

# **A Researched NLP Method of Creating Altered States of Consciousness**

## **Richard Bolstad with Julia Kurusheva**

In 2024, as part of my degree in Archaeology and Ancient History, I (Richard) studied the 7 day Integration training run by myself and my wife Julia Kurusheva in Paphos, Cyprus.

My aim was to simulate the internal experience of pilgrims attending the sanctuary of Aphrodite Kypris in Palaepaphos during the Archaic Age (750-500 BCE) and evaluate this using a well established research tool. This experience included use of massage and inhalation of essential oils (Cinnamon, Myrrh, Frankincense, etc), Shamanic nature rituals and journeys with drumming, Chi-Kung-like body posture and movements, ecstatic dance and chanting, and trance-work. The effect of these processes had been studied in Crete by archaeologists such as Christine Morris (Morris and Peatfield, 2001) – the Minoan cult there had many overlaps with ancient Cypriot cult activity.

We had course participants fill out the 32 question “Hoods Mysticism Scale” and answer several open questions about their experiences over the week. The scale gives an assessment of how profoundly different from normal consciousness the people’s experience was, where the result is expressed as a ratio (a ratio of 1.000 would mean that the person had experienced the most profoundly “altered state” of consciousness imaginable, and 0.200 would mean they had a complete lack of such experiences). The ratios from the “normal” population over their lifetime were 0.683 for men and 0.746 for women, meaning that most people have had some times when they felt at one with everything, or when they felt a sense of awe or bliss etc. (Hood, 1975). When this well researched scale is used with people who have just had a psilocybin (hallucinogenic) experience, the ratio resulting from their experience is 0.875 (Griffiths et alia, 2006:277). In our study the ratio was 0.894, which is to say, attending Integration was, for these 12 people, at least as profound on average as taking a psychedelic drug.

## **The Transcendence Process**

The one technique most strongly associated with this state in the research was “Transcendence”. This process uses an individual challenge as a doorway to heal society, space and time in one vast process. The understanding of mental space implicit in Social Panorama and Time Line is taken here to its logical conclusion. Like many of the processes that Lucas Derks, Tad James and others in the NLP field developed, it is based on the two fundamental idea of NLP:

- The map of the world you have inside is not the same as the world. The map you have can be expanded (not all maps are equally useful) to create a map which more usefully helps you find what you want, showing hidden connections and fresh paths. Inside you is the whole world, and the map is the key that unlocks it.
- Life is systemic, meaning that events are not separate things, but understandable in relation to the social, temporal and spatial systems that they occur in. When you understand the whole system in which something happens, you have many more choices which you could not have had when you didn’t know the whole system. Blame makes no sense inside a system, because blame is pretending that a part of the system is autonomous and entirely independent, and it is not.

The process “came to” Julia at the time we were thinking about this whole process of changing the world and healing collective trauma. In this process we will begin with a specific challenge that you have, in a specific situation, perhaps the way you respond emotionally, or perhaps the way you almost compulsively act and think in that situation. To heal that, we will expand the sphere within which we examine that event in nine waves of change. At each step, there are some fundamentals of our approach that we need to remember. They are beautifully described by our friend Steve Andreas (1935-2018), who studied and “modelled” them in the work of family therapist Virginia Satir. Steve especially

emphasises the way that “Virginia never blamed anyone. She presupposed that hurtful or destructive behaviour was simply a result of limited opportunities to learn how to respond more positively.” (Andreas, 1991, p. 5).

**A Note About Internal Guides:** In the Social Panorama model, above, we discussed the idea that in many cultures people embody their resourceful feelings, values and guidelines for action in one or more spiritual guides, who occupy a position in their “spiritual panorama”. At the beginning of this process we ask people to relax and enter a state where they can be aware without needing to blame or justify. To do this it may be useful in many cultural contexts for people to feel that their Spirit guide, their Animal Spirit Guide, their Ancestor, the Holy Spirit, the light of God or Allah, or some other guide is with them.

**Main Stages:** The process is based on accessing a series of expanding perspectives which reveal the systems in which a problem behaviour is embedded and thus more fully understandable and changeable, then bringing the sense of expanded awareness through each of these spheres:

- The current behaviour is understandable within an amygdala response set for an interaction early in life.
- The original interaction is understandable within the relationship with a significant authority figure.
- The authority figure’s response is understandable within their family of origin.
- The family of origin’s constraints are understandable within their community or cultural history.
- The community/cultural history is understandable within the countries or civilizations that shaped it.
- The behaviour of those countries or civilizations is understandable within that time in history.
- The time in history is understandable within the context of humanity and its longer history.
- Humanity is understandable within the biosphere of earth.
- The earth is understandable within the cosmos itself.

**Earliest time:** The first thing to understand about context is that most of our behaviours (emotional reactions, self-talk, knee-jerk or compulsive behaviours) which we disapprove of, come from an earlier context, where they had an entirely different meaning. Obviously, this includes phobias that emerged after being bitten by a dog at an early age, for example. But even social behaviours that don’t seem harmful at the time may later seem “regrettable”. When I was a child, I often bought a kind of ice-cream bar called an “Eskimo pie”. I repeatedly referred to the indigenous people of Northern Canada by this name. The Canadian Encyclopaedia explains, “The word Eskimo is an offensive term that has been used historically to describe the Inuit.” It apparently meant either “eaters of raw meat” or “one who laces snowshoes”. “Inuit is the standard endonym (a name a group uses to describe itself) for Inuit.... The “Eskimo Pie,” an ice cream bar dipped in chocolate, exploded in popularity in the United States in 1922, the same year the groundbreaking documentary “Nanook of the North” was released. The frozen treat is still sold in the United States. Amid backlash, it was announced in 2020 that the product’s name would be changed.” So now you know, and that changes the meaning of the word. And you can forgive that part of your brain if it automatically was triggered to say the old term, because it was a habit created at an earlier time (Historica Canada, 2023)

**A Note About Parts:** In this process we begin with a situation where the person feels “not at peace with themselves”. This is an experience of internal conflict, where perhaps one “part” of you has a certain emotional or behavioural response and another part of you doesn’t approve or enjoy that. It is our experience that such internal conflicts parallel actual conflicts that happened at earlier times. The template may come from a conflict where someone else disagreed with your behaviour, or from observing a conflict between other people. Often, but not always, the others involved are parental authority figures from early in life.

