

Keynote Address

INTEGRAL HEALTH: *HEALTH, CONSCIOUSNESS & HUMAN FLOURISHING¹*

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ABSTRACT

Ours is a precious human life. It is so because we are gifted with capacities and possibilities unknown to any other species. Through our own efforts we can gain freedom from suffering and achieve a sustained wholeness, peace, love and joy that surpasses the understanding of an ordinary consciousness. With this achievement all efforts at healing come to an end as we have reached the quintessence of human life—a health and life divine of body, mind and spirit. But for this level of healing we must look beyond our remedies and therapies to the second great force of healing, the inner force, that can only be activated and mastered through a progressive expansion of consciousness. This is what the ancient healing traditions have always whispered to us if we would but listen. Their healing elixir is simple: larger consciousness, larger health, larger life. As individuals and practitioners, our personal healing, as well as our capacity to assist others in their own healing, is especially dependent upon our ability to access higher levels of consciousness and their naturally emergent qualities of wisdom, wholeness, peace, love and compassion. A vertical leap in consciousness, we discover, is both the ground of our being and the ground of our healing. To attain such an uncommon health and life requires that we invest in the development of our inner life, our consciousness. Utilizing the many traditional contemplative, meditative and other paths that have been left to us by the great sages we can each tap into this singular essence of all healing practices. It is an essence that transcends yet simultaneously infuses all of our manifold methods with an expansive consciousness that is the great elixir and essence of all healing and simultaneously the source of a remarkable human flourishing—a completion and perfection of our humanity that is unknown to ordinary awareness.

KEYWORDS: Integral health, consciousness, healing

We are quite fortunate to be born into a human life. To begin, human life is a rare occurrence. In the east they tell the story of a blind turtle that spends its life swimming beneath a vast ocean. Floating on the ocean surface is a golden ring that is constantly being buffeted by strong winds. It is said that the chance of being born a human is as unlikely as the chance of this blind turtle raising its head above water every one hundred years and placing it directly through the golden ring. Seen another way, there are more bacteria and viruses in a clod of earth than there are human beings on the face of the earth. So human life is a very rare opportunity, a very fragile and a very brief one.

And there is more; we are also fortunate to be born with certain uniquely human capacities and freedoms. As humans we have a well-developed intelligence, creative imagination, language, compassion and the ability for self-reflection, contemplation, and intentional action. Our material needs are met, we have a sound mind and body, we live in times and in a place in which we have the opportunity for self-study, and further we have the availability of the teachings and the teachers that can guide us towards a larger life of body, mind and spirit. Taken together these factors give us the seed of a very special precious life. But it is only when we choose to actualize this possibility that an ordinary health and life becomes a precious health and life. And if this is possible for us, if this human flourishing is our potential, then its attainment must be the supreme aim of health and healing, and the very essence of what it means to live a meaningful life.

At birth, it is as if we were placed on a Treasure Island filled with priceless gems. Yet at the end of our life too many of us leave empty handed unable to see these treasures of human life even though they are right there beneath our feet, much the same as they are this very moment. And what are these gems that characterize a precious human life? These gems are the unseen and unlied nobility of the human condition—*the direct and sustained experience of wholeness, peace, love, compassion, and joy*. Please be clear that I am not speaking about the common understanding of these qualities, an understanding that arises from an ordinary consciousness, but about a far more subtle experience that can at times be glimpsed through an ordinary consciousness, but can only be directly known in its fullness through an expansive consciousness. So the peace I am speaking of is not a relaxation or a deep rest. It is the peace that

comes when the mind finally comes to rest in its natural state. And the same could be said for the experience of wholeness, love, compassion and joy that are often mistaken for the far lesser experiences of ordinary consciousness that bear the same name.

This possibility of the human condition, the possibility of a precious health, was not lost on the great healing sages of the past—east or west. Consider the Caduceus, the western symbol of medicine. The legend tells of two snakes that were quarreling on the ground—the snakes of the inner way and the outer way of knowing, the inner and outer way of healing. To stop their quarreling the Greek God Hermes placed his staff in between them. The snakes then entwined themselves around this staff in a dynamic play of inner and outer that often places these great healing forces in opposition, with one dominant and the other suppressed, but occasionally, at remarkable times, they rest together in a seamless and balanced union. It is very difficult to hold inner and outer at the same moment. If you are in meditation and you reach a place of clarity, stillness and peacefulness the outer world seems momentarily out of reach. If you are in the outer world, much as our day-to-day experience, you lose the awareness of the inner experience. It is just the nature of how our mind works. It is only with the development of our consciousness that we can develop the capacity to hold both simultaneously, and when this occurs we are in break-through times.

And then there is the eastern symbol of medicine, the Medicine Buddha. In his right hand he holds the healing Aurora plant that is the symbol of all external remedies and therapies. In his left hand he holds a bowl that was traditionally a skullcap signifying the overcoming of death. It is filled with the elixir of wisdom. The inner and the outer way again, and the figure, the Buddha, represents the awakened healer in each of us who has cultivated the wisdom and the awareness to seamlessly interweave these two aspects of the human experience, these two essential aspects of the healing process. And by accomplishing this synthesis of the inner and outer ways of healing we open the possibility of gaining freedom from suffering and preparing our self for the natural and effortless unfolding of human flourishing. So here we find, in both the east and west, a profound healing vision that is precisely the same. What we are reminded of in these two great symbols is that a profound health and healing results from the seamless interweaving of our inner

and outer healing capacities by the awakened higher consciousness in each of us.

