

Shrink Rap Radio #35 April 30, 2006. Attitudinal Healing

Dr. David Van Nuys, aka “Dr. Dave” interviews Dr. Gerald Jampolsky
(transcribed from www.ShrinkRapRadio.com by Jo Kelly)

Excerpt: *“It looks like someone is really bugging you, or they’re attacking you, or being dishonest with you; and the tendency for our ego is to want to attack back, or put a fence around us and not be with that person. What we’re talking about is rather than perceiving that person as attacking you, to me there are only two emotions: either the person is loving and it doesn’t seem like that person is loving at that moment; or they are fearful and giving you a call of help for love. And when we really feel that a person’s giving us a call of help our heart automatically opens up, and the energy between you and that person shifts; and all of a sudden there is a continuity in terms of feeling oneness. And that’s all Attitudinal Healing is about, is letting go of the blocks that interfere with our experiencing ourselves as love, and giving that love away.”*

Introduction: That was the voice of my guest, Dr. Gerald Jampolsky.

Gerald Jampolsky, M.D. is an internationally-known psychiatrist and author. His 1979 book, *Love is Letting Go of Fear* sold millions of copies worldwide. Since that time, he has gone on to write a number of other books, all of which bear the hallmark of stating profound psychological and spiritual insights in simple terms that anyone can grasp. Perhaps, Dr. Jampolsky’s biggest contribution, however, is his founding of the Center for Attitudinal Healing, which now is known as the International Center for Attitudinal Healing, having spawned 300 such Centers around the world. I’d like to give you more background on this by reading directly from the Center’s website at www.attitudinalhealing.org

And I quote:

In 1975 there was virtually no emotional support system for people affected by catastrophic illnesses. Most people in the US were no longer living in extended family situations and rarely died at home as they had a generation before. Instead illness and dying was largely relegated to hospital rooms where the medical problem was the only focus. In this setting the emotional experience was often one of fear and painful isolation, with few opportunities for people to open to a deeper experience.

While making the rounds on a pediatric oncology ward Dr Jerry Jampolsky heard an 8 year old boy ask his doctor “what’s it like to die?” The doctor ignored the question and changed the subject. Jerry wrote: “I think the physician was fearful of addressing the question. When I investigated this further, I discovered that changing the subject was not an uncommon response to these questions. I discovered that children usually look for someone they can trust who will give them an honest reply to these questions. On this particular ward this turned out to be the cleaning woman. The kids seemed to know they would get honest, direct answers from her. I began to wonder generally where kids could go to talk about such serious things as death and found there was no safe place where they could talk.”

Jerry founded the Center to create a safe place where kids with cancer could talk. With the help of several volunteers, Jerry started the first support group at the Center. Even though Jerry is a psychiatrist, in group everyone was regarded as equal: kids, volunteers, and Jerry. The cleaning woman demonstrated to Jerry that an approach to emotional and spiritual support didn’t necessarily require an expert. This woman showed that the presence of such simple qualities as honesty and kindness are powerfully therapeutic.

Today the Center offers support not only to children but people of all ages. Nearly 300 people are served every week. All our services are still provided by regular volunteers, not experts, just as it was in that first group with children. The primary requirement for volunteering at the Center is a willingness to be unconditionally loving, to listen non-judgementally and to be genuine. Certainly professionals do volunteer at the Center, but they leave their titles at the door.

Twelve principles define the core of Attitudinal Healing. These principles introduce the dynamic of choice into a psychological process. Each principle offers an opportunity to step through the fear, conflict or separation we may be feeling, and often recycling, and to make a choice to experience peace of mind instead, even in extreme situations. Attitudinal Healing defines health as inner peace and healing as letting go of fear. It regards love as the most powerful healing force there is.

End quote.

And now, let’s get into the interview.

Dr. Dave: My guest today is Dr. Gerald Jampolsky. Welcome to Shrink Rap Radio.

Jampolsky: Glad to be aboard.

