

# Measuring the Transpersonal: The Research and Mentoring Contributions of Harris Friedman

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Harris Friedman

## Abstract

Harris Friedman has made a unique contribution to science by constructing the first explicitly transpersonal measure, helping to bring transpersonal psychology into the realm of more conventional science. He has also engaged in a wide range of professional activities during his career, including mentoring younger scholars and professionals. This paper consists of an introduction written by Fracasso on her experiences of being mentored in her graduate education by Friedman, as well as a statement written by Friedman on some of the factors that led to his interest in both transpersonal measurement and mentorship. It concludes with brief contributions by Douglas MacDonald and Zeno Franco, two scholars whom Friedman has helped in his role as a senior scholar. This paper illustrates how personal history can shape one's later academic interests, as well as the importance for science of passing on traditions across generational divides.

**Key Words:** graduate education, Harris Friedman, mentorship, transpersonal psychology

NeuroQuantology 2011; 3: 499-514

## Introduction

This paper is a result of the first author (Fracasso) soliciting the second author (Friedman) to be included in this special issue of *NeuroQuantology* focused on research and mentoring contributions of people who have been “pioneers who have changed the face of science.” At first, Friedman resisted this overture, claiming he did not feel his research contributions were of significant magnitude to warrant inclusion, while he also perceived his academic mentoring contributions as relatively meager on several counts. However, Friedman has mentored Fracasso, who is involved as co-editor of this special issue, over the last several years (e.g., she

completed her master's thesis and is now completing her doctoral dissertation under Friedman's supervision), and she strongly felt he should be included. In addition, Stanley Krippner, who is also co-editing this special issue, has served as an informal mentor for Friedman (e.g., by inviting him to co-edit a number of recent books, such as the following: Krippner and Friedman, 2010a; Krippner and Friedman, 2010b), and also encouraged this paper. The paper consists of an introduction written by Fracasso, a statement written by Friedman, as well as contributions by Douglas MacDonald and Zeno Franco.

## Fracasso's Description of Being Mentored by Friedman

A guru I studied with was once asked, “Is it the guru who chooses the student, or the student who chooses the guru?” She replied, “Neither. It is much more mysterious than that. It is a sacred relationship that neither

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Received June 30, 2011. Revised June 30, 2011. Sept 3, 2011.

chooses with a much higher purpose than either can imagine. It is like a bird that leaves no tracks...no path to follow. It is like nothing else. It's a mystery. It's an issue of the heart that cannot be understood by the rational mind (Gangaji, 1997, *Retreat in Boulder, Colorado*).” That saying has always stuck with me over the years, as it is a humble reminder that any type of relationship -- whether it be student-teacher, brother-sister, friend to friend, or co-worker to co-worker -- is always fresh and new, and is unfolding and growing in each moment. So what does this have to do with mentorship and Harris Friedman, you may wonder? Well, let me be the first to say that he is by no means a guru (in fact, he would be the first to humbly admit that). And on the note of being humble, in fact, when Friedman was first invited to contribute to this edition on mentorship with *NeuroQuantology*, he initially said no, as he did not initially think that he had contributed anything substantial enough to warrant such notice. However, after much prodding from Stanley Krippner and me, Friedman finally agreed to contribute.

Although he is no guru, it does amaze me at how what *appeared* to be a chance encounter back in 2007 has continued to unfold all these years later, as he has become my esteemed mentor and colleague. So was it by chance that he became my mentor? I think not. I myself could not have consciously picked out this type of outstanding mentor that was most perfectly suited for me. So, this brings us to the heart of this paper, which is about mentorship, as well as his significant contributions to the field.

To begin, I present the following thoughts for the reader to ponder: What is mentorship? What does it look like? What does it mean? Is there a guideline somewhere that tells the student and teacher what each other's roles are? What is the mark of an outstanding mentor? The answers to these questions are crucial since mentorship is vital to the future success of any field, whether it is in the field of quantum physics, psychology, or any other discipline. In my view, the mentorship process is akin to taking a little seedling, nourishing it, and watching it grow, so that

new up and coming scholars can go on to contribute great things to the field. Therefore, the following is a brief snapshot of my story and experience with Friedman.



Professor Harris Friedman

The year was 2007. Life was insane as a full-time graduate student about to begin working on my thesis, in addition to holding a full-time job (let alone trying to have any kind of social life). I had already signed a contract with a faculty member to chair my thesis and was ready to begin. Until one day (after much prodding from a professor I met during graduate school), I decided to introduce myself and my line of work on the American Psychological Association, Division 32 listserv. Within hours, I received a response from Friedman who expressed an interest in my work (I am a near-death experience researcher) and in chairing my thesis, since he happened to be the clinical director of the graduate school I was attending at the time. I at first was not interested, since I had already signed a contract with another faculty member, but anybody who knows Friedman knows that, once he sets his mind to something, he is very persuasive and charismatic in his approach. Before long, I found myself signing a new contract with him as my chair.

Six months later when I graduated with my master's degree, I thought our relationship had come to an end. However, Friedman contacted me to see if I would be interested in carrying out the study I had only proposed in my thesis. My topic was on psychologists' knowledge and attitudes

towards near-death experiences (NDEs), and their implications for clinical treatment. So the next thing I know, there we were, carrying out a study on psychologists' knowledge about NDEs which was later published in the *Journal of Near-Death Studies* (Fracasso, Friedman, and Young, 2010). Following this, I also struggled with the same questions many master's degree graduates face, as follows: Do I continue on with a doctoral degree? Can I afford it? What kind of job will I get?

As I was considering various graduate schools (along with the hefty price tags), Friedman suggested Saybrook University, since we could continue our work together there with him as my dissertation chair. I was thrilled, applied, and was accepted. A few months later I started at Saybrook. But this was just the start of our work together. Although Friedman, as an Emeritus Professor, does not teach any classes at Saybrook, we kept in continual contact in regards to various other professional projects we had going on (we always have a *gazillion*), as I progressed through Saybrook. Our collaborations now includes five published works, with at least five or six other projects and/or studies that are in the works (to include my dissertation – sorry Harris, I'll get started on that soon!).

