

Review Article

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Lifelong Health Education within the Framework of Medicine for Years

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I want to begin with a broad overview, moving from the general to the specific. My reflections concern the condition of today's world, our societies, families, educational systems, the mental health of younger generations, and the growing social challenges we all face. Everything I discuss concerns every one of us, including children and young people.

As a society, we have reached a critical turning point where both education and healthcare have gradually lost sight of the human being as a whole. Education has become primarily focused on transmitting subject knowledge, while medicine has concentrated mainly on diagnosing and treating the symptoms of disease.

In doing so, we have overlooked the whole person and the fundamental human need for health, well-being, and quality of life. Both education and healthcare require a broader, more integrative perspective. Without such a perspective, we risk compromising not only the well-being of individuals but also the future of coming generations.

The inner world is reflected in the outer world. Contemporary physics increasingly recognizes energy as the underlying basis of material phenomena. Although modern science has revealed the extraordinary complexity of the universe and of human biology, people still need a coherent and understandable model of human functioning.

The rapid expansion of modern technologies raises important questions about their long-term interactions with the environment and human health, many of which deserve further scientific investigation.

At the same time, we observe growing numbers of complex chronic diseases, many of which are increasingly difficult to understand and treat. The consequences are visible not only globally but also in the breakdown of families, deteriorating interpersonal relationships, increasing social polarization, and emotional violence.

Medicine, when focused primarily on disease management, also needs to recover the perspective of the person. Every patient brings a unique life story, family history, personal beliefs, and subjective experience of illness. Without recognizing this individuality, medicine risks reducing the person to a diagnosis.

Many contemporary health and social problems including psychosomatic disorders, addictions, violence, workaholism, and other forms of compulsive behavior reflect a deeper imbalance within the individual. Such instabilities often originate in early developmental experiences and educational environments. They may also reflect a cultural tendency to value material achievement while neglecting inner development, relationships, and the human need for love and meaning.

This imbalance becomes increasingly visible in contemporary education. From an early age, children are often evaluated, compared, rewarded, or marginalized. Later in life, many people identify themselves primarily through professional roles or external achievements, while their deeper identity remains underdeveloped. This contributes to fragile self-esteem and a persistent sense of "not being good enough" often rooted in childhood experiences at home and at school.

When children grow up without sufficient emotional support when technology replaces human presence they may lose their sense of direction during adolescence. Some seek belonging in destructive peer groups or become isolated, escaping into virtual or imagined realities, sometimes supported by psychoactive substances. Today, increasing numbers of adolescents require psychiatric care, and suicide among young people has become a growing global concern [1-6].

These observations point to the foundations upon which many later pathologies develop. They also indicate where meaningful change must begin: in a model of education that supports the harmonious development of the whole child and integrates health promotion with education from the earliest stages of life.

In this presentation, time allows me to introduce only a brief outline of such an approach. The proposed model includes:

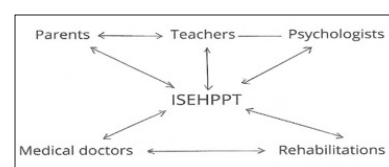


Figure 1: Creating a Medicine for Years system by incorporating individual elements into an Integral System of Education, Health Promotion, and Treatment (ISEHPPT)

- parents and family education centers
- teachers and teacher education centres
- psychologists supporting holistic human development
- physicians with an integrative approach who focus on the person rather than solely on the symptoms of disease. This includes pediatricians, geriatricians, family physicians, and other medical specialists. Their role is to care for the whole person throughout the lifespan, including palliative and end-of-life care.
- a comprehensive system of rehabilitation and health promotion.

This represents only the beginning of an integrated network supporting the sustainable human development and well-being of children and adults. It is the starting point for bringing together education, health promotion, disease prevention, and healthcare into one coherent system.

Everyone participating in this system should understand that integration does not mean increasing control. Rather, it means identifying what is missing, filling the gaps in knowledge, and contributing complementary elements that together support health, human development, and recovery.

Within this framework, patient-centered medicine becomes one of the essential pillars of what I call Medicine for Years. By “Medicine for Years I mean a lifelong, integrated system that combines health education, prevention, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, and self-education throughout the entire human lifespan.



Figure 2: The proposed Health Ecosystem: a network of collaborating communities whose shared goal is to support individuals throughout their lives in Lifelong Health Education.

