

# Esalen's Half-Century of Pioneering Cultural Initiatives 1962 to 2019

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## Preface

Most of us know Esalen mainly through public workshops advertised in the catalog. But there is another, usually quieter, Esalen that's by invitation only: the hundreds of private initiatives sponsored now by Esalen's Center for Theory & Research (CTR). Though not well publicized, this other Esalen has had a major impact on America and the world at large. From its programs in citizen diplomacy to its pioneering role in holistic health; from physics and philosophy to psychology, education and religion, Esalen has exercised a significant influence on our culture and society.

CTR sponsors work in fields that think tanks and universities typically ignore, either because those fields are too controversial, too new, or because they fall between disciplinary silos. These initiatives have included diplomats and political leaders, such as Joseph Montville, the influential pioneer of citizen diplomacy, Jack Matlock and Arthur Hartman, former Ambassadors to the Soviet Union, and Claiborne Pell, former Chairman of the U.S. Senate's Foreign Relations Committee; eminent Russian cultural leaders Vladimir Pozner, Sergei Kapitsa, and Victor Erofeyev; astronaut Rusty Schweickart; philosophers Michael Murphy, Jay Ogilvy, Sam Keen and Robert Solomon; pioneering educators George Leonard, George I. Brown, and Robert McDermott; cultural historians Jeffrey Kripal, Robert Bellah, and Richard Tarnas; psychologists and therapists Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Erik Erikson, Adam Crabtree, James Hillman, Rollo May, Fritz Perls, Gordon Wheeler, and Stanislav Grof; pioneers in somatics Charlotte Selver, Moshe Feldenkrais, Ida Rolf, and Don Hanlon Johnson; scientists Gregory Bateson, Stuart Kauffman, Frans deWaal, Karl Pribram, Henry Stapp, Ed Kelly, and Emily Kelly; pioneers of spiritual understanding Frederic Spiegelberg, Paul Tillich, Huston Smith, Brother David Steindl-Rast, Richard Baker Roshi, Loriliai Biernacki, and Joseph Campbell; world-leading authority on aging Ken Dychtwald; experts in the sciences of supernormal experience David Hufford, Dean Radin, Cassie Vieten, and Marilyn Schlitz; best-selling authors Fritjof Capra, Steven Johnson, Robert Wright, Amory Lovins, Janine Benyus, Susan Griffin, and Theodore Roszak; economists Hazel Henderson and Brian Arthur; Religious Studies Stars: Charles Stang, Tanya Luhrman; journalist Eric Schlosser; sustainability leaders Patrick Holden and Richard Dunne; cultural icons Terrence McKenna, Chungliang Huang, and Robert Bly; and many other Esalen leaders too numerous to name here.

Skim these pages. The order of presentation by no means reflects on the subject matter's importance. This is the first draft of a document that will be revised again and again as Esalen's Center for Theory & Research creates new, cutting edge initiatives. Note the many books that have emanated from these initiatives. If you consider yourself part of Esalen as so many of us do, you will see that you are part of something larger than you might have known.

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## **Activities of the Russian-American Center (TRACK TWO: An Institute for Citizen Diplomacy\*)**

**\*Note:** See **Citizen Diplomacy with Russians** for how the Russian-American Center grew out of a series of Esalen conferences that brought together Americans and Russians, and became TRACK TWO.

**2019:** In September 2019 CTR and Track Two, led by Dulce Murphy and Ginger Thompson, held the *Whom Do We Trust* conference at the Herzen Russian State Pedagogical University to establish projects to improve Russian-American relations, reduce the threat of nuclear disaster, and move our two countries towards peace.

**2018:** In September 2018 CTR/Track Two extended their Russian-American Program with one in a series of initiatives that will be used to expand their networks in each region they serve and to build a permanent forum for dialog for a better world. This first initiative began with a conference, in St. Petersburg, Russia, titled “Whom Can We Trust: a New Generation discusses Russian-American Relations” that invited two groups of bi-lingual students – secondary and university level - from both countries to participate in panel discussions, role-playing activities and a development project that examined the role of media and communications in international relations. The goal was to expose new thinking and practices in the arena of perception-building in order to shift perceptions from less useful narratives to more productive and aspirational narratives centered around understanding, justice, peace and tolerance.

The conference was featured in an article in the magazine “The Nation”:  
<https://www.thenation.com/article/dialogue-is-the-best-medicine-citizens-speak-out-against-reinvigorating-the-cold-war/>

**2017:** In April of 2017, CTR and TRACK TWO: An Institute for Citizen Diplomacy held a working conference in New York City to plan for the International conference that was held at the newly-established Yeltsin Presidential Center and Library in Ekaterinburg, Russia in September 2017. The international conference in Ekaterinburg addressed the most difficult years in the relationship between the USSR and the USA and the events that moved things to a better understanding. In view of the increasingly worsening relations between the United States and Russia and mindful of the undercurrents in the government circles of both nations, renewed efforts of citizen diplomats were called on.

**2015:** Conference held at Esalen in September, 2015.

**2014:** CTR and TRACK TWO: An Institute for Citizen Diplomacy held a conference in Paris to explore the past and future relationships among Russia, the United States, and Great Britain with the overarching goal of figuring out why wariness and distrust continues among these nations and what can be done to improve this. Ambassador Jack Matlock, Jr., and Thomas Graham of Henry Kissinger Associates were among the luminaries who attended this conference. As in all TRACK TWO work, the goal was to increase mutual understanding among the ruling elites of the countries involved, and to promote saner policies and greater cooperation.

**2012:** the Esalen Pacifica Prize was launched to highlight the role of the arts in enriching and deepening ties between Russia and the United States across a range of common interests – cultural, scientific, business, and economic. For more information, see: <http://esalen-pacifica-artprize.org/> and John Brown's public diplomacy blog: <http://publicdiplomacypressandblogreview.blogspot.de/2012/09/september-15.html>.

**2012:** Joe Montville, creator of Track Two Diplomacy at Esalen in 1980, was invited to the Department of State to explain to senior officers in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs how the theory and practice of Track Two came into being. The occasion was a gathering of representatives of several American NGO's, including the Asia Society, the East-West Center, and the Stimson Center, each of which has received State Department grants in the India-Pakistan Track Two People-to-People Program. The event was essentially a formal recognition that the State Department has institutionalized Track Two Diplomacy as an essential part of its Public Diplomacy mission.

**2010:** co-hosted with TRACK TWO the Esalen Russian-American Partnership Project conference (ERAPP) featuring Jack F. Matlock, Jr., Former U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, Vladimir Ponzer, Viktor Erofeyev, internationally acclaimed writer and television host, and others.

**2009:** continued the archiving of historical materials related to our citizen diplomacy work over the preceding thirty years. The TRACK TWO Archive Project collects and annotates primary source materials documenting US, USSR and Russian citizen diplomacy of the 80's and 90's and will make this material available to scholars and the public. These materials will serve as a resource for those who wish to study our role in US-Soviet relations and assess the extent of its contribution to ending the Cold War. It is likely that the archives will be housed at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.

**2008:** continued to develop TRACK TWO's Library of Psychological Literature at Moscow State University by donating books, journals and educational CDs requested by the library's Russian staff, helping to upgrade their computer technology, and helping them find ways to access the vast psychological information available on the web. This collaboration helps to bring the most up-to-date psychological research to assist the training of psychologists in Russia. Professors from Stanford, Yale and other leading universities continue to visit and lecture there and donate their works.

**2008:** TRACK TWO became the non-profit sponsor of a cutting-edge documentary film event in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. More than 40 filmmakers and industry professionals from the US, Lebanon, Kuwait, the UAE and Iran, gathered to explore the role of documentaries in cultural diplomacy. This event garnered media attention and support from the Dubai Culture and Arts Authority, as well as from the Dubai International Film Festival.

**2005:** traveled as a TRACK TWO delegation to Russia with board member Jay Ogilvy, advisor Michael Murphy, and director Dulce Murphy to meet with members of Track Two's Russian board of directors, further work with the Luchkov Library of Psychological Literature at Moscow State University, and interview over forty people on the future of the relationship between Russia and China.

**2005:** sponsored a reunion at Esalen to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the founding of Esalen Institute's Soviet-American Exchange Program, now sustained by TRACK TWO. Citizen Diplomats from the United States and Russia gathered to reflect on our shared history and on how the lessons we learned during the 1980s and 1990s might be applied to major conflicts today.

**2005:** published "25 Principles of Citizen Diplomacy" compiled during the 25th reunion of pioneers of this model at Esalen. These principles were distilled from our work with Russia and the Soviet Union and can be applied to our complex relationships with Islam, Iran, and China over the longer term.

**2003:** held a meeting with our Board of Directors in Moscow at the Literary Gazette Headquarters in September. The purpose of the meeting was to assess the state of the US- Russian bilateral relationship. Those in attendance included Vladimir Pozner, Alexander Tsipko, Davlat Khudonazarov, Sergei Kapitsa, Abel Aganbegyan, Tatiana Kameneva, Valentin Kamenev and Viktor Erofeyev from Russia and Dulce Murphy, Michael Murphy, Joseph Montville and Stephan Schwartz from the United States. We explored the importance of setting a constructive policy toward Muslim minorities in Russia and the United States and searched for ways to address the downturn in Russian-American relations.

**2003:** sponsored the third tour of the "Ballet Beyond Borders" project that included leading Russian dancers and members of The San Francisco Ballet, who performed in Santa Fe, New Mexico to sold-out audiences. Two of the pieces were performed and choreographed by principal dancer Yuri Possokhov, formerly of the Bolshoi ballet in Moscow and the San Francisco Ballet.

**2002:** conference in Samarkand, Uzbekistan with our Russian colleagues that pledged our cooperation in the effort to eliminate terrorism, address Muslim conflicts with the West, and promote knowledge of Islamic spirituality with our Central Asian colleagues.

**2002:** opening of The Russian-American Center's historical video and historical materials archive at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, with the video tapes

from TRAC's 2001 conference.

**2001:** shortly after the September 11th disaster, sponsored an annual conference with a group of Russians, Americans, and Central Asians in order to: promote solidarity between Russia and America, to explore Russian-American cooperation, to eliminate terrorism and address Muslim conflicts with the West, and to continue to explore possibilities for long-term Russian-American ventures.

**2001:** participated in the first phase of an exchange of computer technologists and archivists from Russia, at the University of Texas in Austin, and at the headquarters of Abamedia, in Fort Worth, Texas, the home of the Russian Archives Online (RAO).

**2000:** organized a lecture by TRAC Board member Mac McQuown at the Academy of the National Economy in Moscow to an important group of Russian Bankers and Investment Specialists.

**2000:** organized talks by psychologist Gordon Wheeler and Esalen Institute founder and chairman Michael Murphy with students and faculty at the Moscow State University Psychology Department.

**2000:** helped coordinate the inaugural program in Russia of Students of the World (SOW), a project developed by Duke University students to immerse themselves in other cultures as architects of the future.

**1999:** co-sponsored the third annual TRAC Benefit Conference with the Global Business Network (GBN), a world-wide organization that specializes in futures research and scenario planning. The program theme was "Futures For Russia." All presentations were filmed for inclusion in the archive of our Historical Reflections Project.

**1999:** developed a project with Abamedia on its Historical Reflections media project, which includes a TRAC website, film interviews with major contributors to Russian and Russian-American oral histories, and archival research that will eventually become part of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.

**1999:** co-sponsored the "Ballet Beyond Borders" project with the Russian Cultural Fund in Moscow. Leading Russian and American dancers of the San Francisco Ballet toured the former Soviet Union, performing in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Donetsk, Ufa, Kiev, L'viv, Alma Aty, Tallin and Vilnius.

**1998:** sponsored a summer salon in Moscow at the Kapitsa Dacha (country house) that continued work on the Historical Reflections Project and the Memorial Library of Psychological Literature.

**1997:** began the Historical Reflections Project, which films interviews with Russian and Americans who participated in important ways in the transition from the end of the Cold War to the beginnings of democratic governance and a free market economy. This

project is part of a worldwide movement to learn from the mistakes of past in authoritarian states and their transitions to more liberal governance.

**1997:** inaugurated the first benefit conference week, entitled “Russian-American Dialogues at Esalen Institute.” A highlight was the lecture by Russian scholar Valentin Berezhkov who talked about his personal experiences during the war years. He was Stalin’s interpreter and was present at many of the major meetings, including Tehran, with Stalin, Hitler, Roosevelt, Churchill and other world leaders that changed the course of world history.

**1997:** published the first in a series of monographs entitled Future Scenarios On Russian- American Relations. These scenarios highlight the risks and opportunities inherent in possible post Cold War outcomes for Russia and the United States.

**1996:** sponsored fourteen high ranked young tennis players from Northern California to the Russian Far East to compete with their counterparts in Khabarovsk and Vladivostok.

**1996:** conducted a leadership conference at Esalen, Big Sur, California, which developed alternative scenarios for the future of Russian-American relations.

**1996:** initiated a program with Lindisfarne Press to publish English language editions of major Russian philosophers, including Solovyov, Berdyaev, Bulgakov. This initiative has helped acquaint Americans with the works of these great Russian thinkers.

**1996:** established the Library of Psychological Literature at Moscow State University. This is the only library for English-language psychological literature in Russia and has become a central gathering place for Russians interested in the many currents of psychology that were prohibited in the Soviet Union as they developed in Europe and America.

**1995:** continued to work with Chernobyl Children's Project. With assistance from TRACK TWO, children from the areas affected by the 1986 Chernobyl disaster and American peers worked together to develop new skills and lasting personal relationships.

**1995:** sponsored twelve Russian teenage tennis players from Russia’s Far East for tournaments with counterparts from the United States Tennis Association NorCal and the National Junior Tennis League.

**1994:** Esalen’s Russian-American Center (TRAC) became a separate nonprofit institution, but continued to support the work listed below in close collaboration with Esalen. It is now called TRACK TWO: An Institute for Citizen Diplomacy.

**1994:** Esalen and TRACK TWO sponsored an ethnic conflict resolution conference in Washington, DC, in partnership with the Department of State, to influence the political



climate in Russia. Civil liberties and civil rights in a democratic society were addressed.

### **Citizen Diplomacy with Russians**

**1993:** hosted a major conference at Stanford University, entitled "Toward the Further Reaches of Sport Psychology," in which prominent coaches, athletes, and sport psychologists from the former Soviet republics and the United States discussed current trends in theoretical and applied sport psychology. During this and subsequent meetings Russians and Americans shared methods and insights that contribute to peak performance and experience in sport.

