

**Shrink Rap Radio #170, August 29, 2008, From Dreambody to Worldwork
David Van Nuys, Ph.D., interviews Drs. Arnold and Amy Mindell**
(Transcribed from www.ShrinkRapRadio by Susan Argyelan)

Excerpt:

Amy Mindell: *Worldwork is the name of our large group work in conflict resolution.*

Arny Mindell: *And Worldwork is not just about, then, a small group, but yes, it does have an organizational part that works with small and large people sitting around a desk or in an organizational setting. Now, it was developed, Dave, in order to approach large groups of people who are in, who are irritated, upset, angry or even fighting one another – even dangerously fighting one another. Psychology should be about dealing with people where they're at, whether they're in a coma or they're in an almost murderous situation. So that's how Worldwork began.*

Dr. Dave: How *do* you deal with large groups of people who are upset, angry, or even dangerously fighting one another, or bring someone out of a coma? These and other questions will be addressed by my guests. Dr. Arnold Mindell is a well-known author, Jungian training analyst, workshop leader, and originator of Worldwork. His wife, Dr. Amy Mindell, is an author in her own right, and the two work very closely together. To learn more about this amazing couple, go to our show notes on www.ShrinkRapRadio.com. Now, here's the interview.

Dr. Dave: Drs. Amy and Arny Mindell, welcome to Shrink Rap Radio.

Arny Mindell: Thanks for inviting us!

Amy Mindell: Thank you. Thank you for having us.

Dr. Dave: It's my pleasure. As you probably know, I've previously interviewed two of your associates, Dr. Julia Diamond, on #129, for any of the listeners that might be interested. I interviewed her on Process Work, and then Dr. Max Schupbach, on Worldwork in episode #133. And I got tantalizing hints from each of them, and I'm still trying to wrap my mind around these huge concepts. And so I thought, I'd better go upstream and get the info straight from the horse's mouth, if you'll pardon the mixed metaphor. (laughs)

Arny and Amy Mindell: (laugh)

Arny Mindell: That makes me want to gallop like a horse.

Dr. Dave: Good, good! So if you don't mind, I'd like to start out by having you step us through your very interesting biographies. And Arny, I'll start with you. I

believe you were doing graduate work in physics at MIT, and then somehow ended up a Jungian training analyst. Can you kind of take us through that?

Arny Mindell: Well, Dave, I was studying at MIT. I studied applied physics at MIT, and then I was always interested in psychology. And so I was interested in going back to Zurich, where I had spent my junior year in college. And while I was in college, in undergraduate school, I had bumped into the Jungians over there, and they sort of interested me. So while I was finishing my Master's at MIT – how can I get it, how can I get connected to a research institute there, a Ph.D. institute there at the ETH (that's an MIT in Switzerland). And so I went over there, and while I was there, I started shifting; I began Jungian analysis. And then I became a Jungian analyst, and I did my Ph.D. then in psychology. And then I rolled into Jungian psychology, and then I went further – but I don't want to go too fast. Am I going at the right pace for you?

Dr. Dave: Oh, yeah, this is a great pace. And so you got your Ph.D., actually, after you were an analyst?

Arny Mindell: That's right. I became a Jungian analyst, and at the same time, as I graduated as a Jungian analyst in 1970, I got my Ph.D. in psychology, and I went on working as a Jungian analyst – as a training analyst, then, about five years later. And while I was working as a training analyst, I guess part of my biography – really, a big part of it – begins at that time. I began Process Work.

Dr. Dave: Okay. Well, you know, I'm hoping that in some alternate universe, I'm leading your life... (laughs) Because I started out with a technological set of interests, accepted into university in an electrical engineering program. And then I switched out and ended up going into psychology. I became fairly enamored with Jungian psychology, but never went down that path to get the “black belt” in Jungian analysis...

Arny Mindell: Right. Well, that's very interesting. I mean, I thought physics is interesting, Dave. It's wonderful; I still love it, but believe it or not, even though the physicist in me studies the universe and nature, and what makes nature tick – how does it work, the mind of God, so to speak? Einstein called intelligence behind nature “the mind of God.” Although that still fascinates me, people were even more complicated and more challenging!

Dr. Dave: Oh, yes.

Arny Mindell: And the people were (inaudible) psychology, spiritual traditions and things like that, they had less coherence, less understanding, less... I mean, if you work with a person, then you work with this psychology or that psychology. Psychology was too split up for me into parts. So I thought, this is interesting. Let me get into one of these psychologies, and let me see where I can go from there.

Dr. Dave: Ah, the pieces are beginning to fall into place for me here a little bit. I think I understand something about you here. (laughs) It seems like the physicist in you – I’m thinking of Einstein, who worked to try to get a grand universal theory, you know...

Arny Mindell: That’s right.

Dr. Dave: And it seems like you’re sort of moving in that direction for psychology. You know, starting off with Dreambody work and moving into larger and larger units of study and practice.

Arny Mindell: Right.

Dr. Dave: Seems like (laughs) you’re...

Arny Mindell: That’s just right! Thank you, David. That’s just exactly right. I mean, my first session as an analysand – as a client in Jungian psychology – I went to Marie-Louise von Franz; she was my analyst...

