

# Step Four: Transplantation of Consciousness – Experiencing Other As Self

By Rawn Clark 26 July 2009

For me, Step Four was very exciting! So many factors come together here and the work of Step Four opens up vast new horizons just begging to be explored. The mental work opens us to an experiential understanding of every other living being from the inside out. And the astral and physical work brings mastery of the Elements, opening us to limitless possibilities as we explore the practical applications of this new media.

Today, I'll be talking about just the mental work of Step Four, the transplantation or transference of consciousness. I'll save discussion of the astral and physical work with the Elements for the next lecture in two weeks.

Before I begin my lecture on the mental exercises themselves, I need to speak first about the pre-requisites for Step Four; what is required of you before starting out on the Step Four work. So I will describe some of the abilities you must have developed and to what degree and I will sketch for you a simple picture of what you must have achieved in regard to your astral Equilibrium of the Elements.

First and foremost, you must have reached an Equilibrium of the Elements within your astral body. This is an absolute requirement. If you try to proceed without this Equilibrium then you won't get far and you will find yourself staring over from Step One in the not too distant future. This initiatory system is self-protecting in that way; when you head off unprepared you inevitably loop back to the beginning where you must start all over again.

So, that raises the perennial question of what is an astral Equilibrium of the Elements and how do we gauge whether we've reached it or not. Unfortunately there are no absolutes, no universal standards by which to judge this since each individual is unique, but there are common characteristics or traits that I can at least describe. In the end though it is up to you to judge your own state of Equilibrium.

The most basic definition of an astral Equilibrium is that your responses to your environment have become intentional. Your reactions and responses are no longer dictated by external events but are instead the product of your conscious, intentional choices. For example, you get to the supermarket check-out line to find it's quite long and slow. Formerly, you might have automatically become impatient and angry, but now you choose to wait patiently and without pointless anger.

In terms of negative character traits, you have mastered them all. This means that none of them can take over your reactions and instead, you are at all times master of how you express your emotions. Furthermore, as new negative character traits emerge or are uncovered, you are immediately in control of them.

This presupposes a consistent awareness of your own inner self, of your thoughts and emotions as they arise. You are always present in your thinking and feeling, and always in control of how you choose to express them.

While this does mean the absence of all major negative character traits, this does not mean a complete absence of negative character traits. However, those minor negative traits that do remain are never given the chance to exercise themselves. You are always in control of them, they never control you.

In general, an astral Equilibrium results in a certain calm self-assurance. Such a person is reliable and consistent yet adaptable to the ever changing demands of the moment. The qualities of kindness, consideration of others and even-headedness are also common attributes. But in the end, Equilibrium is judged by one's internal state, not one's external character.

Not only must you be master of your character, you must also be master of your mind before beginning the work of Step Four. You must by this point be able to enter into an emptiness of mind any time you wish and in an instant. Your emptiness of mind practice must by now be a deep source of inspiration, joy and peacefulness.

You must also have greatly deepened your practice of mindfulness into a constant habit of awareness. You always live in the present moment and are continuously aware of your inner environment.

You must also be able to affix your mind upon any idea or thought you desire and keep it focused for as long as necessary without interruption. And you must be able to create any sensory impression imaginable and maintain that impression for as long as necessary.

Furthermore, you must be master of your own body as well. You must be able to override its wants and needs at will to such a degree that no matter how uncomfortable or how pleased your physical body becomes, your mental focus is not adversely affected.

Your work with the factual Vital Energy must be well advanced through consistent pursuit of the work described in the appendices of Step Three and you must, before beginning Step Four, have made contact with the factual Elements through your Step Three work of inhaling them.

If you are absolutely certain you have attained these prerequisites, then you are ready to begin the work of Step Four. But if any doubt remains in regard to your having met any of these standards, then you must improve upon them first. Otherwise, you will be wasting your time and considerable efforts.

So, on to the mental exercises themselves . . .

The title of these exercises is given as either 'transplantation' or 'transference' of consciousness, depending upon which English translation you reference. Both of these

English words imply a projection of your awareness through physical space, into an object some spatial distance away from you. However, that is not in fact the method taught by these exercises. Instead, it is more accurately described by the English word 'transmutation' for indeed it is all about using your creative imagination to transmute the vessel surrounding your awareness. As with the initial exercises with the Vital Energy and the Elements, your creative transmutation of the vessel establishes a connection with the factual object on the mental plane. In other words, the transference occurs through mental-space, not physical-space and is more of a mutual coming together than an act of projection. In effect, you come to inhabit the object by adopting or becoming the object's size, shape, color, purpose and location. This mental act of becoming is how awareness is transferred or transplanted.

