

**The Therapeutic Value Inherent  
in Shambhala Training and The  
Practice of Meditation.**

Mark Mc Grath

2012

*May all beings enjoy profound brilliant glory*

### ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:***

I would like to thank my Supervisor, Siobáin O Donnell for all her guidance and support and also all the staff in the Psychotherapy department in Dublin Business School.

I am deeply grateful to all the members of the Dublin Shambhala Sangha for their support with this research and also for their ongoing commitment and dedication to realising Enlightened Society.

Finally, my heartfelt gratitude to the Vidyadhara, Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche for bringing the profound Shambhala teachings to the west and to Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, the current lineage holder of the Shambhala tradition.

## CONTENTS

*Acknowledgements*

<b>1: Abstract</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2: Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3: Shambhala Training</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4: Meditation and Mindfulness</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5: The Heart of Warriorship</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>6: Methodology</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>7: Findings</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>8: Discussion</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>9: Conclusion</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>10: References</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>11: Appendices</b>	<b>43</b>
(i) Shambhala training chart	
(ii) Sample forms	

## ABSTRACT

This paper posed the question: Is there much in Shambhala training that is of value from a psychotherapeutic perspective? It examined key texts which inform the practice of Shambhala Buddhism and also Shambhala training as a secular path. By way of comparison, this paper also made references to literature from psychotherapy. Meditation and mindfulness are core components of Shambhala training, and the researcher was aware that a large body of research has been done in these areas already, so this was not the primary focus of this paper, although some references were made to existing studies in that area. The paper chose to focus specifically on the teachings of Shambhala and how its training programs may relate to the practice of psychotherapy, as it would appear that very little research has been done in this area. In addition to reviewing the key Shambhala texts, a series of five in-depth interviews were conducted with long-term meditation practitioners in the Shambhala tradition, exploring some of the key concepts found in Shambhala such as: *Warriorship, Basic Goodness, The Cocoon, The Genuine heart of Sadness and Fear and Fearlessness*. The subsequent findings and analysis did indicate that there is much inherent in the teachings and trainings of Shambhala which would compliment and enhance the practice of psychotherapy in a positive way and that there is room for further research into the possibilities of integration of this training into the practice of psychotherapy and the training of psychotherapists.

## INTRODUCTION

The term Shambhala is derived from the ancient legend of the Kingdom of Shambhala, believed to have been located in central Asia. It was said to be 'an enlightened society based on gentle and fearless action, and on the practice of meditation' it also holds the view that the enlightened mind, discovered through spiritual practice, can be extended to all areas of human society. (Shambhala Office of Practice and Education, 2008, p. 20). It is associated with the Tibetan Lama and meditation master Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, who was born an incarnate lineage holder in the Kagyu and Nyingma schools of Tibetan Buddhism. He was Supreme Abbot of the Surmang monasteries and held a degree of Khyenpo, which would be the equivalent of a Phd in Theology, Philosophy and Psychology. (Trungpa, Shambhala, *The Sacred Path of The Warrior*, 1984, p. 201). Following the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1959, Trungpa managed to escape and came to the west. The Shambhala teachings and training presented by Trungpa are inspired by the legendary Kingdom of Shambhala and also are a synthesis of teachings drawing on the wisdom traditions of Tibet, India, China, Japan and Korea. (Trungpa, Shambhala, *The Sacred Path of The Warrior*, 1984, p. 14). He translated these teachings into a language he felt that people in the west could understand and presented them as Shambhala, a secular path to enlightenment.

## SHAMBHALA TRAINING

Shambhala training arose from Trungpa's wish to extend the teachings of Shambhala to the west, in particular to encourage the practice of meditation which he believed was of vital importance. It was partly inspired by a meeting he had with Werner Erhard who was at the time giving his teachings on EST (Erhard Seminars Training). This organisation still exists today under the name of 'Landmark Forum' and gives weekend trainings in increasing awareness and breaking down emotional barriers, although their methods are somewhat forceful. Apparently, during the meeting with Erhard, Trungpa remained silent and as soon as Erhard had left, was reputed to have said "we can do better than that!". (Midal, 2004, p. 238). And so he began to organise the system of training, with an emphasis on the sitting practice of meditation, that became known as Shambhala training. Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, the current head of the Shambhala Buddhist Lineage and also the son and heir to Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, has in recent years expanded the original training into a more complex system, incorporating many elements of Buddhism with the original Shambhala teachings. (see appendix 1). The training is a very elaborate system divided into three main sections:

*The Way of Shambhala I:* a series of 5 weekend workshops and 5 courses that run one night per week for 5 weeks, culminating in a weekend workshop called the Rigden Weekend.

