

On Advantages of the Clear Mind: Spiritual Practices in the Training of a Phenomenological Researcher

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The article describes the training of the mind of the researcher in the process of preparation for phenomenological psychological research. Training opens the direct intuition of the interior architecture and meaning contents of the lived embodied self, thus helping students to ground phenomenological concepts in their own lived experience. Training is based on the comparative analysis of the approaches to knowledge in phenomenology and in spiritual systems such as Hesychasm, Vedanta, Shaktā-Vedanta and Sufism. Husserl's method and spiritual systems share epistemological ground in the emphasis on the "knowledge by presence" and the use of direct intuition. Spiritual systems posit that the mind of the knower should be specially trained to have faculties such as discernment, healthy character structure, and self-awareness, which enhance the capacity of knowledge. This training, designed on the basis of meditation methods adapted for academic purposes, causes positive shifts in self-awareness, sense of identity and self-attitudes. The method has potential applications as a mnemonic technique in higher education and as an ego-strengthening intervention in cases of depersonalization or spiritual emergence in therapy.

"In the course of human knowledge man must first make his inquiry into his awareness of himself . . ." (Suhrawardi, 12th century [as quoted in Yazdi, 1992. p.94]).

Metascience shows that to understand the production of knowledge, one should study the researcher (Radnitzky, 1973). In natural science, this applies mainly to the researcher's social contexts. Within psychological qualitative research, more

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intimately human aspects prevail. Indeed, in a qualitative study the researcher's mind is the only vehicle for the new knowledge. As a research tool, the mind performs various mental procedures to penetrate the intricate interior structures of psychological processes. In that sense, qualitative research is not "egalitarian": The adequacy and effectiveness of the mind as a "tool" defines the capability of the researcher to perform the mental operations prescribed in the research procedure. Meditators (Shapiro & Walsh, 2003) and philosophers (SenSharma, 1990; Stewart, 1999) also use their minds as tools. Although concern of the philosopher is the "disciplined thought" (Giorgi, 1990, p.64) and concern of the meditator is decreasing the random activity of the mind, both engage in special training to change the quality of their mental processes. There are meditators and philosophers of differing caliber and capacity, depending on the predispositions and the capabilities of the mind. In psychological research practice, individual capabilities also transpire in the use of various methods. Consequently, the training of the mind may be of significant benefit to the researcher.

Comparative analysis of the ways of knowing implied in phenomenological research and in spiritual training suggests that successful qualitative, and especially phenomenological, research in psychology requires special mental faculties. Training of these faculties optimizes the preparation of graduate students doing qualitative research in psychology. Particular mental exercises, carefully chosen among other spiritual practices, increase the mental "fitness" of the phenomenological researcher. This article offers a detailed description of such training, suitable for the use in graduate education.

Phenomenological enquiry works off the descriptions of ordinary, everyday reality, variously referred to as the ordinary language, the everyday life, the main reality, the natural attitude, a common sense, and the everyday world. Psychological phenomenological method singles out the psychological dimension in this description. Knowledge of the depth structures of psychological processes is obtained through a series of reductions,¹ applied to the meanings found in this "naïve" description. The following step of imaginative variations (Giorgi, 1990; Mohanty, 1997) consists in subtracting and adding the elements of meaning in the discovered interior structure, verifying consistency of meaning with the original description. To do this, the researcher has to absorb the meanings of the original naïve description, "enter" the reduction mode of the mind, and make explicit the deeper, interior meanings contained in the description. In a series of shuttle-like movements between the original description, and explicated structure of meaning,

¹Phenomenological term, describing the transformation of meaning which allows one to access the underlying, more essential, ontologically prior structures within the same meaning. Reduction is at the core of descriptive phenomenological method. Husserl (1927/1999c) differentiated reductions of three levels, phenomenological, eidetic, and transcendental, dependent on the ontological level addressed.

the researcher attunes the final description in the direction of maximum explication and coherence with the original description. This step-by-step alignment uncovers the essential invariable constituents of the interior psychological fabric. The researcher also controls the interpretive level by bracketing his or her own theory-laden assumptions and tries to identify and “ground” the unconscious process involved in these assumptions (Giorgi, 1992, p.127).

Graduate students in psychology study this method after being exposed to the positivist scientific approach to consciousness in their prior schooling. Obviously, the assumptions and the language of phenomenology differ from those of positivist philosophy. The clash between pervasive positivist ideas and phenomenology as a system of thought becomes really evident in the intense and emotionally charged cognitive conflicts which emerge in the classroom. In addition, phenomenological study cannot be abstracted from one’s life experience. Besides the dazzling intellectual focus, it demands self-enquiry, thus involving the “whole being” of the student. If this passes unreflected, the study of the method will be “hijacked” by psychological defenses and personal agendas. The epistemological rigor of a properly performed phenomenological research ensures its attractiveness for the serious students. But by the time the crucial “Aha!” is reached, half of the students may be caught in frustration and tension between the intuition of the possibilities of the method and the perceived inability to grasp it. This article offers the solution to this situation, based on the author’s experience of teaching phenomenological method for dissertation research in transpersonal psychology.

Dissertation research in transpersonal psychology addresses a wide variety of topics on the boundary between psychology and spirituality, which brings new challenges to phenomenological research methods. Examples of research topics in transpersonal psychology include psychosomatic mysticism (Louchakova & Warner, 2003), spiritual experiences induced by cultural trauma (Wall & Louchakova, 2002), dream yoga (Stefik, 1999), nonordinary states of consciousness in multigenerational family patterns (Little, 2004), science as a path to God (Kuhar, 2004), and the meditative practices of selflessness (Carey, 2004). Focus on spirituality as lived experience aggravates the complexity of phenomenological analysis by several factors. First, transpersonal research stretches the capacity of the regular phenomenological psychological method to integrate the highest levels of consciousness (“spirit”) into the psychological analysis. Instead of staying within the phenomenological or eidetic reductions, which is the common procedure of the descriptive phenomenological method, the researcher needs to engage in transcendental reduction as well. Second, even the naïve descriptions of spontaneous spiritual experiences already contain naturally happening transcendental or eidetic reductions. The mode of reduction itself becomes the part of the natural world of the participant. People experiencing spiritual emergence may describe experiences such as connectedness to everything; ego-dissolution; insight into the absolute Truth, Love, or Knowledge; or

presence to the origins of consciousness (Louchakova, 2004a). The life world of a mystic is different from the life world of a nonmystic not only by the meaning structure, which is transcendent of the individual ego. Consequently, the criteria of what can be considered the natural attitude, the starting point of phenomenological analysis, will be different from the commonly accepted. Third, spiritual experience frequently has a component of “embodiment” (Louchakova, 2004b). This is reflected in the concept of the subtle body and centers of spiritual consciousness associated with the body schema, common to all spiritual traditions (Louchakova & Warner, 2003). Hence, the researcher needs to work with both the meaning contents and the structures of spiritual perception (Louchakova, in press). The phenomenological analysis of the altered states of consciousness, then, needs a method to capture this “transcendental phenomenology of perception”. The question then is, whether the researcher’s mind should have access to the similar forms of spiritual perception to be able to work with the descriptions of his or her research participants.

