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Integrative Approaches in Counseling and Psychotherapy: Foundations of Mind, Body, and Spirit

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Throughout the history of the helping profession the most fundamental approach to helping others has been rooted in compassion and empathy. Empathy has a rich history of being at the core of most humanistic theoretical orientations and has been recognized in the counseling and psychology literature as a skill that can be learned and developed. Possessing the skills of empathy and integrating this in person-centered therapy is seen by many as a prerequisite for becoming a skilled and competent helper (Corey & Corey, in press; Egan, 2014; Ivey, Bradford Ivey, & Zalaquett, 2014; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967). If facilitated competently by the therapist, empathy can assist in increasing client self-awareness; be a motivation for personal growth and change; and cultivate new ways of thinking, feeling, and acting to achieve optimal levels of mind, body, and spiritual wellness.

Pedersen (2005) suggests that “the functions of counseling have been practiced for thousands of years and are not merely an invention of the last century or two” (p. xi). Pedersen as well as many others advocate that, to truly facilitate multicultural counseling approaches within practice, we must look beyond the theoretical models proposed by a small constituency of dedicated scholars in counseling and psychology. Thus, models within a cultural context that advocate knowledge, awareness, and skills may not be enough to understand true cultural indigenous practices. Counselors and psychotherapists who have little exposure or experience with indigenous health and healing practices (e.g., Ayurveda, shamanism, Buddhist, African centered, and/or Latin American healing traditions) may be missing opportunities to facilitate integrative approaches that

enhance the mental and physical well-being of their clients. Thus, there are other pathways to multicultural competence.

Therapy in many professional counseling settings typically begins with the client’s “presenting issues” or “chief complaint” followed by an assessment and diagnosis using the psychopathology model as described in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed. [DSM-5] American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The challenge for today’s professional counselors is finding ways to integrate culturally relevant approaches that utilize the mind, body, and spirit within therapeutic interactions. This especially becomes problematic with the constraints of evidence-based practices and third-party payers. This chapter offers guidelines and resources that will assist therapists to integrate traditional talk therapies with indigenous health and healing practices. Additionally, foundational principles, thoughts, beliefs, ancient wisdom, and philosophies on mind, body, and spiritual wellness will be offered. The comprehensive Foundational Resources at the end of the chapter explore the literature in counseling, psychology, theology, spirituality, and complementary and integrated medicine. Each of these resources honors the tradition of various culturally relevant indigenous practices that integrate the mind, body, and spirit.

In many ways, person-centered counseling and psychotherapy are ritualistic in their form, structure, and practice. Likewise, indigenous healing practices also maintain a form, structure, and ritualistic system for health and healing. Accordingly, combining these two systems of traditional talk therapies with indigenous practices can provide a powerful experience for many clients as well as therapists.

INTEGRATING MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT IN THERAPY

The multicultural counseling literature suggests that, to truly facilitate culturally centered therapeutic approaches, we must be open to a diversity of thoughts, perceptions of reality, and belief systems about culturally different health and healing systems. Because of the population shift in the United States, there is a shift of consciousness among professional counselors who may be challenged with providing services to diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups. The respect for indigenous practices, philosophies, and belief systems such as those found in Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, shamanism, and other traditions have been ignored by some within the counseling and psychology field. There seems to be the scientific belief that if a treatment protocol is not evidence based, then it should not be facilitated in a therapeutic environment. Yet, we are at a time in our history where the collective wisdom of some of the planet's tribal elders, wisdom keepers, new-age scientists, spiritual-religious teachers, cultural leaders, and prophets are available to provide rich opportunities for integrating mind, body, and spiritual work within therapeutic interactions. Enriching opportunities abound if we are open to other culturally relevant belief systems in health and healing.

Integrative

The term *integrative* for the most part has replaced the terms and constructs of “holistic,” “complementary,” and “alternative” within the fields of medicine, mental health, counseling, and psychology. These terms are used interchangeably in the literature; however, some would argue that there are unique differences. For instance, most individuals do not purely use “alternative” approaches when treating a mental or physical condition. Likewise, most individuals engage in what they perceive to be “complementary” approaches (e.g., vitamins, supplements, herbal remedies, exercise, dieting) to health and wellness based on what fits within their belief system. Interestingly, many complementary approaches are not endorsed by the medical literature; yet many consumers integrate these within their daily health care routines.

In the early 1970s, holistic medicine emerged and was a system that emphasized treating the *whole* person. The broader mission was sparked by an increased interest in the consumer empowerment movement that encouraged taking responsibility for one's own psychological, emotional, and physical well-being because the medical model could not

treat all conditions. Thus, professionals who facilitated treatment approaches within the holistic framework had to consider the interaction effects between the person and his or her environment (e.g., family, social, cultural) so as to treat the *whole* person.

