120 E. Harmony, #105, Fort Collins)
- June 7, 2008: Challenge Group (meet at Beyond the Mirror and go to a surprise location)
- July 5, 2008: Uncle's Pizzeria (1717 S. College Avenue, Fort Collins)

Contact Jen Amaral-Kunze at Beyond the Mirror at (970) 402-8543 or email her at [jsamaralkunze@yahoo.com](mailto:jsamaralkunze@yahoo.com) to RSVP. Space is limited. Visit [www.beyondthemirror.org](http://www.beyondthemirror.org) for more information regarding this group and other groups available.

For more community mental health and substance abuse information, including information on support groups, classes and events, visit



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• c o n n e c t i o n s •

mental health & substance abuse resources

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Fort Collins, Colorado 80521



If you wish to be removed from the *Connections* mailing list, your address is wrong, or you would like to receive the publication via email, contact Carrie Husted at [chusted@healthdistrict.org](mailto:chusted@healthdistrict.org) or call 970-494-4370.