

# **THE HEALING SPIRIT**



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## Embracing the Healing Spirit Between and Within Us

Vincent L. Perri



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*The Healing Spirit: Embracing the Healing Spirit Between and Within Us*

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Disclaimer

All the patients discussed in this book are composites of multiple cases so that their actual identity is concealed. Any similarity to any person in this book is purely coincidental. This book cites examples from the Judaic, Christian and Buddhist traditions but is not intended to acknowledge any one religious persuasion over another.

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## DEDICATION

*Jaime Perri*

*Your smile will always brighten the world.*

*David Perri*

*Loving the man that you've become.*



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## INTRODUCTION

**T**here is something special about the space<sup>1</sup> between us when we meet. Something magical happens in this space when we encounter each other, and I hope to show how this seemingly ordinary space<sup>2</sup> is something extraordinary like an invisible matrix that connects us. I am convinced that in the space between you and I<sup>3</sup> there is something that invisibly connects us. Like a matrix between us it materializes like we are being connected by invisible dots that localize us in space and time. I have often marveled throughout my work as a doctor how the space between my patients and I always seemed to move and edge our interactions and dialogue in some uncharted direction. It seemed almost imperceptible at first, but the more I studied this invisible space the more I realized how real and tangible it was.

The space between two people is what I have called “the healing space.”<sup>4</sup> It is a space that can be accessed and engaged when any one of two or more people encounter each other unconditionally.<sup>5</sup> Although we may not realize it, there are specific areas of our brain<sup>6</sup> that facilitate our movement into this healing space. These areas of our brain, however, must be nurtured to freely encounter the space in-between.<sup>7</sup> Deep in our brain there is a striatal complex<sup>8</sup> that coordinates our motor, memory, and cognitive functions<sup>9</sup> and unconsciously guides our movements, actions, and facilitation in space. These actions become a background pantomime<sup>10</sup> of unconsciously generated activity that swirls around us but provides a context of deeper archaic thought. It is this space between two people genuinely

engaged in unconditional dialogue<sup>11</sup> that I believe opens a deeper “psychic space” within each of us that allows inner healing to occur. This, however, is not the end of the story.

Throughout recorded history mankind has always encountered what the renowned psychiatrist Carl Jung referred to as the numinous.<sup>12</sup> It is that deeply meaningful other worldly experience that occurs without any doubt of its spiritual or metaphysical origins.<sup>13</sup> It is the experience that occurs when you awaken from a dream and you marvel at what you know you experienced but are not exactly sure how it could have happened. It may have been an image, or an image associated with an emotional feeling, or maybe just a feeling that something beyond our ordinary experiences had taken place. These experiences are common to us all, and if we search far enough we will find that these experiences are replete in the biblical stories of old and all the mythologies and folklore of our ancestors. So, you may wonder, what does this have to do with the space between two people?

Any two people who have been engaged in serious, unconditional dialogue<sup>14</sup> will certainly affirm that there is a quality of the relationship that is far outside the bounds of ordinary social dialogue. Something unique happens in the space between them that allows them to engage each other in ways that intangibly transcend the boundaries of ordinary dialogue. Is it just the space “in-between,”<sup>15</sup> or is there something else that connects the dots along this invisible matrix?<sup>16</sup> Aren't these the same questions that are asked when anything supposedly magical happens between us? I believe that the “healing space”<sup>17</sup> is much more than just the space between two people. It is a special place where “relation”<sup>18</sup> takes on greater significance and allows greater participation of both the mind and the body.

It is this mind-body participation that occurs between two people in deep unconditional dialogue<sup>19</sup> that becomes the integrating factor that transcends the ordinary space between them. This space, which I believe can be transformed into a healing space, is not without psychological significance. The in-utero baby developing in the amniotic cavity almost appears to be symbiotically experimenting with space.<sup>20</sup> The baby moves about, grimaces, touches its face and ears, grins and smiles.<sup>21</sup> It begins to move its legs and arms<sup>22</sup> almost as if it's measuring space. In *space*, there is *symbiosis*.<sup>23</sup> This is a crucial underpinning to understanding the significance between two people when they meet in true unconditional dialogue.<sup>24</sup> This relationship between *space and symbiosis*<sup>25</sup> becomes the invisible network that links the two people in more than just conversation. When space and

symbiosis<sup>26</sup> engage each other the world of *spirit*<sup>27</sup> is born, and I believe this is the bridge that allows unconditional dialogue<sup>28</sup> to occur. As I develop this concept I will also show that there is great historical significance in the presence of spirit from the Judeo-Christian tradition. I think there is much more to the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber's idea of "grace"<sup>29</sup> in the "I-Thou" relationship<sup>30</sup> than initially may meet the eye. This "grace"<sup>31</sup> may transcend our casual understanding of what we ordinarily think grace is.

