

Shrink Rap Radio

Episode #416 - Trauma and the Soul with Dr. Donald Kalsched, Ph.D.

David Van Nuys, Ph.D., aka "Dr. Dave" interviews Dr. Donald Kalsched, Ph.D.

(transcribed from www.ShrinkRapRadio.com by Paul Vignola)

Introduction:

My guest today is noted clinical psychologist and Jungian Analyst Dr. Donald Kalsched, Ph.D. & we'll be discussing his latest book; Trauma and the Soul: a Psycho-Spiritual Approach to Human Development and it's Interruption.

You can find out more about Dr. Donald Kalsched, Ph.D. by visiting our show notes for this episode on ShrinkRapRadio.com

Now, here's the interview:

Dr. Dave

Dr. Donald Kalsched: Welcome to Shrink Rap Radio.

Dr. Kalsched

Thank you very much, it's a pleasure to be here.

Dr. Dave

Well, I'm very pleased to have you on the show.

Several of my listeners suggested that I should interview you and I'm glad to finally have the opportunity especially given that you are on vacation way up in Newfoundland?

Dr. Kalsched

That's right, Newfoundland, Canada, looking out at the Atlantic Ocean here at whales and seagulls and eagles.

Dr. Dave

Wow, it just really seems like it would be idyllic up there; it's wonderful that you can create that respite in your life.

Dr. Kalsched

Yes it is.

Dr. Dave

Well, I believe it's been about 13 years since you wrote a book that was somewhat similarly-titled; a book on trauma and the soul.

What led you to write this newest one?

Dr. Kalsched

Well, the original book that you just referenced was called the Inner World of Trauma and I was inspired to write it because a lot of my clients were having dreams that interested me greatly, particularly at certain points in their lives, when, if they had a history of early, childhood abuse or trauma or relational trauma, or what we call relational trauma, which isn't always major abusive events, but can be things like neglect and emotional illiteracy in families. anyway, a lot of these patients when they tried to change and tried to emerge from their more restricted life and more defended life started to have nightmares in which a young and vulnerable part of themselves was being attacked by various figures and I got very interested in the fact that this was occurring and as a Jungian Analyst, I got interested in the parallels between these dreams and certain mythic themes in the history of western mythology

Dr. Dave

We'll get into that more as we go on...

I thought that was, you drew some remarkable parallels there and I want to underscore what you just said because the title does say Trauma and the Soul and the trauma that you are talking about is a very particular kind of trauma and it's the developmental trauma, I guess, of poor child care, to put it bluntly, in the early years.

Now by your own admission you were more timid in the first book to use such terms as soul and spiritual and you seem to be much more adventurous, in this regard, in this latest book.

Dr. Kalsched

Yes, the later book is much more adventurous in that respect because after the first book which made quite an impact, at least in the small, Jungian readership and psycho-analytic readership, I continued to be interested in this field and to explore this complex, what I call the self-care system of defense which is this mythopoetic complex of a protector and a persecutor and a child locked up in an inner world someplace and as I became involved with those patients and continued to follow their material I began to become aware that many of them had remarkable mystical experiences, synchronicity experiences, paranormal experiences, experiences that we would call sort of 'visionary' and spiritual experiences as children and young people and sometimes those experiences were life saving for them, so I realized that when the coherence of their psyche was broken, they were falling into a world that Jung would have called the archetypal world or the collective unconscious and that, in that world, there were forces and powers that were either benevolent or malevolent. It was some of those experiences that I tried to record in this recent book.

Dr. Dave

And so, had you in some way become more open to the paranormal; to spiritual etc. in the intervening years, or was it just that you were hearing these things and feeling like they needed to be represented ?

Dr. Kalsched

It was more that I, I don't know, maybe I had become more open to these things in my older age, I'm 71 now, so you know I think, as we age, as we get into our 60s & 70s, we're more open to the ineffable. I've always been a mystically-inclined person. as various powerful experiences mystical experiences make for a reading poetry and hearing music have been close to mystical literature in general but whatever these patients of mine were natural mystics, they seem to have the capacity and propensity and openness to the ineffable that I resonated with because of my own personal history but also I began to get very interested in the fact that this world, which we call the spiritual world, or the ineffable world seems to have a role in protecting them and protecting a certain innocent core of the personality when the kinds of protections these kids needed in their families just weren't there, so they just retreated into this magical, spiritual world and there found protectors; unfortunately, they also found persecutors.

Dr. Dave

Right, interesting and paradoxical, although you do spell out the dynamics of that. Now you describe your approach as a 'binocular' one; What are you getting at there? That's kind of a theme that runs through the book, using one eye and ...