Complementary, alternative, and holistic models of care are deeply rooted in 20th- and 21st-century theories and practices within the fields of medicine, counseling, and psychology. Some of these models did not give recognition to the cultural roots of such indigenous practices. For example, breathing, meditation, or visualization have existed for thousands of years and are being used throughout many different cultural health and healing systems. Despite the routine use of such approaches, many current practitioners may lack the recognition of its origin, cultural roots, or intended application.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recognized the research needs of integrative approaches and created the Office of Alternative Medicine, renamed in 1999 as the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine. Medical historians have widely viewed 20th-century medicine as a turning point for a variety of epidemiological, case review, case-control, population, prospective, and retrospective studies, especially in cancer treatment (American Cancer Society, 2000). Weil (2009) states that we need to change *how* and *what* we research in terms of integrative health approaches. He strongly advocates that NIH create a National Institute for Health and Healing so that we can research the body's natural healing systems as opposed to our current heavy reliance on discovering new medical technology and pharmaceutical products. The Duke Center of Integrative Medicine (2014) is one example of a comprehensive research and training center that integrates the body's natural healing system using integrative approaches in the subtle interactions of the mind, body, and spirit.

Overall, the constructs presented within the Western paradigm of complementary, alternative, and holistic medicine appears to have the restrictions of being deeply rooted in Western models of medicine, counseling, and psychology. Many times, the indigenous healers themselves are not included within research designs. Rarely do indigenous healers partner with training center's faculty or instructors. This may require the counseling practitioner to engage in cultural immersion activities within the natural environment and/or specific indigenous geographic location. Overall, without cultural immersion, the methods and approaches applied may be the researcher's or the practitioner's perception of how such indigenous approaches should be facilitated, thus, not totally possessing a cultural consciousness.

Healing and the Mind, Body, Spirit

The term *healing* does not represent an end point, cure, or the absence of disease or illness. Individuals with chronic illnesses or disabilities prefer not to be defined by their disease, disability, mental or physical condition, or functional limitations. Accordingly, most persons are on a healing journey to maintain an excellent quality of life and live optimally. As a point of orientation for the reader, the following are generally accepted definitions of mind, body, and spirit.

Mind. The literature in counseling and psychology has considered that the mind encompasses ordinary states of consciousness: the individual's thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, philosophies, attitudes, feelings, and general cognitions. However, Assagioli (1965), Castaneda (1968), Tart (2000), and Wilber (1996), as well as many other integrative practitioners and theorists, have suggested that the phenomena of the mind and consciousness include much more than waking or dreaming states of consciousness. Rather, healthy individuals may also express nonordinary states, or alternative or discrete altered states of consciousness, which are not drug induced. It is through these powerful states that individuals may transcend the physical, mental, and spiritual realms into transpersonal experiences. These experiences are sometimes expressed by others as having a "peak experience," "inner-voice experience of all-knowing," "intuitive experience," or "exteroceptive or introceptive experiences." For many, there are few words to describe such events. Rather, it can only be understood by living or experiencing such states of consciousness. By definition of the mind, one's spirituality and physical existence has interconnectedness with the body and spirit. Thus, it would be artificial to create boundaries.

Body. The physical body is much more comprehensible, logical, and rational to define. This is because medical science has examined, analyzed, and delineated the structure of the human organism from purely a physiological, cellular, and biological state of functioning within each of the body systems. Chinese medicine, shamanism, as well as many other indigenous belief systems have a much different experience and conceptualization of the biological mechanisms of the body. In the indigenous worldview, this structure is not viewed from a systems or mechanics point of reference. Rather, the body is expressed as an energy form that consists of "energy vortexes," "body chakras," "energy blockages," "light," and "body auras." By definition, one's physiology cannot be separated from thoughts, feelings, or images about his or her physical-biological self. Spiritual energy enters or leaves the body through the various chakras

or energy centers. Thus, it is artificial, from an integrative sense, to separate the body from that of the mind and spirit.

Spirit. Much of the literature in spirituality separates this construct from religiosity and describes this primarily as the individual's spiritual experiences. There are many who would argue that it is artificial to make such a separation because many individuals express their spirituality through religious rituals or ceremonies. For purposes of definition, it is agreed upon by most that spirituality has come into existence before humankind's creation of world religions, rituals, sacred texts, beliefs in doctrine, and a formal physical structure (e.g., church, temple) by which to hold religious activities. Thus, spirituality is a felt sense of meaning and purpose within the context of a higher power, divine source of energy, God, The Great Spirit, or some other presence not of our physical world. Spirituality is that which cannot be seen but is made up of experiences of faith, hope, comfort, beliefs, philosophies, rituals, and a belief in a divine source of energy that guides our lives. As one might gather, it appears artificial to separate the physical body and mind from spirituality. Spirituality in action requires an explicit state of consciousness, intention, and motivation by which the spiritual realm could be accessed. Additionally, there may be a physical presence, the use of body mechanics expressed sometimes as kneeling, folding hands, raising of the arms, bowing, and the use of other body movement activities to bring in (or drive out) spiritual energies.

