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Title: Emotional Vulnerability and Induced Transpersonal Experiences

Abstract: Transpersonal experiences have been considered incidental events within facets of daily life. This paper will address the potential of creating transpersonal experiences through induction and the challenge faced in attempting to do so by reviewing emotional vulnerability and its impact on the transpersonal process. Organized for future studies, we will discuss the theories of Jung, Kant, Maslow, Csíkszentmihályi, Palmer, Groff, Davis and the correlation to transpersonal emotions. High emotional capacity has a greater likelihood of transpersonal experience and will be utilized as a lens for applying transpersonal work. We will use emotional valance to clarify the feelings surrounding transcendence for participants regarding emotional vulnerability. Additional subjects will include the steps for induction of transpersonal experiences and offer guidance for practitioners in the field, both for client induction and individual practice. Evaluation methods and future study potential will also be discussed.

## Introduction

Imagine that you are in the middle of your day. Something changes and your normal routine has suddenly becomes quite stressful. Maybe you have been given an updated deadline that feels impossible. Perhaps a coworker called in sick, or you have been handed a temporary setback due to delays in other areas of the office. Instead of panic quitting, or screaming until you black out, you decide to take a moment for yourself. You decide to center yourself, to refocus by quieting your mind, and to allow yourself to set the stress aside. You know that with a clear head you can address the new complexities and succeed in your daily work.

You close the door, turn off your phone, and shift your focus inward. Breathing deeply, and slowly, you ask yourself what is wrong. *I am frightened. This is hard. I do not know if I can do it.* Your feelings bubble up, insecurities, worries, and anxieties are all sitting just under the surface. Here, in the moment, you are vulnerable to them. You accept these feelings without judgment and address them within yourself. This would not be your challenge if the company did not think you could do it. You know you are capable. You just have to find the right path forward and embrace it with good work. With a smile, you embrace the fear, the worry, and the anxiety, letting yourself know that you can do this, and you will show those parts of you that there is no reason to fear. You accept that you will do your best, no

matter the outcome. You let go of your worries and remind yourself that you can take all the steps you need to make it through this moment. You know that success is possible if you continue to do your best.

This brings a rising feeling of hope and excitement. You stay there in that moment of hope and excitement, letting it fill you from the inside until you are ready to burst with it. When the rising positive feelings overwhelm you, you open your eyes and return to work.

This is a single expression of a moment that could happen. This could be how the day goes for anyone with deadlines, challenges, or requirements that are placed upon them in their careers. This moment of trading one set of emotions with a potential negative impact for another with a potential positive impact is a very real possibility and often takes a moment of true emotional vulnerability that people are not always comfortable with.

This is a small or minor form of a transpersonal experience. The word “transpersonal” is transcendent in nature and a label used for a personal experience in which a single person overcomes their egoic nature and is in greater harmony with themselves and the world around them. This can include things like meditation, yoga, or other health-focused experiences as well as spiritual practices (Zappala, 2007). The kind of transpersonal moment expressed in the above paragraphs is more common to people than an exceptional human experience, such as peak experiences or near-death experiences, and it could still be a transpersonal moment for someone who is in deep need of this internal perspective shift.

Transpersonal experiences are wide and varied. They carry space for intense moments of personal development, emotional expansion, self-awareness, and spiritual awakening (Garcia & Tart, 2013; Palmer & Hastings, 2013). Though often considered somewhat random or rare occurrences (Palmer & Hastings, 2013), we believe that transpersonal happenings can be intentionally brought about, otherwise called ‘induced’, for people. This can occur through individual induction, partner induction, or even group induction of these experiences. Based on our exposure in the field, we have created a process for the Stages of Induction, which can be used as a guide for safely inducing transpersonal experiences. In this paper, we will share this conceptual format for the induction of transpersonal experiences and their theoretical counterparts and the impact each stage has on their participants.

### ***Intentionality – Participatory Transcendence***

There are many theories about what makes an experience a transpersonal experience. Two of them that directly apply to the process of induction are Carl Jung’s Transcendent Function and Emanuel Kant’s Participatory Philosophy. Carl Jung discussed the mind of man as being able to transcend itself, to overcome its own boundaries through the ability

of transcendence. This is described as a way for the self to incorporate the conscious and unconscious aspects of our own minds (Friedman & Hartelius, p. 26, 2015).

Emanuel Kant likewise discussed the participatory philosophy, the requirement for man to be deeply engaged in their own lives, to participate in the events that happen to be affected by them directly, and that anything we do not engage with remains outside our ability to understand through perception, (Friedman & Hartelius, p.194, 2015). Between Jung's transcendent function and Kant's participatory philosophy, we see a way to engage with the world that is quite intentional.

