



Schizophrenia: Your Questions Answered

"The priest, the doctor, the psychiatrist living seventy years after Jung first cured a schizophrenic - (taking only one extreme of his endeavour) - from his sick soul and demonstrated how the pattern of God in man was a scientific fact and mighty activity, bear a crushing responsibility for the sickness of men and their societies, because they have today the means for healing at their disposal, but refuse to apply it. It is a scandal of a moral kind so great and so general, that no one will proclaim it as it ought to be from the house tops."

~ Sir Laurens Van Der Post [explorer and godfather to Prince William], *Jung and the Story of our Time*, 1976

What is Schizophrenia?

A good question, with no simple, short, or straightforward answer, since each sufferer is unique and schizophrenia is a complex phenomenon. In general, schizophrenia is an extremely introverted, psychospiritual mode of perception, or way of relating to the world; or state of consciousness involving (what I have called) 'extreme empathy'. This simultaneous blessing and curse is due to a fragile, fragmented, dead, or lost ego, or conscious personality structure. The normal, ego-enforced boundaries between the self and the world have broken down, such that schizophrenia sufferers - for better and worse - find themselves identifying with everything within their scope of perception. It is because of this ego loss, or 'dis-integration' that psychosis, shamanic initiation and mystical experience are so inextricably bound. The schizophrenic person may appear to family, friends and doctors to be lacking in emotion, but in reality is in a state of intense empathy, such that extreme sensations of joy and fear are usual. Because of their fragile personal boundaries, schizophrenic folk typically see, hear, sense, perceive and understand things that others are unaware of. Secret, or symbolic meanings are seen and heard in everything, and the schizophrenia sufferer typically feels responsible for the fate of the world.

Is Schizophrenia 'Split Personality'?

Yes . . . and No! Imagine, if you will, that a 3-levelled house represents the structure of the psyche. The top floor, consisting of various linked rooms, represents consciousness, in all its bustling, interacting complexity. Immediately below is the cellar, which represents the personal unconscious, or dark 'shadow' side of the personality. The lowest level, the basement, is the oldest part of the house and contains dim, godlike and archaic figures, personifications of what Jung called 'archetypes', universally occurring, powerful energies and forms of behaviour and thought, which make up what Jung called the 'collective unconscious', and which often take on mythological, religious, semi-human, divine, animal or natural forms. What we call 'split personality' involves the conscious personality forming split off, distinctly separate personalities, so it's as if the upper floor rooms become completely isolated from each other, their doors all locked.

A good example was portrayed in the movie "The Three Faces of Eve", where Eve's conscious personality consisted of a demure, moral personality, who called herself Eve White, coexisting - and juggling for supremacy - with a completely independent, brazen and promiscuous alter ego, Eve Black. Eventually, Eve resolved the split through the emergence of a third 'compromise', who combined the traits of the other two into the more healthily balanced Eve Grey. Similarly, in the recent Jim Carrey movie, "Me, Myself & Irene" (which I was sent to view and asked to comment on by *The Advertiser*), Carrey portrayed a Jekyll and Hyde split personality (wrongly called 'schizo' in the film), where an overly 'nice' and law-abiding guy lets loose his devilish alter ego, or (what Jung called) repressed 'shadow' side. With a schizophrenic split, or fragmentation, however, it's as if the house's floorboards (foundations of the conscious personality) are split, or shattered as

invading archetypal figures from the basement rush up to inhabit, or displace the upstairs (conscious) inhabitants. As Jung notes, whereas the healthy person's ego (conscious self) is the subject of his/her experiences, the schizophrenic person's ego is (therefore) only one of several subjects. The nature of the schizophrenic 'split' (which I've called 'split subjectivity') in other words, arises from the splitting of the archetypes of the collective unconscious into a multitude of figures that invade, or usurp the weaker and far more fragile conscious personality. It's a bit like a swimming pool trying to contain the ocean!