Later I will examine a much deeper understanding of what I believe happens when two or more people engage each other unconditionally.<sup>32</sup> It is the "grace"<sup>33</sup> in Buber's "I-Thou"<sup>34</sup> that I believe is the pivotal element that emerges as a more transcendent function<sup>35</sup> of the two psyches joining in space. We will see how this symbiotic joining becomes the relation that brings space and symbiosis<sup>36</sup> to the emergence of spirit; what the eminent psychiatrist Carl Jung might call the transcendent function.<sup>37</sup> The transcendent function as we will see is not just a psychological process,<sup>38</sup> but will be shown as a concordant process along the lines of the Judeo-Christian tradition. In Jung's transcendent function<sup>39</sup> the unconscious and conscious psyche dynamically interact and evolve the process of individuation toward one's more individuated self. It is the process of relation,<sup>40</sup> but as it occurs within the psyche of the person. It is an intra-psychic relating removed from the dialogue of interpersonal relation as it might be construed in Buber's "I-Thou."<sup>41</sup> Although Buber was critical of the meditative practices and intra-psychic process when it removed the person from dialogue with some other,<sup>42</sup> it is also within the meditative practices and intra-psychic process that spirit may first be engendered.

Prayer is fundamentally an intra-psychic process of meditation. It is a dialogue of the most interpersonal nature with God or what the great Jewish philosopher Martin Buber would call "Thou."<sup>43</sup> By engaging prayer the person brings God or "Thou"<sup>44</sup> to a reality beyond his own psyche. Prayer in its meditative state becomes a process that expands the person's psychic space,<sup>45</sup> and opens the space "in-between"<sup>46</sup> to more meaningful dialogue. This is what I have referred to as the "Healing Space."<sup>47</sup> Historically we can examine Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.<sup>48</sup> The image engendered here is one of profound significance on many levels. If we consider this as an example of prayerful meditation it not only depicts the depth of solace and despair that can be expressed intra-psychically, but it goes further. Jesus returned to his apostles. He engaged them in dialogue. He created "space" between them.<sup>49</sup> He scolded them for not participating in his

prayerful meditation.<sup>50</sup> It is this process of advancing and retreating from spirit to person in space that embodies only what human beings can do.

We can engender spirit in the space between us because we can engage spirit in the space within us. It is only possible to bring spirit to dialogue with some other if you first know what spirit is. To make a person a "Thou"<sup>51</sup> in Buber's meaning of the word we must first know God who is the ultimate "Thou."<sup>52</sup> We know God only through the means available to us as human beings.<sup>53</sup> God is unfathomable to our psyche except as images<sup>54</sup> or what Jung would refer to as the numinous.<sup>55</sup> It is only through our own inner search for God that we begin to glimpse the majesty of "Thou."<sup>56</sup>

This is the spirit in dialogue. Like all things both physical and metaphysical we must appreciate the interconnectedness<sup>57</sup> that embraces all of us and transcend the propensity to encapsulate every phenomenon into its own exclusive domain. I can become unconditionally present<sup>58</sup> for you because I first experience unconditionality<sup>59</sup> in the spirit.<sup>60</sup> This is how the meditative prayerful experience brings us to God or "Thou."<sup>61</sup> When I direct my thoughts to the quietude of prayer I seek dialogue within myself, but not with myself. I look to encounter the other which can only be God. It is this introversion within my own psychic space that becomes the spirit of relation. It is this inner dialogue that becomes the spirit of dialogue when I engage another. To those who think of prayer as a monologue without the other being present this idea may seem strange; however, true mindful meditation and prayer requires substantial listening to both the body and the soul. When Jesus prayed at Gethsemane<sup>62</sup> we must recognize that the silence in between His words was the soulful turning to God in dialogue.<sup>63</sup> Jesus then needed to substantiate His inner turning to God by entering the space of His apostles, and recreating His unconditional presence and dialogue<sup>64</sup> with them. This would have sealed "spirit and form"<sup>65</sup> and brought the more transcendent experience of His sorrow and prayer back to the human encounter. It is the human encounter that becomes the soul of the transcendent function.<sup>66</sup> This ultimately is what I believe Buber's emphasis on human dialogue comprises. It is not so much that meditation or its' prayerful counterpart is detrimental to human relation, but that it must be a servant to human relation in our evolution to unconditional presence in dialogue.<sup>67</sup>