This profound and precious health and healing has a double aim; gaining freedom from all suffering and living into the great gifts of the human condition, what we are calling human flourishing. So let us look at how our current approach to health and healing meets these lofty aims. Consider the alleviation of suffering. Limited to an exclusively biological and physical approach to healing—conventional, alternative or energetic—we cannot bring suffering to a sustained end. And why is this? Consider the four sources of suffering—physical, emotional, existential and conditioned. Each is a mental experience and thus it follows that a purely biological and material approach that does not address our inner life cannot alleviate suffering.

The suffering from a physical ailment can, to an extent, be relieved by treatment and the resolution of the physical cause. But as our body is impermanent we cannot simply rely on treatment alone. Emotional distress, the disturbances of anxiety, depression, attachment, loss, anger and so on, are similarly not resolvable by physical means and this is also true of the existential fear of death, aloneness and even of freedom. And finally, the root cause of all suffering can be found in our habitual and inaccurate mental patterns that leave us with a false understanding of our self and the world around us. As a result of this delusional mental tendency that contrives a cognitive world we cannot see what is actually real, the ever present pure choiceless awareness, where suffering cannot take place. And so it can be seen that the end of suffering, one of the two central aims of healing cannot be achieved except through an expansion of consciousness. No medicine, therapy, remedy or energetic approach can permanently resolve human suffering at its root source.

Until we can approach and alleviate suffering by addressing its root causes we cannot achieve the second great aim of health and healing—human flourishing. Human flourishing, the effortless arising of our natural state of wholeness, peace, loving kindness, compassion and happiness, cannot be experienced or directly known until the obscuring and obstructing clouds of personal suffering are dissipated. Only then can our natural human condition shine through like the rays of the sun. To accomplish this second aim of healing we are thus

similarly compelled to not only mature the outer aspects of healing, but to simultaneously mature and develop the inner aspects of healing through an expansion of consciousness. *Inner development is not an informational process. It is a transformational process.* And unless we commit ourselves to this effort with the same enthusiasm we do for the physical and material approach to healing we will have to be satisfied with an ordinary health, an ordinary life, and an ordinary death.

I am reminded here of another story that is told in the east. It is of a fisherman who goes down to the sea each morning before dawn. One morning he finds a small sack in the sand and idles his time reaching into the sack and tossing what appear to be little pebbles into the sea. As dawn approaches only one remains and he is startled to see that it is a diamond. What he had been tossing into the sea all morning was a bagful of diamonds. He was fortunate. He had at least had one gem left before the end of his life. Most of us will die without having even experienced even one of the great treasures of life. What we will have known are mere counterfeit experiences, fool's gold mistaken for real gold.

How do we evolve an approach to health and healing that can satisfy these two great traditional aims of healing; the end of suffering and the effortless arising of our natural state of human flourishing? I am going to describe to you an approach we are calling integral medicine to reflect the integral vision articulated by Sri Aurobindo in the last century and further developed in our time by Ken Wilber. The integral vision is a lofty vision that speaks to the full dimension of the human experience—biological, psychospiritual, relational and cultural. It weaves together the inner and outer aspects of our life, and it speaks to the human capacity to evolve and grow over time in each of these four areas of the human experience. The integral approach articulates a truly holistic vision, focuses on the person rather than on practitioners and their practices, is trans-cultural and inclusive in nature, and finally, it is a dynamic and vital approach to health and life. In our time the most important area of focus is the expansion of consciousness, the evolution of our psychospiritual life, for this will more than any other effort move us towards the two great goals of healing. The expansion of consciousness drives the full development of our relational and cultural life, allows for an increasingly subtle mind/body healing that occurs at the level of intention and attention, and is

our best hope for a wise, compassionate and healing culture. In a sense we are saying that integral medicine has two movements—first, the ascent of our consciousness into increasing subtleties, eros, and then the descent of this consciousness and its embodiment into our relationships, culture and biology, agape.

Let us look at one historical moment when there was a brief but highly creative interweaving of the inner and outer aspects of knowing and healing, an early form of integral medicine. If you or I were in need of healing in three or four hundred B.C. we would most likely first seek advice from our local physician who would be practicing the science of the day. If that was insufficient to alleviate the disturbance, either on his referral or your own initiative, you would make plans to visit one of the many Aesclepiian healing centers that served as a central source of healing throughout the Mediterranean area. You would pack your bags and head off for an extended retreat. While on your journey you would meet others returning from the healing center, relating to you their stories of temple healing. These poignant and exalted stories would fire up your hopes and expectations. When you finally arrived at the temple gates you would spend a day or more outside the gates undergoing a sacred cleansing, a way of purifying yourself from the concerns of the outer world through ritual and fasting. You were about to enter a sacred healing retreat.

