



TRANSPERSONAL TRAINING

INFORMATION PACK

NOVEMBER 2024

Grof Transpersonal Training
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Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in applying for the Holotropic Breathwork® practitioner training program. This international program is the only training offering certification in Holotropic Breathwork® available in the world. Trainings are offered throughout the year in North America, Australia, and Europe. For a complete schedule of trainings, please visit www.holotropic.com/events/.

In this packet you will find information and supplemental materials to accompany the Application to Grof Transpersonal Training (GTT). Applying is not required to attend modules. It is only needed if you wish to move toward becoming a certified Holotropic Breathwork® (HB) practitioner.

Once you become a certified practitioner, modules attended before applying **will count retroactively** toward your certification. We encourage you to apply to the program as soon as possible after your first or second module. Your application should be submitted at least 6 months before applying to attend the two-week certification closing intensive. Acceptance to GTT is also needed if you wish to participate in the “GTT Trainee Circle” within the community-wide [Holotropic Breathwork® Circle](#) on the Mighty Network platform.

Please read through this information carefully. If you have any questions about the training program or would like more information, please contact us at gtt@holotropic.com or 415 383-8779.

Warmly,

GTT Director, Advisors and Staff

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Requirements for Certification in Holotropic Breathwork®

The Grof Transpersonal Training program for certification in Holotropic Breathwork® consists of a set of requirements that must be met to become a certified HB practitioner.

Important Notes:

*** You may not offer Holotropic Breathwork® workshops or events until you have completed the training requirements and have been certified by GTT as a Holotropic Breathwork® Practitioner. Certified practitioners may not teach or train others.**

*** The curriculum content and teaching method is proprietary and may not be used or shared with others.**

The requirements include attending six-day training modules; completing an Ethics module or course; participating in at least 10 workshops with certified HB facilitators; having at least 10 individual consultations with certified HB practitioners; attending a certification closing intensive; and (for those who wish to lead workshops) apprenticing at least 4 times at workshops led by certified practitioners or in a training module.

All In-person modules comprise theoretical and experiential components. This includes each participant having two experiences as ‘breather’ and two as ‘sitter.’ Integration is also included through group sharing, dance, meditation, music journeys, nature celebrations and art.

(Note: Beginning in 2020, GTT has been offering online ‘Virtual Modules.’ Certification candidates may use up to two of these to count toward certification in place of the required six-day (in-person) modules, provided they also attend one GTT-approved double-Holotropic Breathwork® event for each virtual module attended. See the events page at holotropic.com for many of the approved workshops.)

The specific requirements of the certification training are as follows:

- I. Modules: a total of seven six-day modules as a participant. Of these seven, four are mandatory topics and three are elective. Modules can be taken in any order.**

Mandatory modules are:

- The Power Within: The Practice of Holotropic Breathwork®
- Music and Transcendence
- The Holotropic Paradigm: The Psyche, The Inner Healer and Moving Toward Wholeness
- Spiritual Emergency: Embracing Unexpected Transformation

Elective modules are offered on a variety of topics. You may choose three elective modules to meet this requirement.

Ethics requirement. This may be met in several ways:

- 1) You may attend an in-person module on Ethics and have it count as one of your optional modules.
- 2) You may attend just the online portion of a Virtual Module in addition to your seven modules.
- 3) You may complete the following two online self-guided courses by Kylea Taylor. Ethics 101 and Ethics 102: *InnerEthics™: Ethical Right Relationship in Psychedelic Therapy*.

These courses are available at <https://innerethics.com/online-courses/>.

They can be taken at a time of your choosing throughout your training but must be completed prior to attending the closing certification intensive. A complete description of the Ethics module can be found on page 12 of this information pack.

II. **Breathwork Sessions in Addition to Required Modules**

Ten experiences of Holotropic Breathwork® in a workshop setting. These must be led by a certified Holotropic Breathwork® practitioner, and each participant must experience both 'sitting' and 'breathing'. The workshop must also include preparation by the facilitator and integration of the experience.

Attending additional modules beyond the seven required, whereby you sit and breathe twice in each module, can also count toward the fulfilment of ten additional HB experiences.

Lists of certified practitioners can be found at Holotropic.com, where you can access

searchable links of all -

- (1) certified practitioners who are current with their Continued Professional Development requirements; and
- (2) certified practitioners world-wide, by name and region.

III. Individual Consultations

Ten hours of individual consultations with certified Holotropic Breathwork® practitioners over the course of your training. These are arranged by you with the practitioner directly, for an agreed-upon fee (GTT staff members generally charge \$100 per hour).

At least five of these consultation hours should be with a member of the facilitator staff. The purpose of these consultations is to provide personal guidance in the training, feedback about your progress and recommendations for any additional personal work we might expect you to do.

Four consultations can be with any certified HB practitioner of your choice, including but not limited to GTT staff members. During these sessions, you will have the opportunity to discuss issues related to your personal process, as well as practical aspects of Holotropic Breathwork®. It is not necessary that you do all these consultations with the same practitioner.

One longer consultation will be specific to your music set. In this consultation you will go through the music set you have put together. This consultation can be arranged after you have attended the mandatory *Music and Transcendence* module and by the time you have completed all the requirements necessary to attend certification. A list of facilitators approved to undertake music consultations can be found on page 31. Those certifying in the Educational Track are not required to create a music set and so their tenth consultation can be a one-hour session.

IV. Apprenticing

You will need to do a minimum of **four** apprenticeships to complete your training as a Holotropic Breathwork® practitioner. Apprenticing is the opportunity to experience facilitation at a module or workshop under the supervision of certified Holotropic

Breathwork® practitioners. Apprenticing is not required for those who wish to be certified on the Educational Track.

With the facilitator's agreement and support, you can apprentice in workshops facilitated by a certified Holotropic Breathwork® facilitator any time after the completion of five modules (including *The Power Within* module on Holotropic focused energy release work).

Should you wish to gain more experience of apprenticing, you may also apply to join the GTT Apprentice Program once you have completed seven modules (including *The Power Within* module on Holotropic focused energy release work).

*Note: Apprenticing requirements only apply to participants intending to become certified practitioners (Practitioner Track), not to those applying to certify to mark the completion of their training requirements (Educational Track). See *Closing Certification Intensive* on page 7 for further information.

V. Two Years in Training

In the interest of your personal growth as well as your growth as a facilitator, we require a minimum of two years in the training, beginning from the time you take your first GTT module. There is no maximum time to complete your training, but if several years have passed with no contact, you may be asked to repeat a requirement.

* See Stan and Christina Grof's letter on page 34 for clarification.

VI. Certification Intensive

Certification intensives are generally offered in alternate years, depending on the number of people who have completed all or most of the requirements stated above, and who also meet the criteria for becoming a Holotropic Breathwork® practitioner. (For your convenience, a form is included for recording your requirements so you can keep track as you go through the program. Access to this form is on page 32 of this information pack.

