

# THE CRUCIBLE OF AWAKENING

**Issue 46 February 2009**

## WHAT IS GRACE?

Grace — such a lovely word, so effortlessly evocative, being suggestive not only of a dimension of being ordinarily far from accessible to us, but also of a guidance and support preternaturally attuned to our deepest needs.

In Grace there is an implication or felt sense of sacred intervention, a not-by-us engineered doing that deeply serves our well-being, often in ways that are far from expected.

A serendipitous infusion of more-than-human guidance — this is Grace, however ragged or rough its delivery may be.

Grace — such a wonderfully rich word, conveying a heartfelt sense of something extraordinarily supportive arriving on our doorstep, palpably suffused with undeniable significance. It is a gift, regardless of its wrapping or reception.

In us there persists a longing for Grace, a longing to receive it and let it carry us where it may. And at the same time there may be a longing for Grace to arrive in a particular form, which of course does not necessarily happen. Sometimes what we most need is what we assume we least need, and Grace serves what we most need, which often means that it doesn't seem to be Grace at all to us, but rather just a nasty turn of the wheel.

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Grace is neither good luck nor the inevitable result of our good deeds; it is much more mysterious than that, responding as it does to more than just the obviously visible. It takes much more into account than we can see, being intimate with what is out of sight. Grace can be trusted. It won't let us down, even if in the short term it deposits us in places or situations that we don't like.

May Grace guide our days. May Grace flow through us. May Grace come to us. Such prayers are but confessions of intuiting or wanting to host the presence of something gloriously Other, something that is, sooner or later, recognized to be none other than what we *truly* are. May we not limit Grace to how we think it should manifest. May we not decide beforehand how Grace should look or behave. May our prayers for Grace reach without grabbing, ask without begging, and ready us without leaving us on hold. May we recognize Grace for what it is, and remain grateful for it.

Grace is the arrival and expression of not-by-us orchestrated direction and support, emerging without any strategy or manipulation on our part. When Grace shows up, we are guided in directions that we very likely would have otherwise overlooked or not seen. The gift of Grace is an astonishing thing, no matter how often we have witnessed it. It always feels fresh.

In the same sense that prayer is a divine personal, Grace is a divine intrusion. To the extent that prayer reaches up, Grace reaches down. The gravity of the situation demands it.

Some think of Grace as the tangible entry of our deepest dimensions into our everyday life, appearing in whatever form fits our prevailing belief system. But however we choose to conceptualize Grace, it exists. It doesn't matter if we're religious, agnostic, or atheistic. It doesn't matter what our status is. It doesn't matter how high we've been, or how low. When Grace shows up, we usually know it, whether we acknowledge it or not. We cannot engineer Grace, but we can deepen our receptivity to

it, making room for it, knowing that we don't know when it will show up, nor in what form it will arrive.

In the same sense that Life is the Poetry of Being, and Intimacy is the Poetry of Connection, and Beauty is the Poetry of Appearance, Grace is the Poetry of Evolution.

May Grace touch you, and touch you deeply.

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## **NOTHING BUT MYSTERY**

All there is is Mystery.

Irreducible, Absolute, Sacred, Timeless, indescribably Present, appearing now and evernow as you and me and all the rest of it, every last bit of it, whatever the evolutionary possibilities. Pure Mystery. Nothing but Mystery. The Is of is. To this I bow, until there is only bowing, only Mystery, my words, our words, the words instantly vanishing wingprints in endlessly open sky, leaving not even the slightest hieroglyphic smudge.

Nothing but Mystery. IT is more than Awareness, more than Nonduality, more than Love, more than Wholeness. IT exists simultaneously as subject, object, and verb, weaving a hyperdimensional story that can neither be told nor translated, all the while remaining infinitely Fecund and boundlessly Alive and radiantly Empty, placing this life, like every life, in a context too real to have meaning, leaving us stripped of all familiarity, all our housing projects but confetti in a vast storm.

Nothing but Mystery. IT outlives us, is us, transcends us, consumes and births and undoes us. To truly consider IT is to remember with our

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entire being what and where we really are, beyond all answers and all experiences. Wherever we look, whatever we do, whoever we are, there is only Mystery, both prior to and beyond all knowledge. Only Mystery. Truly realizing this is so radically final and simultaneously everfresh, so speechlessly significant, so wildly raw and so open-ended, that we understandably tend to occupy ourselves with other matters that help solidify and reinforce our self-sense, extracting as much meaning and security as we can from such things.

