

I find the potential for this movement of people drawn to the healing of human distress — the burgeoning world of psychotherapy and counselling — to

embrace and engage with the true crisis that we face as a species, to be enormously exciting. The transformation that is called for is profound: so, perhaps, is the healing.

The Interconnectedness of Everything

Ruth Finar

I'm not autonomous. I'm an organism which couldn't survive independently of my environment. I'm a product of that environment; I evolved out of the prevailing conditions.

Many of my organismic needs can be fulfilled only in conjunction with my environment. I need sustenance. I eat vegetables grown in the earth, themselves nourished by sun, rain and nutrients present in the earth from the living, dying and activities in between of other organisms over millions of years. I drink water whose ultimate source is precipitation brought about by particular atmospheric conditions. I need oxygen. I breathe in air which I process to exhale carbon dioxide. Convenient, isn't it, that plants need carbon dioxide and produce oxygen.

When I inhale, I take in particles of the skin that you have shed, particles of the dust disgorged by a volcano's eruptions thousands of miles away.

I need sunshine to maintain one of

many chemical balances. When the wind is high I am energised. One of my many cycles was named after the moon's cycle. If the moon draws the waters of the earth, surely it draws mine too; when the moon is full I dream vividly. The movements of all the planets exert their forces upon me. When I look at the night sky, I see the light of stars millions of light-years away, stars that no longer exist, and I am moved.

As an infant, I learned about myself from my mother and our interactions. I continue to experience myself in relation. When I am with another, we co-create our experience. When I'm working with a client I acknowledge that her way of being with me at a given moment has emerged from our inter-subjective life experience. Everything is relevant, her family history, the culture she grew up in, her values, what she had for breakfast, whether the train was late, whether the sun is shining, her somatic experience, her spiritual life. And mine. I attempt to provide a space where connection is possible, where our

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relatedness can be experienced and acknowledged. We may focus on our relatedness as fellow human beings and on our interconnectedness with other living beings and inorganic elements of our universe.

I am an active part of a multitude of living systems. Any change to one aspect of the system affects the others, because a system is a web of relationships. My existence makes a difference.

The most fundamental of the systems

that I identify with is the planet I dwell on. I relate to it in manifold ways. I know that if I feel low I can go into the garden and touch the earth and feel better. It is when I am open to my environment, to natural processes, that I most easily connect to and with my spirit. I walk on a beach and see the countless shells and pebbles and grains of sand and worms and flies and bones and the motion of the waves and feel properly humble about my place in the life of the planet across the years.

Giving up Being Consumed by Consumerism

Mary-Jayne Rust

Over the past few years I have grown weary of hearing myself complain about the degradation of the environment, the fast pace of life, and the madness in which we all live. In the midst of such vast problems, it is easy to feel that one's contribution towards change, as an individual, will make no difference. My response, like many others, is either to get stuck in a hole of rage and despair, or to concentrate solely on my own patch, where it is possible to effect change.

It is also tempting to polarise individual versus large-scale structural change; clearly we must act on a political/economic/structural/global level if we are to

get out of this mess. Some would say, therefore, it is not worth acting individually as this will make such little difference to the whole. Recently, I have heard one radical environmental activist say that making changes within one's own personal life is even damaging, as it takes the focus away from corporate responsibility and makes people feel guilty about their own greed. This is an interesting debate. I happen to believe that the truth must lie somewhere in between; we need to take action on all points of the spectrum. Finding my way out of my own consumerism has led to both clearer thinking and the drive towards contributing to a collective

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