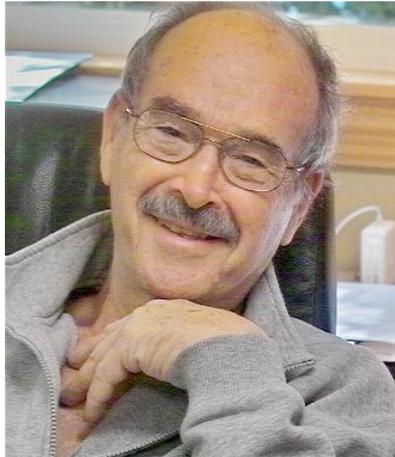


Tributes to Ron Kurtz

1934-2011



In Ron's Own Voice

*The unfolding and growth of consciousness is the central process of psychology
and, in one viewpoint, of every human life, all history,
and the evolution of consciousness.*

in all Buddhas
in Sangha
in Dharma
in my body and yours

Meher Baba, Swami Rama,
the ones I've known
the ones I never met

the holy ones
the sweet, laughing ones
the beautiful ones

who found love,
in this house of pain.

I take refuge this terrible day,

in poets, music makers
dancers, dancing freedom
of the body and the mind

in all seekers
who broke the iron hold
of separation

all lovers . . . young ones, still
surprised, old ones who know
love's sad sweetness

I take refuge this beautiful day

in my loved ones
wife, child, friends,
students, colleagues

Tributes to Ron Kurtz

in the holy ones
all the holy, precious keepers.
in hearts that break
open, that rise up
to comfort, defend, protect

I take refuge in all of these

in the old wisdom,
they who found it, sung it
the laws, how it all works

Not only refuge, I take
sustenance and Hope,
for peace in every heart
in my body and yours

for peace in every mind
for wisdom to see through
our pain, all pain, pain

which drops us blind,
fearful, angry, down
into a deep well

of nothing but self and self-
concern, burning with greed
and desperation

from all of this, I take refuge. . .

in the law, the teachings,
the good books,
the holy writings

of Buddhas, saints,
preachers, drunk on love
all who saw clearly

saw and sang, the good news,
gospel, dharma, going from
mind to mind, soul to soul

touching so many, touching
the seekers holding hands
standing together, joyous,
celebrating

buoyant, even as time flows
people flashing by,
faces in a dream

I take refuge in you,

sweet friend, stranger,
in you and me
as one being

The Day I Married Terry Toth

Ron Kurtz

September 15, 2001

Tributes to Ron Kurtz

Speaking about Ron in the past tense will take some time to get accustomed to. His love for his work and his love of life were indistinguishable. He had the capacity to open our eyes to what's possible, and he did it with insight and laughter. Quite a combination. You'll be sorely missed, RK. Dr. Richard A. Heckler, Sonoma, California.

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Meeting and working with Ron Kurtz changed my life personally and professionally. He had, and will continue to have, a big presence in my life for which I will always be grateful. I am thankful for his gift of Hakomi. Yvonne Guertin, San Francisco, California.

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Ron was a true modern-day shaman, a founding father of our profession. Anyone who was fortunate enough to study with him personally was not simply educated but literally infused with knowledge of and compassion for the human condition. He will be missed and, at the same time, will live on as a guide for those of us who had the privilege to have known him in some way, as well as for future generations of therapists and clients who will continue to benefit from his courage to work "out of the box," reach into the dark and lead us into wholeness. May his soul find peace. Condolences to his family and close friends. Talia Shafir, Cotati, California.

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It is with great sadness, as well as love and gratitude, that I enter 2011 with the loss of my dear friend and teacher, the amazing Ron Kurtz, creator of the Hakomi Method. Ron died suddenly of a heart attack on January 4. I miss him already, his wit, his humour, his compassion, his imagination and inventiveness, his never-ending quest for the most elegant and effective way to help others and to practise his art. I'll write more about this unique being in the coming days and weeks. I know there are thousands of you who join me in holding his memory dear and in sending love and support to his beloved wife and daughter, Terry and Lily. We'll all miss him dreadfully! Donna Martin, Kamloops BC, Canada.

* * *

I am flooded with images, feelings and memories of Ron today, but mostly what lingers is his kindness. . . his basic goodness. He once did a session with me in a workshop that changed my life in the way that he was present, unconditionally accepting, and insightful. I hardly knew him but I miss him deeply already. Jed Swift, Columbus, Ohio.

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La obra de Ron está transformando y moldeando mi vida en forma cada vez más importante. Mi respeto y mi admiración para el. Virgilio Chavez, Toluca, Mexico.

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Tributes to Ron Kurtz

My time knowing Ron Kurtz was one of the most important times of my life. He was deeply formative for me on many levels. I will always cherish the memories I have of him. My condolences go out to his wife and daughter. Christine Palafox, Boulder, Colorado.

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I never met Ron but read his books and had the pleasure of knowing some who trained with him. His powerfully gentle style influences me still. I offer my condolences to family and friends; and I celebrate his life. Marcel A. Duclos, Flagstaff, Arizona.

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I first was introduced to Hakomi in the early 1980's, and it connected with me more than any other approach I had studied. The character typology model of developmental psychology was both more real and helpful than anything I had learned in school. More than anything else, the focus on mindfulness, organicity and mind-body holism totally resonated what I knew to be true deep inside. Ron's work became the foundation for my own contribution to the field, EKP, working with the literal power of the heart. Without Ron, Hakomi and his wonderful trainers (Devi Records and Dyrian Benz, to name two), I would have never had the building blocks to create, practice, and teach what I have been doing for the past 26 years. I am deeply grateful for Ron's innovation, creativity, vision, and contribution. He will be deeply missed. Linda Marks, Newton Massachusetts.

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Ron, your work has meant so much to me personally and to those with whom I have practiced over the years. I feel so grateful to have spent time with you at Esalen. I will always remember your kind and gentle spirit, your sense of humor, and your deep, open-hearted way of both questioning and understanding of the human spirit. The world (and my world) was made a better place because of you. Jean-Marie Mitchell, Orlando, Florida.