Dr. Kalsched

I got inspired with the idea of a binocular way of looking at trauma because of a whale bone carving mask that was given to me, actually given to my wife Robin, by a friend of hers, carved by an unknown Inuit Eskimo carver in the northwest coast of Alaska. and it's this very arresting face with one eye open and one eye closed and its called: "The Storyteller" and I got very intrigued with that because the clarification[unintelligible??] of that is that the best stories we have: The Storyteller is always looking two ways at once; one outwardly into the time and space world that we all live our extraverted lives in, but also inwardly into the inner world and the mysteries of interiority so I felt that it was an important way of framing the book: the one inner world being more connected to spiritual realities or ineffable realities that are experienced as spiritual by us and the outer world; more the ordinary time and space of the material world that we associate with scientific explorations.

Jung was somebody who always looked with two eyes his whole life; he even gave these two perspectives the names of his Number 1 and his Number 2 personalities. Number 1 personality was the part that was well adapted to the world and went to medical school and became a psychiatrist and world-famous writer and the other part was his Number 2 personality which he felt lived in what he called God's world, which was the inner world of dreams and visions and premonitions and intuitions and experiences what he called the luminous.

Dr. Dave

Another word you use throughout the book that I think refers to that same world is mythoi-poetic. Do I have that right?

Dr. Kalsched

Yes, the mythoi-poetic; that was the term coined by Meyers as pertaining to the function of the unconscious that he felt was the human imagination which was naturally a basic endowment of all people, certainly very strong individuals, creative individuals would the tendency of the psyche to express itself in mythic and poetic form and of course that was very close to Jung's heart cause he was a very Mythoi-Poetic guy.

He remembered his dreams from very early childhood and recorded them all this life and in his famous Redbook which was published in the last ten years there's all kinds of imagery from dreams. the Mythoi-Poetic vision of the psyche is that function of the psyche that we have access to through our dreams, our visions, our imagination, our stories and it's terribly important because the soul seems to live happily in the Mythoi-Poetic.

It doesn't seem to live very happily in the dried up world of purely rational, linear, what is now known as 'left-hemisphere' thinking.

Dr. Dave

As we said earlier, the sort of trauma that you are focusing on here involves a rupture in the earliest stages of development, that for whatever reasons, the solid attachment of the mother doesn't happen and so there's a reflexive, defensive process in the infant psyche the purpose of which is meant to be protective, however you note that there is both an up-side and a down-side, if you will, to this defensive strategy. If I understand you correctly, this traumatic wound has the up-side potential of also creating a sort of spiritual sensitivity which put me in mind of Jung's "Wounded Healer" and also the "Grail Hero"?

Dr. Kalsched

Yes, that's exactly right. The up-side is that the survivor of unhappiness wounding rupture interruption [unintelligible??] in the personal world frequently find him or herself repairing to the Mythoi-Poetic worlds. You know these are kids who often have special gifts in the inner world and they have imaginary playmates. They are very highly sensitized to things that go on around them. They have a '6th sense'. They are connected to animals in an especially powerful way. They often have

imaginary playmates that can be animals, so they are opened up to the inner world in ways that better adapted people aren't always necessarily; these are generalizations. There's a big down side to this way of being opened up to this inner world because these kids tend to retreat into the inner world and to be held there in safety and sanctuary with an innocent part of them in safe keeping. They are also often un-adapted and not well related to the outer world, therefore and consequently, frequently, in later years they become very depressed and they require psychotherapy.

Dr. Dave

If I understand correctly, the wholeness of the psyche is ruptured or fractured and split and one consequence of this is that the soul fails to 'indwell the body'; that's a phrase you dwelled on quite a bit, about the soul indwelling the body and thereby leading to an inauthentic way of being in the world.

Dr. Kalsched

This whole issue of the 'indwelling soul' is something that I took from two people, two sources, one is John Keats in a letter to his brother, very early in his life which is frequently quoted by James Hillman and archetypal psychologists. I can't quote the whole thing for you because I don't remember it. I have it here. "Call the world, if you will, the Veil of Soulmaking; then you'll find out the use of the world." and he continues: "I say soulmaking; soul as distinguished from an intelligence. There are many intelligences, but they're not souls until they've undergone a certain amount of suffering." He talks about the sparks, which are those intelligences and vital centers of energy that each of us brings into the world, developing as the individual develops into a soul though a process of losing omnipotence but also suffering into unique and particularity that is part of what each of us brings and I combined that with Donald Winnicott's wonderful ideas about "Indwelling"; He has this very interesting phrase, where he says: "The Mother is continually introducing and reintroducing the baby's mind and body to each other and by that he means that the mother identifies what the baby is feeling in her empathy and gives it a name and if it is a bad feeling, she soothes it and if it's a good feeling she amplifies it and the baby slowly goes back and forth between body and mind and in that process, Winnicott says: something miraculous happens that he calls "indwelling". He calls it the "Indwelling of the Psyche and the Soma" but the Psyche is another word for soul and so I use this throughout the book and if that process is broken down, then the soul has a problematic descent into the body and it tends to remain disembodied and to take refuge in the unconscious, so that we get dreams of an orphaned or forsaken child or wounded animal in some woods or fortress somewhere protected by other forces and that part of the Psyche is very sacred and very special, and if it doesn't get a chance to come down into the body the person can suffer from feelings of not really feeling alive or fully vital or even feeling real.