Integrative Practice in Action

The author of this chapter is a Reiki master, attuned by an indigenous Japanese Reiki grand master and has completed beginning- and intermediate-level shaman training through the California-based Michael Harner's Foundation for Shamanic Studies (2014). These practices integrated with traditional counseling and psychotherapy have produced powerful experiences and testimonials from many clients. Indigenous practices such as deep breathing, meditation, visualization, and body energy work are also powerful elements for change. Such indigenous practices can be integrated within the helping session by any practitioner with appropriate training. The Foundational Resources section at the end of this chapter is a good starting point for understanding the cultural roots of such practices, which should provide readers with an exploration of how to integrate the mind, body, and spirit into everyday counseling and psychotherapy practices. In keeping with the structure of a "desk reference" text, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide guidelines for the implementation of each

approach. However, very little needs to be created or developed by the practitioner because these belief systems have been in place for thousands of years.

Moodley and West (2005), who have also received training in both Western psychotherapy and non-Western indigenous healing traditions, propose a model to integrate talk therapies with indigenous healing approaches using the mind, body, and spirit. Their research suggests that a large number of psychotherapists already integrate mind, body, and spiritual techniques within their person-centered psychotherapy practice. Approaches such as prayer, breathing, meditation, visualization, body energy work, and intuitive healing are already being facilitated by advanced practitioners with clients who have issues related to chronic illness, life-threatening illness, disability, trauma, and addictions. Therapists who facilitate such approaches have the advantage of empowering clients to tap into their own inner resources by prompting their body's natural healing system.

By helping others access this unseen energy, many clients can *live the experience* of faith, hope, belief, vision, intuitiveness, health, and healing. Clients who *live the experience* (i.e., walking the walk) many times sustain wellness for longer periods of time as opposed to relying on the therapist to facilitate strategies such as building awareness, getting in touch with feelings, understanding thought processes, talking through issues, motivating, and devising a plan for change. The challenge for the counseling profession is mapping such integrative and indigenous approaches within the principles and practices of Western-based counseling and psychotherapy.

If one requires scientific methodology or qualitative models to study the effectiveness of indigenous approaches and how they might be integrated into counseling and psychotherapy, then the specialty field of transpersonal psychology is one means that might provide satisfaction of explanation for some. This specialty area of psychology, which has been in existence for more than 40 years, investigates various cultures' mystical experiences; nonordinary states of consciousness; the impact of spirituality, mindfulness, and meditative practices; transcendental experiences; and many more in-depth psychology approaches of the mind, body, and spirit.

AN EXPLORATION OF FOUNDATIONS OF MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT

Mijares (2003) suggests that the teachings, wisdom, and prophecies from the world's spiritual traditions are available to those who seek these approaches. Global communication and transportation systems

allow us to connect with one another and form collaborative relationships. After centuries of separation within psychology, theology, and spiritual teachings, we now have the potential to integrate such wisdom and experiences within the therapeutic session. It is not my intention to suggest that we disregard Western counseling, psychology, theory, and practice in lieu of indigenous approaches. Rather, integrating indigenous practices with traditional counseling and psychotherapy should be viewed by clients and professional counselors as opportunities for activating the body's own natural healing system. Approaches such as breathing, meditation, visualization, and body energy work are already common techniques facilitated in today's psychotherapy practices. These are time-honored traditions in many cultures and should be embraced by 21st-century psychotherapy practices.

Integrating indigenous approaches requires an understanding and openness to indigenous worldviews about health and healing; some of these may be seen by others as paranormal, esoteric, or transpersonal experiences. It is essential for counselors and psychotherapists to trust in the unseen energy by sitting back as observers to see how the interconnectedness of mind, body, and spirit develops within a session. Indigenous approaches facilitated within a session should be natural, intentional, and a conscious way of being. It requires a paradigm shift in the definition of therapy and the mindfulness that nonordinary states of consciousness are quite ordinary. Accordingly, the appreciation and practice of transpersonal experiences have enormous cross-cultural significance, which allows the therapist to appreciate other cultural values and beliefs when it comes to healing the mind, body, and spirit (Walsh & Vaughan, 1993).

FOUNDATIONS OF MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT

The literature relating to Native and indigenous healers, mystics, shamans, saints, and sages from all cultures have much to offer counselors and psychotherapists in terms of health and healing practices. Many Native and indigenous healers discovered that optimal living of the mind, body, and spirit came through peak spiritual experiences, various meditation practices, and long journeys of soul searching and self-discovery. Thus, it is my intention to offer these indigenous foundational principles to the reader so that they may find ways to introduce these within the therapeutic environment.