*The Way of Shambhala II:* A series of programs that run over 6 weekends, culminating in a 10 day workshop called Warriors Assembly

*The Vajrayana Path*: While this consists of approximately six residential workshops, it is essentially a lifetime practice path.

\*NB: As the researcher was completing this paper, it was announced by Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche that the Shambhala training is about to release a new series of programmes to be known as *The Basic Goodness Series*. These will be incorporated into the current structure, affording more entry level programs and also incorporating more Buddhist psychology/philosophy.

## MEDITATION AND MINDFULNESS

The first key element is that of the practice of meditation and mindfulness. It forms the basic ground of all the other practices which derive from it. Its documented existence dates back over 2500 years and was practised in both Asian and Western contemplative traditions although, with the growth of Christianity, its practice largely died out in the West. In contemporary times, we have become acquainted with meditation through its re-introduction to the west in the latter part of the 20th century by people such as Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, Suzuki Roshi, Thich Nath Hanh and others. The term 'mindfulness' has enjoyed unprecedented popularity in recent years, so much so that it is in danger of losing some of the potency of its true meaning. The researcher has come across many definitions of the term, here are just two examples:

'mindfulness means deliberately paying attention, being fully aware of what is happening both inside yourself-in your body, heart and mind- and outside yourself in your environment. Mindfulness is awareness without judgement or criticism' Chazen Bays in (Boyce, 2011)

'mindfulness is the quality of mind that's deeply aware of what's happening-without commentary and without interference. Its like a mirror that simply reflects whatever comes before it' Goldstein in (Boyce, 2011)

Mindfulness has in recent years begun to impact strongly in the practice of psychotherapy. In the third wave of behavioural psychotherapies, mindfulness is a key component of new approaches such as Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), Dialectical behavioural therapy (DBT), Mindfulness based cognitive therapy (MBCT), and Compassionate mind training (CMT). Jon Kabat Zin (Kabat-Zin, 1990)

established MBSR (Mindfulness based stress-reduction) clinics over 30 years ago which have grown exponentially since then with a large body of research to document the findings.

The term mindfulness is often mistakenly taken to be the same thing as meditation but there is an important difference. Mindfulness is derived from meditation practice and is also an aspect of meditation. Mindfulness could be said to be the ongoing continuation of a meditative stance throughout daily life and activity, whereas meditation is a practice that is usually done within a framework and for a specific but varying period of time on a regular basis. The many benefits of regular meditation practice have been documented and there is a growing body of research to demonstrate its efficacy in helping to cope with the stresses and strains of life. Benson observed that the regular practice of meditation could help the practitioner to elicit the relaxation response (Benson, 1975). One study that did an indepth analysis of the findings in research on meditation commented that there were few researchers who examined meditation's original purpose as a 'self-liberating strategy to enhance qualities such as compassion, understanding and wisdom' (Shapiro, Walsh, & Britton, 2003). The same study found that regular meditation practice had many beneficial effects including, enhanced cognition and creativity, improved attention/concentration, improved interpersonal functioning, prevention of relapse in depression, accrued benefits not affected by taking antidepressants, improved self-esteem, increased capacity for empathy and growth in intrapersonal, interpersonal and transpersonal levels. (Shapiro, Walsh, & Britton, 2003) Although the authors did question the validity of the research methods in some of the reviewed studies, nonetheless, overall the results would indicate that meditation does have many beneficial effects

## THE HEART OF WARRIORSHIP

Beyond the basic practice of meditation and mindfulness, there are a number of key terms which appear in Shambhala literature and training. The ones which are of primary interest to psychotherapy are listed below and will be looked at in more detail:

Warriorship : It is best to begin with this term as it clearly invokes the concepts of war and aggression which would appear to be at odds to any notion of healing and psychotherapy, yet in carefully choosing this term, Trungpa (Trungpa, 1984) was concerned with the notion of human bravery and the word warrior is taken from the tibetan word *pawo* which means “one who is brave”. Trungpa suggested that aggression was actually the source of many of our problems and that in order to work with the aggression in ourselves we need to develop courage and so embody the qualities of a warrior and follow a path of human bravery. The type of warriorship that Trungpa describes is very different from the conventional idea of warriorship, he describes it as being tender and raw, without skin. He says that as a warrior you are willing to expose your naked flesh, bone and marrow to the world. (Trungpa, Smile at Fear, 2010, p. 61). This quality is at the heart of Shambhala training and is about learning to develop the courage to open to reality as it presents itself rather than hiding behind defense mechanisms.