In addition to publishing together, some of which were quite exciting studies (e.g., one on Muslim NDEs in Iran; Fracasso, Aleyasin, Friedman, and Young, 2010), Friedman has also gone way over and above to mentor me in several other ways. For example, he consistently sends over any new research within the field of NDEs and energy medicine (i.e., these fields are common interests we both share and have published about). Likewise, he also referred me for several job opportunities, and has helped edit my cover letters and write letters of recommendation for me, and he has referred information about grant opportunities relevant to our research. Additionally, he has encouraged me to apply for opportunities to present at professional conferences, has nominated me for several awards, and essentially has gone out of his way to enhance my career opportunities. In fact, I previously wrote about my mentorship with Friedman, and also Stanley Krippner in an

article published by the American Psychological Association, Division 32 Newsletter (Fracasso, 2010).

As far as what I have learned academically from Friedman, this paper is much too short to address that. But I will say Friedman has very high expectations of his students, and is not shy with his little red marker when delivering feedback. In fact, the first time I received one of my papers back from him I nearly had a heart-attack. However, now, I highly regard and cherish his feedback, as I usually drag him into all of my professional projects because not only do I enjoy working with him, but he is also my esteemed editor and colleague. To share a recent funny story on his editing, I had prepared a large paper on NDEs that we were co-authoring, which initially consisted of three main sections. Three sections that I thought were all vital! When I received his edited draft, my heart dropped for a second when I read his words, "don't panic, but I cut out part two." I chuckle as I write this now, but at the time I felt like someone had cut the head off of my doll and threw it in the toilet (and, in fact I even told him that at the time, as we also share a great sense of humor together)! To make a long story short, that paper turned out wonderfully, and actually recently was published with *NeuroQuantology* (Fracasso and Friedman, 2011 -- but, sorry readers, I guess you will never know what was in part two that disappeared).

Other capacities in which Friedman has helped me grow include being introduced to the editorial world, as I now serve as an Associate Managing Editor with the *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, which was arranged by Friedman, who is past Editor and now serves in the honorific role as its Senior Editor. Additionally, we both serve on the editorial board here at *NeuroQuantology*, and continue to do fun projects together, such as writing this paper (in addition to preparing to put together Volume Nine of a series, *Advances in Parapsychology*, with Stanley Krippner).

In addition to these many academic projects, Friedman has also served as a mentor in other capacities, such as in the business of operating with publishers, as well

as with academic politics, in which we have engaged in some significant shared battles. Friedman likes to emphasize that, if one is going to research unusual phenomena such as NDEs, one needs to take extra caution in approaching these topics from a balanced and scientific approach, while giving all research -- pro and con -- thorough analysis. In conclusion, I could go on about the number of things this outstanding mentor has done to help train and prepare me in the field as an upcoming scholar, but this paper is not long enough to accommodate that. But, enough about me, as we will next see what Friedman himself has to say, followed by a few words from two of his colleagues.

### **Harris Friedman's Personal Statement about his Research and Mentoring Contributions**

My parents were first generation Americans from European Jewry. They were upwardly mobile economically, and played a balancing act between adhering to traditions and assimilating into their new culture, particularly in regard to religion. They seemed to mostly want to just get by in the American culture, and always seemed awkwardly outside of the mainstream, even within the assimilating Jewish community of which they were part. Likewise, I grew up feeling as a cultural outsider (e.g., in my hometown of pre-racial integration Miami, Jews were not allowed in many hotels and restaurants), the compensation for which was to be able to see social and cultural dynamics that others often seemed to miss. My parents did not want me to have close friends who were non-Jewish and, of course, they wanted me to be a doctor, but not what they saw as a "real" doctor, but a dentist--perhaps reflecting that their expectations were not overly high for me or for themselves, as they just wanted to slide by. Interestingly, I exceeded their modest expectations by becoming less real of a doctor than even a dentist, namely by becoming a psychologist. In my early school years, I puzzled about my parents' beliefs, especially their approach to religion in which they rigorously adhered to certain religious rituals (e.g., keeping kosher) while simultaneously seeming to disparage any possible deeper meaning of these rituals, basically wanting to conform externally but

not buy-in internally. This created a major split in me, against which I rebelled. In kindergarten, I was identified as a troublemaker, as I blatantly rejected conformity even then--and probably would have been labeled as oppositional-defiant using today's psychobabble. Luckily I went to a university-affiliated public grade school that allowed me to literally come and go as I pleased, so I spent most of my time in the school's library doing independent reading. With this freedom, there was little to rebel against, and I acquired a lot of interesting academic skills, such as teaching myself a system of mathematics developed by Tractenberg (1960) while he was in a concentration camp. This arithmetic skill learned while I was a preteen allowed me to mentally perform complex mathematics with apparent ease, such as computing cube roots of large numbers near instantly. I also became a fan of science fiction, especially the writing of Isaac Asimov, which fueled my imagination, as well as I became fascinated with many esoteric fields, like paleontology (especially the diversity of dinosaurs) and its evolutionary implications. And I became fascinated with how we know what we know, especially measurement issues. For a grade school science fair, I built a balance scale and explored variance in the measurements of objects' weights, realizing then that even such a simple procedure as weighing common objects did not yield consistent results, leaving me to ponder statistical concepts such as error variances, even though I did not have the terminology to label this as such.