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It is with a heavy heart this morning that Ron's passing begins to be real to me. My life has been profoundly reshaped simply by knowing him. He was my mentor and my friend. In the world of emotional healing he was a true pioneer. For more than 30 years he put mindfulness, nonviolence, and loving presence at the very center of his work. Ahead of his time right up till yesterday, he continually refined his method. Extraordinarily generous with his discoveries, he happily shared them with all who asked. We have lost a giant. Bob Milone, Salt Spring BC Canada.

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Much love Ron. We will dearly miss you. As stubborn and hard-headed as you might have been, very few on this earth exemplify the love, compassion, and fearless dedication to bringing healing to the lives of others. You will be remembered with both smiles and tears. So grateful I am to have been your student, and to have shared in your beautiful loving presence. Kevin Brown, Montana.

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Tributes to Ron Kurtz

I found the Hakomi approach so powerful that I decided to become a therapist after attending a single Hakomi training weekend in 1990. And I am just one of many thousands who were inspired and influenced by Ron's contributions to the field of psychotherapy. I was fortunate enough to study with him on several occasions and he was sweet, funny, insightful, and amazingly gifted. Ron's work helped set the stage for the paradigm shift in the last few decades that have brought a focus on body inclusiveness and the use of Eastern and mindful practices in the treatment room. Every academic quarter I include a chapter from one of his books in my clinical skills classes for masters level psychology students as well as discussing some of the Hakomi techniques. It is an honor to be part of the ripple effect of his work continuing on. Andrew Teton, Santa Barbara, California.

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Words cannot express what impact Ron's loving presence, generosity and work has had in my life. Ron was a teacher at his heart. He shared his insights without hesitation and had a way of explaining complex things in simple words. He radiated love and grace. If you were in the same room with Ron, you ended up talking to him one way or the other. He literally drew you in with his ease, laughter and love. The world has lost a messenger of Love, but his message will not be forgotten. My prayers are with Terry and Lily whom Ron loved dearly. Ron, you are sorely missed! I will always be grateful for you and your teachings. Dace Skudina, St. Louis, Missouri.

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Thank you, Ron, for giving us Hakomi. You were on to mindfulness long before it was a buzzword. You have deeply influenced and brought together a talented and creative group of people all over the world who share your love for this beautiful work. May your spirit live on through all you have touched with your genius, your compassion, your intuition, and your humor, as they in turn share your gifts with the world. Lorena Monda, Placitas, New Mexico.

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Ron can travel anywhere he wants without the hassels of jet lags. I trust that his legacy will be passed on and a new breed of healers will come forth. I remember him as a great teacher, mentor, and most of all a wonderful human being. Susanna Wong, SAR Hong Kong, China.

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I loved especially his humour and his style of talking. Profound and wise he mumbled about the human nature and its obstacles and how to detect and sometimes overcome them. Besides my three other trainings in psychotherapy, the principles he talked about are still the root of my work until today. I am very thankful having met him. There are two people who influenced me most in my life. He is one of them (the other is my wife). I met Ron in 1979 in Germany and was so fascinated from his approach that I asked his co-trainer Halko to start the first Hakomi Training in Europe. Since then Hakomi is flourishing in Germany. Roland Kopp-Wichmann, Heidelberg, Germany.

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Ron, your compassion and intuition, your highly ethical attitude in therapeutic processes and your humour were the foundation of my psychotherapeutic path beginning in 1982. There are still words you said then that accompany my life today. Thank you. Susanne Wichmann, Heidelberg, Germany.

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Tributes to Ron Kurtz

My deepest condolences to the Hakomi community. What a painful loss! Ron was a beautiful and large soul. I remember him from the early seventies. His co-author of *The Body Remembers*, Hector Pretera, was my rolfer. Ron and I had Brooklyn roots, a special connection. John Pierrakos was his therapist and mine, another connection. Ron introduced John Pierrakos at the First USABP Conference in Boulder when John P. received our very first USABP Lifetime Achievement Award. It pleased me that Ron later received the USABP Lifetime Achievement Award. I recall that he was very proud. During each of the early USABP Conferences, Ron did one-day institutes which I never missed. After the intensity of six years of Core Energetics, his gentle approach was a welcome relief for my body. We have lost one of our giants, a person who could take the best from various modalities and synthesize them into an organized system. I will miss him. Mary Giuffra, Broxville, New York.

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I first met Ron at a workshop at Interface in Boston in 1982 that was so powerful and inspiring that within six months, I had left my television career in NYC and moved to Boulder to take the intensive Hakomi Training with Ron, Pat, and Phil. Ron was a dear friend during the time he lived in Boulder in the 1980s. His soul is so incredibly loving and generous. His work is inspirational genius. During the past 10 years that I have served as director of the Hakomi Institute, I have been blessed to witness the power of Hakomi and the transformational effect it has had on the lives of people around the world. Thanks to Ron for his gift to us, and love to him on his journey. Laurie Adato, Boulder, Colorado.

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I am utterly grateful to Ron as my teacher. His presence, wisdom, and love changed my life. The principles of Hakomi created a remarkable and solid container for me as a person and for my practice from the moment I read his book in the 70s. But it was his presence, compassion, and light heartedness, his humor and sensitivity to others that enriched my spirit over the years of knowing him as a mentor and friend. I feel truly blessed. Yesterday, when we heard the news, I began to experience his presence as sparks of light that are redistributing themselves among all of us he has known and loved. It is a body sense that is very strong. He is now an essence and free. The following poem is by D.H. Lawrence:

When the ripe fruit falls its sweetness distills and trickles away into the veins of the earth. When fulfilled people die the essential oil of their experience enters the veins of living space, and adds a glister to the atom, to the body of immortal chaos. For space is alive and it stirs like a swan whose feathers glister silky with oil of distilled experience.

Carol Ladas-Gaskin, Seattle, Washington.

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Ron was my friend, my teacher, and a source of deep comfort, delight, and inspiration. I cherish every minute I spent with him, the fun ones and the hard ones. I miss him now as the waves of grief come and go. His humor, his brilliance, his creativity and his humanity were a delight that I will always remember. He opened doors in my personal life that would have remained closed forever had it not been for him and the Hakomi Method that was his passion and his life work. He was a man ahead of his times: loving presence, attuned tracking of present moment experience, the use of emotional nourishment, taking over, relational mindfulness, non-violence—all of these aspects of Hakomi anticipated by decades the recent directions that modern therapy is trying to take through its recognition of the role of attachment in human development. It seems that a great light has left us; may we be up to carrying this brilliant torch forward. David Cole, Shoreline, Washington.