The author of this chapter makes an attempt to objectively state 30 specific foundational cultural beliefs through an extensive literature base in

psychology; theology; spirituality; and complementary, alternative, and integrated medicine. The interpretations of these foundational principles are found within a variety of cultural belief systems. Some of these foundational principles are universal while others are culturally specific. It is beyond the scope of the “desk reference” to comprehensively delineate each of these universal and culturally specific foundational principles and belief systems. Some principles may seem redundant to the reader (e.g., different interpretations of awareness); some may be perceived as in conflict with other principles or appear paradoxical (e.g., journeying vs. sudden attainment of enlightenment or illumination; good vs. evil). Other readers may interpret the principles through the lens of a particular theory in counseling and psychology (e.g., dreaming vs. dream therapy). Regardless, the principles offered reflect the diversity of cultural belief systems and thoughts that relate to cultural wisdom of the mind, body, and spirit for optimal living.

Overall, the most parsimonious way to describe this data collection procedure in the Foundational Resources section would be to ask yourself the following questions: *What advice did your family members or your culture give to you about health, healing, or wellness? From where did they hear about this particular wisdom? If you could trace your family roots back to its origin and then another 2,000 years before this, what would your culture or family of origin communicate to you regarding enhancing health, healing, or wellness?* Current scientific thinking suggests that some of our emotions, thoughts, cognitions, and behaviors are recorded in various parts of our anatomy (e.g., brain and nervous system) and are responsible for how we think, feel, and act, thus defining our personality traits, moral and ethical reasoning, and physical–biological characteristics, as well as many other aspects. Accordingly, we may not know our family of origin hundreds of years back, but in many ways we are both same and similar in how we think, feel, and act.

The point is that belief systems are typically handed down person to person within a culture. They are communicated and experienced many times through storytelling, oral histories, mentoring relationships, guided experiences, expressive arts, rituals, and many other ways. They are not the special property of any one particular culture because cultures have existed for centuries simultaneously despite geographic separation.

The principles, thoughts, beliefs, wisdom, and philosophies (offered in no particular order) are the beginnings of an exploratory analysis of common and perhaps universal beliefs about health and healing from diverse cultures globally. They have been cultivated by multiple resources (see Foundational

Resources) in the counseling; psychology; theology; spirituality; and complementary, alternative, and integrated medicine literature. The resources chosen for communicating these foundational principles are shared by a diversity of authors. Each author appears to have a deep connection to his or her own indigenous cultural experiences, some of which have been communicated through tribal elders, shamans, saints, spiritual leaders, mystics, prophets, and sacred and spiritual texts, as well as other means. Sacred texts, Koans, and scriptures are not included because many are based on a particular religious and spiritual belief system. Although they are foundational to the mind, body, and spirit, the interpretation is best left to a particular cultural belief system in which to interpret or debate theologically.

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

- *God*: Most cultures and world religious traditions have one supreme being or divine source of loving, all-knowing energy that is at the foundation and center of all life in the universe. Some cultures use terms like *God*, *The Gods*, *The Great Spirit*, *The Holy Spirit*, *The Great One*, *Mother Earth*, or *The Creator*. God is seen by most cultures as permanent; the keeper of all life forms; creator of the heavens, Earth, and the universe; creator of all truths, morals, principles, and physical laws that rule the universe; creator of time as it relates to the past, present, future; and is the alpha and omega of all things known within human existence.
- *Meaning and purpose*: Most cultures acknowledge that they cannot possibly know the mind of God because there are scientific, philosophical, spiritual, and theological questions that are a mystery and cannot be totally comprehended by the human experience. Some cultures believe that everything in life happens for a reason, while others believe that we have some level of control. Cultures throughout time have sought meaning, purpose, and spiritual guidance for health and healing by asking profound questions such as *Who am I?* or *Who is God?* Thus, it is believed in many cultures that wisdom related to meaning and purpose of self and others can be accessed through God’s presence, by means of various spiritual and other life experiences, practices, and rituals that involve the mind, body, and spirit. At the core of all great world religious and spiritual traditions is a God who emphasizes kindness, compassion, and love toward others, loving your neighbor as you would love yourself, and serving others. For some, God is the meaning and purpose of life.