We must never forget that "spirit and form"<sup>68</sup> is an ongoing evolution between any two or more people who meet in dialogue. I should make it clear that the depth of relation I discuss whenever any two or more people

join each other in relation<sup>69</sup> deals more with the serious matters of life than the mundane, or what Buber would call the world of “It.”<sup>70</sup> These are the moments when our unconditionality<sup>71</sup> can become a powerful force engaging the spirit of healing. It is the unconditional soulful attention to the grieving other that brings spirit to the space “in-between,”<sup>72</sup> and opens the psychic space<sup>73</sup> sufficiently to allow healing to occur. The psychic space is the inner domain of protective boundaries that we unconsciously develop from the time of our in-utero development to the present.<sup>74</sup> It is our inner psychic space that determines the unconscious boundaries of our outer spatial field, and how we will navigate this field with others. In this second book on this topic I hope to convey a deeper appreciation for the spiritual energies that are a part of every dialogue when at least one of the persons is unconditionally present.<sup>75</sup> In “The Healing Space”<sup>76</sup> my focus was on the *space* “in-between”<sup>77</sup> that became the unconscious battleground for the deeper archaic expression of pre-verbal speech. It is the space where our unconditional presence<sup>78</sup> for the other becomes the freedom for the other to unconsciously use space to metaphorically enact their deepest thoughts and emotions.

In *The Healing Spirit* the focus shifts from space to *spirit*. It is the spirit engendered in the unconditional presence<sup>79</sup> of the person or persons that connects them in space. The space “in-between”<sup>80</sup> is no longer simply an unconscious arena for the pantomime of meaningful movement, but it becomes a transformative space where “spirit and form”<sup>81</sup> come together. *Spirit* becomes the fundamental reality in the relationship. It is the invisible clandestine connection that links the unconditionality<sup>82</sup> of the person or persons in the process of dialogue. Spirit emerges as the “Thou” *in-between*.<sup>83</sup> It is this idea that Spirit, as it relates to Buber’s “Thou,”<sup>84</sup> is not only within the person or persons but becomes the *presence*<sup>85</sup> between them. We find historical significance here in Christ’s statement to His apostles in relation to the Holy Spirit or Comforter.<sup>86</sup>

Christ tells them that He is sending them a Comforter who will enter them and become an inner part of them.<sup>87</sup> Is this the seed of “Thou”?<sup>88</sup> His statement that He is with them always until the end of the age rings of the universal “Thou”<sup>89</sup> both within them and between them. Through unconditionality we are present for the other<sup>90</sup> and we engage the inner spirit or “Thou,”<sup>91</sup> but we also allow the inner spirit within us to universally emerge and unite us. In the Hebrew bible we read of the “spirit in man” as the “breath of the Almighty.”<sup>92</sup> In relation to the Judaic tradition,

Buber addressed the unity of the Jews in relation to the indwelling God that became the unity within them.<sup>93</sup> In discussing this dualism within man, Buber addressed the unification of the soul through the unity of God within.<sup>94</sup>

This idea of the unification of opposites within the soul, or psyche, is closely aligned with Jung's reconciliation of opposites.<sup>95</sup> By reconciling our dualism we engage the transcendent function.<sup>96</sup> The transcendent function is the path that Jung elaborated in our inner approach to both individuate toward our higher self and integrate our dualities.<sup>97</sup> By engaging the transcendent function we reconcile our inner conflicts and complexes, and evolve to a more integrated being;<sup>98</sup> the God within can now emerge as the Spirit "in-between."<sup>99</sup> This is the essence of the healing spirit within us, and it is the essence of the healing spirit between us when we engage each other in unconditional dialogue.<sup>100</sup> It is interesting to note how Jung and Buber outwardly disagreed in their basic positions, and I often wonder if this wasn't simply because Jung's psychology crossed the boundaries between depth psychology and religion.<sup>101</sup> Contrarily, Buber's religious and Judaic explications often crossed the boundaries of depth psychology, and most likely led to a volatile attack on ego vulnerabilities. However, the unity that Buber discusses in relation to the indwelling "Thou" becoming unified in man, and in turn unifying God in man,<sup>102</sup> is a path that Jung's transcendent function in many ways aims to achieve.