**1992:** organized a conference in Moscow to address the resurgence and persistence of neo-Bolshevism in Russian society. Russian and American participants confronted the Bolshevik mentality and discussed ways to embrace democratic pluralism rather than totalitarianism. The conference marked an important turn (which is not yet complete) from authoritarian rule in Russia toward constitutional democracy.

**1992:** played an instrumental role in a conference, held at the Vatican in Rome, to raise awareness of the emotional and physical needs of people with disabilities.

**1991:** an Esalen delegation, including Dulce Murphy, Jay Ogilvy, and Robert McDermott, longtime president of the California Institute of Integral Studies, went to Moscow for a series of meetings on the progress of psychology in Russia.

**1990:** conducted the Furth Ruble Prize, an international competition for the best proposal offering a practical solution to the question of ruble convertibility in international trade. Award recipients were chosen by a panel of Soviet and American scholars, including Abel Aganbegyan, Joseph Brada, Ed Hewett, and Nobel Laureate Wassily Leontief.

**1989:** coordinated, in conjunction with the United States-based International Center for Economic Growth and Moscow State University, a conference called "Entrepreneurship in the World Economy."

**1989:** hosted Boris Yeltsin on his first trip to the United States. Esalen arranged meetings for Mr. Yeltsin with President Bush, former President Reagan, and many leaders in business and government. According to Yeltsin's biographers Leon Ahrens and Timothy Colton, this trip catalyzed his turn from Communism and his decision to quit the party, which in turn led to his central role in the end of formal Communist rule and the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

**1988:** hosted Academician Abel Aganbegyan for his first visit to the United States as one of Gorbachev's chief economic advisors. This led to the development of a management

training program in Moscow with senior executives from across the Soviet Union and to numerous collaborations between Soviet and American business people.

**1988:** sponsored the first Russian conference on psychoneuroimmunology (PNI), an interdisciplinary field concerned with the relationship between psychological processes and the functioning of the immune system. Inspired by Dulce Murphy, this conference led to productive Russian-American collaborative research in the field and to a follow-up conference held in 1991 at Leningrad's Institute for Experimental Medicine.

**1986:** co-produced a space bridge on Chernobyl and Three Mile Island with the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the USSR Academy of Sciences to facilitate cooperation between the Soviet Union and America in the prevention of nuclear accidents.

**1986 and 1988:** major delegations of Soviet writers toured the United States under the auspices of the Soviet-American exchange program. These tours led to the Soviet Writers Union joining the International Pen Club, which in turn helped facilitate new freedoms of expression for writers and the press in the Soviet Union.

**1985:** helped create the Association of Space Explorers with astronaut Rusty Schweickart, the first forum in which Russian and American astronauts and cosmonauts could share their experiences in space and their hopes for the future of space exploration. The Association has catalyzed several cooperative ventures involving the Soviet and American space programs, and it is still active today in efforts to prevent collisions with asteroids and comets that might hit the Earth.

**1985:** led by Dulce Murphy, signed one of the first agreements between an American private-sector group and the USSR Ministry of Health. This agreement facilitated programs of health promotion and non-pharmacological methods of treating disease and stress.

**1984:** meetings between Dulce and Michael Murphy and the leaders of the Soviet Writers' Union eventually led to its joining the International Pen Club, the world's leading institution for monitoring censorship of writers and the press. This was a momentous event in the evolution of Soviet freedom of expression, signaling a new willingness by the Soviet leadership to relax the intellectual strictures resulting from Communist dogma.

**1983:** co-sponsored a conference called "Faces of the Enemy." Speakers, including Sam Keen, Ashley Montagu, Robert Bly, and Soviet diplomat Valentin Berezhev, discussed the psychology and politics of enmity, propaganda, and projection. Keen's book *Faces of the Enemy*, destined to become a classic in the field, was influenced by this conference.

**1983-1987:** four conferences called "The Erik Erikson Symposia" on the political

psychology of Soviet-American relations led by career diplomat Joseph Montville and psychologists Erik and Joan Erikson. Participants included the eminent historian James McGregor Burns, Pulitzer-prize winning Harvard psychiatrist John Mack, political psychologist Vamik Volkan, theologian Harvey Cox, philosopher Sam Keen, and psychologist James Hillman. Through Andre Melville, a prominent Soviet academician who participated in these meetings, insights into the psychodynamics of the Soviet-American relationship were transmitted to high levels of the Soviet bureaucracy. Among the results of these meetings: 1) James Blight was inspired to take a similar psychodynamic approach to the Cuban missile crisis, which resulted in several books and a PBS documentary; 2) Joseph Montville edited a special edition of the Journal of Political Psychology called "A Notebook on the Psychology of the U.S.-Soviet relationship," which stimulated new thinking about the sources of superpower conflict; 3) John Mack set up his own research center called The Center for Psychology and Social Change; 4) Vamik Volkan, professor of psychiatry at the University of Virginia medical school, created the Center for the Study of Mind and Human Interaction at the University of Virginia; 5) James Blight invited Jay Ogilvy to contribute a scenario planning perspective to a week-long conference at Jackson Hole, including Robert MacNamara,

Joseph Nye, Albert Carnesale and others addressing alternatives to nuclear deterrence.

**1982:** pioneered the first space bridges, allowing Soviet and American citizens to speak directly with one another via satellite communication. These inspired subsequent satellite teleconferences between Soviets and Americans, including an ongoing Congress-to-Supreme Soviet teleconference, which in turn led to many confidence-building programs between people of the two countries.

**1980-1987:** six conferences on citizen diplomacy, during the first of which Joseph Montville coined the term "track-two diplomacy" to refer to private-sector initiatives between nations, including the Soviet Union and America, that supplement and support formal diplomatic relations. Participants included James Hickman, Joseph Montville, Jay Ogilvy, John Marks, Michael Murphy, Dulce Murphy, Peter Schwartz, and David Harris. The first of these meetings provided John Marks with his primary inspiration for the creation of the NGO Search for Common Ground, which now has offices in Washington, Brussels, Amman, Bujumbura, Gaza City, Kiev, Luanda, Monrovia, and Skopje. It engages in creative conflict-reducing and bridge-building activities in many of the world's most troubled zones. And since 1980, Esalen, Dulce Murphy, Michael Murphy, Joe Montville, and TRACK TWO: An Institute for Citizen Diplomacy have pioneered the practice and analysis of track-two work in America, Europe, the Middle East, and other parts of the world.

### **The Abrahamic Faiths and Global Fundamentalism**

International Abrahamic Network (IAN): Led since 2007 by Dulce Murphy, Michael Murphy, and Joseph Montville under the banner of IAN (formerly the Abrahamic Family

Reunion), with much outside support from Fetzer Institute, Adelaide and Andrew Hixon and many others, IAN has united and built common cause among hundreds of Abrahamic leaders from the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths. This work has touched over 250 theology schools, seminaries, and graduate schools in the United States and Canada and now extends into the Middle East. IAN has also created a newsletter that reaches more than a thousand people, and a website: <http://abrahamicfamilyreunion.org> that has become the hub of much Abrahamic activity and which features a “guidebook” for Abrahamic reconciliation.

**2018:** A conference was held in December, 2018 to address the IAN initiative in 2019 and taking the North Pacific Rim Project (NPRP) to its next level. The 2019 IAN conference will bring together a group of 25 to 30 influential peace-builders and practitioners of various human potential practices to help leaders develop their work in the Middle East. The group also firmed up plans for a 2019 NPRP conference and discussed participation, topics and how to create a more permanent discussion using the Internet and mobile technologies to do so.

**2017:** The core group met to strengthen connections with Middle Eastern and American partners and see how they can support each other in continuing to expand their network. The presentations included recent citizen diplomacy efforts in the forms of film, broadcast, social media and people to people efforts by Network groups.

**2016:** The core group met to strengthen established relationships and introduced influential organizations and individuals into the network. The presentations included recent citizen diplomacy efforts in the forms of film, broadcast, social media and people to people efforts by our Network groups.

**2015:** A conference was held in Big Sur in April 2015 to build on the relationships forged during the previous year’s travels by the group, and the network was expanded.

**2014:** The core group traveled to Israel and Jerusalem to strengthen established relationships and to introduce new organizations and individuals into the network. The trip was a resounding success.

**2011:** fifth annual in the Abrahamic Family Reunion series, focused on creating “generative narratives”—that is, new ways of envisioning our religious identities to foster healing and global acceptance.

**2010:** fourth annual in the Abrahamic Family Reunion series, focused on a number of pertinent interfaith themes, such as the youth travel and outreach program, Abraham’s Vision, which brings together Muslim and Jewish teenagers for transformative educational experiences. The promotion of interfaith curricula in high school religion classes was also a focus of this meeting.

**2009:** third annual in the Abrahamic Family Reunion series, focused on theories of social change, information about “best practices”, and new models for inter-group work

involving the Jewish, Islamic and Christian communities.

**2008:** second annual conference in the Abrahamic Family Reunion series at Esalen, focused on overcoming Islamophobia and featured Joseph Montville's "Healing History" model for effectively remediating long-stranding historical traumas in the three Abrahamic faiths.

**2007:** initiated a research and development project on the Muslim Diaspora within Russia and Central Asia to explore the possibilities of Russian, American and Islamic cooperation in Russia and Central Asia to address Muslim conflicts with the West.

**2007:** inaugural conference on "The Abrahamic Family Reunion," co-sponsored by the Fetzer Foundation and directed by TRACK TWO's chairman of the board Joseph Montville. This project fostered reconciliation among Christians, Jews and Muslims through a Five-Cities program in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Washington, DC, New York, and Boston.

**2006:** conference on "Christian Fundamentalism," gathering scholars, activists, psychologists, ministers and theologians to discuss the religious and political roots of intolerance evidenced by certain forms of Christianity.

**2006:** conference on "Judaic Fundamentalism," gathering Jewish and other religious scholars and activists from Israel, the United States and Europe to discuss the motives and historical experiences that have generated aggressive and violent behaviors between various religious and ethnic groups.

**2006:** held the first meeting of an Islamic Outreach program in Mill Valley, California, gathering Muslim and non-Muslim Americans from the San Francisco Bay Area. The gathering included a black American Imam, an Afghan, a Tajik Ph.D. candidate from UC Berkeley, an Iraqi-American journalist, several TRACK TWO board members including chairman of the board Joseph Montville and other social activists. The discussion revolved around the need for educating Americans about Islam and led to proposals for an outreach campaign in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston and New York.

**2005:** conference on "Islamic Fundamentalism," gathering scholars, activists, and religious leaders to consider responses to the dangerous rise of religious nationalism in the contemporary world. Members of the Islamic community included people from Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, and Egypt, as well as scholars in various relevant fields and the Pulitzer Prize winning writer Lawrence Wright.

**2004:** co-sponsored with TRACK TWO the first of five conferences addressing religious fundamentalism, in this case gathering scholars and activists from Europe, America and India to respond creatively to a barrage of hate campaigns, ban movements, and political threats directed against scholars of Hinduism.

## **International Relations: China**

**2013 - 2014:** UC Berkeley Professor and MacArthur Fellow, Xiao Qiang, along with Chungliang Al Huang, Sam Yau, Jay Ogilvy, Dulce Murphy and TRACK TWO, convened the sixth and seventh years of cultural exchange with China including meetings held in Hong Kong and Beijing. Their overarching goal was to create friendship and deeper understanding between China and the United States, effectively creating a network of influential Chinese cultural leaders. Esalen's growing ties with China now include descendants of such major figures as Confucius, Sun Yat-sen, and Deng Xiaoping, as well as some of the most powerful political and cultural figures in China today. Participants in 2013 and 2014 included many Chinese participants of note, as well as two former Presidents of the New York Asia Society, Robert Oxnam and Vishakha N Desai.

**2010 -2012:** the third through fifth annual conferences in the Potential China series were held. Themes included: innovative designs in the arts and ecology; new trends in ecotourism; the ecological activism of the Shan Shui Center; a prominent panda bear ethologist, and the rise of NGOs as a force in the Chinese political landscape. Participants included: China's first

internet blogger, a direct heir of Confucius (78<sup>th</sup> generation), and leading business entrepreneurs in the cell phone and micro-chip industries.

**2009:** second annual conference in the Potential China series, concentrating on the growth of the internet and blogging in China as a democratic means of communication and information sharing. Participants included: Louisa Chiang, National Endowment for Democracy, Isabel Hilton, Perry Link, an eminent China scholar and former Princeton professor, and several journalists and scholars from China.

**2008:** initiated a joint Esalen and TRACK TWO long-term project called Potential China. The project's first meeting was held at Esalen, Big Sur and included Chinese journalists who were visiting scholars at the Department of Journalism at the University of California, Berkeley. Xiao Qiang, a faculty member of the Department of Journalism, is a central participant in this project, which aims to further collaborations between Chinese and American cultural leaders in hopes of broadening understanding between the two nations and deepening appreciation of Chinese spiritual traditions.

**1987:** convened a conference on "Sino-American Dialogues on Social and Economic Transformation" led by James Garrison.

## **International Relations: India**

**2008:** Michael and Dulce Murphy traveled to Pondicherry, Auroville, and New Delhi, India where Michael moderated a three-day symposium relating Sri Aurobindo's philosophy to current world affairs. And as a member of the Advisory Council of Auroville he participated in meetings to further the work of this unique international community.

**2007:** Michael and Dulce Murphy traveled to India to explore possible working relationships with the Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry, India and the international city of Auroville. Michael gave lectures, worked with members of the organizing committee in Auroville, and collaborated with colleagues on the valuable archives at the Ashram.

### **Cross-Fertilization of CTR/TRACK TWO Projects**

**2019:** In April of 2019 CTR and Track Two held *The One Network* conference, led by Dulce Murphy and Virginia Thompson. This conference brought together a network of influential individuals from Russia, China and the countries of the North Pacific Rim, and the Middle East to address issues of global importance including environmental deterioration, nuclear armament, refugee crises, and the growing threats from cyber systems. Each group informed the other and offered not only the means to form friendships and alliances but also to tackle specific problems that the diversity of the One Network helps to solve in new and ground-breaking ways

**2018:** In April 2018 a conference was held representing all three Track Two/CTR projects in order to expand the Track Two/CTR networks by cross-fertilizing the expertise within each group to deepen their impact. A five-year vision for Track Two/CTR was discussed including how to leverage social media and other networking tools to reach new audiences with the extraordinary activities developing across the Track Two/CTR networks.