At onset of adolescence, I was required to go through the Jewish Bar Mitzvah rite of passage and here I had an opportunity to formally converse, or better challenge, the temple's rabbi, whose wisdom I found sorely lacking, as he merely offered unsatisfying platitudes to my deep questions. After the ceremony, I renounced Judaism as unsatisfying and became intellectually fascinated by religious questions. I started reading widely about various faiths and also about cultures. In middle and high school, I continued to rebel against authority by rejecting what many considered to be commonsense, but which often I found nonsensical. I recollect arguing against the dictum that one cannot divide by zero with

my honors advanced algebra teacher—and almost got ejected from his class for sticking to my position that zero would go into any number an infinity of times. My academic forte was to blow-off doing all homework and barely pay attention to what was being taught in classes, as I usually found this incredibly boring and felt I had better things to do—even in so-called honors classes, which most of mine were. Still I somehow managed to frequently get the highest possible grades on exams, which often aggravated teachers who felt rightfully that I was doubly-disrespectful: for not having done the work and for succeeding so well in the end, something I relished as a counter-status. However, I did enjoy science fairs. For one of my high school science fairs, I became interested in psychological measurement. I administered to a small snowball sample a simple measure of IQ (the Army Alpha Scale, which I found in an old college psychology textbook I had read) in tandem with a belief scale I created, based on principles gleaned from Hubbard's (1950) classic, *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*, which remains popular among Scientologists today. I hypothesized that there would be a relationship between intelligence and belief in these Scientology principles, as I speculated that only those who were really naïve would actually believe that stuff, which is the pattern I found by graphing the results (I did not yet know about statistical analyses). Thus my first psychological study used measures and was in the transpersonal psychology field, broadly speaking, although I had no name at that time for what I had done—and this presaged the later work that defines my major academic contribution.

In high school, although I did not perform all that well in terms of grades, I scored what I was told was the highest in the state of Florida on the standardized science talent search measure (at that time, it was the Westinghouse Talent Search). Consequently, I was invited to do original research at the University of Miami in microbiology, which I enjoyed and taught me respect for the meticulous details of science. I also was a National Merit Finalist, but I hated high school and was able to get accepted at Emory through early admissions, skipping my senior year of high school with

the intention of fast-tracking to become a physician.

Once at Emory, however, I had a number of epiphanies, namely related to the fact that this was in the mid-1960s and Atlanta was the heart of the burgeoning civil rights movement, while the Viet Nam War was spiraling along with the psychedelic revolution. Spending time in boring science labs was the last thing I wanted to do as a young man, so I dumped pre-med aspirations and focused on civil rights and anti-war demonstrations, as well as exploring psychedelia. In fact, I wanted to quit school, as learning was something I felt best accomplished when not hindered by academic classes and their mundane requirements. However, the draft would have sent me to a war I despised, as I loved Ho Chi Minh's poetry and tai chi, so I stayed in school just to keep my student deferment. I decided that, since I needed to stay in school for extrinsic reasons, I just as well should take only courses I enjoyed, so I concentrated on literature, which I read with gusto, as well as took solid doses of philosophy and religion courses. I also met a fascinating lady at an anti-war demonstration who was taking some philosophy courses with me. I remember one course on existentialism for which I wrote a tortuously convoluted paper on Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, which reflected the ponderous style of that tome, and I deconstructed it into the absurdity and angst from which it suffered, arguing that its approach showed the inevitable futility of taking reasoning to its final implications, namely solipsism and despair. Essentially I argued for abandoning philosophy for an experiential transpersonal perspective, although I still did not yet have that terminology, and I received a much misunderstood B+ from a not so tolerant philosophy professor who obviously enjoyed the masochism in Sartre's magnum opus. Meanwhile this lady in my class wrote a short play modeled on Sartre's *No Exit* and aced the same course, infuriating me. She was a philosophy major, very artistically talented and quite intuitive, which contrasted to my stark analytic penchants and pointed to where I wanted to develop, so soon we paired-up and she became my wife while we were both still undergraduates (and

we remain together more than 40 years later). In my usual academic style, I took extra courses beyond the required each term as an undergraduate at Emory, typically getting As in classes I enjoyed, but also usually getting at least a few Cs and Ds for courses I blew-off. I did not care at all, as I was there to learn and enjoy, while biding my time avoiding the draft. I also worked a bunch of part-time jobs to support myself and my wife, as I had become alienated from my parents for marrying a non-Jewish lady and lost their financial support. My favorite undergraduate course was on Oriental religions with Thomas Altizer, who was quite famous at the time for his role in the so-called *Death of God Movement*. Although I was only a junior, he also let me take his graduate religion seminar on mysticism later that year, which I thoroughly enjoyed—and I began to see the limits of reason more clearly, as well as ways to transcend reasoning. I also took an undergraduate honors humanities sequence from David Hesla, which was the best psychology course I ever took, although it was not labeled as psychology per se. We read many of the classic psychological thinkers, like Freud and Jung, as well as many from other disciplines, discussing a new book each week for an entire year in a small seminar setting—now this was education at its finest. Both Hesla and Altizer were students from University of Chicago and influenced by Mircea Eliade, and I was beginning to find my academic niche. I was about to graduate in 3 years with a major in English, but I needed to keep my draft deferment, so my wife and I applied to the Peace Corps, which would have given me the continued deferment. She was accepted, but I was not (i.e., the big Afro-Israeli hairdo I sported probably pegged me as potential trouble for the state department, as well as I am terrible at the auditory learning of languages—and had to take a test of my ability to learn Mongolian quickly, which I am sure confirmed my lack of talent in this area). So we applied to teach in a rural Indian reservation with the Teacher's Corps, also a deferred position, and were both accepted. However, just as I was ready to graduate with an English major, the program accepting us lost its funding and I was about to head directly to Viet Nam without stopping at go. But I was entitled to

4-years as an undergraduate with a deferment, so I could stay another year at Emory, but only if I changed my major, as I had completed all the required coursework in three years. I looked frantically at all the majors other than English that I found remotely palatable, but each had structured multi-year course sequences that required prerequisites, so I could not possibly finish any interesting new major within the additional one-year I had allotted to use, except for just one.