Dr. Dave: Oh, wow.

Arny Mindell: I was one of her favorite students. And I said to her, “I have some weird feelings! I’m only 21, but I need a lot of help.” And she said to me, “Well, let’s look and see what you dreamed last night.” And I said to her, “Marie-Louise. Why are you asking me about last night? Can’t you see what you call the unconscious in me right now?”

Dr. Dave: Mmm...

Arny Mindell: And she said, “Well, Arny, to tell you the truth, we don’t yet know how to do that, and maybe that’s part of your story, that you’ll find that out.” So that was a very big question for me: How do you follow this damned unconscious thing? How is it here right now in the moment? Why do I have to wait ‘til I go to sleep at night? So then I began to try to unfold how the unconscious process...

Dr. Dave: Ah... So that really foreshadowed your work. That really...

Arny Mindell: It was all there. Of course.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. You know, they taught, they say the first dream sort of lays it all out, but for you, it wasn’t the dream. It was that sort of intuitive reach for what was needed.

Arny Mindell: That’s right. We do say, still, the first dream is the big thing, and a lot of process people here now are saying – I say, I should speak for myself here – it’s in

the first 30 or 40 seconds that you see somebody, that you can see the parts of the next 20 or 30 years at least.

Dr. Dave: Wow. Well, Amy, tell us a bit about your background and how you two came to hook up.

Arny Mindell: That was a good one.

Amy Mindell: Yeah, that was very good.

Arny Mindell: Mm-hmm...

Amy Mindell: I was in undergraduate school at Antioch College in Ohio...

Dr. Dave: Oh, yes.

Amy Mindell: ...and I was majoring in dance and theater. And I wasn't sure what I wanted to go into, but I loved the arts. And I had a teacher at the time whose name was Ben Thompson. He was an education teacher. He was fabulous, and he used to talk a lot about Arny. And he told me what he was doing, and he knew what I was interested in. He said, "Gee, why don't you go to Zurich and check out what Arny's doing." And it turned out that Ben was also one of Arny's teachers at – where was it? At Union Institute, I believe.

Arny Mindell: Mm-hmm...

Amy Mindell: So he knew both of us and thought I would really like what Arny was doing and should go find him.

Arny Mindell: He told me to take a look at *her*.

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Amy Mindell: So that was good. (laughs)

Dr. Dave: I've seen her picture. I could see why you would. (laughs)

Amy Mindell: Oh, that's so sweet! Thank you! And...now I forgot everything. And then, I, so I went to Zurich and I met Arny, and I just absolutely loved him, and I loved what he was doing. I think I was really passionate to try to find a way of bringing my movement interests, my theater and arts interests together with psychology and social action – and all sorts of things. I wanted a more comprehensive sort of way of viewing the world and working with people. I wanted to work with people, so I was really happy to find him there.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. So that's something that the two of you share, was that quest for a more comprehensive approach.

Amy Mindell: Yeah, exactly.

Dr. Dave: And I had a similar experience to yours. I didn't go off and marry Arny...

Amy Mindell: (laughs)

Dr. Dave: ...but in various workshops that I was leading, people would say, "Yes, but do you know the work of Arnold Mindell?" (laughs)

Amy Mindell: Oh!

Arny Mindell: Oh...amazing!

Dr. Dave: (laughs) So I'm happy to have this opportunity to finally.

Amy Mindell: Oh, nice to have a similar path. (laughs)

Arny Mindell: Well, the three of us can always get married in some sense!

Dr. Dave: Right. (laughs) One of those other universes!

(laughter)

Arny Mindell: Right.

Dr. Dave: Okay. In your... Arny, your early work focused on what you called the Dreambody.

Arny Mindell: Yeah.

Dr. Dave: I'm particularly interested in that because I've always been fascinated with dreams. What did you mean by "the Dreambody"?

Arny Mindell: Well, as soon as I got my diploma in Jungian psychology – I have to build up to it like that –

Dr. Dave: Sure.

Arny Mindell: As soon as I got my diploma, I said, now I *love* Jung, because – wow! – things are meaningful. They're not just problems. And then I got physically sick – I had a bit of a gout attack at the age of 30, which is a very unusual thing. And the doctors – I went to the doctors – and they said, "You've got arthritis. You've got gouty arthritis."

Dr. Dave: Hmmm.

Arny Mindell: “And you’ll have that for the rest of your life.” And I said, “Well, gee, that’s a depressing thought.”

Dr. Dave: Yes, right. (laughs)

Arny Mindell: He said, “Sorry! You’ll just have to take these pills for the rest of - Actually, they were wrong. About seven or eight months later, it disappeared. I think it came because it made my big toe hurt, and it made me walk around and start to hobble around and think, how can this be meaningful? This must also have a meaning. What is it?”

Dr. Dave: Mm-hmm...