Patient-Centered Medicine, across all medical specialties, offers a unique and innovative approach to healthcare. Unlike the traditional disease-oriented model, it focuses primarily on the individual person, supporting their health, well-being, and holistic development rather than concentrating solely on the disease itself.

Drawing on my professional journey twenty-five years in immunology and clinical diagnostics, followed by thirty years of practicing psychosynthesis I have worked both with health promotion and with people living with chronic illness. From this perspective, I hope that medicine will strengthen beyond preventive medicine understood merely as disease prevention or addressing isolated root causes. It should become an integrated model that combines causal and symptomatic approaches while using their full potential to restore homeostasis at every level of human functioning.

Within such a personalized approach, the patient’s life story becomes an essential part of both diagnosis and therapy.

Information that may have seemed insignificant years earlier often returns as a crucial element in understanding the origins of illness. Three aspects are particularly important:

- **The patient’s Personal History**, including traumatic experiences, often originating in childhood.
- **Addressing the Causes Rather than Only the Symptoms.** This requires close cooperation between physicians and psychologists, together with an effective flow of information. Psychologists should routinely ask about physical symptoms, while physicians should recognize the psychological dimensions of illness. Even if this collaboration initially involves only these two professions, it can significantly improve diagnostic accuracy and therapeutic outcomes by revealing the relationships between causes and effects.
- **Recognizing that Health and Illness Involve the Whole Person.** Disease often originates at a different level of human functioning than the one at which its symptoms appear and at which medical practitioners treat them. Understanding this relationship opens new possibilities for more comprehensive and effective care.

It is therefore worth viewing medicine as part of the remarkable system of **Life** a system that supports, protects, and restores Life by bringing together specialists from different disciplines in the common service of **Health**, rather than focusing exclusively on disease.

Life, like health, has many dimensions. Human beings are an integrated unity of **body, mind, and soul**. We cannot ignore any of these dimensions while living, and we should not neglect them when caring for those who are ill.

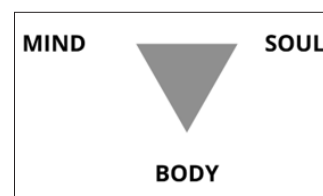


Figure 3: A Holistic View of Human Functioning
The body is not separate from mind and soul; it is where their relationship becomes visible.

Homeostasis in medicine is usually understood as the body’s ability to maintain physiological balance, commonly assessed through biochemical parameters such as blood composition. However, from a broader perspective, true homeostasis extends beyond physiology. It involves harmony across all dimensions of human existence physical, psychological, social, and spiritual.

Contemporary physics describes an underlying order that remains unobservable directly, yet it shows itself in how complex systems organize. Likewise, living organisms depend on the continuous exchange and organization of information and energy. Disturbing this dynamic balance disrupts adaptive processes, eventually affecting the body’s functioning.

Mitochondria play a central role in cellular metabolism, as biochemical processes generate the energy required for life. When these processes function efficiently, the organism maintains its capacity for self-regulation. When they become impaired, physiological disturbances develop, leading to measurable biochemical changes, including alterations in blood parameters.

The human organism inherently contains the information necessary for its own development, regulation, and healing. Therefore, we can understand illness as a disruption of self-regulation. This disruption shows itself not only at the biochemical level but also throughout the entire person. Consequently, homeostasis expresses itself across multiple interconnected levels of human functioning and throughout the whole course of life from birth to old age.

From this perspective, health, well-being, and illness function as interdependent processes that continuously affect each other rather than as isolated phenomena.

Newborn => Baby => Child => Adult

Figure 4: Developmental Interdependencies. Experiences from Birth onward Shape the Quality of Adult Life.

Modern science, which investigates the functioning of organs at increasingly deeper levels, is providing growing evidence of the role of chronic stress and destructive emotions in influencing both the microbiome and mitochondrial function. Mitochondria, as the cell's primary energy-producing organelles, play a crucial role in cellular metabolism, adaptation, and protection against stress. Researchers increasingly recognize mitochondrial dysfunction as an important factor in chronic fatigue and in the development of many chronic diseases, which explains the growing scientific interest in mitochondria.