Dr. Dave: Aboard is the right term actually; we are sitting here in Jerry's houseboat in Sausalito, so a nautical phrase really makes sense. Just backing up here, your training is that of a psychiatrist, and I am under the impression that most psychiatrists are oriented towards medications and so on. But I have the impression that your career has been less oriented towards pharmaceutical approaches, and more towards psychological and spiritual approaches. Am I right? And if so how did that happen?

Jampolsky: Well you're right. I went to Stanford Medical School and had a residency there in adult psychiatry, and then went to Langley Porter in UC Davis and had my residency in child psychiatry there; and so a great way to do both aspects of drugs and psychotherapeutic ways of approaching. But my heart always felt that it's not that drugs aren't helpful, but that often times there are better ways that one can deal with problems other than drugs. I was interested in pushing the envelope and finding other ways; thinking that there had to be another way of practicing psychiatry than the one way I was taught.

Dr. Dave: Yes; and I remember when you and I first had contact many years ago, I had been doing some stuff in hypnosis and I guess you had too.

Jampolsky: I had some expertise for many years in hypnosis and biofeedback; I got interested in parapsychology; I'm a seeker in many ways.

Dr. Dave: I think we got interested in a lot of the same things actually and kind of knew some of the same people. Now the thing I know you best for, is that some years back you founded something called The Center for Attitudinal Healing, and that's still going right?

Jampolsky: Well I'll correct the name: it's called The International Center for Attitudinal Healing. It was originally in Timberon and for a number of years now has been in Sausalito, California. It's known as the Mother Center, and there are now about 130 Centers around the world.

Dr. Dave: Oh my goodness.

Jampolsky: All offering free services. We started working with children who had catastrophic illness, cancer, severe accidents. We had a psychological, spiritual approach. My guidance was at that time of my life I was an atheist, I was going through a difficult divorce, I turned to alcohol, and my whole life was going downhill. I came across some writings called The Course of Miracles, a way of looking at your life spiritually, which really emphasised inner peace as your only goal, and forgiveness as your main function.

I started the Center out of a sense of guidance, listening to an inner voice that said that these young kids were really my teachers, and other people's teachers with another way of looking at life and another way of looking at death. In a sense, wise spirits in young bodies teaching us a lot of important lessons. And that's how the Center started in a very small way – I had no dream that it would expand – and then later on we began to work with the siblings, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles and grandparents.

AIDS came on the situation around 1981, I began closely working with San Francisco Hospital, and then we started support groups for people with AIDS: children who had AIDS, children whose parents had AIDS; we began working at that level. We began doing workshops, and having groups for people with cancer, some of the people wanted to have a sex difference so we saw the women with AIDS, men with AIDS, some people liked the combination; we did a lot of experimentation.

As time went on we started another group called Person to Person group; these are people with no illness but they want to learn to incorporate Attitudinal Healing into their own lives.

Dr. Dave: Now let me interrupt you there. The term Attitudinal Healing I think is an interesting one, and maybe deserves a little bit of explanation. Because usually when we hear the word healing we think of physical healing, if we talk about healing someone from cancer we might think of total remission; but I'm not sure that's what you're talking about.

Jampolsky: We define health as inner peace, and healing as letting go of fear. Attitudinal Healing is based on the premise that it's not our bodies or people outside of our situations that cause us so much distress. It's our thoughts and attitudes about those things; and the one gift that the universe has given us is the ability to change the thoughts we put in our mind, to change the attitudes we put in our mind. And more and more I am convinced that your attitude is everything: it's the anchor and the rudder of your ship, and until we recognise that. So we begin to do inner healing

rather than try to change other people's attitudes we decided we are going to change our own attitudes.

Forgiveness is one of the biggest vehicles around letting go of the hurtful past, and staying in the present; and listening to the little inner voice kind of guide you to tell you what to think, say and do – but coming from love rather than anger, or from hate, or from grievances.

