

Voices: THE ART AND SCIENCE OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PSYCHOTHERAPISTS

Summer 2013 / Vol. 49 / No. 2
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Front Cover Illustration: Rick Mula

Design and Production by Mary de Wit | in2Wit®, llc

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Wild Mind: A Field Guide to the Human Psyche, by Bill Plotkin. Novato, CA: New World Library, 2013, 307 pages.

WILD MIND IS BILL PLOTKIN'S THIRD BOOK. His first book, *Soulcraft*, was based on his decades of experience helping people to gain access to their souls and their purpose in life. His second book, *Nature and the Human Soul*, described his model for the stages of human development in terms of both psychological and spiritual maturity. *Wild Mind* provides a detailed and profound map of the psyche and its relationship to the cosmos, along with a plethora of suggestions on how to cultivate the wholeness of the psyche. His next book, he promises, will outline his theory of personality types and how they interact in cultivating wholeness.

One might ask, with regard to *Wild Mind*: Do we really need another map and another theory about how humans work? Given the sad state of our species and our planet, I believe we need some new ways to understand ourselves. Bill Plotkin hopes to help us. By "us" I mean to refer to us psychotherapists specifically, and to us humans in general. Plotkin's model focuses on facilitating healthy maturation in individual humans, which will lead to the formation of healthy communities, which in turn can foster the healthy maturation, or wholeness, in the people growing up in them.¹ The question is whether we can achieve such wholeness rapidly enough to save ourselves and most of the rest of the life forms on the planet from destruction.

There are seven basic elements in Plotkin's map of the human psyche. At the center is the 3-D Self. There are four facets of this Self that radiate out in a horizontal plane and are related to the four directions, the four seasons, and the four primary points of the 24-hour cycle of the earth—sunrise, noon, sunset, and midnight. Each of these facets (think East, South, West, and North) has archetypal representations within it, some of which relate it to the intrapsychic world while the others relate it to the interpersonal world. All of them are ultimately based on love. All of them also contain subpersonalities that are the result of wounding and tend to perpetuate fragmentation, rather than wholeness, until they are healed. These wounded subpersonalities also provide a potential opening to deeper wholeness. The Self at the center of these four facets in the horizontal plane is considered 3-D because it is also connected vertically to Spirit above and Soul below.

Given that the goal is wholeness, the process by which it can be achieved might be conceptualized as the integration of all these various components of the psyche. Plotkin offers many suggestions about approaching integration—some of them he encourages the reader to try, while others are clearly in the don't-try-

1. The emphasis on maturation or wholeness is similar to Jung's concept of individuation, particularly as it is so dramatically demonstrated autobiographically in his *Red Book* and to which Plotkin makes reference, and to the Enneagram's model of personality based on seven ways of coming to know God as it is presented in *Facets of Unity* by A.H.Almas.

this-at-home category. Included in the *do-try-at-home* are psychotherapy, coaching, good parenting, and a host of exercises provided in the book that can be done alone. Actually “alone” in this context means without the presence of other humans. It is suggested that most of these exercises be done in nature, which would suggest quite the opposite of being alone in the nature-based framework Plotkin offers.

The experiences that Plotkin suggests individuals *not* try at home are those that lead to what he calls Soul initiation—the immersion in the experiential knowing of one’s connection with all of life and one’s unique purpose in terms of a contribution to the Earth community. If the do-it-yourself exercises in the book were compared to CBT, then the process of Soul initiation would be more like depth psychotherapy. Plotkin says that Soul initiation requires the support of a sophisticated guide and can expose a person both to the influence of powerful forces and to the acquisition of unusual powers.

That the process of true maturation or wholeness can convey unusual powers is but one of several interesting hypotheses put forth in this book. Others include: (1) no emotion is toxic, including shame, and all emotions need to be experienced as deeply as possible for maturation to occur; (2) every human’s life has a deep purpose that serves the entire planet, if not the universe; (3) living from one’s purpose, what Plotkin calls “ecocentric” as opposed to egocentric living, may result in giving more value to the collective than to one’s own personal comfort or even continued existence; (4) humankind, as a whole, may have a wound that could reveal our purpose as a species; and (5) each psyche contains a Golden Shadow in addition to the darker or more sinister shadow that is more commonly observed.

Wild Mind is a provocative exploration of what it means to be human. Certainly the concepts offered can be of use to any psychotherapist whose work is informed by something deeper than a how-to manual of a mechanical psychotherapy. The invitation Plotkin extends to all humans to get on with the process of becoming whole, including Soul initiation, is one that most psychotherapists have already accepted in some way or other by becoming psychotherapists. This book provides an opportunity to take the work of one’s personal growth to a very deep level. The results of such work would certainly benefit one’s psychotherapy clients and, according to Plotkin, all life as well. The last sentence of the book reads: “*What are you waiting for?*”