NLP uses the word “part” referring to any neural network in the brain with enough functional autonomy to run its strategies without control by the rest of the brain. In that sense there is a “part” of your brain that knows how to walk, or to ride a bicycle, or to play a piano, or to tie a necktie. You have a network of nerve cells that run the activity and, once you practice enough, can do it without you having to “supervise”. If you can perform these tasks efficiently, and you try to think consciously about the

strategies you use, you may realise you no longer do them consciously. That works fine. However, if you have had a “traumatic experience” you may find that other strategies also run unconsciously when you are reminded of that original experience: biting your nails, drinking alcohol, comfort eating, running away from a scary situation, experiencing “panic” ... these are also indications of a neural network running on its own (Van der Kolk, 1994). In this process we are starting with something that a “part” of the person does, and that they want to change.

**Parent or other significant figure:** In one of the most powerful processes Steve Andreas developed (a process which we studied with him at a conference in Guadalajara, Mexico in October 2008) Steve explains how it was possible for Virginia Satir to respond to clients’ stories without blame. Virginia understood, he said, that behaviours always can be better understood by expanding the scope out to see the system to which the behaviour is a response. Similarly, when Steve was dealing with a client’s internal conflict, where a person has a blaming internal voice, he would ask them to pay attention to the voice, firstly to find out who taught the person to speak to themselves like that, where and when that voice was developed, and what was happening before and after. “Knowing who is speaking provides a wealth of background information about the underlying attitudes and perceptions, biases, and limitations. Where this occurred provides additional context, an important factor in creating meaning. When this occurred, and what happened before and after that, expands what you are able to notice. What else was happening at the time the words were said provides a fuller understanding, and the question how reveals the actions that were going on at the time between all the who’s and the what’s. All of this provides more of the big picture in both time and space.” (Andreas, 2014, p. 4) We start from the presupposition that your brain had to have some reason for creating a response that you now disapprove of, and that involved some interaction with someone outside you. It didn’t just happen inside.

**Extended Family:** In Virginia Satir’s psychodramatic family therapy work, she then expanded the frame even further to show how, for example, a parent’s actions and words early in life were a reflection of their own experience in the larger extended family. Speaking to her client Linda, in a training group session that Virginia titled “Forgiving parents”, Virginia says “You knew about your mother’s heart.... She couldn’t express what was in her heart because, you said, of her upbringing.... Her upbringing is composed of all of these people.” Satir then has Linda place group members who are present in a kind of family sculpture representing the family that Linda’s mother grew up in, confirming that her grandfather “was the big ‘pasha’ in this group” ruling her mother with violence. When Linda looks at this she says “Well, I felt really sad, and a lot of sympathy for my mother.” (Andreas, 1991, p. 112, 114). In fact, Satir expands the frame even further by discussing how each person in that extended family was just trying to be “a good Catholic” and was responding to Italian American cultural rules. This is what changes Linda’s understanding of how to effectively relate to her own mother (both inside when she feels her mother’s critical voice, and even in the real world). This wider frame that we do things because of the family, the extended family, and the culture that we were brought up in was not just some throw-away positive idea, for Satir. “On at least one occasion she facilitated a group that included both a Nazi death-camp survivor and an ex-guard from the same camp.” (Andreas, 1991, p. 4). In Aotearoa / New Zealand Māori, the closest term to extended family is Whānau.

**Community / Culture:** In doing this work, Satir offers us a bridge to the kind of understanding that indigenous people have about the origins of their individual trauma. Tom Ball and Theresa O’Neill say “An indigenist model, the authors argue, not only shifts the focus away from the isolated individual with symptoms to the historical individual whose problems arise out of the stresses of colonization but also to an embedding of the person within the coping resources of family, community, and spirituality.” In their work with Native Americans, they came up with the idea of “creating tribal-specific historical trauma genograms that could be used as counseling tools by tribal mental health and alcohol and drug counselors.” They say that the challenges that initiate historical trauma are not merely that an extended family was damaged, but that the entire society which would usually enable healing from that, was destroyed too. “For the Umatilla tribal consultants, the story was told around two central concepts in their culture: tamanwit, the natural law that orders all of life, and tichum, the knowledge that all of life is intertwined.” (Ball and O’Neill, 2016, p. 337, 339, 348).

