



Edited by
Harris L. Friedman and Glenn Hartelius

THE WILEY-BLACKWELL HANDBOOK OF
Transpersonal Psychology

WILEY Blackwell

The Wiley-Blackwell
Handbook of
Transpersonal Psychology

Dedicated to the Memory of Earl Clement Brown (1928–2002)

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Handbook of
Transpersonal Psychology

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WILEY Blackwell

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Foreword

Stanley Krippner

Frequently, I am asked to make recommendations for people wanting to become acquainted with the considerable literature in transpersonal psychology. However, there has been no contemporary singular source to which to refer them—the last effort to compile such a reference into one volume was the *Textbook of Transpersonal Psychiatry and Psychology* (Scotton, Chinen, & Battista, 1996), which is now nearly two decades old. Consequently, this handbook fills an important niche that will be useful for all who want an overview of the area, as it combines within one resource a variety of perspectives and topics that collectively serve to outline and define transpersonal psychology.

Many have attempted to define transpersonal psychology. In fact, few fields have exerted as much effort in defining itself. Hartelius, Caplan, and Rardin (2007) examined 160 definitions from the first 35 years of the field's existence, and found three major themes. First, transpersonal psychology is commonly defined as one that examines states of consciousness and stages of human development that go beyond the bounds of the self as normally defined, as well as the aspirations and paths of practice directed at transcending the conventional "I." It is also defined as an integrative or holistic approach that considers not just the intellect, but the whole embodied person situated in local and global community, ecosystem, and cosmos. Additionally, it considers the dynamics of human transformation, both individually and collectively.

My approach to defining the transpersonal refers to experiences that lead to the impression of a more complete encounter with "reality" in which the sense of identity extends beyond ordinary limits to encompass broader, deeper, and wider aspects of life (Krippner, 2002), similar to Friedman's (1983) construct of self-expansiveness. I see this as dependent upon both the experient's consciousness and its cultural context. Transpersonal psychology, as one of several varieties of transpersonal study, is informed by science and provides a paradigm that integrates the entirety of human activity and experience, from the most pathological to the most sublime. In understanding transpersonal psychology as a science, I have found William James' (1912/1976) "radical empiricism" useful, which he defined as follows: "To be radical, an empiricism

must neither admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced, nor exclude from them any element that is directly experienced” (p. 22). However, science is not the only approach to understanding the transpersonal, as there are many other epistemologies or “ways of knowing,” such as relying on the body, feelings, intuition, and transpersonal-anomalous experiences, which all can provide access to experiential realms that conventional science has not yet acknowledged, much less appreciated (e.g., Anderson & Braud, 2011). One area in which transpersonal psychology has a particular opportunity is in working to develop new connections between these ways of knowing and the tradition of science—as in, for example, attempting to operationalize Tart’s (1972) suggestion that it may be possible to develop state-specific sciences.

The chapters in this handbook cover a wide range of viewpoints that together illuminate transpersonal psychology. Many in the founding generation of the field are approaching retirement; a few have retired or passed from the ranks. This work brings together the scholarship of many of the senior scholars still within the field and pairs it with the impulse and energy of emerging scholars—often within the same chapter. In this way it represents not only a distillation of the wisdom of those who formed the field, but also the sharing of the mantle with a new generation who will carry transpersonal psychology forward.

This important volume serves as a milestone for transpersonal psychology as a discipline coming of age. It reflects its many successes, as well as points to areas in which considerable work is still required. Within the ranks of those who consider themselves transpersonal psychologists is great diversity, as not all perspectives are in accord with each other, but collectively they address the whole gamut that makes for transpersonal psychology, which can be seen as they are brought together here. Transpersonal psychology owes appreciation to the efforts of Harris Friedman and Glenn Hartelius who, as editors of this handbook, have drawn together a rich collection of chapters, which can now serve as the starting place for those who want to become acquainted with its diversity. More than ever before, a transpersonal view that can integrate not only the field of psychology, but that can also provide an inspiring framework for understanding humanity’s essential connection to the cosmos, is needed for human adaptation and flourishing. This handbook furthers that effort.

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Transpersonal psychology is an approach that emphasizes, among other things, the interconnectedness of individuals—the fact that in growth and transformation and creative expression, we do nothing alone. We have had the privilege to serve as editors, but without the participation of our colleagues and our partners, this volume could not have come to fruition.