Arny Mindell: And oh, I just (inaudible). I read all the books on allopathic medicine and all on alternative medicine, and all very important and interesting, but I didn’t get the meaning of my problem yet. And then, I was working with a priest one day, one of the first times I came across the Dreambody idea. I was working with this priest, and he... people knew that in Zurich, I was the one to go to at the time. “Oh, Arny – he’s interested in somatic stuff.” And so a lot of people would come to me, and he came to me, and he said he had had a heart attack, and he was still having “herz stechenden.” That’s “stabbing pain,” that means stabbing pain in the chest area. So, I asked him about his medicines – and that he’s taking things, he’s being taken care of in the normal sense, and he was, but he still had these stabbing pains. So I said, “Would you be kind enough to pick up something around you and show me what they’re like?” And he took up one of my pencils, Dave, and he pointed it into the air, and he made a little bit of a stabbing motion with his right hand – I still remember it. And he stabbed a bit and he said, “Ahh...” and I smiled when he did that! I said to him, because of my training at the time, “Well, now, that’s so interesting. You’re smiling. Have you had a dream recently?” And the priest said to me, “I did; I dreamt about holding a knife.” And I said, “Aha!”

Dr. Dave: Aha...

Arny Mindell: “So, you’re holding a knife in a dream, and now you’re having stabbing pains in your heart area.” So, I thought, let’s drop the allopathic approach for the moment – that means the regular medical approach, let’s drop that. I said to him, “Ach lieber, Herr So-and-so” – I said, “Dear sir, please go ahead and continue to stab a little bit. While you’re stabbing, just imagine what you could do with that energy.” And he said, “I could be more direct with folks, and when I did my sermons, I could be more direct.”

Dr. Dave: Wow.

Arny Mindell: So, I wasn't very interested in the sermons. I wasn't too interested in the sermons, but I was very interested in the human being *behind* the sermons. He needed to be more direct and say what he wanted to. So that's the psychological thing. But Dave, the amazing thing is that his heart – chest – pains felt better.

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Arny Mindell: And they didn't return. And he didn't complain about them! And a week later, he had tried to do this, and he felt better. And I said, now, that's interesting. The dream about the stabbing and the body about the sensation of stabbing pain – hmmm... *Dreambody!* What you dream, you experience a little bit in your body. And what you experience in your body, is in your – that's a Dreambody.

Dr. Dave: Okay.

Arny Mindell: Okay. So, that's a Dreambody in a nutshell.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. You know, I was struck that that sort of insight came out of the mild physical illness that you had. You know, it reminds me about the whole thing of the wounded healer and so on.

Arny Mindell: Oh, wonderful...

Dr. Dave: And how adversity or an illness can be a springboard and some new creative direction.

Arny Mindell: Oh, it was definitely one of the most wonderful things that - It was a healing thing to have been sick for those months, definitely.

Dr. Dave: Yes. Now, I'm going to be asking you questions relating to other approaches. And, I don't in any way mean to suggest that what you're doing is derivative, but I see elements in other approaches. And so I just want to bounce some of those off of you. I'm sure you're aware of them yourself...

Arny Mindell: Hopefully. Well, I say "hopefully," yeah. Hopefully, because process – my use of the word, process – means that if you're a Freudian, there should be times when you're freely associating, but then those things, that Freudian approach happens during any therapy sessions with anybody. Freely associating where you might have a Gestalt experience in which you're processing something with your hands, like Fritz Perls...

Dr. Dave: Right.

Arny Mindell: ...or might be talking about an archetype. So, all these various things for me, Dave, hopefully, they must come together. That's why I call this Process Work. We're following the unconscious process.

Dr. Dave: Yes. One of the things that I was struck by – you know, speaking of Freud – because in your Dreambody book, you talk about sort of tapping into, it's as if the unconscious were a stream that's constantly running, and kind of tapping into it at various times. And it reminded me of Freud's notion of primary process thinking, which I don't think enough attention is given to these days. It's kind of like that idea got dropped, but to me, that seems like it's a fundamental idea.

Arny Mindell: Wow. (laughs) I found out about Freud's primary process only afterwards, when I said our primary process is the one we primarily identify with. I turned that around.

Dr. Dave: Aha...

Arny Mindell: Yes, yes. Primary process for me is, what are you closest to? So the priest, he was closest to being a sweet guy – in my mind, is a *secondary* process. That means something further from his awareness that was the direct shooter...

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Arny Mindell: The direct stab (?), so to speak.

Dr. Dave: Yes. I think of primary process thinking as “baby thinking.” That's how I talk about it... (laughs)

Arny Mindell: (laughs) I love it.

Dr. Dave: ... to myself. It's the kind of thought we engaged in before we had language, and I don't think it goes away. I think it's still down there somewhere.

Arny Mindell: Definitely (?).

Dr. Dave: Kind of running, as a kind of subterranean stream.

Arny Mindell: Oh, that's a subterranean... Every time I wake up in the morning, I find myself looking at Amy, saying “Google, google, google...”

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Arny Mindell: Baby is right there!

Dr. Dave: Yeah. (laughs) Now, you also... In that book, I seem to recall there was considerable discussion about Taoism. Talk a little bit about how you see your work connecting with Taoism.

Arny Mindell: Oh... Now, that's the thing that is. Isn't it a funny thing – it's a big secret... It's not a secret. But it's a kind of a, it's a deep, inner thing that's something that I really hold to inside.

