

A Person-Centered Approach to Psychospiritual Maturation

Jared D. Kass

A Person-Centered Approach to Psychospiritual Maturation

Mentoring Psychological Resilience and Inclusive
Community in Higher Education

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In Memoriam
Dr. Carl R. Rogers
1902–1987
Mentor
to an entire generation
of educators and mental health clinicians
with humanistic values
committed to the positive development of a peaceful and just society

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to my intellectual, clinical, and life partner, Lynn Kass. If readers find any wisdom or maturity in this book, it is the result of our shared quest for psychospiritual depth and understanding. Thanks also to our son, Jesse, who has travelled this road with us. His scientific and sociopolitical knowledge have contributed to thoughtful conversations related to this book.

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ENDORSEMENTS FROM PROFESSIONAL LEADERS

PRAISE FOR A PERSON-CENTERED APPROACH TO PSYCHOSPIRITUAL MATURATION

Jared Kass has given new meaning to “higher education” and challenged administrators and educators to reexamine how universities address the unmet needs of students who seek grounding in what it means to be truly human. He creates a holistic, multidimensional, and inspirational view of how every person can develop the capacity to become a fully functioning adult who can contribute to breaking the “chain of pain” that litters all human history. I was truly overwhelmed by the scope of scholarship and wisdom.

As did his mentor, Carl Rogers, Kass urges us and the students in his course to a deeper and broader understanding of the human person. His unique contribution is to ground that vision in current research investigating neuroscience, culture, stress, and the existential search for meaning. His maturational model can empower us to transcend traditions of greed, conflict, social malaise, and depersonalization, and confront the isms that afflict our global society and infect our youth.

Using his biopsychosocial view of development, Kass created a college course of self-inquiry that can guide the interested student along a personal journey toward “psychospiritual maturation.” The course addresses important dimensions of growth that can encourage positive behavior changes in specific areas of academic achievement, reduction of self-destructive attitudes and behaviors, and promotion of interpersonal harmony. However, from my perspective, this course offers the opportunity for a more complete transformation that addresses core spiritual and existential crises of students and offers a strong foundation for a life well-lived.

Want to see how it works? The last several sections offer both research data supporting the effectiveness of the course and compelling stories to document the awakening that can occur in this type of course. I cannot wait to get copies for our president and provost.’

—Carlo DiClemente, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology,
University of Maryland. Author, *Addiction and Change:
How Addictions Develop and Addicted People Recover*

‘Higher education currently faces two critical challenges: growing numbers of students entering college with psychological and substance abuse issues and the difficulties of creating inclusive campus communities given the cultural, racial and economic divisions in society. Kass presents a scientifically based intervention that can benefit students in all academic disciplines. His curriculum, Know Your Self, is a person-centered pedagogical process that addresses student needs for psychospiritual growth and development. This book is a must read for student affairs professionals who strive to design effective spiritual formation programs and work to create inclusive campus communities, and for faculty who struggle with helping students address their interpersonal and psychological distress and make meaning of a world fraught with strife.’

—Mary Ann Gawelek, Ph.D., President, Lourdes University.
Former Provost, Seton Hill University

‘In an era in which many of us feel untethered from traditional moorings, Dr. Kass makes an important contribution with his exploration of psychospiritual development. He examines the importance of psychospiritual connectedness for both individual and community health and well-being. Moreover, he suggests a pragmatic educational framework that can help us all develop the kind of multi-dimensional resilience that can see us through troubled times.’

—Gregory Fricchione, M.D., Associate Chief of Psychiatry,
Director, Benson-Henry Institute for Mind-Body Medicine,
Massachusetts General Hospital; Mind Body Medical Professor of
Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School. Author, *Compassion and Healing in
Medicine and Society: On the Nature and Use of Attachment Solutions to
Separation Challenges*

‘This text will breathe life into institutions of higher education by providing a roadmap to enhanced well-being for students entering adulthood in the midst of intergenerational “chains of pain.” Kass provides an insightful, interdisciplinary, campus-based intervention to empower students to break internal and collective chains through the integration of psychology, spirituality, cultural studies, and biology. From contemplative practice and community building to qualitative and

quantitative investigation, this rich text explores topics that are often neglected on campuses—personal development, social justice, and spirituality.’

—Thema Bryant-Davis, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology, Pepperdine University. Author, *Thriving in the Wake of Trauma: A Multicultural Guide*

‘Jared Kass extends the rich discoveries of his mentor, Carl Rogers, in education that develops not only knowledge but wisdom and character. This is an idea-provoking book for faculty and student life professionals for helping students mature in ways that address not only their own suffering but that of humanity.’