Only Mystery. We may busy ourselves pretending otherwise, including pretending that we aren't pretending, clinging to our identity and ambitions and spiritual credentials, treating IT as a something to periodically think about, or perhaps to spiritually acknowledge here and there. But to pull back the veils and really wake up to IT and unguardedly feel the full implications of IT is far, far from a lightweight undertaking, rendering our self-sense so transparent that we can no longer take it to be us.

To call It Mystery is not to say what IT actually is. No one and no thing is ever in a position to do so, being but part of IT, as is every possible position and perspective. That is, there is no standing apart from IT, no escape from IT, no alternative to IT. To the usual us, this may signal a kind of ultimate entrapment, perhaps even a hell beyond imagining, but to what we really are, this is absolute freedom, including freedom from all possible identities. Through it we are emptied of ourselves, leaving only what we truly are. Pure Mystery.

Nothing but Mystery. IT cannot be known, for every knower and every knowing is but another face or facet of IT, just as unfathomable as all the rest of it. To approach IT is to let revelation replace explanation.

Instead of trying to *understand* IT, we *recognize* IT, allowing such recognition to return us to what we never left but only dreamt we did. Eventually we reach a place where we simultaneously know nothing and recognize everything.

Only Mystery. When we feel ourselves being breathed and lived by IT, our dreaming unravels and we see through undreaming eyes that we have never been elsewhere or elsewhen. The sheer hyperbole-obliterating reality of IT makes this utterly obvious. This only makes sense when we completely stop trying to make it make sense.

Nothing but Mystery. The more we sense IT, the more we realize that we *are* IT, which leaves us in a more than interesting position, all undressed at the corner of Nowhere and Nowhere with every road an endless ribboning carrying both an infinity of passengers and no one at all. This leaves our mind speechless, as everything morphs into an everwild, all-containing Möbius strip that has no edge, no mappable infrastructure, no obligation to make sense.

Only Mystery. Perhaps the most fitting other name for IT is God, just so long as we don't limit that word to something that we know or something that we assume is knowable. Only Mystery. Into IT we are born and into IT we die, even though we were never born and cannot die. Such Divine Paradox is but Truth when we no longer stand apart from Mystery, remembering IT in this achingly personal sliver of time, deepening our intimacy with IT until there is only Mystery, nothing but Mystery.

# **FREEDOM THROUGH INTIMACY**

## **A Transformational Intensive For Couples**

**MARCH 7th-8th in ASHLAND, OREGON**

**This group is for committed couples who want a more conscious, loving, and liberating relationship with each other, and are ready to cut through whatever's in the way.**

Even if you already have a good relationship, consider coming, and taking your relationship from good to great to what it *really* can be.

Individual work will be given as much emphasis as couples work, using a spontaneously structured approach that creatively mixes psychotherapy, bodywork, dream exploration, spiritual practices, and dyadic deepenings.

**LOCATION & TIME:** 1012 Bellview Avenue, Ashland. 10am to 6pm both days.

**TUITION:** US\$475 per person (or US\$950 per couple). A nonrefundable deposit of US\$300 is required from each couple.

**Limited to 6 couples only.**

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# ***BREAKTHROUGH***

**MARCH 21st-22nd in ASHLAND, OREGON**

Exceptionally deep and effective integral work for those who want to make wise use of their difficulties, and who are ready to work through whatever is obstructing their liberation.

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THIS GROUP IS LIMITED TO 12 PARTICIPANTS ONLY, so that everyone will have time to do in-depth work. All kinds of issues and concerns — from the deepest trauma to the seemingly trivial — will be dealt with, through a dynamic, intuitive mix of bodywork, psychotherapy, spiritual disciplines, dreamwork, and group practices. Structure will not be preset, but rather will spontaneously arise in accord with individual & group needs.

**LOCATION & TIME:** TBA Ashland, Oregon. 10am to 6pm both days.

**TUITION:** US\$550. A nonrefundable deposit of US\$200 is required.

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# ***BREAKTHROUGH***

**APRIL 4th-5th in WHITE ROCK, BC**

Exceptionally deep and effective integral work for those who want to make wise use of their difficulties, and who are ready to work through whatever is obstructing their liberation.