Multiple tensions between the analysis of the ego, the analysis of the transcendental ego (Mohanty, 1997), and the *terra incognita* in the structural analysis of spiritual perception result in the absence of a defined phenomenological method for transpersonal matters. The training procedure, described in this article, is a step toward such a method. Observations (of students and myself) show that the success of the phenomenological method, applied to transpersonal psychology, depends entirely on the mental discipline of the researcher and his or her rigor in the identifying of individual presuppositions. Together with the deep personal meaningfulness of the research participant to the researcher, encouraged in transpersonal psychology, phenomenological research challenges the very sense of identity of the students, and turns into a process of personal transformation. Adding spiritual practices to the training of transpersonal researchers thus becomes an aid and a container for this transformation.

The educational technique, described in the following, helps to build an aptitude for the phenomenological research method. It was tested in teaching phenomenological research to 10 cohorts (192 students) of graduate students and 1 cohort (12 students) of undergraduate students at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology in 2001–2004.

RATIONALE

The epistemological rationale for the training of individual mind capabilities to enhance aptitude for knowledge clearly emerges from an analysis of the practices of knowing in Vedanta, Shakta–Vedanta, Sufism, and Hesychasm (the early mystical tradition within Christianity). Traditional texts, studies of the practicing groups in Russia, Estonia, India, Turkey, and France, and interviews with living teachers, ac-

knowledge as experts in their respective traditions, were used as the information base for the comparative analysis of training methods.

Spiritual traditions can be seen as the phenomenological knowledge systems (Louchakova & Warner, 2003), where spiritual practices are used to train better faculties of knowing. In their research focus on a conscious person, spiritual traditions can be compared to human science. Traditions sum up the centuries of the use of special practices which refine perception, improve cognitive processes, and positively change the emotional sphere. It seems plausible that the use of such practices, disengaged from their archetypal religious connotations, will facilitate proficiency in the phenomenological method by changing the qualities of the mind of the researcher. The objective of cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural transfer of transformative practices leads to questions regarding the very possibility of training the knowledge ability, the ethical contexts of such a training, the effectiveness of practice taken out of context, the degree of predisposition, the adequacy for the academic setting, etc. To answer some of these questions, the article presents (a) an analysis of spiritual traditions as knowledge training systems, (b) a comparison of the ways of knowing in spiritual traditions and phenomenological research, (c) an analysis of mind faculties traditionally needed for knowledge, (d) description of, and application of, spirituality-based training of the mind in the preparation for the phenomenological research, and (e) an examination of the results of such training.

SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS AS KNOWLEDGE TRAINING SYSTEMS

Spiritual philosophies are generally interested in the ways of knowing as applied to a commonplace maxim, *gnothi seauton* (From the Greek, “know thyself”). Self-knowledge gives happiness and fulfillment (Vidyāranya, 14th century/1967). The stakes are high, so the methodology should not fail. Epistemology becomes grounded in living practice, expressed as attention to connections between the capacity of knowing and the state of consciousness, mental and emotional qualities, and even the practitioner’s constitution (Heer, 1993). Spiritual practice becomes an aid to develop the personal epistemological “fitness” as mental qualities, which help certain ways of knowing. For example, philosophical schools of antiquity put forward self-awareness and discernment as prerequisites to self-knowledge (Stewart, 1999). Hebrew, Egyptian, Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman geniuses alike emphasized the equanimity of the mind as a highest value, as condensed in the famous phrase of Horace (1997, ii.3) “*Aequam ... servare mentem*” (from the Latin, “keep the clear/steady mind”). Merkabah (early Jewish mysticism; Scholem, 1946) and Hesychasm (early Christian mysticism; St. Simeon the new Theologian, 8th century/1995) were specifically interested in the direct apprehension of the Deity (Kirk, 1931) and developed a spe-

cial set of attitudinal and ascetic purification practices which prepared the mind for such a contemplation. In Islam, which emphasizes a phenomenological method as the central means to know (Schimmel, 1994), mind has to be prepared by combination of awareness and devotion practices (Abd-al-Kader, 1995), in the context of overall personal transformation (Dahnhardt, 2002; Frager, 1999).

Eastern traditions of self-knowledge, such as Indian Vedanta, Shakta–Vedanta (SenSharma, 1990) or Sankhya (Larson, 1979), maintain that true knowledge of consciousness is inseparable from transformative practice. This manifests in very concrete methodological instructions and exercises, developing the qualities that serve as prerequisites for knowledge. The training looks more like actualization of the dormant predispositions, rather than developing something anew, internalizing something, or being imprinted by a new conditioning. Vedanta, whose objective is nondual self-knowledge, emphasizes the harmonious character structure, an orderly lifestyle, and a “clear mind” (Akarta, 1996, Rambachan, 1991; Shankaracharya, 8th century/1947). The “clear mind” or, to be exact, “clear internal instrument” (*antahkarana shuddhi*, from the Sanskrit) has no direct correlates in the western vocabulary. It implies the wholeness and “transparency” of the psyche to its own internal process. In the hermeneutic cycle, self-knowledge, available to this “clear mind,” causes the further transformation of the mind in the direction of greater clarity and aptitude for knowledge. “Through repeated practice, Knowledge purifies the embodied soul stained by ignorance” (Shankaracharya, 8th century/1947, p.129). According to Shankaracharya, whom Indian historians consider to be a genius akin to Leonardo, Shakespeare, and Hegel taken together (Bharati, 1991), the gestalt of true nondual consciousness is possible only if the seeker’s mind is clear and his or her character has certain qualities of integrity (Karapatra, 1990; Tandavaraya, 15th century/1993). Similar to the clear reflection of the sun in a bucket with the clean calm water versus the distorted reflection in muddy disturbed water, the gestalt of the essential nature of consciousness happens only in a “clear” mind.