This special two-week intensive is a culmination of your personal and collective journey through the training. You will also have the opportunity to demonstrate your proficiency

as a practitioner. When applying for the certification intensive you will be asked whether you are applying to become a certified practitioner of Holotropic Breathwork® (Practitioner Track) or whether you are applying to mark the completion of the training requirements (Educational Track). The Educational track does not require you to do apprenticeships or construct a music set.

VII. Recommendation to attend the Closing Certification Intensive by a certified facilitator

When you have completed the training requirements and you are ready to apply for the Closing Certification Intensive, we will ask you to provide a recommendation from a certified facilitator who is familiar with you from the training or from HB workshops. The facilitator will be asked whether they are recommending you for the Practitioner Track or the Educational Track. We suggest that you consider having a consultation with this person to discuss your certification application.

Although you may have completed the necessary modules needed for certification, if you have not formally enrolled in the training program, we ask that you submit your application for the training program at least six months before you apply for certification.

Participants who successfully complete this program will receive a certificate confirming that they have completed training in Holotropic Breathwork® and Transpersonal Psychology. Grof Transpersonal Training (GTT) is the only licensed provider of this training program in the world.

*Please Note: This certificate does not represent a therapeutic license; certified practitioners conducting therapy must meet the requirements for practice in their respective states or countries.

Continuing Professional Development

Once certified as a Holotropic Breathwork® facilitator, continuing professional development (CPD) will be required in order to maintain your status as a certified HB facilitator. CPD helps to ensure the highest quality practice of Holotropic Breathwork® (HB) among those who provide this work to others and contributes to the recognition of HB as a credible and well-founded contemporary psycho-spiritual practice.

The CPD requirements are as follows:

- At least twice a year, certified practitioners will experience a full HB session as a breather, either in a workshop or with a qualified sitter.
- Once every three years, they will attend at least one GTT sanctioned module as an apprentice, participant, staff member or floater; OR will attend an advanced training.
- Every three years, facilitators will be responsible for *submitting written notice* of meeting the CPD requirement.
- Those who do not meet all the CPD requirements will have their certification suspended until the requirements have been met as outlined above.

In addition to the above, GTT strongly recommends that all facilitators have a systematic daily psycho-spiritual practice of some kind. Those of us who have been certified for many years and work with others agree that this is a basic minimum to retain our ability to be effective practitioners and to support others in their inner work.

This minimum requirement reinforces our commitment to upholding ethical standards of practice in a psycho-spiritual discipline, to personal maturity as a practitioner, and to personal and professional integrity

Description of GTT Required Modules

Note that all modules include experiencing Holotropic Breathwork®, with two sessions for each person as a “breather” and two as a “sitter.”

The Power Within: The Practice of Holotropic Breathwork®

In this module, holotropic theory comes alive. It’s where we experience the essence of the practice firsthand. We discuss the principles that support and inform the practice of Holotropic Breathwork® focused release work. We explain the fundamentals of HB and why it is such a special method for personal exploration and healing. We will also get to practice holotropic focused energy release work.

Topics covered include: 1) The power of the inner healing intelligence; 2) Facilitator presence and skills; 3) Focused energy release work — principles and ethics; 4) Focused release demonstration and practice (hands-on work by participants); 5) Moving toward closure, and closure; 6) Special challenging situation when facilitating.

The Holotropic Paradigm: The Psyche, The Inner Healer and Moving Towards Wholeness

This module offers an exciting exploration of the philosophy, principles, and strategies underlying the experience and practice of Holotropic Breathwork®. Topics covered include: 1) The power of the inner healing intelligence and moving towards wholeness; 2) Presence; the disciplines required to become an effective Holotropic Breathwork® practitioner; 3) COEX’s; how the inner healing intelligence orchestrates transformation through our experiences of the psyche; 4) Exploration of the frontiers of the psyche through *Movie Yoga*®; 5) Session stories; valuable teachings from practitioners through their work with breathers; 6) Open forums focusing on every facet of the Holotropic experience.

Music and Transcendence

This module is an exciting and transformative journey through the world of music and how it is used for work in expanded states of consciousness. Sound and rhythm have always been vital creative and spiritual tools for transformation. Music has even been called ‘the language of the soul’. This is a special opportunity to learn first-hand the music structure that defines Holotropic Breathwork® in such a special way. In addition, we’ll also explore other exciting strategies that help make the holotropic perspective an

essential tool for everyday living.

This module includes: 1) Holotropic music; It's history, theory and practice, detailed discussion of the three-part structure of a Holotropic Breathwork® music set with demonstrations of specific pieces for each section; 2) Holotropic group work; It's history, theory and practice, discussion of common group experiences, and challenging situations; 3) COEX systems; how we work with multi-level patterns; 4) Demonstration of relaxation; 5) Facilitator self-care.

Spiritual Emergency: Embracing Unexpected Transformation

Understanding Spiritual Emergency is one of the major contributions of the holotropic perspective. Whether you are a professional or a layperson, someone interested in working with people in transformational crises, or primarily in your own growth, the module offers rich experiences and valuable information. In addition to differentiating between psychosis and spiritual emergency, we will also explore the intensely practical aspects of who, in these kinds of crises, can benefit from Holotropic Breathwork® and how best to work with them in their emergencies. This workshop includes a discussion of the concept of spiritual emergency, its manifestations and forms, historical and anthropological perspectives, treatment strategies, and work with family and friends.

Description of GTT Elective Modules

New Elective Modules are added from time to time. Note that all modules include experiencing Holotropic Breathwork® with two sessions for each person as a “breather” and two as a “sitter.”

The Spiritual Quest, Attachment and Addiction (with Christine Calvert or Rob Park)

New ways to look at psychology and spirituality are offering exciting possibilities in the recovery movement, both for individual seekers and for those who work in the treatment field. This workshop explores a whole continuum, from the idea of addiction as an extreme form of attachment, which affects everyone and which is crucial to spiritual seekers of all practices, to the more articulate forms of addiction: substance, process, relationship, and more. Through theory, discussion and experiential exercises, we'll look at (1) the disease paradigm of recovery; (2) the wellness paradigm and the transpersonal recovery center; (3) implications of perinatal and transpersonal dimensions for recovery; (4) the *12 steps* as a world yoga; (5) addiction as spiritual emergency; (6) addiction as shamanic crisis; (7) recovery as a mystery school; (8) psychedelics and recovery; (9) recovery and the feminine; (10) addiction from the homeopathic perspective; (11) recovery as death/rebirth; (12) addiction and the global crisis; and more.

The Art and Practice of Integration (various teachers)

“Integration” is a vital component of Holotropic Breathwork® practice, as well as any other work in expanded states of consciousness. We are often reminded that *preparation, session and integration* are all necessary components of any complete transformational experience.