Dr. Dave

Actually, you have some wonderful dreams that you've quoted, in the book, along with myths and fairy tales and as we go on, I've highlighted a couple of those dreams that I might ask that we can go into.

The task of the Psychoanalyst or the Jungian Analyst is then to stand in those fractures places with the client and do what?

Dr. Kalsched

The more we work in this field, the better we get at doing the kinds of healing work that is necessary. We used to think that our work as Psychoanalysts was more interpretive; we would understand the basic dynamic structure of the psyche and understand something about the person's individual and unique suffering and woundedness and we would be able to then interpret a dream in terms of what it meant.

Dr. Dave

Yes, and there would be a great illumination and all would be well.

Dr. Kalsched

Yes, illumination and insight was the preferred thing. We now know that when you're working with early trauma, that kind of insight doesn't do very much to help that person. In some cases of more helping neurotic psychology where the symbolic function and symbolic thinking is intact and well-founded, a more interpretive, insight-oriented therapy can be very helpful. But with early trauma and this gets into some of the neuroscience that I put in the book, especially the work of Allen Shore and Ian McGilchrist and some of the other neurologists that are showing now that when we are very young, say the first 18 months of life, the right hemisphere of the brain, which is the hemisphere that encodes things like, well... It's the hemisphere that tends to be involved in dreams, in visionary experiences, in poetry, in music, in all the sort of nonverbal, iconic forms of representation; that's the hemisphere that's online in our very earliest life so if we were traumatized in those years or those months it's going to be coded in those forms. It's going to be in those highly-affective emotional iconic imagistic form, it's not going to be reachable by words, so what we find in the therapy now is, back to your question, Philip Bromberg in New York called it "Standing in the Spaces". When a child has to dissociate unbearable experience, it creates a gap in the psyche and he means by standing in the spaces that we go into those gaps and what that means is if we're sitting with somebody for example, maybe, we've just been on vacation and the patient comes in and we can tell that there's no contact with the patient after this absence and yet they're not talking about it but we notice the rapport that was there the previous session just has evaporated, now we know to go into that, to that gap, and to say something like: "Gee, I'm feeling that we're out of contact again. Did you notice it too? What might account for that? I wonder if you have any feelings about me being away last week?" Sometimes you get, very rapidly, to some very deep feelings of resentment, of injury that parallels the early ruptures in attachment that the person felt when they were very little and is now being relived in therapy. So when you go into those with a more feelingful and sometimes imagistic way; sometimes a patient will bring in a dream that they've been abandoned on a desert island someplace or something like that. You get to the affect and the feeling much more readily than the verbal insight that we used to use.

Dr. Dave

Speaking of those special moments, I believe, you say there are moments of almost divine illumination in which the analyst and client experiences a sort of mystical awe and fusion [unintelligible??] I'm not expressing this with nearly the eloquence and precision you bring to the book but maybe you could say a bit more about that.

Dr. Kalsched

Those are rare moments, but they do happen. Sometimes as a Jungian Analyst, I work a lot with dreams. In the process I have one chapter in this recent book; my work with a man named Mike who I give a pretty thorough reprise of the whole spectrum of the analysis with a lot of dreams and showing the development and evolution of the dream content and Mike for example was the kind of person who came into therapy without any expectation that he would go as deep as he did in his dream life and his unconscious opened up dramatically. The process of the dreaming itself was as though he and I were companioned by a very large ancient shaman or something that sent these dreams that helped his process along in remarkable ways and provided a commentary from a very deep place in his psyche about the way he was experiencing the analysis and the way he was experiencing me. You have to read Jung in order to understand what this is about. The actual companioning of the process from the unconscious of the patient is a remarkable thing. It doesn't happen very often but there are those rare cases and Mike was a traumatized individual where we would sit sometimes both in tears with the beauty and the incredible meaning that was brought by some of his imagery.

Dr. Dave

Yes, I was personally touched by that chapter and could easily understand how that his presentation, at first, does not seem like somebody that would be psychologically-minded; very athletic, extroverted kind of guy, who doesn't seem to be at all oriented to the inner world.

Dr. Kalsched

That's right, he didn't he didn't even know he HAD an inner world.

Dr. Dave

I know the type; I've taught dream classes when I was busy as a Professor to Undergraduates. There was a certain type of guy that he reminds me of and so you know so it was a remarkable account.

Dr. Kalsched

Very extroverted, very well-adapted, very attractive, enormous energy, athletic, a favorite among all the ladies. You know, a coach, and all this stuff, all the outer world. But boy he came down into himself in a dramatic way and it was interesting with him that he had two... he and his wife had two small boys when he started his analysis and one of the major reasons he started was that he started to feel very vulnerable and frightened for the safety of his boys. He didn't know it at the time but his boys were helping him keep contact with the vulnerable parts of himself that had been completely dissociated.