‘The definition of warriorship is fearlessness and gentleness. Those are your weapons. The genuine warrior becomes truly gentle because there is no enemy at all’ (Trungpa, Smile at Fear, 2010, p. 38)

Basic goodness : In Shambhala, the notion of basic goodness is that there is an inherent pre-existing goodness in all things, an unspoilt, primordial quality which is present all the time. It is experienced by us in our contact with phenomenon, before we overlay it with our constructs and schemas. Trungpa (Trungpa, 1984) says that we can experience it through very simple things such as as the feeling of freshness when we step out of a shower or when we see a bright colour or hear a beautiful sound. The importance of tuning in to these moments is that they begin to reveal a sense of freshness and non-aggression.

‘Every human being has a basic nature of goodness, which is undiluted and unconfused. That goodness contains tremendous gentleness and appreciation’  
(Trungpa, 1984)

In Tibetan, the notion of basic goodness is referred to as *Ashe* (pronounced ah-SHAY), where *A* is taken to mean primordial and *She* means “stroke” and also “life-strength”. In this sense the Ashe is the primordial life force. (Trungpa, Smile at Fear, 2010, p. 83). Midal (Midal, 2004, p. 209), describes basic goodness as ‘the purity inherent in all experience, the openness that is present in every situation’. This purity or openness is present to us at all times but we fail to see it because we become preoccupied with our issues, our negative thought processes and negative emotions which become like clouds blocking out the sun. Midal goes further by breaking the term into its two components basic and goodness. He points out that while basic refers to the primordial aspects of experience, independent of circumstances, the notion of goodness can be hard to accept, even irritating given all the evil, deception and hypocrisy we see in the world. He suggests that Trungpa was not giving a personal opinion that things are basically good, it is not used as a moral term, rather he is drawing our attention to the fact that we tend not to see the openness of things which

are both basic and good. ‘The word goodness accentuates the term basic to make us sense it’s true resonance. The word functions more as a teaching device than as an expression of theory.’ (Midal, 2004, pp. 209-210)

The way to cultivate an awareness and appreciation of basic goodness is through the practice of sitting meditation. ‘This is the means of rediscovering ourselves and our basic goodness, the means to tune ourselves into genuine reality, without any expectations or preconceptions’ (Trungpa, *The Sanity we are born with*, 2005, p. 20). This practice in Shambhala is known as shamatha meditation, or ‘peaceful abiding’ Mipham (Mipham, 2003, p. 5) , says that this is training our minds in stability, clarity and strength, and we create an alliance that allows us to use our minds to service us rather than ‘be used’ by our minds unwillingly. The technique of shamatha meditation is described by Chodron (Chodron, 1994, pp. 4-6) as sitting with legs crossed in an upright posture, eyes open and lightly focussed, hands resting on our thighs. You then simply become aware of the outbreath, the precision is to stay with the awareness of the breath, when the mind wanders, you gently bring it back to the breath. As the technique develops you can begin to label the thoughts as ‘thinking’, then come back to the breath. Also you can allow the awareness of the space, the room, the sounds, the feel of the cushion etc without a struggle, but all the time coming gently back to the outbreath. The combination of this practice with an introduction to the notion of basic goodness are the main content of the first 5-week course in the Way of Shambhala and also the first weekend training known as ‘the art of being human’

The Cocoon –self and selflessness: In Buddhist psychology it is recognised that the basic root of our suffering (dukka) is in clinging to our sense of self. (Baehr, 2009) As Baehr says, we tend not to experience things as they actually are but rather we experience them as we are and how we experience ourselves as an identity is filtered

by our past and repeated experiences. In psychotherapy this would be seen as our constructs, schemas or core-beliefs. A second cause of suffering as recognised in Buddhism is our resistance to impermanence, we tend to always want things to be solid, fixed and unchanging, we look for certainty rather than settling for uncertainty.' the fact is that what appears to us as a solid reality is actually in a state of continuous flux. The world is in a state of continuous flux' (Mipham, 2003, p. 15). Both these concepts, clinging to the self and resisting impermanence are eloquently expressed in Trungpa's notion of the 'cocoon' (Trungpa, Shambhala, The Sacred Path of The Warrior, 1984). He says that cocoon is essentially the comfort blanket we create to keep ourselves safe and feel secure.