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Tributes to Ron Kurtz

I remember fondly Ron's impact on my life personally and on our Hakomi community. I will miss his presence and teachings and am grateful to what he has meant in my life. My thoughts are with his family and the many students he has impacted around the world. Manuela Mischke-Reeds, Redwood City, California.

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What I want to remember about Ron is how much fun he was to be with. He had a wry sense of humor, which, combined with great insights into how people work, made every discussion I had with him a place where I had to look two or three layers deep to actually get most of the jokes. I doubt I got all of them. He was a kind and gentle teacher, too, helping each student to make the step that was right for him or her in that moment. Along with most other people here, I wish I'd gotten more time with him; I'll cherish the few hours that I did. I describe Hakomi to people as midway between a school of psychotherapy and a philosophy of life. To the extent that I apply the basic principles, I have a more interesting, happier, and better life than I would if I weren't paying attention in the ways he (and his students) taught me. What more could one want from a philosophy? Tom Whitmore, Seattle, Washington.

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Ron Kurtz's exquisite sensitivity, big compassionate heart, and wonderful sense of humor will be sorely missed. I never met anyone who could think so deeply and wisely one minute and break down into absolute silliness the next like Ron could. His loving heart and pioneering spirit will truly be missed. I am so very grateful for the profound influence Ron has had in my life through our interactions and also indirectly through all of us he has shared his beautiful and amazing work with. It is astounding to think about the many people all over the world whose lives were touched by this one. May he travel gently now and may his spirit live on in each of us. Julie Murphy, Santa Cruz, California.

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Ron's work healed me and changed my life for the better. Using his Hakomi Method I pay tribute to him in order to serve others and alleviate the vast suffering of beings for whom Ron cared so deeply. A healing warrior, Ron will be missed. Valerie Lorig, Boulder, Colorado.

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My life was changed from the first meeting with Ron. I was grateful I got to attend a training with him this summer (2010). I am grateful to have heard from him 1/3/11, encouraging me in my learning to teach Hakomi and share the wisdom and power of Hakomi in healing. I will take this encouragement with me and his voice in my heart and help to share what he tirelessly worked out for all of us. I will miss him and I send love to Terri and Lily. Lynne Accetta, Turnwater, Washington.

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I learned much from Ron and the people who came to his trainings – all of us yearning for freedom; courageous enough to take another look. Thank-you. I know Ron as a teacher, a learner, a scientist, a voracious reader, a healer, sometimes a comedian, occasionally a bit of a Zen master, and a mystic. I heard him speak of his great pleasure at being Lily's father; the wisdom of his wife, Terry; his admiration of Jack Benny. Ron sometimes listened to jazz on breaks, was a bit of a hippie and invented "raspberry therapy." Ron often acknowledged, "I have my hand in the pockets of Giants." Ron, you have left tracks across my heart in a good way. I am glad you offered me your hand on the path of Hakomi and now I offer you mine. Thank-you, Ron. Roxanne Peterson, Steilacoom, Washington.

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Tributes to Ron Kurtz

We are saddened by the passing of this man who touched our lives profoundly, and changed the direction of them as well, way back when. His depth of compassion and ability to see deep beneath the surface of human character to the vulnerable yet strong, resilient, and precious human spirit has been experienced by many folks world-wide. Laurie and I admire, respect, and love him for how he touched our lives as people and as therapists and send our prayers and blessings to him on his journey. Stuart Friedman and Laurie Schwartz, New York, New York.

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I never had the privilege of meeting Ron, but my life has been—and continues to be—utterly transformed by the exquisite beauty and power of Hakomi. I've gotten a strong sense of his loving, playful, creative, and daring spirit in a few ways: by reading his books *The Hakomi Method* and *Grace Unfolding*; by watching his amazing training videos; and by training under his *Grace* co-author Greg Johanson and several other gifted trainers, all of whom so beautifully embody the spirit and principles of Hakomi that Ron so generously gifted to the human race. I am filled with love and gratitude. Ken Porter, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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Big love Ron, wherever you are. You helped me so much on my life's journey and my heart goes out to all in the Hakomi community who were so blessed by your person and your teachings and who are grieved by your passing. All my love and best wishes to all of you. I will honor your memory by being the best Hakomi therapist I can be. Brian Scheffer, Olympia, Washington.

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The missing experience; that is what Ron truly was for me! The missing experience of kindness, wisdom, insight, love, patience, and huge humor. How blessed I have been to have known you Ron for so many years. To have learned so much and to have been touched so deeply. Bodhi House will also be a bit empty without the resounding sound of your calling, "Kunzang!" So much gratitude for you Ron. Will really miss you. Love and grace to Terry and Lily. Kunzang Brown, Olympia, Washington.

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I first met Ron in the early 90s in Germany after I had finished my training in Hakomi. I was lucky, not only to meet him on a seminar, but to walk with him through the streets of Hamburg until we ended up in an Italian restaurant where we had dinner. This couple of hours showed me that my impressions that I got from his books and out of the method was deeply presented in his words and attitude. I was touched by his presence, friendliness, and humor. Ron's work and this meeting had a great influence to my life. Thank you Ron, I'll never forget you. Rudolf Engemann, Weingarten, Germany.

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Tributes to Ron Kurtz

I was first introduced to Hakomi by Cedar Barstow when I did the Right Use of Power training with her in Portland. I then found Donna Martin in PEI and started the Hakomi training there and in Montreal. I am forever changed as a result of this training and the connections I feel with the Hakomi world community. I wish to send blessings to you Terry and Lilly and to Ron's worldwide Hakomi family at this very sad and blessed time of honoring Ron's life and sudden death. I met Ron only this past fall in Montreal. I came away feeling like I knew him and loved him all my life. His love, compassion, empathy, understanding, his intelligence, intuition, dry humor, all shone brightly and gently. His authenticity was cellular and openly shared with one and all. His soul danced with all souls in our world on the level in which we are all truly connected. In Ron's company all masks hiding one's heartfelt authenticity mysteriously melted away into a sea of love and acceptance. I so hope that together and in our individual ways we will continue to love and be present to ourselves and each other as we grieve his loss in our lives and move forward his legacy, his love, his beauty, and his teachings. In memory of a bright light in our world who has moved on into the light of yet deeper understanding, I love you Ron and I will miss you and feel your presence forever in my life of learning as a human being and as a passionate member of the worldwide Hakomi family. Janine Clancy, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada.