Dr. Dave

You made reference to the child and a major thing that you focus on in the book is the dream motif of the child and that when a child appears in our dreams it may be pointing to something deeper than our literal childhood and you talk about the symbolic child that is suspended between two worlds. Tell us a little bit about that. What are the two worlds that that child is suspended between?

Dr. Kalsched

Take the Christian myth, for example, here we have the image of a child who is suspended between two worlds; he's half divine and he's half human, right. He has two fathers, in effect; he has a transpersonal father and a personal father. Well, Jung got very interested in that motif which is world-wide in mythology all over the world. The great heroes or the great avatars of religions are either twice-born or they're born to two parents; one divine, one human. and Jung felt that particular child motif was emblematic of the fact that there is a part of the human personality; Jung called the Soul or the Self that I call the Soul that comes trailing clouds of glory, as it were, to use Wordsworth's image. That there's a unique spark of individuality that is sacred in each person so we are children of our time and space parents but we are also children of God and that basic idea is the informing background, the informing myth, certainly of Jung's Psychology and therefore myself as a Jungian Analyst, I grew up in that same tradition and that mythic theme captured something very important about the work we all do in this field and the way we hold our patients in the process.

Dr. Dave

A number of dreams and myths relate to the loss and recovery of what you called the Soul Child. Perhaps you can share with us the Baby in the Cage Dream. I don't know if you have got that book in front of you.

Dr. Kalsched

Oh yes, that was a remarkable dream. This was a woman who was referred to me because she, by one of her friends, she had a poetic sensibility and a lovely artistic side and one of her friends said I think you'd be a good analyst some day. She was vaguely depressed; her children were grown up and she didn't know what to do with the rest of her life. As She came into therapy, her inner life opened up and she started to feel trusting of the process between us and the kind of safety in the container that we established together and very soon in her process, her very first dream, was that she was in the hardware store across the street from my office in this little village of Katonah, in New York. Where the hardware store was, there was a new pet store and she loved animals so she was just entranced by all these puppies and kittens playing in the newspapers of these various cages and she was making her way up and down the aisles of this place and suddenly she just stopped dead in her tracks and she realized there was a baby in one of the cages.

Dr. Dave

This is in the dream right?

Dr. Kalsched

This is a dream; this didn't happen. This is her dream, right. She was shocked and outraged and she looked around for the store owner and he was standing in the back looking vaguely menacing and frightening and she didn't have the courage at the time to confront the store owner but she woke up with a terrible start. What unfolded very rapidly in our work with that dream and in the subsequent analysis was that she had had to banish and exile a part of herself, as a little girl, that couldn't go on living in this family because her mother constantly criticized her or failed to recognize her vitality; made her feel like dirt. This part had to be sequestered and went into the unconscious and we didn't have an image of it until this dream and then she realized OMG If I want to really uncover my full potential, I'm going to have to go back and recover this child.

Dr. Dave

I also loved your story about the Stockbroker and the Buried Child dream.
Is that one you could share with us as well?

Dr. Kalsched

Sure, that was a remarkable story; a young man came to see me who was terribly depressed after his fiancé broke up with him he said that was his only problem. There had never been anything else wrong in his life except that he just lived in a boring household, typically middle class, except that he couldn't remember anything of his childhood. We were puzzled by that, so after a while, the analysis sort of ground to a halt. He couldn't remember any of his dreams. He was just depressed about the lost love. He wanted to know when he was going to get another girlfriend and what good therapy was and I sort of redoubled my efforts with him and we agreed that we would start to do a kind of detective work about what happened to him in his childhood. What was missing? Why were there no pictures of him in his family? He had the fantasy that he was adopted so he went back and he interviewed his aunts and uncles. His mother was dead by now, but he discovered that when he was born, his mother had a post-partum, psychotic breakdown and had to be hospitalized for a long period of time and he was sent to live with an aunt where he almost died for failure to thrive and then as he grew up in his family; the mother had rejoined the family by now. She was a very harsh disciplinarian and when he was bad she would lock him in a closet in the hallway in the dark where he was terrified of spiders and roaches and stuff and he would cry himself into numbness in that closet; it was known as his crying closet.

As these memories surfaced, through his detective work and our work and my gentle interviewing him, he suddenly had a dream and it was the first major dream that he'd had that he was walking along a beach and he saw a woman approaching him in a white terry cloth robe with a hood. He met the woman and she pointed to the sand, a lump in the sand, and told him to uncover this lump in the sand and he dug into the lump in the sand and discovered the live body of a little boy who was also wearing a white terry cloth robe and hood.

Dr. Dave

Wow, How powerful!