This intentionality becomes a hidden key for induction. We must intend to engage more deeply with ourselves and the world around us. We must intend to challenge ourselves in some way. We must intend to expose our vulnerabilities and to honor them in some form. To induce this work within ourselves or others, we must go into a space, emotionally, where that vulnerability is available to us intending to address the things that come out of that vulnerability.

By doing so with intention, we seek the transcendent function through participatory philosophy. A notable example of this is Grof's (2017) holotropic breathing technique and its application of it in situations where an individual has experienced a spiritual emergency.

As we have already discussed, the individual must be intentional about the decision to engage in the transpersonal to induce a transpersonal experience, this is the first stage of the induction process. Stanislav Grof (2017) has developed a technique that engages the emerging archetypes during a spiritual emergence to avoid the complications of it turning to a psychological emergency. He discusses this in depth in his article aptly titled "Spiritual Emergency". He describes a way to engage in the unconscious through deep breathing to allow the conflicts the individual is experiencing to become conscious. The intention is to engage with the hidden parts of self in a conscious way to create transcendence over or through them.

The general strategy here is to create situations in everyday life where it is possible to fully confront the emerging material, such as periods of meditation or introspective experiencing facilitated by music. This seems to clear the remaining time in everyday life from the intrusion of unconscious elements, (Grof & Grof, 2017, p.39).

Here we can see how the holotropic breathwork becomes intentional, as there is a purpose, or a strategy, as discussed by Grof (2017). He goes on to detail how this process brings us in contact with these parts through being vulnerable to our internal feelings, sensations, or perspectives. Grof gives us other ways to be intentional about this through activities such as shamanism, kundalini, or other experiences that report similar results. In each of these experiences, there must be intention to engage with the unconscious self for the transpersonal to take hold. This intention is the first step in induction.

## ***Holding Space - Non-Duality and Exceptional Human Experiences***

The second step in induction would be to hold space for the experience. In our example of using meditation in the middle of a stressful day, the act of turning off the phone, shutting the door, and turning the outside world completely out is the act of holding space for the self. In Grof's (2017) holotropic breathing, or likewise in other activities, this is often done through quieting the surroundings, reducing the potential for disturbance, and removing distractions from the individual or participants. While in this space, we are aware of the interconnectedness with the world around us. We must put ourselves in a mental state where we are in deep communication with the world at large. This provides a container in which we can focus specifically on the intended target. We do this by understanding that we are not separate from the events occurring, but we are part of them ourselves.

John Davis discusses this concept as Nonduality within his article titled "The Transpersonal Dimensions of Ecopsychology: Nature, Nonduality, And Spiritual Practice". Within this article, Davis, in agreement with a quote from Ken Wilber, defines nonduality as being "an awareness that is no longer confined exclusively to the individual ego" (Wilber, 1996 p. 202), or what I will call nonduality" (Davis, 1998, p.8). Davis, as an Ecopsychologist, approaches nature as a reflection of human existence, that we are not separate from the natural world, but that we are, in fact, part of it, as it is part of us. If we were to change out the word 'nature' or 'natural world' for the term 'transpersonal experience,' then we could judiciously apply it to this discussion even more clearly.

If we return to the example of meditation to alleviate work stress, we can say that we are more than just the person experiencing stress, but we are both the person feeling negative emotions and the person who guides the meditation. If it were anger instead of fear, we would both be the person who screams or yells, and the person who calms us down. We exist with our subconscious in a nondual state, however our perspective of it is often splintered through our daily lives. This is different to the highly transpersonal idea of exceptional human experiences, or EHEs, or healing experiences considered less common than non-dual states.

Palmer and Hastings (2013) describe these phenomena as "[consisting of] of mystical experiences, psychic experiences, encounter experiences, unusual death-related experiences, exceptional human performances, healing experiences, desolation/nadir experiences, and dissociation experiences" (p. 333). Regularly viewed as uncommon and spontaneous, EHEs can be harnessed and consciously practiced with repetition and intention, thus providing avenues for actualizing one's true potential and the ability to handle stress in positive ways (Palmer & Hastings). After we have organized our holding space, then we can look at the third step in the induction of transpersonal experiences: Letting Go.

In comparison to non-dual states, Exceptional Human Experiences (EHEs) differ slightly in that they offer complete surrender during the act, due to its expansive nature and journey beyond ego. EHEs are supernatural phenomena whose occurrence brings a state of instant or steady flow of healing to the participant. With practice, EHEs provide continuous benefits for increased bandwidth of holding space at will.