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Ron Kurtz was one of those people I liked from the first view. During my Hakomi Therapy education, I had the chance to work with him and to appreciate his skills and his ability to discover what was going on. In my heart he will be alive. I'm so sad. Sigrid Wentz-Reuter, Mannheim, Germany.

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I believe Ron is a Bodhisattva. The power of his mindfulness was incredible if not almost magical. I luckily got to work with him while I was in Hakomi training at SHEN here in Seattle. As a client/student he rapidly connected to my deepest pain; I cried on his lap in front of perhaps 50 people without shame. For me it was as though I had experienced a miracle. A gift that I want to share with all. I feel so honored to have known Ron and so sad at his passing. What a beautiful legacy he has left me/us, I will always honor him. John Nyquist, Seattle, Washington.

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My heart is breaking with and for you, Lily. My own father recently died and I know (because we talked about it) how much your father adored you and being your father, too. Thank you for sharing him with all of us who are both so sad and so grateful at the same time for all he was, is, and will always be to us. I hope the many comments about all he did with and for others, especially in his professional life, will fill you with a deep kind of contentment for the fullness and goodness of his life, and maybe even inspire you when you might need it. Sending a lot of love to you and to your mother. Cindy Sadlek, Davenport, Iowa.

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Today and tomorrow we are teaching advanced coaching Level III here in Seattle with 26 people gathered together to be a healing presence to each other. What better way to celebrate your life and vision, Ron. You have our deepest gratitude for teaching us how to form a deep, enriching healing community. We have been lighting candles to you all day; each one honoring your love and fierce commitment. We send loving healing prayers to you as well, Terry and Lilly. You were such a blessing to him all these years and a caring presence for us. Carol Ladas-Gaskin, Shoreline.

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Tributes to Ron Kurtz

Ron and the people around him in Hakomi circles, have influenced my life, work and relationships in a very profound way for many years. I want to express my gratefulness, and I will always remember the personal and professional times we shared. Ron had a fascination for many subjects, and one of them was Daoism and Chinese medicine. We shared that fascination and Ron encouraged me to keep blending Hakomi methods with my practice and teaching. That has continued to be a central focus in my work. It's evident from all of these testimonials that this is one of many similar stories. Thanks Ron, and may the next leg of your journey be infinitely more fruitful. Kamala Quale, Eugene, Oregon.

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What always struck me about Ron was my sense that he never stopped. He never stopped believing, learning and changing, loving, and offering knowledge, wisdom, and humor. He gave us many gifts. His kindness and love and deep deep perception touched souls globewide. Ron credited the minds he learned from: the Buddhists, psychologists, systems theorists, and neuro-explorers, but his deepest gratitude was always for Terry and Lily. What a grand force field he continues to be. We love you. Jill Swartz, Victoria BC, Canada.

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Met Ron in 1996 at a conference in Boston, and took workshops and training with him in Argentina, Ashland, and various places in Mexico, the last time in Casa Azul near Tepoztlán, last year. Words don't come easy in times like this. Ron was the best teacher I ever had, and he will continue to be with me in my classes, workshops, papers, and sessions. I am sure his teachings, his humor, his wisdom, and his loving presence will live on through his many students across the world. As I write I am feeling both gratefulness and a sweet, warm sadness. Fernando Ortiz, Mexico City, Mexico.

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I send blessings, gentleness, support, and a sense of timelessness to his family for their grieving process. I never met Ron, yet feel a deep loss and sadness as if I had known him. I have been interested in taking one of his trainings sometime soon. I took Hakomi for body workers in 2006-'07 in Santa Fe and know his work has transformed the "me" I bring to the table and to my clients. The simple shift of having "no agenda" has softened my work and allows the empowerment of my client's own truths. I feel so sad that Ron, a brilliant man, is no longer here with us, yet hope we can continue to call upon his spirit to guide us and inspire us in creating more love and compassion in our world. Bless you on your continued journeys Ron! Love and prayers for his family. Val Morningstar, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

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Ron wanted to bring more and more awareness, compassion, and acceptance of how things are into the world. His genius was that he succeeded in that for so many of us. Thank you Ron! Good-bye for now to an old friend and companion. With deep gratitude and love to Ron and his family who has been such a wonderful support to him all these years. Dyrian with JoAnna. Dyrian Benz-Chartrand, Santa Barbara, California.

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Ron Kurtz was both a teacher and friend. His work has profoundly influenced my life and the development of the organization that I manage, Oregon School of Massage. I mourn his untimely death, and will continue to celebrate his many contributions. My condolences to his family and close ones. Ray Siderius, Portland, Oregon.

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Tributes to Ron Kurtz

Although I did not meet Ron in person, I have clear memories in my heart of seeing him teach and work, through videos and his books and writings. As a Hakomi graduate I feel we have so much to be grateful for. What inspires me is his unashamed tenderness, childlike genuine joy, patience, and courage to be fully in the moment. I have loved his storytelling. Thank you Ron for your generosity in teaching. I extend my best wishes to his wife and family. Penny Kennett, Auckland, New Zealand.

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Ron and I met in 1973 at Refer Switchboard in Albany, NY, where I was a volunteer crisis counselor. That first meeting, the very first thing to like about him was his wonderful sense of humor. A favorite memory is that Ron would do impressions of Jonathan Winters. He could get everyone laughing so hard, the tears rolled down our faces and our sides hurt because we couldn't get our breath back.

There were his little road trips too. He would get a few friends to hop into his car and go. We went to see N. Muramoto in SF, Dorie DiAngelo in Carmel, to Woodstock, to Esalen, to the best runny beans at a Mexican restaurant in Monterey.

He liked to get people to try what he was doing and he brought great people to Albany to give workshops, consultations, and treatments. He was a kind of holistic health pied piper at the time. So he often took us into his kitchen to try the latest, really tasty healthy food he concocted.