### **The Empirical Evidence for the Survival of Death**

**2012:** publication of Eric Weiss's *The Long Trajectory: The Metaphysics of Reincarnation and Life after Death*, a major philosophical study of how reincarnation works in relationship to the evolving nature of the universe. This book was forged in the context of the several conferences described below.

**2012:** 14<sup>th</sup> annual conference in this series, focused on: cross-cultural perspectives on the human subtle body; a review of the evidence for pre-cognition; a presentation on dual- aspect monism, in which mind and matter are seen as two sides of one coin; and a discussion of evolutionary panentheism as a larger context for the survival evidence. Participants: Michael Murphy, Ed Kelly, Emily Kelly, Jim Tucker, Bruce Greyson, Henry Stapp, Adam Crabtree, Jeffrey Kripal, Eric Weiss, Bernard Carr, Harald Atmanspacher, Loriluai Biernacki, Greg Shaw, David Presti, Gary Owens, and Deb Frost.

**2011:** 13<sup>th</sup> annual conference in this series, focused on: intensive dialogues concerning metaphysical maps that might help explain the evidence for survival; presentations that will be developed into specific chapters for a forthcoming follow-up book to *Irreducible Mind*. Participants: Michael Murphy, Ed Kelly, Emily Kelly, Jim Tucker, Bruce Greyson, Henry Stapp, Adam Crabtree, Jeffrey Kripal, Eric Weiss, Bernard Carr, Harald

Atmanspacher, David Presti, Loriliai Biernacki, Greg Shaw, Michael Grosso, Gary Owens, and Deb Frost.

**2010:** 12<sup>th</sup> annual conference in this series, focused on: the contributions of C. S. Peirce to the survival issue; the mind-brain relationship as understood by quantum physics with a special emphasis on how human attention shapes brain activity; an overview of various authors who have written about the paranormal in literary contexts; theories in physics that describe multiple-dimensions; and a review of the fascinating dialogue between Wolfgang Pauli and Carl Jung concerning the nature of synchronicities. Participants: Michael Murphy, Ed Kelly, Emily Kelly, Jim Tucker, Bruce Greyson, Henry Stapp, Adam Crabtree, Jeffrey Kripal, Eric Weiss, Bernard Carr, Harald Atmanspacher, David Presti, Michael Grosso, Gary Owens, and Deb Frost.

**2009:** 11<sup>th</sup> annual conference in this series, focused on: the new field of parapsysics, which bridges physics and parapsychology; a comparison of the Tibetan concept of *alaya vijnana* and the soul; a discussion of Eric Weiss's forthcoming, *The Long Trajectory*, which looks at A. N. Whitehead's philosophy and the survival evidence; a survey of how classical thinkers (Plotinus and Iamblichus) regarded the human subtle body; a survey of the research into night terrors and sleep paralysis and how this relates to the survival evidence; and a presentation on the latest scientific research conducted at the University of Virginia. Participants: Michael Murphy, Adam Crabtree, Ed Kelly, Emily Kelly, Bernard Carr, John Poynton, Claire Villarreal, David Gray, Eric Weiss, Greg Shaw, David Hufford, Jim Tucker, Charles Tart, Ian Whicher, David Presti, Harald Atmanspacher, Henry Stapp, Gary Owens, and Deb Frost.

**2008:** 10<sup>th</sup> annual conference in this series, focused on: the contributions of Jean Gebser to the survival hypothesis; philosophical explanations of the evidence for paranormal phenomena; a critical engagement with David Ray Griffin's Whiteheadian ideas about the survival hypothesis; a review of the Tibetan Buddhist perspective on survival; and the contributions of classical philosophers, such as Iamblichus, to the survival question. Participants: Michael Murphy, Adam Crabtree, Ed Kelly, Eric Weiss, Bob Rosenberg, Stephen Braude, Harald Atmanspacher, David Presti, Jeff Kripal, Bertrand Méheust, David Gray, Greg Shaw, Gary Owens, and Bill Barnard.

**2007:** Publication of a major study of the issues related to the survival of death titled, *Irreducible Mind: Toward a Psychology of the Twenty-first Century*, edited by Ed and Emily Kelly and others.

**2007:** 9<sup>th</sup> annual conference in this series, focused on: the public reception and scholarly implications of *Irreducible Mind*; the contributions of Henri Bergson to the survival question; contemporary interpretations of William James's thought; the mind-brain relationship according to quantum physics; and leading trends in neuroscience that are friendly to the survival hypothesis. Participants: Michael Murphy, Adam Crabtree, Ed Kelly, Emily Kelly, Bruce Greyson, Jim Tucker, Charles Tart, Bill Barnard, Adam



Crabtree, Bob Rosenberg, Henry Stapp, Eric Weiss, Gary Owens, and David Presti.

**2006:** 8<sup>th</sup> annual conference in this series, focused on: a complete survey of all existing evidence for the survival hypothesis with an intention to rank the validity of that evidence; a comparison of quantum physics to A. N. Whitehead's process philosophy; a presentation on state-specific empirical sciences; and a review of Sri Aurobindo's understanding of subtle worlds. Participants: Michael Murphy, Ed Kelly, Emily Kelly, Adam Crabtree, Jim Tucker, Bruce Greyson, Henry Stapp, Charles Tart, Eric Weiss, Bob Rosenberg, Peter Heehs, Christian De Quincey, Gary Owens, and Bruce Wilshire.

**2005:** 7<sup>th</sup> annual conference in this series, focused on: reviewing metaphysical assumptions about space, time, and matter; Sri Aurobindo's model of the evolution of the soul; the use of "quantum entanglement" to understand telepathic interactions; a survey of different philosophical views concerning what constitutes the human "ego" or sense of "I." Participants: Michael Murphy, Ed Kelly, Emily Kelly, Adam Crabtree, Jim Tucker, John and Alyce Faye Cleese, Henry Stapp, Eric Weiss, Sean Kelly, Bob Rosenberg, Dean Radin, Julie Beischel, Lorin Hollander, and Owen Flanagan.

**2004:** 6<sup>th</sup> annual gathering, focused on: preparations for the forthcoming book, *Irreducible Mind*; quantum physics in relationship to the survival hypothesis; the nature of the soul in subtle worlds; human experiences in which time is reversed (the future shapes the present moment); and the importance of larger metaphysical models to explain the existing evidence for survival. Participants: Michael Murphy, Ed Kelly, Emily Kelly, Charles Tart, Adam Crabtree, Jim Tucker, John and Alyce Faye Cleese, Bruce Greyson, Michael Grosso, Gary Owens, Bob Rosenberg, Eric Weiss, Sean Kelly, Dean Radin, Gary Schwartz, and Henry Stapp.

**2003:** 5<sup>th</sup> annual gathering, focused on: an in-depth discussion on the legacy of William James; the successful use of hypnosis during medical surgeries; a survey of specific Western philosophers who were open-minded to the survival question; and a critical evaluation of Ken Wilber's integral model in relationship to this research. Participants: Michael Murphy, John and Alyce Faye Cleese, Adam Crabtree, Bruce Greyson, Michael Grosso, Arthur Hastings, Ed Kelly, Emily Kelly, William Roll, Bob Rosenberg, Charles Tart, and Jim B. Tucker.

**2002:** 4<sup>th</sup> annual gathering in this series, focused on: the paradigm-busting implications of the near death experience of Pam Reynolds, which happened during a medical surgery; the issue of multiple subtle or auric bodies surrounding the physical body; contemporary theories in cognitive science concerning mind-brain relations; and the interface of physics and the evidence for survival. Participants: Michael Murphy, Ed Kelly, Emily Kelly, Charlie Tart, Adam Crabtree, Jim Tucker, John and Alyce Faye Cleese, David Fontana, Bruce Greyson, Michael Grosso, William Roll, Arthur Hastings, Antonia Mills, Richard Baker Roshi, and Saul-Paul Sirag.

**2001:** 3<sup>rd</sup> annual gathering in this series, focused on: expanded models of the human

mind and the unconscious; a survey of the current leading evidence for reincarnation-type memories; the relationship between dreams and the survival question; and the sociological problem of “paradigm fixation” which blocks many scientists from taking the evidence for survival seriously. Participants: Michael Murphy, Ed Kelly, Emily Kelly, Adam Crabtree, Jim Tucker, Stephen La Berge, Arthur Hastings, Chris Bache, Charles Tart, Antonia Mills, and Michael Grosso.

**2000:** 2<sup>nd</sup> annual gathering of leading researchers in the fields of “reincarnation-type memories,” near-death experiences, out-of-body experiences, channeling, mediumship, multiple personality, and a wide range of cross-cultural studies to address the empirical evidence for survival of bodily death. Participants: Michael Murphy, Michael Grosso, Ed Kelly, Emily Kelly, Bruce Greyson, Sukie Miller, Arthur Hastings, Adam Crabtree, David Fontana, Antonia Mills, Marilyn Schlitz, Richard Baker Roshi, and Charles Tart.

**1998:** Michael Murphy launched a series of annual conferences focused on the leading scientific evidence supportive of the view that “something” survives the death of the human body. Inspired by Frederic Myers’s book, *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death* (published in 1902), this series has taken the name “the Survival seminar” or “Sursem” for short. Participants: Ed Kelly, Emily Kelly, Adam Crabtree, Bruce Greyson, Michael Grosso, Arthur Hastings, Sukie Miller, Charles Tart, and Steve Dinan.

### **The Scientific Study of Paranormal Capacities**

**1999-2000:** two invitational conferences on "Subtle Energies and the Uncharted Realms of Mind," brought into collaboration researchers studying telepathy, precognition, subtle energies, martial arts, lucid dreaming, remote viewing, and distant mental healing.

Participants: Ralph Abraham, John Ackerman, Barbara Brennen, Kathy Dalton, Bernard Grad, Wayne Jonas, Mary Ellen Klee, Roger Jahnke, Stephen Laberge, George Leonard, Fred Luskin, Roger Nelson, Dean Radin, Beverly Rubik, Helmut Schmidt, Marilyn Schlitz, Russell Targ, Roeland Van Wijk, and Garret Yount.

**1993-1998:** conference series on "Direct Mental and Healing Interactions," which then became "Distant Mental Influences on Living Systems," convened by Marilyn Schlitz and co-sponsored with the Institute of Noetic Sciences. Participants: William Braud, Sharon Thom, Richard Bierman, Dean Radin, Stephen Braude, Deborah Delanoy, Robert Morris, Bruce Pomeranz, Helmut Schmidt, Richard Wiseman, Dennis Stillings, Elisabeth Targ, Fr. Sean O’Laioire, Ellen Levine, and Garret Yount.

**1982:** sponsored a four-week interdisciplinary training program on "Paranormal Intelligence: Explorations of the Limits of Human Capacities." Its focus areas included: 1) Paranormal experience and abilities 2) Modern parapsychological research 3) Psychosis: Disease or spiritual emergency? and 4) New approaches to self-exploration. Leaders: Christina and Stanislav Grof, Fritjof Capra, Rupert Sheldrake, Russell Targ.

**1987:** invitational conference on "Science and the Transpersonal," designed to explore issues relating to the development of scientific methodologies, styles and concepts which accept and adequately address the implications of a transpersonal realm. Participants: Julian Isaacs, Charles Honorton, Rex Stanford, Michael Murphy, Stuart Twemlow, Rowena Pattee, Ruthann Corwin, Charles Tart, Rachel Bagby, Rodger S. Jones, Shinzen Young, Arthur Hastings, and Michael Harner.

**1981-1987:** seven invitational conferences on "Psychic Research." Participants: Charles Tart, Russell Targ, Keith Harary, Helmut Schmidt, Daniel Benor, Herbert Benson, William Braud, Marilyn Schlitz, Jacob Zigelboim, Alyce Green, Elmer Green, Stephan Schwartz, Rand DeMattei, Janet Quinn, Bernard Grad, Charles Spence, Ed Brame, Nancy Lunney, Michael Murphy, David Deamer, Bruce Pomeranz, and Lynn Trainor. As a result of the first meeting on Time and Psi, the Parapsychological Association held a symposium on the subject with many of the same participants, providing the nucleus for a ninety-minute BBC television program, "The Case of ESP."

**1983-1984:** two invitational conferences on the "Scientific Investigation of Subtle Energies" convened by George Leonard. Participants: Fred Lorenz, Charles Tart, Chris Cullander, Tod Mikuriya, Julian Isaacs, Bernard Grad, and Tim Scully.

**1976:** Michael Murphy inaugurated The Transformation Project to systematically study extraordinary bodily transformations that occur in religious practice, mind-assisted healing, biofeedback, sensory isolation, sports, psychotherapy, erotic experience, physical therapy, hypnosis, and other activities. This project produced an archive of some 10,000 scholarly and scientific studies, books, and other materials that contain evidence of supernormal human functioning, which is now housed in the libraries of the University of California, Santa Barbara, and which is accessible through the Esalen's CTR website.

### **The Super Story Symposia Series**

The The Super Story Symposia Series is a nine-year series of symposia sponsored by the Esalen Center for Theory & Research, generously supported by the Hummingbird Foundation, and led by Jeff Kripal called "The Super Story Series." The Super Story is a poetic device designed to capture all of those emergent mythologies and mystical currents that have been developing over the last two centuries in conversation with the sciences, particularly (1) quantum physics, (2) evolutionary biology and (3) astronomy and cosmology. The series will recurrently cycle through these three scientific complexes and explore the various ways that such sciences are radically altering our understanding of human nature and the cosmos and, alternatively, how the scientists themselves are often secretly informed and inspired by their own anomalous or paranormal experiences.

**2019:** The fourth symposium in the series, "*Physics, Experience, and Metaphysics*" held in December, 2019, was dedicated to exploring ways of relating human experience and the physical world to their metaphysical grounding. This entailed a series of questions.

How, for example, could such relations be properly imagined? The many interpretations of quantum physics and the many ways to deal with the hard problem of conscious experience invite different attempts to understand the mind-matter relationship. Numerous striking resonances or structural analogies seem to exist between the formal models of quantum physics and the nature of human experience. These analogies may point to a deeper origin of the mental and the physical, as it is expressed in some metaphysical accounts of reality. Do human beings, under particular and very special conditions, have access – empirical or experiential – to a metaphysical ground of reality? Such access seems to be reported in large parts of mystical literature in many cultures. Are the descriptive narratives of mystical sources simply mere social constructions, more fashionable nonsense solely based on metaphor, but nothing else? Or is there something to these claims and reports that needs to be seriously considered to move us forward toward answering the deep unresolved questions of mind and matter and their place in nature?