Dr. Kalsched

Slowly he uncovered this boy and they were walking; they got him out and then they were walking down the beach and as they were walking down the beach something remarkable happened: the water suddenly erupted with dolphins jumping and playing and he watched this from a lifeguard tower; they were in a lifeguard tower and the wind came and blew him over backwards. he was very arrested by this dream. I tell in the book how when I had this experience, I was in training at the Jung Center in New York and I happened to read Jung's essay on the Divine Child and there's a paragraph in there...

Do you mind if I quote it?
It's just a few lines.

Dr. Dave

Go ahead

Dr. Kalsched

Jung said this about the Divine Child. He said "Faust after his death is received as a boy into the choir of blessed youth. I don't know whether Goethe was referring with this peculiar idea to the cupid on antique gravestones; it's not unthinkable." Then Jung continues: "The figure of the Cucullatis points to the hooded, that is the invisible one, the genius of the departed who reappears in the childlike frolics of a new life surrounded by the sea forms of dolphins and tritons":

Now I read that and I had just processed with this man, this dream of unburying of new life, of new memories and then suddenly the eruption of dolphins, I couldn't believe it. I literally couldn't believe it. I was suddenly opened up to the fact that the imagery of the psyche is universal. It's archetypal. It's collective and so this image of new life that he and I had uncovered with the eruption of the sea, with dolphins, Jung was pointing to this imagery in an essay about the ineffable Divine Child; the child that represents the new life in us that sometimes gets buried or exiled and can be recovered.

Dr. Dave

Yes, you must have felt close to Jung at that point.

Dr. Kalsched

I did, yes.

If I hadn't been in Jungian training, I think I would have gone across the street and gotten into it.

Dr. Dave

You describe a defensive process in which sometimes angelic personifications can emerge initially as the archetypal benefactors for the patient, but as time goes on, they may turn upon the victim and become demonic and persecutory.

Dr. Kalsched

Yes

Dr. Dave

This description reminds me that many first time psychotic episodes also follow this pattern. Isn't that so?

Dr. Kalsched

They can. Do you have some personal experience with that, Dave?

Dr. Dave

Not in terms of me going psychotic.

But yes. I do, and that's why I thought of that.

I thought well, that's an interesting parallel; if that happens in psychosis.

Yet the people you are writing about aren't exactly psychotic.

Dr. Kalsched

No they're not.

Let me give you an example that I cite in the book, actually, I cite this example in both books.

It's such an arresting story; it's about a little girl.

This comes to us from England through a Jungian analyst named Esther Harding.

The little girl in this story; she was four or five years old and she was asked by her mother to take a note to her father who

was reading in the den. She took the note and she reappeared in a few minutes crying, and said to her mother "Mother, the angel won't let me go in." The mother said she knew this little girl was really very deep into the imagination; the mythoi-poetic imagination so she said:

"You just tell the angel that you have to deliver this note to your Daddy "and she sent the girl back again

She returned another few minutes later, this time sobbing uncontrollably, and saying

"Mommy, the angel won't let me go in." so the mother took her by the hand, walked her down to the threshold of the father's study, looked through the door and saw her husband, the girl's father, dead in his chair from a massive heart attack.

Dr. Dave

I remember that story; that's powerful.

Dr. Kalsched

That is a typical example of the appearance of these, of what you call the spiritual benefactor, the angelic figure. It's kind of interesting how we could understand that story. From a purely Freudian, secular, materialistic standpoint, that little girl clearly made up the angel in order to feel better, in order to tolerate that experience. In other words, the angel would be a delusion or a hallucination which is the way Freud approached all of religious experience. If you looked at it from the standpoint of Orthodox Christian tradition, you might say that this little girl's Guardian Angel on high saw the impossible situation she was in and sent its messenger to her as an act of salvation or an act of spiritual rescue, or something. Now if you took a psycho-spiritual or psychological orientation which I'm trying to do in this book, to that event, you would say I clearly see the defensive quality of this presence. It did save this little girl's psyche at that time. In the sense of, it protected her from too much information, too soon. Information that she could not metabolize or assimilate, so we could say that it's a defense, but what is it defending? and here's where I have a couple of pages on this example in my book, where I talk about what the angel accomplishes for the little girl, is that it gives her a mythoi-Poetic story; a matrix within which to help her hold this experience, which is impossible to hold without it. In other words, the angel is present now in the story so what the angel does is restore a mythoi-Poetic matrix for this little girl and it appears to do that because it's in that matrix that the soul can survive; the soul can live. so that the angel protects the soul of this child from utter annihilation or destruction by providing some insulation between her and the reality of her father's death.

Now to pick up on your further comment Dave, the fact is that this angel can't do this indefinitely and we don't know the results of that event or the rest of that story. If the mother had been able to step in and mediate for the child, and hadn't disappeared into her own crisis, that angel probably wouldn't have had to hang around for too long and the child would have had a way, within the interpersonal matrix, of processing her experience. But if the mother disappeared or, in traumatic environments where there is very little mediation from the parents, that angel would have had to stay around and become a spiritual defense for the little girl and what we find is that in trauma survivors, the benevolent forces in that self-care system, the angelic forces rapidly turn into persecutory forces.