'the way of cowardice is to embed ourselves in this cocoon, in which we perpetuate our habitual patterns. When we are constantly recreating our basic patterns of behaviour and thought, we never have to leap into fresh air or onto fresh ground.' (Trungpa, Shambhala, The Sacred Path of The Warrior, 1984, p. 61)

His use of the word 'cowardice' here may well invoke a negative response for many as it is often associated with a judgement, as if being a coward denotes failure or inadequacy. However, referring back to Trungpa's concept of warriorship being associated with bravery, then we realise that this 'cowardice' is really our habitual state of being but that we have the potential within us to develop bravery and courage to overcome this. There is the possibility within us to leave the cocoon, to 'leap into fresh air or onto fresh ground'. This potential within us, the capacity to grow and expand is one of the key teachings of Shambhala and is echoed in the humanist tradition, Maslows idea of 'self-actualisation', Rogers notion of 'process' (Rogers, 1967). The idea of 'cocoon' has many parallels in psychotherapy under the guise of defense mechanisms and resistance. We use these mechanisms consciously and

unconsciously as a way of managing our anxiety and to avoid confronting our fears. There is a reason for this, we need our ego to survive, it makes us feel secure, it helps us to self-regulate, we even enjoy the experience ‘it is comfortable and sleepy: a very intense and familiar home’ (Trungpa, Shambhala, *The Sacred Path of The Warrior*, 1984, p. 61). There is a payoff in it, perhaps similar to Lacan’s ‘jouissance’ (Leader & Groves, 2010, p. 140), we both love and hate being in our cocoon at the same time. We also experience it as limiting and inhibiting, Trungpa says that we experience the cocoon as claustrophobic, we have a longing for openness a longing for ‘something other than the smell of our own sweat’ (Trungpa, Shambhala, *The Sacred Path of The Warrior*, 1984, p. 61) . This longing often marks the beginning of awakening, we look for something different, a way out of our self-imposed prison. This is a time when many people decide to try psychotherapy, or seek out a spiritual path. For others, they might be mercilessly ripped from the security of the cocoon by a traumatic or catastrophic event and so have no choice other than to face their fears. In both cases there is a valuable opportunity for growth. This is perhaps one of the important points that the medical, clinical approach to pathology often overlooks in its eagerness to diagnose, to find out what’s “wrong” with the client. Perhaps the problems and issues of clients in therapy are the very things that provide the pathway towards healing, growth and transcendence (Wilber, 1998, p. 162) that by opening to the vulnerability of suffering (Chodron, *When Things Fall Apart*, 1997) there is the possibility of softening the apparent solidity of our self our ego or our cocoon. This softening offers the possibility for personal transformation. Wallin describes this as a process of moving from a stance of ‘embeddedness’ to a ‘reflective’ or ‘mentalizing’ stance and finally to a ‘mindful’ stance. He states that, for the insecurely attached client, this progress of states: embeddedness-mentalizing-mindfulness coupled with a strong

therapeutic relationship can lead the client to develop a new ‘internalised secure base’ (Wallin, 2007, p. 144). He says that this growing awareness in the client, a move towards ‘selflessness that lessens the need to protect the (personal) self- can strengthen our sense of an internalized secure base’ (Wallin, 2007, p. 68). Rodrigues says that, as therapists, learning how we cocoon ourselves we gain greater insight into the barriers and defenses our clients construct and by learning how to lean into our own pain we understand the obstacles our clients face and this helps us to create a holding environment. (Rodrigues, 2008, p. 30)

The shambhala training level 2 weekend programme entitled ‘birth of the warrior’, looks at the notion of cocoon and how we use habitual patterns and defense mechanisms as a way to mask our fear.