Exploration with Holotropic states has an impact on the totality of our being and our lives on physical, mental, emotional, environmental and spiritual levels. Giving attention to integration offers the potential to enrich our life experience by allowing us to digest, embody and apply to our daily lives the insights and lessons learned while doing in-depth exploratory work. We will create a safe, supportive, sacred, contemplative, and playful container that will invite spaciousness for absorbing, being with, and processing that which occurs before, during, and after holotropic sessions. The week will be highly experiential and offer valuable tools to support the integration of your personal holotropic practice. This is a not-to-be-missed opportunity for facilitators and any

seekers, and offers exciting, creative ways to support groups and individuals through the integration process.

The Power of Trust and Connection: Transforming through Compassion (with Diana Medina)

If one has compassion for self, the natural consequence is to have compassion for others. Many of us have a core imprint that “I am not safe, and I can’t trust”. The challenge for us to trust and connect with our deepest selves greatly impacts on our ability to trust and connect with others. This makes it difficult for us to risk reaching out when we need support. A daily practice of mindfulness and compassion for self and others is a crucial step towards healing traumas that make it so hard for us to trust and feel safe. In this module we will explore: a variety of simple daily practices, which can transform our relationship to ourselves; the exciting scientific research of Kristin Neff and Paul Gilbert, which connects neurobiology with our ability to be nurtured; practices of self-compassion that help to shift our neurobiological pathways and heal our instinctual response, changing it from “I don’t trust” to “I can trust and feel safe”; how self-compassion can deepen our ability to support others.

The Spirit of Place: Exploring Our Ensouled Relationship with Place and Belonging (with Vicky Nicholson)

We invite you to celebrate with us an exciting journey into the mysteries and power inspired by the Australian Aboriginal wisdom tradition. Being “on country” is based on a special relationship between our natural surroundings—place—and belonging. Belonging means being present with ourselves as well as those closest to us (our clan, tribe, family, neighbour, nation). But it is also about being engaged in a colossal cosmic setting—what we call the transpersonal dimensions of our being.

Along with the powerful practice of Holotropic Breathwork®, this workshop offers a variety of exciting explorations in the natural world, and within our own being. Through the emergence of what we call “our stories”, we can learn to listen deeply to what is most meaningful to us as individuals within a greater whole.

Storytelling has long been a sacred tradition of indigenous peoples from all lands. It is essential to the health and wellbeing of the collective to which they belong, and to a co-creative process of bringing the universe into being. Along with our deep inner journeys via the breath, we will also spend time outdoors engaging with our natural

surroundings. Join us in an adventure of self-remembering ‘*on country*’ in this exciting module to deepen our connections of self with world.

Holotropic Perspectives on Psychedelic Sitting (with Christine Calvert and John Stockberger)

Join us in an exploration of how the Holotropic paradigm and Stan Grof’s cartography of the psyche can be a helpful framework and set of tools for safe and effective psychedelic sitting.

We’ll explore the well-known concepts used in GTT’s Holotropic Breathwork® facilitator training, such as: our innate inner-healing wisdom, no-directive facilitation, integrity through presence, and the idea of healing through amplifications of symptoms. Through a combination of discussion and experiential practices, we’ll also explore set and setting; presence as a compass; practitioner self-awareness and accountability; the inner healing impulse as a path to integrity, moving toward impeccability (through owning our humanity); ethical issues on the topics of power, sex and intimacy; preparation and integration; considerations working with certain populations: addiction, complex trauma, eating disorders, psychonauts; issues with touch; working with transference and projection; working with challenging psychedelic experiences (looping, confusion, extreme emotions, identity loss, nonverbal states); and working with inflation.

While this module is designed primarily for psychedelic sitting, it can also be of value for anyone wanting to enhance their work with others in expanded states of consciousness in other settings, such as spiritual emergency, breathwork, and sitting with the dying, to mention a few.

A Holotropic Approach to Psychedelics: Past, Current and Future (with Marc Aixalà)

In recent years, we have witnessed a renewed interest in psychedelic therapy and research being called “the psychedelic renaissance.” Many people are discovering the potential benefits of psychedelic substances and master plants, and shamanism has become an increasingly sought method for healing. Dozens of clinical trials study the efficacy of psychedelic medicines such as MDMA, psilocybin and ketamine to treat serious conditions like PTSD and treatment-resistant depression. At the same time, the importance of Stanislav Grof’s Holotropic Paradigm and of Holotropic Breathwork®

in the development of the psychedelic field still remains unknown to many. With respect to this new era of psychedelics, those of us involved with the Holotropic paradigm have much to contribute and consider. How do psychedelics compare with or compliment Holotropic Breathwork® as tools for personal development? What is the role of Holotropic Breathwork® now that psychedelics are becoming an accessible therapeutic method? How is the future of Holotropic Breathwork® affected now that more people can access deep experiences through psychedelics and master plants?

In this module we will explore in depth: the different paradigms in which psychedelics have been used and are currently used; general characteristics of the main psychedelic medicines and the process they induce; the use of psychedelics from the Holotropic Paradigm developed by Grof, Sparks, and others; how do psychedelics compare to Holotropic Breathwork®?; the principles of supporting processes from the Holotropic perspective; dealing with challenging situations; and the importance of integration of psychedelic experiences.

Movie Yoga™: The Holotropic Experienced Through Film (with various teachers)

This module is an exciting opportunity to experience the Holotropic through film. For years, GTT director Tav Sparks' passion and knowledge about movies has infused GTT workshops. Participants have found movie watching to be an integral part of the inner process. Based on material from his book *Movie Yoga: How Every Film Can Change Your Life*, Tav's complete system of movie watching from the holotropic perspective will be brought to life with real-time movie experiences. This workshop is for those who want another avenue to take the holotropic into everyday life. Watch together, breathe together, and learn how movies can become a fun and exciting transformative practice, as you experience the perinatal journey through film. This is sure to be an adventure, so bring the popcorn and your Inner Healer.

The Ringbearer and Moving Toward Wholeness: Transformation in the Lord of the Rings Film Trilogy (with Diana Medina [as created by Tav Sparks])

This workshop uses Peter Jackson's film adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* and Holotropic Breathwork® to create a deep personal experience of being a Ringbearer in the twenty-first century. The popularity of these movies demonstrates planetary culture's striving toward a new world myth, as well as our yearning to discover the deeper dimensions of what it means to be human. Interwoven through our experience of the films, we will explore: The *Fellowship* characters as mythic

dimensions of ourselves; Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey; Carl Jung and the realm of the archetypes; the reemergence of the epic soul; film as catharsis and spiritual path; death/rebirth in modern popular culture; the Holotropic practitioner as Ringbearer; Art, ritual, dance, meditation, and role playing. Seeing the films beforehand is not required.