**Country / Civilization:** When we attempt to understand how individual communities and “cultures” become the way they are, then the larger notion of “countries” and even “civilizations” are the system in which these are embedded. For example, when the European colonists arrived in North America, they were shocked by the exposure to a vast network of new cultures. Equally, the North Americans were shocked when they discovered what European civilization was like. Universally, when they were able to visit France, England etc., they would report their amazement at the state of things there. David Graeber and David Wengrow collate a number of the resulting written discussions. For example, Kandiaronk (the name means “Muskrat”) was a politician from the Wendat Confederacy, one of the representative governments of indigenous nations in the North East of the continent of North America. He says “I have spent six years reflecting on the state of European society and I still can’t think of a single way they act that’s not inhuman, and I genuinely think this can only be the case, as long as you stick to your distinctions of ‘mine’ and ‘thine’.... Fathers sell their children, husbands their wives, wives betray their husbands, brothers kill each other, friends are false, and all because of money.” He similarly found European religion incomprehensible. “What kind of human, what species of creature, must Europeans be, that they have to be forced to do good, and only refrain from evil because of fear of punishment.” (Graeber and Wengrow, 2021, p. 54-55). We don’t have to agree with Kandiaronk, who clearly saw the Europeans as victims of the most enormous historical trauma, but we can see that from his point of view, having seen this civilization as a system, helped him make sense of (not forgive, perhaps, but understand) the brutal colonization of his people’s lands.

**Time In History / Chronotope:** We mentioned in the second section of this book that Russian writers sometimes refer to the Stalinist era as a “chronotope” – “a specific and inextricable bundle of time and space whose defining features are despotic arbitrariness, suddenness, shock, attack out of nowhere, disappearance and the blurring of the line between reality and phantasm.” (Hinton and Good, 2016, p. 98). How does the chronotype affect our understanding of traumatic events? The time outframe is summed up in the common French expression “autres temps, autres mœurs” (other times, other customs). Here’s an example. “In 1958, a student wrote to Martin Luther King, Jr., with this question: I am a boy, but I feel about boys the way I ought to feel about girls. I don’t want my parents to know about me. What can I do? Is there any place where I can go for help? To which King responded: Your problem is not at all an uncommon one. However, it does require careful attention. The type of feeling that you have toward boys is probably not an innate tendency, but something that has been culturally acquired. Your reasons for adopting this habit have now been consciously suppressed or unconsciously repressed. Therefore, it is necessary to deal with this problem by getting back to some of the experiences and circumstances that lead to the habit. In order to do this I would suggest that you see a good psychiatrist who can assist you in bringing to the forefront of conscience all of those experiences and circumstances that lead to the habit.” (Urban, 2023, p. 327-328; Duffy, 2015).

Here, the famous social activist Martin Luther King is recommending that a gay teenager see a psychiatrist to “fix” his homosexuality. How can we “forgive” this cruelty. The LGBTQ website PinkNews does not so much “forgive” as simply point out that we are all enmeshed in our chronotype. It says “ Though Dr King’s response may seem ill-informed by modern standards, his advice to the boy is remarkably calm and polite, given the fears and active scaremongering about gay people at the time.” (Duffy, 2015). Once again, PinkNews is saying it is unhelpful to “blame” a person or a group, and more empowering to understand the system that they are responding to. The very failure of Martin Luther King’s advice also emphasises why we are best not to stop at the first or second level in this Transcendence process. King understands that it will help to outframe the boy’s responses by identifying what experiences in his life story those responses come from, and the circumstances around them. He does not have the awareness to outframe even this and note that the meaning of these experiences and circumstances is dependent on the society and the chronotype they emerge within.

Shakespeare’s play “Romeo and Juliet” is about a sexual relationship between a 13 year old girl and a 16 year old boy. Such a relationship would be considered abusive today, and the agreement by a church official to marry the two people would be seen as sanctioning child brides. In the England of 1597, this idea of a 13 year old marrying was still surprising (it came from an Italian story from perhaps 100 years earlier, and 16 was actually considered the earliest a girl should give birth), but it was more scandalous rather than proof of a crime. In fact in the play, Juliet’s father says “Younger than she are

happy mothers made”, and her mother argues against it “...and too soon marred are those so early made.” (Povey, 2021) That doesn’t mean we need to accept child marriages, or that we are wise to promote the story to modern 13 year olds; but nor does it make sense that the book should be banned. Shakespeares other stories contain other such anachronisms, including the presence of “witches”, who, if convicted, would have been burned at the stake in his time. We can no more expect Shakespeare to stand up against burnings of heretics than we can expect Russians under Stalin to have opposed the show trials. We are all trying to survive given the constraints of our time.

As we mentioned above when looking at the shift in world values over the last 50 years, we can see that civilizations shift their priorities, depending, for example, on how safe life seems. (Ingelhart, 2018). What was acceptable 50 years ago is different now in every country.

**Humanity:** How long has this been going on? Well, the story of humanity is the story of multiple related species of hominid. There are very few in our lineage left – none who were related to us more closely than bonobos. When we consider the whole history of humanity, observed through genetics, we see that our species nearly died out at least twice. We can detect this in modern genetics by identifying “founder events” (Tournebize and Moorjani, 2022). “A founder event occurs when small numbers of ancestral individuals give rise to a large fraction of the population. Founder events reduce genetic variation and increase the risk of recessive diseases.” They can be caused by famine, war, plague and climate change. Similar events also occur in other species, and dogs, for example, have had a rough history due to our forced breeding of them. “Most dogs these days have so many more problems than village dogs. Their rates of cancers and congenital diseases are pretty high. And that’s largely because of these very severe founder events in their history during breed formation.” Explains Priya Moorjani (Sanders, 2022). Sadly, this is true of our species also. Most of the bones of our ancestors just a few million years ago show signs of predation, which is to say that our early ancestors very often ended their life by being eaten by predators (Hart and Sussman, 2005). For the last 70,000 years or so, a remarkably short period of time, our species has produced beautiful art and, according to anthropologist and neuroscientist Brian Hare and science writer Vanessa Woods (mentioned in the first section of this book: Hare and Woods, 2021) we domesticated ourselves by focusing on our emerging superpower – cooperation. Hare and Woods maintain that this is the deeper story behind our species spread, a story which is far from complete.