THIS GROUP IS LIMITED TO 12 PARTICIPANTS ONLY, so that everyone will have time to do in-depth work. All kinds of issues and concerns — from the deepest trauma to the seemingly trivial — will be dealt with, through a dynamic, intuitive mix of bodywork, psychotherapy, spiritual disciplines, dreamwork, and group practices. Structure will not be preset, but rather will spontaneously arise in accord with individual & group needs.

**LOCATION & TIME:** 16133 9th Avenue, White Rock, BC. 10am to 6pm both days.

**TUITION:** US\$550. A nonrefundable deposit of US\$200 is required.

*An opportunity to directly learn from a master integral psychotherapist and groupleader (1) unique, exceptionally effective psychotherapeutic, spiritual, and bodywork/energywork skills; and (2) how to creatively and effectively integrate these in counseling work.*

# Masters Integral Psychotherapy Practicum

## 2009 USA APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

The purpose of this training is to deepen the capacity of participants to effectively counsel others through a dynamic, intuitively structured approach that integrates body, mind, emotion, and spirit.

To this end, the training will blend deep work on oneself and equally deep work with others, in personal, social, and spiritual contexts. Healing will be the primary intention and activity. Approaches that are taught and practised will be held, as much as possible, in a perspective that transcends them.

You'll learn to not rely upon nor necessarily impose structure, but rather to let it naturally arise from your relationship and interaction with those you're counselling. Working this way weans us from the security — the eventually deadening security — of operating from behind a preset structure or methodology, leaving us in a position that requires an appropriately creative response from us. Such creativity keeps us fresh, open, and alert.

Throughout the training we will be working in great depth with body, mind, emotion, and spirit. Love, integrity, and presence will be the cornerstones of our practice.

**WE WILL ONLY BE TAKING TWELVE PARTICIPANTS.**

**NOTE: The Practicum is intended for those who want to learn and practice a deeply intuitive, integral, and bodywork-including**

**approach to psychotherapy, and who at the same time *also* want to participate with kindred spirits in a year of exceptionally deep personal (and interpersonal and transpersonal) work, during which they will learn skills that will serve them in every area of their life.**

Graduates of previous practicums have not only found themselves at home with new skills (sufficient enough to begin working as an integral counsellor), but have also done work of such depth — and not just a few times, but *many* times — during the practicum that they invariably emerge more grounded, open, intuitive, and confident about both themselves and their ability to effectively guide others.

Much of the depth and quality of the work done has to do with being with a group of individuals who are all deeply committed to their own healing and awakening. In such a setting, there's not only more than enough safety and trust, but also a rare intimacy, generated by sharing such deep work both as a participant and as a counselor-to-be.

### **LOCATION & STRUCTURE:**

The Practicum will take place over 5 four-day modules in Ashland, Oregon.

Each module will include individual and group work, plus facilitation by participants of each other's work (with fitting feedback and guidance from Robert).

After the training concludes, participants who have attended it in its entirety will receive a diploma indicating that they have completed a one-year training in Masters Integral Psychotherapy with Robert Augustus Masters.

**PREREQUISITE:** Previous work with Robert.

**TUITION:** \$7000. A nonrefundable deposit of \$1000 is required. Half of the tuition is due at the start of the first module; the rest is due by the start of the third module (unless other arrangements have been made with us). Lodging and meals will be extra. Contact [info@robertmasters.com](mailto:info@robertmasters.com) to arrange payment.

## **SCHEDULE:**

April 16-19, June 4-7, August 6-9, October 8-11, December 3-6..

**There is considerable interest in this our latest Practicum. If you are thinking of possibly participating, please contact Robert.**

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## **Some Further Notes on the Practicum:**

The work done in the Practicum differs from the work done in our other groups in a number of ways:

- 1) Much of it occurs in the context of Practicum members doing work with each other under my supervision, pairing up and practicing what I have taught.
- 2) I oversee all of the work; Diane and I circulate among the practising pairs of Practicum participants to help guide each session in more optimal directions.
- 3) When I am working with an individual in front of the group, I may explain in some detail — without lowering the quality of the session — what I am doing and why, so that the session also becomes a teaching opportunity.
- (4) Each participant gets to work, often very deeply, four or five times in one module, as opposed to once or (now and then) twice in a regular group.

