

# AHPB Co-chairs' Page


**Alexandra Chalfont** and **John Rowan**

## Alexandra Chalfont

I have just accompanied my mother, in deepest reciprocal love, through the final days and hours of her life. I am immeasurably thankful for this painful, beautiful gift. At the same time I am aware that this most intense transpersonal experience is denied to so many, moment by moment, in this present world of human insanity as we repeat cycles of mutual hostility and cruel oppression on international and national levels, in societal and personal contexts.


So what is our task as practitioners in this environment? Our psychotherapy literature often likens us to artists rather than (or sometimes as well as) scientists. In this respect we have much in common with writers and poets. When logos is infused with creativity, it transmits universal and transpersonal meaning through and beyond metaphor, symbol and the expression of lived experience. It can touch, and allow to blossom, our deepest spirituality in and beyond the human dimension. Solzhenitsyn says of art and literature: 'it recreates in the flesh an unknown experience and allows us to possess it as our own'. He goes on to say: 'it conveys irrefutable condensed experience ... from generation to generation. It becomes the living memory of the nation... in a form which is safe from deformation and slander. ... Literature, together with language, protects the soul of the nation.' We connect with our own past and that of the other, in a world where power continues to smother and distort individual and group identity.

Literature can be as deep a source of nurturance for transpersonal growth as psychotherapy or spiritual practice. When we as psy practitioners are artists, then we may agree with Camus that 'artists scorn nothing: they are obliged to understand rather than to judge'. Should we join him when he says: '(the writer) cannot put himself in

the service of those who make history: he is at the service of those who suffer it'? 

**Alexandra Chalfont**, November 2012

## John Rowan

I have just come back from a meeting of the new Transpersonal Faculty of the UKCP. Good turnout, and some specific mentions of our event next year to celebrate 50 years of Humanistic Psychology. It is good to know that this connection is being made. It seems more and more obvious that there is a close connection between transpersonal psychology and Humanistic Psychology. This also comes out in an interview with me which has now come out on the Internet, on the Psychotherapy Excellence site. This is about humanistic and transpersonal psychology, with I suppose more emphasis on the transpersonal. It has long been our view in the AHP that Humanistic Psychology includes body, emotions, intellect, soul and spirit. And of course the transpersonal is all about soul and spirit, so there is a nice sense of inclusion there. Actually I myself have argued that the discovery of the real self, the existential self, the authentic self, is actually a mystical experience. It often brings with it that enormous sense of opening, of expansion, of enlargement, that speaks of the mystical. There is a section in Rollo May's book *The Discovery of Being* which speaks quite eloquently of this. Rollo was of course a member of the AHP in the USA. The AHP was founded in America, of course, and they will be holding their own celebration of the 50 years. Hands across the sea! 

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