**The Biosphere:** By the time we are thinking of our species, most people being guided through this process will be beginning to accept the frame of blameless shifting to wider systems. Certainly, life, which spans this planet and, as we noted at the start of the book, has been here for perhaps a billion years, is a fragile and beautiful experience to be part of. Knowing that life has survived all the challenges of the mass extinctions (such as the last one which exterminated the large dinosaurs), to continuously blossom back, is in itself a moving experience. More and more, as we study biology, we discover that humanity cannot be understood alone. The attempt to do so, Lynn Margulis suggests, is due merely to our “linguistic, national, regional and generational impediments to perception. Like those of everyone else, the scientist’s hidden assumptions affect his or her behaviour, unwittingly directing thought.” (Margulis, 1999, p. 3) Most of the living cells in our body are not human, but bacterial, and the microbiome contributes significantly to the production of essential chemistry in our body, such as neurotransmitters (Sender et alia, 2016). Margulis is the microbiologist who first realized that inside every cell in our body, the mitochondria are separate bacteria-like organisms which symbiotically give us energy. She follows a long tradition of scientists stretching from Piotr Kropotkin in 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia (“Mutual Aid”), through James Lovelock in 20<sup>th</sup> century America (“Gaia Hypothesis”); scientists who have been trying to shift our view of nature from the idea of a war of all against all, to a new model of vast cooperative symbiosis. There is not so much a tree of life, or a “great chain of being”, she explains, as a web, a network, where animals and plants share their genes with each other in an intricate co-evolution. So much DNA is shared amongst bacteria, for example, she says that it is actually incorrect to say that bacteria have separate species. All trees are linked together in a vast planet-wide web of over 300 different fungal symbionts, which transfer information and nourishment from tree to tree. This network of lifeforms makes an absurdity of the idea that there could be “higher life forms” and “lower life forms”. In this network, “We *Homo sapiens sapiens* and our primate relations are not special, just recent: we are newcomers on the evolutionary stage. Human similarities to other

life forms are far more striking than the differences. Our deep connections, over vast geological periods, should inspire awe.” (Margulis, 1999, p 3-4)

**The Cosmos:** And, beyond even “Gaia”, beyond the one life that lives on and interpenetrates earth, as we mentioned at the start, the universe itself forms a vast unity, which created even the earth and the stars. Our tiny galaxy, the Milky Way, has at least 100 trillion stars, and there are billions of such galaxies extending across the known universe in huge superclusters – our local one is known as Laniakea and holds over 100,000 galaxies in a vast silk-like structure whose size defies imagination (Plumer, 2015). We are only now understanding that the universe is not a random explosion of material, but a greater system itself, organized in multiple layers of beauty. Whether this system is conscious as a whole (as Quantum Physics developer Erwin Schrödinger thought), certainly it creates, again and again, the opportunities for consciousness, and in that sense we are the universe looking out at itself in wonder. For Schrödinger, this truth was expressed in terms of the Indian philosophy of Vedanta. “This is what Brahman expresses with the holy, mystical, and yet actually so clear and simple formula “Tat Twam Asi -This Thou Art” or also with such words as “I am in the East and in the West, I am below and I am above, I am this entire world”.’ This is not meant in Spinoza’s pantheistic sense, that you are a part, a piece, of an eternal infinite being, since then the old question would arise, what piece are you? ‘No, as inconceivable as it seems to ordinary reason: you – and every other conscious being taken in itself – you are all in all ... it is a vision of this truth that forms the basis of every morally valuable activity.’” (Quoted in Moore, p. 172).

Another way of discussing the same idea is Gareth Cook’s panpsychism, mentioned at the start of this book. “Consciousness, for the panpsychist, is the intrinsic nature of matter. There’s just matter, on this view, nothing supernatural or spiritual. But matter can be described from two perspectives. Physical science describes matter “from the outside,” in terms of its behavior. But matter “from the inside”—i.e., in terms of its intrinsic nature—is constituted of forms of consciousness.” (Cook, 2020). Of course a more traditional way is to say “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” (Christian Bible, New International Version, John 1: 1-5). Is it such heresy to say that this quote and Gareth Cook’s quote are using different metaphors for the same idea?

Even putting aside the mystery of Tat tvam asi, of consciousness, of “the word”, the comment of the more sceptical cosmologist Carl Sagan remain true. In his 1980 television series “Cosmos: A Personal Voyage”, he famously summarised much of his previous writing by saying “The cosmos is within us. We are made of star-stuff. We are a way for the universe to know itself.” In his beautiful Science Fiction story of first contact with alien life (“Contact”) he sums up his final learning as an astrophysicist even clearer: “She had been fierce in debunking the creation myths of others, and oblivious to the lie at the core of her own. She had studied the universe all her life, but had overlooked its clearest message: For small creatures such as we the vastness is bearable only through love.” (Sagan, 1997, p 371). In the end of our journey, climbing beyond system after system, this is our message as well. For creatures like us, there can be no blaming; because blaming stops this other thing emerging, and that other is the meaning of it all: love.

Having given you some of the theoretical background of the new process, in the next section Julia will tell you her experience of how this process emerged.

