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Foreword by Melinda Ring

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“Healing isn’t just something that comes from medicine or surgeries; it comes from a shift in the way we perceive ourselves and our connection to our health and our bodies” (Melinda Ring, M.D., FACP, Greer, 2018, pg. 15).

Shamanism and Jungian analysis—the transpersonal realm and the unconscious. As George Hogenson, PhD, notes, Carl Greer offers “A remarkable melding of Jung’s analytical psychology and the ancient, and global, traditions of shamanic healing . . .” in his newest book, *Change the Story of Your Health: Using Shamanic and Jungian Techniques for Healing*.

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Similar to what he did in his previous book, *Change Your Story Change Your Life: Using Shamanic and Jungian Tools to Achieve Personal Transformation*, (see [SPT Volume 5, number 2, Spring 2015](#)), Greer shares his personal experiences and the experiences of others. He provides a cognitive experience with plenty of information. The book is written in a way that is easy to understand and provides a bodily presence with numerous exercises (shamanic journeys, meditations, visualizations) to support the work. One familiar practice is what Greer calls a “ritual” to use before doing any of his “expanded awareness practices”: opening and closing sacred space, cleansing your energy field, and doing mindful breathing to prepare. Within this in-depth book written to explore our health story and choose a more desirable one, he also offers the potential for new experiences, be it:

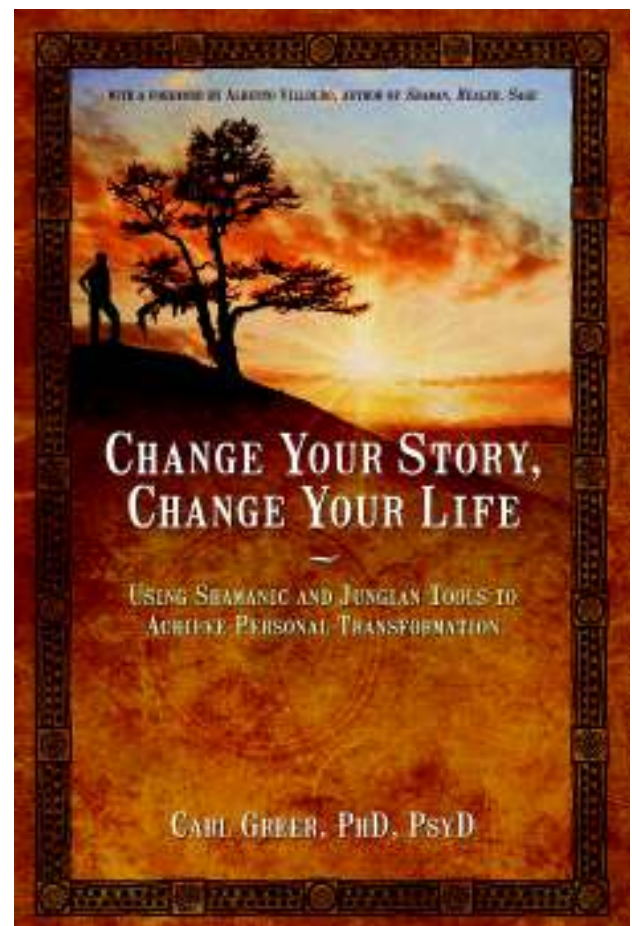
- Improving health and well-being
- Maintaining wellness as you age
- Managing chronic conditions
- Dealing with having your health story suddenly rewritten by events you did not expect, such as accidents and diagnoses of conditions or diseases (pg. 18).

Greer uses the language of “story” as a frame for discussion. He talks about chapters, themes, characters, settings, plotlines, conflicts and resolutions, as well as conclusions. The act of, or perhaps the art of, storytelling is ancient. Narratives carry our past forward and set a pretense for our future. Stories, he says, are fashioned from events in our lives, and they are created from our perceptions and interpretations of those events.

Greer maintains that you can change your “story”—the story of yourself, your health, your emotional well-being—by delving deeply into the roots of those stories, exploring the story lines and the characters

involved, having dialogues with your inner healer—that wise inner self that has insights into your healing—and more. If you change your beliefs, revise the stories you tell yourself, and review and assess the stories you carry (perhaps those told verbally and/or passed on as a legacy via genetics and cellular encoding), you can live a new story.

Storylines, a/k/a themes, are ancestral, both within our specific family line and in a global more genetic sense—as humans we are all ultimately connected, and all beings and life energy are connected. Common themes that Greer says arise in Jungian archetypes and in shamanic journeys often



involve heroism, companionship, collaboration, and courage. He sees battling/ the warrior, healing/ the inner healer, and innocence/ the inner child along with generic stock characters such as a wise king and a foolish prince, or a comeback kid. Archetypes are considered symbolic embodiments of experiences and ideas common to people around the world and across time, Greer says.

Once you have a firm grasp of your current story, you can then work to write a new one. To gain understanding, to create a comprehensive outline of our story, he suggests four beginning chapters:

- Eating, drinking and weight
- Movement and exercise, flexibility, balance, stamina, and strength
- Sexuality, body image and acceptance, and changes due to midlife hormonal shifts
- Management of symptoms of an acute or chronic condition (pg. 45).

He offers expanded awareness practices that are designed to engage the non-rational part of the brain that is involved in the experience of the unconscious (pg. 47) so that intuition can guide you as you interpret what happened when using the practices.

Within these practices there are journaling activities. He suggests for starters that you spend several hours with the first journaling guide in Chapter 3 to get your “health story” down. He invites readers to journal about their earliest memories of experiencing their body, looking for positive aspects of one’s health as well.

He offers that the more details you include when journaling about experiences, the easier it may be to determine patterns that may flesh out themes. He also recommends journaling when using the guided prompts in the book. He offers dialoguing (a practice based on the Jungian technique of active imagination) as well as chakra clearing and engaging and partnering with the earth, air, water, and fire to release old, worn-out

stories.

“The overall goals of the practices are to help you make and maintain healthy lifestyle changes through enhancing your connections to the invisible energetic realms that surround and infuse the material world” (pg. 19). The notion of energy is important. Greer explains that, “. . . the idea of a universal, interconnected grid composed of energy, where we can access insights and energies that affect the physical body as well as the psyche, is a part of many healing traditions” (pg. 23).

According to Greer, “the essence of shamanic healing is to work with our past so that it lives within us differently and we no longer are caught in old habits—and to align with a future that is more desirable for us and Spirit” (pg. 24); “shamanic work awakens a person to greater awareness of the interconnectedness of all that is seen and unseen” (pg. 24). And, “Shamans believe that energetic and spiritual imbalances are at the root of all physical ailments” (pg. 24).

The book is not meant to replace professional care—doctors, therapists, etc. It is meant to be a tool for self-empowerment through knowledge and experience. Greer is clear that you have inner wisdom about what your body needs and that often, your body can heal itself when given the right support. To start, you need to look within and sense what feels right for you—and you need to be honest with yourself about your story and about your intentions.

While this is a “quick” review, the book itself moves slowly, deliberately, allowing pauses to breathe, to take in and to consider when you feel resistance. The book is not meant to be read and then considered done. It is not written to sit on a shelf but rather to be part of your day, part of your awareness as your own storylines—the themes—about your health move into your awareness, allowing you options to embrace them and then accept and/or change them. This is about taking the time to heal inside and out.

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