Dr. Dave

That seems a little paradoxical and you do help us to understand that. You say that sometimes that defenses have survival value and sometimes they keep us in Hell forever and you use Dante's epic poem The Inferno as a metaphoric map to describe the states of suffering that traumatized patients endure.

Take us through whatever part of that calls to you right now.

Dr. Kalsched

The reason that these archaic and archetypal; 'archetypal' is a word that means simply archaic and typical - Archetypal.

Dr. Dave

I love that breakdown of it. Thank you

Dr. Kalsched

So it simply means that these are archaic remnants in the psyche. These are images that come from a very deep stratum of what Jung called the Collective Unconscious, which is where the angels and the demons reside and these forces are a part of all of our inheritance. They exist in us and if we have traumatic experiences, they get recruited for defensive purposes. They become part of an archetypal self-care system, which is why I got interested in the first place. So if these forces; these demonic forces, angels and demons, are designed to cut the person off from a reality in the world that is just unbearable. They can do that for a time by just protecting the child, but pretty soon, it's very hard to cut a child off from reality, unless you start to attack the child's efforts to relate to reality and that's what happens when these forces become more persecutory. The basic idea is that the child who wants to reach out and reattach in the world is discouraged from doing so by an attack by these defensive systems; I'm talking about trauma now. and so what we find is that in the adult life of such a person is that there is an internal saboteur, a fifth column, a kind of a dark critic that is always attacking their hopes, always attacking their wishes to connect, their wishes to improve, their wishes to change and it disconnects them from their hope, and from the possibility of new life in a world, and from relationship.

Dr. Dave

Would it be fair to say that they go into the state of suffering and it's defensive inasmuch as the ongoing suffering is somehow protecting them from something that would be worse and intolerable. For example, to squarely see that they were unloved by the mother.

Dr. Kalsched

That's exactly right. The reality of their situation in the world is so unbearable that their hearts would break. Their souls would be murdered or annihilated. So the suffering that is provided for them is the suffering of isolation and that's where my Dante chapter came in. I got very interested in the fact that Dante's name for the Fallen Angel who creates all the problems for people in Hell in the Medieval Imagination is named Dis. That's a word from which we get dissociation, which is the main defense used in trauma, and disease, disconnection, disavowal and even disaster, which means literally to be separated from your stars: dis-aster.

Dr. Dave

I thought that was remarkable.

Dr. Kalsched

Isn't that interesting?

Dr. Dave

Very interesting, are you the first person to observe that?

Dr. Kalsched

No, I don't think so, I think that's been observed, well, at least I got intrigued by it because one's stars are the spark, the scintillate of one's true selfhood, one's soul life. If you get Dis-Astered; your life becomes a disaster. You've lost your lodestar; you've lost your direction, your basic meaning. Anyway, that chapter on Dis and his minions I simply got very intrigued with the fact that Hades, as it's imaged in Dante, is a great out picturing for what I call a Self-Care System; the trauma survival fortress and system. Full of negativity and dismembering violence and the suffering that goes on in there is endless and it's chronic, but you're right in pointing out, that it's a suffering that's tolerable to the person that is trying to survive in this life because it's a substitute for the suffering that is necessary if the person is to truly heal and change.

Dr. Dave

I was interested in your suggestion that the affects associated with these traumatic memories are deeply encapsulated in the body and for that reason, Body Therapy approaches might be particularly relevant and effective and you draw on the work of neuroscience authors as you mentioned, Dan Siegel, and Allen Shore to describe the process by which these implicit memories might be formed at a biochemical level.

Dr. Kalsched

That's right and it fits with what I was saying earlier about the Right Hemisphere being online for the first month. We now know that affect is encoded in the body and when we have affects that are unbearably painful, they get embedded in various forms in the musculature, the gesture, breathing, different facets of embodied life and we don't have access to them until we pay attention to the body.

This came home to me one time in a Milwaukee massage parlor where I was having my shoulder worked on. The masseuse was telling me about a man she was working with who had a terrible cramp in his shoulder. She was working on it and working on it. He was a very Type-A personality, very hard driven Hedge Fund Manager-type of guy. She was working on this thing on his shoulder and she discharged him that day and he called her up that night and said that she had ruined his life. That he couldn't stop crying. She said well come back in here. I want to work with you further and he got back on the table sobbing and she said OK now just tell me anything that comes to mind as I just gently touch you here, any fragments, feelings, images, memories, whatever. They worked the better part of that evening. He suddenly had an image of dirt being thrown on a board. She said "Stay with it. Stay With it." He stayed with it. He couldn't figure it out. He finally remembered, He was two years old. His father had just been killed and he was at the graveside and they threw the first shovelful of dirt on the coffin. That memory was somehow embedded in that knot in his shoulder. That's a very dramatic example of it, but that's what we find in our work with very early trauma is that some of these memories are encoded in the body and that they're not accessible. You can do Verbal Therapy forever and never get to that.