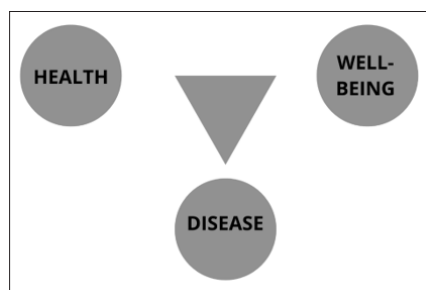


Figure 5: Health, Well-being, and Disease: Their interdependence

We should consider health, well-being, and disease as dynamically interconnected processes that continuously influence one another throughout life, rather than as separate states.

Inflammation is often a consequence of chronic stress. In response to prolonged stress, mitochondria activate protective mechanisms that may reduce cellular energy production in order to preserve cell survival.

Looking at human functioning as a whole, we can see that disease manifests itself throughout the organism because the human being has always functioned as an integrated whole rather than as separate parts. The challenge is whether we are willing to use the widest possible range of approaches to uncover the underlying causes of disease. This applies to every dimension of human existence the body, mind, and soul.

Health is the most valuable human resource. Therefore, when illness occurs, it affects only one part of the person, while the rest remains healthy. It is within this healthy part of ourselves that the potential for healing resides.

Health is more than the absence of disease. It is also a state of inner harmony. The more we cultivate this harmony, the more peace, joy, and well-being emerge within us. In such a state, metabolic processes are more likely to remain in balance with the natural

rhythms of our organism and, ultimately, with the rhythms of Nature itself.

We should remember that health and illness concern not only the physical body. Genetic and epigenetic factors, patterns of energy metabolism, and the environment in which a person lives influence them. Equally important is the individual's capacity to transform that environment through conscious choices. Lifestyle, nutrition, relationships, and attitudes all contribute to supporting resilience and immune function.

Knowledge about the spiritual dimension of human beings is far less common and therefore much more difficult to access. Yet such knowledge may be essential for living in today's world not only in an environment burdened by chemical pollution but also in one affected by broken relationships, aggression, and violence.

Education for a New Future, a New Human Being requires a new integrative framework, starting with the individual and supporting their development and health through education at all levels, and thus the school class, family, social and health systems, communities and societies, and the entire nation, **seen as a single organism**. However, its core is the ethical/moral dimension of every human being.

It is essential to seek mutual connections, interaction, participation instead of control, creativity new ways of learning, teaching, or caring for health and illness, and hence "lighting the way, especially where it is darkest.

Suppose we start by educating ourselves, seeing the problems, looking at the "roots" and evolution of the diseases in our families. In that case, we will see opportunities for change at any moment and be able to begin the process of "returning" to health. Health is not only about "who we are" and what lifestyle we lead, but also about **what we do to ourselves**, our loved ones, and the world through ignorance and unawareness. So we can start living consciously, understanding that this is the only way to build individual and collective well-being.

Currently, especially in times of successive health challenges that we face as individuals, but also as communities and as a world, relating to our immune system, we must start thinking and acting differently—rebuilding not only relationships within ourselves but also with others and the world. This will help us better understand what health means and appreciate it, taking care of it every day. And this will allow us to return to nature within ourselves and the Nature that surrounds us. We should dedicate our work to **well-being** and find meaning in it. Then we will allow ourselves to live better, but also others and the world.

At that point, we find a deeper meaning in Edward Stachura's words: "To become well, one must first become ill only then do we understand why illness occurs and how to regain true health.

May our lives fulfill the words, paraphrased from JRR. Tolkien: May it be a light in dark places, when all other lights go out.

Human Beings at the Core of Education and Medicine Today
Until now, both education and medicine have tended to fragment the human being into separate parts, assigning them either to school subjects or to isolated symptoms and diseases, rather than addressing the person as a whole. Their focus centered on external details, and they neglected the essence of human identity.

The social and health consequences of this fragmented paradigm in education and science have become increasingly evident over the past several decades. Contemporary education, including upbringing, requires not only reform but also the restoration of what has been damaged through ignorance and neglect. Many patterns of aggression and violence are rooted in beliefs and attitudes that have become deeply embedded in the minds of both adults and children. As Federico Mayor, quoting Václav Havel, reminds us, **we cannot postpone until tomorrow what must begin today, because tomorrow may already be too late**. For this reason, an ethical approach that recognizes the spiritual dimension of education is becoming increasingly important in a world challenged by terrorism, violence, and growing social pathology.