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Arny Mindell: That since I was a little boy... and looking out at the sky in the evening, it would get dark, and I would be fascinated: Why is it getting dark? My father said, "The sun goes down." And I said, "Really?" And then it gets light again, and it rains, and the seasons change. I was always just amazed that everything changes. And then, right in the beginning of my Jungian studies, I came across and needed to study a specialty, and it became Taoism – the idea that you can't really define the very essence of the Tao. It's something that's almost ineffable. And so, I just spend a lot of time myself in a kind of empty, open-mind state when I can – not always. The Tao that can't be said.

Dr. Dave: Mm-hmm...

Arny Mindell: And then watching then the Tao that can be said, come into life. Changes happen, signals happen. They occur in channels, and I can follow them with people. The Taoism plays a very, very central role and has always played a central role in everything that I've done.

Dr. Dave: You know, that's interesting. As I heard you talking about the Tao as the thing that can't be named, having that ineffable quality, one of the tie-ins, I think, to Jungian thought is the archetype, which ultimately can't be nailed down. We can only sort of gesture in its general direction.

Arny Mindell: Definitely. Jung, he would have been thrilled. I arrived in Zurich, it's funny, six days after he died. And so I've always felt very close to him, and the whole ineffable thing that you're bringing back was also part of his "unus mundus" – the "one world" of alchemy that's behind everything, something that you can't put your finger on exactly. It's like a unification layer in the background of reality.

Dr. Dave: Yes. Now, that story that you told about working with that priest, it did have very much the feeling of Gestalt therapy. And maybe you hadn't even been exposed to Gestalt therapy at that point. I don't know.

Arny Mindell: It was 1960... '70, and I hadn't yet found out about Esalen and Gestalt and everything; that came later.

Dr. Dave: Uh-huh, interesting...because (laughs) ...

Arny Mindell: So his hand's moving, and he was showing me, acting something out.

Dr. Dave: Yes, yes.

Arny Mindell: So it made obvious sense. From Jung's "active imagination." I had come from Jung's active imagination, where you look at an image; you talk to images. But just talking to images was boring. I wanted to have more fun! So I asked people to act their images out. And then I found out later, well, listen – Fritz Perls and a whole group of folks have been doing that for a while.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. You know, I'm not aware of Fritz Perls giving Jung any credit. I could be wrong about this but his approach did seem to have a lot in common with the idea of active imagination.

Arny Mindell: Definitely.

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Arny Mindell: Definitely.

Dr. Dave: Do you see any connection between the Dreambody and what the aborigines refer to as "dream time"? I'm reaching there. They just sound similar, so I'm wondering. (laughs)

Arny Mindell: Well, the aboriginal people of Australia – I'm going to speak about mainly the north and northeast coast – their dream time is an earth-based psychology.

Dr. Dave: A what?

Arny Mindell: Earth-based.

Dr. Dave: Oh, earth-based. Yes.

Arny Mindell: Earth-based. That means when they talk about the dream time, they're not talking about dreaming, like, European schools of psychology. They talk...that's mainly visual. The dreaming for most of the early European psychologists, at least, was visual. But they're talking about the earth. The dream time is a power emanating from the trees and the grass and the ground, and appearing in the form of figures, like the great rainbow serpent and other things like that. And so they're closer – I feel much closer – to them in some ways than I do today, to just the European psychologies because of their earth basis in everything.

Dr. Dave: Yes. So if I saw you two doing dream work, what would it look like? How would it be different than say, Gestalt work, with a dream – if at all?

Arny Mindell: You want to speak about that, Amy? Huh?

Amy Mindell: Go ahead, go ahead. I'll tell them.

Arny Mindell: Well, that depends entirely on the person. Someone says, "I want to work on a dream," and then I'll say, "What a great idea."

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Arny Mindell: "What dream would you like to work on?" But then, just recently one of my clients started coughing. So I said, "What's happening?" The person said, "I can't talk. I have (makes coughing noises). I have a little bit of, my throat is sore. I have a cold or something like that." And so, I said, "Well, that's wonderful. Let's go with that." And then, "Go into your cough." And the cough, (coughs). The person got quiet, and then got red in the face, and I said, "You're getting red in the face. What's happening there?" And the person said, "I can't talk!" I said, "What *can* you do? Do you want to do anything?" "I can only move." The person got up and danced a really strange and wonderful dance. I followed the person's process in the dance movement, and the arms were coming out in a very – the elbows, I mean – were coming out in a very – let me use the word; it's not quite right – but a very rough or aggressive way. And then I said, "That's good. Let's see what..." That effect was secondary for me; the arms coming out like that. The person began to put her feet on the ground – boom, boom, boom, boom – and then I said, "That's interesting. What are you doing?" She said, "I'm beating a drum!" And then she started to talk about her dreams. "Last night," she said, "I had a dream in which I was beating a drum - " And I can't say the details; I don't want to give the person's stuff away. "But I was beating the drum, and there was a dance happening." And I said, "Okay. Did you get it?" And she said, "I got it!" She understood the meaning of her dream because she was experiencing it.

