

English translation by Sabine Klein-Schwind; Edited by Shyam Kishore.

Presence is to be understood as being there, “Dasein”, in the sense of existing and at the same time as being there in the sense of being-with-somebody. It is a “here I am” and “I am with you”. As a designation, it denotes the present time as well as the presence of mind. It is the Now in the Here and Now, and the Now shared with another person. It is the Now of existence and the Now of awareness.

Presence is a vital precondition of psychotherapy, irrespective of the psychotherapeutic method. It is the core of the so-called transpersonal psychotherapy, and it represents an indispensable basic attitude within psychotherapy which thus fails to be a therapeutic method in its own right. It allows for the possibility of an extension of psychotherapy towards personal growth to take place, which goes beyond medical treatment and can lead to a profound inner transformation.

In Germany, 90% of the population have health insurance, and psychotherapy is provided as an insurance benefit. Thus, it is regarded mainly as an instrument of medical treatment, and there, attempts are made which focus only on the cure of the symptoms. In Germany there is a strong tendency within psychotherapy towards functioning merely as a remedy, a repair tool, void of consideration for mindfulness as well as the element of relationship. However, in Mrs. Reddemann’s psychodynamic therapy of trauma and in Mrs. Linehan’s Cognitive Behavioural Therapy of trauma, mindfulness functions as an integral part of the therapy.

To quote Mrs. Reddemann: “«What is the use of mindfulness in psychotherapy?» Having agreed on this title for my lecture, I started to ask myself whether this title should not rather be changed into «Is an efficient therapy possible without mindfulness?» I would like to define mindfulness as a basic attitude that all kinds of psychotherapy would benefit from and as a mode of approaching psychic processes. ... (The main thing is) the benefit for any psychotherapeutic work whatsoever and – what is particularly important for me – the benefit for the psychotherapists.” (Reddemann, 2007).

Scientific investigations regarding the efficacy of psychotherapy have shown that it is indeed effective. The question, “What produces the therapeutic results?” showed that the methods applied contribute only a small part. Rather, it is the alliance between therapist and client that accounts for the efficacy of psychotherapy (Berns, 2004; Wampold, 2001). What actually acts on the client is the relationship and the intensity of presence they are able to create. It is these components that account for the efficacy in a successful psychotherapeutic relationship.

The problem is that detached psychotherapy cannot produce considerable results when relationship as a vital means is left out. Whereas, through presence, the therapist is able to create a relationship that gives the client’s own personality full scope. In presence, the required respect is given to the client, while the therapist’s interests are left aside, and full dignity is given to the interpersonal boundaries.

This approach can be achieved by means of self-discovery as a constituent part of psychotherapeutic training. The attempt is made to develop what can be characterised as an “adult human being”, that is, somebody who knows his strengths and weaknesses. This forms a constituent part of what is found in the *yogasûtras* of *Patañjali*, and in what is called *âðavopâya* in Kashmir Shaivism. In this context, presence plays an important role in the sense of affection, of kindness, and in compassion, not only towards the other person, but towards oneself as well.

Psychotherapy starts with the body. I recommend to all clients that they perform some sort of regular physical exercise: be it Tai Chi, Qi Gong, *haúhayoga*, or gymnastics. This leads to a relaxation of the nervous system and should be performed daily and joyfully in order to make it effective.

This is the “grounding” which constitutes the platform for all that follows. The therapist has to be endowed with this “being grounded ness” as an essential precondition in psychotherapy and to effectively impart it to the client.

This “grounded ness” gives rise to space in presence, and it is this space which constitutes the bridge between the physical and the mental planes. Actually, there is no need for a bridge, since there is no difference between the body and the mind. The perception of the three-dimensional space turns into the atmosphere this same space spreads. Interpersonal relationships demand space in order to allow contact.

Words and the sound of voices fill the space. Psychotherapy is verbalisation and takes place within the imaginative space of words, just as tones make music. Speaking and comprehending require presence to enable comprehension. And eventually, this manifests in the spontaneous flow of words while speaking.