Education for the future, beginning today, should reunite the human being into an integrated whole. It should adopt a concentric approach, placing the person at its center and supporting the gradual development of the many dimensions of identity and human functioning. Above all, it should recognize every individual as a unity of body, psyche, and spirit. Such education should cultivate awareness of oneself and of the importance of each sphere of human existence for the well-being of the whole person.

Its task is to uncover, layer by layer, both the strengths already present within the individual and those neglected aspects that require understanding, support, and healing the healing of the deepest core of the person, their spiritual essence.

The new education should therefore become a journey toward discovering the realm of the soul and restoring inner order across every dimension of human functioning: the physical, mental, emotional, imaginative, intuitive, and above all the dimension of **will**.

Such an approach becomes **lifelong education**, whose purpose is to preserve and promote the well-being of individuals, families, communities, and future generations.

In several of his publications, the New Zealand cardiologist and psychosynthesis practitioner **Dr. Guy A. Pettitt** presented a model of the human psyche that illustrates the mechanisms blocking harmonious development. According to this model, many of these obstacles originate at the unconscious level. Working at this level makes it possible to release the **life energy constrained by traumatic experience**, thereby supporting healing and reducing the symptoms associated with unresolved trauma Pettitt GA, Health, Joy, Love and Forgiveness.

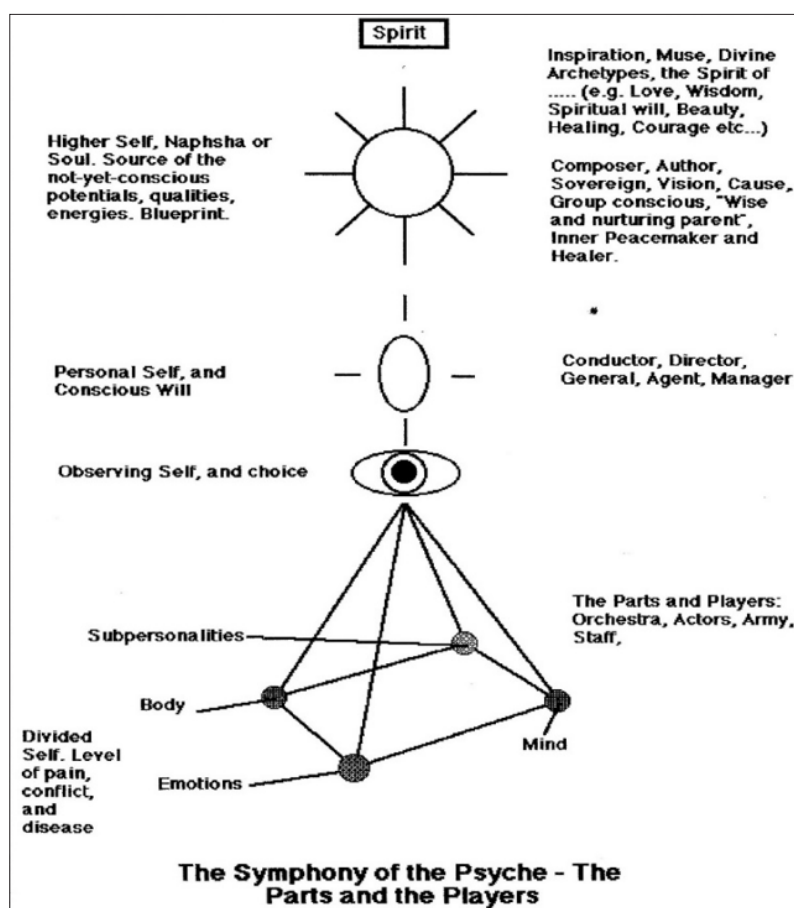


Figure 6: The human psyche: levels of consciousness, subpersonalities, the personal Self, the Higher Self, mind, and will. Reproduced with permission from Guy A. Pettitt, Health, Joy, Love and Forgiveness.

According to the New Zealand cardiologist and psychosynthesis practitioner Dr. Guy A. Pettitt, many disturbances originate in the lower unconscious, which he metaphorically describes as the “basement” of the psyche.