The third symposium in the series, “*Beyond the Spinning: The UFO Phenomenon, Cosmology, and Eschatology*” held in January, 2019 focused in on the UFO phenomenon as a classic example of the third cycle, that is, that scientific and mythical complex involving astronomy, cosmology, and the countless encounter or abduction experiences of the historical record. The conference looked at some of the theological, parapsychological, and eschatological implications of this material, particularly as it pertains to the nature of time, the possibility of retrocausation, the arrival of meaning from the future, and the cosmic destiny of the human soul.

**2018:** The second symposium in the series “*Evolution and Deification*” held in November, 2018 focused on the convergence (and divergence) of modern evolutionary thinking and the concept of deification, both human and cosmic, in the history of philosophy and religion. The conference attended especially to the esoteric evolutionary threads that have emerged over the last century and a half (Esalen being one of them); and put these threads into conversation with a nuanced history of incarnation and deification in philosophy and religion, ancient and modern. Such questions were considered as: the place of teleology in evolutionary thinking; what sorts of latent or manifest doctrines of deification are at work in the philosophical and religious histories that inform our present, and how do these interact with scientific discourses of evolution; what options there are for bridging the discourses of evolution and deification (e.g. evolutionary panentheism, panpsychism, the study of consciousness); what are the obstacles, real or imagined, to building such bridges; and how does or should popular culture contribute to these efforts.

**2017:** The first symposium in the series “*Mind, Matter and the New Real*” boldly explored some of the various roles that quantum physics and the nature of matter have played in shaping our understanding of who we are and what our place in the cosmos is. In particular, looking at the mind-matter interface and the nature of time from the perspectives of psychology, philosophy of mind, and quantum theory and the obvious but still contentious resonances these display with the phenomenologies of mystical, imaginal, synchronistic and other “rogue” phenomena. The symposium also addressed the incredible “too good to be true” success of mathematics in modeling the physical

universe from the smallest to the largest scales in space and time and what this might tell us about a cosmic dimension of mind itself. How do we explain the uncannily surprising mirroring between “mind” and “matter”? No conclusions were presumed, only new futures, new vistas, new conceptions of mind, matter and the human.

### **The Religion of No Religion**

**2019:** In December, 2019, Jeff Kripal and Dana Sawyer convened the symposium, “The Religion of No Religion”. Frederic Spiegelberg, a professor of comparative religion at Stanford University, used the phrase “the religion of no religion” in 1948 to capture his paradoxical mystical theology of a divinity within and beyond both the natural world and all of the world religions. The religion of no religion for Spiegelberg was at heart of the cosmos, but it was also the source of all religions, even as it also overflowed and preceded each and every one of them. No religion captured such a cosmic ground. All expressed something of it. In short, this was Spiegelberg’s academic “perennialism.” Or was it? What do we mean when we speak of perennialism? Can we still? How are such claims related to traditional apophatic mystical theology? How are mystical theology and perennialism to be related to the contemporary “Nones” or “Dones” and their oft-heard refrain, “I am spiritual but not religious”? How are such demographics and forms of thought relevant today, and why are they generally dismissed in the study of religion and the humanities more broadly today? Put a bit more abstractly, is sameness always wrong? Can pure difference really support any long-term search for justice and well-being, much less the universal human search for transcendence and transformation? These were some of the questions addressed during the symposium which included both Esalen leaders, who work with these communities and teachers on a daily basis and in a very practical way, as well as academics who study them.

### **Incarnation**

**2019:** In April, 2019, Michael Murphy, Loriliai Biernacki, and Greg Shaw, convened a conference exploring the theme of *Incarnation*. from its beginning, CTR has focused on the discoveries of science, mystical experience, and the actualization of supernormal abilities. These explorations, initiated at Esalen by Michael Murphy, may be seen within the trajectory of an evolutionary panentheism. In both Western and Eastern traditions, the realization of supernormal abilities has been imagined as the Incarnation of the divine, or the expression of humanity as self-transcendent. Incarnation, thus, may be seen as a *telos* of *human* existence, exemplifying our deepest yearning for what it means to be fully human. From April 14 to 19, leading thinkers from diverse fields of research have been invited to a CTR conference to explore the significance of Incarnation, how it has been expressed in modalities of the body, traditions of the spirit, and what role it continues to play in the unfolding of our human story.

### **Understanding Extraordinary Experiences and Events**

**2018:** This event, led by facilitators Jeff Kripal and Tanya Luhrmann, and sponsored by the Center for Theory & Research of Esalen Institute, brought together professional

anthropologists and scholars of religion committed to tracking, describing, and interpreting extreme or robust religious experiences and contemporary experiencers themselves in a context of mutual trust, open conversation, and exploration. Two intellectual projects lay behind this special event: Tanya Luhrmann's project on a comparative phenomenology of mind and spirit; and the publication of Jeff Kripal's memoir/manifesto, *Secret Body*, in which Jeff called for a "new comparativism" based on an ethnography and phenomenology of extraordinary experiences in the contemporary world.

### **The Super Symposium: the Paranormal and Popular Culture**

**2010-2011:** The publication of Jeff Kripal's two-volume work summarizing several themes and figures from the four conferences below: *Authors of the Impossible: The Paranormal and the Sacred* (Chicago, 2010) and *Mutants and Mystics: Science Fiction, Superhero Comics, and the Paranormal* (Chicago, 2011). The first book was voted a Choice Outstanding Academic Title for 2010. The second book won the university press industry's Prose Award for Media and Cultural Studies.

**2011:** fourth annual in this series led by Jeff Kripal on "Esoteric Esalen: the Altered States of History and the Human Potential Movement." Significant participants: Michael Murphy, Stanislav and Christina Grof, Ed Kelly, Adam Crabtree, Scott Jones, Charley and Judy Tart, Richard Lacey, Dana Sawyer, Don H. Johnson, Birgit Menzel, Elizabeth Rauscher, Russ Targ, and Nick Herbert.

**2010:** third annual in this series led by Jeff Kripal on "Plato's Theater: Mystical Realism and the Maturing of Metaphysical Film." Significant participants: Michael Murphy, Corinne Bourdeau, Jacob Gray, Mitch Horowitz, Bruce Ingram, Scott Hulan Jones, Ken Kosub, Richard Lacy, Victoria Nelson, Dean Radin, Scott Ross, Katherine Steele, Whitley and Anne Strieber, Keith Thompson, Jacques F. Vallee, and Eric Wilson.

**2009:** second annual in this series led by Jeff Kripal on "The Paranormal in History, Science, and Popular Culture." Significant participants: Michael Murphy, Erik Davis, Mason Gamble, Mitch Horowitz, Scott H. Jones, Christopher Knowles, Edwin May, Doug Moench, Victoria Nelson, Christopher Partridge, Dean Radin, Paul Selig, George Stephanopolous, Lawrence Sutin, and Jacques F. Vallee.

**2008:** beginning of a four-year series of conferences led by Jeff Kripal on supernormal powers in popular culture. The inaugural conference, titled "On the Supernormal and the Superpower," established the historical links between the history of psychical research and parapsychology (the "supernormal") and the history of American pulp fiction, science fiction, and metaphysical film (the "superpower"). Significant participants:

Michael Murphy, David Hufford, Dean Radin, Jacques Vallee, Russel Targ, Barbara Denzler, Bertand Meheust, Victoria Nelson, Donna Freitas, Roy Thomas, Christopher Knowles, and Wendy Doniger.

## Research on the Effects of Meditation

**2013:** In cooperation with Michael Murphy (who has a long-standing reputation in this field), meditation researcher Cassandra Vieten of the Institute of Noetic Sciences convened emerging leaders who are challenging existing biases and breaking new ground in neglected areas of meditation research. The first conference in May 2013 gathered diverse professionals never convened before in the uniquely collaborative context of Esalen. They surveyed the existing field and assessed the new methods derived from cutting-edge neuroscience that show how to improve the results of meditation practices. They also looked at more effective ways to bridge the worldview of Western science with the Eastern mystical traditions. This conference provided specific recommendations that researchers in this exciting field can take into the future.

**1996:** publication of the scholarly resource book *The Physical and Psychological Effects of Meditation: A Review of Contemporary Research with a Comprehensive Bibliography: 1931-1996*, by Michael Murphy and Steve Donovan, updated by Eugene Taylor. This remains the most complete survey of empirical research into the effects of meditation and has been updated by The Institute for Noetic Sciences (IONS) to include studies completed through 2011.

**1988-1995:** seven conferences on "New Directions in Meditation Research," convened by Tom Hurley and co-sponsored by the Institute of Noetic Sciences. Participants: Joan Borysenko, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Daniel Brown, Beverly Rubik, Roger Walsh, Frances Vaughan, Elmer Green, Stanley Krippner, Charles Tart, Willis Harman, Charles Alexander, Etzel Cardena, Michael Washburn, Stephen LaBerge, Kenneth Pelletier, Ron Kurtz, Michael Murphy, Steve Donovan, and Michael Mahoney.

## Exploring the Link Between Physics and Consciousness

**2011:** David Kaiser published *How the Hippies Saved Physics*, which describes how the physicists mentioned below pursued the paradigm-busting discoveries in their field (quantum entanglement and Bell's Theorem) with Esalen playing a catalytic role for their avant-garde metaphysical discussions and successful collaboration.

**1976-1988:** eleven annual invitational conferences on "Quantum Physics and the Nature of Reality" convened by Nick Herbert. Special attention was devoted to Bell's Theorem and its implications. Participants: Gary Zukav, Charles Brandon, Nick Herbert, Ariadna Chernavska, John Clauser, Ralph Abraham, Saul-Paul Sirag, Bernard d'Espagnat, and Henry Stapp.

**1987:** Nick Herbert published a popular science book *Quantum Reality: Beyond the New Physics*, inspired partially by his experiences at Esalen. He subsequently

published *Elemental Mind: Human Consciousness and the New Physics*.

**1979:** Gary Zukav published *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*, which explored the implications and origins of quantum physics for a popular audience, and won the American Book Award for Science. It was largely inspired by Esalen conferences.

**1976:** Esalen and the Physics Consciousness Research Group of San Francisco conducted a month-long invited conference on various conceptual gaps and new possibilities in theoretical physics and the relevance of modern physical thought for consciousness transformation on the planet. Participants: Jack Sarfatti, Saul-Paul Sirag, Michael Murphy, Fred Alan Wolf, Nick Herbert, Peter Flessel, Ralph Abraham, Michael Karnov, and John King.

### **Sports Psychology and Supernormal Performance**

**1993:** Esalen and TRACK TWO hosted a major conference at Stanford University, entitled "Toward the Further Reaches of Sport Psychology," in which prominent coaches, athletes, and sport psychologists from the former Soviet republics and the United States discussed current trends in theoretical and applied sport psychology.

**1983:** George Leonard gave the first of three Leonard Energy Trainings at Esalen, a rigorous eight-week integral program of physical, mental and spiritual disciplines.

**1978:** Michael Murphy and Rhea White published *In the Zone: Transcendent Experience in Sports*, the most comprehensive study to date on supernormal experience in sport.

**1976:** the Esalen Sports Center began a six-month program in mind/body development, coordinated by Mike Spino, featuring running, meditation, yoga, and other disciplines.

**1975:** George Leonard published *The Ultimate Athlete*, which presented a theoretical framework for the kind of work the Sports Center was fostering.

**1973:** *New York Times* article (April 15, 1973) on the Esalen Sports Center stated that, "Such is the clout generated by Esalen that the occasion may be to a change in sports what the storming of the Bastille was to the French Revolution."

**1973:** formation of the Esalen Sports Center, designed to foster an orientation to sports beyond mere competition and physical activity. Former professional football player David Meggyesy, Bob Kriegel, a group leader and sports coach, and Mike Spino, an innovative running coach, joined with Michael Murphy to build programs that saw sports as vehicles for self-development and avenues to a higher nature. The first weekend program was so successful that Esalen launched a two-week summer program. Prominent faculty: Stewart Brand, Judith Aston, John Brodie, Tim Galway, George Leonard,



Stanley Keleman, Dave Meggyesy, Eleanor Metheny, Dan Millman, Robert Nadeau, Mike Murphy, Chungliang Huang, Will Schutz, Jack Scott, Mike and Dyveke Spino.

**1972:** Co-founder of Esalen, Michael Murphy, published *Golf in the Kingdom*, which became a classic work on the psycho-spiritual dimensions of sport.

### **Human Evolution and Integral Transformative Practice (ITP)**

2016: A conference on the topic of “Emerging Supernature” was facilitated by Michael Murphy. Over the past century, psychological researchers William James, Frederic Myers, Abraham Maslow, and Herbert Thurston made comparative studies of supernormal human experience that established a “natural history” approach to such experience analogous to the natural history of living forms that comprises the field of biology. In the early 1990s Michael Murphy proposed a synoptic embrace of this approach in *The Future of the Body*, arguing that most if not all human attributes, which have evolved from analogous attributes in our animal ancestors, can give rise to supernormal versions of themselves and thus serve as harbingers of our emerging supernature. Using this thesis as a starting point, this conference gathered scientists and scholars such as Ed Kelly, Adam Crabtree, Jeff Kripal, Jenny Wade, Diana Paulka, David Hufford, Dale Allison, and Henry Stapp to address the relationship between transformative practices and humanity’s continuing evolution as a species. As many thinkers have argued, when evolution is broadly conceived, it reveals a vast continuity of development from matter to life to mind and beyond. In this view we can see that all life is slumbering Spirit pressing to manifest its latent supernature.

2014: “The Evolution of Transformative Practices” conference was facilitated by Michael Murphy and Adam Crabtree and gathered cultural historians, anthropologists, scholars of religion, historians of science, evolutionary theorists, and other academic specialists to investigate how humans have engaged in transformative practices throughout our history and evolutionary past. Transformative practices include: shamanism, meditation, yoga, tai chi, psychotherapy, sacred medicine journeys, and other modalities that influence human growth and transformation. This conference addressed some of the following questions: How can we regard archaic shamanism as a transformative practice and in what way did it influence our hunter-gatherer evolution? How did the great sages and spiritual teachers of the classical era (Lao Tzu and Buddha, for example) influence the development of transformative practices? To what extent are those teachings still relevant to today’s spiritual practitioner? How have attitudes toward the physical body in the world’s great religions influenced transformative practices? How have supernormal powers (siddhis) played a role in the evolution of transformative practices? Can we detect any noticeable trends in transformative practices since the Axial Age and the emergence of the Upanishads? How has modern psychology and therapy influenced the contemporary development of transformative practices? How does an evolutionary worldview (evolutionary panentheism) influence our understanding of the effect of

transformative practice on further human evolution?

