

Transformance: The AEDP® Journal

Volume 13

December 2024

Issue One

Editor's Letter

By Carrie Ruggieri

The Core-Self Issue

The *Core-Self* issue offers four insightful articles, and a poem, exploring how AEDP facilitates the emergence of the flourishing core-self. The contributions examine this emergence within the contexts of development, healing, and, in Jacque Ye-Perman's article, broader cultural dynamics.

Both Ben Susswein and Annika Medbo draw inspiration from Eileen Russell's (2021) work on the agentic self. The issue begins with Ben Susswein's extensively researched article on the development and expression of human agency within attachment relationships. Susswein distinguishes *resilient agency* from *resistant agency* and incorporates Russell's concept of "attuned disruption" alongside recognition processes to address and repair resistant agency. His exploration lays a foundational understanding of the role agency plays in flourishing.

We follow Susswein's erudition on agency with Annika Medbo's innovative approach on working with patients who have not yet developed an agentic core-self. She begins therapeutic work with these patients by joining them in their State 2 maladaptive state of 'no-self' and creates a relational bridge to adaptive State 2 functioning. Medbo's interventions are represented by her two new triangles of experience: *The Triangle of Finding and Rescuing the Self* and *The Triangle of the Emerging Self*.

My article follows Medbo's, delving into an ecological model of recognition as central to the development of a flourishing core-self and to the therapeutic resolution of core-self hindrances. I highlight the role of core-state experiences that emerge after pivotal moments of therapeutic recognition and demonstrate how these experiences reinforce the flourishing core-self.

Finally, Jacque Ye-Perman continues the discussion of core-state, reframing it not as an endpoint but as a state of readiness for deeper trauma work. Her clinical case study focuses on a Chinese client, illustrating AEDP's cross-cultural applicability through its emphasis on affect and somatic processing. Ye-Perman highlights how core-state experiences set the stage for transformative growth and resilience, even in the context of profound trauma.

I close this letter with a poem by Gerald Brooks, a beautiful encapsulation of the core themes explored in this issue's articles. It is also a prelude to Brook's work to be featured in an upcoming issue of *Transformance*. Please scroll to the next page for the poem.

Carrie Ruggieri

Father Hunger

By Gerald Brooks

An insatiable fact, as the boy opens his eyes,
where does he look? Not yet understanding
these eyes will know pain—
searching for the father and his embrace.

The world instructs the father, unconsciously,
to be distant, to be tough.
But must we lose that tender nature,
those body responses to comfort and emotion,
in the name of toughness?

It becomes a challenge
for fathers to raise their sons
when the world has ripped
the very nature of emotion from them,
leaving them defended followers—
distant from heart and flesh.

But fathers, teach your sons to be themselves,
to feel without shame, and to rise without fear.
Show them what is possible—
that they can find their way,
and still know they have your hand upon their shoulder,
a support that endures, even in their becoming.

For when we starve our sons of emotion,
we feed the animal within—
the rage that prowls the underbelly of life,
locked within the cage of unspoken pain.
It becomes a weight, wielded outwardly,
and turns inwardly to a life left locked,
when the awareness of emotion is withheld,
when the hunger is denied and unmet.

As men, we must acknowledge this truth:
the hunger for a father's connection remains
deep and unsatisfied if one has been starved
or poorly nourished in that bond.
Yet, even where absence or distance has been,
there is still time to heal—
for it is never too late to reach, to mend,
to offer and accept what was once missing.

And fathers, remember—
connection does not mean perfection.
Strive instead to tame that hunger—
to heal what you may not have received,
and to honor your journey towards awareness.
For connection is an ongoing art,
and even the smallest gestures
can begin to fill the aching spaces
where absence once dwelled.