Editors' Introduction

The Promise (and Some Perils) of Transpersonal Psychology

Harris L. Friedman and Glenn Hartelius

As a term, *transpersonal psychology* is a juxtaposition of three disparate ideas contained within its linguistic components: *psychology*, *personal*, and *trans*. As a psychology, it is focused on the scientific understanding of, and applications for working with, the individual, commonly seen as an isolated nexus of affect, cognition, and behavior embodied within a unitary biological encasement distinct from its environ (see Friedman, 2002). Clearly the notion of an individual, whose attributes can be mechanistically dissected should be exhumed for a more holistic understanding, as its components of affect, cognition, and behavior are no more separate in the individual than is its biological aspect separate from its many interconnected contexts. Humans isolated from their matrices of support, such as physical necessities like air and social necessities like succorance as a baby, would surely not survive. Further, that which differentiates an individual from other individuals, as well as that which lends some degree of continuity to an individual over time and across space, is the usual defining *personal* aspects of the individual, or the personality. Although the study of personality is a core subdiscipline of psychology, it lacks consensual understanding, despite that many competing perspectives have long attempted to construct unifying views of the person (John, Robins, & Pervin, 2008). These concerns engage with various tensions, such as understanding intrapersonal (including developmentally across time), interpersonal (including socially and culturally across space), and biological differences, which all serve as backdrop to that which is personal within humans. This is aptly reflected in the famous quote by Murray and Kluckhohn (1953), "EVERY MAN is in certain respects. a. *like all other men*, b. *like some other men*, c. *like no other man*" (n.p.). Then, throwing the prefix *trans*, most often seen as meaning *beyond*, into this mixture provides even further basis for confusion. This prefix, when attached to the personal, implies somewhat of a disqualifier, referencing that the personal is incomplete. It introduces an enigma, as in, exactly who is the person that might require going beyond and what is the beyond where the person might be going. In transpersonal psychology, this beyond has typically related to experiencing (or seeking to experience) so-called higher states of consciousness and possible spiritual realms, which both presumably go beyond the personal. In another meaning of the prefix, however, *trans* can also refer to a bridge, perhaps betwixt and between the person, that spans the boundaries

dividing the person from the world of others and things, and even from transcendent possibilities that can be construed as super-personal or supernatural (as in the possible spirits implied by the term spirituality (Lindeman, Blomqvist, & Takada, 2012)). Then there is the extreme possibility of that about which cannot be spoken cogently, the ultimate mysteries that can be described perhaps as God or non-duality, or in other ways that do not define but merely serve as a place marker for whatever might be ineffable. So, to coherently discuss transpersonal psychology when the notion of the individual as isolated within conventional understandings in psychology is obviously flawed, what constitutes the personality is ambiguous, and to what the prefix trans refers is inadequately specified together pose a triple conundrum.

One of us (Hartelius, Caplan, & Rardin, 2007) summarized previously published transpersonal definitions into basic themes via content analysis. The first focuses on the self as beyond ordinary ego separateness, recognizing the complex interconnectedness of self with all, including the cosmos as a whole. The second focuses on integrative approaches through employing the most inclusive framework to comprehend self, emphasizing spiritual and transcendent qualities. The third focuses on transformation, applying transpersonal perspective to individual and systems change processes. All three themes reinforce each other mutually as evolving parts of the definition.

Another way to understand transpersonal psychology is historically, as it emerged as a part of psychology during a time of turmoil when old structures were breaking down and new ones were not yet available for their replacement. Its immediate precursor, the humanistic psychology movement, stemmed from rebellious psychologists who rejected the two then-prevailing forces in psychology, psychoanalysis and behaviorism, and created a so-called third force focused on honoring human beings in a more holistic way. For some, however, the humanistic rebellion was still inadequate, resulting in rejection of the limitations of a humanistic perspective focused around the person as a whole but still relatively isolated entity, and moved toward embracing a wider and deeper, rather than human-centered, vantage that embedded the person within the largest aspects of the cosmos. These pioneering founders were unhappy with the extent of the revolution fomented by humanistic psychology, and sought more, but what this more is remains unclear. As such, transpersonal psychology is still a work in progress and, after more than half a century, it continues to search for its identity.