The spirit in us is the spirit between us. It is the vibrational string<sup>103</sup> that is more than the space that separates us; it becomes the space that connects us. It is our unconditional presence for the other<sup>104</sup> that allows the spirit within to emerge as the spirit "in-between."<sup>105</sup> The unconditional presence that Buber elaborates in "I and Thou"<sup>106</sup> is a holy ground of compassionate silence. There is no greater gift that one can give to another than to offer the simple gesture of silence in listening.<sup>107</sup> Silence can become a powerful instrument in helping another heal from inner wounds that penetrate deeply. Our unconditional presence<sup>108</sup> becomes a focused intention of silent listening as we allow the other to express their deepest concerns. Our present age has evolved into a silentless cacophony that deafens the spirit within us and restrains the emergence of spirit between us. If we are to evolve our world we must evolve ourselves. Buber made this point clear in relation to the Judaic people becoming unified within themselves, so they could be unified as a people and community.<sup>109</sup>

Silence in dialogue is humility in listening. When we listen in soulful silence we express our undivided unconditionality<sup>110</sup> to the other. It is a way of expressing humility in the presence of the other's suffering. In silence, we invite the spirit within us to emerge and become the "grace"<sup>111</sup> that connects us. This is the miracle. This is the soul of all living creatures. It is the blood that gives life to the spirit and spirit to the person. We live in an ego-driven world that precludes the humility of the spirit. Jesus best described this humility on the Mount when He called the mourners meek and humble, and the merciful and persecuted the inheritors of the kingdom.<sup>112</sup> In some way, at some moment in time, we are all those others who mourn, are persecuted and made weak, or who suffer. This is the common thread of our connectedness. This thread is the road to the spirit. It is the path that we must travel if we are to make ourselves and the world better. Just think for one moment how the world would change if each of us simply humbled ourselves in the space we occupy.

This space is the holy ground. It is the space that connects us and becomes the space of the spirit between us. It is the chain of "grace"<sup>113</sup> that frees the hidden and repressed emotions that engender fear and reprisal. This may seem oversimplified and pretentious; however, it may be as simple as being responsible for our space. We no longer are a community-based people. Buber discussed this in relation to the Judaic people,<sup>114</sup> but now it is equally true of all of us. We have lost our ancestral heritage and no longer have ties to the soil of our ancestors. We live in a fast-tracked global society that has been watered down by a consumerism that thwarts the emergence of spirit. We no longer see the space between us because we have lost the soil under our feet. Our earth was once our common ground where life pulsed between us and became a part of the spirit within us. We have disrespectfully stripped our earth of its spirit and this has thwarted our inner spirit. We must reclaim our space because our space is a holy ground. The spirit within our soil is part of the spirit that pulses within our soul and becomes the life blood of our relationships.

Until we see the connection between our earth and ourselves and realize that the "grace"<sup>115</sup> of spirit is without bounds, we will never appreciate our life in the spirit of unconditionality.<sup>116</sup> When we further discuss the *spirit of embrace* we are going to explore these relationships in greater detail. It is no coincidence that Jung found his greatest solace working in the earth and developing his relationship with the soil, stone, and spirit at

Bollingen.<sup>117</sup> He chiseled, hammered, carved and cultivated the remnants and elements of the earth, and developed his spirit. By working in the soil, he worked within himself to discover the spirit within him. It is only in the earth from which we all herald that our spirit becomes the space between us.<sup>118</sup> The more we humbly cultivate our space the humbler we become. It is this humility in the presence of “grace”<sup>119</sup> that allows the emergence of unconditionality.<sup>120</sup> Until we can relinquish the glitter and glamor of conditionality for the *naked essentials of relation* we will never fully appreciate the emergence of spirit in relation.<sup>121</sup>

There is great solace in essentials. When we clutter our lives with all the inessentials of life we create the basis for conditionality. Everything that we do becomes a condition of something else. The *naked essentials of relation* are engendered by the simple act of being unconditionally present for the other<sup>122</sup> in silent regard. This opens the corridor of spirit and allows an uncontaminated symbiosis to emerge. We must remember that the unconditionality of being fully present for the other<sup>123</sup> is a closely knitted symbiotic relation. I think of Buber’s “I-Thou”<sup>124</sup> relation almost as if it is encased in an amniotic relationship of one person to another. This unconditionality<sup>125</sup> creates freedom of thought and expression which often expresses itself manifesting as movement, gesturing and even playful activity. This is what I have termed “archetypal language.”<sup>126</sup>

Archetypal language is the pre-verbal language that is expressed out of the deeper more archaic regions of our brain. It is the language that is most manifest when unconditionality<sup>127</sup> is present. When relation is steeped in unconditional presence<sup>128</sup> for another it generates a movement of deeper self-expression. In my original writings, I wrote about our “spatial field of optimal interaction”<sup>129</sup> and how I considered it a pivotal component of interpersonal dialogue. It is the space “in-between”<sup>130</sup> that we unconsciously cultivate for the free expression of our pre-verbal language, and that allows us greater access to our more archaic emotions. It is the space that reflects each person’s psychic boundaries, and how these psychic boundaries are put in place when two or more persons come together for dialogue. I wrote this in relation to caretakers who needed to optimize their communications with ill, grieving, or emotionally troubled individuals. What I have since discovered is that this “spatial field of optimal interaction,”<sup>131</sup> and how one is given the freedom to navigate within this field, is the unconscious arena for deeper archaic expression. It is the arena where our interpersonal unconscious becomes a symbiotic participant in dialogue,