Sample testimony involving 'split subjectivity' and archetypal/mythic material [by David]: "I then felt some part of myself slip down through the crack in the pavement, down to the underworld, while another part of myself remained upon the pavement. I am currently trying to make further sense of this experience in relation to Ancient Egyptian belief, as, certainly during the early dynasties, they had a working knowledge of the Land of the Dead, much of which has been fortunately rediscovered, and is known to us as The Egyptian Book of the Dead."

What causes Schizophrenia?

Again, this is largely uncharted territory in which a great deal of work still needs to be done. There appears to be no one cause, or set of symptoms. However, in his 50-odd years of psychiatric practice, Prof. C. G. Jung found that in the majority of cases, an unresolved, or 'buried' personal trauma or triggering crisis, sometimes from childhood, lay hidden in the schizophrenic symptoms. My own work, which aims to extend Jung's, focuses on crisis-induced schizophrenia as a cultural phenomenon, in particular as a soulful, imaginal, egoless, Nature-respecting compensation for the egoic, detached, patriarchal, competitive, unnatural and materialist values of Western society.

The existence of so-called 'brain abnormalities' in some cases does not prove that schizophrenia is a brain disease. It simply verifies what one would expect from a wholistic medical perspective - that there may be a physical component in schizophrenia. Dr Al Siebert writes: "The large majority of people diagnosed as having schizophrenia show no neuropathological or biochemical abnormalities and a few people without any symptoms of schizophrenia have the same biophysiological abnormalities as do a few people with 'schizophrenia'." [*Journal of Humanistic Psychology* Vol. 40, No. 1, 2000, pp. 34-58.] The possibility of nutritional and biologic factors also needs to be explored, with the therapist's aid of a naturopath, homeopath, and/or wholistic GP (who will therefore not automatically assume that the schizophrenic symptoms arise from brain malfunction). Metabolic/enzymatic malfunction, as well as cerebral allergy to almost anything, including oral contraception, alcohol and drugs, may cause serious mental disturbance.

Who is affected by Schizophrenia?

The initial incubation period for the vast majority of sufferers is in late teens, or early twenties, perhaps because of the ego's relative fragility at these ages(?) Relatives and friends are deeply affected, as well, and may also need therapeutic help for their anxiety, depression, bewilderment, panic, deep concern, fear of potential violence, inability to cope, or near despair. Finally, the society as a whole is affected, since schizophrenic values, insights and modes of experience and consciousness are at odds with the prevailing egoic, dogmatic and materialistic beliefs and practices of Western society.

Do 'antipsychotic medications' cure Schizophrenia?

No, they simply band-aid symptoms, dull the mind, slow body metabolism (sometimes), and usually have harmful, toxic, or otherwise undesirable side-effects. They can also cause serious mental disturbance, if used improperly. Suggested reading: Peter Breggin, *Toxic Psychiatry*, HarperCollins, 1993. Lucy Johnstone, *Users & Abusers of Psychiatry*, Routledge, 1989. Stephen Rice, *Some Doctors Make You Sick*, Angus & Robertson, 1988. Jackson & Southill, *Is the Medicine Making You Ill?* Angus & Robertson, 1989. Inlander, Levin & Weiner, *Medicine On Trial*, NY: Prentice-Hall, 1988.

Is Schizophrenia treatable without the use of drugs (antipsychotic medications)?

Yes. Firstly, it is vital for the sufferer's dignity and well-being that his/her whole range of needs - physical, emotional and spiritual - be respected and addressed. The great soul-centred psychiatrist Jung cured his schizophrenic patients with psychotherapy alone, since only in this personal and painstaking way could he unearth the personal story, in which was embedded the trauma, or crisis which had originally triggered the schizophrenic disintegration. Australian Jungian Analyst John Herbert also cured his own schizophrenic son with psychotherapy and vitamin therapy.

Jungian psychotherapy involves a non-authoritarian, one-to-one personal dialogue which involves drawing on the healing potential within the individual's unconscious, as it expresses itself in schizophrenic dreams, visions, artwork, voices, and other inward experiences. Since schizophrenia taps into the collective unconscious and its powerful and sometimes disturbing archetypal energies, effective psychotherapy usually involves working with mythological, archetypal and religious themes, experiences and imagery, usually with a view to reintegrating the wandered, or dissociated fragments of the personality. What Jung called 'active imagination', a form of guided visualization, can also help 'rewire' the mind and regain a sense of focus and personal identity.