## How the Process “Emerged”? (from Julia)

On the day when this process emerged, I (Julia) got distressed thinking that I accidentally smudged Lily plant substance over our cat Shaman. Followed by a Google search for “Cats and lilies”, the distress turned into an intense sense of guilt and devastation. After taking a shower with the cat, to clean it (if you can avoid this experience – do!), I noticed that the adrenaline left my body. Still distressed, I decided to guide myself through a process to get into a more resourceful state. I have an extensive range of self-help tools to choose from. Shamanic Journey is one of them. I lay down, connected with my Shamanic guides, and asked them for help and guidance.

I had a sense of firstly being cleared of “sticky energies” and standing like a vulnerable featherless just born bird-ling. Intriguingly, there was a strong smell of blood present, which pointed my mind to the time of my birth.

I know from my mum that at my birth the medical personnel got me out, ensured I was breathing, put me in the cot, and attended to my mum. For a few hours I was by myself, adding to my mum’s dismay with non-stop crying, while her physical body was being mended. In my life I often felt guilt about “hurting others” (as in “hurting my mum at birth”). But the intensity of this feeling never quite made sense to me. It was visceral and stubborn to process. It was the same sense of guilt of hurting someone inadvertently – especially inadvertently – as I felt about “hurting” our cat.

Leading up to this day, Richard and I had talked about collective trauma and cultural experience of guilt as he had been studying this topic. It made sense to me that this guilt could be cultural and epigenetic even, which could explain its tenacity.

So, in my mind I was at my birth. No one was attending to the new-born me, who seemed abandoned and exiled.

Shamanic Guides: “Connect with her”.

Me: “No. I have no connection with her. She smells, there is blood and stuff all over. I don’t like it. I do not feel any closeness whatsoever to this new-born person. No.” Prominent smell of blood endures. After years of self-development work I would expect myself to feel unconditional love to the new-born me. Instead I felt revolted; with the sense of separation, devastation, loneliness, i.e. ultimately “abandoned” using a modern-day term.

She (me) was disconnected. Mother was disconnected from her. Then a thought occurred “My mother is distressed on her own accord because of her relationship with my father”.

“Wait, what if there is an even larger context here? Family”.

We all lived together (my parents and grandparents, brother and I, cat and a tortoise). At the family level – things were not perfect either. Everyone had some distress – mum and dad, mum and her mum, dad and mum’s mum, mum and dad’s mum, and so on.

“What is an even larger context? Community.

Larger? Culture.

Larger? Country (former Soviet Union).

Larger? Period of time in history.

Larger? Humanity.

Larger? The planet.

Larger? The Cosmos.”

I was going through each level, observing how each might have been affecting and contributing to the level before, with curiosity of a neutral observer.

At the Cosmos level everything became expansive and meaningless as in “free-of-meaning”, free of a particular frame or understanding. It felt open, vast, free, neutral, calm, light, energy, awareness, presence, being, spirit. The vastness washed through any emotional and somatic unease, the boundaries of me melted away, and I felt one with Spirit, Cosmos.

I started the Journey back with Spirit going through all layers.

Planet – it is OK.

Humanity – seeing humanity at peace; being inside the circle of humanity but observing it as if from the centre of a centrifuge. I am calm, at peace, and humanity is at peace, distanced.

Period of time in history – this is just a part of a larger scope.

Country – looking at the country, I am centred and at peace.

Culture – I am at peace, part of the Cosmos, Spirit, looking at culture.

Community – I am inside the community but bigger than it somehow, looking from the centre of it (like from inside a donut).

My larger family – recognising the individual hardships but not being engulfed, affected by them; still looking from inside at the family circle that is around me and outside of me.

My immediate family – mum and dad – are being together, OK with each other, dad is supporting mum while she is giving birth, waiting in the hospital (I re-wrote this part of the story in my mind because “It’s never too late to have a happy childhood”).

Me and mum – mum is no longer distressed, whole. There is enough of mum for me because she is enough, whole in herself.

In reality my birth was fast and hard; and – my Mum healed, I was OK, there has been ongoing connection, closeness, and warmth.

Now in my mind I could take the new-born me into my arms and hold her to my body so that she felt my body warmth and contact right after her birth. She needed warmth and contact; contact is connection, the opposite of abandonment.

Checking on that initial vulnerable feeling, I now felt like an intricate energetic matrix was going through my body, creating an electro-magnetic structure of inner strength. I am my own being connected with the energy of Cosmos, maintaining my energetic integrity. Everyone – even our cat – is their own being connected with the Cosmos, maintaining their own energetic structural integrity.

My distress about what happened that morning changed into a calm sense of “Yeah, it’s possible that I accidentally contaminated his fur. If I did, I truly did not know. It was an accident, if it even happened at all.”

I completed the Journey with gratitude and gifts to my Shamanic Guides.

Returning back to being awake, I thought “Huh, this is new. What is this process? I don’t know it. I’ve not experienced it before. I wonder if anyone has it. Need to talk with Richard, he will know for sure.” Curiously, I discovered that during the entire time I was Journeying, Richard was thinking about writing his new book about collective trauma. He was very excited to tell me about it. I interrupted “Before you say anything, let me tell you what just happened.” Richard listened and said “This is it! This is The Process! I’ve been thinking for a while about what new process could combine various elements in my new book, that I could then run as a training. This is IT!”

I did not know that Richard was looking for a new process and the he wanted to write a book to convert into a new training. I knew that he was reading about collective trauma and guilt.

Trying to explain how this synchronicity occurred, I might think that I tapped into Richard’s thinking. I often joke “You are thinking too loud! I can hear you thoughts.”