Genuine Heart of Sadness : If the goal of psychotherapy is to learn to deal with our issues, whether they be attachment issues or issues of pathology, trauma, addiction, loss and so on, an underlying characteristic of all of these is vulnerability. As humans we are fragile vulnerable beings. We are always trying to cover up our vulnerability but, as Rodrigues (Rodrigues, 2008, p. 116) says, vulnerability is actually our source for connection. Trungpa captures this sense of vulnerability perfectly in his teachings on the ‘Genuine heart of sadness’ (Trungpa, Shambhala, The Sacred Path of The Warrior, 1984). The suggestion he makes is that if we are to grow beyond the cocoon, to face our fears and anxieties, to transcend our limiting self-concept, then we must first recognise our vulnerability, he refers to this as the ‘soft spot’ a powerful sense of sadness and aloneness that we all experience from time to time. He says that it is not necessarily the type of sadness that results from a sense of loss:

‘this experience of sadness is unconditioned. It occurs because your heart is completely exposed. There is no skin or tissue covering it; it is pure raw meat. Even if a tiny mosquito lands on it, you feel so touched. Your experience is raw and tender and so personal.’ (Trungpa, Shambhala, *The Sacred Path of The Warrior*, 1984, p. 45)

This poetic use of language to describe our basic fragile and vulnerable nature is typical of much of Trungpa’s writings and it is why his teachings have an ability to reach us at a deeper level than the intellect, they can also penetrate at an emotional and heart level. This is what is known in Buddhism as a *transmission* of the teachings. It bridges the gap between intellectual understanding and an embodied knowing. You could describe it as the gap between theory and practice. Coming back to our vulnerable and fragile selves, it would seem that an ability to connect with this ‘soft spot’ would be of enormous value for both client and therapist alike. It would create a perspective where client and therapist could meet on a more equal level. The relationship in therapy, or therapeutic alliance has long been recognised as one of the most powerful healing forces in the therapy (Kahn, 2001) (Wallin, 2007). It is this sense that we are not alone, not isolated individuals, but rather our existence is contingent on one another, we live in an interpersonal world, a state of ‘interbeing’. (Kahn, 2001) According to Jack Kornfield, this is the place where compassion begins, it arises from our interconnection with all things (Kornfield, 2008). Compassion is the central focus of Gilbert’s Compassionate Mind Training (CMT). (Gilbert, 2009)

Fear and fearlessness : These are terms that come up time and time again in the shambhala teachings and are central to the shambhala concept of warriorship.

According to Trungpa we need to learn to ‘Smile at Fear’, he says that our fear comes from a sense of basic bewilderment which happens when we are unable to synchronise body and mind. (Trungpa, *Smile at Fear*, 2010, p. 4) . He also says that in

order to experience fearlessness we must get to know our fear intimately and learn to go beyond fear. 'if we look into our fear, if we look beneath the veneer, the first thing we notice is sadness', he goes on to say that 'In the Shambhala tradition, discovering fearlessness comes from working with the softness of the human heart' (Trungpa, Shambhala, The Sacred Path of The Warrior, 1984, p. 49). Again, here we see the reference to our vulnerability as being the gateway to developing the courage to overcome our fears. This is a key principle in Shambhala, when Trungpa describes the 'birth of the warrior', he compares it to the young reindeers horns, they are soft and rubbery and gradually grow into firm strong horns with ten or more points. He likens this development to the development of fearlessness, at first we are very tender and vulnerable, but as we experience more and more this feeling of relating with fear, the feeling becomes quite ordinary and we naturally evolve into a stance of fearlessness. (Trungpa, Shambhala, The Sacred Path of The Warrior, 1984, pp. 49-50). In existential approaches to psychotherapy it is commonly recognised that fundamental fear or basic 'existential angst' is at the root of our human condition as soon as we become aware of ourselves (Van Deurzen, 2002, p. 34). And of course, once we realise that we exist we worry that we may cease to exist or as May puts it, 'anxiety is the experience of the threat of imminent non-being' (May, 1983, p. 109). Van Deurzen goes on to say that the goal of existential psychotherapy is to encourage people not to suppress their anxiety and to help them find the courage to 'unearth all their anxieties and to face life squarely.' (Van Deurzen, 2002, p. 35). The problem is that Van Deurzen doesn't offer any suggestions as to how this might be done. The approach in Shambhala is to gently open to the fear. Through the regular practice of meditation we become more keenly aware of our fears and anxieties, yet we also

become aware of our vulnerability and, as has been suggested previously, it is through developing self-compassion that we gain the courage to face our fears.