Further reading: C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* [Jung's vastly entertaining autobiography, widely available in paperback.] C. G. Jung, *CW Vol. 3 "The Psychogenesis*

of Mental Disease." [entirely on schizophrenia] John Herbert, *Don't Scoff at the Cocks: The Amazing Implications of Schizophrenia*. MBS Books, Castle Hill NSW [Australia] 2154 Karon & Vandenbos, *Psychotherapy of Schizophrenia*, Jason Aronson, 1981.

Why do sufferers of Schizophrenia refuse medication?

To start with, many diagnosed schizophrenia sufferers deny that their condition is primarily an illness. They are usually shrewd, creative, sometimes brilliant and sensitive folk, as are many artists, mystics and visionaries. From their angle, the sterile textbook mentality of drug-based psychiatry is soulless, arrogant, meaningless and patronizing. In some cultures, as Joseph Campbell notes, sufferers of schizophrenia are highly regarded, even revered as potential shamans, healers, poets and prophets.

Sample testimony [by Chris]: "It certainly feels more like an initiation of some kind. For all the pain it has brought me, I wouldn't be without it, as it has made me so much more aware of a lot of things.

"To be honest, I don't think your average psychiatrist really has a clue. My psychiatrist has never even read any Jung. It's impossible for me to respect that, and dangerous for me to allow him to administer drugs that affect my mind. It is, after all, my mind. My medication makes me very lethargic, but I'm bullied into taking it, and my appeals to reduce it, gradually, aren't considered. People are horrified at the thought of Medieval tooth-pullers, and I think as we learn more about the mind, in years to come people will feel much the same way about our psychiatrists. My doctor kept trying to make me believe that the things I was seeing and hearing and feeling were delusions. But what I was experiencing was real, in the truest sense of the word."

Can I trust a GP's diagnosis of 'Schizophrenia'?

On the whole, no. Sadly, some GPs assume that they are qualified to diagnose and treat psychological, or psychotic conditions, even though they would be outraged if someone who hadn't trained as a GP dared to suggest that they were (nonetheless) competent to practice as one. GP medical training covers only physical illness in depth, hence does not include a working, in-depth knowledge of the equally complex 'anatomy of the psyche', or of the unconscious. Unless a GP has obtained - in addition to his/her GP training - an equal amount of training, deeply personal experience and soul-centred education in the field of mental health psychology, s/he will know next to nothing about schizophrenia. To entrust a sufferer to a GP's judgment and (often drug-based) 'treatment' is therefore a bit like putting a scalpel into the hands of someone who knows next to nothing about physical anatomy; it's (therefore) potentially harmful and traumatising, particularly to a person in a critical, or incubation phase of a 'spiritual emergency' (a term coined by Stanislav Grof, MD).

Can I trust a psychiatrist's diagnosis of 'Schizophrenia'?

Again, caution is advised. Psychiatrists in Australia are trained in and for the most practice 'biologic', or 'brain chemistry' psychiatry, which assumes that all (what I call) 'soulful sickness' is the result of faulty brain chemistry. Many 'diagnoses' are, accordingly, not based on medical facts, but on circular reasoning and on highly subjective, culture-bound value judgments grounded on (unprovable) materialist dogma. This 'Brain Chemistry Dogma' judges certain modes of behaviour, experience and consciousness - such as telepathy, visionary abilities, insights into society's sickness, introverted withdrawal from society, or non-ordinary states of consciousness - to be 'mentally ill,' 'schizophrenic', 'disturbed', or 'delusional'.

