

ProcessMind: A User's Guide to Connecting with the Mind of God

By Arnold Mindell, PhD. (*This material was reproduced by permission of Quest Books, the imprint of The Theosophical Publishing House (www.questbooks.net), from [ProcessMind: A User's Guide to Connecting with the Mind of God](#) ©2010 by Arnold Mindell.*)



"The processmind corresponds to something we all feel surrounding people and objects and that in some way gives birth to them."

—[ProcessMind](#)

Just about everyone wonders now and then if there is some kind of intelligence organizing the apparently random and creative events in personal life and the universe. Are those events haphazard . . . or is some kind of “mind” at work in the background? How might our awareness of such events influence them?

. . . I have often wondered about the mysterious power that seems to appear throughout life, especially in moments of crisis and near death. What is this power that not only produces the most amazing and helpful experiences but is also behind our ongoing difficulties and conflicts, our environmental problems . . . *and* our ability to make peaceful changes? Science and spiritual traditions both contribute answers. Yet in the twenty-first century, we are far from a consensus about what or who we are and what, if anything, arranges or “co-creates” our fate.

Modern leading scientists such as Albert Einstein as well as ancient world spiritual traditions have believed there is an intelligent cosmic force behind it all. Yet Einstein doubted that science had found it. In a 1926 letter to his colleague Max Born, he made a remark now well known among theoretical physicists: “Quantum mechanics is certainly imposing. But an inner voice tells me it is not yet the real thing. The theory says a lot, but does not really bring us any closer to the secret of the Old One.”¹

Today, about a century after the discoveries of quantum theory and relativity, cosmologists are still wondering about “the secret of the Old One.” Stephen Hawking and Paul Davies refer to the intelligent force Einstein sought as the “mind of God.”² Some theoretical physicists hope to find this “mind” in unified field theories or related concepts. C. G. Jung, Roberto Assagioli, and other depth psychologists speak of a “collective unconscious,” the “transpersonal Self,” or some type of transcendent or “unitive” consciousness. Quoting sixteenth-century alchemists, Jung and his friend Wolfgang Pauli, a Nobel Prize-winning quantum physicist, speculated about a unified psychophysical region of experience – the “Unus Mundus.” Religions have always spoken of the design, powers, and wisdom of the universe in terms of a Self, a God, or gods.

I call Einstein's "Old One" the *processmind*. By processmind I mean an organizing factor – perhaps *the* organizing factor – that operates both in our personal lives and in the universe. Studying and experiencing this processmind will connect the now separate disciplines of psychology, sociology, physics, and mysticism and provide new useful ways to relate to one another and the environment. The processmind is both inside of you and, at the same time, apparently connected to everything you notice . . . Processmind is in your brain yet is also "nonlocal," allowing you to be in several places at the same time.

When I first began writing, I was afraid that this nonlocal nature of the processmind, foreshadowed in quantum physics, might sound too strange. But then I realized that at least some people sense nonlocality every morning in those hypnagogic states just between sleeping and waking. In this "half sleep–half awake" state a kind of dreamlike intelligence frequently gives us "nonlocal" information about people and things in distant places. A physicist might call this experience the psychological counterpart of "quantum entanglement" . . . The processmind is not just a specific altered state of consciousness; it defines the lifestyle and political view we need to resolve the deepest outer as well as inner conflicts. . . . [It] can be experienced as a kind of force field. It is an active, intelligent "space" between the observer and observed. It is both you and me and the "us" we share. It is connected to the facts of everyday reality but also independent of them. After much exploring, both in myself and in people near death, I think it likely that the processmind has qualities that extend beyond our present concepts of life and death. (pp. 3–5)

Quantum Mind and Processmind

. . . The quantum mind is that aspect of our psychology that corresponds to basic aspects of quantum physics. The quantum aspect of our awareness notices the tiniest, easily overlooked "nano" tendencies and self-reflects upon these subliminal experiences. However, the quantum mind is not just a supersensitive self-reflecting awareness; it also is a kind of "pilot wave" or guiding pattern. . . . Physicists speak of the wave function "collapsing" to create reality. I speak about how our self-reflection uses and then marginalizes, rather than "collapses," our dreaming nature. For example, after reflecting on a dream, you might think, "Ah ha! Now I will do this or that"; then you put the dreamworld aside temporarily while you take action in order to create a new reality.

