

EDITORIAL: GETTING SELF CONSCIOUS

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Until recently, 20th Century psychology and psychotherapy did not pay much attention to a theory of the self that could undergird and direct therapeutic practice. In part we were running from some of our speculative, philosophical roots. In part we were impatient to get out there and do hand-on work that brought pragmatic, healing results. Both psychoanalytic and behaviorist camps went to work with partial theories of the self and generated partial successes.

Today there are a growing number of books and articles emerging on the theory of the self. There are probably many reasons. We have been responsibly bothered by outcome studies that demonstrate our therapeutic failures. We are post-60's folks who are less intimidated by the authority of a particular tradition, and more inclined to study eclectically to find a fuller view and an increased effectiveness. European linguistics and liberation movements have made us more aware of the unconscious assumptions of the self we employ which can be oppressive. For instance, the male-oriented emphasis on separation-individuation has been hurtful to women who have been pathologically denigrated as "dependent." Feminist therapists are pioneering better fitting theories of the self-in-relation. Viewed cross culturally, the Western ideal of the grand, autonomous self is seen as pathological by two-thirds of the world which cannot conceive of a meaningful self apart from family, community, or place. The increased respect for Native Religions and Transpersonal Psychology, along with the resurgence of Fundamentalism, is calling into question any theory of the self that systematically excludes any relationship of the spiritual. In Hakomi we have explored foundations for our work in the theory of living, self-organizing systems. Much remains to be done.

This issue of the *Forum* deals with aspects of the self from a number of perspectives. Additional issues will include more explorations. James DeLeo begins with an article that discusses the dialogical use of self in therapy. This is an

important interpersonal note for those of us who use a lot of intra-psychic techniques. Tom Whitehead provides the first of a two-part series of articles on the nature of boundaries in the formation, maintenance, and transformation of the self. Cedar Barstow follows with a talk that outlines ethical issues involved when boundaries are inappropriately crossed. Richard Schwartz's work deals with the "myth of the monolith self" and the important differentiation of what he calls the Self with a capital "S". Stephen Wolinsky's contribution points to capacities of the self for stepping out of the everyday trances we normally operate in. Finally, William Schmidt offers a constructive summary review of the major issues in the formation of the self from Western philosophical and psychotherapeutic traditions.