—William R. Miller, Ph.D., Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry, University of New Mexico. Author, *Motivational Interviewing: Helping People Change and Lovingkindness*

‘This book is an excellent resource for administrators and faculty across disciplines concerned with student development, and committed to transforming higher education. Educational professionals interested in deepening commitments to health, social justice, and peace for all on campus will resonate with Kass’ insights and challenges. This project moves higher education beyond engaged participation toward campus life that supports the psychospiritual maturation of students and the building of inclusive communities. This rich and provocative book will inform the field in years to come.’

—The Rev. Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook, Ed.D., Ph.D., Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Professor of Practical Theology, Claremont School of Theology. Author, *God Beyond Borders: Interreligious Learning among Faith Communities*

‘From the walls of the Temple of Apollo in Delphi to classrooms and campuses across the United States, “Know Your Self” speaks ancient and contemporary truths reweaving a holistic vision for teaching and learning that rescues education from centuries of deconstruction and fragmentation. In this remarkable book, Jared Kass offers an approach to education that invites the identity forming narratives of each student into the classroom so that students of diverse identities are recognized in such a way that the learning environment becomes a place of reflection and discovery, of dialogue and interaction, of encounter and conversation. This work is an essential resource for all who teach and learn, and a blessing for all who believe in education as a pathway to personal and social transformation.’

—The Rev. Victor H. Kazanjian, Jr., M.Div., Executive Director, United Religions Initiative; former Dean, Intercultural Studies and Religious and Spiritual Life, Wellesley College. Editor, *Education as Transformation: Religious Pluralism, Spirituality, and a New Vision for Higher Education in America*

‘For four decades, Jared Kass has led the teaching and scholarship of mind-body-spirit approaches to training counselors. His book presents an integrative model promoting the maturational value of articulating diverse worldviews, acknowledging psychosocial trauma, and the healing power of community. He shares his unique curriculum for higher education drawing on knowledge from psychology and contemplative studies. Students who take his course attest that it is a life-changing opportunity and demonstrate both heightened personal and intellectual growth.’

—Susan Gere, Ph.D., Director and Professor, Division of Counseling and Psychology, Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences, Lesley University

‘This remarkable prevention-oriented synthesis teaches us skills and attitudes that markedly enhance health and well-being.’

—Herbert Benson, M.D., Distinguished Mind-Body Medical Institute Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School. Author, *The Relaxation Response*

‘It will be the lucky student who starts college and early on encounters the remarkable Know Your Self curriculum which Jared Kass has proposed in this book. The depth and range of the philosophical and psychological concepts, combined with the use of self-examination and experiential learning, provides a path to maturation that should be a part of all college students’ experience.’

—Jimmie Holland, M.D., Wayne E. Chapman Chair in Psychiatric Oncology, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center; Professor of Psychiatry, Weill Cornell School of Medicine. Author, *The Human Side of Cancer: Living with Hope, Coping with Uncertainty*

‘Jared Kass demonstrates a lifelong passion for the study of person-centered spiritual maturation and provides educators concerned with the psychological resilience of students in higher education, critical insight for mentoring the next generation and the communities they inhabit. His work encourages us to honor the wisdom of contemplative practices from the spiritual traditions to build diverse and inclusive communities where all human potential can flourish.’

—Cheryl A. Giles, Psy.D., Francis Greenwood Peabody Senior Lecturer, Pastoral Care and Counseling, Harvard Divinity School. Editor, *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices in Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*

‘Professor Kass sees the big picture of social—cultural development—in both its pain and promise. He also recognizes the stem cell moment of emerging adulthood in the human life span. This book is an invitation to Higher Education to meet him at that crossroad and to consider a stretch of soul and curriculum.’

Grounded in both research and significant practice, this book is an informing, highly-valuable, thought-provoking read.’

—Sharon Daloz Parks, Ph.D., Whidbey Institute. Author, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Emerging Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith*

‘Life itself is a university is the memorable conclusion of this remarkable book that breathes new spirit into our efforts to understand and promote the development of college students. In this deep and beautifully written work, Kass introduces readers to Know Your Self, an exciting program to facilitate the journey of emerging adults into greater wholeness as physical, psychological, social, and spiritual beings. Built on a foundation of strong science, the wisdom of multiple religious traditions, and Kass’ own work with Carl Rogers, Herbert Benson, interfaith dialogue, and the lived experiences of many college students, Know Your Self deserves wide dissemination within institutes of higher education.’

—Kenneth Pargament, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Department of Psychology, Bowling Green State University. Editor-in-Chief, *APA Handbook of Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality*; Author, *Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy: Understanding and Addressing the Sacred*

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