### ***Letting Go – Flow States & Emotional Vulnerability.***

The next step in inducing transpersonal experiences involves giving ourselves up to emotional vulnerability by letting go of our defenses and submitting to the truth of our own feelings. In our example of meditating in a stressful situation, letting go is the moment the individual turns within to address their own feelings and moves into releasing themselves from the emotional holding patterns they carry. The process of letting go and facing those internal feelings begins with understanding where emotional vulnerability comes from and why it is important.

Emotional vulnerability as discussed by Mia M. Maurer, Jason Maurer, Eva Hoff, and Daiva Daukantaitė (2023), in their article, is a required part of self-development in the Personal Growth Model.

All sides in the communicative event (both the self and the partner, be it therapist, teacher, facilitator, a friend, family member, etc.) are able to express their own emotions honestly and openly, showing vulnerability. This mutual opportunity to express vulnerability is a key component for the growth process to take root – the individual(s) feels that they are capable of processing self-related personal topics without needing to put on any defenses (Rogers, 1961 p. 15), (Maurer et al., 2023 p. 4).

This quote discusses the need for vulnerability as a key component for the process of personal growth. The Personal Growth Model reviews this as a part of the genuineness and authenticity of self that is needed to develop in a personal way (Maurer et al., 2023). This aligns with our uses, as it is the emotional vulnerability that will allow us to seek out that necessary internal change through induction of transpersonal moments during the process we describe here. The access to one's internal vulnerability is essential no matter what emotions come up for us as practitioners of the induction. Often, the emotions that come from our vulnerability are uncomfortable for us. We are challenged by the things we keep within ourselves because of the discomfort that we experience while facing the rising tide of emotional depth. This can cause us to avoid or reject or disconnect from those emotions due to that discomfort. A lack of emotional vulnerability is a hindrance to development and the induction of transpersonal experiences. No matter what, if our emotions are intense enough to feel them thoroughly, then we can utilize them during an induced experience. Groff talks about this in his article about Spiritual Emergencies (2017).

The main principle here is to encourage the experiencer to surrender fully to the emerging emotions, sensations, and physical energy and find appropriate ways of expressing them through sounds, grimaces, postures, and movements without judging or analyzing the experience. The function of the facilitators is to follow the energy flow and encourage its full external expression. This work continues until the experiencer reaches a state of resolution and relaxation, (Groff & Groff, 2017, p. 40).

This gives us an additional perspective to consider and adds to our growing understanding of the induction process. Ultimately, if we have those emotions, we can connect to the transpersonal experience regardless of what the emotion happens to be. The purpose of these emotions is to surrender to them or to engage with them deeply. When we surrender or give into the experience of these emotions, we resolve them, as Groff mentions above. We can connect to the transcendent function through participating in our own vulnerability to our emotional selves. Through this emotional vulnerability, we are introduced to a state of flow wherein the transpersonal moment can be delivered.

Flow states are also part of the Letting Go state of the induction process. They indicate a moment of complete engagement with what is considered 'limited stimuli' and a non-dual perception of themselves within the activities they utilize in the world. This Flow state is discussed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2014). Chapter ten specifically discusses the action of flow within play, dance, sports, and other creative physical outlets for people of all ages.

Flow denotes the holistic sensation present when we act with total involvement. ...While flow is often experienced in play, in creativity, or in religious ecstasy, it is not always present in these activities, nor is it limited to them. ... Perhaps the clearest sign of flow is the experience of merging action and awareness. A person in flow does not operate with a dualistic perspective: one is very aware of one's actions, but not of the awareness itself. ...Flow seems to occur only when people face tasks that are within their ability to perform. This is why one experiences flow most often in activities which have clearly established rules for action, such as rituals, games, or participatory art forms like the dance. ...The merging of action and awareness is made possible by a centering of attention on a limited stimulus field. ...Ideally, flow is the result of pure involvement, without any consideration about results. In practice, however, most people need some inducement to participate in flow activities, at least at the beginning, before they learn to be sensitive to intrinsic rewards. ...Self-forgetfulness does not mean, however, that in flow a person loses touch with his or her own physical reality. In some flow activities, perhaps in most, one becomes more intensely aware of internal processes. This obviously occurs in yoga and many religious rituals. Climbers report a great increase of kinesthetic sensations, a sudden awareness of ordinarily unconscious muscular movements. Chess players are very aware of the working of their own minds during games. What is usually lost in flow is not the awareness of one's body or of one's functions, but only the self-construct, the intermediary which one learns to interpose between stimulus and response. ...A person in flow is in control of his actions and of the environment. While involved in the activity, this

feeling of control is modified by the “ego-less” state of the actor. Rather than an active awareness of mastery, it is more a condition of not being worried by the possibility of lack of control, (Csikszentmihalyi, pp. 136-142, 2014).