Finally, you would enter the temple area passing first through the temple of Aesclepius. Here you would leave an offering acknowledging the sacredness of the healing process you were about to enter and signifying your understanding that to turn a corner in your life, to gain a rebirth into a larger health you needed to give something up first, you needed to let go of what was pulling you into disease and distress. And then you would walk to the dormitory, leave your bags and enter temple life.

And temple life was quite a multi-dimensional experience. There was the gymnasium with bathing, massage, physical exercise and athletic competitions. There were the roving minstrels, the endless philosophical dialogue in the streets, the greatest of the art of ancient Greece and beautiful gardens to ease your mind, body and spirit. In the afternoon you would likely attend the theater. At the healing center in Epidaurus one still finds the largest theater

of ancient Greece where even today performances occur each summer evening. Perhaps you would see a presentation of the great trilogy of Oedipus. This is a story about suffering and salvation, fate and destiny, the growth of wisdom and the final healing. Each play would bring you in touch with the larger drama that was but a macrocosm of your more personal drama. Your “small” story would be elevated to myth. Perhaps you would come upon new realizations or more inner spaciousness, or perhaps even some lessening of your distress. As you can see, the healing temple was an enormously rich and diverse healing ecology.

Then at night you would clothe yourself in your sacred whites and walk to the Abaton, the sacred room of dream healing. You would lie down for the evening and ask Aesclepius to visit you with a healing dream. The healing God may come to you on that night or perhaps another with an important dream. He may give you a variety of instructions hidden in your dream—instructions for the use of herbs or pharmaceuticals, or perhaps for physical activities or dietary change, and in each case the priest would assist you in interpreting and carrying out the intentions of your dream. When you look at the iconography of Aesclepius you can see the love, peace, wholeness, gentleness and compassion that is in fact our natural healing state, a natural state which unlike our Greek ancestors we no longer need to project out to the gods, but can reclaim as our own. So the visitation by the healing God was nothing more or less than a visitation from our inner healing capacities projected outwards.

To all of this they added the science of the day. And this healing process would continue day after day and night after night until you were healed and “wholed.” Then you left the temple to return to your community and your re-vitalized life. This healing and wholing was an integral experience that was at once biological, psychospiritual, relational and cultural. It was an integral healing suited to the level of inner and outer development of that age.

And when you left the temple, if you had the means, you might have left a testimonial to your experience carved in stone. About 200 such tablets now remain. One that was written in 350 B.C. goes like this:

Believe me men, I had been dead during all of the years of life that I was alive. The beautiful, the good, the holy, the evil were all the same to

me—such, it seems, was the darkness that formerly enveloped my understanding and concealed and hid from me all these things. But now that I've come here, I have become alive again for all the rest of my life, as if I had lain down in the temple of Asclepius and had been saved. I walk, I talk, I think. This sun so great so beautiful I have now discovered men for the first time—today I see under the clear sky you, the air, the acropolis and the theater.

This is an integral health and healing, a whole health and healing that arose from the seamless interweaving of the inner and outer levels of healing that can arise only in a unique culture that can simultaneously hold and value inner and outer.

But this tenuous synthesis of both the inner and outer was destined to come apart with the rise of the Christian era. For 1000 years, science disappeared and all of healing fell into the spiritual realm of scripture, faith and prayer. Although this era has left us in our time with a legacy of humanism, compassion and love for the other, the shadow side of a partial one-sided approach to life also led to the death from the black plague of one quarter of the European population in the 13th century. And so we see as we will also see in modern times the mixed blessings of a one-sided approach to health and healing.

Then we come to the year 1543, when two seminal books were published. The first was by the master surgeon, Andreas Vesalius, who in text and elaborate graphics took us through the first dissection of the human body. While Vesalius looked inward to the nature of the body, Copernicus looked through the telescope outwards to the spheres. In the midst of the dominance of the inner way we see the rise of the natural sciences, the outer way. The human spirit searching to balance outer and inner finds its outer imagination reinvigorated. But it is essential to remember that these new students of the outer world conceived of the natural sciences within the context of a greater sacred mystery. The natural world was seen as manifestation of the divine force. It was not until the time of Descartes that the final divorce between the spiritual realm and the material realm was solidly established, and this divorce opened the modern era with its reification of the outer and the denial and devaluation of the inner.

And so we have the emergence of another one-sided world-view, the outer view. If I can see it, smell it, taste it, touch it or hear it it is real, if not it does not exist. Over the past 500 years this world view, this exclusively outer gaze, has driven our approach to almost everything, particularly healing. It has been a powerful model and world view, but powerful only in terms of the physical world. We cannot find love through an outer way, or peace, or compassion or joy or wholeness. You can develop an extraordinary amount of information and understanding of the natural world conveying the ability to predict and control natural events, but as we have seen such a one-sided view leaves us empty inside, spiritually impoverished. Irrespective of the extraordinary success of our scientific outer medicine it remains impossible for such an outward approach to help us gain freedom from suffering or attain the human treasures human flourishing. The writer, teacher and scientist Goethe said of the modern age:²

