

KATE COHEN-POSEY

EMPOWERING  
DIALOGUES  
WITHIN

A Workbook  
for Helping Professionals  
and Their Clients



John Wiley & Sons, Inc.



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DIALOGUES  
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### **Author's Note**

The mandala on the cover has an even number of sections suggesting crystallization and accomplishment. There is a hint of personality parts poised around an unseen Central Self. The mandala slips off the cover, inviting the reader to open the book and start an inward journey.

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*To my parents,  
Ann and Hy Cohen,  
who started me in this amazing new career  
by checking, rechecking, and editing all my school papers;  
beginning the dialogue with the question—  
“What are you trying to say, dear?”  
You are always close by, helping from the other side.*





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# VIGNETTES, FIGURES, AND EXERCISES

The names of clients, friends, and family members whose stories appear in this book have been changed even though people (especially clients) have most generously given written permission to use their case stories. To further protect anonymity, details of lives have been altered and, in some cases, literary gender changes were performed.

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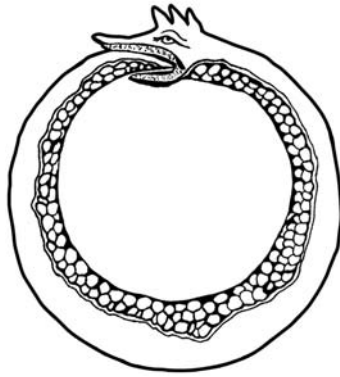
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## PREFACE

In 1923, Martin Buber published *I and Thou*, which contained his **Philosophy of Dialogue**. *Empowering Dialogues Within* invokes the spirit of Buber by using his dialogical method to delve into the core of the psychological realm. Although his theory was concerned with a social reality, he recognized a contact seeking “inborn Thou” and purpose-driven personality parts that cause “I-it” monologues. Unknowingly, Buber had begun to define the multifaceted mind where interaction happens between inner entities through subvocal messages. He believed that the inborn Thou may have to recede within due to bashings from people striving for control and power (Kramer, 2003).

This unfortunate state of affairs is a product of the survival instinct. Out of necessity, people must use and manage their environment by taking an *I-it stand* in which they interrogate, convince, and judge others for personal gain. However, people can also spontaneously open themselves to their fellow beings without any agenda. In these I-Thou moments of *meeting*, a dialogue emerges that conveys more than words. Two people confirm each other as they are while acknowledging and contending with their differences. Through asking questions, showing understanding, and evoking potentials, both parties become more fully human (Kramer, 2003).

The inborn Thou’s longing for real relationship is supported by an “Eternal Thou” (God force) that is always present, pulling people toward genuine meeting. A third catalyst for dialogue is the “central Thou”—a dynamic group leader through which vital fellowships form and renew themselves. In the psychological landscape, this hidden leader is the central Self that relates to and radiates outward to all personality parts of the internal community. With coaching, this innermost Self can sally forth and make genuine contact with internal adversaries. In this manner, compassion, calmness, and self-respect are born.

This text rests solidly on the ideas of many great minds that fleshed out the terrain of the intrapsychic domain. Generations of theorists defined subpersonalities, higher Selves, ego states, and personality parts. Developmental psychology offered clues about how major subpersonalities and the Self are formed. Vivid models of the multifaceted mind abound, and treatment approaches that encourage communication with and between inner entities are beginning to flourish. But none convey the mysterious elegance of Buber’s dialogue in which opposites unite without lessening their opposition. While Buber’s philosophy of interpersonal relations makes a strange bedfellow with those who probed the psyche, this text turns to him again and again for guidance on encounter,

---

**Uroboros** or the snake swallowing its tail encircles a void—a beginning before a beginning. It also suggests a tube entering a tube, adding an inner layer to the previous. The tension between layers creates dynamic interaction, which is the subtext of the philosophy *and psychology* of dialogue. Drawing by Pelecanos Theodoros in a Greek manuscript of an alchemical tract titled *Synosius* (1478). Adapted from “Ouroboros,” n.d., *Wikipedia*, retrieved September 2007, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uroboros>.

## Preface

engagement, and contact. When the Self is restored to its full glory through dialogue, there is little need to integrate subpersonalities; instead connections are made.