and when that dialogue is grounded in unconditionality<sup>132</sup> it can evolve to the “I-Thou”<sup>133</sup> relationship. It is this deeper archaic self-expression that allows the more subterranean emotions and conflicts to emerge in selfless expression. When the *spatial field*<sup>134</sup> becomes the safe amniotic container for unconditional dialogue<sup>135</sup> it opens the door for deeper relation.<sup>136</sup> This is how we cultivate safe inner space.

Unconditional presence for the other<sup>137</sup> strips away the outer trappings of the world and creates a focused intention that only sees the other. Silence by the listener who attentively remains present for the other evolves into a poetic dance of eye movements and gesturing that begins to manifest the inner world of the person. This is *archetypal language*.<sup>138</sup> The inner person now emerges in the safe container<sup>139</sup> of the “psychic space.”<sup>140</sup> This becomes the momentary holding environment<sup>141</sup> where unconditional presence<sup>142</sup> translates into unconditional acceptance of the other.<sup>143</sup> The other’s inner space begins to emerge in the space “in-between”<sup>144</sup> as a safe holding environment<sup>145</sup> of transitional self-expression. In this sense “holding” becomes freedom. It is the freedom of inner knowing that can only be known when unconditional presence<sup>146</sup> is unequivocally conveyed. To strip oneself down to the essentials of relation is to be present.<sup>147</sup> We strip away all the pomp and glory and simply exist for the other in that moment. This is unconditional presence.<sup>148</sup> In that moment it is not psychology or philosophy, but simply “being present”<sup>149</sup> in the most complete way possible. It is the act of simply being there for the other person; being silent, listening, allowing the other to be. In Winnicott’s concept of “holding” he noted the significance of knowing when to be silent.<sup>150</sup> Silence is a great therapeutic and personal tool that enables anyone to simply be present for the other.<sup>151</sup> We evolve from our silence to then reach out to the other and participate in the other’s grief and suffering without losing ourselves and becoming a victim to the suffering.<sup>152</sup>

This is where “grace” in the “I-Thou” relationship<sup>153</sup> becomes the intangible factor that creates the aura of consoling depth that comes from somewhere outside us. It is that feeling or emotional depth that one knows has some basis outside of our sphere of function. This is the *spirit* “in-between”<sup>154</sup> It is the emergence of the intangible “grace” that Buber discusses in the process of relating.<sup>155</sup> It is the phenomenon of knowing when something is happening outside your sphere of personal experience, because it is an experience of spirit.<sup>156</sup> It is this experience of *spirit*<sup>157</sup> that I believe becomes the connecting link “in-between”<sup>158</sup> that makes

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unconditional presence<sup>159</sup> an *unconditional spirit* that is the “grace” that both transcends and connects us.<sup>160</sup> This is what makes each one of us capable of helping the other when the other’s grief and suffering needs more than any one of us can give. We become unconditionally present,<sup>161</sup> and allow the spirit within us to become the spirit that binds us.<sup>162</sup>

We become a symbiotic expression of our unconditionality<sup>163</sup> for the other. Spirit emerges in the space that separates us, and then becomes the spirit in the space that connects us.<sup>164</sup> This is the spirit of embrace.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE SPIRIT OF EMBRACE

The first time I encountered the feeling that there was something special in the space between me and one of my patients, I was awestruck by the aura that seemingly enveloped us. My patient was a middle-aged woman who was deeply troubled, and somewhat overcome by a life that was filled with what she felt was personal failure and grief over the loss of her son to heroin. When I walked into the treatment room I saw her sitting in the corner of the room almost as if she was huddled in despair. The image I conjured was that of a skeleton sunken over in the chair with the weight of the world pressing on her shoulders. I gently greeted her as I knew this wasn't going to be an ordinary encounter, and I asked her if she was okay. Tears welled up in her eyes as her head dropped to her chest, and then she looked up at me. I slowly moved toward her and sat on the treatment table across from her chair, and just sat quietly. At that moment, there was a blanket of heaviness that engulfed our encounter, but suddenly this blanket began to lift.

She looked at me soulfully. Our eyes connected in a stream of quiet emotion almost as if there was a settling of the grief and despair she was feeling. This settling, however, took on a dimension of quiet solitude. It was a dimension that I could only think of as an intangible link that connected something between us and existed in the space that separated us. It was a vibrational link that somehow made ordinary space an extraordinary space.<sup>165</sup> I could sense that my body was feeling what her body was feeling in a way that went beyond what analysts would refer to

as countertransference. It was *spirit*.<sup>166</sup> This is the only way that I could describe what was happening in the space that separated us.