And Ron saved my life. In 1975, he and Hector Prester worked out a sabbatical for me, to spend three months in California. Those three months let me totally jump out of my system and rest. So I have been reaping the benefits of his intervention for 36 years. He has influenced my life through all of the people he taught: my Hakomi teachers, trainers, supervisors, and friends. He will continue to touch my life through the Hakomi community he hoped would evolve. I think his dream is coming true. So I thank Ron every day for encouraging people to support each other mindfully and with loving presence.

Over the last five years Ron has been my teacher. It has been an honor to sit in his intensives and enjoy just being with him again. Just being with Ron I was happy.

It is with deep gratitude, respect, wonder and unbounded love to have been Ron's friend.

In 2006, I wrote this poem for Ron:

In this Circle

In this circle
heart becomes free
spirit is at ease
and we are held in the warm breath of the universe.

Outside this circle
heart's hunger returns and spirit will thirst again
and know that outside this circle
sometimes
I will have to think
in order to breathe.

Bari Falese (Andersen) 2011, January.

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Tributes to Ron Kurtz

I will miss Ron, especially his genius and his humor and most of all, his loving presence, whether with a class he was teaching, a client he was working with, or just with me whenever I talked with him. I remember when he was in Montreal, we were both singing "Sunday Morning Coming Down" together. He loved music and as we all know, loved reading the very latest in cutting edge knowledge about the brain, the self, and growth. Truly an inspiring being that often comes to visit me in my sessions with clients, the times when I say "Ron, this one's yours . . ." Learned that from him! What a gift and privilege to have been a student of Ron, and to be able to be a part of his legacy. Roland Berard, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Comenze a estudiar Hakomi, en octubre de 2010, no conoci personalmente al maestro y en cierta forma me duele, sin embargo creo firmemente en que se sigue a la esencia y no a la presencia, asi que mi amado maestro SIGO TU ESENCIA Y NO TU PRESENCIA. BENDICION HASTA DONDE ESTAS. Roberto Martinez Cortes, Mexico.

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Ron's amazing work healed me during tough times. I pay tribute to him by using the Hakomi method to help alleviate other people's suffering. Ron's big heart made him a healing warrior and mindfulness master in the therapeutic world - a rare combination and true bodhisattva. Valerie Lorig.

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Hi everyone,

I wanted to be sure that all of you had heard that Ron Kurtz died last week of a sudden heart attack. Ron was a close friend to me, and an important influence in the development of IFS. He generously took me under his wing in a way that is rare for leaders who have their own stuff to promote, and at a time when he was already established and didn't need to support a different approach. Through his and the rest of the wonderful Hakomi community's influence, IFS is more body-centered and mindfulness based. In addition, we learned many things from him and Hakomi in general about running good, safe trainings. There is a special connection between the IFS and Hakomi communities with lots of cross-fertilization, and Ron set that in motion.

Ron also had a great sense of humor and charisma that invited lots of love and transference. He had his parts—could be stubborn and (from my perspective) reckless at times—but his contribution to IFS and psychotherapy in general is immense. He recently asked me for a blurb for his website and this is what I wrote:

"Ron Kurtz is an important pioneer in bringing mindfulness to body sensation and emotion in a healing way. He was doing this long before others discovered the power of mindfulness in psychotherapy. His refined Hakomi Method invites clients into deep states where core beliefs reside and can be released. I have learned a great deal from Ron and am grateful for his mentoring."

I haven't had a lot of contact with him the last several years as he tried to travel less so our paths didn't cross much, but I always held him in my heart and I have grief in his spot in there now. With love, Richard Schwartz, Internal Family Systems Therapy.

* * *

Tributes to Ron Kurtz

My Dear Colleagues,

I can only imagine what this week has been for you. For me, there are tears, memories, chuckles, dreams . . . and so much gratitude for having been blessed by God to have brought me into contact with Ron way back in 1977 at 24 yrs. old when a friend suggested I take a workshop with him in Boulder the summer before beginning massage school. A year later, he taught us the Reichian theory part of our Reichian massage class and had everyone gather around him huddled close because he spoke so softly and created an environment where you could hear a pin drop in the room and we all hung on his every word. Then he'd have us do exercises where we'd stand in front of the room and do body-reading, or make slight adjustments to our posture and observe the feelings that emerged. . . changed my life. Took the first training in Boulder three years later with Halko and about nine Germans, three Americans, (me, Jaci Hull, and Jim Lehrman), two Canadians (Wendy Wildfong and ??) and Pat helping out. . . We students lived in a house on The Hill where the training was held for nine weeks. Three days training, two days off; and there was Ron and half-organized papers (no training manual yet), half-formulated exercises, his jokes and stories and quotes—he boxed with us (he loved to show off what a good boxer he was)—and flipping pens and catching them between his index and middle finger (which I got great at!) He also would show off that he could kick a straight leg up higher than 90 degrees—I was impressed. He was always a bit on the beefy side, although when I see pictures back then, he looks well-proportioned and strong. He was built like a bull.

One of the most meaningful and intimate times for me and Ron was when I got to drive him around upstate New York and then to Long Island in 2002 when he came to Omega Institute to do a weeklong workshop there, in my 1991 cherry red Toyota convertible with Hakomi license plates. And always interspersed in our personal and philosophical conversations there was wit and humor. When he wanted to change a heavy discussion, he was into his phase of "I always wanted to be a _____, but I just ____" and the gauntlet was thrown and for the next fifteen minutes we'd see who could outdo the other with some ridiculous pairing. Of course, I think I came up with the best one with "I always wanted to be a juggler, but I just didn't have the balls." (Sorry, I can't remember any of his. Does anyone?)

Whenever someone I love passes, I experience the sense that there's more of life I want to share with them. Gratefully, with Ron, I don't feel sad about not having let him know how much I love and value him. Just after his operation, Laurie and I called him from a bench in Central Park and we chatted, reminisced, laughed, and spoke of his wanting to come to NYC with Lily and share his birthplace with her. And just two weeks before his passing, we exchanged emails around my transcribing one of his sessions. I was amazed at how quickly he uploaded the sessions on a flash drive that I sent to him and mailed it back to me. A simple exchange, but laden with richness of care and deep respect. So, my heart aches at knowing that I will not be seeing him anymore and I feel my core vibrate and swell at the awe of our lives having touched—tears flow—and I am sitting with my vulnerable, expansive heart—and am grateful to *you* and love *you* for how you have also touched Laurie and me and how you share the incredible, majestic depths and breadth of your love, wisdom and compassion in the way you have expressed a lifetime of your wonderful and inspiring divinity and humanity. I will always be sending you rays of warm light with a song and a smile. Stu Friedman, Laurie Schwartz, New York City.