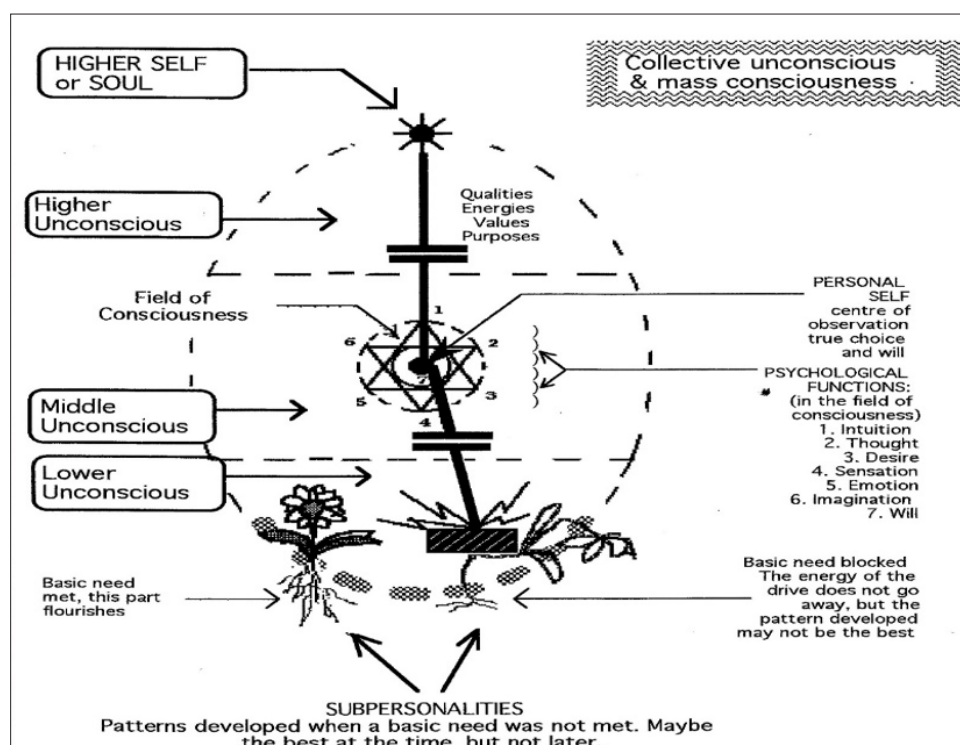


Figure 7: A Map of Human Consciousness: Growth Blockages

The personal Self may be unaware of the origin of dysfunctional subpersonalities or of its connection with the Higher Self. Psychological functions are instruments used by the Self; they are not the Self itself. Learning to recognize and consciously use these functions is an essential part of personal development.

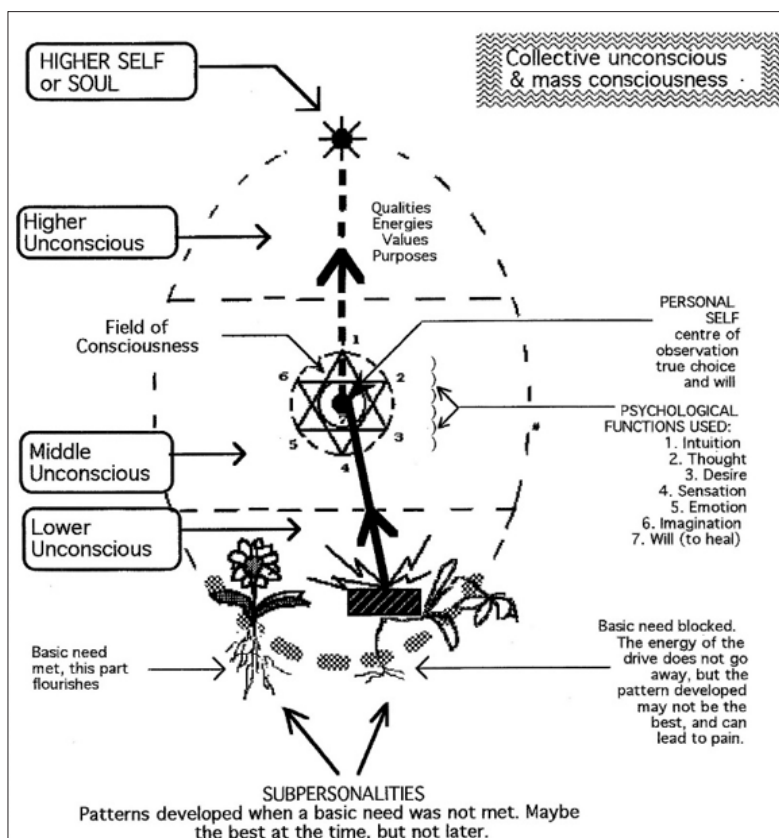


Figure 8: A Map of Human Consciousness (II): Understanding the Source of the Problem. Releasing the energy held within trauma restores its natural flow and supports healing.