Dr. Dave: Aha... So –

Arny Mindell: It happened first through her coughing, then she was in the proprioceptive channel, and then she was in a movement channel – kinesthetic; she was moving, and watching her signals there – and then the dreaming, dream work doesn't necessarily... You can interpret the dream *first* in process work and then discover that the dream is like a *check* on the work that you did.

Dr. Dave: Mm-hmm...

Amy Mindell: I think that our visual description of the dreaming process, as Arny was saying before, that we dream at night, but there's – and you were saying before, David, too, that there's a dreaming process that's always happening that we can step into anytime, and try to follow it through its various sensory-oriented channels and signals, and that often will lead back to the actual dream itself. Although there are

times when we'll focus on the dream, the actual images, if that's what the person's interested in.

Dr. Dave: Okay. There's the Jungian concept of amplification as a way of working with dreams and symbols. And I gather that you've applied that in your work.

Arny Mindell: Haven't we answered that, the first one enough? The dream work itself is what's happening, in other words. That's what Amy and I were trying to say there.

Dr. Dave: Mm-hmm...

Arny Mindell: And it's not, we don't just focus on the dream and its symbol and the associations.

Dr. Dave: But, you're focusing on what's unfolding in the moment.

Arny Mindell: What's happening in the moment is the interpretation of the dream.

Dr. Dave: Yes. Okay. (laughs)

Arny Mindell: Sorry...I was so excited about that, I didn't hear your next question.

Dr. Dave: Oh, I was trying to get something in about amplification, because I notice you took that Jungian idea and you apply it to your work in some novel ways.

Arny Mindell: Yes. Yes. Like, for example, the situation I was telling you about, where this woman was moving about with her arms and then, instead of amplifying a symbol like, let's say, drumming – by talking about the drum is a symbol and Native American symbolism and whatever – the idea of the symbol, and amplify it not just through mythological or intellectual information, but through actually amplifying the signal in which an experience is happening. A little movement – can you make that bigger? If we work with somebody in a coma and we see just a little tiny, tiny eyebrow movement, amplification there means I'll say to the person, "Whoa! I see your eyebrow moving!"

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Arny Mindell: "Would you – I know it's moving! You're there, I guess!" And then you watch for other signals that come up. That's coma work. I didn't want to get too far too fast –

Dr. Dave: Yeah, I want to get to the coma work. (laughs) But before we get there, I've got some other questions here. I read an interview that you did and read that you're uncomfortable with the concept of "healing" these days. If you're not doing healing, what is it you're doing when you work with individuals?

Arny Mindell: Well, I have to tell the whole truth, and that is, if someone's really interested in getting healed, I won't say I'm not interested in... I won't hurt their feelings about that. But in my very deepest feelings, people, I don't think, need to get healed. They need to just catch on, follow their process. I don't see people as "sick." The body is not only sick. That's one level of things, and I do accept that, and it's fine to heal all of that and everything, but I don't feel that people are sick. So...

Dr. Dave: What about the symptoms that they're trying to get rid of, though, that they so dearly want to be rid of?

Arny Mindell: I don't blame them. I always say, have a headache? Get rid of that damned thing. I'm with those people entirely; however, the deepest part of me, I feel – no. I don't look at them as pathology that they're just going to rid of, but as something trying to emerge that's meaningful to the unconscious process, process. That's why I call, what I do, I feel that we're doing – lots of us, people doing in many schools – is process work.

Amy Mindell: Maybe I can jump in. I'm thinking the difference of healing or following somebody's process and what they get out of that. And it, for some reason in the moment, reminds me of a woman that we worked with many years ago who has cerebral palsy. And she suffers a lot from that. She has a hard time speaking. She has an incredibly hard time walking and moving – she has to use a huge amount of energy just to go from here to there and to concentrate. But she would like to be healed, in a way, because it's an incredible weight upon her just to do her daily life. And so, we talked about what might be helpful in the ordinary sense, what she's done medically, and then tried to follow her natural process, let's say her, the signals and experiences that she was having that maybe didn't go along with the normal way that she was supposed, that she thought she would like to operate and be in the ordinary world. And she ended up following all of her spastic movements and ended up moving sideways, and going on the ground – not trying to make herself walk normally. And she got up finally –

Arny Mindell: She was courageous, wasn't she?

Amy Mindell: She was *extremely* courageous. She was very shy and scared of that at first. And when she went into that... She ended up, to make a long story short doing a kind of dance. And a rhythm came out of her movement, and then she started laughing and singing. And I was in the middle of a seminar, and she asked everybody to sing with her. And there was like something like a party came out of that. And she said, "Oh, this is what I've longed for my whole life, is some connection with everybody. But I feel so isolated and alone all the time, and people look at me like I'm weird and all of that. And this is what she was looking for. In her childhood dreams, she had dreamt she was with her family in a castle, I believe, having a huge party. So this was... When she got in touch with that aspect of

herself that loved people and wanted to have joy and party, sort of dancing with them, she felt much better physically. Her body could relax, and she felt more, she felt better in the ordinary way, and also, she was able to follow her deepest process.

Arny Mindell: So, you could say, would you say she...

Amy Mindell: Mm-hmm...

Arny Mindell: So, she was, she had an illness...

Amy Mindell: Mm-hmm...

