

What is *Transformational Gestalt*?



The ***Transformational Gestalt*** approach is essentially a synthesis of Gestalt and Christian spirituality - Gestalt through a Christian lens. The work is based on the premise that God is present and available for healing and wholeness.

Acknowledging this allows us to enter a sacred healing space that is profound and inspirational. If we can 'step aside' metaphorically and attend to the emerging process, then healing and change will occur naturally, as God is revealed personally through embodied experience. Participants of the workshops have experienced profound physical and emotional

healing and growth when God is consciously invited into the process, and the framework of Gestalt offers a vital and enriching backdrop to this growth work.

Connection and **community** are prominent aspects of the work and exploration often centres around our blocks to connection both personally and relationally. With an underpinning of compassion and focused care, each participant is encouraged to centralise and deepen their spiritual connection, in turn deepening connection to self and to each other - ultimately strengthening a sense of community. In this sense the work is about 'fellow travelling' and tapping into what God is already doing in each person and in the group as a collective.

The '***Opening to Grace***' **Retreats** are essentially experiential and experimental, where participants are invited to explore personal concerns and ways of being within a supportive space. The work is awareness focussed in the 'here and now', with an emphasis on the relational aspect of how we express ourselves in the world. Spontaneous personal Gestalt experiments are an integral part of the process, facilitating awareness and insight, and bringing an element of creativity and spontaneity to the work. Each Retreat comes alive with a sense of seeking more of God personally and collectively, and building strong, compassionate community.

During the Retreat we emphasise a **contemplative stance** which is the relational underpinning of this work. This will prepare and equip you to approach this work effectively, both for your own spiritual development and for your work with others. Spiritual formation is part of the focus of this work. Whilst the emphasis is on personal healing and growth for each participant, the work can be viewed through a professional development lens and unpacked from a process perspective - learning can be immediately integrated into professional practice.

Terrigal Gestalt Institute is an affiliate of Gestalt Pastoral Care in New York, which has greatly influenced Dinah & Barry in their development of the ***Transformational Gestalt*** approach. Tilda Norberg is the founder of GPC and has outlined her work in her book '*Consenting To Grace*'.

Who will benefit from 'Opening to Grace' Retreats?

The *Transformational Gestalt* approach is both a way to deepen personal faith and spiritual connection, and a way to help others deepen and strengthen their own faith. In turn connection to self and other is also strengthened. The Retreats are open to all – professional practitioners and others alike. Participants don't necessarily need to have experienced Gestalt work previously or be a clinical practitioner. For professionals and helpers who want to work more creatively, spontaneously and more effectively with others, there is no better way than to experience *Transformational Gestalt* work personally through an '**Opening to Grace**' Retreat. Within the TG framework we are all regarded as 'fellow travellers' and support each other on our individual and collective spiritual journeys. Contemplative practice forms the foundation for the process as a way to invite God's presence and healing revelation.

Participants are encouraged to participate at the level they are comfortable with and the work is sensitive and timely. Because the work is experiential it tends to be more creative and spontaneous, with attention to emerging process and embodied experience – participants report profound awareness and insight that often leads to recognisable shifts in continuing experience and relationships.

Participants who are in professional practice also report that their work with clients and others deepens and becomes 'easier', in the sense that they are able to attend to where God is already working in each person, and more easily facilitate awareness and insight into this process for their clients.

Above all the Retreats are a chance to step out of the bustle of life and step into a reflective space – there will be time for some silent meditation and reflection, and time to reflect on your own faith journey, and what God is calling forth in you. You will also have an opportunity to support others and be part of compassionate community whilst at the Retreat. Your faith will be deepened, and your faith walk become clearer and more profound. We will have times for discussion, reflection, and meditation / contemplation in various forms.

'Opening to Grace' Retreats are suitable for those who are in professional practice such as **counsellors, therapists, ministers, chaplains, spiritual directors, pastoral care workers, mentors, coaches** as well as those who are not in any professional role with clients. All you need is a willingness to participate and a willingness to surrender to the process.

All faith journeys are welcomed, honoured and shared in a spirit of deep community.

Dinah Eades Buchanan
December 2016