While this quote is long, and pulls from several places in this chapter, Csikszentmihalyi discusses the depth of flow that we need for our purposes. The act of overcoming the ego, our early definition of transpersonal experiences, is clearly at play within the flow state, and additionally, the release of one’s thoughts from dualism, as well as including the deep awareness of the whole of movement, both internally and externally, is all discussed in this quote. These are pieces that we have spoken of in separate points, and for the induction of the transpersonal, the requirement of flow is also part of the need for emotional vulnerability.

The use of flow also gives us some further structure to consider based on Csikszentmihalyi’s requirements for limited stimulus, clear rules, and enough motivation to engage deeply in the experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). This tells us that participants can neither care too much nor too little about the outcome of the experience, otherwise they will lose the flow state. Similarly, if they are not motivated to participate, or have too much motivation to participate, then they will be attached to the outcome and will lose the flow state. This helps us clarify the mentality of the individual who seeks to use the induction of the transpersonal.

Additionally, the experience itself cannot be overwhelming for the participants, as too many stimuli or too little would remove them from the flow state. Also, the use of clear rules, or clarity in the role of the participant will be necessary so that everyone involved in the process knows what is expected of them, as confusion in their roles will also remove the individual from the flow state. That creates a lot of challenges for the participants, and the researcher who could utilize this theory in the future. Perhaps this is why transpersonal experiences have been difficult to pinpoint until now. The requirements of flow are mysterious and could be difficult to manage in some environments.

Lastly, flow is considered an internal state of importance with “no goals or rewards external to itself” (Csikszentmihalyi, p. 145, 2014). This tells us that, as an example, if we were to win a marathon it feels wonderful, but the act of being in flow with the environment is less about winning, and more focused on a sense of accomplishment. The simple act of doing the action is its own reward or must be for a flow state to develop. For our use during induction, this means that the act of meditating, dancing, or painting must be the reward we seek on its own and that if we aim for a transpersonal experience, then we will likely not meet the requirements for the flow state.

This is also the paradox of seeking the transpersonal. What we aim for cannot be transcendence, but to know that it can come to us along the way as we attempt to overcome our ego through non-duality and flow is our path to induction. Any other

attempt will miss the desired transformation of self. Concisely, we must aim for our own joy, our own benefit, and our own release from duality into the state of non-dual flow to induce the experience we seek. We must let go of our assumptions about what will get us there and delight in our harmony with the world.

Maslow and Panagiotaropoulou (1976/1994) discusses the idea that individuals who avoid the moment of peak experiences, also considered transpersonal experiences, are able to entirely skip the potential of the transcendental shift. This concept of the 'non-peaker' enables those who wish to avoid internal change to do so at will by remaining stubborn and steadfast against the experiences that change them.

Any person whose character structure (or Weltanschauung, or way of life) forces him to try to be extremely or completely rational or "materialistic" or mechanistic tends to become a non-peaker. That is, such a view of life tends to make the person regard his peak- and transcendent experiences as a kind of insanity, a complete loss of control, a sense of being overwhelmed by irrational emotions, etc. The person who is afraid of going insane and who is, therefore, desperately hanging on to stability, control, reality, etc., seems to be frightened by peak-experiences and tends to fight them off, (Maslow and Panagiotaropoulou, p. 33, 1976/1994).

Here again, we see how the individual is required to stay emotionally vulnerable by letting go of the rational, the materialist, the fear of loss of control, or other intense feeling that could reject the moment of transcendence or personal change. We must allow ourselves to feel exposed to the irrational, life affirming, worldly connective, joy of experience, to retain flow, and to give into the peak experience in the very moment of awareness that is found in induced transpersonal participation. If we are to do so, what is our best way in which to embrace these internal changes?

### ***Welcoming the New - Emotional Intensity and Healthy Ego***

As we move from the induction stage of Letting Go of the things that hold us back and move into the next stage, Welcoming the New, we are made suddenly aware of the intensity of our emotions within the transpersonal experience. The new feelings we are facing can feel both overwhelming and extraordinary. We may feel worried about the strength that our own response carries with it, or the feeling of loss of self in the face of such abundant joy. As we begin to return from our flow state, our non-dual state of deep harmony with the world and the environment, we must learn to embrace the feeling of new unity, of surprise, or of community.

This change internally will bring new perspective, and the depth of feeling we have been offered in the moment of flow will mirror or match the depth of revelation we face after it has come to pass. For this reason, participants are encouraged to embrace every powerful emotion before, during and after the transpersonal experience, regardless of its nature.