Spiritual practice enhances the emergence of the self-knowledge and character development. Details of this process may differ. For example, *Advaita* [nondual] Vedanta lists four qualifications necessary for self-knowledge such as discernment, sense of satisfaction, good moral character and total dedication (Rambachan, 1991), and does not go into the intricacies of character development. Shakta–Vedanta (a.k.a. Kundalini Tantra) specifies a more complicated developmental map similar to that of Sufism. The levels of personal transformation in Shakta-Vedanta parallel the changes of perception and the levels of knowledge (Louchakova & Warner, 2003). Some of the types of knowledge in Shakta–Vedanta include the indirect conceptual knowledge of something which is not immediately available to senses; the knowledge obtained through external senses; the direct apprehension of phenomena in the interiority of consciousness such as symbols, meaning, and imagination; and the self-knowledge of pure con-

consciousness which is neither direct nor indirect (Shankaracharya, 8th century/1993). On one side, these different ways of knowing, except the nondual knowledge, are the natural equipment of the living self. On the other side, they can be discretely trained. Contrary to the popular opinion of yoga as a fitness system, or Tantra as a good sex system, classic Yoga or Tantra Yoga are examples of the systematic use of practices which train the mind (Bangali, 1990; Buddhananda, 1971; *Vijnanabhairava*, 1979). In the living tradition, there are examples of how one, using the specific yoga practices of focusing, can be trained to use logic, or to use the refined senses to be a skillful craftsman or musician. One can also be trained to open the inner seeing of the contents of consciousness such as symbols or meaning.

The knowledge of pure consciousness stands apart from the other ways of knowing. According to Vedanta, this type of knowledge does not emerge by itself but needs to be established by a teacher. On the rise of this knowledge, one becomes a *jnani* (the person of self-knowledge, from the Sanskrit), and enjoys a direct insight into the nature of consciousness. The preparation for self-knowledge uses the specific mental devices called *Vedanta pramana* (means of ultimate knowledge, from the Sanskrit; Dayananda, 1993) and also involves the whole being of the practitioner. “Jnana [knowledge of consciousness-self] is not only a process at a cognitive level but involves the transformation of will and emotion ... cognitive change alone is inadequate for the commitment to a new understanding of oneself” (Rambachan, 1991, p.87).

All spiritual systems begin the training of the faculties of knowledge in the natural condition of the human being, that is consciousness of the phenomenological life world. The journey of knowledge begins with assuming the observing, witnessing attitude toward phenomena. All systems agree that self-knowledge further requires introspective attention, the capability of explication of the interior structures and contents of consciousness, and the capacity of the direct recognition of the nature of pure consciousness. According to the oral tradition of Vedanta, the deployment of and bringing to awareness the interior structures of consciousness happens only in the so called “open mind,” which is a condition resulting from the specific practices (Sri Ranjit Maharaj, personal communication, May 4, 1996). Open mind means that the mind opens to depth-phenomenological self-exploration, where the contents of sub- and unconscious (using rather crude translation of the process into western vocabulary) and consciousness per se is brought to immediate awareness. “It is only the experience which contemplation (From the Sanskrit *nididhyasana*—direct perception of the contents of consciousness) affords that conclusively informs us about Brahman (nondual self-consciousness)” (Rambachan, 1991, p. 14). Hindu and Muslim spiritual philosophies developed the theory of “knowledge by presence.” Nasr (1992, p.xii) defines the “knowledge by presence” as the knowledge of something present in the mind, whose very existence is inseparable from the

knowledge of it, such as phenomena of the inner life or immediate experience of sensory perception. This existence–knowledge of phenomena in consciousness is opposed to knowledge of something which exists is absent from the mind, and of which mind creates the representation only such as external objects or processes. The example of the first kind of knowledge will be the memory of the text of this article, and consequent understandings, after putting the article away. The example of the second kind of knowledge will be the reader’s knowledge of the printed text of this article while first reading. The knowledge by presence in the first case will be, of course, the close correspondent of direct intuition, the foundational pillar of Husserl’s phenomenological method (Louchakova, in press; Tymieniecka, 2002).

In considering the data rendered by knowledge and by presence, various spiritual philosophies differ in their interpretations of the phenomenological data. There are differences in suggested ontological hierarchies, in functional groupings of experience such as chakras, and there are different perspectives on spatiality, temporality, archetypal, and symbolic contents. But, against this diversity of interpretive, philosophical, cultural, and historical perspectives, all spiritual systems are primarily phenomenological knowledge systems based on the data of immediate self-experience of a conscious participant. This important point connects the spiritual enquiry with the enquiry of the phenomenological philosophy. Both perspectives require the aspirant to have faculties such as: (a) a capacity for introspection, (b) a capacity to directly apprehend the interiority of consciousness and pure consciousness, and (c) control of the random activity of the mind. However, the millennia old spiritual systems identify the prerequisites in the mind and character for the development of these capabilities, and use spiritual practices to train them. Phenomenology, still being in its youth as a philosophy of scientific knowledge, takes these aptitudes of the mind for granted.

KNOWLEDGE IN PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH

In phenomenological psychological descriptive method, the subject matter of the study is intentional consciousness. Husserl’s (1999b) description of intentional consciousness, which in the process of knowledge “grasps” its own phenomena, assumes the direct apprehension of consciousness by consciousness. The latter is the foundation of any knowledge activity such as sensory perception or reasoning. *Noesis*, the immediate apperception of noemata by awareness, is a constant activity, rooted in the innate sentiency of consciousness. As Husserl (1999b) says, the noetic “grasping” of noemata is an essential activity of consciousness foundational to all cognition. By noesis, the phenomena of mental life appear sentient, conscious.

Every intentive mental process is precisely noetic ... It is of its essence to include in itself something such as a 'sense,' and possibly a manifold sense on the basis of the sense bestowal and, in unity with that, to effect further productions which become 'senseful' precisely by this sense bestowal (Husserl, 1999b, p.87).

Noesis is always there, always in the background, as a known-ness of things within a unified set of cognitions, "awareness is" and "awareness of something." The relationship within the noesis–noemata duo is paradoxical – although noemata are in constant flux, the awareness of them is unchanging. However, mentally differentiated from one another, they present no "spatial gap" between the two. Their existence is indivisible and they are distinguished only for the sake of analysis. This unity of phenomenal and pure awareness is implicit to consciousness.

