



Health as Expanding Consciousness

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Assumptions

- Health is a *unitary pattern of the whole* and encompasses both disease and non-disease.
- Pattern identifies the evolving human-environment process and is characterized by *meaning*.
- Consciousness is the *informational capacity* of the whole and is revealed in the evolving pattern of the whole.



Premise

Health is the expansion of consciousness.



A Paradigm Shift

To see health as the pattern of the whole, one needs to see disease not as a separate entity but as a manifestation of the evolving pattern of person-environment interaction.

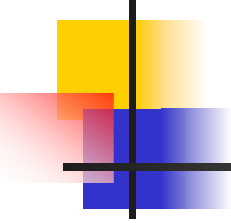
The paradigm shift is:

- from treatment of symptoms to a search for **patterns**
- from viewing disease and disruption as negative to viewing them as a part of the self-organizing process leading to **higher-consciousness.**



Supporting Theory

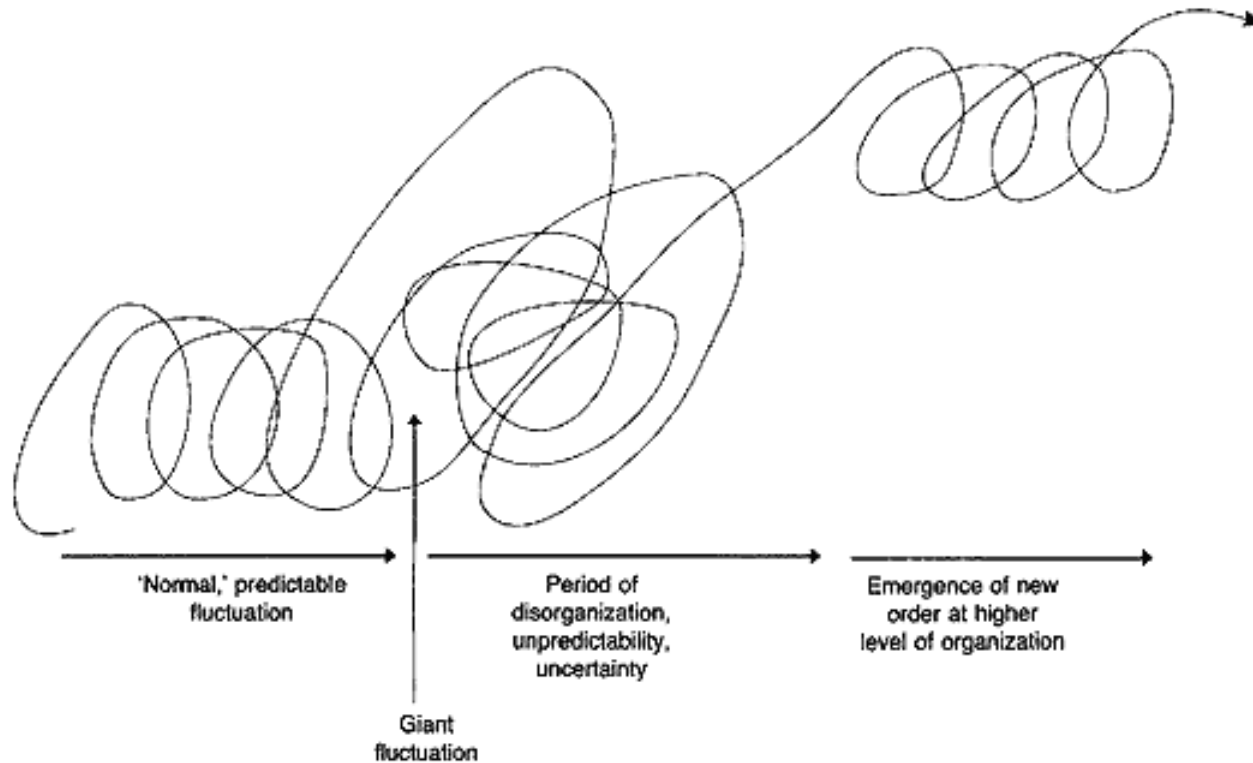
- The health of a human being is a unitary phenomenon, an evolving pattern of human-environment (Rogers, 1970).
- Life is a process of expanding consciousness. Consciousness is the informational capacity of the system and can be seen in the quality of interaction of the system with the environment (Bentov, 1978).
- The explicate order is a manifestation of the implicate order (Bohm, 1980).