*Empowering Dialogues Within* thoroughly identifies the parties involved before exploring how to engage inner troublemakers:

- *Chapters 1 and 2* present the true Self and provide exercises for becoming reacquainted with core being.
- *Chapters 3 and 4* describe directing, distracting, and emotional entities and offer exercises for identifying these parts to dis-identify with them.
- *Chapter 5* teaches techniques that *turn* monologues and debates into dialogues. The Self is coached to engage tyrannical or distracting personality parts so that they will loosen their hold on vulnerable energies.
- *Chapters 6 and 7* detail the steps of *Empowering Dialogues*, give a history and philosophical context of treating people as a plurality of parts, and offer psychoneurological evidence of the existence of Selves and subpersonalities.

## THE ORDER OF THE READING

The order of the chapters suggests making the acquaintance of confident curious inner Selves (in Chapters 1 and 2) before approaching divisive personality parts. However, if you are plagued by tyrannical voices that demand rigid restraint, perpetual preparation, or absolute acceptance from all people, you may want to dive right into Chapter 3 to gain a better understanding of these dictators and then read Chapter 4 where you can meet them in a more intimate way that will allow you to hold them at bay compassionately.

Use Chapter 5 to master the *internal art* of dialogue, which empowers the knowing Self and softens personality parts' extreme messages. But, as soon as you can catch your breath, return to the beginning of the book to learn about the spiritual *instincts* that are as innate as your drives for pleasure and aggression. These forces of observation, intuition, reason, and centering will fine-tune your encounters with inner adversaries.

Chapter 6 reviews the previous material from a clinical perspective. Techniques from EMDR and comparisons with emerging ego state therapies are used to illuminate fine points. Chapter 7 is for the academically inclined and shows how *Empowering Dialogues Within* takes its place in the evolution of psychology and history at large.

Like the author of *Martin Buber's I and Thou: A Guide* (Kramer, 2003, p. 7), I invite you to enter into a dialogue with this text. My wish is that you study the forthcoming ideas as though hearing a living voice, explore how they are different and similar to your own assumptions, reflect on their meaning, and share them with a larger community of readers.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are so many people to thank and so little space. Memory prevents me from recalling the name of the workshop leaders who introduced me to ego-state therapy when I was ready to make a quantum shift in the way I worked with people.

Much appreciation goes to Cara Chamberlain who read my manuscript when it was wordy and information-dense. Yet she was always gentle, positive, and full of unexpected esoteric wisdom. While I was dabbling in character development of tiny scenarios that illustrate the theory in my work, Cara was living a double life, putting muscle and flesh on the denizens of her novels. Any publisher of fiction should not miss an opportunity to have Cara Chamberlain's titles on their front list. She can be easily found in Billings, Montana, by Googling her husband's wonderfully unique name: Bernard Quetchenbach.

Joan Carr also had the perseverance to read this manuscript before I could part with a single word or idea. I have visions of her sitting bleary-eyed in front of her computer because she did not ask for a hard copy, and I doubt she printed the plethora of pages. Similar thanks goes to my niece Deborah Neal who always encourages me.

Virginia Culbert, who read *I and Thou* in the original German, was my Buber expert and confirmed that my preface was philosophically correct.

Sharon Kirkland deserves credit for the wonderful insight in Chapter 3, linking the location of the third chakra (home of personality parts carrying parental demands) to a person's navel through which family values travel. Sharon shares my love of esoterica, and together we have traveled the frontiers of inner space where few people have gone before.

I owe a debt to Trudy Cory Rankin whose Center for Creative Studies is an oasis in a remote region of Florida where people gather to flesh out thorny issues of life and meaning while consuming delicious food. Here my material had its first debut, and I discovered that *Empowering Dialogues Within* warranted a separate presentation from its more extraverted sibling—*Making Hostile Words Harmless*.

I am always grateful to my friend Paula Douglas do da who keeps my spirits high with her greetings and salutations (vintage 1950s) and who has the most impressive resume of spiritual adventures and misadventures of anyone I know.

My reverence for my husband Harry grows exponentially over the years. He creates the space and foundation for me to do this work, never complaining when I've abandoned him for my muse, but beckoning me away from the computer when I'm neglecting the bare necessities of life.

I want to thank the folks at John Wiley & Sons, who plucked me from obscurity and solicited me to write *Brief Therapy Client Handouts* and then were willing to support me in birthing an "emergent therapy." Their interest in combining Buber's philosophy with psychology was a welcome surprise and showed me that they trust their reader's thirst for new integrations of ideas and deeper truths. It

## Acknowledgments

has been pure joy to work with my editor, Lisa Gebo, who rediscovered me and kept coming after me when a computer gremlin started hiding my e-mails behind + signs. She has been an amazing real-live muse.