Dr. Dave

Then how do you as a Jungian Analyst reconcile your work with that potential work on the body, on the other hand?

Dr. Kalsched

What we would say is that until we work with that very early material in an embodied form of work. Now, there are many forms of Body work, Alexander Technique, Continuum, there's Active Imagination and Movement. There are various forms of Somatic Psychotherapy, Peter Levine's work is emblematic. Sharon Stanley's work, Ted Ogden's work, a lot of people are working in this area where they are paying attention to gesture and a lot of embodied ways of being in the moment in the therapy session. They are finding that this opens up certain very early feelings and traumatic experiences in ways that Verbal Therapy just hasn't been able to get at. Once you get that material from very early childhood work done, then the symbolic process opens up and you can do the usual kinds of things that we're good at in Jungian dream-work.

Dr. Dave

Well, I applaud your openness to these ideas and your flexibility in that regard.

Let's skip ahead in the time we have left here, to Chapter 8, in which you write about Jung and HIS inner crisis and in part, you explain you wrote this chapter in reaction to the Psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott, who you mentioned previously, who, you say, misunderstood and pathologized Jung.

Dr. Kalsched

Jung wrote a famous autobiography called Memories, Dreams, Reflections, which is one of the major books that introduces Jung to the world. It's a fabulous autobiography, and in that autobiography, he talks about his early life and his parents separation when he was very young about his coming to mistrust the word love because his parents had separated. Then he also talks about God's world and the world of his mythoi-Poetic imagination and all of his dramatic fantasies and his Number One and his Number Two Personalities and Winnicott read that and came at it from his basically Kleinian

background and understanding which is that a Unit Personality has to develop in the early months of life and what he means by a Unit Personality, basically is that the child has to be able to get his love and his aggression, his hatred together in one place. He has to be able to work through a process of loving and hating with a receptive and coherent family system and parents. Klein called that the Depressive Position; when you work through to that point, you then don't have to split the world between the good objects and the bad objects. You get them both together in a coherent unified object that you can both love and dislike or love and be angry at. That's a very useful understanding of every child's early experiences with love and hate, but that was the template that Winnicott plastered on to Jung's autobiography and he concluded that Jung had never reached Unit Status because he had his Number One and his Number Two personality all the time, even through later childhood, six seven, eight, nine, all the way up to adolescence, so Winnicott concluded that Jung was an example of Childhood Schizophrenia and that he had basically healed himself but that it was only a very partial cure and one that really haunted Jung, psychopathology that Jung showed haunted him the rest of his life. I've always been upset with that article; Winnicott's critique of Jung's autobiography, which was published shortly after the autobiography came out, because I felt that Winnicott really didn't understand anything of the mythoi-Poetic dimension of the unconscious in the way it can really provide a matrix for the soul before it can come down into this world and Jung clearly is an example of that because he saved himself or he was saved by his extraordinary imagination; his dreams, his visions and so I wrote a whole chapter criticizing Winnicott's criticism. The wider point was the book is about Trauma and the Soul and I feel Jung's Soul was saved without a psychosis and that Winnicott really didn't get the religious dimension of the Psyche which is something that is essential to understand Jung.

Dr. Dave

I take it that Winnicott wrote his article well before the Red Book was released.

Dr. Kalsched

Yes, He did.

Dr. Dave

I wonder what he would have made of the Red Book?

Dr. Kalsched

You know, I really don't know. That would be a very interesting question. I'll have to ponder that.

Dr. Dave

I could see him perhaps trying to use that as evidence for pathology.

Dr. Kalsched

He might have gone that direction, that's conceivable or he might have been impressed at how faithful Jung was to a dialogical process with inner figures and how he worked out. I suspect that Winnicott would have thought of that as part of Jung's self-cure; that Jung didn't have an analyst and found a way, nonetheless to have a dialogue with these inner figures and work out his feelings.

Dr. Dave

I love the story of the little mannequin that Jung carved out at ten years old. He carved off a piece of a ruler and created this little mannequin and hid it in the attic and then wrote little secret messages in an unknown language. Was that in Dreams, Memories, Reflections?

Dr. Kalsched

That's in Dreams, Memories, Reflections. That's one of the really precious memories that Jung talks about and to me, that's a beautiful example of the way Jung needed to provide a little image of his own Soul Life; the Sacred Center of him and actually carve it as a little mannequin and put it in his pencil box and put it on a beam up in the attic and make a little library for it out of sayings that he thought were really wise and that gave Jung a tremendous feeling of peace and security in the traumatic life he was living in the school he was in at the time and it's a wonderful example of how the soul really needs to be sequestered sometimes, in order to be saved.

Dr. Dave

He was a Jungian already!

Dr. Kalsched

He was a Jungian already, that's right! Jung used to say, when people would want to go into training; he didn't want to do a training institute in his own name; He used to say: "Thank god I'm not a Jungian, I'm only Jung."