Weaving Your Medicine: Healing Journeys for the Soul (with Tom Francescotti)

Dr. Tom Francescotti, ND, has dedicated his life to helping people awaken to their true potential by identifying and addressing the root causes of energy imbalance and chronic disease. In this workshop, using powerful practices from established wisdom traditions, you will have the opportunity to gain insight and clarity as to what nourishes your body, relationships, and purpose.

We will explore the expansion of consciousness through the practices of: Shamanic Retrieval Journeys; Qigong breathing techniques and playing with Qi; Inquiry, Mindfulness, and nature Bathing; Guided sound meditations; Creating your personal medicine cards and prayer stick.

In addition, Tom draws from his decades-long experience as a naturopathic doctor to highlight how supporting our bodies is of fundamental importance on our transformational journeys, including: Naturopathic teachings on nutrition, brain neuroplasticity, and adrenal stress; Group discussions on our relationship to food, hunger, and addictions and how these can connect to traumas of omission and commission.

This module will be a rich combination of experience, insight, and community, with the goal being for each participant to go home grounded and empowered in their true healing nature.

In the Heart of Breathwork: A Facilitator Journey (with Sitara Blasco)

This module offers a focused exploration of Holotropic Breathwork® facilitation, which is also relevant for accompanying and supporting journeys in other modalities or Expanded States of Consciousness. Drawing from over two decades of personal experience as a facilitator, Sitara invites participants to explore facilitation skills enriched by practical examples, reflective questions, firsthand anecdotes, and

interactive discussions, embodying a journey of continuous learning. In this module you will deepen your insight into essential aspects and dynamics of facilitation, such as meaningful interactions, presence, self-awareness, personal growth, and ethics, to improve your facilitation skills.

The module aims to boost facilitation skills for anyone keen on assisting others through transformative experiences, providing a grounded and insightful approach to facilitation. Topics include: The Journey of Growth: Becoming a facilitator, overcoming challenges, acknowledging mistakes, and using feedback and self-reflection; Insights about the Practice: The importance of presence, support, transference, countertransference, and self-disclosure in HB; Integrity and Ethical Considerations; Navigating the Inner Landscape: Strategies for managing difficult situations and triggers as opportunities for growth; The Shared Journey: Being a fellow traveler, a connection with the breather that allows mutual growth; Teamwork: The inescapable significance of teamwork in creating safe and effective facilitation.

The Art of Presence: Sitting for Transformational and Extreme States (with Holly Harman or Diana Medina)

Ancient wisdom traditions have worked with expanded states of consciousness as a healing modality for millennia. Since the early 1970's, Holotropic Breathwork®—a methodology with its roots in psychedelic research via the work of Stanislav and Christina Grof—has enabled seekers to access expanded states of consciousness for the “adventure of self-discovery.” This non-drug methodology offers language, method, and structure for the experience of expanded states of consciousness in a safe set and setting. The practice of Holotropic Breathwork® has shown us that the holotropic perspective applies to any situation where one encounters, or is present for, others.

This module applies this perspective as part of a foundational training for those wishing to be a ‘sitter,’ and for those experiencing a variety of expanded states of consciousness. During this module we will explore and discuss: *Preparation*: engaging with clients ahead of sessions, building a rapport; *Set and setting*: identifying a suitable space; how to create a safe space within that setting; *Session*: set up, duration, completion within the wider field of incompleteness; *Safety and Ethics*: agreements, boundaries, ethical issues; *Presence*: Being, rather than doing (“*Doing Not Doing*”); Use of language and body language; Working on our own material; *Integration*: tools to support integration (including mandala, creative

writing, and active imagination).

The Expanded Self: Exploring Grief, Death, and the Afterlife (with Cary Sparks)

As holotropic experiencers and practitioners, the theme of death emerges throughout this work, both in theory and as an intrinsic part of our inner journeys. Over the years, GTT has held Holotropic Breathwork® retreats on *Death and Dying*,* *The Books of the Dead*,* *The Art of Living and Dying*,** and more. This module continues in that tradition.

While Western society tends to ignore or turn away from anything related to the idea of dying, those of us drawn to the holotropic are often fascinated by the experience and meaning of death, rebirth, and the continuity of consciousness. From our journeys in the holotropic state, as well as in learning to be present for others, we also become natural “sitters” for our loved ones in their dying process.

This retreat is an opportunity to explore and share our experiences in and around death, dying, rebirth, grief, and the afterlife, as they occur in HB sessions and in our lives. Primarily experiential, it will include a range of topics, such as: How do we best face our own death; Living before dying; dealing with loss; The mystery of the grieving process; Being present for and sitting with others as they die; Near Death Experiences (NDEs); Life After Life; Life Between Lives; Evidence for the existence of the afterlife; the primacy of consciousness

Coming together with our stories, our fears, our fascination, our curiosity, and, of course, in our HB sessions as breathers and sitters, this retreat allows us to delve into one of the most significant aspects of the holotropic perspective and experience.

*modules with Stan Grof; **module with Jean Farrell

The Art of Living and Dying – A Dance to the Music of Time (with Jean Farrell)

Join us for an in-depth exploration of the fascinating human journey, from conception to death and rebirth. In embarking on this adventure, we may begin to ‘DANCE’ with the music of time, rather than moving through life resisting the flow toward death. Such a shift gives us the opportunity to fulfill our deepest life purposes and let go consciously of what keeps us from embracing this crucial process of transformation.

By viewing life and death through the lens of Holotropic Paradigm, we can explore, in depth, the triple dynamic and experience of *death-birth-rebirth*. We will draw upon some of the world's leading paradigms of the death/rebirth process, including: The work of Stephen Levine and Elizabeth Kubler Ross; the shamanic practice of working with mortality; the contributions of Ralph Metzner and Timothy Leary, including their references to the Tibetan Book of the Dead. We will also explore the fascinating and powerful impact of near-death experiences on our everyday experience of living. This unique journey in facing our mortality offers us a profound opportunity to enrich our own unique life journey. The process will be deeply experiential. In addition to Holotropic Breathwork® sessions, the week's inner adventures will involve creative exercises, including art as well as participation in other modalities of psychospiritual journeying.

Trauma and Transformation: A Holotropic Perspective (with Jean Farrell)

Trauma is the Greek word for wound, a wounding. We all have woundings, from birth to death, and even before birth. These can be demanding in their intensity, in their impact on us, and in our relationship with ourselves, others, and our environment. The module will focus on the impact of trauma on physical, emotional and psychological well-being. We will explore holotropic strategies that can be beneficial in working with these challenging issues. Our approach will be largely experiential and interactive. Each participant will experience two Holotropic Breathwork® sessions as a 'breather' and two as a 'sitter.' Drawing on our personal experience, we will also engage in creative exercises with art materials, writing and movement. Topics will include: the use of survival strategies and ego defense mechanisms; their effectiveness and limitations; how Holotropic Breathwork® can work to integrate and transform trauma; looking at related approaches, such as Peter Levine, Bessel van der Kolk, and Pat Ogden; EMDR; TRE; EFT; recent research with MDMA; the power of Presence; understanding Grof's perinatal and transpersonal levels of our being; and the impact of generational links as part of the transpersonal. This module will not only be useful in our own journey towards wholeness but will enhance our ability to be present with others—as companions, therapists and facilitators—as they work with their own trauma.