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Ron is gone! This was the shocking and sad message we received a few days ago. We're still very moved and mourning for this loss and want to offer our condolences and heartfelt sympathy to all persons who were close to him, knew, loved, and admired him. Ron, the founder of Hakomi Therapy, is somewhat like the father of our "Hakomi family," of our work, of our perspective towards the healing resources of human nature. He always was the central source for our understanding of psychotherapy.

His death leaves the most important chair of our Hakomi community empty. We will miss his inspiring, loving, and curious spirit. It's already some years ago—in 2005—when Ron visited us for the last time for two weeks at the Helga and Ulrich Holzapfels training venue. We gladly remember this intensive time we spent with him. Ron presented his new ideas and concepts, developments and tools to work with as he taught us again about "loving presence": the first week with the faculty of the Hakomi Institute of Europe, filled with deeply moving experiences that he gave us by working with our own personal issues; the second week with a very large group of trainees. Everybody was very impressed and grateful, especially by Ron's direct and humorous way of being in contact. Ron's simplified approach influenced our training curricula and we integrated his ideas into our ways of working as therapists.

We always have held Ron in our highest regard, as we do his creativity, his never ending curiosity and openness to innovative approaches to therapy, his sense of humor, and his brilliancy. Together with so many members of our Hakomi community in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland—we received many many responses regarding Ron's passing during the last days—we are very grateful to have had Ron as a part of our lives, immensely important as our teacher. His life's contribution guided and supported us on our path to bring more freedom and peace into the world. Our thoughts and hearts are with his family and we are wishing them well during this difficult time. We have lost a big soul, a brilliant mind, and a loving heart. He will stay with us in our work, our trainings, and most of all in our hearts. The faculty of the Hakomi Institute of Europe e.V. Karin Apfel, Susanne Baier, Cora Cornels, Ha-Jo Diehl, Carl Edelbauer, Anne Fischer Nicole, Gäbler Christian, Gottwald Uta Günther, Helga Holzapfel, Ulrich Holzapfel, Halko Weiss, Dagmar Wernicke, Patricia Wurl, Ursula Plitt (managing director Hakomi Institute of Europe e.V.)

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I only met Ron once, a few months ago at CIIS in San Francisco. However, during that one meeting, after but moments, I knew I had met a true master. His big-hearted, confident, unshakable presence brought a smile to my face, and inspiration through my body. The power of listening, being, and expanding awareness through the techniques he developed continues to inspire my path as I learn to work with people. Sam Bernier, Solano Beach, California.

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Deeply saddened, the memory that is most alive in me (the "felt sense" memory) is when during a good-bye hug I started to unexpectedly and embarrassingly cry, I asked myself aloud why I started crying and Ron said, with the soft smiling face. "It's just love." The Hakomi training with Ron was forever life changing. In deep appreciation and love, this farewell. Eva Goforth, St. Louis, Missouri.

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I am thankful for having met Ron and been inspired by him. A great presence has passed from us. Those of us he touched are his legacy. John Millman, England.

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Ron, you have given so much healing to so many people. The Hakomi Method you invented has grown and blossomed. It has healed so many all over the world, including me. Your gift to humankind will live on. I am happy today because of your gift, and I will forever be grateful to you. Hakomi brought me from Germany to the US. It helped me find my life's work, realize when I found the right guy to marry, and find ways to spread more lovingness in this world. Thank you for inventing this! Blessings to you, Ron, and warm wishes for comfort to Terry and Lily. Bettina O'Brien, Santa Rosa, California.

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Tributes to Ron Kurtz

Ron Kurtz changed my life and charged my soul. 1978. First day of my first workshop, Ron came to a practice group I was in and said, "It's okay to relax and let go." It was immediately clear that this was the method for me. It remained clear. It is still clear to me in 2011 as a Hakomi trainer and Hakomi therapist. Mindful, body centered, experiential, organic, tenderly loving work and way of being in the world. Simple and deep. My gratitude is immeasurable. And how essential—the laughter, the overflowing laughter we all shared! Cedar Barstow, Boulder, Colorado.

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In June of 2009, two to three weeks after my husband (Tony) died, I received a phone call from Ron Kurtz. I didn't even think Ron Kurtz knew who I was, but here he was calling me. And, magically, he was calling me just minutes before my phone was scheduled to be disconnected. Just hearing his voice made me melt. My heart responded to him like he was a combination of Santa Claus and a loving grandpa. I couldn't help but unconditionally trust him. Being so broken-open in my heart at the time, tears just started flowing in response to his presence before he could even say why he was calling me. He simply inquired "what's the matter?" as if that was exactly why he was calling. I told him my husband had just died, and he proceeded to authentically meet me right in that place of grief, his original reason for calling evaporating into a vapory residue, on hold indefinitely. He asked how long we had been married and noted that he and his wife were similar in years of marriage. I could feel him imagining losing her, and he dropped in to meet me even deeper in my grief. He was regretful having just returned from Boulder, and voiced that if he had known what had happened to me, he could have met with me when he was there. Then he got excited, and invited me to come out to Ashland sometime in the next few weeks so he could work with me for a few days for free. I surprised myself, and did travel to Ashland. Ron effortlessly led me into self-discovery about the two key themes of my grieving process that were to arise in me again and again over the months to come. He was brilliant, and definitely an angel to me in a very desperate time of my life. I will always cherish this intimate heart-felt time with him. And I will always aspire to be as generous and natural in my service to others as he was to me. His giving was his receiving. His great heart in human form will be missed by my heart. And if you're curious, he called originally to get permission to use a taped session of me in his teaching library. I know, of course, it was a divinely orchestrated event with the purpose of permanently imprinting in me his transmission of embodied unconditional love and compassion. June Konopka, Fort Collins, Colorado.