There are five modules, each lasting four days. Between modules 2, 3, 4, and 5, participants practice what they have learned, both with each other (if they live in the same area) and with suitable others (who are not charged for such work and who are beforehand informed that they are working with a trainee). After the second module, their sessions will last about half an hour. After the third module, their skill level will have increased quite a bit, so that they can now offer longer sessions, and bring more depth to their work.

Between modules, participants are not only expected to do a certain number of sessions (which they will keep notes on), but also to work on themselves in whatever ways are needed. This will include a daily meditation practice as well as keeping track of their dreams. All will have the opportunity to have

phone consultations with Diane and me to discuss questions and challenges concerning their practice.

Modules differ. The first one is an introduction, the second is mostly about working with emotions, the third mostly about working with body, the fourth mostly about working with mind and spirituality, and the final one is all about integrating what has already been learned. Spirituality is part of each module, as is dreamwork.

The Practicum quickly becomes a crucible/sanctuary for very deep work, providing a remarkable support system for personal evolution. In the final module, we all brainstorm and give input to each person, sharing our insights about what the post-Practicum work they might do could look like — not as a clone of me, but rather in the context of their unique abilities and talents, fittingly expressed through their own style, incorporating, to whatever degree, other healing modalities that they may already be practicing.

The Practicum is a prerequisite for further trainings with us, including advanced bodywork/energywork, working with couples, and leading groups.

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## ONLINE COMMUNITY

**FACEBOOK** has a group for people who have worked with me and/or who are interested in my work/writings to connect and discuss my work/writing or anything related to it. Once a week I answer questions from group members, which are sent to me from the group administrator, Arthur Gillard. If you're not already a member of Facebook, it is easy to join at: <http://www.facebook.com>. Once you have joined, simply type "Robert Augustus Masters" in the Search box and then click to join the group.

**GAIA**, a social networking site (free to join), also has a Robert Augustus Masters discussion group, featuring the same intention and invitation (and weekly Q&A) as my Facebook group. The online culture of my Gaia group is vital and inviting (and far more active than my Facebook group), and its powerful forum software is perfectly suited for meeting, discussing, and sharing

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with others who are interested in authenticity, healing, transformation, and Awakening.

You don't need to be a member of Gaia to see the posts there — just go to **[http://pods.gaia.com/robert\\_augustus\\_masters](http://pods.gaia.com/robert_augustus_masters)**.

But if you would like to participate in the discussions, you can join Gaia by going to: **<http://www.gaia.com/apply>**, or email Arthur Gillard ([thinkintuit@gmail.com](mailto:thinkintuit@gmail.com)), the cultivator of the site, who will send you an invitation.

The format of my Gaia group makes it very easy to navigate through, with everything organized into eight main categories: *Introduce Yourself; Ask Robert; Announcements & Feedback; Doing the Work; Dreams & Dreamworking; Robert's Writings; Other Influences, Teachings, Lessons, & Exemplars; and Potpourri for the Soul.*

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For more information regarding groups and trainings, or to register for them, contact [info@RobertMasters.com](mailto:info@RobertMasters.com).

All cheques, deposit and otherwise, should be mailed to Robert Masters, 16133 9th Avenue, Surrey, BC V4A 1A5.

Payments for groups (plus Robert's books and Diane's CD) can also be made online at our Store page; simply go to [www.RobertMasters.com](http://www.RobertMasters.com) and click on STORE.

To view previous newsletters, click on the NEWSLETTER button at [www.RobertMasters.com](http://www.RobertMasters.com).

To view Robert's blog, go to [www.RobertMasters.com](http://www.RobertMasters.com) and click on the BLOG button.

## **2009 Work Schedule**

January 8-11 Integral Psychotherapy Practicum: Ashland, Oregon

January 17-18 Breakthrough: Ashland, Oregon

March 7-8 Freedom Through Intimacy: Ashland, Oregon

March 13-16 Integral Psychotherapy Practicum: Ashland, Oregon

March 21-22 Breakthrough: Ashland, Oregon

April 4-5 Breakthrough: White Rock, BC