In Buddhist psychology the term *shunyata* means emptiness or groundlessness (Trungpa, Cutting through Spiritual Materialism, 1973, p. 187) and if viewed through the lense of existentialism, it is a concept that would naturally give rise to fear, a fear that we don't really exist. Yet as Chodron puts it, quoting from the Buddhist text The Heart Sutra, "form is emptiness, emptiness is form", both exist at the same time. Emptiness is not 'empty' in the conventional way we understand it, it is vibrant and fluid, continually manifesting form, it is we who attempt to solidify it and solidify ourselves. (Chodron, 1994, p. 65). Welwood says that we need not experience this emptiness as 'existential dread' but that the practice of meditation helps us to appreciate our lack of solidity as a powerful clarity and presence rather than something to be feared. He says that, through regular meditation practice, we observe the mind as it tries to grasp the passing stream of thoughts, feelings and perceptions and we find that we cant hold on to anything, this gives us an experience of the lack of solidity of the self. (Welwood, 2000, p. 153)

## CONCLUSION

In this brief look at Shambhala Training, many of the themes considered have emerged in one way or another in the various forms of psychotherapy practices available. Mindfulness is at the core of new developments in behavioural psychotherapy such as Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) (Westbrook, Kennerley, & Kirk, 2007). The concepts of working with compassion form the basis of Compassionate Mind

Training (CMT) (Gilbert, 2009) and also underpin the various approaches of humanistic and person-centred therapies. Psychoanalytic and Psychodynamic approaches look at making the unconscious conscious, thereby increasing awareness and consciousness. The similarities between these approaches and Buddhism has been explored by Fromm (Fromm, 1960) and many others. Existential therapies talk about opening to our basic ‘existential angst’, which is essentially opening to our fears and anxieties rather than turning away from them. Body psychotherapies speak of synchronising mind and body, of becoming ‘embodied’. They all offer, by way of help, talking therapy, theories and information, which, although proven to be very beneficial in many cases, may not be enough to create a real and lasting transformation in the client. Chogyam Trungpa (Trungpa, The Sanity we are born with, 2005) says that western psychology offers much in the way of theory but little in the way of practice. Like learning a musical instrument, progress is synonymous with practice, psychotherapy, with the exception of CBT doesn’t appear to offer much to the client in terms of things to practice at home, tools to continue growth and development when the therapy is finished. CBT offers many surface level practices to challenge our NATS (negative automatic thoughts) and unhelpful behaviour patterns but it does not really address the deeper underlying vulnerability, fragility, fears and anxieties that make up our sense of self, alongside the basic goodness that is inherent in our human nature.

There doesn’t appear to be any single therapeutic approach that covers all these perspectives. Newer, eclectic forms of psychotherapy do offer an ‘integrative’ approach, but are they actually integrated or a collection of different disciplines and approaches that the therapist has dabbled in to a certain degree and now uses them to inform their therapeutic style? Shambhala training, although not psychotherapy, does

provide a path to personal growth and development that is clearly and practically laid out in terms of its levels and structure. As well as the structured training programme offered through its weekend level programs, its five week courses and residential meditation retreats and advanced programs , it offers a set of daily practices which show the student how to practice and integrate meditation, mindfulness and awareness into their daily lives. It offers further practices that help to develop self-acceptance, compassion for self and others, an expanded sense of self leading to more inter-connectedness and inter-being, and at the advanced level of Vajrayana practice, it shows the way to becoming fully embodied and authentic human beings.

Taking all this into account, it is the view of this paper that Shambhala teachings and training offer insights and practices that could be very useful tools for the both the therapist and client alike.

## METHODOLOGY

**DESIGN:** The design of this research was qualitative and exploratory. The decision to employ this research strategy was taken based on the fact that the epistemological orientation of the material is essentially interpretivist, and the ontological orientation is constructionist (Bryman, 2008). A methodology using Thematic Analysis was employed to examine both the similarities and the differences between the participants in relation to the dominant themes (Breakwell, 2006). The study asks the question, is there much in Shambhala training that is useful to and compatible with the practice of psychotherapy? It also poses the hypothesis that the practice of meditation could and should be a regular practice for all psychotherapists and that this practice could be introduced and fostered throughout the period of training as students.