Psychology required only 9 courses, in no particular sequence after the introductory one that I had already taken, so I emerged as a psychology major. I loved reading some psychology books, especially the classics, but I had only taken 2 psychology courses and hated them both, with their large lecture classes emphasizing rat studies and proffering demeaning characterizations of people. In fact, I once had an argument with the psychoanalytic-oriented psychology professor of one of these courses, who had demeaned all anti-war protestors as simply “rebellious against father.” Of course I was rebellious against father, but also against so much more. I thought of psychology as naïve and superficial. I decided to do the psychology major anyway, by taking 7 more psychology courses in what was a 4<sup>th</sup> or extended senior year to avoid the draft. But there was one major glitch, namely all psychology majors had to take an experimental course that required killing animals. After taking lot of psychedelics, which I was doing regularly as a meditation enhancement, I was a firm vegetarian and anti-vivisectionist, so I could not condone taking that experimental course. I had to appeal for an exemption to the then Chair of the Emory Psychology Department in an attempt to avoid that course. He was known at that time as the guy who had killed more dogs than anyone alive, as he was a Pavlovian researcher who procured unwanted stray dogs to condition and later dissect in search for observable neurobiological changes due to conditioning. Everyone in the psychology department seemed to fear his acerbic wit, but he was the gatekeeper. It was quite a debate between him and me, but somehow I was allowed to proceed with the experimental course by being exempted from the animal-sacrifice

requirements for which I substituted some human memory studies that hurt no one. I finished the psychology major in 1969 at 20 years old and actually had some good experiences (e.g., engaging as a research assistant with D. J. Kiesler, a colleague of Carl Rogers, on experiential psychotherapy studies), but I still found mainstream psychology boring. So I decided to go on to graduate school, as I was too out of the cultural mainstream to work at most employment and needed to maintain my draft exemption. But I was not interested in continuing to study psychology per se, so I decided sociology offered a better bet. Both my wife and I received fellowships to study sociology at Emory and off we went; actually I had only had one undergraduate sociology course, but the Chair of the Emory Psychology Department, who apparently had somehow grown to respect me, perhaps because few had challenged him, actually pulled the strings to get me admitted with full funding. And I loved sociology, as well as anthropology that was housed in the same department, but at that time no one was getting hired with a sociology doctorate. My wife dropped out to have our second child (she later finished her master's degree at Emory from a distance, while I was teaching). I finished my master's thesis in sociology by validating measures of love, focusing on systems theory that emphasized the Western concept of the isolated individual is a fiction, as selves are inextricably embedded within relationships, such as experienced during love. I was developing and better articulating a thoroughly transpersonal perspective, but still had not discovered the term.

Meanwhile I heard about a radical new psychology doctoral program starting at a nearby school, Georgia State University, and after getting my master's at elitist suburban Emory in 1971 in sociology, I defected to the more plebian state school downtown in Atlanta's urban heart, mainly because I thought I could make a living better as a psychologist. GSU gave me a lot of intellectual freedom, as it was filled with many rebellious faculty, whom one of my more esteemed Emory psychology mentors called a herd of white elephants. I discovered transpersonal psychology at GSU, which some of the faculty used to describe

their perspectives, and I saw this as a way of putting together my various interests in science and philosophy/religion, as well as in socio-cultural studies, with something practical by relating it to psychology. The courses I took at GSU were interesting, sometimes even bizarre, like *graduate kindergarten* in which all the clinical psychology students had to draw pictures with their non-dominant hands and learn to give basic massages. As open as it was, the fact that I was taking LSD most weekends while engaging in deep meditation on my own, had some folks concerned about my competence to be a clinical psychologist. I also refused to perform individual psychotherapy and insisted only in working with encounter and personal growth groups, as I thought individual psychotherapy had inherently corrupt power dynamics (and thought I was too *out-there* to take on that role, while still in my mid-20s and so anti-authoritarian). I did relent to work with one individual client, just to get through the clinical program, and I am sure it was a poor decision for my one client, as I was struggling with my own big questions, but group work was exciting for me--and I found an approach to psychology I loved. I decided to specialize in transpersonal psychology (and was the first person, to my knowledge, to graduate from an accredited doctoral program with this specialization), as well as to minor in body awareness (reflecting my interests in martial arts and somatic therapies), both within an APA-accredited clinical psychology program at GSU. I then decided I just had to do a dissertation on transpersonal psychology, but I was told without reservation that it had to be empirically sound to pass, as most of this transpersonal stuff was non-empirical and there was little research tradition on which to build. This posed a big problem, as I could not find any suitable transpersonal measures to use in research that interested me, so I decided to build my own. My major professor, Earl Brown, discouraged me, stating that was too much for a dissertation, as it had never been successfully done before, but I decided that, if this doctoral degree was to have meaning for me, I had to follow my passion. I was also told that, if I failed to find any convincing pattern in the transpersonal area, I would not graduate—a

higher standard being expected of me than of other students, since I was stubbornly going off the beaten path. I left GSU as all-but-dissertation (ABD) to teach at a small college and finish my dissertation. This work dragged on for 4 years, as nothing I did to measure anything in the transpersonal domain made any empirical sense. While teaching and struggling with finishing the dissertation, in my spare time I built a multi-million dollar consulting company as a way of alleviating my dissertation anxiety, and I found this applied work creative and satisfying. I also teamed up with another instructor at this college, Jerry Glover, who was also an ABD (but in anthropology), and we did a lot of cross-cultural work together, such as through a grant to study tourism in the Bahamas (it was tough work, but someone had to do it). My major professor finally wrote me a note stating, "I am about to retire and, if you do not finish soon, no one else will support your strange research in transpersonal psychology; also, I am getting old and could die at any time, so hurry up" (paraphrased from memory). I was about to give up, and even had a letter drafted to Earl stating I was quitting to just focus on my consulting work, but then a burst of energy came from somewhere and patterns emerged. I had my measure, which I constructed and validated using all the then available psychometric bells and whistles. I note that this measure was my attempt to take insights gleaned from my meditations and put them into a scientific framework that could be empirically studied—a view of self-concept as expanded in which the arbitrary distinctions people commonly make between their self and the world could be measured on a space-time grid. After constructing and validating this measure, I published it in the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* (JTP; Friedman, 1983) and went on to other things, as I felt that someone else would have to take it further, because I had done my pioneering part in simply making the blessed thing work. And I still consider this measure, and its underlying conceptualization, my major contribution to scholarship.