At the time of our initial encounter, when I sat on the treatment table next to her, I had not yet uttered a word other than to greet her; however, in that moment of silence and sorrow there was the emergence of spirit.<sup>167</sup> This, I believe, is what Buber would term “grace.”<sup>168</sup> It is knowing that something outside the reality of our ordinary space and time has emerged in the extraordinary space between us.<sup>169</sup> This spirit, however intangible it may be, creates a tangible vibrational link that unifies the soul of the unconditionally present person to the other.<sup>170</sup> In my experience this is not something that has to be sought in order to be found. It is the spirit that presides in each of us regardless of ethnicity, religion, race or creed.

In my writings I have used the term “archetypal dyad”<sup>171</sup> to depict the bond that occurs between two persons when they meet in unconditional relation.<sup>172</sup> It is a fusion of their unconscious psyches and it is their deeply focused intention that when *I encounter you I also encounter spirit*.<sup>173</sup> *Spirit* is the intangible “Thou” within us.<sup>174</sup> This is the way we discover the seed that connects us. When I interact with you, the ordinary space that separates us becomes the fertile soil that binds us, and for that moment in time we occupy extraordinary space. How would our world evolve if each of us took the responsibility to safeguard the space between us every time we meet? When I am unconditionally present for you<sup>175</sup> I allow extraordinary space to emerge in the space that separates us. I encounter you as you are at that moment, and in that moment, you become all the things you have always been.<sup>176</sup> You become present as a history of yourself,<sup>177</sup> and the space that separates us now embraces us. It is a *spirit of embrace* grounded in the fertile soil of unconditionality<sup>178</sup> that becomes the rooted vine connecting us. “I am the vine and you are the branches. . .”<sup>179</sup> is the soul of unconditionality. It is the spirit that embraces us every time I encounter you unconditionally. Spirit cannot exist without *us*.<sup>180</sup>

In the same way that we need *spirit* to bring the fruits of relation to life spirit needs us to be born and fulfilled in relation.<sup>181</sup> Without us the spirit in life dies.<sup>182</sup> This, perhaps, is God’s greatest task for us. God comes to life in us and emerges in us as the vine that flows in the space between us. Without spirit, we are without unconditional relation because spirit is the essence of unconditionality.<sup>183</sup> Buber and Jung have elucidated these ideas from differing perspectives, but the theme is unchanged. We need God, but God also needs us to be realized in life.<sup>184</sup> I think it becomes equally

important to extend this idea to include all living forms of life. Spirit is born in life, and it is not for anyone to judge how the value of life differs from one form to another. When I stand in relation to another it becomes my responsibility to be there unconditionally. If I value my life above any other life, at that moment I have made the other an “It” to paraphrase Buber.<sup>185</sup>

Ordinary space becomes extraordinary space in the spirit of embrace. It is not for me to decide when I am encountered if the life of a shivering dog is more important than mine or anyone else’s. My only responsibility at that moment is to embrace the other unconditionally and enter the spirit of embrace. This is how we become the branches of the vine that bears the fruit of the spirit. When we begin to fully embrace the spirit between us we realize that all of life is precious, and that all life deserves unconditionality. When we unconditionally embrace each other we unconditionally embrace God.<sup>186</sup> This is how God comes to life in all those beings that possess life. Each time I fully encounter some other, and I become unconditionally present, I allow spirit to emerge.<sup>187</sup> My unconditionality becomes the foundation for the emergence of spirit through “grace.”<sup>188</sup>

In “Psychology and Alchemy” Jung developed the theme of the creation of the new element. He discussed how the alchemists of old would mix two basic substances to produce the cherished third substance in the reaction.<sup>189</sup> This idea fits well in relation to the emergence of spirit when we unconditionally encounter each other in relation.<sup>190</sup> This is how ordinary space becomes transformed into extraordinary space and becomes the invisible branches of the vine. My soul enters relation with you, but only if my unconditional presence<sup>191</sup> opens that door.