Modules with guest teachers:

Celtic Shamanism – Vessels of the Soul’s Wisdom

(with guest teacher Cáit Branigan)

As a framework for understanding this form of shamanic teaching, Cait uses “The Three Cauldrons,” the repositories of our vital essence, our life force, and our spirit. They contain our soul’s vitality, creative energies, and experiences as it travels through life. They fuel our vocation and capacity for wisdom. Through art, sound and dance, participants will have the opportunity to explore shamanism as a spiritual practice and the role of the shamanic journey. Our aim is to ensure the clear and free-flowing nature of our essence and energy through the body. We will explore each Cauldron using journey, chant, and ceremony to discover that which lies within. Participants will also develop the ability to use shamanic techniques to help access and express their own sources of inspiration for use in living creatively, freely, and fully from the heart.

The Cauldron of Inspiration

(with guest teacher Cáit Branigan)

This module focuses on the gift of ‘Imbas,’ the Irish concept of inspiration, and teaches the basic techniques of indigenous shamanic practices of the Irish/Celtic traditions. The Cauldron of Inspiration, for the purposes of this workshop, represents the world within, the spiritual repository of vision, enlightenment, and inspiration, which we draw on for spiritual nourishment. It thus becomes the source of the Weaving of our life pattern through daily ritual, creativity (such as art, sounds dance etc.) and the day to day unfolding of the self.

During the workshop, participants will explore Shamanism as a spiritual practice and the role of the Immrama (wonder voyage) within that context. We will explore the Great ‘Bile’ Tree; the Far-Seeing Eye and the use of song/musical in ancient practice. It is hoped that participants will leave, holding within, the ability to use shamanic techniques to help access and express their own sources of Inspiration for use in living creatively, along with an insight into the traditions of the Irish/Celtic Druidic schools.

The Art of the Healing Voice

(with guest teacher Cáit Branigan)

Sound is one of the most important aspects of shamanic practice. The primal sound of the universe is to be heard in the stillness of meditation. Each aspect and being of the cosmos has its own sound, its own song, which may be heard by those who simply

choose to listen. The use of the voice to heal, to express our innermost being and spirituality, is often neglected. Yet, the voice mirrors the soul and to sing is to touch the deepest parts of ourselves. The healing song is a very powerful tool which speaks directly to the soul of an individual, bypassing all other barriers or inhibitions.

Returning to Brigid’s Hearth: A Time of Rebirth and Re-Emergence (with guest teacher Cáit Branigan)

As the world turns and cycles through the many deep and profound changes we are currently experiencing, challenging us to witness our own truth and the nature of our experience—our flaws and our blind spots—we come again to the rebirth of the new year and the emergence of the Spring in Ireland. Spring is born in the bitter cold of January with the snowdrops and daffodils, to rise with the strengthening sun to its climax at the Spring Equinox. Brigid is the Patron of the Season: Inspirer; Goddess of the Eternal Flame and the Sacred Waters; Bringer of Imbas, the Exalted One; Goddess of the Dawn. As Goddess of the Hearth, she teaches us to tend the flame—the fire within, the fire of our spirit—and to share the flame with our communities. She blesses us with insight and wisdom, from the depths to the heights. As we return to her Hearth, we begin our year from the sacred space within ourselves, to seek Imbas—Divine Inspiration—to guide and lead us into the year, that we may face the changes and the challenges with her fiery arrow of perception, insight, and clarity. With meditation, journey, sound, and silence, we will come to Brigid’s Hearth to rebirth ourselves, embodying the fulness of our potential.

Celebrating Wild Potency—Bealtaine and the Sacred Marriage (with guest teacher Cáit Branigan)

The Festival of Bealtaine is one of the most important celebrations of the year. A fire festival (Bel—a God of the Sun + Tinne—fire), we celebrate the union of the Sun and the Earth, the cleansing and fertility of the land and all her creatures. We embrace and dance with the wild potency of life. At a time in the world where societal and sexual relationships are fractured or strained due to gender inequality and the dominance of patriarchal institutions, exploration and healing of our intimate and community relationships is deeply important. During this workshop, we will take time to explore our creative potency and the balance of our sexual energies. Through meditation, journey, chant, and sharing, we will tend to the core of our life, our inner creative spark, to help us empower our lives and deepen our relationship with Life.

Deepening Into Samhain

(with guest teacher Cáit Branigan)

The season of Samhain, and the festival which marks the beginning of the Celtic New Year, is one of four important festivals in Irish tradition: Imboic (Spring); Bealtaine (Summer); Lughnasadh (Autumn); and Samhain (Winter). The word Samhain means 'Summer's end' and is seen as important in all Celtic calendars. Samhain is the beginning of the dark season and is greatly associated with the dead (ancestors) and the Otherworld. The Irish, in common with many indigenous cultures, placed great importance on their dead ancestors, and this was reflected in their customs and beliefs. At Samhain, focus was placed on the telling of our ancient myths and legends; storytelling and the telling of anecdotes; fireside craft; study and learning. Samhain Eve was a time of setting out on voyages to the Otherworld and the blurring of customs through mask-wearing and cross-dressing. In ancient times, the fires were put out in the home and relit from the sacred fire on the Hill of Tlachtga.

In this workshop, we will prepare for the coming of Winter, exploring our ancestral stories and the evolution of familial and cultural traditions. Through shamanic journeys, creativity, sound, and movement, we will explore the fears we carry societally and individually, represented by the masks we wear at Halloween.

Trauma and Transformation: A Holotropic Perspective

(with guest teacher Laura Prescott)

Trauma can be a doorway, a portal, a teacher. While walking through the fire of suffering and despair, we can also find moments of individual and collective awakening, healing, and transformation.

This workshop offers an opportunity to come together as a community to talk about trauma and its impacts, as well as ways to facilitate/hold space for healing to occur through Holotropic Breathwork®. The principles of the holotropic paradigm parallels many of the principles of trauma-informed practice, providing a unique and important framework for people to reclaim their lives. Through this module, we will explore ways to deepen our own personal awareness and examine assumptions to increase our ability to be truly present for the process of transformation. The format will include didactic overview, group discussions, and experiential exercises to deepen and integrate the material. Together we will build a community offering opportunities for growth, increased connection, and developing new narratives beyond the trauma identity.