Any kind of grasping or intention to control, limits the psychotherapeutic process. Therefore it is essential that the therapist’s interpretation be as unbiased as possible. Deidentification from the meaning should be focussed on. Subject and object should be open to listening and responding to each other with full freedom of expression, while simultaneously respecting each other’s interpersonal boundaries. It is like dancing together without putting hands on each other.

On the part of the client, to engage him in the practice of awareness represents a major support for the therapeutic process. In my experience, it cannot be foreseen who will open up to such suggestions. However, for those who do, there are obvious benefits that result. There is no doubt about this, and this can only be realized when the therapist himself is versed in the practice of awareness, and when he displays this in his personal attitude.

All kinds of meditation are conducive to mindfulness and awareness that opens to an unconditioned presence. The challenge lies in allowing everything to happen, without grasping using one’s own personal intention. Then a “Nondual Presence” can arise, where there is no valuation and no distinction between right and wrong.

When we are willing to not value whatever we are observing, but rather to just be present to what there is, at that point there unfolds the recognition of the inalterability of existence, because in that, “it is as it is”. This attitude is practised in quiet

meditation, expressing itself moment to moment, and, it gradually turns into a resident attitude that remains present the whole day through.

Meditation is aware presence in every moment, in every instant. And it is the breath that enables one to open to the Now, because we breath the air only moment to moment. And the very Space, which is the source and substance of the breath, turns into the Presence of the Now, the Reality. Space and Presence are one and the same, and when the awareness of that Space is open in someone, one's potentialities can be unfolded without restraint or limitation.

Thus, Presence can generate a modified perspective towards the problems at issue. It develops what is known as *shaktopâya*. In it, the psychotherapist's basic attitude turns into a Presence as a willingness to recognise and accept everything, and thus to face reality.

*shaktopâya* deals with "facing psychic facts", that is, spiritual knowledge applied to everyday life. In "facing" whatever comes up in the process, one has the opportunity to give up the defence reactions of flying, fighting, and freezing. It is the willingness to look at oneself just the way one is, that is, the way one sees oneself in every very moment, without avoiding. It is the ability to bear the pain, the scare, and the anxiety or "Angst", which come along with this, and to confront oneself. It is the "inclusion of the paradoxical nature of reality into our understanding, our knowledge or insight, so that our ignorance becomes a legitimate part of our experience", writes the German teacher Ulrich Hennigs, who has translated and commented on a text pertaining to Kashmir Shaivism.

It is recommended to pay attention to the relation between subject and object, that is, to the *in-between*. What does that mean regarding my ideas and projections about the other person? What does this mean regarding transference and counter transference? What happens to my judgements, requests, feelings, and limitations when I look at them from the point of view of the unseparatedness of nonduality? What does nonduality mean in the light of Presence? In what way does the psyche respond to the confrontation with the existential question for meaning, the whence and whither, the "who am I"? How can one face the fundamental reality of loneliness, of death, and of not knowing the meaning of life (Sinn)?

Mr. Hennigs writes: "With each of these questions there comes a desperate query to understand just what the text is talking about: a gap, a lack of understanding, a failure to respond, ignorance, an empty space, an openness, and all of these can cause uneasiness. At this point, Kashmir Shaivism recommends stick yoga: dwelling in this very state, in this gap, in this ignorance, in this empty space. *Ēâktopâya* is the practice of keeping the thinking mind quiet and confronting whatever appears in that mind."

*Dandraprayoga*, stick yoga, is quiet attentiveness to whatever motions of thought arise. It is the state of attentiveness which goes on simultaneously with the sensation of being like a stick. It is not the stilling of the body and the cessation of the thoughts which is demanded in many meditation techniques. Rather is the process of being stimulated within impartial attentiveness, and as it goes on, curiosity and possibly even an erotic element may ensue. At the highest stage, Eros as the drive to manifest is equalled with *spandan*, the cosmic pulse, the vibration of everything.

Kashmir Shaivism is based upon a nondual philosophy, which may contribute greatly to this approach. It is a school of belief within Hinduism that developed in the Kashmir valley, Northern India, around 800 A.D., bearing various elements of both Buddhist and Hindu schools of thought.