*Who would study and describe the living, starts,
by driving the spirit out of the parts:
in the palm of his hand he holds all the sections,
Lacks nothing, except the spirits that connect.*

The philosopher Whitehead describes the modern era in the following manner:³

*. . . a dull affair, soundless, scentless, colorless:
merely the hurrying of material,
endlessly, meaninglessly.*

The modern philosopher, Ken Wilber, who speaks to the dilemma of our time in the following way:⁴

*This descended grid determines our goals,
our desires, our consumption, our salvation.*

Yet, however limited this world-view may be, we must honor and respect the gifts of scientific medicine which arose from this fabulously successful perspective. As an active medical practitioner for 20 years I have grown to increasingly recognize the gifts we have been given. But is not the gifts that are the problem, but rather that the very success of this approach has made its limitations more apparent. When we achieve success at a particular level of development it is quite natural that a dissonance sets in as new needs become apparent

which cannot be addressed by the existing model. The new epidemics of our time are not from viruses or bacteria, but rather they are epidemics of inner suffering, of anxiety, depression, anger, violence, addiction and their reflection in our body. The denial of the inner aspect of the human condition in modern times has invariably led to a certain inner tension, restlessness, agitation and homelessness that starkly highlights the limitations of an exclusively outer world-view.

T. S. Elliot eloquently speaks to this shadow side of modernity:⁵

*Where is the life we have lost in living?
Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?*

And in his poem “The Hollow Men” he reiterates this understanding:⁶

*We are the hollow men.
We are the stuffed men.
Leaning together
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
Our dried voices, when
We whisper together
Are quiet and meaningless
As wind in dry grass
Or rats' feet over broken glass
In our dry cellar.*

As difficult as it may be we must be willing to confront the shadow side of our great achievements in science and medicine. Only then will we more clearly see and feel the limitations and tragedies of a limited and one-sided outer and materialistic view—tragedies that are reflected in a loss of potential that result from this partial and limited notion of health and healing. It is essential that we correctly understand the nature of the dilemma. For this reason I have carefully attempted to clearly establish the precise source of our modern dilemma—our exclusive focus on the outer aspects of the human experience, particularly the physical while disregarding the inner aspects of our experience. Only when we firmly understand the problem can we meaningfully address and transcend it.

Beginning in the 1970's we can identify efforts made to resolve this tension, this limitation of our possibilities for healing. One of these first efforts was the Wellness model developed by Jack Travis. His model attempted to move us beyond an exclusive focus on the signs, symptoms and treatment of physical disease. Not only, he said, is there illness, but there is also Wellness—a positive health, a psycho/spiritual/social well-being that goes beyond the presence or absence of disease. I know he believed very deeply in this aspect of our potential. Yet when this vision was placed in the funnel of a materialistic world view it was distilled and contracted into smoking sensation, nutrition, and physical fitness. All are important, but please notice that the innovative psycho/spiritual/social focus was jettisoned and what was retained were the most physical aspects of this approach. Its essence was lost. Although a broadening of our perspective did occur, fundamental change did not. The prevailing world view changed the Wellness initiative rather than the other way around.

Now consider the holistic movement. The term holism itself originates from Jan Smuts' work on evolutionary dynamics written in the 1920s. *Holism in its purity can be seen in two ways.*⁷ First, holism is the universal tendency for life to evolve in increasingly larger and more complex wholes. Each whole is itself a part of a larger whole as the spiral continues to evolve. Holism expressed in this manner is an understanding of the evolutionary nature of existence. Another way to consider holism is from the eastern perspective in which holism is an expression of an individual's capacity to directly experience the oneness and unity of all of life. But now let us look at what this lofty vision has become when it was dropped into the materialistic funnel of our culture. In modern times the noble vision of holism has been reduced to no more than the circumstance of a health practitioner who has assembled multiple physically based approaches under the same umbrella—a larger medical tool box—or perhaps it is a “holistic supplement” that has multiple components to it rather than one. If you consider it more fully I think you will see how this profound vision of life has been co-opted by a rather narrow material and marketing-based perspective. The vision of holism was reshaped by the prevailing world view rather than becoming itself a nexus for fundamental change.

Then there is the emerging field of psychoneuroimmunology that was yet another attempt to explore the interaction of the inner and outer world. But

as an outer scientific discipline it has primarily concerned itself with the issue of stress and its biological reflection—circulating neuropeptides. It's a fascinating and potentially important area of investigation, but it doesn't go much deeper than stress and neuropeptides. What about the individual that, in his or her experience of stress, produces these neuropeptides? What underlies the stress? What is the role of consciousness? How can we grow into a knowledge of the deeper sources of stress and develop the capacity to transform our inner experience so that *we can heal stress and suffering at their source*? Again we find that our materialistic viewpoint and our ignorance of the inner aspects of the human experience result in a materializing of the field of psychoneuroimmunology and the lost of its potential in revealing the role of consciousness and intention in the healing of mind and body. We are left with the mechanics of a very gross mind/body connection rather than the extraordinary power of a more subtle mind/body connection that can only evolve with an expansion of consciousness.