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SILENCE

*has a ring to it
give a deeper listen
and don't cling to it
let it travel
from ear to jaw
around the tongue
and down the maw
from center to center
each step of the spine
the stillness abides
let your spirit unwind
around the tail
and back to the head
the stillness unmoving
the silence unsaid.*

'Oasis' Darryl Hasten

Tributes to Ron Kurtz

To Ron On the Night of the New Moon

Death is a doorway
to what I don't know.
But your shadow looms large
in that dark rectangle tonight,
crossing the lintel into a mist
that is more like a dream
than anything I can grasp
with my quavering mind.
It is my heart that stops
in the space between beats
to taste an emptiness so big
it swallows the night and
any prayers I might speak.
In this absence of a moon
there are no words to hold
the teeming silence
you leave behind.

With Love and Gratitude,
Maya

* * *

I will miss the piercing intelligence forged with immense love that was Ron Kurtz. Like so many artistic and scientific pioneers, I believe his greatest impact will come after his earthly incarnation. As it is impossible to verbally express the enduring impact he had on my life and teaching, I let it pass through my body now as a bow of gratitude, respect, and even wonder. Gregory Gaiser, Sunnyvale, California.

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I consider it a blessing to have known Ron and been in his sphere of practice and experience. Two things stand out for me: Ron's absolute lovingness, graciousness, and kindness. Secondly, the absolutely brilliant concept of "helping people to do what they are already doing naturally to help themselves." Phyllis Hodges, Saskaton, SK.

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Hi Ron, thank you very much for your insights you gave me while I was in Boulder. Together with Pat we had some really good days. Definitely you formed my way of thinking and working! I will miss you as I still miss Peter Melchior my other great teacher. Herbert Grassmann, Nürnberg, Germany.

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Ron's work was more than body-centered, it was heart-centered in a deeply kind and profoundly human way. Hakomi Therapy is a rare blend of science, art, and pure loving presence, and Ron spent his last years determined to teach as many people his "refined Hakomi method" as he could. If you missed the privilege and honor of studying with Ron, don't miss the gift of studying his work. It has changed me and the way I work with clients in humbling and surprising ways. Most of all, it has inspired me to be a new kind of human being, one I didn't know existed: one that can hold seemingly infinite tenderness, intelligence, and compassion. Ron was ahead of the curve. I hope we manage to catch up to him in time. I for one will spend the rest of my life trying. Terry and Lily, I have been grieving too deeply to even write until now and I can only imagine how you must feel. Thank you for sharing him with us, know that he loved you even more than his work (a day never seemed to pass in class without Ron mentioning one of you!), and please accept my deepest and most heartfelt condolences. Rhonda Mattern, Shelton, Connecticut.

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Ron Kurtz and Hakomi deeply changed my life. I became better able to see and accept myself and to undertake the ongoing process of personal growth. It was his kind eyes, patience, and ability to see deeply into me that called me forth. Having then learned from him how to facilitate a similar process for others, I have been honored to carry this gift into the world. It is with both sorrow and gratitude that I rededicate myself to carrying Hakomi forward, my best attempt to honor the gift Ron gave me. I would not be where I am today without the teachings of Ron Kurtz. Thank you Ron. Robert Bageant, Taipei, Taiwan.

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I was introduced to Ron's work through reading first his books, and then by a psychotherapist who was one of his first students in the 70s, who brought the work to a handful of therapists in South Africa, not by official training but rather experiencing the work in action. This way of working informs and underpins my current psychotherapy practice, and will continue to do so. I have on a deeply personal level grown and developed a way of living mostly with truth of selfhood, as my own autonomous self started to appear during the teachings and experiencing the Hakomi way. I feel very sad at the news of his death, but also grateful for having been able to learn from him, even in an indirect way. Love to all. Ronelle Hart, Johannesburg, South Africa.

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Ron Kurtz inspired and influenced my life in profound ways back in the early 80s in Santa Fe, New Mexico, when the Hakomi Institute and ideas were just emerging. For the past 30 years I have worked to integrate training, practice, and study of body mind work. I am now the vice president of the Leadership Center at Children's Institute in Los Angeles where I get to implement this work with the kids and families that we serve. His work and friendship changed my life and is helping the inner city kids of Los Angeles. His legacy lives on in them. Leslie Anne Ross, Los Angeles, California.

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To a friend, a visionary, and a trickster in the finest coyote tradition. Ron never missed a chance to celebrate life. A tribute to his courage to begin a family at a senior age. Their loss, as husband and father, must be great. I have only met you once but I offer you my condolences for your loss and for a life fully lived. Peter Levine, Lyons, Colorado.

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Very strange. I had not thought about Ron Kurtz since 1981. And then last week—April 5, 2011—I came across a book with an author Ron Kurtz along with Hector Presteria copyright 1976—*The Body Reveals*. I ordered the book from Amazon for \$7.00. The book led me to the Institute and to a posting that Ron had passed away in 2011. What was the date of his passing?

I met Ron only twice. In Bloomington, Indiana I was on Kirkwood Ave at “People’s Park” in summer of 1972 or 1973 (maybe 1974) and saw a handwritten card on a bulletin board: “Encounter Group” call this phone number. Being aware of Gestalt Therapy and Fritz Perls, I signed up not really knowing the reason.

At the first encounter I recall Ron working with about 20 diverse people during that 30-hour session. When it was time for me, Ron noted my shoulders and some energy was being withheld and dug within ten minutes to the place where it hurt, the scene in my mind when my mother left me for the day at this day care school because my father was in the hospital after cancer surgery. She had to work and I had to be left alone for the first time in my life. I could see the street through the window and I would stand there all day until my mom picked me up. Feelings of abandonment, I guess. I had never thought about that over my life. It was my neurosis and he found it sitting there on my shoulders in 30 minutes of focus. The next encounter group I attended with Ron was less productive but I did have a long conversation with him about using Rolf, or Alexander, or Feldenkrais for preparation of an actor when researching for a character and role. I was an actor back then and a director so that was my interest. Then—I never saw Ron again. But I often recalled in my memory the encounter group and sometimes a flash in my memory of Ron and his magic. I never knew Ron studied psychology at Indiana University but our paths crossed because of the random encounter group happening (we were all so trusting then). So why am I at this web site posting a memory and recollection? We never know who or how we affect people as we go through life. God bless his soul and his body of work. Ken Ott, Altadena, California.