The more we embrace and engage the new strong emotions, the more we can process in the following steps of induction. For now, we will focus on how emotion impacts our transpersonal experiences and the healthy ego required to share in those experiences.

### ***Healthy Ego***

As we are working with human subjects within transpersonal psychology, it is important to maintain compassion and awareness of our various needs. Some of these needs are addressed by the Ego and its never-ending focus on self-preservation. It is necessary to come to transpersonal experiences through the lens of healthy egos, as discussed by Kaspro and Scotton (1999).

Because ego boundaries are diminished or absent in transpersonal states, subject/object relationships are altered, or in some cases completely collapse, creating the possibility of profound experiences of connectedness. Most transpersonal theorists would argue that these experiences are not mere feelings of union, but rather that in these states individual consciousness is actually connected to and participating in phenomena beyond one's usual ego boundaries. ...The concept of the pre/trans fallacy underscores the necessity of healthy ego development as a prerequisite for constructive transpersonal experience: without it one is unable to integrate such experiences and is at risk of psychological fracture and regression into lower functioning states. ...The hallmark of mystical experience is stepping out of oneself, of joining with something beyond or outside one's normal ego boundaries. ...If ego development has been healthy and successful, this reintegration can occur at a higher, trans-egoic level; if it has not, the individual is at risk of regression and loss of function, (Kaspro & Scotton, 1999, p. 14-15).

This healthy ego is what gives us the ability to maintain our sense of self through the struggle of psychological dissolution as we encounter the drastic feelings of change in transpersonal experiences. We can see these as moments of internal conflict, and the healthy ego can carry our sense of self through these experiences. As we are Welcoming the New, we must allow ourselves to appreciate the change in perspectives that we have been given and our healthy ego must allow the changes without reverting to the previous state that we held ourselves before the experience happened. We do not need to fear intensity in our emotional self if we have a healthy ego.

### ***Impact of Emotional Intensity***

As part of Welcoming the New, we are also challenged to accept the emotional impact that we receive from transpersonal experiences. It is common for people to cry, laugh, scream, or feel a deep personal sense of change within transpersonal moments. The emotions that encourage these activities are the ones that we must embrace. It is through these that our

most profound awareness will come from. Cunningham (2014) discusses this in his article addressing this impact through the 'big emotions'.

Emotions and various "feeling states" associated with exceptional human experiences and transformative behaviors, and religious/spiritual/transpersonal (beyond ego) experiences that carry the individual beyond (trans) the personal ego are an important topic of study in transpersonal psychology (Anderson, 1996; Braud, 2001; Welwood, 1979). Sundararajan (2000, p. 66) identifies joy, dread, panic, acceptance, serenity, sorrow, wonder, and rejection as transpersonal "being emotions. "Inner peace and compassion are other emotions that can also take us "beyond" ourselves. Transpersonal psychiatrist Roberto Assagioli (1988/1991) identifies joy, love, appreciation of beauty, power and will, the moral sense, the desire to know and the capacity to know as "spiritual elements in our personality" (p.7). In this section we will take a brief look at only a few of these transpersonal emotions and spiritual elements of the personality: joy, love, inner peace and compassion, (Cunningham, 2014, p. 47).

The quote strongly supports the identification of 'big' emotions and their role as spiritual elements in the individual's personality. For this discussion, we see those emotions as being doorways to personal change, to unlocking those aspects of our personality, or to release the potentially unknown restriction over these pieces of ourselves. When combined with the concept of one's healthy ego and the intensity of experience that we induce during a transpersonal moment, we are further able to understand how important it is to welcome these big emotions. Through welcoming these sudden emotions, the induction of transpersonal experiences can prepare us to process the moment further and implement changes into our lives.

### ***Process the Moment - Emotional Valance and Emotional Resilience***

It is easy to feel like the emotional flood after the dissolution of ego, after the disappearance of our sense of self, is too overwhelming to handle. We look at the feelings that momentary loss of self can produce, and we feel surprised, shocked, fearful, or even complete rejection of the experience. These are judgments that we make against our lost sense of self that often leads to avoidance of personal emotions.

There is a tool in psychology wherein we address those judgements called the Emotional Valance. Avoiding our feelings because they are too intense, negative, or overwhelming is a judgement of those emotions. Often judgments like this can be moved into the frame of 'good' or 'bad.' Emotions that serve as motivational or positive experiential factors are commonly considered the Affective Valance. "Motivation and emotions are closely related and allied in experience and behavior. Affective feelings that are either pleasant or unpleasant accompany most motivated behavior," (Cunningham, 2014a, p. 15).