Intentional consciousness both "see[s] and seize[s] upon" (Kersten, as quoted in Mohanty, 1997, p.9). The "seeing" part is not different from knowledge by presence in mystical philosophies (Yazdi, 1992).² Phenomenological eidetic intuition seems to be the same faculty as the Islamic intuition of essences and of existence, the fundamental basis of Islamic phenomenological metaphysics (Al-Attas, 1990).

The interior mental protocols of knowing are very similar between the systems. The phenomenological attitude (Giorgi, 1990) resembles the foundational shift of attention initiating training in all spiritual systems, that is, shift to witnessing consciousness. Phenomenological *epoché*, the mental move of "backing up" onto the interior foundational contents of meaning, reorients the vector of attention in the direction of pure subjectivity. Kundalini or Classic Yoga practices the same inward direction of attention, focus on interiority of consciousness, examination of assumptions, and eventually focus of the attention on pure subjective consciousness. Eastern Yoga, however, works primarily with perception, paying no attention to meaning. In Eastern Christian Prayer of the Heart or Islamic *Dhikr* (practices involving meditation on the archtypes of Divine) the analogy becomes fuller due to involvement of the dynamics of meaning.

Although there are essential similarities between phenomenology and spiritual systems, there are also radical differences. Certainly, the similarity of knowledge-related protocols does not imply the similarity of interpretive frames or an identity between the systems. Phenomenology rarely makes ontological claims—spiritual systems always do. Interpretations in spiritual systems are frequently considered as revelations and will not be subject to bracketing until the very last step of the enquiry. For example, in the process of self-knowledge in Vedanta, phenomenological self-examination is accompanied by the application

²The other function, "to seize upon," is generally interpreted in spiritual traditions as a mode of identification by which pure subjective "I" consciousness is conditioned by the perceived phenomena. For example, In Vedanta this mode of mind is known as *ahamkara*, the "I-body-maker" (from the Sanskrit).

of *Vedanta pramana*, which is a special logic allowing recognition of nondual consciousness. *Pramana* continues until the last step, *manollasa* (from the Sanskrit—dissolution of the mind or the ego principle), when the mental processes subside in contemplation of nonduality (Karapatra, 1990). Phenomenology, on the contrary, begins and ends with the bare data of one's experience of living. So, the similarity is in the knowledge method, or, one may say, in the ontological foundations and epistemological focus of the method but not in the systems on the whole.

Other differences arise concerning questions of essences. Theorists argue whether essences are subject to direct apprehension and have a phenomenological nature (Mohanty, 1997). The spiritual epistemology of Islam considers that human essence, that is, the primal relationship between man and God, is available to "knowledge by presence." The many aspects of this primal relationship (which corresponds to the levels of interpretation in Koran) bear an interesting similarity to the structures of consciousness discovered in phenomenological analysis (Mohanty, 1997, p. 6). Another interesting similarity between spiritual philosophies and phenomenology of the self (Wiley, 1995) is that the spiritual philosophies of Islam and Hinduism always consider the structures within consciousness as *sui generis*. Essential structures of consciousness in Islamic philosophy are characterized by principal autonomy, or ontological and logical primacy (Ibn al-Arabi, 1975), and cannot be reduced to either cultural or personal contexts.

Both the Islamic approach to *marifat* (from the Arabic), knowledge, and the *gnosis* of Christian mysticism (Andrae, 1987), consider imagination as a cognitive organ by which consciousness knows itself (Corbin, 1969, 1995). In phenomenological enquiry, imagination is involved in the process of imaginative variations, as an essential tool that allows stripping off the accidental parts of the description and explication of the essential parts. The phenomenological researcher performs the imaginary removal of the elements of the description, checking whether the meaning remains the same (Mohanty, 1997). The functioning of imagination, and the direct apprehension of the phenomena in imaginal realms by awareness without an intermediary, resemble the method of the Islamic philosopher Suhrawardi, one of the founders of the approach of knowledge by presence (Suhrawardi, 1185/1999).

Mohanty (1997, p. 15), in his analysis of Scheler, indicates that there are difference in goals attached to knowledge. In spirituality, knowledge aims at internal fulfillment. In phenomenological psychological research, knowledge is a product which has to be, insofar as this is possible, separated from the researcher. As any scientific knowledge, it is intended largely for the practical transformation of the world. However, the anecdotal accounts of phenomenological researchers show that in the actual process, a phenomenological stance toward life changes the person engaged in research. If this is so, the differences pertain not to the character of knowing, but to the focus of enquiry and application of results. Knowledge in spirituality has to remove the fear of death, alleviate existential suffering, and render a

sense of satisfaction and fullness through recognition of the nature of the transcendental self. Most cases of phenomenological psychological enquiry lead only as far as the knowledge of the individual mind. Nevertheless, the character of knowing is the same, by presence, not by logical processes.

The interface between phenomenology and spiritual knowledge systems may be more direct than appears through the analytic parallels. The recently published letters of Husserl indicate that the founder of phenomenology was fundamentally inspired by religious motivation (Schmitz-Perrin, 1996). He wanted the new type of philosophy to help contemplatives in their search for "God." Edmund Husserl himself characterized his research as an a-religious search for God and for real life. The rigorous unbiased investigation of lived intentional consciousness, while analyzing its horizon of transcendence, lead him to say in 1935 to one of his students:

The life of man is nothing but a path toward God. I am trying to reach this goal without theological proofs, methods and any theological grounding; I am looking forward to reaching God without God. I have to eliminate God from my scientific life in order to clear a path toward God for the ones who do not have the certitude of believing what the Church is claiming (Husserl, as quoted in Schmitz-Perrin, 1996).

LIMITATION OF THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MENTAL QUALITIES

To choose and adapt the methods of spiritual training for the phenomenological research, the author attempted to interpret the traditional character and mind prerequisites in terms of their western psychological counterparts. Simple as it may seem, this comparative analysis brings out a set of methodological problems. First, there is a problem of cross-cultural comparison, connected with the cultural construction of the mental qualities and cultural relativity of the self (Cushman, 1995; Shweder, 1991). For example, the detachment from the social responsibilities recommended as one of the prerequisites to knowledge in Vedanta, makes very little sense in the western world. It easily makes sense in the context of Indian karma notion, which implies that nonattachment serves to interrupt the causal chain of events leading to reproduction of suffering and future incarnations. However, the interior outcome of detachment, such as the capacity of one-pointed attention on the contents of the self, will be ontologically common to both western industrial and Indian traditional culture.