**1999-2000:** two invitational conferences on "Transformative Practices," which gathered researchers and practitioners of meditation, yoga, martial arts, and somatic practices to discuss how to enhance the effectiveness of all forms of transformative practices.

Participants: Roger Walsh, Michael Mahoney, Don H. Johnson, Fred Luskin, Stephen Dinan, Jeff Kripal, Kaisa Puhakka, Richard Baker Roshi, George Leonard, Michael Murphy, Gordon Wheeler, and Jorge Ferrer.

**1992:** publication of *The Future of the Body*, Michael Murphy's comprehensive scholarly study of supernormal abilities and extraordinary human experiences. This volume was the fruit of work begun in 1976 with The Transformation Project and continued through invitational conferences and scholarly exchanges.

**1992:** George Leonard and Michael Murphy initiated a two-year experimental class in what they called Integral Transformative Practice (ITP), which combined meditation, imaging, affirmations, intellectual study, physical discipline, nutrition, and group work to create a comprehensive program for development. This experiment led to the publication of Leonard and Murphy's *The Life We Are Given* in 1995 and to the creation of numerous ITP groups in the U.S. and overseas.

### **Re-Imagining the Power of the Imagination**

**2016:** Jeff Kripal continued to gather scholars and thought leaders, this time to address "The Further Reaches of the Imagination III: Bodies of Light and Super Saints." This conference continued to investigate the powerful influence of the human imagination on the construction of our experience and our sense of reality. This unique gathering treated the notion of bodies of light or energy that are often seen or experienced in mystical events. It surveyed the various siddhis or supernormal powers described by saints, shamans, and mystics from different spiritual and religious traditions. All of this was pursued in a manner that continued to develop the insights into the human imagination that began during the first two gatherings. Some notable scholars who co-facilitated included: Charles Stang of Harvard Divinity School and Diana Walsh Pasulka of the University of North Carolina, Wilmington.

**2015:** The second meeting of this series of symposia, on the nature and scope of the imagination as something potentially cosmic, was held to consider: what if the imagination is not a simple spinner of subjective fantasies? What if sometimes—in rare but real moments—it becomes a mediator, translator, or communicator of information and worlds beyond the brain and body, beyond the senses, beyond even space-time. What if the imaginal can become a kind of psychic ability or real-world superpower? And if this is true, how might we re-engage these imaginal potentials in creative writing, in film, in sport, in our daily lives? How might we imagine ourselves into something and someone else? This symposium brought together filmmakers, writers, historians, philosophers, and scholars of religion to help frame anew and offer answers to these

questions.

**2014:** For the inaugural conference, the historian of religion Jeffrey J. Kripal, who specializes in the study of extreme states of mind and energy, particularly in American history and popular culture, gathered scholars of literature, filmmakers, sports professionals, and leaders involved in the human potential movement to re-imagine the powerful capacity of the human imagination. This conference was partly inspired by reports of paranormal experiences by prominent authors, such as Mark Twain and Philip K. Dick, and how those experiences facilitated remarkable awakenings of the creative imagination. For example, the science fiction author Philip K. Dick once experienced being “radiated” and “resynthesized” by a cosmic Mind that he calls “Valis” for two months in the winter of 1974. During that period, he had multiple telepathic, telekinetic, and paranormal experiences, after which he spent the rest of his life writing about it in three popular novels. This kind of creative inspiration is not just “imaginary.” Instead, this conference aimed to re-imagine what we mean by “imagination” as a faculty that is more real, even potentially cosmic, like Dick’s Valis. The scholars addressed such questions as: what if the imagination is not a simple spinner of subjective fantasies? What if sometimes—in rare but real moments—it becomes a mediator, translator, or communicator of information and realities beyond the brain and body, beyond even space-time? And if this is true, how might we re-engage these imaginal potentials in creative writing, in film, in sport, in spirituality, and in our daily lives? How might we imagine ourselves into something More and Else?

### **Esoteric Anatomies and the Dual Aspect of the Soul**

**2015:** Convened by facilitators Michael Murphy and Greg Shaw, this conference focused on two related themes: (1) the doctrine and experiential lore of the subtle body in both Eastern and Western traditions, with particular attention on its contemporary expression in the West, including the widely held belief in the chakra system of yoga traditions; and (2) the metaphysical frameworks of the East and West that present a dual aspect of soul: embodied and disembodied, descended and undescended, heavenly and earthly, etc. We believe these themes are directly related and represent imaginative maps and philosophic strategies that establish a perceived continuity between spirit and matter, soul and body, and the transphysical and physical worlds. By bringing our shared focus to the comparative study of these traditions we move towards discerning what they hold in common, what distinguishes them, and what this may reveal about their development. The chakras have become widely assimilated in the West, yet our knowledge of the chakras has largely been promoted through popular rather than academic writing. The same holds true for the subtle body, whether it is the *sūksma sarīra* of South Asian yoga traditions or the *ochēma*, the soul vehicle or astral body of Neoplatonism and the Western occult traditions. This conference aimed to deepen our understanding of these “subtle bodies” by exploring and comparing them from cultural, historical, and experiential perspectives. This included studies of how these “anatomies” have been culturally imagined and transmitted as well as exploring the therapeutic value of these anatomies for practitioners. The aim of the conference was to deepen knowledge of esoteric anatomies by inviting academics with historical and philosophic expertise as well those

who have therapeutic and experiential knowledge. Through this engagement our understanding of subtle bodies and their metaphysical frameworks can be more clearly understood and more richly imagined.

### **Reconciling Scientific and Spiritual Views of Evolution**

**2011:** conference series on “The New Human Story: Retelling the Human Origins Story for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” led by Douglas Abrams and Gordon Wheeler, which has brought together psychologists, primatologists, developmentalists, evolutionary biologists, cosmologists, anthropologists, neuroscientists, futurists, and social activists to begin putting together a human origins story based on the latest generation of findings in all these fields. Specifically challenging and updating “Selfish Gene” theory and Social Darwinism, the conference examined new evidence that both the human brain and early human society evolved for and depended on relationality, cooperation, and prosocial instincts for evolution and survival. This project lays the groundwork for a new cultural narrative of “human nature,” alternative to both reductionist materialist models and fundamentalist-creationist perspectives. Further iterations of the conference are planned for both extension of this work to a broader audience of scientists from related fields, and also a new science-based conversation with spiritual leaders and practitioners. Participants: Douglas Abrams, Nancy Abrams, Frans deWaal, Allison Gopnik, Sarah Hrdy, Rudy Lohmeyer, Mark Nicolson, Joel Primack, Deborah Ullman, Gordon Wheeler, David Sloan Wilson.

**1999-2005:** seven annual conferences on "Evolutionary Theory" which brought together cosmologists, physicists, biologists, and psychologists with representatives from the world's religious and contemplative traditions to discuss the evolutionary story of the universe and the potential for the further evolution of human nature. Participants: Jay Ogilvy and David Deamer, Stuart Kauffman, Richard Baker Roshi, Eric Chaisson, Phil Clayton, Terrence Deacon, Owen Flanagan, Steven Johnson, Robert Kegan, Michael Murphy, Marilyn Schlitz, Michael Silberstein, Evan Thompson, Gordon Wheeler, and Robert Wright.

**1987:** conference on "New Directions in Biological Research and Evolutionary Theory," led by David Deamer, a prominent origins-of-life scientist at UC Santa Cruz.

### **The Esoteric Lineage in Western Cultural History**

**2004-2008:** five annual conference series with international scholars of esoteric religions and practices, particularly from Europe. Co-chaired by Jeff Kripal and Wouter Hanegraaff of the University of Amsterdam, this series addressed such thematic topics as: non-ordinary states of consciousness in Western esotericism; the influence of esotericism on Western mythology and literature; and the prominent role of erotic and sexual themes in Western esoteric thinkers and practices. The series produced, among other things, a major book co-edited by the co-chairs, *Hidden Intercourse: Eros and Sexuality in the*

*History of Western Esotericism* (Brill, 2008). Participants: Gregory Shaw, Antoine Faivre, Claire Fanger, Elliott Wolfson, Michael Allen, Arthur Versluis, Olav Hammer, Philip Wood, Dan Merkur, Kocku von Stuckrad, Don Hanlon Johnson, Garry Trompf, Helmut Zander, Peter Kingsley, Georg Luck, Brendan French, Stanislav Grof, and Richard Tarnas.

### **The Emergence of Evolutionary Panentheism**

**2006-2011:** a series of annual conferences addressing the emerging, yet largely unacknowledged, worldview of evolutionary panentheism, which regards Eternal Divinity as both transcendent and immanent to the ever-evolving universe. Some of the themes addressed: the history of the intellectual lineage of evolutionary panentheism beginning with German Idealism; the widespread presence of panentheistic views in the world's religions; the continuing emergence of evolutionary panentheism in contemporary culture. Significant participants: Michael Murphy, Jeff Kripal, Glenn Magee, Loriliai Biernacki, Phil Clayton, Catherine Keller, Freya Mathews, Duane Elgin, Bill Barnard, Sean Kelly, Robert McDermott, Richard Tarnas, Eric Weiss, Fred Amrine, Joseph Prabhu, Chris Chapple, Frank Clooney, Brad Artson, Geoffrey Samuel, Greg Shaw, Ed Kelly, Adam Crabtree, and Frank Poletti.

### **New Directions in Philosophy and Theology**

**1991:** publication of *Revisioning Philosophy*, edited by Jay Ogilvy, an anthology resulting from the following conferences.

**1987-1990:** a four-year program on "Revisioning Philosophy," convened by former Yale professor Jay Ogilvy. Participants: Huston Smith, Robert Solomon, Jacob Needleman, Don Johnson, Robert McDermott, Michael Murphy, Joanne Ciulla, Robert Bellah, Bruce Wilshire, Brian Swimme, and Jean Lanier. This culminated in a week-long conference at St. John's College, Cambridge, for more than a hundred philosophers gathered from all over the world.

**1969:** an interdisciplinary series on religion, supported in part by the National Council of Churches, began at Esalen's San Francisco office with a focus on grounding theological reflection and philosophy in human experience. Leaders included: Sam Keen, William Nicholls, Harvey Cox, Michael Novak, Bishop James Pike, John Cobb, Robert Cromeey, Bishop John Robinson, Gordon Kaufman, William Hamilton, and Richard Rubenstein.

### **Intuition and Psychic Phenomena**

**1988:** invitational conference on "Applications of Intuition to Areas of Psychology, Business, Medicine and Race Relations" convened by Helen Palmer.

**1987:** invitational conference for practicing intuitives to exchange information on personal methodologies such as somatic and visual psychic perception, remote viewing, shamanism, and out-of-body techniques. Participants: Wes Agor, Anne Armstrong, Angeles Arrien, Frances Cheyna, Laura Day, Keith Harary, Robert Johnston, Helen Palmer, Stephen Schwartz, Joan Steffy, Charles Tart, and Frances Vaughan.

**1986:** invitational conference on "Exploring the Inner Processes of Intuition," including Angeles Arrien, Arthur Hastings, Charles Tart, and Helen Palmer.

**1974:** Esalen's San Francisco office launched a public series of introductory and in-depth seminars on various psychic abilities and phenomena, including presentations and seminars by Lawrence LeShan, Edgar Mitchell, Robert Monroe, Anne Armstrong, Montague Ullman, Helen Palmer, Frances Clark, and Uri Geller.

### **Creativity, Imagination, and Shamanism**

**1993:** invitational conference on "Creativity" in which writers, artists, psychologists, and scholars explored the nature of the creative process. Participants: Michael Krasny, Sharon Thom, James Hillman, Margot McLean, Amy Tan, Matt Groening, Deborah Groening, Sarah LaSaulle, Walter Murch, Aggie Murch, Lucy Wilson, Sam Wilson, Frank Barron, Nancy Barron, and Lou DeMattei.

**1988:** invitational conference on "The Nature of Creativity" convened by Michael Hoffman.

**1988:** invitational conference on "Living in the Imagination" convened by Terence McKenna and Lewis Carlinio.

**1984-1988:** five invitational conferences on "Shamanism" led by Professor Michael Harner, anthropologist at the New School for Social Research and chair of the National Academy of Sciences committee on anthropology. Additionally, many of Michael Harner's training programs in shamanism took place at Esalen.

**1977:** month-long seminar for professionals and graduate students on "Shamanism and the Mystic Quest," coordinated by Joan Halifax and featuring the following guest faculty: Joseph Campbell, Barklie Henry, Janet Lederman, Charles Lloyd, Kathleen Mullin, Henry Munn, Barbara Myerhoff, Richard Price, Christine Price, Gabrielle Roth, Ruturi, Alexander Shulgin, Beverly Silverman, and Julian Silverman.

### **Harmony in Food, Farming, and Education**

2018: The first conference in this series was led by Patrick Holden CBE, head of the Sustainable Food Trust, and co-lead by Eric Schlosser (Fast Food Nation, Command and Control) and Richard Dunne. Initiated by Michael Murphy and Jane Hartford, this

conference gathered some of the most influential and highly conscious leaders in the field of food systems transition education in a moon-shot move to make a real difference in the transition to organic food systems around the world. Prince Charles's book *Harmony: A Sustainability Revolution* is this work's guiding light. A 2<sup>nd</sup> conference in this series is now scheduled for September 27-October 2, 2020.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick\\_Holden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick_Holden)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric\\_Schlosser](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric_Schlosser)

## **Compassionate Social Outreach**

**1998:** conference led by Akuoye Graham bringing ten inner-city children to Esalen.

**1996:** invitational conference for spiritual teachers, psychologists, and social activists to explore the nature and application of compassion. Conveners: Brother David Steindl-Rast, a Benedictine monk and author; Ajahn Amaro, a monk in the Thai forest tradition and founder of the Abhayagiri Monastery and Alan Jones, Dean of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.

**1996:** conference entitled "Dream Seekers: Empowering African-American Youth" which hosted eight inner-city teens for three days of meditation, T'ai Chi, exercises, artwork, and psychological games.

**1995-1996:** two conferences, co-sponsored with the San Francisco Zen Hospice Program, on "Living Mindfully with HIV" designed for people with HIV and AIDS who were interested in using mindfulness practice to live more fully and compassionately with life threatening illness. Frank Ostaseski, Howard Cohn, Brother David Steindl-Rast, Marcy Bahr, and Mary McBride worked with 16 HIV-positive people representing a cross-section of races, sexual orientations, and stages of disease progression.

**1990:** conference on "Be Your Own Hero: Careers in Commitment" designed to give students at all levels an opportunity to learn of everyday, self-realized heroes, to study their endeavors, and to emulate them.