Now we arrive at the most current effort to deal with the limitations of an outer medicine, the emergence of alternative, complementary and integrative medicine. Here a trans-cultural effort was undertaken to bring to bear on conventional medicine the rich healing approaches developed in other cultures. But what has happened? To begin, there has been considerable value in the expansion of our medical tool kit to include alternative therapies. Yet that is all that has happened. What happened to the expansive consciousness-based vision of Oriental medicine or that of Ayurvedic medicine? Oriental medicine is founded on the vision of Taoism and Ayurveda on the profound vision of Yoga. In both cases, particularly with practitioners seeking social legitimization, licensure and insurance reimbursement, these approaches have been largely reduced to therapies and remedies with their consciousness-based vision jettisoned along the path of enculturation. Let's acknowledge the truth. When you see such a practitioner it now appears more like a visit to a conventional practitioner than to a traditional practitioner who knew in his heart the full tradition from inner to outer. Yes, there are practitioners who are more broad-based in their approaches to these traditions, but the same can be said to occur in conventional medicine. The point again is that this effort to transform our approach to medicine increased the size of the medical tool kit but did little to open medicine into the inner ways of healing—the central limitation of our current approach.

Why is this? First, it is because we have not properly understood the source of our current dilemma—the exclusive focus on a physical and outer-based approaches to health and healing—conventional, alternative, and energetic. Second, we have not understood, respected and taken into consideration the power of an existing world view to pattern the manner in which we perceive all of our sensory and mental input. It is the tendency of our mind to superimpose and reshape any new input so that it takes on the familiarity of what is already known to our mind. That is the easy way, the comfortable way and at times the most efficient way to preserve inner stability and cohesiveness, but such a reshaping of and dilution of these traditional approaches destroys any effort at transformative change. And so that is what has occurred in each of our attempts to transform our existing medical approach and to transcend its limitations. We have succeeded in expanding the range and scope of our medicine, our medical tool kit, and we have also succeeded in expanding some of our perspectives, but we have failed to create fundamental change. As a result the same problems unaddressed by our existing approach to medicine persist, and our aspiration and potential for a larger health and healing remains unseen and inaccessible. We have been duped by the conforming tendencies of the human mind, and as a result some of the greatest thinkers in the field of health and healing have pre-occupied themselves with promoting approaches that they sincerely think are transformative when they in actuality are not.

It will be of further help to explain that there are two ways of changing—horizontal and vertical, expansion and transformation. The first, horizontal, is an approach to change “what is” through expansion. Such a change in medicine results in a larger medical tool kit, allowing for a broader range and scope of methods, techniques therapies and remedies within the same world view, or in our case within the boundaries of the outer perspective of modern medicine. Although we attain access to additional remedies and therapies with which to address physical illness nothing further changes, neither the healer, the healee, nor the basic approach to healing undergo change. No transformation takes place, and so the limitations of the existing system remain in place. In fact they are fortified and affirmed by the delusion that foundational change is actually occurring when it is not. All our efforts to shift our current approach to medicine, including alternative, complementary and energetic approaches, have merely expanded the tool box of modern medicine. Fundamental change has continued to elude us and with it the potential for a

larger health and healing—an alleviation of the root causes of suffering and the emergence of a natural and effortless human flourishing.

In contrast, vertical change is a transformative growth in consciousness, world view, complexity, capacity and possibility. Transformational change embraces and transcends what came before. This embrace of “what was” incorporates but does not exclusively identify with the earlier approach. If one examines the great vertical leaps in medicine it becomes apparent that each leap is preceded with a disturbing dissatisfaction with the limitations of the status quo. This dissonance leads to the exploration of alternative perspectives which feed an expansion of consciousness that finally drives the transformative leap. In actuality it is the expansion of consciousness that is the critical factor that can allow for a leap in our creative imagination beyond our conditioned thinking. Without this leap in consciousness we merely find ourselves rearranging furniture in the same room. Once a vertical leap occurs the details are filled in by horizontal or expansive change. The shift from a religious approach to healing in the Middle Ages to the emergence of modern science is an example of such a leap, and it has taken the past 500 years to fill in the details of this new approach to healing.

So our work now is to shift from a scientific medicine to a medicine that embraces the richness of modern science and yet simultaneously transcends its limitations. By this I mean the embrace and transcendence of *all* materialistic objective efforts at healing—alternative, conventional and energetic. It is now time to look at what such a transformational leap would look like, a medicine that we are calling *Integral Medicine* to distinguish its broad-based evolutionary perspective from our current scientific approach.