A major concern in transpersonal psychology thus involves definitional issues. Perhaps it is not yet adequately defined because it has not attained sufficient maturity, as it awaits a new paradigm that remains to be discovered or constructed, a prerequisite to its definition becoming better articulated. Alternately, perhaps by dealing with the most overarching perspective that humans might strive to attain, transpersonal psychology can never be summarized in any pithy way, similar to how a map can never completely capture the territory it attempts to portray.

What can be said generally about transpersonal psychology as an approach is that it supports the use of systematic scientific methodology, but critiques the insertion of modernist metaphysical assumptions about the mind-independent nature of the world (cf. Braud & Anderson, 1998; Anderson & Braud, 2011; Tart, 2004). It asserts, by contrast, that scientific method can be applied to research questions that reflect other types of assumptive frames, such as phenomenological, postmodern, traditionalist, feminist, and participatory frames, among others. Good research requires that the

methodology be appropriate to the object of study. For example, one obviously does not immerse salt crystals in water in order to examine their structure for, since salt crystals dissolve in water, the methodology thwarts the objective of the inquiry. Something similar may be true of assumptive frames, for when reports of exceptional human experiences and capacities are placed within modernist assumptions about the nature of reality, they may appear to be delusional beliefs or anomalies that make no rational sense.

Modern Western philosophy, following Descartes, supposes mind and matter to be separate in some fundamental way, which in psychology has led to a practical denial of the personal mind as anything more than a brain-based biological information-processing system that, for some unknown reason, seems to be aware of itself (cf. Grof, 1983). This might be adequate were it not for the vast body of contemporary and historical reports of human experiences and capacities that are difficult to explain in satisfactory ways within such a context. These encounters at times transform the lives of individuals and change the course of entire societies; they inspire questions about the adequacy of what the modern West supposes to be the nature of reality.

Parapsychological research, investigating these experiences and capacities as anomalies within a modernist frame, has produced substantial evidence that such phenomena may not just be delusional reports. In this process, parapsychological researchers have advanced the rigor of scientific methodology by developing innovations, such as double-blind research. If the research evidence supporting such anomalies is valid, it would suggest that reality may be bigger and deeper than what modernism describes.

If Western notions of reality are to be expanded, then it may be that these anomalous exceptional human experiences and capacities—some of which are well supported by empirical evidence—offer clues about the ways in which modernist assumptions are deficient. Yet if a modernist metaphysic is imposed on research (cf. Mahner, 2012), then those very aspects of the phenomena will necessarily be discounted *a priori*, and the knowledge that might be generated from them will be lost. Evidence challenging the *de facto* metaphysical assumptions that tend to accompany science is disallowed on the grounds that it challenges those assumptions—rather like a judge who refuses to consider a motion to recuse him- or herself. Under the impetus to do good science, this actually constitutes resistance to critical examination of a metaphysical position.

Transpersonal scholars support further pursuit of research that extends the boundaries of knowledge and how it is produced, including the study of phenomena that may not adhere to the limits of reality suggested by a modernist metaphysic. Yet a transpersonal approach typically goes farther than merely considering anomalies within a reductive philosophical frame: it seeks out other carefully-constructed and critically-evaluated assumptive frames that may be more effective at producing a useful understanding of non-ordinary phenomena.

One example of a non-reductive frame of reference is phenomenology, which engages in the description of phenomenal experience without subjecting its veridicality to scrutiny based on particular presuppositions about reality. Another example is the traditionalist frame, which proposes, for example, a Buddhist psychology or a yoga psychology; a variant on this is the perennialist frame, which holds that various spiritual epistemologies reflect hidden but ontologically real aspects of the cosmos

expressed in culture-specific ways. A postmodern frame, though diverse in its expressions, typically holds that the division of the world into objects of perception is a function of the perceivers, and does not reflect inherent properties of the world. Feminist and participatory approaches tend to emphasize the intersubjective nature of reality, and the researcher as being a participant in a living, relational process; subjectivity here is taken as foundational to reality, not a quality set over against an objective domain.