The second problem is associated with the different categories used in explanation of the human being. Psychology uses personality theory with "traits" and "states," psychoanalysis speaks about self and character, spiritual systems also use the categories of self and character, but give them content different from that of psychoanalysis. Consequently, the qualities within these systems will not be ex-

actly comparable. The notion of personality traits, for example, has a very limited application in spiritual systems. The latter take human being in developmental and environmental contexts, and see emotions and consciousness as associated with the whole body (Louchakova & Warner, 2003).

FACULTIES OF THE MIND NECESSARY FOR KNOWLEDGE

Despite the limitations of comparative analysis between phenomenology and spiritual systems, the practice of knowledge and the character of knowledge inherent to self, are quite comparable, if not the same, in both. In developing the “fitness” of the mind for this knowledge, traditions indicate the following essential qualities.

Viveka (discrimination, from the Sanskrit), is the capacity of discernment real and unreal, that is, between cognitions of constant and changing elements of the mind, and eventually between the pure awareness and the phenomenal awareness. *Vairagya* (dispassion, from the Sanskrit) means dispassion due to cessation of resolved or satisfied desires. Vedanta establishes these as prerequisites to the knowledge of the Self. Next, the group of six qualities includes the control of mind, control of senses, cessation of social activity, control of passions and endurance, settling down to reflect on the nature of consciousness, and faith. Last is *mumukshutvam*, the passionate desire for liberation (from the Sanskrit; Tandavaraya, 15th century/1947). Dispassion and other qualities correspond to the integrated personality structure, which copes well with frustration and has a characterological and existential maturity where the satisfied lower needs of Maslow’s hierarchy have developed into the higher needs.

Shakta–Vedanta emphasizes humility, modesty, nonviolence, endurance, simplicity, purity, persistence, self-control, etc. (*Srimad Bhagavat Gita*, 1983, p.425–429). These qualities also correspond to the higher ranks in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, low levels of narcissism, and a high degree of personal integration.

Sufism states that the mind in its natural condition has “veils.” Removing the veils requires persistence in study, contemplation, spiritual discipline and exercise (Heer, 1993). The main *quest* is to develop a mind of the heart, that is, direct intuition (Louchakova, in press), versus knowledge by logical processes.

Hesychasm recommends the “heart . . . purified through watchfulness” (St. Simeon, 10th century/1995, p. 75). Stages of purification of the heart include watching over the heart and curtailing the passions rising from it, repulsing temptations to external senses, and detaching entirely and giving oneself to God. Hesychasm suggests applying mindfulness to sensations, emotions, and thoughts; developing the inward vector of attention; and developing a focus on the phenomenological origins of consciousness associated with the sense of self in the chest. Discrimination between the knowledge by concept and the knowledge by presence via engagement of bodily

concentration in the chest has no parallels in psychology. However, if one tracks the “eidetic intuition” of phenomenology (Mohanty, 1997) to its origins in Greek thought, the connection with the Gnostic “mind of the heart” becomes apparent.

Along with the qualities of the mind that are essential for gnosis, there are mental obstacles or deficiencies, which inhibit the attainment of knowledge. Sufism mentions more than a thousand veils, such as disturbing emotions, false unexamined intellectual assumptions, dissociation with the actual experience, etc., as well as an immature character structure that can interfere with the clarity of direct perception. Yoga maintains that mind has a threefold constitution, that of *sattva* (transparency, clarity, positivity, subtlety, from the Sanskrit), *rajas* (activity, dynamism, from the Sanskrit), and *tamas* (darkness, inertia, sloth, dissociation, from the Sanskrit). For the mind to become the tool of knowledge, *tamas* has to be transmuted into *rajas*, and the latter into *sattva*.

Analysis shows that in developing the aptitude to knowledge, spiritual traditions target two interconnected aspects: character transformation and the training of the perceptual faculties. In adapting the spiritual training for academic purposes, the focus on character transformation does not seem appropriate but the training of perceptual faculties seemed quite manageable. For training purposes, spiritual practices had to be taken out of their particular sociocultural context. In a sense, the focus was on the explication of the transformative essence of the practices, taken in relation to the general human capacity of knowledge, and abstracted, insofar as it is possible, from cultural contexts. A number of researchers showed that this abstraction of the essence of the practice is possible. Antonov and Vaver (1989), Louchakova (1990), Gurdjieff as described in Ouspenski (1949/1976), Torchinov (1997) and Walsh (1999) discovered common generalizable structures in practices, which can be creatively adapted in cross-cultural transmission. These discoveries became a foundation for the development of the training of the phenomenological researcher.

Phenomenological researchers are likely to agree that the enquiry requires patience, receptivity, sustained focused attention, emotional harmony, inspiration regarding the subject matter, and some degree of characterological maturity. Similarly, epistemology in many spiritual systems concludes that great intellectual power has to be necessarily combined with a heart full of love. Resulting knowledge is “not simply cerebral, but belongs to the realms of heart-intellect” (Nasr, 1992, p. xiii). This specific preparedness of the “heart-intellect” is especially important for research in transpersonal psychology with its consideration for the breadth of human experience.

PILOT STUDIES FOR THE MIND TRAINING

In the preliminary studies conducted in 1992–1999, the author used a spectrum of concentration practices of psychosomatic mysticism, related to the development of

knowledge (Antonov, 2003; Antonov & Vaver, 1989). The practices were approved in classes in philosophy and religion at the California Institute of Integral Studies, training of ministers in the StarrKing School for the ministry, and training of the psychologists of both PhD and Master's levels in several schools in California. Pilot studies showed that psychosomatic practices target different conditions of the mind and therefore can be adjusted for the purposes of the training of perception and direct intuition.

The author focused on practices that specifically increase the internal presence, that is the availability of the phenomena of inner life to awareness. Specifically, these were practices involving concentration in the chest, attention to the embodied sense of self, and potentially opening a perception of the interior space of the body which is experienced *as in* the phenomenological space of the self.