Logically, this process is an amalgamation of elements from several techniques: Shamanic work (working with guides and Journeying), Aligning Neurological Levels the way Richard teaches it (connecting with the Energy of the Universe), The Double Handshake process as Richard guides people through it (“we are all made of star dust, cosmos”), Havening (the first time the pattern/feeling occurred), Core Transformation (parts), Transforming Troublesome Voices (scope). In reality this Journey experience happened effortlessly, without preconceived agenda or plan, or brainstorming, or trying to organise the steps. It came out of asking my Shamanic guides to help and guide me. In that sense I consider it to be a gift.

## The Transcendence Process: An Example

How do we use these nine layers of system in helping a person heal? Before we list the steps as instructions for you to use, here is the transcript of the first time Julia guided me through the process. My thoughts are [*italicized in square brackets*].

Julia: You can relax and you can close your eyes if you like. And think of a situation you want to change, where you are not quite at peace with yourself, it might be an emotional feeling you have, overwhelmed by a certain emotional experience. Let me know once you have something.

Richard: OK [*I thought of an uncertainty I had about whether a particular training was going ahead and the frustration of not being able to plan for the next two weeks*]



Julia: Just notice for yourself how you experience it inside, notice your internal experience, and give it an intensity from 0 to 10, 10 being the most intense,

Richard: Maybe 4 or 5.

Julia: And also if you are working with any guides, like shamanic guides, you might invite them to be with you as well. And now again thinking about this experience, notice how this aspect of you or a “part” might have been created, because you didn’t generate it consciously, how it came into being. Notice what emotional feeling you experience towards it. And check how old it is, which means maybe how old you would have been when it first appeared.

Richard: Four, four years old. [*I remembered a time my parents were arguing about whether my father’s business was going to succeed, whether he was making the right decisions*]

Julia: Mmm. Thank you. And now have a check internally how this inner part might in some way parallel a conflict you might have had earlier in your life, with a parent or a caregiver, or you might have observed them having a conflict between themselves. And notice these others in the situation: other or others, and have a sense of how they might have brought their own internal limitations into this situation, and therefore contributed to your experience of this situation.

Richard: Yep. [*I noticed how my parents had different values and different experiences with money, and how they were each trying to live up to such different ideals*]

Julia: And now expand the scope to include the larger, extended family. Notice the unease that might have come with it in interactions between the family members, just at the level of noticing.

Richard: Yep. [*I was thinking about how my mother’s family had been employed and my father’s family had been business managers; about how my grandparents had different ideas about what my parents were doing; how my parents both felt under pressure to obey their own parents*]

Julia: And now expand the scope to include the community around all of you at that time, and just notice what you notice. Have a sense of how that community might have been at that time contributing to certain aspects of the unease.

Richard: Yep [*I thought about the suburb where my family lived, and how everyone was just starting out raising families, but with so little support, and with mortgages and other stresses*]

Julia: Now expand the scope to include the culture, noticing how the culture might have been at that time, and how in some ways the culture might have been also linked, affecting that situation. There is a larger story.

Richard: Yep. [*I thought about the two different cultures my parents had come from, one valuing working class solidarity and physical labour, and one, including Roma/Gypsy experience, valuing creativity and flexibility*]

Julia: And now expand the scope to include the country and in the same way observe what you observe, notice what you notice.

Richard: Yep. [*I was thinking about colonial New Zealand: about the do-it-yourself ethic of colonial society and the sense of the “British Empire” in the background*]

Julia: And now notice what time in history it is, and understand that it is part of this larger story, and how that might be playing a certain role. What is happening at the time.

Richard: Yep, yep. [*The 1950s boom time with the peak of the “Pleasantville” home-maker fantasy*]

Julia: And now expand the scope to humanity itself.

Richard: Hmm-hmm. [*such a long story of migrations and conflicts and struggles to create “a living”. I felt a kind of collective compassion*]

Julia: And now expand the scope to include the entire planet.

Richard: (Nods) [*I felt a sense of the beauty of it*]

Julia: And now expand to the cosmos itself, so that your awareness expands completely. And at this level, using whatever words feel right for you – and you can choose the word – allow spirit, cosmic expansiveness, energy, awareness to be fully present, almost expanding your awareness to the cosmic limitlessness, and allow yourself to relax into the existence itself, melting almost, going beyond the bounds of your physical body, to experience yourself as one with all.

Richard: Mmm-hmm. [*everything became very still, and silent, and peaceful*]

Julia: And as you experience this fully, bring this larger awareness back into the planet itself, and notice how it transforms your understanding or perception of the planet.

Richard: Mmm-hmm. [*I saw the planet as part of that great vastness*]

Julia: And experiencing this at every level of your being, bring it, allow it to go through humanity, noticing how it transforms your understanding or perception of humanity’s place there.

Richard: Mmm-hmm. [*I had a sense of life eventually finding its way, of humanity like the other life forms before and after it*]

Julia: And bring this expansive awareness into the level of the time in history and notice how it transforms your understanding or perception of that time.

Richard: Mmm-hmm. [*The time in history felt small, almost as if people were just learning basic things and didn't know what would be possible yet*]

Julia: And bring this expansive awareness to the level of the country and notice how it transforms your understanding or perception of that.

Richard: Mmm-hmm. [*It felt unimportant*]

Julia: And bring this expansive awareness into the culture, again noticing how it transforms your understanding or perception of that culture.

Richard: Mmm-hmm. [*The separate cultures I grew up in felt like different flowers in a garden*]

Julia: And allow this expansive awareness to come with you to the level of the larger family or whanau, and notice how it transforms your understanding or perception of that extended family.