In this module we will explore: The definition of trauma from a holotropic perspective and its impact; Stories / narratives we develop in order to survive; Examining our own assumptions about illness, wellness, recovery, trauma “symptoms,” and distress; What “safety” means from a Holotropic perspective; How to support people expressing their distress (e.g., with histories of self-harm, hearing voices, having visions); Ways to increase our own tolerance for distress (in order to remain present); Secondary trauma – the importance of self-awareness and self-care; and Post traumatic growth and the opportunity to develop new narratives.

Sacred Geometry, Mandala and Consciousness – New Frontiers of the Holotropic Paradigm

(with guest teacher Geoff Fitzpatrick)

When we construct sacred patterns in a meditative way, we begin to embody qualities of the creative principle behind them. We learn to resonate with these underlying patterns and come into alignment with the sacred mandala of the self, the inner intelligence always moving us toward wholeness. In addition to Holotropic Breathwork®, meditation, dance, ritual, and music journeys, you will: create your own sand mandalas with the tools and techniques developed by Tibetan Buddhist monks; learn about a ‘Grand Pattern’ underlying all of existence, from the shape of our DNA to the movements of the planets and the form of the galaxy; experience how sacred geometry can be harnessed to open a pathway between your everyday awareness and the deeper, hidden aspects of your being, as well as between your truest self and the world; experience the archetypal ritual of creation, impermanence, and destruction used by Tibet and other cultures for thousands of years; come into alignment with a pattern of order that binds all of reality together in the most beautiful tapestry imaginable.

The Inner Healer, Surrender & The Yoga of the Cross* (* the geometric cross)

(with guest teacher Geoff Fitzpatrick)

In this module we will explore a triad of core Holotropic principles: the Inner Healer, Surrender, and the Yoga of the Cross – also called the Awareness Positioning System, or APS. Tav Sparks championed the primacy of the Inner Healing Principle for healing, spiritual growth, and transformation. He wrote, “The most essential foundation of any authentic psycho-spiritual practice is the experience that all true power of transformation comes from within.” Sometimes our Inner Healer is obscured but Surrender and Letting Go can cleanse the lens of our perception and help us get direct

access to this natural resource. A welcome nuance of virtual modules is the fact that as we illuminate our inner healers 'remotely' we are already in our everyday lives. Even though Holotropic states can be 'top of the mountain / peak experiences' where we can be gifted glimpses beyond the veil into the true nature of reality, the time inevitably comes when we return from the top of the mountain to our everyday worlds. The 'Yoga of the Cross' is a bridge from the mountain top into our everyday lives This practice is an invaluable resource we can use to bring the brightness of our true selves into our meeting of the world just as it is—Now! Learn about: The Inner Healer – The Pearl Beyond Price, Surrender and Letting Go, Cleansing the lens of perception, and "Be Here Now".

InnerEthics™ & SoulCollage®: Finding the Power and Beauty of Right Relationship

(with guest teacher Kylea Taylor)

This Virtual Module offers exciting new dimensions in working on oneself and with others. Discovering ethical "right relationship" with people in our lives — including with clients if we work professionally with others — invites the same courageous approach to self-discovery that brought us to Holotropic Breathwork®. We will learn how to find right relationship with our own inner parts, as well as with the other people in our lives. InnerEthics™ provides a no-blame model based on self-compassion and curiosity that supports a willingness to uncover and own our motivations, share with our peers what we have learned from ethical missteps, and make good choices on behalf of our clients and ourselves.

We will not only learn the InnerEthics™ model developed by Kylea Taylor, author of [The Ethics of Caring](#) and multiple books on Holotropic Breathwork®, we will also get to experience the dynamic expressive arts, self-discovery method of [SoulCollage®](#), a creative practice that helps us view and listen to the feelings and counsel of our many parts. SoulCollage® is wonderfully compatible with the principles and practice of Holotropic Breathwork® and is a valuable addition to your tools for personal transformation and integration.

Ecstatic Remembrance

(with guest teacher Jai Uttal)

This workshop combines two ancient technologies for entering into deep states of consciousness for inner exploration and contact with the collective unconscious. One technique is, as in each Grof Transpersonal Training module, using the breath

in Holotropic Breathwork® sessions. The other technique is the ancient one of chanting. Jai uses call-and-response chanting, vocal and rhythmic exercises, and storytelling to invoke a sacred space for non-denominational prayer and heartfelt expression. This is an exploration of the heart and a way of attaining ecstatic awareness by repetition and remembrance of the Divine. No previous experience is needed; this is an exploration of the heart, independent of vocal or musical technique.

GTT Certification Reading List

Required Reading

Training Manuals

Doing Not Doing by Tav Sparks (1987)

The Holotropic Breathwork Facilitator's Manual by Kylea Taylor (2015)

By Christina and/or Stan Grof

Holotropic Breathwork by Grof and Grof (2010, FIRST edition). *Note: the first edition of this book is still available on the secondary market or from the Holotropic Bookstore:*

<http://www.holotropic.com/shop/books/holotropic-breathwork-a-new-approach-to-self-exploration-and-therapy/>

Beyond the Brain by S. Grof (1985)

The Cosmic Game by S. Grof (2010)

Psychology of the Future by S. Grof (2000)

The Thirst for Wholeness by C. Grof (1994)

Spiritual Emergency GTT edited by Grof and Grof (1989)

The Stormy Search for Self by Grof and Grof (1992)

By Tav Sparks

The Power Within (2016)

Movie Yoga (2009)

The Wide-Open Door (1993)

4 CD set on Holotropic Breathwork™

By Kylea Taylor

The Ethics of Caring (2017)

Considering Holotropic Breathwork (2008)

Additional Recommended Reading

Exploring Holotropic Breathwork by Kylea Taylor (2003)

Paths Beyond Ego edited by Roger Walsh & Frances Vaughan (1993)

Psychedelic Integration: Psychotherapy for Non-Ordinary States of Consciousness
by Marc B. Aixelá

Psychedelics & Psychotherapy: The Healing Potential of Expanded States

edited by Tim Reed and Maria Papaspyrou (2021)

Follow the Call by Tomek Kwiecinski (2024)

The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz (1997)

The Breathwork Experience by Kylea Taylor (1994)

Any other books by, or video with, Christina Grof and/or Stan Grof

GTT Floating and Apprenticing Guidelines

Floating

“Floating” (walking the floor during breathwork sessions) is open to those in the training who have attended at least five modules (including *The Power Within: The Practice of Holotropic Breathwork®* module) and who would like to experience working alongside GTT staff while attending the module as a participant.

Floating during a module can be either for two, or for all four, breathwork sessions. If you would like to ‘float’, and you have enough modules to do so, please let the facilitator team know at the module. (Please note: the cost is the regular cost of attending a module).

Apprenticing

Apprenticing is the opportunity to gain experience of the facilitator role within a supportive setting by working alongside GTT certified facilitators. It is also a requirement of the facilitator training program (Practitioner Track only) that trainees have a minimum of four experiences of working as an apprentice.