## **Building Bridges Across Racial Divides**

**1967-1970:** a series of twenty-two weekend encounter groups designed to heal deep rifts between the races. Price Cobbs, Ron Brown, John Poppy, and Mike Brown eventually continued this work as independent consultants.

**1967:** the first interracial encounter group, entitled "Racial Confrontation as Transcendental Experience," was led by *Look* editor George Leonard and black psychiatrist Price Cobbs.

## **Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychology**

**1996:** conference convened by Stanislav Grof and David Ray Griffin on the relationship between transpersonal theory and the process philosophy of Alfred N. Whitehead. Themes included: the relationship between matter and mind; the nature of causality and synchronicity; the nature of memory and experiential access to non-physical memories; the transpersonal dimensions of the human psyche; and the origins of psychopathology. Participants: John B. Cobb, John Quiring, June Watkins, Catherine Keller, Robert Brizee, David Roy, Barbara Keiller, Rebecca Parker, Joe Grange, Steve Odin, Christina Grof, Michael Murphy, Robert McDermott, Francis Vaughan, John Mack, Rick Tarnas, Leonard Gibson, John Buchanan, and Christopher Bache.

**1977:** during a month-long seminar at Esalen, Christina and Stanislav Grof gave the final form to Holotropic Breathwork, a non-drug method for exploring non-ordinary states of consciousness using deep breathing in a group setting with evocative music and bodywork. In 1987, they launched a formal training program, which has since spawned its own international organization and journal.

**1971-1975:** summer programs in Berkeley, co-sponsored with the Association of Transpersonal Psychology, on "Human Consciousness: Exploration, Maps, and Models." Core seminars taught by: John Lilly, Dorothy Fadiman, James Fadiman, John Perry, Charles Tart, Stanley Keleman, Arthur Hastings, Stanislav Grof, Joan Halifax-Grof, Jean Houston, and Arthur Deikman. These summer programs helped shape the nascent discipline of transpersonal psychology.

**1970-1971:** a number of Esalen group leaders traveled to Arica, Chile to study with the Sufi teacher Oscar Ichazo. Key figures: Claudio Naranjo, John Lilly, Steven Stroud, Jack Downing. This eventually resulted in the proliferation of work on the Enneagram, a system of personality typology, as well as the founding of the Arica school.

**1970:** an Esalen team visited Europe to find new approaches to personal growth and discovered Roberto Assagioli's Psychosynthesis, a comprehensive approach to development focused on the higher dimensions of humans. This group then introduced Assagioli's work to America in the winter of 1971. Key figures: Michael Murphy, James & Susan Vargiu, Stuart & Sukie Miller, James Fadiman, Robert & Donna Gerard.

**1970s:** As residents at Esalen, Stanislav and Christina Grof coordinated 28 month-long experiential and think-tank seminars that featured such guest faculty as: Fritjof Capra, Karl Pribram, Fred Wolf, Gregory Bateson, Joseph Campbell, Huston Smith, John Lilly, Rupert Sheldrake, Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, Russell Targ, Keith Harrary, Bernard Grad, Stanley Krippner, Michael Murphy, Dick Price, Karl Simonton, Will Schutz, John Perry, Julian Silverman, June Singer, Humphrey Osmond, Tim Leary, Gordon Wasson, Michael and Sandra Harner, Charles Tart, Amy and Arnold Mindell. Arthur Hastings, Ralph Metzner, Dora Kalff, Angeles Arrien, Frances Vaughan, Jean Houston, Ann and Jim Armstrong, Roger Walsh, Luiz Gsparetto, various Tibetan lamas and Indian



spiritual teachers, native American and Mexican shamans, and Christian mystics. These month-long seminars focused on such themes as: Buddhism and Western Psychology; Parapsychologists and Psychics; Maps of Consciousness; Aboriginal Healing and Modern Medicine; Ancient Wisdom and Modern Science; Higher Creativity; Frontiers of Science; and Energy: Physical, Emotional, and Spiritual. The personal connections established during these month-longs made it possible for the Grofs to organize several International Transpersonal Conferences in the coming years. Later, Michael Murphy and Richard Price joined the Grofs as founding members of the International transpersonal Association (ITA).

**1967:** Will Schutz published the national-bestseller *Joy* and took up residence at Esalen, which subsequently became a major center for his style of encounter groups, thereby helping to spark a boom in group-centered therapies.

**1962:** The eminent psychologist Abraham Maslow, co-founder of both humanistic and transpersonal psychology, arrived at Esalen by chance, and came to play an important role in its development, leading several workshops and guiding the founders. Esalen workshop leaders eventually played a pivotal role in the growing discipline of humanistic psychology.

## **Gestalt Psychology**

**Note:** the series of Evolution of Gestalt conferences described below has pioneered the “blended form” of CTR conferences, which bring together a dozen or more leaders in different branches of a related or to-be-connected field, to cross-fertilize, synthesize, and select from their approaches to make a new integral articulation of theory and method in an emergent, cross-“school” or cross-disciplinary area of study and practice. The conference leaders work and share their “growing edges” and spark off each other in the company of, and with the active co-participation of some 50-75 other professionals from these and related fields, in a co-creative “symposium of the whole.” The result has been an exciting and deeply pragmatic advance of theory and practice, based on a dynamic flow of the whole group, as they interact with the input and interchange from the invited leaders.

**2013:** Evolution of Gestalt V (Working with Couples) conference led by Gordon Wheeler and others, applying the contemporary developments in cognitive brain models and

neuroscience together with new trends in intersubjective psychotherapy to an integral Gestalt-based approach to working with couples. The book from this conference will be edited by Gordon Wheeler and published by Routledge/GestaltPress.

**2011:** Evolution of Gestalt IV (Working with Embodiment), conference led by Michael Clemmens, Ruella Frank, & James Kepner, extending the fundamental Gestalt concept of embodiment of experience, also developed extensively by Don Johnson and others in

Esalen CTR Somatics Conferences. The book of presentations from the Conference is in editorial development with Routledge/GestaltPress.

**2009:** Evolution of Gestalt III (Gestalt-based Coaching), conference led by Gordon Wheeler and others extended the tradition of Fritz Perls and Richard Price, who pioneered a non-pathology-based, extra-clinical work with executives, professionals, and other laypersons who might in the past have undertaken “personal growth-oriented” psychotherapy, into new directions through Gestalt-based Coaching. The book of presentations from this Conference is in press with Routledge/GestaltPress.

**2007:** Evolution of Gestalt II (Child and Adolescent Development), conference led by Gordon Wheeler and others extended this series, under the subtitle Relational Child/Relational Brain. The book from Conference presenters, *Relational Child/Relational Brain* (eds. Lee & Harris) featuring contributions from Daniel Siegel, Peter Levine, Gordon Wheeler and others was published in 2010.

**2005:** Beginning of a multi-year series of conferences led by Gordon Wheeler, involving leading scholars, practitioners, researchers and experimenters who are evolving the theory and practice of applied Gestalt psychology. Now that Gestalt psychology itself has been incorporated as the foundation of the contemporary revolution in neuroscience, this CTR Conference series has focused on completing that circle: bringing the Gestalt-based, relational insights of this new generation of cutting-edge brain-based psychology to bear on the evolution of applied Gestalt psychology (therapy, counseling, coaching, social work, consulting, community, and educational work). Papers drawn from the presenters at this first Evolution of Gestalt I conference were published, featuring Esalen, in *CoCreating the Field: Intention and Practice in the Age of Complexity* (eds. Gordon Wheeler & Deborah Ullman), Analytic Erlbaum/GestaltPress, 2008.

**1985-2005:** The continuation of the outreach of Fritz Perls’s and Richard (Dick) Price’s earlier work at Esalen, as Gestalt training institutes were founded and staffed across the US and Europe, in large part through those who had worked and trained with Perls at Esalen in the 60’s, including Sonia and Edwin Nevis, George and Judith Brown, Ilana Rubinfeld, followed by later students such as Peter Levine and Gordon Wheeler, and many others who have gone on to become the next generation of prominent teachers and writers in the field.

**1970-1985:** Building on Perls’s Esalen legacy and other influences, Esalen co-founder Richard Price and others developed the Gestalt Practice tradition, extending Price’s and Perls’s work redefining the Esalen-created methodology of “personal growth” as a

holistic learning program distinct from psychotherapy and the pathological model and bringing to life the Esalen vision of Human Potential Education.

**1964:** Fritz Perls, co-founder of Gestalt therapy, arrived at Esalen in poor health and relatively unknown. In the ensuing five years at Esalen, his health improved and he was provided a public platform for his work through regular demonstrations in the lodge

and sundry workshops. By his death in 1970, several training centers had opened and Gestalt had become an important component of the psychotherapeutic landscape.

### **New Paradigms in Education**

**1990:** the book *Human Teaching for Human Learning* was republished as a Penguin paperback. It had grown out of Esalen's support for Confluent Education.

**1987:** invitational conference on "Early Childhood Education for the 1990s, convened by Janet Lederman.

**1977:** Esalen created the Gazebo school under the guidance and vision of Janet Lederman, a regular seminar leader on educational subjects, an innovative teacher, and author of *Anger and the Rocking Chair*. The Gazebo became a long-term experiment in applying new principles to the field of education.

**1973:** Esalen seminars on education became available for academic credit through the UC-Santa Barbara extension program.

**1971:** Esalen's education work, under the direction of Sukie Miller, was awarded a Title- III grant from the state of California for a demonstration program in confluent reading in the Newark school system.

**1968:** Esalen's vice-president, George Leonard, drawing upon his reporting background and experience in the human potential movement, published *Education and Ecstasy*, a radical, utopian vision of education that is still influential today.

**1967 to present:** A Ford Foundation grant led to the creation of the Ford/Esalen Project in Confluent Education, joining affective and cognitive learning. Dr. George Brown, a regular Esalen workshop leader and Professor of Education at U.C. Santa Barbara, spearheaded the program. His work was summarized in an Esalen book entitled *Human Teaching for Human Learning*, which sold more than 50,000 copies in the education field and was republished in 1990 as a Penguin paperback. Brown also published a subsequent book called *The Live Education: Innovations Through Confluent Education and Gestalt*. This project gave rise to 3 full-time faculty positions in the Confluent Education program at U.C. Santa Barbara's School of Education, which has conferred more than 100 doctorates and 300 master's degrees. Graduates from this program have taken Confluent Education all over the world. More locally, the State University of California at Bakersfield now uses Confluent Education as its official philosophy.

**1966:** Esalen sponsored "Education in the Year 2000," a workshop jointly led by Richard Farson, director of the Western Behavioral Sciences Institute; George Leonard, west coast editor for Look magazine and winner of many national awards for education reporting; and Richard Suchman, Director for the Divisions of Elementary-Secondary Research and Higher Education Research in the U.S. Office of Education.

**1966:** Rollo May, a leading figure in humanistic psychology, led a workshop on "Education and the Dimensions of Consciousness."

**1966:** James Bugental, prominent existential psychologist, facilitated a workshop on "Ontology: Education for the Human Frontier."

**1965:** George Brown, professor at U.C. Santa Barbara, first began teaching workshops at Esalen on new paradigms of education. His work at Esalen led to the development of the field of Confluent Education (see 1967 entry).

### **The Field of Somatics**

2013: Somatics and Ecoactivism: this conference, under the leadership of Don Johnson, invited leaders in the teaching of body practices that root us in an earthly sense of ourselves, as well as thinkers who were diagnosing the monsters at our doorway and what to do about them. One proposed reason that the ecology movement has had trouble mobilizing the vast populations that it needs is that most people—even those in favor of ecology—don't deeply feel that their souls and levels of consciousness are entwined with the earth; that the pressing dangers to the earth are dangers to their own sensibilities. On the one hand, there are tens of thousands of gifted workers with the body who are very halting in how to bring forth their earthly concerns. On the other, are the activists who are too often rooted mainly in discourse and concept. Something effective could come from their joining. Conference participants included Bill McKibben, Steven Harper, David Abram, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, and Emilie Conrad.

**1998:** Don H. Johnson edited the third volume in this series, entitled *The Body in Psychotherapy: Inquiries in Somatic Psychology*, with cases that explored the interface between bodywork and clinical psychology.

**1997:** Don H. Johnson edited the second volume in this series, entitled *Groundworks: Narratives of Embodiment*, to emerge from the working group, including articles by Robert Hall, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, Emilie Conrad Da'oud, Michael Salveson, Elizabeth Beringer, and Darcy Elman. Each therapist described how he or she approaches and diagnoses a patient's problem, how he or she determines what and where to work, and the progress of a session.

**1995:** Don H. Johnson edited the first in a series of texts on somatic literature *Bone, Breath, & Gesture : Practices of Embodiment* as an outgrowth of the working group established through the Esalen conferences, which included Emilie Conrad Da'Oud, Continuum; Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, Body-Mind Centering; Clifford Smythe, Feldenkrais; Michael Salveson, Rolfing; Darcy Elman, The F. M. Alexander Guild; Robert Hall, Lomi; Michael Marsh; Martha Herbert, MD, PhD, Harvard Medical School; and Stuart Newman, PhD, NY Medical School.

**1992:** invitational conference on "Somatic Therapy and People of Color" convened by Clyde Ford and Don H. Johnson.

**1991:** conference convened by Don H. Johnson on Somatics and Phenomenology. Participants: Elizabeth Behnke, Seymour Carter, Edward Casey, Maureen Connolly, Chris Gove, Robert Hall, Drew Leder, Kennard Lipman, David Rehorick, Glen Mazis, Kay Toombs.

**1990s:** Several projects grew out of the "Body and Spirituality" conference series, including the Healing Center for Survivors of Political Torture in San Francisco, and the Group for Healing the Body of Slavery, based in Oakland.

**1990:** third conference on "The Body and Spirituality." Participants: Joseph Couture, Emilie Conrad Da'Oud, Sister Myriam Dardenne, Robert Hall, Rosemarie Harding, Vincent Harding, Barbara Holifield, Don H. Johnson, Michael Murphy, Naomi Newman, Dr. Mohammed Shaalan, Brother David Steindl-Rast, Father Thomas Matus, Father Innocenzo Gargano, Victor and Luiza Krivorotov, Dmitri and Leonid Spivak, Vladimir Petrovich Zinchenko.