Richard: Mmm-hmm. [*Again I felt compassion*]

Julia: And now allow this expansive awareness come into the interaction itself, where we started from. And now allow this expansive awareness to be with you and that other person or those other people, noticing how it might transform your understanding or perception of that situation, when you have this expansive awareness.

Richard: [*And more compassion*]

Julia: And now allow it to be in that original situation where you started, noticing how it might transform your experience of yourself in it, your experience of that aspect of that experience.

Richard: Mmm-hmm. [*The situation felt more clearly "back there", a small part of a much bigger story*]

Julia: And then just noticing what you notice at the time, just bringing yourself back, and checking how it might have changed things for you from what was originally there when we began. How was that. Tell me what was like.

Richard: Well I was using the situation of worrying about whether these courses will run, and feeling uncertain about what things will happen this year and what won't, and remembering how my mother and father would argue about whether my father's business would succeed when he was, you know when I was very young.

Julia: Mmm-hmm, four.

Richard: Yeah, but it felt so relaxed that I found myself just kind of drifting into... you know, like almost asleep, relaxed kind of, and at several times coming back, but it was really good.

Julia: Mmmm, and when you're more consciously checking on what it is like right now, how does it feel different?

Richard: Oh, it feels completely relaxed and like almost it has no sense of ...

Julia: Meaning?

Richard: ...being related to that other situation, and it also feel like I can just be curious about what is happening, rather than have some backlog of worry about it

Julia: Oh, Wow. Great.

## The Transcendence Process: Steps

- **Preparation**

*For the person guiding this process, it is important to be in a calm and compassionate state. Your own attitude is easily picked up by the experiencer. Remember that you and this person are part of one system, you share the same ancestry in deep history, and the future of humanity is in the guardianship of both of you together. Notice their breathing and body position, and synchronize with them. Imagine your own connection to cosmic awareness and gently put aside any other thoughts.*

- **Find a Starting Place**

You can relax and take a breath in, and enjoy a long exhale, and you can close your eyes if you like.... And think of a situation you want to change your response to, where you are not quite at peace with yourself, it might be an emotional feeling you have, a situation where you are overwhelmed by a certain emotional experience. Let me know once you have something.

- **Scaling Question: 1-10**

Notice for yourself how you experience it inside, notice the internal experience of it, and give it an intensity from 0 to 10, 10 being the most intense.

- **Identify Original Earlier Situation**

And also if you are working with any guides, like shamanic guides, you might invite them to be with you as well. And now again thinking about this experience, notice how this aspect of you or a “part” might have been created, because you didn’t generate it consciously, how it came into being. Notice what emotional feeling you experience towards it. And check how old it is, which means maybe how old you would have been when it first appeared.

- **Others in the Original Situation**

And now have a check internally how this inner part might in some way parallel a conflict you might have had earlier in your life, with a parent or a caregiver, or you might have observed them having a conflict between themselves. And notice these others in the situation: other or others, and have a sense of how they might have brought their own internal limitations into this situation, and therefore contributed to your experience of this situation. You are not blaming or justifying, just noticing with understanding of yourself and others.

- **Expanded Family / Whānau**

And now expand the scope to include the larger, extended family. Who else was around or was influencing the people in that original experience? Who had influenced them previously? What values, beliefs, and challenges did those people focus on? Notice the unease that might have come with it in interactions between the family members, just at the level of noticing. Be aware of how this wider family affects the others in the original situation.

- **Community**

And now expand the scope to include the community around all of you at that time, and just notice what you notice. Have a sense of how that local community might have been at that time contributing to certain aspects of the unease. How do people in that community go about their daily life, and what other challenges, conflicts, values and beliefs may influence things at this level. Notice how the community around them influences your extended family.

- **Culture**

Now expand the scope to include the culture, noticing how any culture or cultures that these people are immersed in might have been at that time, and how in some ways the culture might have been also linked, affecting that situation. Again, without criticising or justifying, just notice any challenges, conflicts, beliefs, values and traumatic experiences that may have happened at this level. Notice how different cultural values shape life in each community. There is a larger story.

*(For some people, either community or culture may not make sense as a category, and for some people these will be the same. For some people their faith may also be their culture).*

- **Country**

And now expand the scope to include the country and in the same way, notice what you notice. Continue to be careful neither to blame or to justify, and just observe in what way this larger system may influence or shape the experiences you were thinking about. How decisions at the national level may shape the choices of cultures and communities.

- **Time in History**

And now notice what time in history it is, and understand that it is part of this larger story, and how that might be playing a certain role. What is happening at the time, what values and beliefs are common, what choices are not there or are there, what technology is emerging, what world events are significant in people’s minds, that are unique to that time. Notice how those larger world-wide events shape the country and its communities.

- **Humanity**

And now expand the scope to humanity itself. Realise that this time in history is part of the greater story of humanity appearing and spreading across the planet, of civilization emerging, of the whole story of history. That greater story shapes the particular time.

- **The Planet**

And now expand the scope to include the entire planet. Be aware that this story of humanity is part of the larger story of the planet forming, and of life spreading across it, interconnected and ever changing.

- **The Cosmos**

And now expand to the cosmos itself, so that your awareness expands completely to cover all of existence. And at this level, find whatever words feel right for you – and you can choose the word –

allow spirit, cosmic expansiveness, energy, light, awareness, to be fully present, almost expanding your awareness to the cosmic limitlessness, and allow yourself to relax into existence yourself, melting almost, going beyond the bounds of your physical body, to experience yourself as one with all. You are the cosmos experiencing itself.