Besides the ability we share with other parts of our universe to sense possibilities, self-reflect, and move from dreaming to everyday reality, we may have the ability to be in two places or two states at the same time, just as quantum physics suggests that material particles can behave. For example, in a dream you may be at once dead and alive – even though upon awakening, you come out of this unitive experience and soon begin reflecting, identifying with one or another of the dream images. Thus, we can characterize our quantum nature as nonlocal or "bilocal" as well as highly sensitive and self-reflective.

The processmind expands upon these characteristics of the quantum mind by adding one more crucial quality: Our deepest self, our processmind, is not just sensitive, self-reflective, and "bilocal"; it can also be found in mystical traditions. In particular, it can be sensed in terms of what Aboriginal peoples have identified as an individual's or group's "totem spirit." Our processminds are related, not just to general physical characteristics of the quantum universe, but

to particular earth-based characteristics experienced as, or associated with, what shamans have called “power spots” – special places on earth that we love and trust. The processmind is a force field that has been identified with “totem spirits,” that is, with subtle feelings we have about places on earth that tend to “move” us into feeling wise and/or in particular directions. (pp. 5–6)

Presence

Your presence appears around you and also in the spaces and rooms you inhabit, as well as sometimes being associated with spots on earth. . . . This nature of your presence may be obvious to others, but it may well be distant from your consciousness.

Presence is a tertiary process. It is not primary – that is, it is not your identity process. It is not part of your secondary process – it is not part of the signals you emit but do not identify with. No, your processmind and presence are at the third, more intuitive essence level. They are behind and, in a way, “prior” to all your signals. *Though everyone gets dressed up in consensus reality, your best presence – really, your most amazing self – is the processmind.* It is the subtlest and yet the most powerful force or energy that you possess.

If you don’t know your presence, you may be confused about why people act toward you the way they do. Some will love you, and you may irritate others. The more you know about your own presence, the less confusing or irritating you will be. Why? Because the more you live your presence congruently, the less it has to “force” its way out. For example, if you have a shy presence and live it congruently, it becomes indisputable, like a beautiful forest flower. However, if you don’t recognize your own shy nature, you look instead like a person who is acting related to others, while not really wanting to talk to anyone. Because other people perceive this disjuncture, they may be confused or criticize you for not really being with them.

Everyone should have their own definition of enlightenment. Some people call it connecting to love, others call it truth. Some say it is “empty mind.” For me, enlightenment is knowing your processmind while being open to your everyday mind.

It’s natural to lose touch with your deepest self as you enter and identify with everyday reality. Everyone has moments of detachment from ordinary reality and being in touch with processmind, then losing it, getting messed up, and then remembering the processmind again. Why all these variations and vacillations? My guess is that changing states of mind – being deeply in touch with our deepest self and then losing touch with that deepest self – is part of the diversity, part of the compassion or generosity, of the processmind. . . .

. . . What is presence exactly? What do we mean when we say, “He blushed in her presence?” or “She sensed the presence of danger?” What does presence mean here? Why should I blush in somebody’s presence? Everybody seems to know, because a word for presence is found in every language I know of.

I suggest that presence is a *pre-sense*. *Pre* means “before” and *sense* means “feeling” or “perceiving” something. A *presence* is something you can almost feel before you can describe it as a feeling. Your processmind is a pre-sense. You need to know this pre-sense of who you are in

order to be yourself, in order to facilitate your inner world and outer relationships, and even to improve world situations.

To be a good communicator of any sort, you must know your pre-sense. Otherwise it precedes you, and, as I indicated earlier, confuses communication. Your presence is like a kind of spirit that sends signals to others before you even know you've sent them. Think of teachers you loved. You may remember some of their words, but usually what moves us the most about such teachers is their presence.

If you know your own presence, you can even describe it to others. Knowing your own presence eases communication because it is there anyway, as an almost invisible signal behind all your other communications. If you identify only with what you do and say, you are likely to miscommunicate because that is not the whole of you. (pp. 38–40)

[Space Is not Empty]

One of my favorite stories about presence is called “The Little Fish.” This is a Hindu story told by the Sufi master Inayat Khan.³ Once there was a little fish. That fish goes to the Queen Fish and says, “I have heard about the sea, but what is the sea? Where is it?”

