

Book Review: Three Recent Books by Arnold Mindell:

- **The Dreammaker's Apprentice: The Psychological and Spiritual Interpretation of Dreams.** Hampton Roads, Charlottesville, N.C., 2002, 240 pages.
- **The Deep Democracy of Open Forums: How to Transform Organizations into Communities :** Practical Steps To Conflict Prevention And Resolution For The Family, Workplace And World, Hampton Roads, 2002, 216 pages.
- **The Quantum Mind and Healing: How To Listen And Respond To Your Body's Symptoms,** Hampton Roads, 2004, 272 pages.

Introducing recent books by Dr. Mindell to an NLP public needs some qualifying remarks. Arnold Mindell has degrees in applied physics from MIT and in Analytical Psychology from the Jung Institute in Zurich, Switzerland. He also holds an American doctorate in psychology. While still training analysts in Zurich in the late 1970s, Mindell developed a methodology for working with somatic manifestations of dreams - the "Dreambody" - and established the ground work for facilitating psychological processes in the largest sense for what he has called "Process-Oriented Psychology". Since then he has written fourteen books, worked in almost every corner of the world and has relentlessly applied his insights of the process of change to psychotherapy, psychiatry, teaching and to community-conflict resolution work involving often hundreds of people. With these three, most recent books, Mindell extends his integration of quantum physics and psychology to include spirituality and biology in bringing together a non-dualistic worldview of matter and energy, of the divine and consensual reality with a simplicity and ease that is worth writing about.

Where do dreams come from? Mindell's thesis in the *Dreammaker's Apprentice* is that by learning to recognize the source of dreams - the Dreammaker - we gain a generative perspective of the direction, and of the flow of the process of dreaming, and become the dream facilitator, the apprentice of the Maker of dreams. The source of dreaming is the non-local, non-linear and discontinuous (to conscious perception) quantum dimension, a dimension that others have

described as archetypal, of primordial images, of quantum-like waves. We perceive the dreaming dimension through its manifestations in body symptoms, of dream symbols and of evanescent “flirts” that attract our attention for reasons to discover.

Mindell’s experience of over twenty years in working with Process Facilitating shows in the accessibility of the exercises, in the way he starts with the memory of a dream, relates it to a somatic manifestation in physical reality and then helps the reader perceive the non-local relationship of body symptoms, dream fragments and dream process to world conflicts. The reverse is also true according to Mindell: global conflict manifests itself in relationships, individual dreams and body symptoms. That is the quantum dimension of consensual reality.

In collectives, the quantum dimension is developed through fields that reveal the unconscious conflicts in systems - organizations, businesses, communities, schools - basically, in any group or family. By acknowledging the disagreeable, unpleasant sensations and feelings that we experience individually as members of a group, we learn to stand up for what we believe and to state in front of everyone involved that, for example, we do not feel represented and in what way. Acknowledging all its parts is the first level of what Mindell calls “Deep Democracy” for an organization, and it starts with the responsibility of each of its members, individually, that each recognize his or her uncomfortable sensations and feelings about being a member and a participant of the group. Deep Democracy for Mindell begins with the inner work of each of us - much like the dream work of the Dreammaker’s Apprentice - that we do not marginalize extreme or disagreeable feelings in order to be more sociably acceptable. Denying as well as speaking one’s truth are easily recognizable acts in a group, as one person’s perceptions are amplified by another until a deeper level of conflict appears, one that shows the fundamental issues involved. Since the quantum level is discontinuous to the conscious mind with individuals, groups and organizations, we only perceive the deeper issues by amplifying our conscious perceptions until we perceive the non-local, non-linear connections of the here and now to the “not-here”, “not-now”, “not-me”.

Mindell developed the Open Forum format through his worldwork sessions. The new format makes doing field work in collectives much more acceptable to more mainstream people who may

be unfamiliar with non-linear processes in organizations, and offers us a choice of format according to the degree of involvement we want to generate through our action. I want to quote a passage that describes three levels of worldwork:

“The Worldwork Spectrum

- **Little or No Awareness of Feelings:**

Business meetings, linear processes that use known rules and procedures.

- **Awareness of Emotions:**

The Open Forum semilinear processes, the central focus of the present book. These can be used anytime.

- **Powerful Emotional Transformation:**

Large group, nonlinear process for use during community-making times or extreme crisis periods.” (p. 28)

The third and most recently published book by Mindell in May of 2004 focuses on inner work with body symptoms and processes. As in the *Dreammaker’s Apprentice*, Mindell leads the reader to acknowledging the uncomfortable sensations and feelings of chronic symptoms, starting with the initial symptom and leading to perceiving the relationships of an integrated world in which matter and energy co-exist. The Mindell web site (www.aamindell.net, under “publications”) provides the following description of *The Quantum Mind and Healing*:

“With many practical exercises, this book explores how and why dreams influences your biology, and how emotions are linked to invisible, (quantum) dimensions of symptoms. Awareness training and examples make the theory a living experience connecting psychology, biology and physics.

There are chapters on anti-aging, music therapy, and symptom oriented relationship-work in which symptoms are influenced by non-local aspects of relationships with individuals and communities.

For professionals and clients focusing on symptoms, for students of the life sciences and physics,

- Integrates alternative and allopathic medicine attitudes creating useful symptom approaches
- Shows how physics, biology and psychology come together
- Explores the quantum and dreaming dimensions of symptoms
- Suggests why + how community problems effect symptoms

- Show why and how music can be medicine
- Uses awareness as a time-bending factor to explore the origins of life and death.”

To conclude this review of Arnold Mindell’s most recent books, an NLP-trained person will find something of interest in any of the three books, yet the psychotherapist or health practitioner will be particularly interested in spending some time with *The Dreammaker’s Apprentice* and *The Quantum Mind and Healing*. Organizational consultants and trainers will find *The Deep Democracy of Open Forums* surely to be insightful reading. All three books are currently available from the publisher online at a 25% discount (www.hrpub.com).

Charles Levine

December 2004

word count: 1140 words with biography

Biography

Charles Levine has a private practice for personal development in Evanston, IL. He consults in organizational development, and has introduced and developed Analytical NLP. He can be reached by e-mail at: cmlevine@hotmail.com.