Several years passed and I almost forgot about my interest in this measure, until one day I happened to look at a JTP issue and found that someone had used my

measure in replicating and extending my research. I located this person, a young graduate student, and asked why he had selected my measure to explore. His response was poignant: "I thought your measure was crap and I wanted to debunk it." Yet he found the same patterns I had, which was doubly sweet, as he had started as my critic and a skeptic! I contacted Earl, whose response was, "You're vindicated." Surprisingly I found out then that many professors at GSU did not want to award the doctorate to me, as they thought I had fabricated my data, as well as possibly was crazy. Simply stated, my findings looked too good to be credible in the eyes of those who thought transpersonal psychology could not be scientific, not to mention that I was an enigma to many in the department. Luckily, Earl was the Chair of the GSU Psychology Department and backed me, so I got through with the doctorate. Although Earl never gave me a lot of specific guidance as a mentor, because I conducted my work alone, he was an excellent voice of reason, encouraging and supporting me. And, incidentally, the young graduate student replicating my work is Douglas MacDonald, who became my long-term colleague in many future transpersonal research projects and makes a statement next in this paper.

I left my first college teaching post and began working full-time as an applied psychologist post-PhD, building a large private practice in clinical psychology (with multiple offices and many employees), as well as continuing my consulting endeavors. I also often worked internationally with my colleague Jerry, who also had finished his doctorate and became a professor of social change at another school. Jerry is a little older than me and had many applied experiences with businesses and other organizations that enabled exciting cross-cultural experiences to happen for both of us, so he also has served as my mentor, as well as colleague, over many years. Together we have written a number of important papers on social change (e.g., Glover, Friedman, and Jones, 2002), and this area is a secondary specialization for me, while transpersonal psychology remains by primary love.

My former aversion to doing individual psychotherapy abated as I



matured, so I actually grew to love being a psychotherapist, and I even began to supervise and train other psychotherapists, many of whom I mentored. Over the years, I have supervised over a dozen doctoral clinical and counseling psychologists who have obtained licensure, as well as probably double that number of master's level mental health counselors. I also built many applied programs as a social activist, such as mental health overlays for school systems to serve extremely disturbed kids no one seemed to want to help. And I decided to resume active interest in mind-body-spirit work and pursued the practice of aikido, which I had earlier studied while in graduate school (I now hold the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree black-belt in this nonviolent martial art), as well as became a bioenergetic therapist (later writing and editing books with Alexander Lowen, that therapy's founder; e.g., Lowen, 2005).

After Doug's replication of my measure a few years after I graduated with the doctorate, I also decided to resume *sciencing*, but primarily continued my applied work until age 50. At that point, however, I decided to return full-time to academia, accepting the role as Academic Dean at Saybrook University and rededicated my scholarly efforts. The reason Saybrook hired me was not for my strong academic background, but rather for my prowess as a consultant and grant-writer, as I was known as someone who could get things done (and had received over 100 grants for all sorts of applied projects). My intent in going to Saybrook was to inculcate some sorely needed reforms at this school, which was filled with talented students and faculty but also languished from all sorts of vexing problems. I only lasted one-year as Academic Dean at Saybrook, and then retreated to the executive faculty—and ultimately got asked to leave from the executive faculty, primarily because I continued to ask hard questions about the school's position on various topics—and met resistance to my efforts to change the school's culture. It is ironic that someone as iconoclastic and counter-cultural as I was could not fit in well with a school that prided itself on such attitudes. However, I remained to supervise a number of dissertation students at Saybrook and eventually eased out as a Professor Emeritus, remaining connected only enough to

complete my supervision of the few remaining doctoral students, Cheryl being my last (and who hopefully will finish there soon). Perhaps the most important connection I obtained through my affiliation with Saybrook has been related to Stanley Krippner, who I have come to see as an informal mentor. Our most recent book, *Debating Psychic Experiences* (Krippner and Friedman, 2010b), was a perfect opportunity to study how people can look at the same data from different vantages and draw totally divergent conclusions—and get so angry about their differences.

I also received an appointment as a Research Professor of Psychology at University of Florida in the early 2000s while transitioning from Saybrook, and from where I recently retired after a decade, although it remains my primary academic affiliation on a courtesy appointment basis. I have especially been pleased to be associated with its innovative Center for Spirituality and Health, where much good work has occurred. During my time in academia, I also continued to consult and conduct independent research, as well as teach—and I continue to supervise dissertation students at several schools from a distance.

My major academic accomplishment has focused on extending the boundaries of science in transpersonal psychology related to my early experiences as a *psychonaut*. Essentially from childhood on, I puzzled at how people often latch onto beliefs that make little sense, particularly related to religious issues, and I wanted (and still want) to examine these. In my own inner explorations, I often saw how easy it would have been for me to literally glom onto any number of closed belief systems, like becoming a Buddhist or taking similar dogmatic positions based on faith alone. Instead, probably because of being such an anti-authoritarian iconoclast imbued with a rebellious spirit, I continued to push the edge in trying to scientifically understand, and even measure, transpersonal constructs--doing what Alan Watts's frequently described as "the business of effing the ineffable" (a widely cited quote I personally heard during a lecture by Watts in Atlanta, circa 1972). Thinking back, that this built off my earlier high school science fair

project seems remarkable. I continue to write and/or co-author many papers on my measure of transpersonal self-concept based on my dissertation (e.g., Pappas and Friedman, 2007), as well as many papers focused on conceptual and empirical difficulties in this burgeoning area I helped pioneer (e.g., MacDonald and Friedman, 2002). In addition, I continue as an outsider to challenge authority, such as how people will elevate some religious traditions over others (e.g., Friedman, 2009) or elevate some research methods over others (e.g., qualitative vs. quantitative approaches; Friedman, 2008). I also am fascinated by cultural differences on all sorts of things, which has led to my secondary area of academic interest, namely social change (e.g., Friedman, Glover, and Avegalio, 2002), a field in which I have made some recognized contributions and still consult often. Last, I have begun to think of myself as an epistemologist and methodologist, tackling some fundamental questions at what I consider to be a deeper philosophical level (e.g., Friedman, 2003).