In contrast to the common interest in Buddhism among the researchers of consciousness, these practices belong to Shakta–Vedanta schools of Indian Tantrism, Hesychasm and Sufism (Louchakova & Warner, 2003). Some of them are used in contemporary eclectic schools of spirituality (Kungurtsev & Luchakova, 1997). These practices work with the “felt” sense of self, and open the access to interior spatial phenomenological correspondents of all psychological processes such as perception, cognition or motivation, that is the direct perception of the interior structure or contents of the self. Tantrik practices combine awareness with directing attention to particular zones of interior space, known as chakras, centers, or meridians. According to several co-researchers, these practices provide a faster maturation of awareness and a better aptitude to knowledge than traditional types of Buddhist mindfulness. The payoff may consist of a rapid opening of unconscious, known as spiritual emergency. Avoiding this rapid opening was a matter of special concern in development of the training.

Also, the spatial, body-based maps of the psyche, such as the Tantrik map of the coverings (*kosha*, from the Sanskrit) of the Self (Siddharameshwar, 1998), accommodate the vectors of interrelatedness and intrasubjectivity, although the bodyless maps, such as Buddhist Abhidhamma, emphasize only the intersubjective consciousness. Consequently, we used the spatial, body-based approaches to the training as more suitable for the enhancement of direct intuition.

Description of the Training

The training consisted of three stages. These were offered at the introduction to qualitative research, during participation in a research group focused on a particular research topic, and within the advanced methods seminar. The overview of the whole process is followed by a detailed description of methods.

As always in meditative training (Goleman, 1977), mindfulness practice formed the foundation. The particular types of mindfulness differentiated the modalities of awareness, such as sensory, emotional, intellectual, and imaginal and also discrimi-

nated between the subjective “I”-consciousness and the activities of “seeing” or “feeling.” The modality, developed for the training, was a synthetic adaptation of the Christian practice of “sobriety” (St. Hesychios the Priest, 5th century/1979; St. Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain, 18th century/1989), in conjunction with Malamatia Sufi practices, and instructions of the contemporary spiritual master Jean Klein (Klein, 1994, p. 94). As shown in his writings, Klein, a western initiate into Shakta–Vedanta and Yoga, was strongly influenced by western phenomenology.

This type of mindfulness was rigorous in its disidentification with the phenomena. In comparison with popular *Theravada* mindfulness systems such as *Vipassana* in the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin (Goenka, n. d.), this approach provides rapid identification of witnessing, faster access to subconscious material and to the experience of pure consciousness (according to the accounts of practitioners proficient in both systems). It is very effective in identification of the basic assumptions—quality useful both for the personal growth and for the successful phenomenological psychological research.

The developed awareness of the interior mental processes helps to prepare for the second stage of training, the self-reflective questionnaire which identifies the best-suited research paradigm. The third stage of training, offered as the part of the advanced methods seminar, consisted of the technique of focused introspection on the sense of self in the chest. This technique opened the interior map of the psyche and refined the awareness of its subtle elements. Overall, this succession reflected the naturally occurring cycle of spiritual practice, from elementary forms of awareness to self-reflection, and then to more advanced forms of self-awareness.

Training Stage 1: Four Modalities of Awareness

At Stage 1 of the training, students were advised to practice daily for 30 min for a period of 10 weeks. The following instructions were given:

Assume a convenient posture. Draw attention inward (if necessary, close eyes), and become aware of the inner space of the body. Then, establish an attitude of “welcoming” toward the rising experiences. Be alert, yet relaxed. After inner presence and clarity are established, identify the four modalities of spontaneously rising inner experiences: sensing, feeling, imagining, and thinking.

Further introspection consisted of observing the flow of spontaneously rising inner experience and commenting on the rising modalities: “I sense,” “I feel,” “I think,” “I imagine.”

Labeling of the rising interior modalities developed the habit of identification and bracketing of the assumptions and frees the phenomenal field of inner experience from a dependency on learned attitudes. The internal “naming” of modalities distinguished this practice from a simple witnessing of inner experience. Although

difficult in the beginning, “naming” increased alertness, caused the faster opening of the deep psyche, and facilitated the processing of the rising contents of consciousness. This commenting acknowledged both sides of the equation contained in statements such as, “I sense,” such as the subject “I” and the activity directed at the objects. Hence, attention became accustomed to identify both nodes of the perceptual field, thus restructuring awareness and training it to notice its own origin. This last element, returning attention to its source, is known to have a beneficial “purification” effect on the mind of the practitioner, as shown in the study of Bader (1990). Over time, this internal “naming” could be cancelled because all the elements of internal experience became highly differentiated and noticeable.

The students were requested to describe the results of the process phenomenologically with the use of structured feedback forms with sections such as name and date, duration and contents of practice, highlights of practice, “what did I learn?”, and requests and questions for the instructor.

Training Stage 2: Identifying the Research Paradigm

Stage 2 of the training consisted of work with the self-reflective multiple-choice questionnaire of the researcher, to identify the paradigmatic “predisposition” of one’s mind. As awareness of one’s assumptions has been established (Stage 1), students became progressively more aware of the conflict between the conscious desire to use the qualitative methods and the internalized positivist thinking inherent in the whole culture of higher education. The questionnaire was based on the Handbook of Qualitative Research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), and allowed students to identify and bracket the unconscious identification with the natural scientific approach, and also to curb the tendency to logical a priori theory building. An example of a question is “What is the nature of knowledge I want to obtain?” with the following three response choices:

1. “I want to come up with a hypothesis (verified or non-falsified) that will be regarded as probable facts or laws. This knowledge should allow later formulating a theory, maybe a new paradigm; in other words, it should be able to be summed up” (*positivism/postpositivism*).

2. “I want to come up with insights that may be transformed in the future, as ignorance and misapprehension give way to more enlightened insights. This knowledge will grow and change as consciousness develops in the course of history, and can be generalized when historical and cultural circumstances are similar across settings” (*critical theory*).

3. “I want to come up with the understanding that would serve achieving a consensus. My research may result in multiple ‘knowledges,’ which can coexist when equally informed interpreters disagree, or when ethnic, cultural and other diverse circumstances may differentiate the interpreters. I want to obtain knowledge which

would allow the emergence of continuous revisions in a dialectical context (nonviolent confrontations reaching synthesis) with changes likely to occur when consciousness develops. This knowledge can not be generalized but the approach to receiving this knowledge should work again and again in situations with different experience” (*constructivism*).