**1989:** second conference on "The Body and Spirituality" convened by Don Hanlon Johnson. Participants: Phyllis Ocean Berman, Richard Bollman, Sandy Boucher, Sister Myriam Dardenne, Sister Rose Mary Dougherty, Clare Fischer, Reverend Marsha Foster, David Griffin, Rosemarie Freeney Harding, Elise Saggau, Dmitri Spivak, Halima Toure, Ted Tracy, Arthur Waskow, Rabbi Sheila Weinberg, Judith Aston, Emilie Conrad Da'Oud, Robert Hall, and Jean Lanier.

**1988:** first of three conferences on "The Body and Spirituality," funded by Laurance Rockefeller's Fund for the Enhancement of the Human Spirit, convened by Don H. Johnson. Participants: Lauren Artress, Diana Beach, Shepherd Bliss, Grita Gil-Austern, Alan Jones, June Keener-Wink, Paul LaChance, Daniel O'Connor, Michel Pantenberg, Paula Pohlman, Rosemary Radford Reuther, Brother David Steindl-Rast, Thomas Stoll, and Alton Wasson.

**1987:** Michael Murphy invited Don H. Johnson to convene meetings of scholars and practitioners of transformative body practices for week-long seminars with the aim of refining the many transformative practices that now comprise the field of Somatics. Esalen had provided a leading venue for such practices since its inception in 1962 (noted above). In the 25 years since Johnson began to organize such meetings, there have been dialogues among many of the leading innovators in the field with biomedical researchers, spiritual teachers, phenomenologists, psychologists, and social scientists. These dialogues have explored the methods, intricacies, and consequences of somatic practices, including the beneficial effects they can have in addressing political and personal violence, racism, and degradation of the environment.

**1987:** conference on "The Biological, Psychological, and Cultural Body: Methods of Transformation" bringing together experts in various somatic disciplines, including Don Hanlon Johnson, Ted Melnychuk, Emilie Conrad Da'Oud, George Leonard, Judith Aston,

Thomas Hanna, Candace Pert, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, George Solomon, Charlotte Selver, Michael Murphy, Leslie Gray, Barbara Halpern, and Susan Griffin.

**1971:** Judith Aston gave her first training in Aston Patterning at Esalen.

**1970:** Moshe Feldenkrais, creator of the Feldenkrais method, held his first major training in the United States at Esalen.

**1965 to present:** Esalen has provided a major West Coast venue for Reichian and neo-Reichian approaches to personal growth, among them the Bioenergetics of Alexander Lowen and John Pierrakos.

**1964:** Ida Rolf, creator of Structural Integration, began a series of extended residence periods. Structural Integration involves a deep muscular-fascial restructuring of the body. With Esalen as a platform, this work grew into international prominence, with its own licensing body and training program.

**1963:** Charlotte Selver arrived at Esalen for the first time, bringing with her the Sensory Awareness approach first developed by Elsa Gindler in Germany. Through her regular workshops at Esalen this work became much more widely known and practiced.

### **Holistic and Complementary Medicine**

**1981:** creation of a four-month residential training program in Holistic Health, designed for health care professionals and students in the health field. It included fifteen major areas of study: homeopathy, gestalt, acupuncture, herbology, group process, nutrition, t'ai chi, massage, healing meditations, organic gardening, movement integration, bach flowers, anatomy, deep tissue, and community health. This residential training was repeated in the fall of 1982 and the fall of 1983.

**1981:** invitational conference on "The Perinatal Period: Interface of Biology and Behavior," bringing together specialists in neurobiology, neuroendocrinology, anatomy & physiology, clinical psychology, obstetrics, hypnotherapy, psychiatry, and philosophy to discuss the effect of birth on consciousness and to find ways to create more humane and psychologically sensitive birth experiences. Participants: Peter Levine, Jeffrey Babbitt, Lewis Mehl, Suzanne Arms, Stanislav Grof, John Lilly, Gayle Petersen, Michael Leon, David Cheek, Michael Leon, Jack Downing, Stephan Porges, and Ian MacNaughton.

**1979-1980:** two public conferences on "Stress: Harnessing Its Energy for Health," led by stress experts Hans Selye and Meyer Friedman, targeted to nurses and physicians for continuing education.

**1979:** Esalen was approved by the Board of Registered Nursing and the California Medical Association in California as a provider of continuing education.

**1976:** Wayne Jonas attended an alternative health month-long workshop, planting many of the seeds which later manifested in his work as the head of the NIH Office of Alternative Medicine.

**1976:** the first federal legislation (PL94-434: Health Professions Education Assistance Act) mentioning "humanistic medicine" came before Congress, framed in large part by Sukie and Stuart Miller, directors of Esalen's program.

**1976:** month-long seminar for professionals and graduate students entitled "Holistic Medicine and Traditional Healing," facilitated by Joan Halifax-Grof, Dr. Stanislav Grof, and Dr. Kenneth Pelletier. Visiting faculty included: Carl & Stephanie Simonton, Michael Harner, John Lilly, Gay Luce, and Julian Silverman.

**1971-1974:** Esalen created the Program in Humanistic Medicine in which twenty carefully selected medical professionals met monthly over a period of three years to explore various human growth methods, somatic disciplines, Eastern spiritual practices, and alternative medical models. This understanding was then applied to a more humane practice of medicine. Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen and the late Dr. Alan Barbour, among others, participated in the first group. This program also trained and consulted for SAMA (Student American Medical Association).

**1974:** workshop entitled "Four Pillars of Health: A Workshop in Preventative Medicine" led by John McCamy and Al Drucker.

**1974:** workshop on "Femininity in Humanistic Medicine" featuring Rachel Naomi Remen, Marguerite Abell, and Mary Morgan.

**1974:** first Esalen month-long workshop devoted to health, emphasizing nutrition, bodywork, structural integration, meditation, and group work, led by Dr. John McCamy.

**1974:** the Program in Humanistic Medicine became a separate entity called the Institute for Study of Humanistic Medicine after receiving a \$1.2 million grant from HEW Manpower. This program was subsequently adopted by Mt. Zion Hospital.

**1973:** workshop on "Holistic Medicine" led by Gay Luce.

### **Ecology, Spirituality, and Social Justice**

2014: Convened by facilitator Robert McDermott, this conference focused on how society can more effectively determine and teach the cognitive, conceptual, and emotional skills needed to address global climate change. For the previous two years, scholars from different disciplines had been meeting to explore the relationship between climate change, social justice, and human interiority. This Esalen conference furthered

that effort by emphasizing the connection between humanity's inner life and the growing need to address climate change. The group addressed such issues as: How can new academic research generate insights about human interiority and its relationship to climate change? How can educational institutions develop better pedagogical tools to educate our citizens about climate change? What educational procedures will convince society of the seriousness of climate change? How do we design better governance so that our society can build a post-fossil fuel economy? Overall, this conference investigated the interior human response to the evidence for climate change, and it looked at how society needs to develop the emotional, philosophical, and moral understandings that now need to be a part of climate education.

### **Environmentalism, Sustainability, and Ecopsychology**

**1995:** conference, convened and led by Allan Badiner, on "Sustainability Consciousness," designed to forge relationships between activists, journalists, scientists, artists, business people, and educators, to encourage ecological thinking, and to weave together issues of sustainability, spirituality, and systems theory. Participants: Ralph Abraham, Rebecca Adamson, Andra Akers, Carl Anthony, Andrew Beath, Steve Beck, Mirabai Bush, Andre Carothers, Brother David Steindl-Rast, Christina Desser, Mark Dowie, Barbara Dudley, Joan Halifax, Paul Hawken, Mark Hertsgaard, Bill Joy, Joshua Karliner, Jay Michael Levin, Amory Lovins, Terence McKenna, Miguel A. Reynal, Catherine Sneed, Betsy Taylor, and Nina Wise.

**1993-1994:** two conferences, convened by Theodore Roszak, on "Ecopsychology: Theory and Practice" which helped create a new field of inquiry. Participants: Charlene Spretnak, James Hillman, Mary Gomes, Allen Kanner, Sharon Thom, Margot McLean, Lane and Sarah Conn, Ellen Cole, Carl Anthony, Chellis Glendinning, Laura Sewall, Betty Roszak, Leslie Gray, John Seed, Elizabeth Ann Bragg, Dolores LaChapelle, Claire Greensfelder, Robert Greenway, Jeanette Armstrong, Steven Harper, Alan Badiner, Harold Gilliam, Steve Beck, Danile Moses, Renee Soule, and Jerry Mander. These conferences resulted in the publication of *Ecopsychology*, considered the defining work for the nascent field, and indirectly contributed to the formation of the first Department of Ecopsychology at Hayward State University.

**1991:** invitational conference on "Ecological Transformation," bringing together environmentalists and activists to explore the confluence of ecological, cultural, and personal transformation, with a focus on a local project.

**1990:** invitational conference on "Tropical Ethno-Medicine," gathering botanists, phytochemists, ethnologists, and ecologists working to preserve and understand rain forest plants with healing and psychotherapeutic potential.

**1987:** invitational conference on "Thinking About Biotechnology: Environment, Public Health, Social Priorities," convened by Walter Truett Anderson.



**1971:** lecture by Alan Watts and Lynn White on the "Ecological Crisis" at the Esalen San Francisco center, a lecture which inaugurated a joint effort by Esalen and Friends of the Earth to develop a psycho-ecological approach to human problems.

**1968:** Ralph Metzner led a series of dialogues on ecology and psychology at the Esalen San Francisco center.

**1966:** Gerard Haigh and William Zielonka led a workshop entitled "Man in Confrontation with Nature" to explore how modern humans distance themselves from the natural world and how best to remedy this separation.

### **Alternatives to Psychiatry: the Spiritual Emergence Network**

**1981-1988:** seven invitational conferences at Esalen on "Alternatives to Institutional Psychiatric Treatment" convened by Larry Telles.

**1987:** invitational conference on "Spiritual Emergence," convened by Stanislav and Christina Grof.

**1984:** month-long Esalen seminar for professionals and graduate students on "Spiritual Emergency: Understanding and Treatment of Transpersonal Crises" led by Stanislav and Christina Grof.

**1980:** creation of the Spiritual Emergence Network by Stanislav and Christina Grof, with Esalen sponsorship. This organization is a referral and information network, which has had a worldwide presence and thousands of members.

**1976:** Stanislav Grof and Joan Halifax-Grof led an Esalen month-long seminar for professionals and advanced students on "Schizophrenia and the Visionary Mind," including guest faculty such as Gregory Bateson, Erik Erikson, Jean Houston, Claudio Naranjo, Kenneth Pelletier, John Perry, Betty Fuller, and Will Schutz. Areas of focus included the biochemical, psychological and cultural variables in schizophrenia, the study of mystical experience, and various techniques for personal self-exploration (e.g. sensory isolation tank, biofeedback, bioenergetic work).

**1969:** Esalen launched the Agnews Project, a three-year study of alternative approaches to psychosis, in a California State mental hospital, drawing expertise from Esalen faculty with support from the National Institute of Mental Health and the California Department of Health. Dr. Julian Silverman, an eminent research psychologist from the National Institute of Mental Health, headed the program, which had three main objectives: 1) to identify, via neurophysiological lab techniques, those individuals who go through psychotic experiences and emerge as better integrated personalities; 2) to develop a unique therapeutic milieu, including encounter groups and didactic seminars, where certain patients are allowed to go through psychosis unmedicated; and 3) to revise theories of acute schizophrenic reactions so that they include possibilities for

positive, healing, or problem-solving outcomes.

**1968:** series of workshops and seminars, titled *The Value of Psychotic Experience*, designed to integrate and extend the theories of John Perry, R. D. Laing, Stanislav Grof, Fritz Perls, Kazimierz Dabrowski, and Julian Silverman. Alan Watts also gave a presentation called "Divine Madness" as part of this series.

**1962:** Richard Price co-founded Esalen with a strong personal commitment to finding ways to deal with psychosis that were more humane than the prevalent practices of institutionalization, medication, and electroshock.

### **World Mythology and Joseph Campbell**

**2004:** an Esalen conference celebrating Joseph Campbell's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday led to the 16<sup>th</sup> International Transpersonal Association (ITA) conference, organized by Christina and Stanislav Grof, in Palm Springs in June, titled *Mythic Imagination & Modern Society: The Re-Enchantment of the World also celebrating Joe Campbell's 100th anniversary*.

**1992:** the Joseph Campbell Foundation Invitational Conference, which the foundation's first year of operation and planned its future activities, including a major conference, titled "Myths of the Twenty-First Century: The Creative Legacy of Joseph Campbell."

**1982:** Campbell engaged in a series of conversations about his life and work with Phil Cousineau at Esalen, which served as the foundation for the book *The Hero's Journey*.

**1970s and 1980s:** Campbell conducted and participated in various Esalen seminars and month-long programs in these decades. During this time Campbell engaged in discussions with the transpersonal psychiatrist Stanislav Grof concerning the universal archetypal patterns (the hero, death and rebirth, the Great Mother Goddess, and so forth) evident in the mythologies of the world's great religions and indigenous cultures.

**1965:** the great mythologist Joseph Campbell first lectured at Esalen. Thereafter, Campbell frequently returned to Esalen to led seminars and discuss his ideas with Sam Keen, Chungliang Huang, John Weir Perry, and others, to receive inspiration for his own ongoing work, and to celebrate his birthday.

### **New Approaches in Governance**

**1981-1990:** Nine invitational conferences on "Appropriate Governance," convened by social psychologist and futures planner Donald N. Michael, designed to explore the nature of appropriate governance for nations and groups that require both autonomy and increasing independence, with special attention to the viability of heterarchy as an

organizing principle. These conferences addressed complex, seemingly intractable issues — notably in arenas of health, learning, enterprise, and governance — where paradox, ambiguity, and complexity dominate the landscape; where rapid change means yesterday's solution no longer works, where only genuine innovation has any chance of success. What personal qualities are required to acknowledge and confront the deep uncertainty and “the inevitable fact of our ignorance” in a complex, fast-changing world? According to convener Donald Michael, the proceedings wrestled with (1) the function of myth systems in social change, especially how beliefs about human nature affect personal, organizational and societal change and (2) the challenge of more clearly understanding the role of unconscious needs and motives (genetically and culturally sourced) in the behavior of leaders, decision makers and organization members and their interplay with the social construction of reality. Participants: M. Brian Murphy, Walter Anderson, Donald Michael, Jack Ballard, Patrick Ophuls, Lynton Caldwell, Keith Thompson, Jay Ogilvy, Jack Fobes, and Elsa Porter.