Until I become present solely for you there is no “Thou” in the encounter.<sup>192</sup> We can only embrace spirit if spirit is rooted in our encounter. An example of this is best illustrated in one of my encounters with a patient just a few years after I entered private practice. I was just finishing my morning schedule one Saturday when I smelled the peculiar odor of kerosene. My receptionist hurriedly came into my office and told me I needed to come to the front desk immediately. Realizing something was wrong, I jumped up and made my way to the front desk. In one of our reception room chairs I noticed one of my patients soaked in kerosene and holding his cigarette lighter which was unlit. Calmly, I just said, “John, come into my office.” He just looked at me, but after a few moments he got up and made his way to the corridor. As he approached, I simply put my

arm around his shoulders and brought him into my office. We sat on our diagonally arranged conference chairs, and as we did he held up his lighter and said, "I'm going to set myself on fire; there's just no more reason for me to live."

At that moment, I knew he had every intention of carrying out his plan. He flicked the lighter which sparked, but didn't fully light, and as he did all I could think to do was to whisper his name. "John," I said, "Look at me." Slowly he lifted his eyes and looked at me, and something between us happened. As I looked into his eyes my body softened almost as if I was somehow cushioning the intense pain he was feeling. Slowly, as his eyes swelled with tears, I felt as if we were both stripped of all but our basic functions. It was just him and me sitting with an empty space between us. But there was more. Suddenly, he whispered an almost unintelligible word that I couldn't fully understand, so I leaned a little closer. "Thank you," he whispered, "Thank you for caring." With that John handed me the lighter which I carefully took from him and placed into my pocket. He slowly got up from his chair and walked over to me, and in his kerosene-soaked clothes he embraced me and let out the last of his sobs.

I couldn't help but wonder what transpired between us that ultimately led him to relinquish his thoughts about such a violent suicide. Certainly, I had not said anything beyond just a few words during our initial interaction that could have possibly led him to relinquish his thoughts of suicide. As I thought about it, however, it wasn't just what had transpired between us during that encounter, but it was all those past encounters we had that had led up to that point. That is what led John to my office in the first place. John was a young man who was always deeply troubled about his life, sexuality, and family. He often lived his life in ways that were less than admirable, but on the other hand, John had many redeemable qualities. He had a kind soul that always seemed to shine through some of his bleakest and more troubled moments. Whenever I met with John, I always tried to focus by totally engaging his every word and listening intensely to his message. Often, I would just remain silent as he pantomimed and engaged the space between us. But there was always something much deeper that I knew was going on in the background of our conversations.

Jung developed the idea that each of us has a "soul guide" within the deeper layers of our unconscious that helps us connect our ego functions to our often hidden and greater innate potential.<sup>193</sup> Each time I met with

John, we were able to forge an alliance between what was unconscious in him and what was unconscious in me. It was within the unconditional presence of our relation<sup>194</sup> that allowed the spirit in me to meet with the spirit in John. The “unconditional relation”<sup>195</sup> became the rooted vine from which the invisible branches of spirit crossed the bridge and connected us. When any person meets another in a time of utter human need, and the other becomes present unconditionally,<sup>196</sup> the vine of spirit becomes rooted. When we strip away all the trappings of egotism and become unconditionally humbled like the wounded soul before us, the divine branches of the rooted vine connect us.

This is how we encounter the *spirit of embrace*. It is the spirit in each of us that cannot be fully realized until it meets and joins with our inner soul-guide and some other’s inner soul-guide.<sup>197</sup> Buber’s unconditional presence is the soil upon which the *spirit of embrace* is born between us.<sup>198</sup> The soul in each of us becomes connected in the *spirit of embrace* when we become humbled by the suffering of another. If we are unwilling to become “meek and humble”<sup>199</sup> in the presence of another’s suffering, and strip ourselves of our regalia and preoccupations, we will never open the doors that lessen the suffering of others. The *spirit of embrace*, we must remember, is first an embrace of our inner soul to the spirit within us, but also an embrace of our inner soul to the soul and spirit of the other who allows us to be unconditionally present<sup>200</sup> with them.

It is impossible to fully appreciate the immensity of life in the spirit of embrace. When I encounter someone in “unconditional relation”<sup>201</sup> I encounter the spirit in him in all its totality. This totality includes the world of the person in the same way that it includes the totality of my world. Buber discusses how this totality in the spirit, or in God, cannot be experienced outside of the world, or in the world for that matter. It must be experienced by apprehending the world in the person.<sup>202</sup> When I encounter all of you I encounter you in the spirit of embrace, and the spirit between us is what Buber would say is “. . . between I and You.”<sup>203</sup> When I think about John and how he came to me that day, I recall vivid images of a man who had lost his way and couldn’t find the spirit that animated his soul. His eyes were sunken and vacant, and the only thing that seemed to matter to him was the lighter that held the flame. It was the symbol of his self-destruction and typified the evil forces that had consumed the spirit that animated his soul. Buber tells us that the soul of the person never gets sick alone without there being a “between-ness” with some other.<sup>204</sup> I think

this is a pivotal concept in understanding why the relationships we develop with others is so important. The soul of the person maintains life by the love that fuels it in its existing relationships with others. Buber eloquently examines this idea in “The Redemption of Evil,”<sup>205</sup> and shows us how it is our abiding love for individuals, not in the conceptual sense of loving humanity, but our ‘concrete’ love of people in our daily everyday dealings that is the true love of man.<sup>206</sup>