- *Why bad things happen:* Bad things happen in life to good people and good things happen to bad people. Some cultures interpret bad things happening in life as God presenting opportunities for personal and spiritual growth (e.g., with crisis comes opportunity; God tests us). God has the power to send angels, power animals (as noted in shamanic cultures), and other divine sources of energy to intercede, guide, and provide answers or solutions to health and healing of our mind, body, and spirit. The question of why good things happen to bad people is perplexing and each culture has its own interpretation. There are various theological and nontheological explanations that create the foundations for cultural belief systems in regard to *why bad things happen*.
- *Miracles and things we cannot control:* Many cultures believe that miracles do not happen in contradiction to nature or our creator. They are ordinary experiences that occur in an extraordinary universe we live in. Some cultures view the birth of a child, spontaneous remission from an illness or disease, new plant and animal growth, or naturally occurring events such as rain as a miracle. Some degree of skepticism exists within every culture because of within-group differences in the belief of supernatural forces or claims of Christ-like healings or spiritually based spontaneous remissions. It may not fit within the logical confines of the human brain and especially within the modern world that we currently live. As humans, we try and place conditions and limitations on what God can and cannot do. By doing so, we may only accept or acknowledge God within certain settings or environments (e.g., church or sacred ceremonies vs. school or the workplace). This results in the human-like reaction or attitude that “I know what is best for me” or “I can control my own destiny.” Overall, most cultural belief systems maintain that miracles still exist and abound throughout the planet. There are unexplained phenomena, life is full of mystery, and there are some things in life that we may or may not be able to control.
- *Good versus evil:* During the Middle Ages, the world was full of diseases, barbaric invasions, poverty, famine, pain, and suffering. Most cultures at the time viewed this as “Evil.” Currently, in the world, there exist wars, disease, poverty, famine, pain, and suffering. Many cultural belief systems still struggle with evil and attached dark spiritual beings (i.e., The Devil in Christianity) that exist in the heart and minds of all humans. Some cultural belief systems interpret this dark energy as moral evil (i.e., sins against humanity) and natural evil (i.e., disease, floods, tsunamis). The existential and spiritual dilemmas that exist throughout most cultures pose the question “If God is an all-loving God then why would God allow evil to exist?” Most cultural belief systems suggest that no God(s) or religion seeks to increase misery, suffering, hatred, or hostility. The fundamental quality of God as the creator of all life is that God is the ultimate divine source of love and compassion, and invites us to try and be more God-like in our daily lives. The ultimate reward is waiting for us in Heaven, the afterlife, or some other dimension that has no pain and suffering. The ultimate challenge of the human spirit may be this balance of drawing toward the light instead of the dark energy in our internal and external worlds.
- *Breathing:* Breathing is foundational to all meditative practice and integral for mind, body, and spiritual health. Taking a deep cleansing breath has physiological benefits and helps quiet the mind so that we can listen to God or “the other side of silence,” and receive all things spiritual through our creator. The breath was given to us by our divine creator at birth, so we need to learn how to take care of it on a daily basis.
- *Compassion:* Compassion and the expression of compassion through empathy toward self and others are natural to all human beings and lies at the heart of most world cultures, religions, and spiritual practices. Some cultures have specific beliefs about “the nature of human kind” (e.g., evil vs. good). Unconditional and absolute compassion is found in God, Buddha, and other divine sources of energy. We all possess these characteristics at varying levels. Cultivating increased levels of compassion and empathy toward self and others is a quest for those who desire and choose to have more compassion and empathy in their life.
- *Medicine:* Medicine, a term and practice that dates back to ancient times, has been integral to the health and healing of the mind, body, and spirit of all cultures. In many cultures, religious beliefs; spirituality; magic; mysticism; herbals; botanicals; and any element that facilitates health, healing, and cures were not separated into specialty areas (e.g., family practice and allied health medicine, the priesthood, psychotherapy, psychiatry). Indigenous healers such as tribal shamans facilitated cultural medicine that “treated” all conditions of the physical body, mental–emotional–psychological health, and the spirit. Most indigenous medicine practices were not shared with anyone outside the culture. Many indigenous medicine practices are not known today because of cultural extinction, the loss of languages, and the practices themselves being handed down by word of mouth.
- *Suffering:* Suffering, a complex concept to understand, exists in many cultures as a natural human

condition. The experience such as “dark night of the soul” is a form of suffering. It is described as depression, dryness, futility, or the sense of wandering aimlessly or feeling lost. It is quite natural to experience suffering and dark energy. Some cultural belief systems view suffering as a chronic and persistent condition in which one cannot change his or her mind, body, and spirit. In other cultural belief systems, suffering and misery are viewed as only temporary. Most spiritual and religious traditions’ intention is to overcome the temporary state of unhappiness, pain, misery, and suffering. For some, freedom from suffering can only be achieved by their eventual physical death. The “reward” lies in what some cultures refer to as “Heaven.” Thus, the intention is to achieve everlasting life in Heaven. Because humanity cannot escape suffering, the challenge in many cultural belief systems is to find ways of transcending this experience. For some individuals, bringing meaning and purpose to their suffering is an empowering experience that can mean freedom from suffering and dark energy, thereby transcending their suffering and misery.