Dr. Dave

Well, as we wind down now, is there anything more that you'd like our listeners to know?

Dr. Kalsched

Gee David, I don't know, we've covered a pretty broad swathe of this book in a short time and I appreciate your questions because they helped me download some of my own ideas in, I hope, a really accessible way. I hope the listeners, your listeners will enjoy this.

Dr. Dave

I'm sure that they will.

Dr. Donald Kalsched, I want to thank you for being my guest on ShrinkRapRadio.com

Dr. Kalsched

You're very welcome, it's been my pleasure. All the Best!

Dr. Dave

Hi Eric, it's good to have you here again.

e

Great to be here.

Dr. Dave

I know you were particularly interested in this upcoming interview with Dr. Kalsched because you'd had some exposure through the depth psychology program you'd been in.

e

That's right, I'd been really excited for this interview today and his work with trauma and grief and things really hit home for me and it's had an impact on my life, and of course, we've studied him in the classroom, as well, it's a known-state [unintelligible ???] so it's a really enjoyable experience.

Dr. Dave

Fortuitous, I didn't know that when I set out to interview him but it was fortuitous that this should dovetail with your needs and your experience.

What did you think of how the interview went?

e

I thought it was great. The first thing that jumped out to me was his talking about his binocular vision; his story telling which is just a great, great metaphor for keeping an awareness of the outside world, as well as the inner reality, in telling a story, in telling one's truth.

Dr. Dave

In telling one' OWN story and exploring one's own inner world. It's sort of a paradox; there's two versions of reality going on all the time. The external version and the internal version, of which we have some awareness, and much of which that we don't have much awareness of. I was happily surprised by how friendly and accessible he was. His book is, I think it's a very solid, intellectual, elegantly written, very carefully researched Jungian book, so it was nice to experience the person on the other end. Somebody who is very open and flexible and could laugh and be loose.

e

I always find it great to be able to put a voice to the reading and at first glance, my first thought on reading Trauma and the Soul was this is going to be heavy and depressing, but my experience with Dr. Kalsched's work couldn't be more opposite, what I found was a very rich and very powerful experience in his work that was actually quite enjoyable to me.

Dr. Dave

I'm glad that we could cover as much of the book as we did in the interview. I think we covered certainly the highlight, the overall feel of it came through in this interview. For anyone who is deeply interested in Jungian thought,. I would strongly recommend this book. It is definitely readable but it requires some dedication and some passion for the Jungian Perspective to motor your way through it. and so if you're that kind of person, I think you'd like this book. What do you think?

e

I think so. Absolutely and really you can pick it up and read a chapter at a time; there's so much material in it and what I love about his writing is the wonderfully vivid imagery that comes to mind. It really just provides a very unique experience and I wouldn't be thrown by the title Trauma and the Soul, because, yes, it deals with trauma and grief and these themes, but it's really much more than that, in my experience.

Dr. Dave

One of the things that really impressed me was the breadth of material that he draws from. As you heard he's drawing from some of the latest thinking in neuroscience; he's drawing from Classic Psychoanalytic, as distinct from Jungian Analyst; he goes to the Freudian Analyst and draws very freely from some of the major figures in that tradition. He goes to mythology and fairy tales. He has an whole chapter on Dante's inferno. Just the way that he weaves all of this stuff together from such different sources. I didn't ask him but I suspect that this book was years in the making.

e

I would imagine it would be and especially with the accounts of, with his working with patients and he pulls from dreams and from myths and from fairy tales and really weaves this unique pattern.

Dr. Dave

It's my habit to turn the recorder off as soon as I've thanked the person for their participation and sometimes they thank me back and sometimes I regret that because afterwards sometimes they will say some really wonderful stuff that I wish had gotten recorded and in this instance, he shared that he has never listened to Shrink Rap Radio, but that had heard of it from some Jungian colleagues and he named Monica Wickman, who long time listeners will know I've interviewed a number of times. As I described what the show is and that I'd interviewed many of the people that he mentioned both in this interview and in his book, he really lit up. He said: Wow! How can I support this show? What does it cost to join? He was shocked when I said it's all free. I've struggled with whether or not to figure out a way to charge or not, but it's all free. We get donations and said he would become a donor and would spread the word. Needless to say, I was excited by all of that.

e

It is such a valuable resource, myself as a student and I'm sure, as professionals, and he did seem to be shocked to learn that this is a free service for people.

Dr. Dave

Sometimes I feel a little bit burdened by the weekly schedule... here's another one... I'm gonna do another one but there are a couple of things that really keep me going, One is the feedback I get from listeners. which is uniformly supportive, enthusiastic, etc. and the other is just the joy of making contact with somebody like this and feeling like Hey, there's a connection here, we're understanding each other. I do get his material. He gets that I get his material and that's a wonderfully reinforcing feeling. Okay so I guess that's going to wrap it up for you and me.