When John sat before me, I couldn’t help but wonder about all those human relationships in his life that somehow extinguished the flame of *spirit* within him and allowed the flame of evil to emerge in his soul. It reminded me of Buber’s discourse in “The Nature of Evil”<sup>207</sup> where he views good and evil as “existent states of human reality,” and not as distinct polar opposites as they are most often considered.<sup>208</sup> In other words, it is our composite nature as human beings to exist in this dual state where we have the potential to perform acts of either reality. However, and I paraphrase Buber, when we turn our entire being toward God in what the Jews or Hassid call “Teshuvah” we reach out to God in His capacity and resolve for our “redemption.”<sup>209</sup> What is most important in my view of this statement is that it is only through relation that we can ultimately encounter God’s redeeming power.<sup>210</sup> We need to encounter God in some other that allows us to find God within ourselves.

In the act of relation, we enter the “archetypal dyad”<sup>211</sup> of my soul and your soul and enliven our spirit to sprout the branches of the vine that connect us; this is where we find the *Healing Spirit*. “Whenever any two or more gather in my name there I am among them.”<sup>212</sup> The *healing spirit*, in my opinion, is the spirit in God that is the spirit in us. It is the divine sparks that the Zohar depicts as the mythical shower of God in all His living creatures.<sup>213</sup> It is not until the act of relation, however, that we find the *Healing Spirit* emerging in the space between us<sup>214</sup> to heal the soul within us. My concept of the “archetypal dyad”<sup>215</sup> attempts to depict our deeper unconscious connection that allows this spirit within us to become the spirit “in-between.”<sup>216</sup> I introduced this term in my first book, *Language of the Archetype*,<sup>217</sup> and further developed it for practitioners of the healing arts who were interested in deepening their relationship with their patients. The “archetypal dyad” is the unconscious union of our deeper psyches that can only occur when unconditionality<sup>218</sup> is present. It is within this context that Jung’s idea of the mixing of the *alchemical elements*<sup>219</sup> has relevance.

When I am fully invested in understanding you, I must, strip myself of all preconceived notions. I enter relation with you, and when I deepen our relation,<sup>220</sup> we cross the chasm that separates us. This can only happen when we metaphorically mix the alchemical elements of our souls. In alchemy, the alchemists mixed basic elements to produce the cherished gold of the reaction.<sup>221</sup> This becomes the rooted vine that slowly grows and unfolds the branches that connect us and eliminates the space that separates us. The “soul-guide” in me reaches out to the “soul-guide”<sup>222</sup> in you and allows spirit to emerge within the branches of the rooted vine. I think we underestimate the value of deepening our discourse with each other when we are in general conversation, and this is understandable. However, we need of necessity to sensitize ourselves to the subtle nuances and cues of each other that telegraph a need for deeper discussion. Our present environment, typified by our advances in telecommunications, has diluted our capacity to simply listen attentively to the other. This obfuscates our capacity and inclination to read what I have previously described as “archetypal language” which are all those non-verbal nuances of body movement and facial expression that become an active and ongoing catalogue of inner thought.

When I open myself to the other I become their symbiotic partner. I allow myself to simply listen, and through this simple act of compassion the other hears their own inner voice. They feel their emotion pass through their body, and unconsciously express thoughts that can't be spoken. They grimace, groan, frown, and posture what cannot be stated; but, in doing so, they start the process of unfolding their deeper conflicts and ambiguities. Within each of us there presides a “wise old man” and a “wise old woman”<sup>223</sup> silently waiting for our quiet appeal for guidance on our tumultuous path in life. These historical archetypes as they are called in Jungian psychology often come to us in dreams and reveries,<sup>224</sup> but are all too often dismissed as simple figments of our imagination. When we engage each other in compassionate interest we become the voice that summons these archetypes and draws them out of the unconscious domain.

Perhaps these archetypes are the lesser spirits of the kingdom that help guide us on our path to the “eternal Thou.”<sup>225</sup> Are these the messengers of old? Are these the angels in our corner of the kingdom? Jung described archetypes in a similar vein to the angels depicted in the Judeo-Christian tradition, but as representations of the unconscious, and stressed how they should not be confused with the actual spiritual archetypes themselves.<sup>226</sup> These representations may come to us in dreams or visions as persons,