Nonduality is an important, but difficult concept. When we attempt to grasp it with words, it remains paradoxical in itself, for words are always bound to duality. The empirical world is a world of duality, marked by differences and thus by the relation between them. This relationship becomes manifest in the vibration, *spandan*, the cosmic pulse. Without distinctions, without contrasts, we would not be able to perceive anything. As the *advaita* tradition in Hinduism would put it: This world appears with a nondual plain as its background. This background is free from distinctions, and thus it is without relation; it has no other. However, nonduality is not a background, the basis of everything, rather it *is* everything! Although it is impossible to provide an affirmative description of it, it can, however, be alluded to, but only in the sense of “it is not this, it is not that” - the “*neti, neti*” approach. This is a reference to the paradoxical nature of reality. To speak in Buddhist terms, it is the emptiness of all phenomena (*shunya*).

Nonduality includes everything, everything indeed. It is “all-inclusive”, for it is *non-exclusive*. It appears as duality to a dualistic observer. We all experience reality in different ways, depending on whether we look at it from a dual or a nondualistic viewpoint. In nonduality, which is the absence of distinctions, there is no sense of time passing from one moment to the next; rather only the present moment, the Now, exists. And in that moment there exists no place to be distinguished from another, and in that only the “facticity (*Faktizität*)”, the Being of the “timeless no place”, exists. In order for something to happen at all, it has to become manifest, it has to appear. That means, what is here is everywhere, what is not here, is nowhere.

Nonduality and duality are inseparably connected and are intertwined with each other, and the absence of differences actually manifests itself as diversity. “Supreme perfection, according to Lao Tse, appears deficient, and thus abides by perfection.”

We experience the dualistic plane by grasping it, whereas the nondual plain can be experienced when we open up to it. Then it reveals itself. Yet we cannot grasp it; it is already there! *You cannot invite the wind, but you can open the window.* Or, as the Zen master Shunryu Suzuki puts it: “It is not one, it is not two. It is one and two. *Things as it is*”. Only if we accept this paradox, through refraining from grasping and controlling, only then liberation and freedom is possible.

When we respond to openness with openness, when openness gets in touch with openness, there is love and compassion, *karuna*, and it reveals itself within the relationship as being one. While this may not be noticed directly, it becomes apparent in the effects it brings about. It often goes along with moments of silence.

In Kashmir Shaivism no final response is given to the eternal question: “Who am I?” Rather, it is the openness of this question that is pointed out, emphasising the fact that it can by no means be answered.

In the “Nondual Space”, “the Now” opens towards eternity. And, in the completely alert, aware attentiveness, which is unconditioned openness, there is access to Presence, which is no longer experienced as awareness nor as presence; it *is* Presence. For in that Presence, as Presence, there is no thing which can be perceived of, nor is there anybody to perceive anything. It is a state of clarity which goes along with the intuition that transcends the ego; it is *intuition without intention*.

It is the scare in the confrontation by the fact that one does not have a choice: The actual moment is but this very moment and not several of them leaving the choice. From a different point of view, this indiscriminateness is the great release when I manage to open up to nonduality, *anuttara*, which has no other and thus obtain the power of discrimination, Khecari Shakti, the capacity to “walk in the sky”, to be a “skywalker”.

In Kashmir Shaivism *shambhavopâya* is naked awareness, pure attentiveness. The experience of no need for choice gives rise to *anuttara*, a state without difference breaking into ordinary perceptions of the world. When we stop identifying ourselves with the projections of our empirical world, which consist of the interpretations and ideas of the ego and our personality, the “*being thus*” can reveal itself. “The breaking in of *anuttara* makes discrimination cease and brings to an end interpretations and conceptions”. (Hennigs)

Krishnamurti says: “The death brought about by meditation is the immortality of the new”.