- *The journey*: Many cultures believe that achieving balance, health, and wellness of one’s mind, body, and spirit is a journey, not a goal. All great spiritual leaders throughout history (e.g., Jesus, Buddha, Mohammad, Gandhi, Mother Teresa, the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, Billy Graham, and native shaman) pursued a spiritual journey to acquire insight, enlightenment, illumination, meaning, and purpose in life and to try and enhance their spiritual relationship with the divine creator or God. A journey has no real definitive beginning or end. For some, optimal mind, body, and spiritual living is a journey that takes place over one’s lifetime. Some cultural belief systems suggest that a “journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step”; however, there are many steps that start and stop along the way. Journeying requires constant mindfulness and attention to both your internal and external environment on a daily basis.
- *Zen*: Bodhidharma, an Indian monk and founder of Zen Buddhism in the 5th century, developed this indigenous approach to life based on the principles of Buddhism. Zen is not just a meditation practice or a journey. Rather, the intent is enlightenment or illumination, which can only be attained spontaneously. As described by some, Zen is a form of consciousness and practice for everyday life. There is nothing mystical or esoteric about Zen. Zen has evolved in many Western cultures but has a difficult translation because of the rational thinking, scientific paradigm, and the need to predict and control thoughts, feelings, and actions. Zen requires us to cease ordinary states of consciousness and thought process and experience a type of mindful and meditative consciousness while being engaged in activities such as washing dishes, sweeping, chopping wood, going for walks on the beach or in a forest, and so forth.
- *Contemplative prayer*: In Christian traditions, contemplative prayer is experienced as a type of deep meditative experience. It is a way to quiet the mind, body, and spirit. Prayer is a gift from God that cannot be earned. Through this all-sensory experience we can be transported to another realm or dimension. It is through this process that we merge with the light or divine presence of God creating a profound sense of peace, which may be the “Zen moment” in some cultures.
- *Dreams*: Dreams are a way for us to pay attention and access deeper insight into our mind, body, and spirit. In the 4th century, the great saint and mystic Gregory of Nyssa recognized the art of Christian meditation and the experience of dreaming states of consciousness. Dreams are a gift from the Creator. Many cultures understand the symbolic importance of dreaming as a way to bring meaning, purpose, health, and healing into everyday living. It is also understood that the symbolic meaning within dreams may not come about immediately. Rather, such meaning may take days, weeks, months, and even years.
- *Visualization*: Visualization and use of imagery provide the possibilities of creating profound changes in thoughts, feelings, and actions. The 20th and 21st centuries have revealed some unprecedented discoveries in technology, health care, space travel, and environmental sciences. These discoveries were first visualized by a human being as an inner reality (e.g., space travel, cures or vaccines for diseases, life-saving medical procedures). The awakening of visualization and imagination stirs thoughts and emotions, and has the possibilities of propelling someone into action. Visualizations do not have to be actions that contribute to humankind from a global perspective. Rather, humans have the capacity to change something pivotal within their inner world. This could be visualizing a career change, a new relationship, or how to live optimally with a chronic illness or disability. Thus, visualization and use of imagery are a gift from the creator and have empowering qualities to enable individuals to make profound changes toward optimal living.
- *Awakening*: Awakening the mind, body, and spirit does not have to be achieved through experiences of ecstasy or nonordinary states of consciousness, nor through a transcendental or deep meditative state. Awakening can be achieved in everyday life through sudden illumination of a thought, feeling,

or intuitive senses. The “ah ha moment” associated with awakening requires that the individual be *present* moment to moment and *open* to different thoughts, feelings, and actions.