The full questionnaire consisted of nine questions, which covered the stages of research such as formulating the pilot study, clarifying research questions, style of engagement with the material, outcomes, etc.—the full procedure for qualitative research.³

Training Stage 3: Accessing Knowledge by Presence

Stage 3 consisted of body-based focusing, which opens the Gnostic “mind of the heart.” The concept of the “mind of the heart” originates from the discoveries of the ancients that the phenomenological emergence of meaning happens in the inner space of the chest (Louchakova, in press; Spidlík, 1986). Introspection into the “inner space of the chest” allows one to apprehend the layers of the psychological and spiritual life, organized as concentric circles around the central phenomenon of the subjective consciousness-self. The mind then acquires spatial representation and its different manifestations can be mapped through the layers of absorption of consciousness in the inner space of the chest. The “inner space of the chest” is the experiential domain of the knowledge by presence, that is direct apprehension of the contents and structures of consciousness, bypassing the functioning of physical senses or workings of the intellect (Louchakova, in press). This area in the inner space of the body is known in Hesychasm, Sufism and Shaktā-Vedānta as the Spiritual Heart, the subtle center of embodied consciousness (Louchakova & Warner, 2003). The focusing techniques of meditation on the Spiritual Heart enhance the awareness of the interiority of the psyche, and lift the habitual identifications with unexamined concepts, thus facilitating “bracketing” in phenomenological enquiry.

The phenomenological discovery of the heart as a seat of mind sweeps across spiritual traditions (Cutsinger, 2002), as reflected in scriptures, language, arts and artifacts.

Heart is the principal concept in Hebrew Scriptures, used more than 800 times to describe human states and actions (O’Rourke Boyle, 2001). In Christian iconography, one of the eight canonized images of the Virgin, the Mother of the Sign, depicts the Virgin with the head of Christ in her chest. In the Syracuse museum in Sicily, a terra-cotta Persephone (4th century B.C.), central archetype in the myth

³The full text of the questionnaire is available from the author at the e-mail address hridayam@prodigy.net or olouchakova@itp.edu.

cycle connecting Ancient Egypt and Greece, has a small human head located within her chest.

Many spiritual teachings and practices are centered around the Spiritual Heart (Louchakova, 2004a). Every system of psychosomatic mysticism contains the methods of introspection, which allow accessing the depth phenomenological map of consciousness via focusing in the sense of self in the chest. This group of practices seemed to be the natural choice for deepening the capacities of phenomenological researchers.

The focusing techniques of psychosomatic mysticism require caution to avoid the rapid opening of subconscious material known as spiritual emergence. Our adaptation of the practices provides gentle opening of the levels of interior perception accompanied by slow and manageable psychospiritual transformation. The main benefit of this method is in opening the awareness of the interior phenomenological map of consciousness.

The training in this level used two consecutive practices. The first practice, "Opening the Eyes of the Heart," trains the relocation of the center of awareness into the chest. The second practice, "Heart–Mind, Researcher's Mind," encourages the deep mapping of the introspective space through knowledge by presence.

A. Opening the eyes of the heart. Students practiced the relocation of the focus of awareness from the head into the interior space of the chest once or twice a week for a period of 4 to 6 weeks, until accessing the introspective space in the chest got easier. The resulting focus of attention in the chest has to be "in" not "on" the interior space; therefore, the attention cannot be merely "dropped" into the chest. To attain this concentration "in the object" rather than "on the object" focus had to be gradually relocated through the particular body "pathways" described in yoga as a system of subtle energy meridians (Louchakova & Warner, 2003; Poortman, 1978). In this exercise, the practitioner imagines and senses that the eyes are moving from the eye sockets back down, to the region of the medulla at the base of the skull. This movement, difficult initially, became progressively easier with training, and corresponded to the notion of "opening the meridians" in the practice of yoga. Then, "eyes", that is, the concentration, were moved down through the spine to the space in between the shoulder blades, and forward into the inner space of the chest. After concentration was relocated into this region, the practitioner "opened" these imaginary eyes inside the chest, gradually developing an awareness of the interiority of consciousness (Louchakova, based on Antonov & Vaver, 1989).

B. Heart–mind, researcher's mind. After opening awareness of the "inner space of the chest," the capacity to be aware of the deep contents of consciousness was developed through the guided introspection on the sense of self. This exercise was based on the two spiritual practices. One is the body-based phenomenological

enquiry into the nature of the self, known as *Atma Vichara* (Ramana, 1996; Sri Ranjit Maharaj, personal communication, 1996). The other is the Hesychastic Prayer of the Heart (St. Simeon the New Theologian, 1995; Fr. Leonid Vodolazski, personal communication, January 1989). The adaptation of the practice, developed by this author, consisted in focusing in the sense of self on the right side of the chest, opening the deeper awareness of the interior contents of the self through the gradual absorption of the focus backwards toward the spine, and into the inner space of the chest. Focusing on the right side of the chest versus a left side is very important to avoid the rapid opening of subconscious material in the process of introspection.

The teacher guided this process for a period from 20 to 40 min four to five times during the 10-week period of the graduate seminar. Students were also encouraged, but not required, to practice on their own, one to three times per week. The following instructions were given:

Start with the focusing of attention in the sense of self in the right side of the chest. Connect your breath with this area, and identify the warm, tangible sense of individual “I,” slightly to the right of the chest bone, in the area of your third rib. Using the skills of focusing “in,” developed in the previous exercise, try to be inside the felt sense rather than observing it from the outside. Slowly, start the motion toward the back of the body, absorbing attention through this distinct “current” of the sense of self. The latter intensifies as one deepens attention.

As the absorption deepened, the experience shifted from the complete physicality of the body perceived through the sense of touch, to the layers of psychological phenomena, emerging in a strictly organized and predictable order. The layer of sensory experience was followed by the layer of emotions, then by verbal thoughts, then images, opening of darkness, and “nothing,” followed by the rise of meanings and deep understandings. Practitioners mentally “backed up” through these experiences, following the current of “I-sense” in the direction of an increasing sense of intimacy and on into pure subjectivity. This process is very alive and personal, filled with insights and experience of the sacred.