Given time and practice and experience however, the process of using the imagination to create the sensory impressions of inhabiting an object becomes less and less necessary and eventually it does become a very simple act of projecting awareness, of simply moving your awareness into the target immediately, similar to the experience of focusing your awareness into a specific part or organ of your own body.

This technique of adopting or becoming other, is fundamental to Hermetic practice and will be greatly advanced in future Steps. At this point however, its main function, aside from increasing your access to understanding and experiencing the perspectives of others, is to render your awareness more fluid and adaptive, more malleable.

There are five steps or phases to this technique. Bardon stated the first step as “Similar to the concentration on objects, put some objects which you are using every day in front of you. Sitting in your habitual position, fix your eyes for a short while on one of the objects, and inculcate the shape, color and size of it firmly in your mind.” In other words, get to know all the details of your target from the outside first. You must impress all of the object's external details firmly in your mind, noting especially its shape, its size, its color and its surface texture. Later, when you're working with imaginary targets, this stage involves the actual creation of the target with your imagination, in which case you will be determining all of its external details.

Bardon described the second step thusly: “Now imagine yourself being transmuted in this object. You must feel, in a way, as the object itself and adopt all its properties.” Here you are using your creative imagination to surround yourself with all the physical properties of the target. In effect, you build the object around your awareness. For example if you've chosen a yellow pencil, you will creatively imagine that you inhabit the shape of a narrow tube that is painted yellow on the exterior. At one end is an eraser affixed with a metal band and at the other end you are sharpened to a point. Internally you are composed of fibrous wood surrounding a very narrow shaft of lead. You must build all of these sensations with your creative imagination until you truly feel that you are this pencil. Take your time and work slowly and carefully and when you feel that you truly inhabit the exact form of your target, move on to the third step.

And for the third step Bardon wrote, “**You have to be quite certain of the fact that you are fastened to the spot you have been put, unable to abandon it but through an outside influence.**” This is the point at which you complete your connection with the factual target. The goal is to so completely inhabit your target that you feel it to truly be your body. You are now bound to it in exactly the same way you are bound to your normal body of flesh and blood. Achieving this sense of captivity is very important. It’s similar to the difference between being a tourist in a foreign land and being a native of that land. Tourism gives only a superficial experience and what is aimed for here is the deeper experience of permanent residency. Only then will you be able to learn things of true and lasting value from inhabiting your target. Once you have attained this sense of captivity, move on to step four.

Bardon stated step four as: “**You have also to consider the purpose of the object after being transmuted into it imaginarily.**” This is when you start perceiving instead of creating, for now you must perceive the purpose of your target from its inside and from its perspective. This is not a rational process of deduction; but rather, it’s an intuitive experiential process of opening yourself to what this form communicates to you. Similar to the very first mental exercise of Step One, you must observe, without interference or imposition of what you think the target’s purpose is supposed to be.

Another term for what you are meant to perceive is the thing’s essential meaning which might be quite different than its intended use, as in an object. And of course, when it comes to natural, non-manmade things, plants, animals, etc., and those targets that are created by your own imagination, the question of purpose or usefulness is inappropriate and one must contend with essential meaning instead. When you have come to understand your target’s essential meaning, move on to the final step five.

Bardon described step five as: “**You should even be capable, by intense concentration, to regard your surroundings from the point of this object, and to grasp its relationship to other objects. For example: supposing the object happens to be on the table, you feel the relationship to this table as well as to all the other things on the table, including the room in which the objects happen to be.**” In this final stage you must perceive as your target. It’s no longer you perceiving your target, but rather you perceiving your target’s surroundings as your target perceives them. In other words you have so deeply and thoroughly inhabited your target that you are now capable of experiencing your target’s perceptions.

We are naturally able to sense our relationship to our surroundings. For example, when you close your eyes, you can still sense that you are in a physical body, situated in a physical realm that is filled with various physical objects located at varying degrees of distance from your body. So what you are aiming for here is that same sensation of physical location, of physical relationship to the physical surroundings of your target.

At first, these perceptions will be only of a physical nature, such as sensing your target’s spatial relationship with other objects, but with time and practice these perceptions will

deepen and you will directly experience your target's astral and mental perceptions as well.

Your concentration and your inhabiting of your target at this point must be so deep that, as Bardon phrased it, “**It must be possible for you to overlook and forget your body completely.**” You exist only as your target. It should also be noted that nowhere in his instructions did Bardon say to close your eyes. All of this is done with your eyes wide open but, with your mind focused elsewhere, your physical eyes do not feed any sensory impressions to your awareness. The only sensory impressions that fill your awareness are those of your target.