The Queen Fish explains to the little fish: “You live, move, and have your being in the sea. The sea is within and without, inside and outside, of you. You are made in the sea, and you end in the sea. The sea surrounds you and is your own being.”

The little fish says, “Huh?” (Actually, “huh” is not in Khan’s story. I slipped it in!)

And the Queen says, “If you know the sea, you will never be thirsty.”

We get thirsty, hungry, and needy if we don’t know the sea, the field around us. Why don’t we see it if it is all around us? Because it is a pre-sense. It is the sea we swim in, the space we live in, the air we breathe. We are the sea, yet we identify with the fish and not the sea. The fish’s presence is the power around it . . . but the whole environment is as well.

For several hundred years, physicists have talked about the presence in which the parts of the universe “swim,” so to speak, calling it *aether* or *ether*, the Greek word for “air” or “atmosphere.” The aether was considered fieldlike. For some time, scientists thought aether was a medium that filled the entire cosmos and carried electromagnetic waves, a kind of presence in which all events were embedded.

Einstein at first disputed this notion but later in his life brought it back again, and today it is called the Einstein aether theory. Many physicists still propose that the universe is filled with a medium or field – some call it particle gravity, others refer to it as the “zero point” field, a kind of sea of virtual particles popping into and out of creation.

For Einstein, the aether was the essence of space-time, a medium in which everything happened and which gave birth, as it were, to matter. In 1930 he said: “Now it appears that space will have

to be regarded as a primary thing and that matter is derived from it, so to speak, as a secondary result. Space is now having its revenge, so to speak, and is eating up matter.”⁴ Scientific theories still abound describing the space, the universe, in which we live as a medium or an energy that might give rise to everything else.

I call our experience of the physicist’s aether a “presence,” the mind of God, or our own processmind, which is both nonlocal or universal, *and* has effects that can be localized in space and time. The processmind corresponds to something we all feel surrounding people and objects and that in some way gives birth to them.

We find similar ideas in Bohm’s quantum potential theory, Jung’s concept of the collective unconscious, Sheldrake’s morphogenetic fields, Reich’s orgone energy, yoga’s prana, and Taoism’s Tao and qi. An equivalent term can be found in most cultures on the planet. . . .

. . . The essence world is captured by Aboriginal people’s feeling about the earth as a place of power or presence – not unlike Einstein’s aether. For example, the Dreaming Land of the Aboriginal Australian people is both the “real” land on which they walk with their feet and their subjective experiences of the “feelings” or “power” of the land – an essence quality. The power of the earth is described often as a totem land spirit, which may be a real place, a field, or a power.

The oldest, longest-lasting spiritual and cultural history we know of belongs to the traditions of the Aboriginal Australian people. According to Professor W. H. Stanner, one of their proponents and researchers, these people believe in what he translates as “everyway.”⁵ For them, Dreaming is an objective reality that gives rise to objects and people all at once in physical reality. Objects such as kangaroos have a presence called “kangaroo Dreaming.” They talk about Dreamtime as a presence and creative power.

According to Stanner, the Aboriginal Australians consider everyday time to be subjective. To follow a clock is *subjective*, whereas Dreaming is closer to their objective consensus reality. Aboriginal people can feel presences; they know the Tao, the Dreaming, the processmind field of individuals and communities. They say that everybody can feel the presence of Dreaming. Space and time and today’s consensus reality are also accepted by these people. Yet there is also a consensus about the reality of Dreamtime. They believe that there is a portion of every person that exists eternally, that was there before the person was born and continues after life ends. (pp. 40–43)

This material was reproduced by permission of Quest Books, the imprint of The Theosophical Publishing House (www.questbooks.net), from [ProcessMind: A User’s Guide to Connecting with the Mind of God](#) by Arnold Mindell, PhD, ©2010 by Arnold Mindell.

Endnotes

1. Letter from Einstein to Max Born, Dec. 4, 1926, in *Albert Einstein, Hedwig, und Max Born: Briefwechsel 1916–1955* (Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1969).
2. P. Davies, *The Mind of God: The Scientific Basis for a Rational World* (New York: Touchstone, 1992).
3. From *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones: A Collection of Zen and Pre-Zen Writings* (North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 1998), 211.
4. L. Kostro, "Einstein and the Ether," *Electronics & Wireless World* 94 (1998): 238–39.
5. W. H. Stanner, "After the Dreaming," *The Boyer Lectures* (ABC radio, Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1968), 44.