This layered phenomenological map of the psyche emerges only during the introspection in the chest, and not in focusing in any other part of the body-schema. Gradual disidentification with the emerging experiences and the deepening of concentration leads to the opening of the deeper layers of the embodied psyche, resulting in absorption in the subjectivity of pure consciousness. In this mental motion, concentration, like a bead on a thread, glides on the current of the sense of self-existent awareness through the right side of the chest backwards. This is the movement toward the phenomenological origin of the sense of self. This meditation is initially guided by the instructor, and then taken into individual practice by the students. In the final stage of training, students get

to verbalize the process of their own contemplation. This verbalization helps the practice to mature.

OUTCOMES OF THE TRAINING: PHENOMENOLOGICAL ARCHITECTURE OF THE EMBODIED SELF

Structured introspection opens awareness of the phenomenological architecture of the self. The self appears as a complex system constituted of many structural levels. Spatiality is seen as the primary organizational principle for this self-awareness, pervasive to the whole internal self-structure. The components of the self are organized in the “internal space” of introspection as layers around the central experience of the “I am” consciousness. “I am” in association with sensations, emotions and feelings, images, verbal thoughts, deeper nonverbal understandings, mental states such as torpor or confusion, and with the experience of “nothingness” formed the easily identifiable clusters of experience. Starting from the sense of self, predominantly identified on the right side of the chest, students described the layers of introspective experiences as emerging in the following succession: (a) sense of personal self of the right side of the chest; (b) sensory experiences; (c) layer of rising emotions, subtler sensations of energy, and breath; (d) layer of “talking” mind; (e) layer of images; (f) stillness, nothing, unknowing, like in a deep sleep. This layer, (f), of stillness and the following layer, (g), layer of sheer intellect, meanings, and vast space and subtle mental states, archetypes, and essential relations—commonly interpenetrated each other. Finally, it was possible that an eighth layer was reached: (h) absorption of awareness in pure subjective consciousness. These levels of internal self-organization correspond to the phenomenological descriptions of Hesychasm (Theophanis the Monk, 1984), Sufism (Dahnhardt, 2002), and Vedanta (Berliner, 1990; Misra, 2001; Sadananda, 1974).

Students, in the course of the training, learn to differentiate between the various manifestations of consciousness. Their experiences resonate closely with the account of St. Simeon the New Theologian, an acknowledged authority in Hesychasm. He describes the process of opening into inner space as a transition from the “darkness and impenetrable density” to a condition where “intellect... sees things of which it previously knew nothing” (St. Simeon the New Theologian, 1995, p.73), that is, interior workings of consciousness. This direct knowledge of the structures of the psyche provides a very tangible help in learning the skills of phenomenological analysis, by correlating the maxims of phenomenology and one’s own inner experience. Phenomenology stops being perceived as an abstract philosophical system and becomes a practical guide to self-understanding and interior transformation. Students find internal correspondents to different phenomenological terms, such as intentionality, and learn to discern the hierarchies of meaning and relationship between signifiers and the signified (Husserl, 1999a,

pp.26–51). On a personal level, they report a decrease of impatience and anxiety and an increase of self-acceptance and self-appreciation.

Students report the shifts in their sense of identity and attitudes toward the world. They have said:

I am much more than body and my conditioning ... I am not able to articulate the sense of greater awareness and connection (participant 1).

I can see where phenomenology can be very useful for inner development (participant 2).

How do we go from explaining to understanding? The wisdom that lies in the lived experience is infinite ... I learned that what unites the two [opposing] views (the aha!) is the transformation we are looking for ... Therefore, our opponents are our allies rather than enemies (participant 3).

I began to see where I fit into the 'world' of perspectives. I've never thought seriously about it before (participant 4).

The navigation through one's own system of inner experience facilitates the faculty of *epoché*, the backward motion through the layers of experience toward the explication of ontologically deeper structures. It also facilitates elements of the descriptive phenomenological method, such as the process of imaginative variations, and enhances the intuitive explication of the essential structures, potentially present in the analyzed description. However, we can only hypothesize the mechanisms of this effect. The introspection used in the training is conducted on the metaphysical seat of consciousness, the subtle center of consciousness called "spiritual heart." In the traditions discussed previously, it is known that introspection on the spiritual heart center deepens the awareness of the deep structures of meaning, such as divine names (archetypes). Focusing attention within this layer of deep meanings facilitates the eidetic reduction. The method can also open early memories, and archaic emotions, so the application requires careful discernment and an individualized approach.

DIRECTIONS OF FUTURE RESEARCH

Several directions of future work may follow. For example, research suggests that the "I am" sense, a constant component of self-awareness, can be easily differentiated from the changing components by participants in guided open-eyed introspection. After some initial training, the "I am" sense becomes available for the continuous fixing of voluntary attention, causing various changes such as a sense of well-being, and an increase of secondary self-reflective thoughts. In prior studies, the increase of these secondary reflective thoughts was reported to correspond to the human experience of becoming more conscious (Williford, 2002). Because

knowledge about the self is typically remembered better than other types of semantic information (Kelley et al., 2002), the author hypothesized that the sustained focus on “I-sense” can enhance the understanding of complex concepts. The focusing on “I am” sense was used as an educational mnemonic technique with a total of more than 70 graduate students in psychology seminars. Students reported that the voluntary focus of attention on the constant aspect of the self in the process of learning leads to the decrease of performance anxiety and to the enhancement of learning.

The focusing on “I am” sense was also used in therapy with a total of seven clients diagnosed as having a *DSM-IV* category *Religious or Spiritual Problem*, V-Code 62.89, in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). This technique helped to neutralize the core feature of depersonalization, the “virtuality” of the self (Bezzubova, 2002), thus helping to reestablish the normal structure of self-experience.

CONCLUSIONS

The training increased the ability of students to bracket one’s own assumptions and to be mindful of emotions. Decreased random activity of the mind helped handle complexity and enhanced imaginative responses to interaction and dialog between researchers. In some cases, the training increased sensitivity toward parapsychological phenomena and opened perceptions of interior light. Besides enhancing the skills in phenomenological method, “opening the eyes of the heart” helped students, initially “immune” to phenomenology, to gain the necessary qualifications and a consequent appreciation for the method. This article was written in response to the request of students to have a description of the practice.

Research shows that the spiritual practice based training, enhancing direct intuition, can be effectively used in preparation of the phenomenological researcher. A phenomenological approach in transpersonal psychology attracts an increasing number of students interested in a meaningful, authentic, present mode of living and enquiry. Phenomenological research, augmented by the special training of the mind which opens the direct intuition of the phenomenological architecture of the self, is a transformative educational practice, contributing to both personal development and professional training of future psychologists.

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