

Image a being whose consciousness is more like the fly's eye, multiple-collective, than like ours, single-selective. "The eye of the Lord" simultaneously focuses everywhere, so his consciousness is both concrete-particular and omni-integrated! Poor me, I have to focus my attention on some point and pay the cost, no matter how good my peripheral vision, of fading or un-awareness of the other points. Attentional selectivity gives me partial integration, like a photographic lens limited both as to field and as to focal depth at any one setting and orientation. By what Frankl, in another connection, calls paradoxical intention, I can, paradoxically, expand my "mind" to cover more of reality by contracting my attention to a point even sharper, narrower, than in normal life: that's "meditation," no matter in what medium (mantra for the inner/outer ear, mandala for the inner/outer eye, etc.). This principle is used in Gestalt therapy, in psychosynthesis, and in many other processes now being pushed in and beyond the human-potential or humanistic-psychology movement. All of this comes down to the basic technique I call attentional asceticism, deliberate self-deprivation of all but a single awareness [such as the currently increasingly popular "my mantra" of TM] or awareness-field [such as Gestalt therapy's reduction of attention to the here-and-now: "What are you feeling right now? Be aware of that. Be present to what's happening inside you, your body, your feelings...."].

Butbutbut...how can you know whether you should, at any moment, focus on what's going on inside your skinbag? For religions-philosophies-techniques dogmatic that inside the skinbag is where it's at--and that includes most "Eastern"-hemisphere religions, the cults (Hellenistic-underground), much of "humanistic-psychology," and mind-is-all metaphysical groups (Theosophy, Christian Science, et al)--that's a non-question. But it's an open question for the biblical religions: "the eye of God" is to be free to direct my eye inward or outward or upward or downward. Jewish and Christian meditation is continuous with contemplation (a functional-missional concentration on some creature or on some quality of God) and prayer (communication with God, in listening and speaking). Open, too, is the effect of the meditation-contemplation-prayer continuum: at any one time it may be God's will that the effect, inside my skinbag, be chaos or peace or a vague unease of yearning or a specific stress toward some action--where the dogmatic and predictable effect of "Eastern" meditation is inner stillness, tension-reduction [which "the science of creative intelligence," TM, measures, to the impressing and impressment of the gullible], "peace." Ask Israel's prophets and our Lord Jesus what you find when you go to the heart of God, and they will say not "peace" but weeping and yearning and deciding-determining. Ask the Early Church what you find when you go to the heart of nature, and you will hear not harmony but "groaning" [Ro.8]. Take your choice, but realize that these two approaches, from our globe's two hemispheres, are more enemies than friends. And do not mishear me as saying they are only enemies! God is doing a work among us all unto integration, unity, the convergence of justice and joy in praise.

While studying with the founder of Gestalt therapy I had many conversations with him, the above being the substance of my side of the conversations. Subsequently --I did not say consequently!--he added the last two lines to complete what he wryly, as atheist, called "Fritz Perls' Gestalt Prayer." INTEGRATIONAL EXERCISE: On the back of this sheet, write a line-by line commentary on the "prayer," your sections indicated only by the line-numbers. The attentional asceticism is to be this: Your comments must be limited to data from your own life--wherever possible, a bit of biography for each section.

1. *I do my thing, and you do your thing,*
2. *I am not in this world to live up to your expectations,*
3. *And you are not in this world to live up to mine.*
4. *I am I, and you are you.*
5. *And if, by chance, we find each other, it's beautiful,*
6. *If not, it can't be helped.*

DM STAFF [whom I take to be Mel, Bill, Tom, Weis, Bob, Diana, and myself] from Willis  
30 June 75  
Comment on INTEGRATION SEMINAR DESIGN

I'm trying to get some pre-feel by talking with some candidates--including one who just left my office.

1 I think we're on the right track in seeing this as two-strand, the heavy strand being case-emergents from the candidates and the lighter being Willis-injected processes and materials.

2 On the lighter strand,  
please have a look at #647 (attached).

Note some of the components in the integration-potential mix of this exercise:

personal experiences

personal commitments

the brain hemispheres

the globe hemispheres

confrontation with the cults

ministry to the gulled

awareness of the biblical way of seeing and living in the world

meditation +/- contemplation-prayer

the world as sinning-suffering creature

ministry as interpersonal

as aimed at more than "peace of mind"

individuality vs. individualism

person/role

the pathology of attention in theological perspective

ritual/freedom-liberation

the minister as technique-user/teacher

body/"mind" integration + heart/world integration

apollonian/dionysiac tension in minister-church-community

integration  
meditation  
attention