Also, I see myself as a person who is more political than academic, in the sense of Bismarck's famous quote defining politics as "the art of the possible," as I try to get things done for bettering the world, continuing a long history of my social and environmental activism. This stems directly from, and relates to, my transpersonal perspective. For example, in the transpersonal area I was able to take one of the few professional publications in the field, the *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, and become its editor while keeping it from financially going out of business and, subsequently, turning it over to another editor who is keeping it sustainable. Likewise, the *International Transpersonal Association* was also in danger of going out of existence, and I was able to assume its presidency and salvage it (Grof, Friedman, Lukoff, and Hartelius, 2008). I also particularly enjoy when things come to a full-circle, such as recently when my esoteric doctoral major in transpersonal psychology and my doctoral minor in body awareness resulted nearly 40 years later in my being asked to write definitive summaries of both of these areas for a widely-cited reference work (i.e., Hartelius and Friedman, 2010;

Friedman and Glazer, 2010). My activism has also been recognized (e.g., by receiving the 2003 Florida Psychological Association's annual award for "Outstanding Contributions in the Public Interest," and I was recently invited to assemble and edit a handbook on social justice), which has been a source of pleasure.

One of the foremost areas in which I enjoy the practical fruits of my efforts involves generativity through mentoring, both clinically and academically. Academically, I have enjoyed supervising a number of Saybrook dissertation students, as well as a number from other universities. I encourage my students to publish their research, in accord with Earl's, my GSU major professor, incessant harping, "the dissertation is not done until it is published," and I go out of my way to make this happen (e.g., contributions from my Saybrook students' dissertations are currently being collected for publication in a special issue of *The Humanistic Psychologist*). I also enjoy helping other scholar and professionals get their own footing. I see science as part of life, not just an isolated enclave, and a social endeavor in which there is responsibility to share with subsequent generations. What comes to be accepted within science depends on how it is nurtured and cultivated every bit as much as the worth of any findings themselves. As such, I have strived to balance research and theory with pragmatic concerns but, as I get older, I hope to increase my scholarly impact, while being less of an activist.

### **Comments from Douglas MacDonald**

As a requirement for completion of my undergraduate degree, I needed to do a thesis. I was approached by one of my professors and asked if I had an interest in doing a study examining the validity of a measure called the Self-Expansiveness Level Form (SELF). My professor, Dr. Neal Holland, and myself both had a strong interest in transpersonal psychology and when Neal came across the SELF, he thought it curious that someone developed a quantitative tool to assess a transpersonal construct. Transpersonal concepts, after all, are *supposed* to be inherently non-empirical and not accessible to conventional measurement strategies, or so has been the

perception of the so-called experts of transpersonal psychology since the subdiscipline came into existence in the late 1960s. And at least up to that point in time, most people seemed to have accepted this stance as there were no other measures of explicitly transpersonal concepts in the literature. After reading about the test in its only publication in the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* in 1983, I was pretty confident that the SELF was a misguided instrument and its creator, one Harris Friedman, a somewhat confused fellow who simply did not fully grasp the true nature and significance of transpersonal theory and experience.

So with the intent to demonstrating that the test was “crap,” I focused on examining its psychometric properties. This resulted in my not only using the SELF as the fodder for my undergraduate thesis, but also in my inclusion of the test in my MA thesis done two years later. As I looked at the data obtained from both studies, which I ultimately combined for the sake of ensuring a good sample size for statistical analyses, I was somewhat surprised to see that the instrument held up pretty well—it produced good reliability coefficients and manifested an internal structure consistent with that found by Harris. It even demonstrated reasonably good discriminant and convergent validity.

Figuring that such results might be of interest to transpersonal researchers, myself, Neal, and one of my graduate school colleagues completed a manuscript which was published in the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* (MacDonald, Tsagarakis, and Holland, 1994). Shortly after this paper appeared in print, I received a letter in the mail (this was prior to the convenience of email) from Harris. In this correspondence, he lauded me for completing an independent validation of his measure (he even expressed how his own dissertation chair proclaimed that my article vindicated him for doing a transpersonal dissertation), and he extended to me an offer of support to facilitate my ongoing studies in the area of measurement of transpersonal constructs.

His initial outreach to me led me to contact him and through the phone

conversations and written correspondences that followed, he and I came to share and appreciate each other’s view of science and the necessity of integrating scientific methods into transpersonal psychology. In short order, our relationship developed into active collaboration on a variety of projects and papers, including some concerning the further validation of the SELF (Friedman, MacDonald, and Kumar, 2004; MacDonald, Gagnier, and Friedman, 2000) and a variety of other articles reporting on assessment and measurement in humanistic and transpersonal psychologies (e.g., Friedman and MacDonald, 1997, 2002, 2006; MacDonald and Friedman, 2002; MacDonald, Friedman, and Kuentzel, 1999; MacDonald, Kuentzel, and Friedman, 1999; MacDonald *et al.*, 1995).

While I have never really viewed Harris as a mentor per se, he has become a dear and valued friend, benefactor, and collaborator who has been a constant source of personal and professional support for me up to the present time. His inquisitive mind, ever-evolving interests, and love for transpersonal psychology have served time and again as activating and energizing forces for me in my ongoing quest to help make the subdiscipline accessible to study with the methods of psychological science. More generally, his pioneering work with the SELF and his active involvement in all aspects of academic and research psychology, ranging from his extensive editorial work with multiple journals to his role in resurrecting the International Transpersonal Association to his extensive mentoring of students at several universities, make Harris a unique and significant individual in the history of transpersonal psychology. I sincerely hope that his contributions to the vitalization and legitimatization of the field garner him the recognition and respect he so rightly deserves.

### **Comments by Zeno Franco**

*From the Painted Porch to the University of the Clouds: Reflections on the Mentorship of Harris Friedman*

I met Harris through the Division 32 listserv, which I joined during the almost 5 year interregnum between completing a BA in psychology at the University of California, Riverside and returning to graduate school

in clinical psychology. After completing undergraduate research in psychology the question, “is this all that psychology is about?” kept popping into my mind – I knew I was searching for something that spoke to a deeper human experience than just p-values. I couldn’t bring myself to apply for graduate school immediately because I knew that I probably could not find what I was looking for in a traditional program. I started thinking about the books that had influenced me, Suzuki’s book *Zen Mind, Beginners Mind*, Ram Dass’s *Be Here Now*, a copy of *On Becoming a Person* by Carl Rogers – the popular literary detritus of the 1960s, the fertilizer – no, the compost, for those of us born in the 1970s. And somewhere during this period of academic doubt, I realized that Third Force psychology was still alive, somewhere – it just wasn’t anywhere to be found on a UC campus.