This affective valance is a part of the emotional arena and for our purpose this idea of positive or negative valance can help us understand the deep emotional responses we have from transpersonal experiences. This allows us to view these emotions through a subjective experience lens (Mauss & Robinson, 2009). For us, this is the application of transpersonal experiences that become subjective, and through the vulnerability to that subjective experience we can identify and process them. This is easy to express as an emotional valance.

Lane and Nadel (2002) discussed Emotional Valance through their focus on valance being the tension of opposites between pleasantness and unpleasantness in an individual's emotions.

Valance could be described by bipolar scales that, in aggregate, defined a continuous dimension from pleasantness (unhappy, annoyed, despairing, etc.) to unpleasantness (happy, pleased, hopeful, etc.). The fundamental role of valance in emotions received further support from studies of language categorization (Ortony et al., 1988; Shaver et al., 1987). This work showed that human knowledge about emotions in hierarchically organized and superordinate division is between positivity (pleasant states: love, joy) and negativity (unpleasant states: anger, sadness, fear), (Lane & Nadel, p. 247, 2002).

This book then went on to discuss Osgood's second dimension of arousal in valance that ranged on bipolar scales from unaroused state to a high arousal state (Lane & Nadel, 2002).

We have already talked about how we require emotional vulnerability to experience a transpersonal moment of change. This quote is about positive and negative emotions, as well as the arousal state connected to that assist in the identification of emotions. We would encourage practitioners to use the emotional valance scale to help identify the strength of emotional responses while knowing that so long as emotion has been aroused in an individual, that individual is having the desired experience in some form.

In other words, if the process includes an emotional response, no matter how positive or negative, the individual is having a transpersonal moment. The recognition of those feelings, the acceptance of those feelings, is part of the experience and is what allows us to know that something concrete has happened. Once one knows they are having a strong reaction, one can decide how they wish to address it and how much resilience is required for the transpersonal experience to leave an impact upon them and their view of the world.

### ***Emotional Resilience and Maintaining Healthy Ego***

The capacity for using transpersonal experiences for healthy change resides in psychological resilience. Psychological resilience is often considered a positive way to deal or cope strictly with difficulties or stressful situations (Leipold & Greve, 2009). When

viewed from a slightly different lens, we believe resilience is the key for the simpler act of accepting new life circumstances and the motivating factor for allowing integration.

In other words, the resilience that appears outwardly as the expression of stability and unchangeability in the person is the result of regulation and coping processes that are not only highly dynamic and complexly interacting at every point in development, but also are themselves constantly changing throughout the lifespan (Leipold & Greve, 2009, p. 44).

In this information, the discussion of resilience is an inward action of coping with 'dynamic' or 'complex' personal experiences (Leipold & Greve, 2009, p. #). For our purposes, the presence of resilience, coupled with a healthy ego, are required for integrating and applying transpersonal experiences. As the gateway to personal development, resilience can help us remain emotionally vulnerable while in the throes of transcendence.

### ***Implement Changes – Integration and Mindfulness***

Now that the individual has found a new awareness in and welcomed in the new, it is time to find comfortable ways for them to implement those changes into their life. The goal of our process is for someone to develop psychological change in a way that benefits them. Integration will ensure certain and continued transpersonal growth in one's life, using transcendent habits. New habits allow us to develop changes in our lives that fully cement our personal growth. Mindfulness is a good example of these new habits, as it offers many benefits for an emotional resilient and transpersonal lifestyle.

Mindfulness has been shown in numerous studies to create positive changes within the human brain structure, reduce adverse reactions to stress, increase emotional regulation, and produce beneficial physiological changes within the body (Hill & Updegraff, 2012; Klatt et al., 2014; Richardson, 2024). The following are mindfulness practices that have been shown to produce positive changes in one's life, including slower resting heart rate, better sleep, increased resilience, overall awareness, self-regulation, self-compassion, authenticity, and decreased or non-reactive response to stressful stimulus (Davis 1998; Klatt et al., 2014; Niemiec et al., 2012; Richardson, 2024, Sharma et al., 2014). Based upon these facts, we encourage using mindfulness for integration, as it lays an appropriate foundation for the human biological system to facilitate the changes that can follow a transpersonal experience. The best way to conceptualize this is through clear examples of mindfulness practices. Additionally, modalities such as expressive and creative arts therapies are "an essential ingredient in any therapeutic process is promoting the awareness of the client's undigested material, and the arts therapies aid in the facilitation of integrating physical emotional, cognitive, spiritual, and creative elements so these aspects can be harmonized, communicated, and expressed for enhanced functioning." (Bella & Serlin, 2013) This allows us to begin to integrate our transcendent experiences through these mindfulness activities.