The model that I am presenting to you may be called a map to an integral healing. It begins with the premise that the human experience manifests itself in four specific arenas: biological, psychospiritual, inter-relational and cultural. All of our life experiences can be found to occur within these four broad expressions of human life. Diagrammatically these are displayed in each of four quadrants with a vertical and horizontal axis which again sub-divide our experiences into inner and outer (right and left sides) and personal and collective experiences (top and bottom). (Figure 1)

The Scope of an Integral Medicine

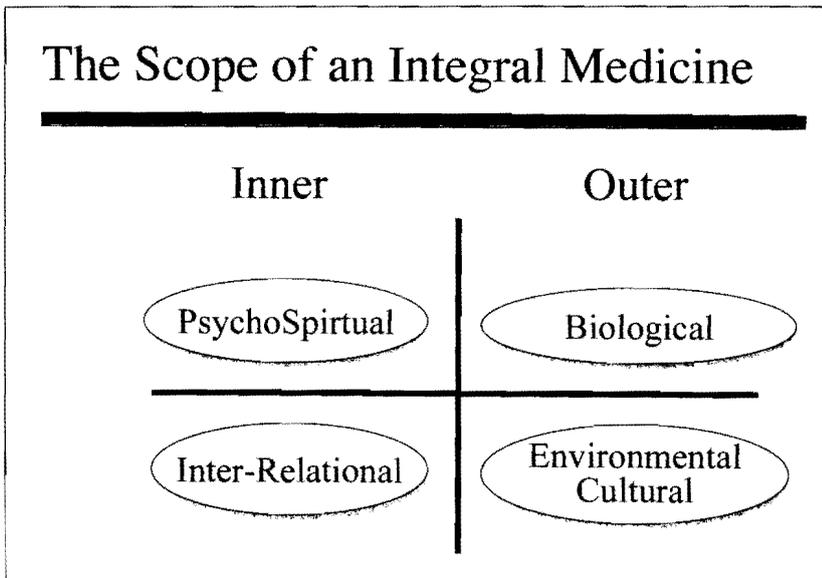


Figure 1. Four quadrants which subdivide experience into inner and outer and personal and collective experiences.

Let us first address the characteristics of this integral model. To begin, you will see nothing about disease, practitioners, therapies or remedies in this model. It is *person-centered*. We look at the development of health in each arena of our life, judging our current state as neither good nor bad but as merely one step on an upward and expansive spiral of a potentially larger and larger health and life. A second characteristic is its truly *holistic* nature. All aspects of the human experience are addressed and are seen as essential inter-dependent forces in the development of a larger health and life. No single arena is our center of focus. Our focus is the whole, the individual in all of his and her possibilities. A third characteristic is its *evolutionary* vision. In each quadrant, in each arena of the human experience, we are seen to have the tendency to evolve into greater and greater complexity, capacity, and potential. A fourth characteristic is the *trans-cultural* aspect of this approach. The path to development in any one of these arenas of human life may occur through one or more paths that are related to an individual's disposition, temperament and cultural matrix. And finally, this is a *dynamic* model that is continuously tailored to the movements and transitions of our life. At one

time we may be reaching for development in one area of our life and at another time in a different area. Health is continuously redefined and further expanded as we enter into the unfolding spiral of the healing mystery. In a sense we can call this “designer health” as our movement towards health is specifically designed to meet our individual capacities and potential as we traverse through the movements of our life. And finally this model acknowledges that it is not the territory but only the map. The tendency of the biological approaches to health—conventional and alternative—is to mistake it for the territory. The materialism that currently underlies all approaches to health and healing are cognitive assumptions and assertions, they are not life itself whose profundity they can hardly approach. The integral model acknowledges that it is only a map that must in the end be destined for deconstruction as we come closer and closer to experiencing our richness, diversity, wholeness and mystery, no longer needing a map or theory to experience our health and vitality as living beings.

The upper right hand corner is where we located the biological aspects of our life (Figure 2). It is the arena of conventional, alternative and energetic medicine. Here we can see the evolution of the understanding of our physical life as it shifts from an anatomical understanding to a far more dynamic physiological perspective, from there to a coarse mind/body view which evolves into a subtle mind/body capacity that opens the possibility of neuro and physiologic plasticity. From there we evolve an understanding of the energetic body and finally we begin to see our body as an expression of consciousness. With each leap in understanding new complexity, capacities and possibilities arise, continuously allowing for an increasingly comprehensive physical health.

From the biological we shift to the psychospiritual, the arena of development that is a new frontier in our outer-based culture, a frontier that because of its relative under-development now offers us the most significant opportunity to shift our total well being. As we in the west have gained mastery in the outer way our eastern counterparts have gained mastery in the inner way. Largely still unknown to us at this time is the profound understanding of human consciousness, its nature and workings and the methods and practices that can take us towards a larger consciousness. We see here the movement from an archaic sensorimotor awareness, to the unconsciousness storehouse of latent

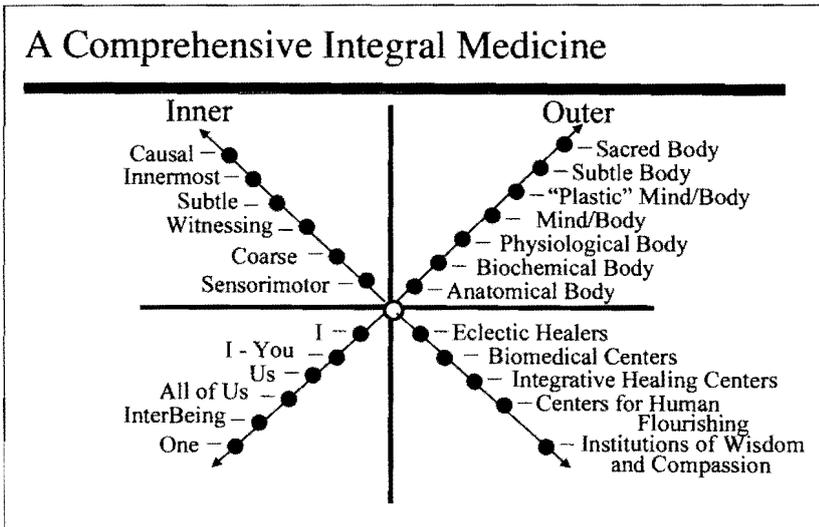


Figure 2. Life as it evolves from physical understanding to an increasingly comprehensive understanding of consciousness.