With the agreement and support of the facilitator, trainees can apprentice in workshops facilitated by a certified Holotropic Breathwork® facilitator any time after the completion of five modules, one of which must be *The Power Within: The Practice of Holotropic Breathwork®*.

For those wishing to gain further experience, there is also the option of applying to join the GTT Advanced Apprentice Program. Applications are welcomed from those in the training who have completed GTT modules, including *The Power Within: The Practice of Holotropic Breathwork®*.

Certified practitioners wanting further experience in this role are known as “support staff” to distinguish them from apprentices who are not yet certified.

If you would like to join the advanced apprentice program, and you meet the requirements to do so, please contact the GTT Office for an application form.

(Please note: Certified persons in the role of apprentice/support staff cover their own

expenses, including travel, accommodation, and meals. Non-certified apprentices cover their own expenses plus a fee of \$200).

Consultation Guidelines

The overall purpose of this requirement for certification is to enrich your journey through the training and to support you to be the best facilitator possible. Many certified facilitators continue to have consultations even after certification to support them in their continued personal growth and to discuss situations that occur during their own workshops.

Consultations must be done with a Certified Holotropic Breathwork® Facilitator. At least five of the consultations need to be with a person on the GTT staff.

What and when

Consultations with certified facilitators are an important part of your journey through the training. We recommend spreading your consultations out over the course of your training. **Ten consultations** are the minimum requirement for certification. Many individuals in the training find the support beneficial and therefore choose to do more than ten. Most consultations will be approximately an hour, with the possible exception of the music consultation, which will need more time, as described below.

The purpose of consultations

These consultation sessions offer an opportunity for you to talk about your own personal process in HB, ask questions or share thoughts about the Holotropic perspective, and discuss any other issues that arise related to your participation in the training or being a facilitator.

Keeping a record:

It is your responsibility to keep a record of your consultations. Consultations offer us the opportunity of getting to know you better during your training. This gives us an opportunity to offer support. In addition to any personal, private journaling, please write one or two general sentences about each of your consultations, which we may ask you to share as part of your application for certification, or during your personal interview meeting that takes place at the closing certification intensive. A form for keeping track of your attendance at modules and consultations is included for your convenience.

Topics covered in consultations

These conversations are personal and individual. Some of the things you may be asked in your consultations are:

- What would you like to share about your life?
- What brought you to Holotropic Breathwork®?
- Tell us about your inner journey so far.
- How are you doing?
- How is it for you to sit for others during Holotropic Breathwork®?
- What has been most challenging for you in the training?
- How do you see Holotropic Breathwork® in your life once you are certified?
- How has it been to apprentice?

Music consultation

Included in the ten consultations must be one about the music set for Holotropic Breathwork® that you have created. Music consultations may be done online or in person. A list of current HB practitioners who are approved for music consultations provided in this information pack, see page 31.

Specifically for the music consultation you will be asked to talk through your music set: why you chose the pieces you chose, why you placed them where you placed them. Most of the time, changes to your set will be suggested. You will need to have a set of music 'approved' by the consulting practitioner as a requirement for certification.

Music consultations require a lot of input from whomever it is you consult with – time to listen through the set, time to make comments, and time in conversation with you to offer feedback about the set. It may be that a few 'rounds' of conversations and adjustments are needed. For this reason, we recommend that you check in with the facilitator you are having your music consultation with about how many hours the music consultation may involve and what the cost will be.

If your set is approved in advance of certification, and is in a fully playable state, you may request it be used as one of the music sets played at your certification intensive.

Cost

There is an hourly fee for consultations. Please check in with the facilitator regarding their fee. Many facilitators will offer a sliding fee scale or payment options.

List of GTT facilitators approved for the required music consultation

(Consultation fees applicable)

Name	Country	Contact Information
Anthony Olsen	Australia	maiworkshops@melbournebreathwork.com
Diana Medina	USA	medinachicaloca@aol.com
Dory Perry	USA	breathworkpittsburgh@gmail.com
Juanjo Segura	Spain	info@holotropica.org
Marc Aixalà	Spain	marc@holotropics.cat
Mireya Alejo	USA	mireyaam@gmail.com
Paul McCormack	Ireland	paulmccormack.bife@gmail.com
Peter Köllerer	Austria	peter@starmill.at
Sitara Blasco	Spain	info@holotropica.org
Stacia Butterfield	USA	nomadyes@me.com
Vicky Nicholson	Australia	vickynicholson@me.com

Record of facilitator training requirements

We strongly recommend tracking your training requirements using the template below:

Required modules	Date attended	Location/Leader
The Power Within		
The Holotropic Paradigm		
Music and Transcendence		
Spiritual Emergency		
Elective Modules	Title & Date	
1		
2		
3		
Ethics requirement		
Repeated or additional modules (if any)		
1		
2		

Required 10 workshops (In a group setting)	Date attended	Leader/Facilitator
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Apprenticing dates (4 apprenticeships required for Practitioner's Track)	Location	Facilitator/s
1		
2		
3		
4		

Consultations with certified practitioners (10 required – 1 of which must be specifically for music)	Date	Facilitator
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
Music Consultation		

Letter to the Holotropic Breathwork® Community from Stanislav and Christina Grof

Dear Participants in Holotropic Breathwork Training:

Many people in training, as well as potential trainees ask us why we require a minimum of two years of continuous training in Holotropic Breathwork before certification. We feel that this issue is so important that it deserves a few words of explanation. Holotropic Breathwork has certain important characteristics that differentiate it from many other forms of self-exploration and therapy. This is closely related to the fact that we work systematically with non-ordinary states of consciousness, which presents very specific emotional and philosophical challenges.

Since it employs very natural means, such as faster breathing and evocative music, Holotropic Breathwork might appear deceptively simple to a superficial observer. In addition, this approach relies on the spontaneous healing forces within the psyche and the body. The body work that we use is based on the clues coming from the experiences and the interventions consist in deepening and accentuating what is happening already. There is no complex system of techniques that one has to acquire. The basic principles of the breathwork can be taught within a few hours and it is easy to come to the conclusion that nothing more is necessary. We have encountered situations where people, some of whom were professionals, attended a single weekend seminar with us and felt immediately qualified to offer their own workshops.

However, as you know, a good facilitator has to have qualifications that lie far beyond a simple familiarity with mechanics. Holotropic Breathwork elicits a wide range of very unusual experiences that can be extremely dramatic. In addition, many of them are not understandable in the context of science. We have repeatedly seen that even professionals with full traditional training, who consistently see psychiatric patients in their clinical practice can have great difficulties working intimately with people in non-ordinary states of consciousness. To be able to effectively facilitate Holotropic sessions for others, we often have to go through a very profound personal transformation that has emotional, psychological, philosophical, and spiritual dimensions.