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This month Ron Kurtz, a great leader in the field of somatic psychology, passed away. I was saddened to hear about the loss of this great teacher within the field without ever having the opportunity to meet him in person. Kurtz developed The Hakomi Method, which is a mindfulness based somatic psychotherapy. Yet despite never having been in his physical presence, Ron Kurtz has had a powerful impact on my life. As a student of Hakomi, Kurtz’s method introduced me to the powerful wisdom available to us when we listen to our bodies. Hakomi initiated me into the expansive potential of each moment when we enter into a state of mindfulness. The story is that the word Hakomi came to Ron Kurtz in a dream. It was later discovered that Hakomi was a Hopi Indian word that meant “Who are you?” or “How do you stand in relation to these many realms?” Nothing could be more of a perfect fit for this modality.

Hakomi is basically a meditative practice being witnessed and supported by another. The experience of a Hakomi session feels like a dance. A Hakomi practitioner holds the space for a client to explore how he constructs his experience of the world. With a supportive loving witness, the client is invited to dive into the hidden layers of her consciousness. Ebbing and flowing in an organic rhythm, Hakomi allows things to arise and dissolve away at a natural organic pace. When I think about the impact that Hakomi has had in my life, I am reminded of the power that lies in the method’s five principles: organicity, mindfulness, non-violence, mind-body holism, and unity. These are principles that are not only essential ingredients to the method itself but are empowering tools for increasing joy and peace in our daily lives.

Organicity is about honoring the natural unfolding of the self. It is easy to forget that our system holds all the answers within. The organicity principle asks us to have faith in ourselves and our natural pace.

Mindfulness is about remaining in contact with our inner state in each and every moment. It’s about remembering to remain embodied and in touch with our emotions because it is our connected authentic self that has so much to

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contribute to the world. Non-violence is about supporting our defenses, knowing that they are brilliantly constructed for a reason and serving a purpose. It is about not coming in with a hacksaw to chop down worn out defense mechanisms, but instead to first support them and honor them, knowing that they hold a key to further understanding. Often when we reach that place of feeling “stuck” or “blank,” we are on the edge of a brand new, more expansive universe.

Mind-body holism is about honoring the place where the mind and body meet. It is about trusting the wisdom available by listening to the body. And last but not least is the overarching principle of Hakomi: unity. Unity is about remembering that the whole is composed of many parts. It is both a Buddhist concept about non-duality and an integral concept reminding us of the interconnectedness of all living organic systems.

Kurtz brilliantly enfolded these Buddhist principles into his method, encouraging each session to be a gentle, naturally paced exploration of the self. The Hakomi therapist is encouraged to sit in a state of curiosity, leaving both judgment and analyzing at the door. The “personhood” of the therapist is asked to show up and just “be” with another soul. This allows the therapist to come from a humble person-centered place instead of an egoic “power-over-client” place. This process fosters a soul-to-soul connection. From a place of loving presence, Kurtz invites the sacred to show up in the therapy room. I have often thought to myself, “I wish every moment could be like a Hakomi session.”

What specifically makes a Hakomi session feel like magic? A Hakomi session is just as powerful for the practitioner as it is for the client. What I now believe is happening is that by using the principles of the method, Hakomi invokes a blissful peak state of consciousness.

One of the greatest things about Ron Kurtz was that he was dedicated to the evolution of his work. In line with his principle of organicity, Kurtz allowed the method to evolve in order to rest in a container of loving presence. I love the story of how this came to be. Kurtz explained the story in an interview from 2009: “It popped up many years ago when I was working in Germany. I had done nine straight days of therapy sessions in a group, over and over, and I was exhausted. I was so tired I couldn’t think very well, and I just stopped thinking for a while, even though I couldn’t tell the client. I didn’t interrupt the client; they were just talking and I sort of went blank. In this blank state, looking at this person, I saw a certain kind of beauty in them. And I realized if that person knew that I was seeing this, they would feel it. And I realized, “It shows. I’m looking like I’m feeling this.” And I had the person look at me (he had his eyes closed). He looked at me, and immediately his process changed into something deeper and emotional. And that’s when I realized, “Oh, yeah, that’s the basic engine of the relationship: it’s just appreciating this person to the point where you feel compassion and you feel loving towards them. And that will move the process by itself.”

Ron Kurtz invited this state of loving presence to lead the way in his therapy sessions from here forward. It became this deliciously rich peak state that clients could align with in each session and attune themselves to. Cultivating loving presence is a simple yet profound technique that can be used by anyone on a daily basis to increase joy and cultivate a peaceful state. Try a little taste of Hakomi today. Start by looking at something natural in your environment like a plant, tree, or a ray of sunlight. Notice what it is that you find beautiful about it. Is it the color, the texture, the movement? And when you are ready, take it into your being as loving nourishment. You can even breathe it in. Notice how this increases your sense of connection to your environment. Notice how your consciousness shifts. You can also do this with people in your life. Choose something beautiful and nourishing about their skin tone, coloring, etc and take it in. You’ll find that your presence becomes softer and more inviting. This is a gift of loving presence that you can give anonymously to the world.

I want to express the utmost gratitude to Ron Kurtz, not only for his incredible contribution to the field of psychology, but for the impact he has had on my own life. Your work will live on for a very long time and your loving presence will live on in my heart and thousands of others worldwide. Katherine O’Leary, San Francisco, California.

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References to article by Katherine O'Leary: Kurtz, R. (1990). *Body-Centered Psychotherapy: The Hakomi Method*. Mendicino: LifeRhythm. • Kurtz, R. & Prester, H. (1976). *The Body Reveals: An Illustrated Guide to the Psychology of the Body*. New York: Harper and Row/Quicksilver Books. • Johanson, G. & Kurtz, R. (1991). *Grace Unfolding: Psychotherapy in the Spirit of the Tao Te Ching*. New York: Bell Tower.

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We acknowledge here all the people who have held thoughts of Ron silently in their hearts, those who might not yet have heard of his passing, and those who were not aware of the USABP website and the opportunity to share.

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