The email interactions that I had during this period with members of the Division 32 – Mike Arons, Mark Stern, Harris Friedman, Tom Greening (to name just a few) were literally sustaining. As students, we struggle to find the right models, the people after whom we wish to pattern our careers and to some extent, ourselves. I had found in undergrad that I didn’t like what I saw in many of the psychology research professors, few of them embodied the traits that I felt were important to be an effective teacher, let alone therapist. Yet, within Division 32 at that time, I also was disappointed that there wasn’t *more* of an emphasis on quantitative research and a commitment to keeping the humanistic and existential research up to date with the mainstream of what was occurring in APA as a whole.

Harris and I met in person at the Division 32 Hospitality suite events at APA in Washington, DC, 2005. I also watched him present a largely quantitative research summary in one of the APA tracks – and I thought: here is someone doing traditional research on a very non-traditional topic – bringing this discourse into the overall discussion in academic psychology. In effect, it felt like he was subtly challenging both establishments – the APA’s unwillingness to take humanistic and transpersonal psychology seriously, and what he and I both

perceive as a subtle, but important bias against quantitative approaches within Division 32.

One of the most memorable moments that further highlighted this divide (and what I’ve come to see as Harris’ important role – almost that of the counter-trickster within a division that is very much the trickster within APA) came during a mid-winter Division 32 meeting in 2006. In part because of my activity on the Division 32 Listserv and at the Div32 events at APA, I had been invited to be the student representative (ex-officio) to the Division 32 board. At this meeting an argument was happening over a change in the name (and thus the mission) of Division 32, with a proposal to call it the Society for Humanistic Psychology. While the majority felt that shifting in this direction was important, Harris argued quite emphatically that this change, at best, shifted us from focusing on our core academic missions to more of an outreach position with the general public – and at worst, it risked reinforcing the notion that Division 32 was a “fringy” element within APA that was more new-age than science. Despite significant efforts to convince him otherwise, my recollection is that Harris abstained from the final vote in quiet protest of this change in footing. Although the irreparable damage to the division that Harris had warned against has not happened, and, in fact the opposite has probably occurred in part as a result of opening the Division up more to the public, I was impressed with Harris’ continued commitment to the endeavor of science and insistence that deviation from it could further alienate our group from the mainstream of psychology.

As a result of personal exchanges with Harris and an intense discussion about the relative merits of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches between him, Mike Arons, myself and others, a paper began to take shape through the discussion on the Division 32 listserv. We worked on it in fits and starts during the last couple of years I was in graduate school. I was in the final stages of writing my dissertation when I got an email from the Division that Mike Arons had died. As a mentor to both of us, Mike’s death helped to

catalyze the final push to get this work published. Harris and I finalized the paper a few months later, and as far as I know this was the last academic publication that Mike co-authored (Franco, Friedman and Arons, 2008). This very open dialogue, the intense scholarly argument, and the deep feeling of camaraderie – that sense that we were *moving through life together* – even though we were at very different points in our careers was profoundly fulfilling for me, as it felt like a gap that I'd been searching to fill for years had finally been addressed.

But this is only the narrative of the development of relationships – the actual *process* of mentorship happens within this web of relationships. During graduate school, I had the opportunity to work with two very well respected, traditional psychologists. At times, the politics of authorship were not always fair (even if unintentionally so) or well planned. This stood in stark contrast to the conversations I had with Harris about authorship, in which – despite my contributing the least to the initial dialogue amongst the group discussing the relative merits of methodological approaches, he suggested that I edit and manage the preparation of the manuscript – in some sense in exchange for taking first author.

In this way, I felt that Harris was “apprenticing” me into the field in a way that was more equitable, and more deliberate than anything I'd seen up to that point. Being able to see the contrast in approaches helped me to start thinking relatively early on in my graduate career about issues of authorship, and how I wanted to handle authorship in a series of other projects and search for resources to help balance these conversations in other contexts (see e.g., Domjan, 2008). As a result, I've been much more conscious about the ensuring appropriate authorship for students working with me, working to ensure that review processes that I am supervising include underrepresented groups – not just to improve the review process, but also to make certain that individuals from these groups benefit at a personal level from the “inside” experience these opportunities bring.

During the first year of Post Doc, I was struggling to prioritize my research

projects, somewhat disheartened about a collaboration with a senior psychologist that had not yet yielded the first author paper I had hoped for, and needed help just sorting through some of the pragmatic aspects of transitioning into the role of a career scholar. Harris and I began communicating again actively over email, and exploring possible alternative avenues for future research. An important part of this process was that much of my dissertation work had been done in areas that were not directly related to clinical, humanistic, or existential psychology – although the work was grounded in ideas drawn from these traditions. Because I was working in a very multidisciplinary space, I did not feel I was particularly able to relate my research to the activities of my department, nor was I able to communicate much about psychology with the disaster and information technology researchers I was collaborating with. The combination of the solitude of the dissertation process and the disciplinary displacement that can accompany transdisciplinary work left me feeling quite isolated. Not very many people are interested in anyone's dissertation, but I felt comfortable summarizing my work to Harris over email:

Hey Harris,

This is about a 10 page summary of my dissertation that we submitted to an international conference on information science and emergency management this past spring. It took best conference paper (see: [link]) - not so much for the method, which was fairly trivial, but I think for the level of multidisciplinary representation and the shared perspective that results - thus transcending the silos that you mention. In particular the acknowledgments show that we made a substantive effort to get feedback (and in my case mentorship) from a wide range of experts as part of the process. Looking forward to our next steps Harris, even if it takes a while for us to come around to it.

And his response:

Thanks for sharing this fascinating glimpse of your dissertation. I had no idea you were working in this area, which I would call more sociological than psychological (note, I consider myself to be in both fields). I have done a lot of

similar work on “knowledge diffusion” and decision-making, particularly in cross-cultural organizations, e.g., looking at organizational factors (such as “strong organizational culture,” usually defined as folks who share a similar worldview, and more complexly diverse organizational multi-cultures) in relationship to adaptive leadership. This is far afield from the humanistic literature in which I knew you and I shared interests, but now I see our interests are more broadly shared...