A transpersonal approach, then, pursues its study of psychology or other aspects of the humanities, within multiple frames of reference—within the field this is sometimes referred to as multiple ways of knowing (e.g., Braud, 2006). Transpersonalism critiques much of standard science for imposing a metaphysical frame while claiming to be strictly empirical; at the same time, it accepts the fact that a modernist frame is a simple and pragmatic one that can support a wide range of research topics. In this critique the transpersonal field finds touchpoints with postmodern scholarship, whose methods the field also utilizes. Yet there is also a contrast with some expressions of postmodernism, in that many transpersonal scholars are not ready to cede more scientifically-oriented fields such as psychology to strictly reductive approaches, or to relinquish the ontological reality of experiential phenomena.

A transpersonal approach is not in any sense anti-realist; a critique of the metaphysical assumption of a mind-independent reality does not necessarily imply an embrace of magical thinking. There are many ways to characterize the relationship between mind and nature other than strict dualism or uncritical fusion. Transpersonal psychology has the opportunity to participate in the development of this leading-edge aspect of inquiry, not only philosophically, but also empirically through the pursuit of research questions and methodologies that are congruent with alternate ways of considering reality.

Much of our desire to produce this handbook stemmed from our struggles to adequately define the discipline of transpersonal psychology. As editors, we do not always agree upon the best strategy although, as authors and co-authors of a few specific chapters in the handbook, we share our own approaches to definitional issues. However, as editors of the overall volume, we are interested in staying near the data provided by the many who have joined us this handbook through their writings. Rather than trying to abstract basic themes or other commonalities from this diverse collection of chapters, our hope is that by presenting various views, the panoply of approaches and content subsumed under transpersonal psychology can speak self-evidently. Ken Wilber, the well-known philosopher who once was a leader in, but no longer identifies with, the transpersonal movement, once quipped to one of us (personal communication to Friedman, circa 2002), “every year there is a contest to define transpersonal, and every year no one wins.” Perhaps this book taken as a whole, not in piecemeal fashion, might or at least place in the contest for this particular year.

Our volume commences with a dedication, expressing some of the travails experienced by one of us (Friedman) in attempting to do dissertation research on transpersonal psychology within a mainstream doctoral program, a situation that has changed little after many decades. This is followed by “A Brand from the Burning: Defining Transpersonal Psychology,” by one of us (Hartelius) and two co-authors, Geffen Rothe and Paul Roy. This initial chapter sets the tone for what follows, as it attempts

to simplify the numerous definitions to something that can be shared on a brief elevator ride when someone quizzically asks, what exactly is transpersonal psychology? A further definitional attempt stems from a historical perspective, as Michael Daniels writes on the "Traditional Roots, History, and Evolution of the Transpersonal Perspective." This is followed by "The Call to a Spiritual Psychology: Should Transpersonal Psychology Convert?" by both of us, and James Pappas. In this chapter, we (and Pappas) try to engage with what makes transpersonal psychology, which is so little understood (often even by its own adherents), worth retaining, as much of its content overlaps with spiritual psychology. It is noted that, when transpersonal psychology was founded, the term spiritual was taboo in psychology, whereas now it has widespread acceptance, so it is reasonable to ask why the field should hold onto a less well-known and controversial term. Finally in this section, Harald Walach offers "Criticisms of Transpersonal Psychology and Beyond—The Future of Transpersonal Psychology: A Science and Culture of Consciousness," as a reflection of some of the meta-issues and possible dangers of transpersonal psychology—representing the sort of self-criticism that is mandatory within a responsible discipline. Together these four chapters constitute the *Introduction to Transpersonal Psychology* section of this volume.

The next section, *Transpersonal Theories*, takes on the heart of what transpersonal psychology movement offers, its theoretical perspective. Stanislav Grof, one of the most influential founders of transpersonal psychology, presents a very personal piece titled, "Revision and Revisioning of Psychology: Legacy from Half a Century of Consciousness Research," which sets the tone by sharing his involvement since the onset of the movement, as well as his unique theoretical perspective. Albert Garcia-Romeu and Charles T. Tart, also one of the pioneering luminaries in the transpersonal movement, focus on "Altered States of Consciousness and Transpersonal Psychology." They present the notion that ordinarily experienced consciousness states are but a sample of many potential states, and so-called higher states are the essence of how many view the main focus of transpersonal psychology. Alan Vaughan's chapter, "Jung, Analytical Psychology, and Transpersonal Psychology," follows with an introduction to the work of Jung, one of the major precursors to the movement and still a source of contemporary inspiration and creativity. Brant Cortright next presents "Integral Psychology," focusing on synthesizing Eastern and Western psychospiritual perspectives relying on the insights of Sri Aurobindo, another transpersonal luminary. Alan Combs then writes "Transcend and Include: Ken Wilber's Contribution to Transpersonal Psychology," sharing the complex worldview of another of the main contributors to transpersonal psychology. One of us (Hartelius) along with Jorge N. Ferrer presents "Transpersonal Philosophy: The Participatory Turn," further articulating a relatively recent approach to avoiding some of the dilemmas of earlier frames within transpersonal psychology. Following this, one of us (Friedman) writes on the importance of using conventional science within transpersonal psychology, illustrating with "Self-Expansiveness Theory" as one scientific approach. Last in this section on transpersonal theories, Les Lancaster writes on "Neuroscience and the Transpersonal," which deepens the connection of transpersonal psychology with science.