Arny Mindell: But another view of the same situation is, she had a dance...

Amy Mindell: Yeah.

Arny Mindell: And a (inaudible) dance.

Amy Mindell: It was trying to emerge. That is usually suppressed in trying to be an ordinary woman.

Dr. Dave: Well, that's wonderful. I can see how your creative background would feed very well into this, Amy. I get the impression that the two of you work together very closely. Amy, can you describe how that interplay works a bit?

Amy Mindell: Oh, it's wonderful, I think. *We love* working together! (laughs) We travel a lot, and we do seminars and all kinds of different seminars on different themes. And we work together and play off of one another, have a lot of fun. And I think we bring some similar, but some very different, qualities that fill out what we do together. It's really beautiful; it's really lucky, I think, to have a relationship where we can do that.

Dr. Dave: I think so, too.

Amy Mindell: It's pretty rare.

Dr. Dave: I think it's pretty rare. I agree, it's very rare. To me, it's kind of the pinnacle of self-improvement. (laughs) Improvement's the wrong word! I don't know what I'm reaching for!

Amy Mindell and Arny Mindell: (laugh...inaudible)

Dr. Dave: Okay.

Arny Mindell: It's great working together! And it's really weird. I have to say, you know, we're both trained to work with one another and work on situations and work

with people, but we don't, it's just – I think, I don't know – Amy, am I wrong in saying it's kind of lucky. It just sort of happens.

Amy Mindell: Yeah.

Arny Mindell: You think?

Amy Mindell: It's very lucky, yeah.

Dr. Dave: That's great. Well, Arny, now I can cut you loose on the subject of the comatose patients. I read a bit about your work with comatose patients. What moved you in that direction? You know, most people think, "Oh, this person's in a coma – forget it."

Amy Mindell: Mm-hmm...

Arny Mindell: Really? Well, that's it, you know? You see, I was in Zurich, and I was interested in people. I thought, you know, I was trained in psychology sitting in a chair with another person sitting in another chair, sometimes getting up – but rarely. And, I wanted to move around more. And so, the whole Dreambody work took me into movement and body stuff, and things of that sort. And, most of psychology, Dave, until that time was about people talking and expressing things mainly in words, though movement would come up also. But then, how about working with somebody who's totally knocked out, near death, or in a vegetative or comatose state? So, people knew I was interested in all sorts of things, and some of my first clients that I saw were severely ill, and some of them, then, would approach death, and they would say, "Come with me! Stay with me." And, that encouraged me. I didn't know anything about working with dying people. I was in my 30s. I was shocked – it was a great shock to me even to work with somebody who was dying. And then, when they went into these quiet, apparently remote states of consciousness, where they weren't present... Like, for example, one of the clients that I first worked with, was just sitting there in a, she was...there was still an oxygen tent at that time. It was the end of the early 70s there in Zurich. She was on oxygen, and she just, people couldn't get her to get out of the coma or die, or live, and so I went inside her oxygen tent – that makes you a little bit high when you do that, from the oxygen – and I said to her, "I can see you're breathing." And then she made a bigger breath, and I said, "Huh! I now see you're really breathing." And then I said, because I had a little too much oxygen myself, I was perhaps more excitable than I normally am, and I said to her, "You know, people want to know what you're doing in there. Why don't you do something?"

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Arny Mindell: And she made a big motion. And I kind of know motion; I thought it was a "no" motion, so I said, "Okay, no...you don't want to come back." And then she made another motion and she said, "I don't want..." – she said in English; she

was Swiss German, but she said in English, “I don’t want to come back.” And I said, “Why not?” She said, “I have unfinished stuff on the Bahnhofstrasse” – on the main street in Zurich. She was a businesswoman, apparently. And so, suddenly she was talking. And, I said, “Well, it’s up to you. If I were you, why don’t you finish that stuff up, and then you can do what you want.” And, to make the story short, she pushed her own oxygen thing aside, and the nurses were all telling her to go back in the oxygen tent and take it easy. But she wanted to get up and leave the hospital. So things like that occurred several times to me, and it really freaked me out that the person can be quite, they’re much more there than you think – many people. Not everybody – many people. And then, I didn’t dare write about any of those far-out stories until Amy and I began to work together. And then, the first case I wrote up, really, about working with a person right near death, I decided I can do it – because Amy’s there; she sees it, and with all sorts of other people around. And so coma work began, so to speak, at that time.

Dr. Dave: What an interesting, fascinating direction to follow. Now, somehow, your work with individuals has evolved into working with groups. How did that transition happen?

Arny Mindell: Dave, it’s all the Tao.

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Arny Mindell: It’s all... It looks like... And that’s what I’d like psychology eventually to be, where all of us can say, yes, we’re doing process work in one form or another. And it (inaudible) human beings and human processes. So, whether somebody’s in a coma, I’m just following the process, which changes the minimal cues and what have you. Or, large groups... Amy and I, it began in a way... Amy and I were in South Africa before the revolution, in Cape Town. And we were talking about the Dreambody. And there were all kinds of people there in Cape Town, South Africa, and some came forward and said, “Yes, but what about the pain and agony we’re having here on the streets?” And I said, “Gee, I’m a psychologist. I’m working with individuals and couples and families. Gosh.”