When you reach this step in the transmutation of your awareness into an inanimate object it is then possible and wise to experiment with accumulating either the Vital Energy or an Element within the object you inhabit. Simply inhale the Energy or Element in the same way you did within your own body except that now, your body is the object you've inhabited. Build an accumulation of the Energy or Element, hold onto it for a short while and then exhale it from the object back to the universe from whence it came. Soon you will be able to transfer your awareness into any object you desire and create an accumulation from within the object itself.

Until you have thoroughly mastered this technique of accumulation through transference of awareness into an inanimate object, it is wise to avoid working with more animate life forms to avoid unintentionally harming them. But once it is mastered, you may use this technique for actual healing work with other living beings.

A little further on in the text of the Step Four mental exercises Bardon made a statement that is very revealing and explains why this transference of consciousness technique works. He wrote: “**Consciousness knows neither time nor space; it is consequently an akasha-principle.**” In other words, consciousness is not limited by time and space – it can be and is every where and every when and, going still further it is every why. And his statement that consciousness is an “akasha-principle” means that every thing is inhabited by consciousness. This is not a reference to just human consciousness's ability to inhabit any thing it chooses to but rather is a blanket statement about consciousness. EVERY thing contains and is a manifestation of consciousness. Thus when we use this technique to inhabit another with our consciousness we are able to connect with the thing's own resident consciousness on the mental plane.

There is nothing in this universe that does not contain consciousness; which means that there is nothing in the universe that we cannot connect with through this technique of transplantation of consciousness.

The form of a thing, its size, shape and color, expresses its consciousness. Conversely, a thing's form determines the experiences and perceptions available to its consciousness. Like everything else, our human bodies are expressions of our human consciousness and at the same time the limitations of our human forms, our five senses, two legs and hands, etc., establish the limits of our perceptual sensitivity and of what we are physically

capable of doing and experiencing. For example, our physical bodies are too soft to experience standing on the surface of our sun and our eyes are not sensitive enough to perceive ultraviolet light, so our forms limit what our consciousness can experience and perceive. But when we transplant our awareness into forms that are capable of these things then we can experience and perceive them with other-than-human senses.

And not only do we experience a different set of perceptions, we also experience a different structure or type of consciousness. What differentiates the consciousness of a pencil from that of a human being is its structure. So when we become the form of the pencil we also experience what it is like to exist with a different structure of consciousness. For example, a pencil is incapable of thinking because its structure of consciousness does not enable thinking, so when we truly and deeply become the pencil, we cease thinking and interpreting in the same way we do normally as human beings.

Of course it takes extensive practice in order to reach this level of integration in which you cease to be human and truly become the pencil in every sense. At first, all you will achieve is the sensation of being a pencil in size, shape, color and location, and you will interpret this experience in purely human terms. The eventual goal however is to experience other-than-humanness, to experience what it means to really be a pencil instead of just what it feels like to be a pencil-shaped human being. The only way to achieve this goal is through repeated practice with a variety of objects. This slowly softens the rigidity of your humanness and renders your consciousness more and more malleable, more and more plastic so that it may eventually adopt non-human structures.

We begin this work with simple, man-made forms for a number of reasons the most important of which is their dissimilarity to the structure of human consciousness. Because of their essential difference, it is easier for us to perceive our own biases than if we were to start out trying to inhabit an animal for example which is much more closely related to our human structure of consciousness than an inanimate pencil. With a similar structure of consciousness it is more difficult for us to truly understand the differences in structure since we find ourselves assuming similarities that do not exist. For example, with a dog, we tend to assume that its emotions are the same as our own human emotional responses and motivations and thus never truly come to understand the significant differences. So we start with inanimate, man-made objects with which we share no similarity in structure and thus learn about difference. It is also through this awareness of such radical difference that we begin to perceive our own unique structure of consciousness and once we have identified our own structure, we can then more easily set it aside and truly experience a foreign structure without bias and without assumptions.

This is why Bardon laid out a specific sequence to work with. He said to start with inanimate, non-living objects, such as our pencil; then move on to living, but still inanimate, plants; then animals and finally human beings. I recommend the following, slightly modified sequence: start with man-made objects; then natural objects such as stones, shells, crystals, etc.; then plants, molds and fungi of every variety; then insects of every variety; then animals of every variety; and finally, humans of every variety. This progression will teach you what you need to learn about consciousness in many of its

various forms or structures in a way that is guaranteed to free you from your normal human biases.

Have you ever wondered what it feels like to fly through the sky as a bird or burrow through the soil as a worm or swim through the ocean depths as a fish? Well, here's your opportunity to discover this and a million other things foreign to the human experience. Experiencing these things expands your mind and instills a deep empathy for everything else that exists within our universe. Establishing this depth of empathy is crucial to advancement into the higher forms of magic and especially into the higher levels of awareness.

So, that ends tonight's lecture. I will take a break for a few moments and then be back to address any questions you might have.