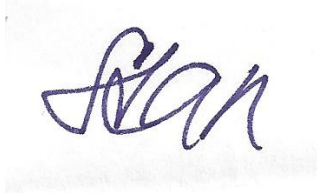
As you train to be Holotropic Breathwork facilitators, we ask you to work toward the capacity to remain unperturbed while providing support for people in all possible forms of non-ordinary states of consciousness, toward the ability to follow them wherever they have to go in their experiences, and toward maintaining trust in the intrinsic healing forces in them. We require that you do a considerable amount of deep personal work in order to reduce or eliminate certain problematic areas in the psyche, which are easily triggered when we assist in the intense emotional processes of other people. Your competence and self-confidence in this area will also grow as you observe a number of different states of mind in others and their successful resolution. For this reason, we require that you spend sufficient time in sessions guided by experienced facilitators in the modules and outside of them.

The Holotropic Breathwork training always combines theoretical lectures with experiential sessions, in which the trainees alternate in the roles of experiencers, sitters, and "floaters" or group supervisors. During the training, we also suggest that the trainees enter an apprenticeship relationship with certified facilitators to obtain additional practice and personal experience. Holotropic sessions engage deep levels of the unconscious and bring to the surface much unconscious material that requires sufficient time for integration. Personal experiences, as well as participation in the processing sessions with others, tend to bring about profound changes in our world view, philosophy, and system of values. This aspect of the process also requires time, since these changes are often in conflict with the beliefs and norms of the culture in which we live. For this reason, unlearning might be as important a part of the training as learning new things.

To summarize: We feel very strongly that a minimum of two years of systematic involvement with Holotropic Breathwork is a necessary requirement for training; this time limit serves the interests of your own personal and professional growth, as well as the integrity of the training program. It discourages the rapid accumulation of training modules without sufficient time for integration and offers the opportunities for additional experiences in peer groups or in apprenticeship with certified facilitators. This also means more opportunity to observe and participate in other people's process and to watch the work of facilitators. It has been our experience that most people need to be around the work for awhile to undergo the necessary transformation and to begin to really trust the process.

When you have completed the modules and apply for the certification intensive, we will ask you for a written record of the work you have done in Holotropic Breathwork, with the dates and places.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stan', written on a light-colored background.

Stanislav Grof, M.D.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Christina', written on a light-colored background.

Christina Grof, Ph.D.

PRINCIPLES OF HOLOTROPIC BREATHWORK®

BY STANISLAV AND CHRISTINA GROF

THEORETICAL POSITION:

A broad understanding of the human psyche that includes the biographical, perinatal, and transpersonal dimensions. Phenomena from all these domains are seen as natural and normal constituents of the psychological process; they are accepted and supported without preference.

Recognition of the fact that non-ordinary states of consciousness induced by Holotropic Breathwork® as well as similar states occurring spontaneously, mobilize intrinsic healing forces in the psyche and the body. As the process is unfolding, this “inner healer” manifests therapeutic wisdom which transcends the knowledge that can be derived from the cognitive understanding of an individual practitioner or from any specific school of psychotherapy or bodywork.

PRACTICAL APPROACH:

The basic elements in Holotropic Breathwork® are deeper and accelerated breathing, evocative music, and facilitation of energy release through a specific form of bodywork. This is complemented by creative expression, such as “mandala” drawing, and discussion of the experience. Holotropic Breathwork® can be conducted on a one-to-one basis, or preferable in a group situation, where participants alternate in the role of experiencers and “Sitters”.

Before the first breathing experience, participants receive an in-depth theoretical preparation which includes a description of the major types of phenomena that occur in Holotropic sessions (biographical, perinatal and transpersonal) and technical instructions for both experiencers and Sitters. Physical and emotional contraindications are discussed and if there are any concerns, expert assessment is obtained.

Holotropic Breathing is faster and deeper than usual; generally, no other specific instructions are given before or during the session as to the rate, pattern, and nature of breathing. The experience is entirely internal and largely nonverbal, without interventions. Exceptions are constriction in the throat, management problems, excessive pain or fear threatening the continuation of the session, and explicit request of the Breather.

Music (or other forms of acoustic stimulation -- drumming, nature sounds, etc.) is an integral part of the Holotropic process. Typically, the choice of music follows a characteristic pattern that reflects the most common unfolding of the Holotropic

experiences: at the beginning, it is evocative and stimulating, later it becomes increasingly dramatic and dynamic, and finally it reaches a breakthrough quality. Following the culmination, it is appropriate to shift gradually to quieter music and end with peaceful, flowing, and meditative selections. Although this seems to represent the statistical average, it should be modified if the energy in the group suggests that a different pattern is indicated.

The role of the Sitter during the session is to be responsive and non-intrusive, ensure effective breathing, create a safe environment, respect the natural unfolding of the experience, and provide assistance in all situations that require it (physical support, help during bathroom breaks, bringing tissues or a glass of water, etc.) It is important to remain focused and centered while facing the entire spectrum of possible emotions and behaviors of the Breather. Holotropic Breathwork® does not use any interventions that come from the intellectual analysis or are based on *a priori* theoretical constructs.

It is important to leave sufficient time for the sessions, usually between two and three hours. However, as a general rule, the process is allowed to reach a natural closure; in exceptional cases, this can take a few hours. In the termination period the facilitator offers bodywork (energy release work), if the breathing has not resolved all the emotional and physical tensions activated during the sessions. The basic principle of this work is to take the clues from the experiencer and create a situation where the existing symptoms are amplified while the energy and awareness is held in this area, the subject is encouraged to express fully his or her reaction, whichever form it takes. This form of bodywork energy release work is an essential part of the Holotropic approach and plays an important role in the completion and integration of the experience.

Facilitators of Holotropic Breathwork® should recognize that, when they utilize a technique which evokes a non-ordinary state in a client, there is a potential for unusually intense projections, including regressed longings for nurturing, sexual contact, or spiritual connection. These projections are often focused on the facilitator. In such cases the facilitator should be sensitive to the imbalance of power in the facilitator and client roles and take care to assist clients with such feelings as they arise. Facilitators make agreements to conduct their practice of Holotropic Breathwork® in an ethical manner.

Discussion groups take place on the same day after an extended break. During these sessions, the facilitator does not give interpretations of the material, based on a specific theoretical system, including that of Holotropic Breathwork®. It is preferable to ask the experiencer for further elaboration and clarification reflecting his or her insights from the session. Jungian amplification in the form

of mythological and anthropological references can be very useful in the discussion of the Holotropic experiences as well as the mandalas. On occasion, references to the facilitator's own experiences in the past or experiences of other people might be appropriate.

There are many approaches that complement Holotropic Breathwork®. However, whenever these are used, it should be clearly indicated that these are not a part of Holotropic Breathwork®. If the practice of conducting the sessions itself departs significantly from the above descriptions, the name Holotropic Breathwork® should not be used for such a procedure. We ask that it be replaced by a different term and not be associated with our names.

Stanislav and Christina Grof