Dr. Dave: Yes; I'm struck by the convergence of this spiritual approach, which says that your thoughts and your attitudes are key, or fundamental to your wellbeing, to your inner health, and also have a big impact on your outer health; and developments in cognitive psychology that have kind of come to the same conclusion. They are cloaked in a different guise and a different language, but they talk a lot about your beliefs and assumptions and challenging those. Isn't that interesting?

Jampolsky: Yes I think that the more we wake up to the fact that our thoughts do create our reality, then we begin to take responsibility for our own happiness rather than blaming it on someone else.

My wife Dr. Diane Cirincione and I have written a number of books around Attitudinal Healing like: *Love is Letting Go of Fear; Teach Only Love; Good-bye to Guilt; Out of Darkness Into the Light; Change Your Mind, Change Your Life; Me First & the Gimme Gimmes.*

Dr. Dave: What's your most recent title?

Jampolsky: *Forgiveness: The Greatest Healer of All*

Dr. Dave: OK; I'll put a link to that one for sure in our Show Notes.

I read *Love is Letting Go of Fear*, the first one, and it had a big impact on me; and it was widely read, everybody that I knew was reading it.

Jampolsky: We sold over 5 million books now, and I guess all of our books put together maybe it's about 6 1/2 million; and they say each book usually gets to about 3 people, so we're talking about maybe 20 million people have been exposed, in about 30 different languages. I have been invited to about 50 different countries to do workshops.

This coming workshop in July 2006 some of your listeners might be interested in, on July 14th to 18th is going to be in San Raphael, California; and all over the place. If people are interested in this, they can go to the

website of the Center at www.attitudinalhealing.org and they can find out other information about Diane and I, by going to www.loveisforeveryone.com

Dr. Dave: OK. You know I went to one of those websites, and I found a list of 12 Principles of Attitudinal Healing. I'd like to read through them; and I don't know if it makes sense to have you comment on each one, or maybe make a comment at the end. What do you think?

Jampolsky: I think at the end.

Dr. Dave: OK; Let me just read through them quickly then They are worth reading because they do encapsulate what you've been talking about here. So these are the principles of Attitudinal Healing:

1. The essence of our being is love.
2. Health is inner peace. Healing is letting go of fear.
3. Giving and receiving are the same.
4. We can let go of the past and the future.
5. Now is the only time there is and each instant is for giving.
6. We can learn to love ourselves and others by forgiving rather than judging.

There has been a lot of research on that recently, showing the importance

Jampolsky: This has become a very important subject, all the stuff we were theorizing back in 1975 now has been validated by scientific documentation; that when we hold on to angry thoughts, when we hold onto grieving thoughts, it interferes with our immune system, and plays a big part in many of our illnesses and why people go to doctors.

Dr. Dave: That's right. Actually the preceding interview, the one just before this one, was with Dr. Gail Ironson and Dr. Dale Ironson who were reporting at a major conference at UC Berkley. They have been studying AIDS patients and they studied a lot of attitudes and beliefs, and they found that AIDS patients who believed that God loves them do much better, and their physiological markers are better than those who think that God is a

punishing god and out to get them. And that was just one of a number of attitudes and beliefs

Jampolsky: Now stop there for a moment. If you are really feeling that there's a god that's out to get you, you are going to live in a fearful state.

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Jampolsky: Then that fear plays a part in the chemistry of our body, so there has been a lot of new research now in terms of Lamas and other kinds of things to say: when you have a quiet mind – there is an old Indian statement that: a busy mind is a sick mind; a slow mind is a healthy mind; and a still mind is a divine mind.

So if we really want to be healthy, I think we have to learn to not make our to-do list so important. And what we do in Attitudinal Healing is make our only goal is to have that inner peace. And if we are holding onto a grievance, or we are angry in the moment, ask: is this really bringing me peace of mind? And the answer usually is: no. Do you want to be happy, or do you want to be right? That is the question.