- *Mindfulness*: Mindfulness simply means paying attention to your mind, body, and spirit at different levels of awareness within the present here-and-now moment, in a nonjudgmental and unconditional way. This kind of attention nurtures and cultivates greater awareness, clarity, and acceptance of self and others on a day-to-day basis. A mindfulness practice can facilitate “awakening moments.”
- *Quieting the mind*: Quieting or silencing the mind opens the door to other dimensions, allowing us to listen to the voice of God. This may come in terms of symbolic meaning or through an all-sensory experience of sight, smell, sound, light, feeling, sensing, and/or touching. Quieting the mind and listening from a spiritual perspective is a difficult task for many. The rules of reality, logic, rational thinking, or ordinary states of consciousness do not apply when accessing the “other side of silence.” Many indigenous groups suggest that listening through the “third-eye chakra” is vital to awakening the intuitive self. Many cultures believe that God has given us the capacity for intuitiveness. However, most of us do not know how to be silent and quiet our mind because we have “monkey mind,” which is a Zen Buddhist expression for cluttered and disorganized deficits in attention and concentration. Thus, quieting the mind and listening is essential to accessing the presence of God, light, or other divine sources of energy.
- *Koans, parables, and storytelling*: Koans are indigenous to some Zen Buddhist practices. A Koan such as “what is the sound of one hand clapping” is interpreted not by the rational mind, but rather through a deep meditative state with the intent of illumination or enlightenment on its meaning, which is typically found in its actions. Parables and stories are also observed in many sacred texts, indigenous rituals, and healing ceremonies, and have rich metaphors that require one to reflect and meditate on its meaning. With meaning comes change in one’s thoughts, feelings, and actions.
- *Attitudinal change*: Each new healthy thought, feeling, or experience has the potential for an attitudinal change that can create a better future. Unhealthy attitudes can disturb the balance within our physiological and biological existence, which can break down the various body and immune systems, creating the risk for illness and disease. Having an attitude of gratitude and compassion, for example, keeps us from focusing on the dark energy. Living within the present, here-and-now moment, as opposed to spending too much time in your past or future, is viewed as healthy. Thus, embracing the “right” attitude within the present moment creates potential to visualize an attitudinal change.
- *Karma*: Karma, a Buddhist concept, is correctly translated as “action” of intention. It is the sum total of your life’s direction whether it be suffering, happiness, anger, or fear. Karma is created by your past actions, thoughts, and behaviors. Karma is often confused as a person’s fixed destiny but is more of an accumulative pattern of actions, thoughts, and behaviors. Accordingly, you can change your Karma by choosing different thoughts, feelings, cognitions, and actions in the present moment, which ultimately will affect your future. Thus, being mindful in the “now” moment is what matters most, because what you are in the present moment affects every action, thought, and feeling in your future. Changing Karma is a conscious choice we make that spans attitudinal change, lifestyle changes, and all changes within our mind, body, and spirit.
- *Simple life*: To attain balance and wellness of the mind, body, and spirit, many cultures believe that we should look for the most parsimonious practical solutions and wisdom, ones that fit best with who you are as a person and your life. Materialism complicates the human existence and does not allow us to experience the simple life. Some cultural belief systems would suggest that it is not so much the material things we possess; rather, it is the amount of time we spend focusing on such materialism that takes us away from the simple life.
- *Judgments and conditions*: There are not “good–bad”; “positive–negative”; or “acceptable–unacceptable” thoughts and feelings. Rather, there are a range of human emotions, behaviors, and experiences we feel and communicate to ourselves and others throughout the day and in a diversity of environments. The natural world is not static; it is constantly evolving. There are up, down, and sideways: north, south, east, and west. Likewise, our inner and outer worlds also have many directions, places, and spaces. Placing values, standards, or ideals as a condition for our thoughts, feelings, emotions, behaviors, and experiences can hinder growth and development of our mind, body, and spirit. It is okay to be who you are because you are a unique individual created by a divine source of energy. Thus, the judgments and conditions we place on self and others are unhealthy energy.
- *Unconditional love and acceptance*: Loving unconditionally, both self and others, requires the ultimate patience, devotion, and acceptance. This

typically does not occur instantaneously but does require attitudinal change, which may take place over many months or years. Having love and acceptance of oneself and accepting all the limitations we have within the human experience can bring about attitudinal change. Love and acceptance have potential for harmonizing our mind, body, and spirit.