### **Women's Studies**

**1991-1992:** two conferences on "The New Older Woman" in which prominent American women shared viewpoints on what it's like to be energetic, ambitious, optimistic and over 50 in today's America. Participants: Peggy Downes, Patricia Faul, Virginia Mudd, Ilene Tuttle, Ruth Asawa, Mary Catherine Bateson, Virginia Boyak, Ruth Brinker, Denise Scott Brown, Cecelia Hurwich, Mildred Mathias, Elizabeth Mullen, Gail Sheehy, Harriett Woods, and Marilyn Yalom.

**1973:** beginning of the Women's Studies Program at Esalen's San Francisco Center, featuring lectures by Betty Dodson, Anais Nin, and Phyllis Chesler.

**1967:** workshop at Esalen, led by Arthur Shedlin, entitled "Exploring Woman Power -- A Workshop for Women."

### **The Historical Context for Esalen and Human Potential**

**2007:** Publication of Jeff Kripal's history of the broader historical, religious, and cultural, currents that influenced the founding of Esalen and its overall mission titled *Esalen: America and the Religion of No Religion* (Chicago, 2007).

**2003:** conference on Esalen's historical significance led by Jeff Kripal. Participants: Michael Murphy, Wouter Hanegraaff, Joseph Prabhu, Jay Ogilvy, Robert Ellwood, Robert Fuller, Tim Miller, Marilyn Schlitz, Catherine Albanese, Don H. Johnson Ann Taves, Richard Tarnas, Robert Ellwood, Eugene Taylor, and Marion Goldman. Resulted in anthology *On the Edge of the Future: Esalen and the Evolution of American Culture* (Indiana, 2005).

## **Miscellaneous Initiatives**

### **Greening Globalization, Reforming Capitalism and Economics**

2014: CTR hosted a conference for the world's leading contributors to the new theory of complexity economics. The conference was led by longtime CTR conference facilitator Jay Ogilvy, Esalen's Chairman of the Board Sam Yau, and W. Brian Arthur of Santa Fe Institute fame. Where the old approach looked at the economy through the physicist's metaphor of a closed system that always finds an even equilibrium between supply and demand, the new, more biological/evolutionary approach sees an open and dynamic system that is often far from equilibrium. By building a fellowship among the leaders in this nascent and very important field, Esalen can do for economics what the famous Solvay conferences did for modern physics: create a new and better paradigm for discovery, understanding, and a more reliable creation of sustainable wealth.

2013 - 2014: CTR hosted its 3rd and 4<sup>th</sup> annual Conscious Business Conclaves in partnership with Conscious Capitalism, Inc. Initiated by Chairman Sam Yau and co-designed with Jay Ogilvy, Chip Conley and others, these events brought together progressive business leaders with systems thinkers and spiritual teachers to share their personal values and discuss the emergence of new business models that honor employees and the environment. Current or former CEOs and senior executives from companies picked by Fortune magazine as the best 100 to work for were invited to share what they know with the others. Participants have included John Mackey, CEO of Whole Foods; Sally Jewell, former CEO of REI (and Secretary of the Interior at the time of the conference); Eileen Fisher; Ping Fu of Geomagic; Blake Mycoskie of TOMS; Jack Wadsworth, former Chair of Morgan Stanley Asia; and Chade-Meng Tan, Head of Personal Growth at Google. Starbucks, Bright Horizons, Nordstrom's, the Container Store, Cliff Bars, Trader Joe's and many others have been represented as well. The heart-felt sharing and depth of intellectual exchange during these conferences is making a unique contribution to the emergence of the conscious business movement in the United States.

**2012:** the inaugural gathering at Esalen for a series on "Complexity Economics," co-chaired by Brian Arthur, Eric Beinhocker, Jay Ogilvy, and Sam Yau. Participants in the October 2012 meeting include leading thinkers from around the world, such as Dan McFadden, winner of the 2000 Nobel Prize in economics, and Herb Gintis.

**2011 to 2015:** Sam Yau and Jay Ogilvy have facilitated a series of annual conferences on "Conscious Business," co-sponsored by the Conscious Capitalism Institute. These meetings promote fellowship among the CEOs of companies featured on Fortune's list of "best companies to work for," such as John Mackey of Whole Foods, Kip Tindell, founder and CEO of the Container Store, Dough Rauch, former president of Trader Joe's, Sally Jewell, CEO of REI, and thought leaders including Steven Johnson, Don Beck,

Fritjof Capra, and Tim Brown, CEO of IDEO.

**2008-2009:** two annual conferences organized by board member, Jay Ogilvy, in “The Global Potentials Program,” applying insights from the human potentials movement to global problems, especially the economy. The inaugural conference focused on the BRIC nations (Brazil, Russia, India and China), with participants from each nation represented, as well as guests from Turkey and South Africa. Participants at both events included: former U.S. Senator Bill Bradley, Brian Arthur, Betty Sue Flowers, Noboru Konno, Mac McQuown, Jack Wadsworth, David Judson, Maggie Winslow, John Katovich, Hunter Lovins, Bruce Cahan, Adam Kahane, Liz Hasse, and Sam Yau.

**2001-2003:** three annual conferences on Integral Capitalism and Governance, which addressed how to facilitate the emergence of a green paradigm in corporations and global regulations. Conference chairs: Jay Ogilvy and Amory Lovins. Participants: Hunter Lovins, Walter Link, Ray Anderson, Janine Benyus, Bob Richards, William Rosezweig, Jay Bragdon, Frances Moore Lappe, Christine von Weizacker, Elisabet Sahtouris, Rodrigo Costa da Rocha Loures, Hirotaka Takeuchi, Gifford Pinchot, Elizabeth Pinchot, Patsy Northcutt, Mary Ellen Klee, and David Korten.

### **Agrarian Elders**

2016: The second conference in this series will built upon the very successful and consequential first conference that was held at Esalen in January 2014. Convened by Michael Ableman and Eliot Coleman, the first event brought together a unique group of Agrarian Elders, each with thirty-plus years of experience in natural systems agriculture, whose ground breaking conversations were reported in The New York Times and Washington Post and filmed by documentarian Deborah Garcia. The second gathering explored optimal solutions to the problems facing organic agriculture today: climate change, governmental regulation, co-opting of the organic market, false and deceptive labeling in grocery stores, contamination by genetically engineered crops, and most importantly, how can the Agrarian Elders gathered at Esalen transmit their accumulated wisdom to the younger generation of farmers. Prominent pioneers and award winning farmers attended, among them Tom Willey and Don Bustos. Overall, this conference series made a major impact by providing innovative and crucial leadership to the organic and new food movements and the overall food revolution of our era.

2014: For the first time since the industrialization of agriculture, several small organic farmers in America and Canada have accumulated forty-plus years of practical experience, stories, and philosophical understanding in the art and craft of natural systems agriculture. These farmers are the original pioneers of the rapidly growing organic and slow food movements. Spearheaded by organic farming expert Michael Ableman, this CTR conference gathered these farmers to share their hard earned techniques and ideas in order to create a grounded vision for the future of food and agriculture. Some of the participants are well known, while others have been working more quietly on the margins to create unique farming models. Many are now in their

sixties and seventies and older. The bottom line of this conference was to capture on film and in print a significant body of knowledge and philosophical wisdom that these individuals have accumulated so that it can be passed on to future generations. Although there had been isolated gatherings to talk about these ideas, this Esalen CTR conference was the first time that leaders of this caliber and early adopters in this movement came together in an intimate space to share their wisdom. Filmmaker Deborah Garcia (widow of Jerry Garcia of The Grateful Dead) is making a documentary of the conference. Her previous films include: “The Future of Food” and “The Symphony of the Soil.” New York Times reporter Carol Pogash also attended, and her article on the event can be found here: <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/25/business/the-elders-of-organic-farming.html>

## **The Food Reformation**

2016: The second conference continued to gather some of the world’s preeminent nutritional scientists, doctors, entrepreneurs, educators, and thought leaders in the global food supply industry, whose first meeting in 2015 was considered historic by many involved. During two consecutive mini-conferences (the first focused on national food issues, and the second on the local food movement), the participants identified general aspects of the U.S. food industry that should be reformed in order to create a healthy and sustainable food supply for future generations. During the 2016 conference, several of the previous participants joined together with new participants and continued to find the optimal solutions to challenges in our food system. This conference served as a strategy session utilizing individuals that have expertise in various aspects of the food industry.

2015: Hosted by Esalen in collaboration with The Détente Group, and facilitated by Sam Yau and Lisa Rayburn, this conference was part of the budding “food revolution” which promotes healthy and mindful eating as well as the protection of delicate ecosystems through sustainable farming practices. The inaugural gathering in 2015 hosted leading nutritional scientists, activists in food reform, and thought leaders in conscious business practices in order to spark creative thought and new collaborations. Some questions addressed included: How can we revision the out-dated paradigm of nutrition and health? How do we more effectively educate the public about the risks of GMOs and pesticides? How do we encourage Americans to make healthy and sustainable diet choices? Some of the leading participants included: T. Colin Campbell, Ph.D., influential nutritional scientist, Lisa Rayburn, Esq., founder of the Détente Group, Myra and Drew Goodman, founders of Earthbound Farm, and John Elstrott, Chair of the Board of Whole Foods. Overall, this conference provided a unique opportunity for leaders in this movement to envision the next steps in this ongoing revolution that impacts all of our lives.

## **Overcoming Political Polarization**

**2014 – 2015:** The increasing polarization of American politics is the bane of our democracy and, as yet, no existing institution seems to have a handle on how to make a change. Well-meaning appeals for a return to pragmatism and centrism have failed,

leaving the ship of state floundering in uncertain waters. The daunting complexity of the subject, which touches on all aspects of America's political order, calls out for new perspectives, innovative thinking and unconventional approaches. Why has our nation become increasingly polarized? Why does the center lack sufficient cultural gravity to hold the electorate together? Are systemic issues at the root of the issue: campaign finance, gerrymandering, or the media's obsession with the political horse races? Or are there deeper cultural issues at work, historical trends that can help us better explain and diagnose the clash of values that poisons our nation's political system? In early October 2014, a small gathering, facilitated by Sam Yau and Jan Ogilvy, that included leading public figures, academics, pundits, theorists, insiders and activists met to address the most vexing and important issue facing the country today—the growing tribalism of America's political order. The meeting was a beachhead in beginning civil discourse between conservatives and liberals to bridge the divide. A fellowship was formed of the initial participants, intense and ongoing blogging among the fellowship is taking place, and a 2<sup>nd</sup> conference was held in October 2015 to carry forward the work begun at Esalen.

### **Revisioning the Attention Economy**

**2016:** This conference addressed a novel, disturbing, and timely topic: how the decisions of a few leaders in the technology industry now have more influence on how billions of people spend their time, live out their relationships, make choices, and experience reality. These tech leaders are like the captains of a new kind of “Attention Economy” by which tech companies compete to maximize how many people they can addict to their screen. It is akin to a dark “race to the bottom of the brain stem” that aims to seduce people's instincts and get their attention, leaving a billion people constantly distracted. However, this conference sought to imagine a different and more positive outcome for the new world generated by technology. What might the world instead look like if companies were not appealing to our basest instincts and motives? This pioneering conference hosted several of the tech industry's most empowered leaders to envision solutions to this problem. It addressed such issues as virtual reality, augmented reality, and artificial intelligence as well as the future of how people will work with computers, and how tech companies can forge more responsible and positive solutions to all of these issues.

**1992:** invitational conference on "The Global Film Community: Present and Future" in which representatives of the film industry from America, Japan, Europe, India and the Soviet Union, met to discuss the changing global influence on the media; ethics in the international film community; how the art form is altering global consciousness; universal stories and themes; innovations in sound and visual effects; and global financing and distribution.

**1988:** invitational conference on "Holonomic Processes in Social Systems" convened by Karl Pribram.

**1988:** Mobius-Esalen conference on "Human Potential Issues" convened by Stephan Schwartz.

**1988:** conference on "Mysticism Reconsidered" convened by Frances Vaughan.

**1985:** invitational conference, co-sponsored with Fritjof Capra and the Elmwood Institute, on "Critical Questions about New Paradigm Thinking," designed to address the question of whether there is an emergent, holistic worldview and if so, what are its contours?

Participants: Paul Gunn Allen, Walter Truett Anderson, Richard Baker Roshi, Ernest Callenbach, Fritjof Capra, Tyrone Cashman, Jacqueline Doyle, Leonard Duhl, Riane Eisler, Patricia Ellsberg, Stanislav Grof, Randy Hayes, Hazel Henderson, Eleanor LeCain, Robert Livingston, David Loye, Don Michael, Patricia Mische, Daniel Moses, Brian Murphy, Helena Norberg-Hodge, Jay Ogilvy, Janice Perlman, Ziauddin Sardar, Charlene Spretnak, David Steindl-Rast, and Brian Swimme. The highlights were published in a special issue of the *Re-Vision* journal.

**1983:** invitational conference on the topic of personal identity, chaired by Michael Murphy. Participants included: Chris Sizemore, multiple personality expert; Jay Ogilvy, philosopher; Michael Harner, anthropologist and expert on shamanism; Kenneth Ring and Carlos Alvarado, near-death researchers; and Charles Tart, parapsychologist.

**1973:** San Francisco public conference on "Spiritual and Therapeutic Tyranny: The Willingness to Submit," designed to address cultish problems in human growth arenas. Panel included: Joe Adams, Bernard Apfelbaum, Stewart Brand, Arthur Deikman, Werner Erhard, Richard Farson, Arthur Hastings, Michael Kahn, Sam Keen, Stanley Keleman, Paul Krassner, George Leonard, Peter Marin, Richard Marsh, Michael Murphy, Claudio Naranjo, Jerry Rubin, Lee Sanella, Will Schutz, Thomas Szasz, William Irwin Thompson, and John Vasconcellos.

**1969:** Esalen began a publication series in conjunction with Viking Press to showcase works from the growing human potential movement. These books included: *The Act of Will* and *Psychosynthesis* (Roberto Assagioli), *The Further Reaches of Human Nature* (Abraham Maslow), *Human Teaching for Human Learning* (George Brown), *On the Psychology of Meditation* (Claudio Naranjo and Robert Ornstein), *Depression and the Body* (Alexander Lowen), *Golf in the Kingdom* (Michael Murphy), *Anger and the Rocking Chair* (Janet Lederman).

## **Document Notes**

In 2012 this document was revised and edited by Michael Murphy, Jay Ogilvy, Keith Thompson, Stanislav Grof, Don H. Johnson, Joseph Montville, Jeff Kirpal, Gordon Wheeler, Frank Poletti, Jane Hartford, and others.

For further historical background on Esalen, please see Jeff Kripal's *Esalen: America and the Religion of No Religion*.