tendencies and patterns, to the coarse ordinary consciousness that to a large extent merely operates from these stored patterns, to the more developed witnessing, subtle, “nakedly aware” and finally causal consciousness. This represents a breath of evolution, development, complexity, capacity and possibility largely unknown in the west. And yet it is primarily this expansion of consciousness that will drive us towards the higher levels of health in each of the other arenas of life—the capacity to self-regulate the body through subtle intention, the capacity to enhance the quality of our relationships, and the wisdom to develop a wise and compassionate cultural life. And finally, it is also the expansion of consciousness that more than any other single accomplishment offers us the opportunity to touch into the great treasures of health and life—wholeness, peace, love, compassion and joy—as sources of healing and health for ourselves as well as for others.

Now we drop down to our relational life that is largely guided in its development by the expansion of consciousness. Healthy and healing relationships require an expansive consciousness that can shift our focus from ourselves towards others. So the focus on “I” slowly gives way to a focus on the other

that in time grows into recognition of the interdependence of all beings, which may culminate in a direct experience of oneness in which there is no further separation from others and no illusion of a separate self. In our personal relationships this is the shift from a largely unconscious reactive-dependent relationship, to a partnership, to psychological intimacy to the possibility of a profound spiritual union. Seen from the perspective of the health professional this is a shift from the eclectic practitioner, to a healing partnership, to the master healer. Again, as we fully develop our inter-relational life we grow in complexity, capacity, possibility and health.

Finally we arrive at the most noble vision of health and healing. We realize that our personal accomplishments are not merely for ourselves, but rather, they serve the goal of creating a better world—a compassionate and wise world. So we bring our consciousness to bear on the institutions of our cultural, transforming them to comply with and support the health of all of us. I recommend to you a look at the Gross National Happiness project of Bhutan as an example of a national effort to embed a large vision of health into the cultural institutions of daily life. Another example can be found in the United Nations resolution and plan of action for a culture of peace (res. 53/243). Looking merely at the health field this would mean the shift, as has largely occurred, from eclectic healers, to an organized medical establishment, to integrative care centers to centers for human flourishing. As with all the other quadrants such growth always brings further complexity, new capacities and expanded possibilities for health and healing.

When each of the arenas of personal growth and development are taken as a unified dynamic, evolutionary, trans-cultural and person-centered approach to health and healing we have the fullness of an integral health. An integral approach thus offers us the possibility to live into the great dream of healing as it was expressed by the great sages from the east and the west; the freedom from suffering and the arising of an effortless and natural state of wholeness, peace, love, compassion and joy. And in this we can find the ultimate healing, and in a sense the end of healing.

Previous leaps in medicine have occurred primarily because of dissonance between the existing healing system and the needs of the individual. More was called for than the existing system could provide. Much the same can also be

seen operating today. But there is yet another factor that is at work today that was nascent in previous times. That factor is conscious intention. Today's level of consciousness allows us to become co-creators in the evolutionary process. So the next leap in medicine, an integral leap, is driven not only by an increasing awareness of the limitations of our current approach, but is further accelerated by a conscious and chosen intention to discover and embody a larger health and healing. So if we can truly see the possibility of a precious human health and life, and we can see that we can gain freedom from the causes of suffering and promote the causes of human flourishing, and if we realize that our lives are short and so time is essential, and finally, if we know that the levels of health and human flourishing I am speaking of cannot be attained through any outside sources, therapies, remedies or practitioners we can then, through a chosen intention born in wisdom, turn inwards to gain the consciousness that will drive an integral health and life.

There are many paths to a larger consciousness and health and each of us must find a path that fits our nature and temperament while reaching towards our highest potential. In his work on alchemy Jung described this transformative movement in general terms. He noted that we are all born into a primal unity, into an infantile oneness. As a result of the necessary wounds of human existence we are thrust out of this garden into a complex psychological life filled with feelings of separation and afflictive emotions—anxiety, depression, anger, pride, jealousy and so on. As we attend to these psychological dilemmas we slowly calm down the inner divisions, becoming more fully ourselves and gaining moments of inner freedom. To go even further towards the outer reaches of health and healing we must ultimately attend to our spiritual path and the expansion of consciousness. Here our goals shift from psychological understandings and management strategies to the attainment of the great treasures of life—wholeness, peace, love, compassion and joy—which are not achievable through any psychological means. So the movement is from a primal unity, to acquired psychological divisions, to the matured unity and wholeness of the spiritual life. In a sense we return to the same unity we started from but become conscious of it for the first time. The final primal unity is accompanied by a profound wisdom unlike our initial oneness, which lives in ignorance. T. S. Eliot expresses the journey as follows:⁸

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring*

*Will be to arrive at where we started
And know the place for the first time.*

And so this is the journey of personal transformation the harbinger of a global transformation. It is the expansion of consciousness that drives an integral health. We start from a primal wholeness and after our long heroic journey return to the same place but know it for the first time. And this transformation in turn transforms all the other aspects of our existence, bringing us towards a truly comprehensive and whole health.