Amy Mindell: What if I go out in the street and I’m shot at, or I have to live in this political situation? I can’t just afford to work on myself.

Arny Mindell: “What good is it?” The people said, “What good does it do to work on me? I go outside and get shot.” So, Amy and I started talking about that, and I went back to Zurich, and I talked to my friends and students and colleagues in Zurich and we’ve got to develop Worldwork. And...

Amy Mindell: Worldwork is the name of our large-group work in conflict resolution.

Arny Mindell: And Worldwork is not just about then, a small group, but yes, it does – it has an organizational part that works with small and large people sitting around a

desk or in organizational settings. Now, it was developed, Dave, in order to approach large groups of people who are in, who are irritated, upset, angry, or even fighting one another – even dangerously fighting one another. And then psychology should be about dealing with people where they're at, whether they're in a coma or they're in an almost murderous situation. So, that's how Worldwork began.

Dr. Dave: So, what would you do in a large, emotionally charged, conflictual group?

Amy Mindell: Mm-hmm... Maybe an example would be helpful about that. There were many, many different things. There are a whole lot of skills, then – what I call “meta-skills,” or the feeling skills of what we do. But right in the moment, I think of an example from, we're in Oakland. I forget what year that was. It was just before...

Arny Mindell: 1992 or 3 – something like that.

Amy Mindell: Uh-huh. It was just before the verdict on the Rodney King trial came out, when the policemen were on trial for the beating of Rodney King.

Arny Mindell: An African-American man.

Amy Mindell: Yeah. And it was, as you can imagine –

Arny Mindell: Dangerous, yeah.

Amy Mindell: And we were in Oakland at the time.

Dr. Dave: I can imagine what that was like.

Amy Mindell: I'm sure you can imagine, yeah. And we came together. A colleague of ours, Wilma Jean Tucker, organized and facilitated the seminar with us. And it was a very large group of people, and there were policemen that were there, also, because they were very worried that a riot or something could happen. And everybody was worried about what would happen after the verdict came out. And, I can feel the tension and everything as I say it – all of the emotion. Many things happened. At one point, there was a really, really very intense conflict.

Arny Mindell: Imagine, hundreds and hundreds of people standing around, and the African-American people are saying, “You, you white characters! You're such a problem. You don't realize it.” I'm saying it very nicely.

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Arny Mindell: You can imagine, and then the people on the other side are saying, “No, we're not all bad! What are you doing to us?”

Amy Mindell: The white people are saying, “We didn’t do it; it’s not us. Don’t talk to me about it.”

Arny Mindell: “We’re innocent. We’re good people...” “No, you guys don’t know. Just the rank and the power that you have... Just because you’re not even aware of the historical component of what you’re doing.” And people started to scream, and they were getting very, very angry at one another. And in the middle of all of this, suddenly, one African-American man started making sounds. “Ooooh....ooooh,” he said. And then, at first, he was very quiet, and then he gets louder, “Ooooh!” and he started louder and louder. “Oooh, oooh!”

Amy Mindell: He was wailing, and he said, “This is not black pain. This is not only white pain. It’s all of our pain. When you hurt, I hurt, too.” And then, he proceeded to almost wail.

Dr. Dave: Mmm.

Arny Mindell: And there were hundreds of people, and one by one, people started to gather around him in this large hall and form – it’s hard to describe – formed a large circle of people, and while he was wailing. And out of that wailing sound, then, shortly thereafter, the African-Americans began to sing sacred songs of their own.

Dr. Dave: Wow.

Arny Mindell: And then, of all things, they asked, “Come on, you guys with European traditions and backgrounds! Sing some of your sacred songs.”

Dr. Dave: Now, were you there “leading” this in any way?

Arny Mindell: We’re the facilitators.

Amy Mindell: Yes, we’re the facilitators.

Dr. Dave: (laughs) ‘Cause you kind of left yourself out of the story.

Arny Mindell: Right. I forgot about that. Yeah, we’re encouraging people. How do you do that? We see things that are very, as we said before, secondary. That means nobody’s, the whole group is (?) identifying with that particular signal, that’s keeping, that’s coming forward. This was like, we call it a “ghost role.” The role... We’re talking about suffering, but no one is directly showing the suffering.

Dr. Dave: Mm-hmm...

Arny Mindell: But the “ghost role,” in our terminology now. And that ghost role needs to be filled. It’s a ghost of agony that is impossible for any – really, one – human

being to fill, but it's in a role in the field in the larger, the pain. At the surface, more primary to everybody, was the anger and the upsetness and the fear. And more secondary, in the background, is roles and ghost roles. One of the ghost roles was just the ultimate pain of it all. And by bringing up again the same thing, in the process sense, of bringing up what is there in the background, change... I'm making it simple because there's a lot of other signals and things but the base studies (?) are change happens through that. And especially when there's a collision of opposites at the surface, so something from the background has immense transformation power. That's one example. Another example like that in Ireland...

Amy Mindell: Yeah. We -

Arny Mindell: Want me to tell you another one?

Dr. Dave: Yeah, sure. I love it.