Figures 7-9: illustrate not only the structure of the human psyche but also the dynamic process through which psychological fragmentation can be transformed into greater integration and healing.

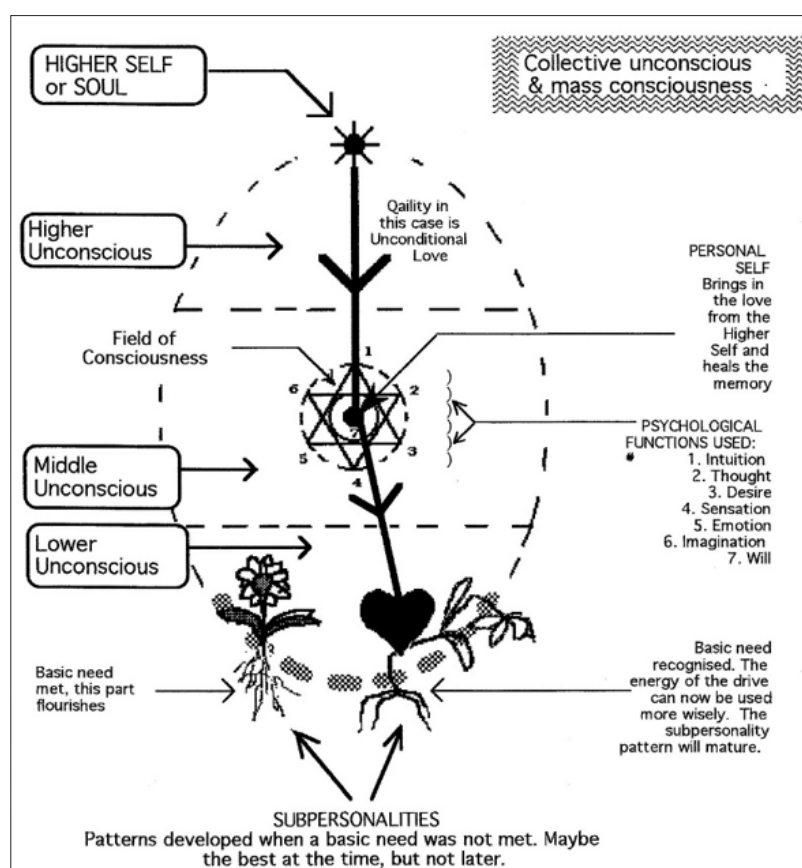


Figure 9: A Map of Human Consciousness: Healing Through Integration

Taken together, these models provide a conceptual framework for integrating medicine, psychology, and education into an approach that supports human development, health, and sustainable development.

After reviewing Guy Pettitt's diagrams of the human psyche, it becomes possible to integrate knowledge from medicine, psychology, and education into a coherent framework for understanding human development. Such an approach provides a foundation for educational methods that support sustainable development, beginning with the individual, fostering harmonious personal growth, and ultimately contributing to the well-being of families, communities, and society as a whole.

The growth path begins with understanding the different aspects of ourselves, recognizing the roles played by our subpersonalities, and gradually establishing harmony among them. Through this process, the personality becomes integrated into a coherent whole. The better we understand these inner dynamics, the more consciously we can regulate and direct them according to our values, goals, and life purpose. Integration is therefore not the elimination of differences within the personality but their harmonious cooperation. As this process unfolds, the effectiveness of the personality increases, previously neglected aspects find their rightful place, and each part receives the psychological "nourishment" needed to develop its full potential.

Ultimately, integrated and sustainable development begins with the development of the human being. Only an integrated person can contribute to creating an integrated family, an integrated society, and a healthier world.

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6. Map of human consciousness (3), showing the levels of the psyche. Pettitt G.A.
7. Figures 6-9 reprinted with permission from Pettitt G.A.

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