The individual or healer seeking to teach the integral approach and to directly experience its fruits must by necessity make the intentional choice to turn inward and engage this transformative process. This is what distinguishes an integral practitioner from any other practitioner. It is not the words that define an integral practitioner—it is the transformative change in his/her inner being. And by this we are not merely speaking of book learning or practice at a once-a-year retreat. To become integrally informed one must study, contemplate and regularly practice with the aim of continuously expanding one's awareness. In its essence integral health is not about methods and systems or maps; it is about the direct experience of progressively higher levels of consciousness that drive the character and quality of our relationships, allow for the capacity to acquire a subtle ability to self-regulate our biology through conscious intention, and offer the possibility of infusing wisdom and compassion in our cultural institutions.

It is not our intention here to discuss in detail the progressive levels of consciousness we can achieve, the methods to achieve them and the characteristics of each of these levels. Suffice it to say all of this and more has been described in great detail in the eastern literature and we are quite fortunate to have these teachings and qualified teachers to assist us along this path, if one considers the rigor of the scientific method and the marvelous results that have accrued from it over the past 500 years one can begin to grasp the similar depth and detail of the investigation of the consciousness that has been acquired in the past 2500 years. And it is the direct experience of these teachings that will allow us to find the healer within each of us that can seamlessly interweave the inner and outer ways of healing across the four aspects of human life with the aim of bringing all suffering to an end and allowing for the effortlessly arising of our natural state of human flourishing.

It is also not our intent to discuss in any detail here the characteristics of a clinical practice that is integrally informed. Suffice it to say that essence of such a practice is informed by the broad-based vision of an integral map that encompasses the totality of the human experience, facilitated by the unique healer who himself is in the process of transformation, motivated by an authentic compassion and love, embodied in the integral healing relationship, and enacted through the integral “diagnosis and prescription,” all occurring in the context of a supportive and sacred clinical setting. The question of how to shift ones clinical practice towards an integral approach involves a more detailed exploration of each of these areas of clinical practice as transformed by the integral vision. Yet in a simpler way the transformation occurs quite naturally when the healer himself enters a committed, authentic and sustained transformative practice. It is the healer himself, the individual or the professional, that in the end becomes the integral healing.

Finally, we must acknowledge the recent and evolving research with long-term Tibetan mediators that has begun to shown us that the fully trained human mind can in essence reach to the far limits of the human experience. Like the well-trained Olympic athlete who can attain the limits of physical capacity, these mediators teach us the potential of mental training, and these capacities are almost unimaginable to those of us who live from a normal consciousness. This is why I have said before that we cannot really understand the final fruits of integral health—the freedom from suffering and the very special peace, wholeness, love, compassion, and joy that surpasses understanding—from our day-to-day consciousness. So we know that the intentional choice to be integrally informed through an expansion in consciousness infuses all aspects of our life with a potential that has previously been unknown to us.

We should be encouraged by the results of a series of clinical studies that tell us that the results of an integral approach can be experienced quite early in the process. A brief 10-week program that emphasizes a mindfulness approach to consciousness demonstrates both increased levels of well being and physiological change that are sustained for at least 3 to 6 months. So as soon as we undertake the transformative leap towards a larger map of health and healing that is driven by an expanding consciousness we shall begin to reap its fruits in all aspects of our life.

There is far more to speak of than time permits us today. But let me say again that today we are called to enter into momentous change. We are called to participate in a transformative leap that will offer us a fundamentally new, comprehensive and far reaching approach to health and healing. The dominance of the outer perspective of health and life is now coming to an end as it gives way to the second great force in healing, the inner way of knowing and healing capacities. And the seamless interweaving of these two great aspects of healing shall unfold for us the possibility of gaining freedom from suffering and living the natural fruits of human flourishing; wholeness, peace, love, compassion and joy. Let us not be diverted by lesser expansionary changes, let us not be diverted by our deep conditioning that points us outward, let us not be diverted in any way until we realize this great possibility of healing.

The poet Christopher Fry says in his play *The Sleep of Prisoners*:⁹

*Dark and cold we may be, but this
Is no winter now. The frozen miseries
Of centuries breaks, cracks, begins to move.
The thunder is the thunder of the flows,
The thaw, the flood, the upstart Spring.
Thank God our time is now when wrong
Comes up to face us everywhere,
Never to leave us till we take
The longest stride of soul that men ever took.
Affairs are now soul size
The enterprise
Is exploration into God.
Where are you making for? It takes
So many thousand years to wake,
But will you wake for pity's sake?*

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REFERENCES & NOTES

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