- **Returning With That Awareness**

And as you experience this fully, allow this expansive awareness to transform your understanding or perception of the planet.

And allow this expansive awareness to transform your understanding or perception of humanity.

And allow this expansive awareness to transform your understanding or perception of that time in history.

And allow this expansive awareness to transform your understanding or perception of the country.

And allow this expansive awareness to transform your understanding or perception of the culture or cultures.

And allow this expansive awareness to transform your understanding or perception of that extended family or whānau.

And allow this expansive awareness to transform your understanding or perception of the interaction itself, where we started from.

And allow this expansive awareness to transform your understanding or perception of the interaction earlier in your life itself. Allow this expansive awareness to be with you and that other person or those other people, noticing how it might transform your understanding or perception of that situation.

And now allow this expansive awareness to be in that original situation in your current life, where you started, noticing how it might transform your understanding or perception of your experience in it.

- **Checking What Has Changed**

And then just noticing what you notice at the time, bringing yourself back, and checking how it might have changed things for you from what was originally there when you started. How was that? And when you're more consciously checking on what it is like right now, how does it feel different? On that intensity scale of 1-10, how does this feel now? And if you imagine a time in the future, when in the past that would have been a challenge, what is it like to think of that now?

### **The Transcendence Process: Summary**

1. Preparation: Calm, Compassion and Presence
2. Identify the issue in current life.
3. Scaling Question: 1-10
4. Identify Original Earlier Situation. Emotion? How old?
5. Expand Scope to Others in the Original Situation and notice how that affects the earlier situation.
6. Expand Scope to Extended Family / Whānau...
7. Expand Scope to Community...
8. Expand Scope to Culture ...
9. Expand Scope to Country...
10. Expand Scope to Time in History...
11. Expand Scope to Humanity ...
12. Expand Scope to The Planet...
13. Expand Scope to The Cosmos, allow expansive awareness to be present.
14. Returning Allowing That Expansive Awareness to transform your understanding or perception of: planet, humanity, time in history, country, culture, community, extended family, others in earlier situation, you there and in current situation.
15. Checking What Has Changed

## **What is the Transcendence Process Like?**

Transcendence is a guided process that can be done in a group or with an individual. Generally it takes about 30 minutes. When we ask people what the experience was like, they describe changes on at least three levels.

**Problem Emotions and Responses are Gone:** Firstly, they explain that it changed their experience of the problem situation they were thinking about when they began the guided process:

- “I can’t get the same feeling that I had before, again, and I tested every way.” Heba Zayed, Pharmacist, coach and trainer, Egypt
- “I cannot recall the feelings that bothered me. I’m trying to recall the two situations and how they feel and it’s not coming together.” Mai Bassal, Teens and Kids coach and trainer, Egypt
- “Transcendence is a unique process. It changed the perception of my problem by 180 degrees, and expanded understanding. Thank you very much. I am very impressed.” Sylwia Włodarczyk, therapist and coach, Poland

#### **Sense of Connection to Ancestors and Community, at the Same Time as a Letting Go and Forgiveness:**

Secondly, they say that they have a new way of understanding the people in their family, their community and in the history that led up to our current time:

- “And now when I’m in the situation another voice comes responding to that “Just remember, she came from a different place, a different situation, she meant well”: as if its reforming, or reclaiming.” Mai Bassal, Teens and Kids coach and trainer
- “The whole process was very pleasant and allowed me to distance myself from various behaviors – my own and other people’s. It was also important to me that knowing all these connections does not mean either judging or justifying parents, family, society, etc. It just is, and it helps to get rid of negative emotions and have more warmth and happiness both for yourself and for others. Thank you.” Adam Ostrowski, Poland
- “The experience was transformative and helped to transcend from current state to past state to future state with a emotional understanding of a feeling of what has gone before my existence and what I now need to keep going and leave as a legacy into a continuing journey”. Hope that makes sense to you and helps you.” Jitay, London, United Kingdom

**Energy and Oneness; a Sense that Everything is Different:** Thirdly, they describe an experience of energy, of oneness, of profound transformation that is almost beyond expressing in words.

- “It feels nice. When you were speaking about the cosmos it was as if I’m not me anymore; I’m a field of energy. So it was a really healing process. As we were going through the levels, the heaviness started to get lighter and lighter. I don’t feel it anymore. We are very blessed.” Lubna Al Sharif, Master Trainer, Coach and Mentor, Laurus Training Centre, Egypt.
- “A process that changes the perception of the situation on so many levels that nothing is the same anymore.” Magdalena Daraż-Gogół, NLP trainer and coach, MSC Coaching, Poland
- “Very powerful and energising session – I feel so energised by what I learned, especially the last exercise – it was ‘moving’ tingling sensations through my body as I let it settle within me.” Glenda Yearwood, NLP coach, supervisor and trainer, London, United Kingdom
- “Transcendence is an exceptionally beautiful and supportive process that led me through the recesses of my history and my mind, leading to a moment of emotion, understanding and seeing myself and others on many levels. Thank you.” Agnieszka Grzeskiewicz, coach and therapist, Poland
- “I believe that this process gives an adequate response to the way we are created – the grounding. It organizes the proportions and frees us from ... I don’t even know how many constraints ... gives vision and access to Being. Thank you very much.” Marzena, Poland
- “Transcendence is a unique process. It changed the perception of my problem by 180 degrees, and expanded understanding. Thank you very much. I am very impressed.” Sylwia Włodarczyk, therapist and coach, Poland

In summary, we consider this process to be an important contribution to healing the world civilization at this time. Please use it with care and compassion.

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