We need to learn to realise that we really can change our life; and no matter what has been put on our plate, we can learn that we can really be happy and be peaceful. Our peace does not depend on what's going on in the external world. We can have peace even when we are in the midst of chaos – which most of us are living in a world at this point wondering what terrorism is going to be happening, what's happening with our government and all the other kinds of things. We can still maintain peace, and be an activist, but still without anger and without attack.

Dr. Dave: I totally agree, and what a great reminder.

I want to finish the list here, so we are on number 7 I think, which says:.

7. We can become love finders rather than fault finders.

That's an interesting turn-around on the idea of fault finding, is to do some love finding.

8. We can choose and direct ourselves to be peaceful inside regardless of what is happening outside.

Which is what you were just saying, about terrorism and so on.

9. We are students and teachers to each other.
10. We can focus on the whole of life rather than the fragments.
11. Since love is eternal death need not be viewed as fearful.
12. We can always perceive ourselves and others as either extending love or giving a call for help.

Jampolsky: Let's take that last one for a minute.

Dr. Dave: OK.

Jampolsky: It looks like someone is really bugging you, or they're attacking you, or being dishonest with you; and the tendency for our ego is to want to attack back, or put a fence around us and not be with that person.

What we're talking about is rather than perceiving that person as attacking you, to me there are only two emotions: either the person is loving and it doesn't seem like that person is loving at that moment; or they are fearful and giving you a call of help for love. And when we really feel that a person's giving us a call of help our heart automatically opens up, and the energy between you and that person shifts; and all of a sudden there is a continuity in terms of feeling oneness.

And that's all Attitudinal Healing is about, is letting go of the blocks that interfere with our experiencing ourselves as love, and giving that love away, and our experiencing oneness.

If I had the opportunity to rewrite the nomenclature book for psychologists and psychiatrists, the thick book with all the diagnosis: it would be one page, and one sentence. And it would say: "You're crazy, you're insane when you are not experiencing yourself as love, and giving that love away."

And if you really follow that definition, most of us are all crazy most of the time. Some of us just wear better costumes than others, so it looks like we are OK, but the other person's kind of crazy. Not so.

Dr. Dave: Yes; you know one of the things that got triggered for me in what you just said: something I have noticed in myself is I may have judgements against a person when I first meet them. I may have stereotypes and so on, but once I've heard their story – and everybody has a story – and

once we get beneath the surface and I've heard their story, I find all of that goes away; and what comes instead is a lot of understanding and acceptance.

Jampolsky: We need to let go. I think we are born with compassion; we are born with Ph.D.s in love.

Dr. Dave: I think you're right.

Jampolsky: What happens is: we create an ego that tends to come from fear, and where we tend to attack other people, and find that guilt gets us something that we want. And we get all these things that interfere with our experiencing love. But as we let go of seeing any value in guilt, we let go of seeing value in holding onto grievances, those blocks when we let go the natural flow of our energy is love. And that's why when we give love we receive it at the same time. It's not a matter of getting it's a matter of giving and living in the consciousness of giving and forgiving.

Dr. Dave: Yes. Now has there been any linkage between the Attitudinal Healing and physical healing in the many people that have come through this process?

Jampolsky: Well that's not been our purpose. Our purpose has been to find inner peace. That's how we define health. But there are many people who have had experiences where they were terminally ill and indeed there were a lot of terminally ill living many, many years afterwards; and we've had someone who was legally blind and began to see again.

Dr. Dave: My goodness.

Jampolsky: But the emphasis has been when people come to us, is not to heal the body as it is to heal the spirit.

Dr. Dave: Right, because if the spirit is healed then one can face death with equanimity

Jampolsky: One can really do that, if one really feels that. It goes back to our first principle that you mentioned: the essence of our being is love. That means we are really light beings.

And a little lesson I wrote the other day says this: "Your light is the only thing I that I see, and is but a reflection of the light in me."