**INTERVIEWS:** The style of interviews was In-Depth, Semi-structured. The questions (Appendix 2) were used as a means to expand on the emergent themes. (Bryman, 2008). If the participant introduced a variant or a different approach in answering the questions, this was encouraged and explored within the limitation of the time available. Each interview lasted between thirty and sixty minutes and was recorded at the participant's home.

**SAMPLE:** The five participants all attend the Dublin Shambhala Buddhist meditation centre and are all regular meditation practitioners. They represent a majority sample of Shambhala Buddhist practitioners in Ireland. They were recruited by local

discussion either by phone or in person. The basic objective of the research was explained to each participant, as were the issues of consent and anonymity (Appendix 2). All five were open and responsive and happy to participate in the research. They were selected for a cross section of gender, age, experience and background.

*Participant 1:* Male aged 34, 7 years meditation experience, living and working in Dublin.

*Participant 2:* Female aged 50, 12 years meditation experience, living and working in Dublin.

*Participant 3:* Male aged 54, 35 years meditation experience, living and working in Dublin.

*Participant 4:* Female aged 52, 20 years meditation experience, living in Dublin, not working at present.

*Participant 5:* Male, aged 65, 30 years meditation experience, Living in Dublin, Retired from work.

**MATERIALS:** To record the interviews, a Sound Devices 722 hard disk recorder was used. The audio was then transferred to Digidesign's Protools audio editing software. A recruitment sheet, consent form and interview schedule was used for each participant. (Appendix 2)

**ANALYSIS:** All six interviews were transferred to Protools audio editing software and labeled accordingly. CD copies of each interview were also made so that the researcher could listen back to them while driving. Repeated listens were done in this way and also within the Protools audio system. Within Protools, markers were placed to identify various answers and points of interest for each interview, in this way the

researcher was able to quickly access the material and could easily cross check the different responses from each participant. Emergent themes, similarities and differences between the participant's answers were noted and examined for inter-relationships. They were also compared against the themes that had emerged from the literature review. In this way the findings of the research were clearly identifiable.

ETHICS: The Ethical approach and guidelines used in this research were in accordance with the Belmont Principles for research involving human subjects. (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioural Research, 1979). Participants were recruited by informed consent and were given an information sheet, a recruitment sheet and interview schedule. (Appendix 2).

## FINDINGS

The main themes emerging from the interviews were that the long-term effects of meditation practice in the Shambhala tradition have a considerable positive transformational influence on the individual's sense of being in the world. It is also inextricably linked with the cultivation of courage, compassion and fearlessness.

The questions were based on the themes that had emerged from the literature review.

- 1) Development of mindful awareness through the practice of meditation.
- 2) Development of courage and bravery.
- 3) Basic ground of existence seen as essentially "good" or unbroken.
- 4) Excessive defense mechanisms seen as a claustrophobic "cocoon".
- 5) Cultivation of compassion for self and others through acknowledging our vulnerability.
- 6) Opening to basic anxiety and the cultivation of "fearlessness".

In addition to these themes, the participants were asked about their personal experiences of psychotherapy. The findings from each of these themes will be considered in turn.

**DEVELOPMENT OF MINDFUL AWARENESS THROUGH THE PRACTICE OF MEDITATION:** In discussing this theme the focus of the questions was on the length and regularity of practice and also on the transformational effects on the sense of self and relationships to others. The regularity of practice varied between regular

and daily *'I would practice every day for at least an hour'*(participant 5) to very irregular and inconsistent *'my meditation practice is like a landscape, it goes up and down....laughs..'* (participant 2) , although all participants would have regular periods of consistent and extended practice with retreats being part of that. With regard to the transformation in the sense of self and relations to others, all participants reported that there had indeed been considerable transformation here. *'whatever sense of self I had was imbalanced....through the practice its given a sense of...all the fuzz, the noise, the personas you have, you drop a lot of that and you touch into more of, let's say, a sort of ground essence and you begin to relate with that but also see that as being you as well'* (participant 1) *'now I'm much more aware of my reactions and how I am with people, not to say that I get it right because I don't but the world has a way of tripping you up and reminding you that you are losing your mindfulness'* (participant 2). It also emerged, especially when talking to the long-term practitioners that the notion of self as presented in the questionnaire is reductionist from their perspective. *'meditation practice gives me a very very fine sense of awareness, fine to the extent of almost a paradox or a dissolving'* (participant 4) *'the relationship to self must also account for the relationship to non-self, that I find quite liberating, one realizes that one doesn't have to regard everything that goes on in one's consciousness as being self'* (participant 5)