Amy Mindell: Okay. We were in Ireland a number of years ago, in Dublin, just before they voted on the peace treaty. And there were people who came together from the north and from the south, from the opposing parties there. And as you can imagine also, it was extremely tense, and -

Arny Mindell: Dave knows about that because have you not worked there, Dave?

Dr. Dave: Yes, I have worked in Ireland. That's one of the places where they said, "And do you know Arny Mindell's work?" (laughs)

Amy Mindell: Oh! (laughs)

Arny Mindell: Maybe that's why we're (inaudible), right?

Dr. Dave: Yeah, may be... So, go ahead with the story.

Amy Mindell: No, go ahead...

Dr. Dave: No, no, you were in the midst of a story, weren't you?

Amy Mindell: Oh, okay. Again, to make a long story short, at one point in the large-group process, there were two men who were kind of really, really angry with each other. One was from the north, one was from the south.

Arny Mindell: Politicians. Yeah, mm-hmm.

Amy Mindell: And they were enraged. They were scream-... One side was screaming that, "I was in a pub and we got blown up and I survived, and a lot of people didn't." And the other side was saying, "Well, so many of my relatives have been

killed, and it's your fault," and it got very, very... It started to escalate. And I remember, Arny, you saying at one point – because people were getting nervous – “Trust these men. They're going to know how to deal with this together.” And that brings a kind of awareness to what's happening, that things can actually go further.

Dr. Dave: That's a great sort of meta-message there.

Amy Mindell: Yeah, mm-hmm.

Arny Mindell: It's a meta-message, and it lets the group as a whole be quiet, and the two particular contestants then can channel the energies in the group. So the man from the north and the man from the south were really yelling at each other, almost screaming at each other...

Amy Mindell: Mm-hmm...

Arny Mindell: ...and everybody, though they gave them room in the center to follow this, while focusing on that, everyone started to scream at the same time. And then suddenly, I remembered my own training. *Signals, Arny!* Remember signals. And I looked in, and I... what signals am I seeing these men doing? And, I saw the neck of one of the men – the signal that was standing out most to me was not his yelling, but an extremely red neck. It all blotched, and red blotches all over. And, I said to him, from the outskirts – we were facilitating from the outskirts of the circle – looking inward, I said to him, “Your red neck. The red neck, the redness there.” And he stopped suddenly, and he said, “My doctor told me *not* to come today. I had a heart attack a couple of weeks ago. He said I'm crazy to come here.”

Amy Mindell: And then, right away, the man on the other side said, “Well, my doctor told *me* not to come, either...”

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Amy Mindell: “...because I have lethally high blood pressure. It could be very dangerous for me to come and to get very upset.”

Arny Mindell: Then I said, “Death.” And they both looked at each other. It's hard to believe. They both looked at each other and slowly, one man walked slowly around to the other man, and he said, “Death.” And he put his arm around the other man, his contestant (?). And they stood side by side, and everybody got quiet. And these men walked into the edge of the circle, and everybody was quiet. And after that, everyone could sit down and start talking about how *do* we get along together?

Dr. Dave: I feel emotionally moved just hearing this story. I can imagine what a moving moment that must have been.

Amy Mindell: It was extremely touching. It's one of those moments in life.

Dr. Dave: Yes. Well, I'm afraid we're going to have to wrap this up. You know, I could go on talking with you two for hours. Let me ask you one last question, which is, what do you see for the future of your work? What's on the horizon?

Arny Mindell: Amy, what do you think?

Amy Mindell: Oh, I think there's many things. One of the things that I'm particularly interested in – again, coming back to my background – is creativity. I wrote a book about process work in creativity and how we can use some of our psychological ideas that we use in therapy to enhance, bring forth our creativity – not just look at its psychology, but as a furthering of our artwork in the creative, dynamic dreaming forces (?) happening inside of us all the time. I'm interested in bring that out more.

Dr. Dave: Amy, is that your work that I see on YouTube?

Amy Mindell: Yes, it is. (laughs)

Dr. Dave: (laughs) 'Cause I did a search there...

Amy Mindell: (inaudible) What's that?

Dr. Dave: I actually did a search there...

Amy Mindell: Oh, my God! (inaudible)

Dr. Dave: (inaudible) I saw puppets and all sorts of little things there. (laughs)

Amy Mindell: Yeah. (laughs)

Arny Mindell: Yeah. And on my side, I think the future for me is understanding more about the Tao that can be said, and trying to get along and follow the Tao. And, I've been using in recent years (inaudible) quantum physics. It's been very helpful. And non-locality goes back to the mind of God again. What is the intelligence in our universe moving us and moving everybody? What is it? Is there a mind back there, and is it a very intelligent one? Sometimes, it seems like a – as they say in German – a dumkopf.

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Arny Mindell: It seems a little silly, that mind. But I think it's not, and I want to find out more about it.

Dr. Dave: Wonderful. Well, Amy and Arny Mindell, thanks so much for being my guests on Shrink Rap Radio.

Amy Mindell: Thank you very much. It was wonderful.

Arny Mindell: What a pleasure! You do a lot for people, and we want to thank you personally – not just for us, but for other people. You do a lot for the world. Thank you, Dave.