- *Connections:* A tree cannot survive without its roots. Persons without connections to their roots cannot survive either. Living alone is an aching stressor. This principle may not necessarily mean reconnecting with your biological roots or family, for there are many who have had to endure physical, mental, and sexual abuse or alcoholism within their family roots. Rather, the implication is that we have spiritual ancestors and spiritual families that we can draw to in time of need. Some may refer to this as a social–therapeutic support group (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous); church family; or neighborhood or community support.
- *Taking responsibility:* Taking responsibility for one’s own mind, body, and spirit is essential to stay on the path of one’s journey. There are some things you will have to give up to God, a higher power, or the universe, but we should be open to the idea that there are some thoughts, feelings, or behaviors that we can change but only if we choose responsibility.
- *Higher states of consciousness:* Many cultures practice alterations in their states of consciousness with the intention of accessing God, angels, or power animals. Achieving higher states of mind, body, and spiritual well-being is a desirable characteristic and attribute in many cultures. Being mindful, quieting the mind, and listening to our “inner voice experiences” provides rich opportunities for personal transformation for optimal health.
- *Gratitude:* Strive for gratitude, obedience, loyalty, and devotion toward your mind, body, and spirit. Cultivating more love and compassion toward yourself and others leaves less room for unwanted thoughts, feelings, and actions. Striving for gratitude, obedience, loyalty, and devotion can create true freedom from stress, anxiety, depression, or suffering.
- *Attachments:* Becoming aware of how we hold on or hold in to dark or unwanted energy does not allow us to experience the nature of our feelings, emotions, thoughts, cognitions, and other higher states of consciousness. We all have attachments to many things in our lives. Reluctance or resistance to become enlightened concerning our dark or unwanted energy attachments does not provide opportunities for optimal growth of mind, body, and spirit. Letting go and freedom from our attachments have profound effects on the mind, body, and spirit.
- *Movement:* Movement activities such as dance, expressive arts, Tai Chi, yoga, walking meditations, and many other movement activities reach our deepest nature of human existence. Such activities have the profound power to transform the mind, body, and spirit for healthful living. Epidemiological researchers, when studying longevity “hot spots” of the world, find that physical movement is a protective factor in resiliency against disease and illness. Movement cultivates good overall physical and mental health. In shamanic cultures, various rituals that involved expressive arts (i.e., dancing, drumming) were believed to be able to have the power to change the physical world (e.g., bring rain for crops, communicate healing within the tribe). Awakening the spirits, soul retrieval, and other shamanic rituals were very physical in nature. Without accessing these ancient movement activities, it is difficult to awaken the healing energies internally and externally. Energy must not be contained for internal use; it should flow freely outward, and be shared with others within the culture. Peaceful marches or demonstrations, having cheerleaders at sporting events, or Tai Chi in the park all invite participation and a vibrational energy that can impact the world outside of oneself.
- *Aromas and essential oils:* Essential oils date back thousands of years to ancient Egypt, China, and India, as well as other countries. Aromas and essential oils have always been part of healing rituals and social celebrations. The use of fragrant substances, or essential oils, distilled from plants and other natural substances have the power to alter mood and affect; reduce pain and stress; and improve overall mental and physical health. A French chemist, René Maurice Gattefosse, originated modern-day aromatherapy. Today, it is common to find more than 40 different essential oils that are typically present in massage therapy, Yoga, Reiki, and acupuncture practices. In the integrative psychotherapeutic environment, essential oils are used to enhance calm and balanced states of consciousness.
- *Sounds:* Sounds such as drumming, waves, wind, rain, animals, human-made, and even high-altitude environments produce frequencies that stimulate the relaxation centers of the brain as modern-day researchers note. The use of drumming and other sounds has been present since the beginning of time. Sounds are frequently used for rituals, religious/spiritual ceremonies, celebrations, and many other events to enhance the group and individuals’ experience of the ritual itself. Rhythmic drumming

with indigenous hand-made instruments (e.g., rattles, string, wood) are commonly integrated in shamanic and Native American cultures. Drumming and other sound frequencies have the opportunities to produce trances and other altered states of consciousness by which a shaman may journey for his or her power animal. Indeed, sound is healing energy in many cultures.

- **Body energy:** Energy from all different forms has been present from the beginning of life. Energy never dies, it continues on into all eternity: a world without end. We are all made from a divine source of energy as well as elements within our natural environment (plants, animals, and the physical earth). Subtle energies such as different states of consciousness give birth to new life or new ideas, visions, and creative thoughts. This happens every moment of each day from a cellular structure point of view as our body replenishes itself. Our mental, physical, and spiritual health is dependent on this vital system of energy, which is designed to maintain and increase health, wellness, balance, and healing. Ancient traditional writings have identified more than 88,000 chakras or energy vortexes connecting all body systems. In Japanese Reiki, there are more than 40 energy centers considered to be significant, which, if blocked, can cause disease, illness, and imbalances in the mind, body, and spirit. *Ki*, *Chi*, or *Qi* flows through this invisible meridian system of the body. There are those who can sense the body's energy flow through various sensory and extrasensory perceptions, therapeutic touch, and body auras. Body energy healers, such as those attuned in Reiki, shamanism, message, or other body energy systems of healing, use their intuitive gifts to find these energy blockages and rebalance these areas, which are vulnerable to illness and disease. The individual can also facilitate self-healing if attuned to such practices.
- **Art:** All cultures have art. There are as many art forms as there are cultures. Art is used to express and communicate cultural identity to others and those within their own culture. Art forms such as dancing, painting, carving, tattoos, jewelry making, music, and other forms have therapeutic value and contribute to the cultures' overall well-being.
- **Environment:** Some native cultures view the environment as made up of earth, air, water, wind, and fire, which connect all life forms to planet Earth. Our "Mother Earth" represents all of existence, even before the first human, and this energy connects us with a web to the cosmos and everything else in the universe (e.g., the sun, sunspots, meteor showers, exploding stars, and universes). When cataclysmic events happen on our planet naturally (floods, hurricanes, fires, earthquakes,

volcanic eruptions) or unnaturally (human made), our planet must make adjustments to rebalance its energy forces. Because the creator has provided us with all that exists, we dishonor our creator when we intentionally upset this balance. Whatever we take from nature we must give back. This is consistent from a global perspective or to our own geographic area in which we live (our town, community, or neighborhood). Environment is also connected to our personal inner space and intertwines with our mind, body, and spirit. Feng Shui, which is a Chinese system of harmonizing everything within the surrounding environment, is one example of feeling and sensing this balance. Feng Shui is a sophisticated system that integrates our architectural surroundings and natural spaces to create an optimal living environment that brings peace to the mind, body, and spirit.

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