What was powerful for me about our exchange at this stage is that it allowed me the freedom to express the difficulty of the dissertation process, the pride I felt about the project in a protected environment where I knew I would be supported, and most importantly, Harris was able to acknowledge and transcend the fact that this work wasn't easily linked to humanistic psychology or my primary areas of training. Moreover, he was able to start contextualizing this work more broadly, look for connections to his own work, offer suggestions, and concrete linkages to other researchers. In effect, this discussion was part of the reflexive process of bringing the work full circle, reintegrating it into a psychology framework, but with a much wider view of what our discipline is or can be.

While some of the things we discussed doing together at this stage didn't work out because of time constraints, the set of email conversations and telephone contacts with Harris at the beginning of the Post Doc also helped me to refocus my efforts on the project with the senior psychologist mentioned earlier. The encouragement and troubleshooting were important, and the sense that Harris was willing to read the paper, even though he was not involved and didn't stand to personally benefit, renewed my sense that it was possible to bring the project to a successful completion. Instead of dreading contacts with journal editors, I became much more systematic about my contact with them, and the paper was accepted by the *Review of General Psychology* a few months later – a piece that I am hopeful will subtly challenge several decades of thinking on altruism, and which includes a direct critique of positive psychology and reaffirms the importance of existential psychology in a journal read

widely outside of the Division 32 community (Franco, Blau, and Zimbardo, 2011). Ultimately Harris never had to review and comment on the paper – but I knew that he had helped other junior researchers in similar situations, and the assurance that he would review it if push-came-to-shove was one of the keys to getting back in the ring. Interestingly, this effort was another important way for me to wrap my work back to my primary interests in psychology – which served me well during job talks.

As with all good mentorship relationships, eventually, the dynamics and the roles begin to change. As I have aged, and as my tenure as a member of Division 32 extends to a decade or more, I've become more aware of the past disagreements, political infighting, and professional differences between the senior members of the field. I have watched Harris advance a specific agenda that largely I agree with, but have become more aware of his difficulty in expressing these ideas without “fighting dirty” by dragging old academic injuries into the discussion. One of the reasons I feel a deep affinity for Harris is that I can present this to him directly, even bluntly and in public at times, without fear that it will adversely impact our working relationship – I've found that this is a very rare quality, and it is something that I would not attempt with most people. Moreover, as my own thoughts about the role of the general public in the endeavor of science have changed, I found that we have very different priorities and opinions about some issues that I assumed we would agree on. Again, his deep commitment to the *ritual* of adversarial academic discourse, rather than its use to personally diminish others continues to sharpen our thinking as scholars and time and again has *deepened* our personal and mentoring relationship (see e.g., Tannen, 2002).

Beyond all of this, my experience of Division 32, of which Harris has been one of the central figures, is that these communications and mentorship *outside of my department, over a period of years*, has been one of the pillars my own personal “university of the mind” or what I like to call an instance of the “metaversity” (see: [www.metaversityproject.org](http://www.metaversityproject.org)). For me,

working within a department of clinical psychology using a modified, but largely Boulder model approach, was just one part of the puzzle. I quickly realized as a graduate student that real academic reach (i.e., being stretched) would come through connections to scholars at a wide variety of institutions, bringing together very different perspectives and expertise. While my advisors were steeped in the traditional “uni”-versity model, working out of one lab, my dissertation brought together several labs across the US, industry, and my truest academic home is *literally* in the cloud (e.g., the idea of the “science hostel” a term coined by the particle physicist Garret Lisi; [www.sciencehostel.org](http://www.sciencehostel.org)). While the trappings of this are new and technologically driven, Harris’ work, his wide ranging interest in multiple disciplines, and somewhat entrepreneurial approach to research were and remain guides for me. But most importantly his ability to teach through *dialogue*, the oldest and truest form of pedagogy, remains a vital bridge to the Stoa Poikile in the digital age.

### **Conclusion (written by Harris Friedman)**

Perhaps it takes a rebellious and even contrarian spirit to furrow new ground in science. An individual who is more agreeable, content to simply further the status quo, is not necessarily equipped to challenge prevailing paradigms or tenacious enough to deal with the inevitable resistance to new ideas. An interesting confluence of my own early background and later experiences has led to my modest contribution of being perhaps the first to devise an explicitly transpersonal measure, which has shown scientific worth and opened an avenue for some exciting research. This type of accomplishment is never solely from an individual, of course, and I have been enriched by many “chance” (or predetermined?) opportunities along my life path. These were both at the micro-level,

such as by encountering influential people and ideas, and at the macro-level, such as by being born in a certain cultural context and later coming of age during a time of great social change. I am still pursuing the path of a transpersonal scientist, and few yet have recognized it as having value. My contributions have landed in an interesting limbo, namely between those who experientially appreciate the transpersonal but who tend to reject the worth of science for furthering it on the one hand, while on the other hand are more conventional scientists who reject the worth of the transpersonal and are often resistant to even scientific evidence supporting it. I am interested in the proverbial third hand, developing the interstices between these two oppositional stances. The prefix *trans* in transpersonal means both *beyond* the personal, beckoning toward transcendence, and also *across* the personal, as a bridge between perhaps the most important experiences of which people are capable and their intellectual ability to make sense of them, especially in ways that help us adapt and flourish as humans. I enjoy having helped to build one such bridge and look forward to further bridging, while I also enjoy the fortune of having been embodied during many transpersonal experiences that inspired my scientific efforts, which essentially has been diligent, and sometimes painfully sacrificial, work towards empirically effing the ineffable for bringing to be a vision of the larger good. Ultimately, science is a social activity that involves a burgeoning consensus based on empiricism, not authority, and one of the best ways to contribute to this process is by recognizing preceding mentors, and mentoring others embarking on a similar life path, all of whom bridge across each other. And perhaps from a transpersonal perspective of this sense of the term *trans* as an interpersonal bridge, we all are mentoring each other in some profound ways through all of our actions, whether we recognize it or not.

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