Be wary of any drug-based psychiatrist who has no respect for the validity and reality of spiritual values, experiences and crises, who tries to maintain a distanced, or patronizing air of clinical authority, or who is unable to differentiate between schizophrenia and other forms of psychosis, or ego loss, which could be better described as 'soulful crises' (my term), or spiritual emergencies. Examples are: self-rebirthing processes, activation of the God archetype, kundalini arousal, shamanic initiation trauma, karmic recall, possession states, and mystical/visionary states. Similarly, severe neuroses, psychopathic tendencies, and multiple personality states are often wrongly diagnosed as 'schizophrenic'.

Always, therefore, seek a second opinion, or reassessment by a practitioner who works from a soul-centred psychiatric perspective, which honours emotional, individual and psychospiritual values and needs.

Further reading: Stanislav Grof, MD & Christina Grof, *Spiritual Emergency: When Personal Transformation Becomes a Crisis*, Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1989.

John Nelson, MD, *Healing the Split: Madness or Transcendence?* Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1990.

John Weir Perry [Psychiatrist & Jungian Analyst], *The Far Side of Madness*, Prentice-Hall, 1974.

Sample testimonies: [Sadie] "Yet as a direct result of my experiences, I've been able to pull my friends out of psychoses which otherwise would have held them fast. Shamans are able to make it through the confusion because there are older shamans who have been there themselves, and can help them."

Female schizophrenia sufferer (for 18 years): 'I've had past life memories, visions of angels and Jesus and I love God. In fact, I love schizophrenia. It's frightening, dramatic, adventurous, interesting, profound, delightful, terrible, horrific, challenging, impossible, never easy, but it's life. I sometimes wish I'd travelled overseas, but I've been to places

inside me most people know nothing about. Still, it would be nice to be normal - to have had children, travelled, worked - I wanted to be a psychologist. Never mind, I would never have found the peace of God without the terrors of hell - schizophrenia."

What other drug-free therapies are available for Schizophrenia?

Generally, schizophrenia sufferers - most of whom, understandably, do not want to be forced to take harmful 'medication' - find any or all of the following helpful: non-patronizing acceptance, intelligent conversation, peace and solitude, good friends, long walks, practical help (with managing their day-to-day living needs), literature on mythology, spirituality, the Cosmos and shamanism, excursions into Nature, open fires, drumming, working with stones and crystals, gardening, drama and art therapies, music, soulful environments, shamanic work and Medicine Wheel work (based on Native American rituals). Herbal remedies, Bach Flower remedies, acupuncture, homeopathy, diet, aromatherapy and nutritional medicine are also vitally helpful in redressing associated biologic imbalances and nutritional deficiencies. Always bear in mind that the person who knows most about schizophrenia is the one experiencing it. Always, therefore, listen primarily to what the sufferer has to say regarding what they find helpful, meaningful, truthful and healing. Don't try to force the schizophrenia sufferer into accepting any 'treatment' which they don't want, or don't find helpful and respectful of their needs - it simply adds further anxiety and trauma to their already fragile condition.

Who, then, can help?

Whoever helps needs to be compassionate, non-authoritarian, flexible in approach, comfortable with psychosis, self-aware, imaginative and respectful of the whole person's needs and values. Seek out any C. G. Jung Societies, Jungian Analysts, or Spiritual Emergence Network members in your area, or contact the Schizophrenia Drug-free Crisis Centre [Adelaide]. Ask if there are any Jungian practitioners available who are comfortable with and experienced in working with schizophrenia and psychosis. Avoid self-proclaimed New Age 'Spiritual Healers' and suchlike, if they have no reputable credentials, training and experience in the field of soul-centred psychiatry. This kind of work is potentially hazardous, tricky, and intensely demanding. It can backfire on anyone who panics, gets out of their depth, or falls back on a neat theory, and it involves a great deal of soul-centred training, self-knowledge, personal commitment, first-hand experience and education. People who have pulled themselves out of a schizophrenic episode or spiritual psychosis are, above all others, invaluable sources of help to folk still stuck in a psychosis. Finally, you can help, by remaining non-judgmental, by re-educating yourself about schizophrenia, by listening to and learning from schizophrenia sufferers, by doing some intense soul-searching in order to own your own inner demons and madness, and by befriending, practically helping and supporting schizophrenia sufferers in the way(s) they wish to be helped.

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