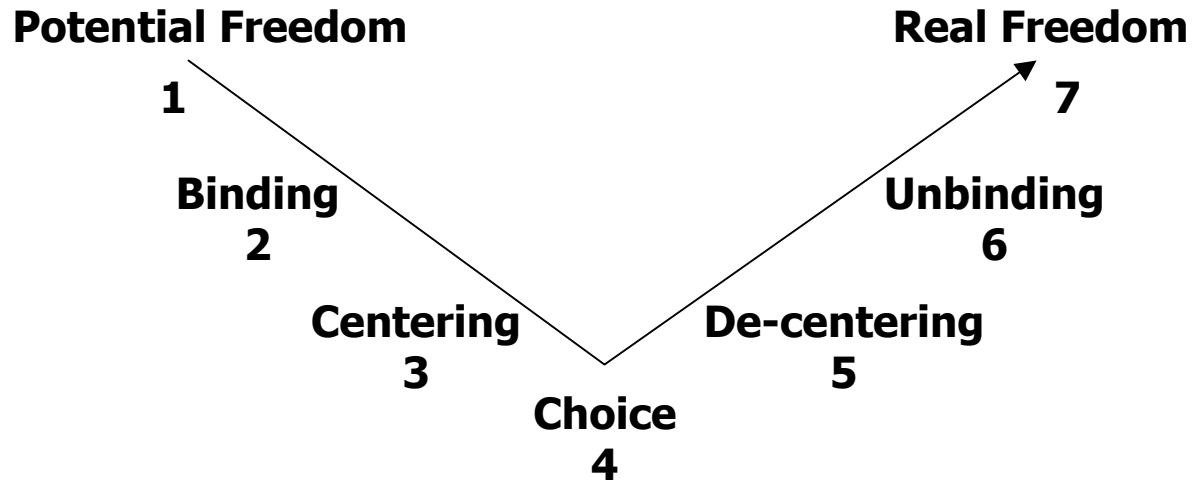
A system fluctuates in an orderly manner until the occurrence of a disruptive event, at which time the system moves in seemingly random, disorderly ways until it chooses a new direction at a higher level of organization (Prigogine, 1976).

A person moves through stages of consciousness involving the loss of freedom in the development of self-identity until a turning point is reached when the 'old rules' don't work anymore. The life task is to discover the 'new rules' and move toward increasing freedom and higher consciousness (Young, 1976).

Based on Prigogine's Theory of Dissipative Structure



Arthur Young's Sequencing of Human Evolution





Research Method

A unitary approach centers on meaning and requires a method of inquiry that is interactive and receptive to the pattern of the whole. The hermeneutic dialectic method allows the pattern of person-environment to reveal itself without disturbing the unity of the pattern. The process culminates in intuitive apprehension and expression.

The researcher-practitioner (RP) enters into a partnership with the participant-client (PC) when the PC is experiencing disruption and uncertainty. A reflective dialogue centering on the meaningfulness of the PC's pattern of relationships is maintained during the period of uncertainty until the PC's pattern shifts to a higher order.



Elements in the research process:

- Establish the mutuality of the process of inquiry.
- Focus on the most meaningful events and relationships in the participant's life.
- Organize the data as a narrative and display graphically as sequential patterns over time.
- Share the researcher's perception of the pattern with the participant.
- Inherent in the process is the insight participants gain as pattern recognition occurs, and with it the illumination of action possibilities.