The following section focuses on *Transpersonal Methodologies*. Rosemarie Anderson and William Braud provide an overview of the unique methodological challenges

in their chapter, "Transpersonal Research and Future Directions." Charles Laughlin and Adam Rock share a uniquely transpersonal research perspective in "Neurophenomenology: Enhancing the Experimental and Cross-Cultural Study of Brain and Experience." Next, Douglas A. MacDonald and one of us (Friedman) present "Quantitative Assessment of Transpersonal and Spiritual Constructs" as a way of using conventional psychological methods applied to nonconventional transpersonal material. One of us (Friedman) then discusses the "The Role of Science in Transpersonal Psychology: The Advantages of Middle-Range Theory." Rounding out this section, Douglas A. MacDonald writes on the "Philosophical Underpinnings of Transpersonal Psychology as a Science."

The next section focuses on *Transpersonal Experiences*, starting with Genie Palmer and Arthur Hastings, who write on "Exceptional Human Experiences," which have always been a central focus of transpersonal psychology. One type of exceptional experience that has particularly captivated the transpersonal movement is the topic of the chapter by James Fadiman and Andrew Kornfield titled "Psychedelic-Induced Experiences." Another type of exceptional experience that has been important in much of transpersonal discourse is the topic of the chapter by Cheryl Fracasso and Bruce Greyson, as well as one of us (Friedman) titled "Near-Death Experiences and Transpersonal Psychology: Focus on Helping Near-Death Experiencers." This is followed by Jenny Wade's chapter on "Transpersonal Sexual Experiences," which are often triggers to profound experiences of a transpersonal nature. Concluding this section is the chapter by Adam Rock, Lance Storm, Harvey J. Irwin, and Julie Beischel on "Parapsychology."

The following section focuses on *Transpersonal Approaches to Transformation, Healing, and Wellness*. Jacob Kaminker and David Lukoff write on "Transpersonal Perspectives on Mental Health and Mental Illness," which has been another central concern of transpersonal psychology. Douglas A. MacDonald, Roger Walsh, and Shauna Shapiro present a chapter on "Meditation: Empirical Research and Future Directions," which also has been the focus of much of transpersonal work. Similarly, Thomas B. Roberts and Michael Winkelman write on "Psychedelic Induced Transpersonal Experiences, Therapies, and Their Implications for Transpersonal Psychology," which has also been a major focus for transpersonal psychology. Don Hanlon Johnson presents a chapter on "Transpersonal Dimensions of Somatic Therapies," which constitute a variety of practices that are not always identified as transpersonal psychology, but which have close ties in many traditions to achieving transpersonal experiences. Ian Wickramasekera II writes on "Hypnotherapy and Transpersonal Psychology: Answering the Call Within," as hypnosis also has long been a way recognized in the West, as well as in other traditions, to enter transpersonal states. Daniel Deslauriers presents on "Dreaming and Transpersonal Psychology," as dreamwork is another avenue long used to understand and work with transpersonal experiences. Kim Bella and Ilene Serlin write on "Expressive and Creative Arts Therapies" as yet another avenue to enter extraordinary states for healing purposes. Kathleen Wall, Fabrice Nye, and Eric Fitzmedrud present on "Psychospiritual Integrative Practices," which they have been researching to facilitate positive change from a transpersonal perspective. John Davis, Theodore J. Usatynski, and Zvi Ish-Shalom write on the "Diamond Approach" of A. H. Almaas, another major figure in transpersonal psychology. Last in this section,