Given these benefits and the sources listed above, we suggest incorporating the following lifestyle habits into a weekly routine can successfully integrate a transpersonal experience and provide continuous lifelong gain.

- Yoga
- Breathwork (therapeutic breathing)
- Meditation
- Bibliotherapy
- Eco Psychological Awareness - Nature Therapy
- Expressive and Creative Arts Therapy

As integration is such a personal portion of implementation of changes, we encourage participants to engage in this process deeply. It is important to use the habits that feel the best individually to experience those benefits in your own life. Beyond the health benefits, there is a world of transcendence and personal development that awaits us through mindful integration of perception changes. We believe that participants of the induced transpersonal experience will find these equally helpful with states of emotional vulnerability. The practiced transpersonalist can find a significant depth of flow, non-duality, and peak experiences are just on the other side of their own vulnerability.

### ***Inducing Transpersonal Experiences in Others***

Up until this point in our discussion, we have outlined self-induction with clear examples. Our purpose in revisiting the process that we have already discussed below is to address our steps in sharing an induction with a participant. This will illuminate the potential of induction into transpersonal states for other people. The style listed below is utilized in energy work but could be adjusted for any other transpersonal style in the future. For our uses, we consider energy work to be a universal skill of intentional healing on a spiritual, physical, or emotional level using 'energy' as commonly used by reiki or psychic healers (Warber, Kile, & Gillespie, 2003, p. 140). This Induction process is easily pictured with the following Figure 1, a visual representation of the process we describe. This allows you to follow the steps in this example.

### **Figure 1**

Stages of Inducing Transpersonal Experience



### ***Review of the steps- Unique state of Induced Transpersonal Experiences***

#### *Intentionality- Step 1*

As with individual induction, the process for inducing transpersonal experiences in others begins with the same premises: intention and emotional vulnerability. These must be present in both the participant and the practitioner, as well as a clear and affirmed feeling of trust. The participant will get into a comfortable state by sitting or lying down and closing their eyes. At the participant's head, the practitioner begins to cultivate intention through breathwork, utilizing the breath as a bridge between the mind-body connection and their relaxation. Next, the practitioner generates, or self-induces, a feeling of gratitude as a gateway emotion to connect with the participant's energy field. Gratitude is shown to be a powerful transpersonal emotion used to create connection through its naturally binding effects (King et al., 2022). Holding the state of gratitude, the practitioner then sets an intention to connect to universal energy using a flow state of being, as described previously.

#### *Holding Space – Step 2*

Once the practitioner feels they are in connection with gratitude and have induced a flow state, they begin to connect with the participant through the participant's energy field. This is the 3 to 5 inches in space around their body, commonly called the 'aura'. (Warber, Kile, & Gillespie, 2003, p. 193). Once the practitioner feels the connection intuitively, they begin to move their hands around the participant's energy field, scanning and reading the person's energy. Remaining in connection with the universal energetic gratitude and flow

state, the practitioner creates a communication channel that sends energy from their state of flow and into the participant's energy field. By doing this, they are acting as a bridge between the universal flow state and the participant's energy field that allows for deeper healing within the participant.

### *Letting Go- Step 3*

As the communication channel between both individuals is established, the participant will use the concept of surrender to emotional vulnerability and engage personally in the flow state by practicing letting go. The act of letting go allows the energy to flow into the participant's energy field, as guided by the practitioner. Mirroring individual transpersonal induction, the intention of the participant during this state focuses on allowing the energy to penetrate and release emotional patterns. The focus of letting go of boundaries, blockages, or restrictions will surrender the participant to the energy of flow and assist in greater self-awareness that brings their emotional needs to the surface of their consciousness. This surrender to flow adds to the natural internal flow of energy within the participant, creating harmony and the potential for deeper levels of healing. The energy flowing from the practitioner will naturally assist this process (Cooperstein, 2003).

### *Welcoming the New- Step 4*

Once the practitioner feels the energy flow is complete, the session will end. To do so, the practitioner will direct the cycling of new energy within the participant to continue so that it can further benefit the participant while they return to normal life. Much like any other individual transpersonal experience, this induction produces the same quality of intense emotions and can also require a healthy ego for both the practitioner and the participant. The unique benefit for all parties in the partner induction process is the act of the practitioner bearing witness to the participant's transpersonal experience.

Bearing witness is being with and relating to others that is based on values and beliefs that give rise to a commitment to attend to, honor, and stay with persons' truths, perspectives, priorities, hopes, and dreams; that is, their lived experience is a distinct way of being and relating with persons because of the ontological view about human beings and health that underlines it (Naef, 2006, p. 149).