Now if we can begin to do that kind of imagery, with people, even politicians that we may not agree with; we don't have to agree with someone not to attack them. And to recognise that everyone is virtually a Siamese twin to us, and really hurting someone else, you are really attacking yourself. In essence we are only one child, we are all really one.

And what Attitudinal Healing is helping is to heal the illusion that we are separate from ourselves. And healing that fight that many of us have inside where we are fighting ourselves, or condemning ourselves; we don't feel we are worthy of love; or we feel like we are victims, and we don't realise we can choose not to be a victim. We can choose to know that we are responsible for our own happiness, and that love is who we are. That's what we are; we don't have to prove it.

Dr. Dave: Now there was a turn around for you; this really worked in your life. I think you started off mentioning that you went through a period of alcoholism, and somehow taking on these principles

Jampolsky: Yes. Well I disciplined myself, I really worked hard, still work hard, still in process, I'm always there. But I think it's about retraining your mind, it's about retraining thoughts in your mind so that you don't block your heart from its natural way of doing things.

We get up at 4:30 every morning, because we want to take that time to communicate with our spiritual life. We light a candle over there, you see on top of the fireplace, and we spend time there. And we take a walk, it's a meditation walk. And we revere the higher power, and we try to do our best to listen to what I call the voice of love telling me what to think, say, and do – rather than the evil voice that gets me into trouble all the time.

Dr. Dave: Yes so that's great that you have a partner in your life, who you are both on the same path.

Jampolsky: Very fortunate, no question about it, very blessed.

Dr. Dave: You have written all of these books, where do you get the ideas for the books, where are they coming from?

Jampolsky: Well we were riding in the car the other day, and I saw smoke from the aeroplane – it looks like one of these white smoke screens, and it was just trying to turn into a cloud. And she was driving along, and I said: look at that cloud. It's a cloud that's trying to be a rainbow.

And all of a sudden she got really excited and saying: “hey! That’s a wonderful name for a book! The cloud wants to be the rainbow, and the rainbow wants to be a cloud; and we don’t really realise we are not really happy with who and what we are.” So she’s going to try to write a little children’s book. So it happens just in terms of listening to her guidance.

We have a new book, we have a mini-course for healing relationships, called *Love is for Everyone*, subtitle is *a Mini-course for Life*. It’s a modification of an old publication, called *To Give is To Receive: an 18 Day Course for Healing Relationships*.

Dr. Dave: OK.

Jampolsky: We just got the idea that changing the title and adding some more aspects, because that was done before... because I’m dyslexic and I need to write simply and I like things to register

Dr. Dave: Ah that’s great.

Jampolsky: So most of our books are simple. And so one of the books we want to write – when Diane and I were first going together, since I got divorced back in 1973, none of my relationships worked you know, and I thought maybe I need to be a monk or something. And I wasn’t thinking that I could have any relationships; and started my relationship with Diane, who was 21 years younger than I. And I had a heart that I had on my desk for a long time, and I said Diane I’m going to give you this heart, and I am going to ask you for a favour if you can. And that is, in our relationship I am going to ask you if you can hold my heart gently, and I’m gong to do the same to you. I am writing a book called, *Holding Each Others Heart Gently*.

Dr. Dave: Beautiful.

Jampolsky: Because I think so often when relationships don’t go well, all of a sudden there is attack, there is secrecy, there is disloyalty. And something different happens if you really keep in mind that you are not going to hurt the other individual with any of your thoughts, or any of your actions.

Dr. Dave: Jerry I want to thank you so much for giving me this interview. It’s uplifting just to sit here and have this conversation with you.

Jampolsky: My pleasure; and I want to congratulate you. I think the podcast – I think we haven't see anything yet, it's just the very infancy stage; and I think it's going to be an educational tool beyond books and beyond anything we have seen, internationally and in many different ways.

We have just had a little experience, and it's our intention to get involved in podcasts with our new website www.loveisforeveryone.com and I'll probably call on you, and consult with you around that.

Dr. Dave: I will be happy to help out in any way that I can.