What I wish to make clear is that human relations in general are completely transformed by Nondual Presence as a basic attitude. Within the therapeutical relationship this demands from the therapist to give up any ego related projections, and any identification whatsoever with the projections, which usually arise regarding myself and the other. It is the knowledge of Nonduality which enables the therapist to generate this state of emptiness. This emptiness makes itself felt in the reluctance to offer quick answers, even if they appear all-too evident, but rather “to live into the questions” (Rilke).

Yes indeed, even one’s own theoretical ideas fade. It is therapy without theory, without dogma, without taking measures of any kind just to be on the safe side. Nevertheless, one can use the methods without being entangled in them; “One can wear them as a robe”.

Krishnamurti comments on this: “As soon as you begin to realize what you are, without any attempt to change it that which you are is transformed.”

Guruji Swami Shyam wrote:

“Whenever I close my eyes, I see you as Me with Me ...:

Since our bodies are made of physical substance, so the living situations and the nature of work have to be different. And the aware persons like you have accepted it and developed your psychological awareness to that height where your Knower is one with it. So all that world around you is the manifestation of the same Pure Being in which, for the Knower, there is no birth, no death. Yet, when we take the body into account and watch everything from mind’s side, then it is all mental and the creation

of illusory mind. So every individual, who essentially is the same Being, has made himself a body with senses and mind and the three states of functions – deep sleep, dream, and waking state. All three of them are one deep sleep when we see from deep-sleep side. And when we see from dream side, for the dreamer there is no deep sleep and no waking state. And when we watch from the wakeful side, then for the person who is awake in the waking state there is no deep sleep or dream state. And when you meditate, then the one which has no form, yet it is Pure Awareness, Pure Existence, unborn, unchanging, for him there are no three states. So it is your own choice ... whatever state you choose, it is all fine.”

Classical psychotherapy remains inside the scope of interpretations, and it confines itself to a small part of consciousness. Awareness, spirituality, Nondual Presence enables psychotherapy to expand towards a practice that opens the horizon to reveal the underlying paradox consisting in the inalterability of the world. It is the ceasing of distinctions, the fact that everything is, and that identification narrows the perspective. When you do not interfere with openness, transformation is indeed possible in its true and profound sense. Only then one sees the other person as me, and it is only Me alone everywhere. “Pure, Free, Forever” as Swami Shyam puts it.

To the therapist, Nondual Presence provides the opportunity to become rooted, and at the same time it is a strengthening without which this work could not be done. For the client, it is the chance to experience a genuine, profound transformation that “sends him freshly towards new dimensions” (H. Hesse).

Just as Swamiji says, we do have the choice to either remain in the limited spheres of consciousness or to transcend them. Only in the Nondual Presence does the formlessness arise, which is the openness and the variety of consciousness as a whole. *Anuttara* is an individual state that is beyond comparison, and it makes up the variety of the empirical world, and at the same time it *is* the world, *it is everything*. This state exists in and emerges out of relationship. Therefore, Presence unfolds through being present and being in the present moment, where Now and Eternity cross and are congruent. It is being there, “Dasein” and Being, “Sein”. “*Things as it is.*” (S. Suzuki)

“That something tender would happen to us,  
when we touch heaven,  
when its breathing nearness  
seduces us to wholly be here.”

(Jean Gebser, 1986, Gedichte Bd. 7, S. 29)

I thank you for your attention, since there is nothing but awareness, it is the door to presence, that opens up to openness.

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### **Address of practice:**

Dr. Guido Peltzer and Christiane Peltzer

Fahrenholzer Str. 16  
D-21423 Drage  
Germany

phone: +49-4179 7505 177  
e-mail: [cg.peltzer@web.de](mailto:cg.peltzer@web.de)

Homepage:

[www.parasamvit.de](http://www.parasamvit.de)

### **Biography**

Dr. Guido Peltzer, 1953 Germany; medical doctor, university studies in psycholinguistics and philosophy; specialised in psychiatry and psychotherapy; certified trainer for psychotherapists; meditation practice with Swami Shyam, Kullu, India and Ulrich Hennigs, Hamburg, Germany; member of DKTP (Eurotas); transpersonal counselling and psychotherapy in private practice in Winsen/Luhe, Germany