

David Stowell Full spectrum Art
5113 Whitman way, #106 Carlsbad, CA.
92008

www.fsastudios.com

fullspectrumart@gmail.com

760.271.9995 3/28/2010

Final Paper for David Gibson,
Sound and Consciousness Institute

HOLOTROPIC BREATHWORK

As developed by Stanislav and Christina
Grof

INTRODUCTION

This past summer

while researching sound healing schools, I was drawn to a Sun Magazine article and interview, (August, 2009 issue 404) with Stanislav Grof on non-ordinary states of consciousness (N.O.S.C.)

Grof born in Prague Czech., where he went on to receive his MD from Charles Univ., and a PhD in Philosophy of medicine from the Czech. Academy of Sciences.

While he was a psychiatric resident, his research lab received a box of LSD ampules from Sandoz Labs in Switzerland. Grof was fascinated by the possibilities the new substance offered for psychiatry and psychology. Psychedelics and non-ordinary states of consciousness (N.O.S.C.) soon became the focus of his work.

From 1960-1967 Grof served as principal investigator in a psychedelic-research program, at the Psychiatric Research Institute

in Prague. Afterwards moved to Baltimore Maryland, to serve as a clinical and research fellow at John Hopkins University.

By the early 1970's funding and permission for psychedelic research had largely

ceased. In 1973 he was invited to serve as scholar- in- residence at the Esalen

Institute in Big Sur, Ca., where he conducted seminars and wrote until 1987. During this

time he and his wife Christina, developed "Holotropic breathwork," a drug-free

method of exploring N.O.S.C.

Holotropic breathwork is typically done in

groups, and participants work in pairs, alternating between the roles of the "breather," and the "sitter," who assists the breather. The Grofs have conducted sessions using this technique with more than thirty-five thousand people in the U.S., Asia, Europe, South America, and Australia. And have trained and certified more than a thousand breathwork facilitators.

After some study of "Holotropic breathwork," it is apparent that the use of breathwork, music and sound, body work, and Mandalic art, are powerful and gentle tools for healing, and

transformation. Stanislav takes the approach of allowing each person's inner healer to do the work, and facilitators assist in providing the catalyst or the supportive environment. The work

is derived from modern consciousness research, depth psychology and shamanic and spiritual practices. Which supports natural healing and growth through direct experience of N.O.S.C. (non-ordinary states of consciousness). Holotropic breathwork experiences tend to engage the inner radar, scanning the field, that brings into consciousness what's in the unconscious that has the strongest emotional charge, and is the most psycho-dynamically

relevant, and naturally available at the time. Using a hyperventilation breathing technique was opted after experimentation with many forms of breathing. The Grof's concluded that a specific technique of breathing is less important than the fact that the client is breathing faster and more effectively than usual, and with full concentration on and awareness of the "INNER PROCESS." It is a general strategy in holotropic therapy to trust in the intrinsic wisdom of the body. The client should be encouraged to listen to the inner cues from their organism, rather than follow any specific conceptual scheme. Increase of the rate and of the depth of

breathing, combined with provocative music and sound, typically loosens the psychological defenses and leads to release and emergence of the un-conscious and super conscious material.

Opening the gates beyond everyday reality reveals that we are fields of consciousness without limits....

After many years of research working with non-ordinary states of consciousness Dr. Grof has discovered there are archetypal states people go into in a varied and similar way. He discovered that re-living early traumas are a common experience of releasing and healing.

And it seems that Dr. Grof is saying the Womb experience and birth trauma, is a very

important influence on our perceptions of the world. The amount of time people spend exploring early childhood varies greatly. However continued work with n.o.s.c. lead an individual to leave the arena of their own history and move to entirely new territories. These new places have been systematically studied and held in high regard by ancient and pre-industrial cultures since the dawn of human history. They awaken a new perception of reality, and experiences of Universal Consciousness, and Oneness. Another aspect of holotropic breathwork which is of particular interest to me, is the use of Mandala drawing, which is incorporated in the process. Dr. Grof asserts that words and language have

meaning and context, and have an unlimited number of contexts and as many meanings. So the use of Mandalic drawing unlike words has an immediate message or sense, that is not given through language.

Archetypal images from the un-conscious and super-conscious come to the surface in a collective way, as a bridge, for healing, expanding, and growing.

To summarize, through this development of Transpersonal Holotropic Psychology, I feel it is another very powerful Healing work. Healing with breath, sound, visualization, intention, body work, and art are being used throughout the Globe. Having not yet personally experienced Grof's sessions, I can only give

an introduction to a very deep subject.
I am planning on participating in the
experience as soon as possible.
References are provided in the handout
attached.

David Stowell

3/28/2010