Most of all I am blessed by my clients who are always willing to travel this road with me, helping me refine my therapeutic arts, putting up with the strange *props* I use in therapy now, and simply smiling at my stocking feet, which compliment my otherwise professional attire.





## INTRODUCTION

I present to you the drama that has been unfolding between my clients and myself over the past several months. I have gone beyond choosing from my bag of tricks acquired over 30 years and have fallen into a treatment orientation that is mysterious.

I wonder if the cubist painter Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) knew his benefactor when he began to fragment objects and show multiple facets simultaneously. I reflect on my own training to discover which of the masterful predecessors whom I have studied might have planted the seeds that have been prodding me to say to clients: “What part of you thinks you have to take care of everything?” “What is your special (inner) friend saying about this situation?” “Go inside and tell the controlling part of yourself that you know it is afraid to let go. . . .” “Tell me what happens.”

I want to know if the stuff that happens in my office has the makings of a method to lead people out of the labyrinth in which they often feel trapped, or whether it is a hodgepodge of questions ending in blind alleys. I am on a mission to discover if other clinicians and researchers believe, like Picasso, that exposing multiple facets of a person (or object) can lead to a higher unity. Even more than wanting to authenticate a treatment method, I seek clarification of *what* is happening between my clients and myself and ways to embellish and enhance the power of the process.

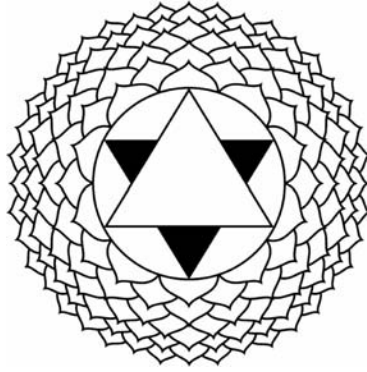
Happily, as I begin my research, I find that my work is well-rooted in the past but different enough to be considered a new leaf on the psychotherapy tree. The surprise has been that this approach’s closest cousins are treatment orientations I have only been introduced to secondhand and some that I have never known existed. Therapy schools and their originators’ brilliant minds will be given proper acknowledgment with parenthetical notation. The jargon that permeates the study of mind and spirit is bypassed, and descriptive, practical language is substituted whenever possible. Words like *personality* and *Self* and technological terms are listed in a Glossary to clarify definitions.

I sense that a mighty force is pushing me to write this book; that my clients are contributing authors as they help me discover their inner identities; that I will be meeting many great minds who have laid the foundation for this work; and that you, my readers, will always be with me, challenging me to make more understandable the mystery of how people become truer to themselves and freer in spirit.

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**The Mandala** is a labyrinth, suggesting the beginning of a journey and active searching (Fincher, 2000). *Source:* “Labyrinth,” n.d., *Wikipedia*, retrieved September 2007, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labyrinth>.





## Chapter 1

# Discovering the True Self

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Elijah stood atop Mount Carmel clad in his skimpy loincloth and hairy cloak taunting King Ahab and 450 priests his wife Jezebel had imported from the neighboring kingdom of Tyre (I Kings 18:20).

Why does your god Baal do nothing to end this 3-year drought? As the mighty god of fertility, is it not his job to send rain? Why have you allowed your foreign-born wife to slay Israel's prophets simply for demanding loyalty to YHWH, the true God!? He glared at the hoard of Israelites gathered for the spectacle.

The hour has come to choose! Build two altars. Place a bull on each. Have Baal's priests send fire down from heaven to consume the sacrifice.

The priests cried out to Baal all morning, shouted his name, hobbled and danced, gashed themselves with lance and sword until blood gushed out, but neither fire nor rain came. Then Elijah did a strange thing. He dug a trench around his altar, filled it with precious water, and doused the bull offering as if to shield the sacrifice from heavenly fires. But when he called on the God of Israel "the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stone, the soil, and licked up the water in the trench" (18:38).

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The Mandala on this page combines the thousand-petaled lotus: symbol for the 7th (crown) chakra, with the upward/downward pointing triangles, symbol for the 4th (heart) chakra that integrates earthbound and spirit-bound energies. Interpreted graphically by Gavin Posey.