As expressed in this quote, the relation to others allows the participants to carry their experiences into their present-day lives in a beneficial way. Bearing witness requires the practitioner to actively listen with empathy and compassion while the participant expresses all emotions and tells the story of their induced experience. This allows practitioners to facilitate integration of welcoming the new because the participant has an immediate opportunity to express their experience and successfully cope by drawing positive conclusions. It also allows the participant to deepen their transpersonal

experience through feeling heard and accepted and having a felt sense of belonging (Stephens, 2022).

#### *Process the Moment – Step 5*

In addition to these practices, Niemiec et al., (2012) introduces the concept of the practitioner to identify character strengths for the participant, following the process of bearing witness. This would entail the practitioner to take note of the communication of the participant's experience, and then provide observant feedback on the character strengths that appear within the participant's story. Especially those centered around bravery for having faced the obstacle of transpersonal experience.

Character strengths are one path to a strong mindfulness practice, and in turn mindfulness offers an opportunity to express strengths and work with the contextual nuances that emerge, (Niemiec, Rashid, & Spinella, 2012, para. 38).

The participant can note these character strengths observed by the practitioner and incorporate them into their mindfulness practices for a more well-rounded integration experience, as it will continue to help overcome life obstacles.

#### *Implement the Changes – Step 6*

Another unique benefit of partner induction is the collaborative environment for implementing the changes of the transpersonal experience. The practitioner will recommend the following mindfulness practices to facilitate integration. These are the same for induction of the individual.

- Yoga
- Breathwork (therapeutic breathing)
- Meditation
- Bibliotherapy
- Eco Psychological Awareness and Nature Therapy
- Expressive and Creative Arts Therapy

These changes to the lifestyle of the participant take root in their life, the individual is likely to feel different. They also lead to the same health and wellness benefits that self-induction can create including healthier physiological status, higher rates of emotional resiliency, and lower levels of stress in daily life.



The nuance of induction with another person, specifically a transpersonalist, includes things like processing in collaboration, having help with implementation of life changes, and having that slow transformation be witnessed through the acceptance of another individual. As implementation of various changes to the lifestyle of the participant continue, there is a feeling of mutual appreciation that can occur, and in the positive environment this creates, those changes are likely to last longer, remain firm, and to open the individual up to more developmental changes towards greater health in the future.

## Conclusions & Hopes for a Future Study

Transpersonal experiences in their very nature are a journey beyond the ego to bring harmony and emotional release in one's life. Although previously considered rare or uncommon, we have experienced intentional transpersonal moments that have been induced for the use of healing. Whether this is an individual, partner, or group effort, the Stages for Induction offer a comprehensive process for guiding oneself or others safely through a productive and effective transpersonal experience. Integration is a factor that must be considered for one to gain continuous and permanent beneficial change from these transpersonal experiences. Our future dedication to this subject will naturally develop into a research study.

We feel that this subject could be best explored using qualitative methods study. This style allows us to focus on the participants' feelings and experiences and the first-hand accounts of their transpersonal journey, without being forced to reduce those concepts to numbers. The explanation of what a transpersonal moment is for each person will be unique with specific details that hold meaning for the individual. These cannot be reduced to numerical data with the clarity and importance required for a quantitative method. We will focus our future study on the following questions: Can transpersonal experiences be induced, and how do emotional vulnerability, emotional valance, resilience, and healthy ego impact the induction process?

To answer these questions, we will include an emotional valance questionnaire, a healthy ego assessment, and a resilience assessment. The participants will be asked to answer these before the transpersonal induction and are also encouraged to repeat these after the process. Journaling would also be an ongoing requirement for all participants throughout the experience to record first-person experiential data. We will be defining the ability to induce an experience based upon the emotional standing of the participants as recorded through emotional vulnerability and valance.

The responses participants in future studies have before, during, and after their experiences will allow us to understand how the experience made them feel. This is in alignment with Transpersonal theory that these experiences bring on a sense of calm, peace, or deep perspective change. We will also be looking at how they feel in connection

to the world, how they reflect on their own egoic nature, and how their level of resilience feels before, during, and after the experience.

These considerations will give us the perspective of where emotional vulnerability plays a part in the journey and if it is the key to the induction process, we believe it to be. We hope to provide a starting point for the induction of transpersonal experiences for those who are ready or seeking profound personal transformation for themselves or another person. When introduced in this form, we see the potential for transpersonal experience to be more available to the participant. We look forward to creating a pilot program to test viability as a formal study in the future.

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