#### DEVELOPMENT OF COURAGE AND BRAVERY.

It emerged from the interviews that, whilst bravery is a central part of the Shambhala teachings and training, its cultivation, although related to the practice of meditation, is not a direct result of this practice. *'you see I'm not convinced about the direct relationship of meditation to the development of courage, it's a different muscle, you have to like dredge it out...laughs....draw it out, its manual work, there's no magic in*

*it, there's no silver bullet. Meditation is not a silver bullet to develop courage right...that's my own feeling, courage is developed by being courageous...laughs.'*

(participant 4) One participant found it difficult to quantify whether changes, such as increased courage, awareness were in fact possible to observe. *'all of these things suppose some way of standing outside of oneself and outside of situations so, I'm not sure that that's possible or valid necessarily' 'its not possible for me to conceive of myself as not being what I am...that being the case, how can I know whether what I am is better than if I wasn't.....but I can't not be'* (participant 5). Answers such as this began to reveal that 'mind' as realized by some of these long-term practitioners, is highly complex and transcends the simplicity of the questions being presented to them at the interview.

#### BASIC GROUND OF EXISTENCE SEEN AS 'GOOD' OR UNBROKEN.

This theme emerged directly from Chogyam Trungpa's term 'basic goodness' which forms the cornerstone of the Shambhala teachings. All participants had a unique way or expressing their understanding of this term. *'you hear of various things described as basic goodness you know, the smile on a child's face, all that kind of stuff which is fine but you also hear that basic goodness can equally be a pile of shit and it in itself is basically good'* (participant 1) *'I think that the ground of everything, the essential nature of everything that we perceive, like most importantly ourselves, is basically good, is basically wholesome and eh...pristine, pure...unstainable'* (participant 3)

One participant, when questioned on the relationship between meditation and experiencing basic goodness as a by-product said *'you don't practice so you have basic goodness "on tap", to me that's a rather perverse understanding... its not programmable... it's practicing not being rather than practicing to be basic goodness plugged-in-ness'* (participant 5)

## EXCESSIVE DEFENSE MECHANISMS SEEN AS A CLAUSTROPHOBIC 'COCOON'

This theme attempted to forge a link between Trungpa's notion of 'cocoon' and the traditional psychotherapeutic concept of defense mechanisms. For most participants, in describing their experience of cocoon, the link is quite evident, although the concept of cocoon seems to point more deeply to the basic restricted way that we all tend to live our lives. *'its all the stuff that you create around yourself to shelter yourself, it's the flopping out, the lying down on the couch watching the box set...eating the fast food, its living in familiar circumstances all the time in auto-pilot state.'* (participant 1) and also *'almost like suffocation, you know...that we enclose ourselves in our little world and it's restricting, limiting and suffocating and he (Chogyam Trungpa) describes it as being "a bit smelly" ... laughs..'* (participant 2) In psychotherapy, defense mechanisms are seen as being necessary to a certain extent as a coping mechanism. For two of the practitioners in particular, this view is challenged *'the defense mechanisms, let's call it, are seen as necessary, because there isn't enough overall deep awareness to expose the fact that they are not necessary and the fact that they are counterproductive, self-defeating and self-perpetuating'* (participant 5) and more directly expressed by participant 4 *'I think that defense mechanisms are neurotic....right....so they are kind of habitual and there is not an expansive understanding in them, its just habitual.....I think its very important to draw a distinction between knowledgeable or Vipassanised protection (vipassana is the Sanskrit word for insight) and habitual defense mechanisms, because with habitual defense mechanisms there is no intelligence in it, do you know what I mean? There is no clear seeing in it'* (participant 4). It emerged that the difference between the notion of Shambhala's cocoon and psychotherapy's defense mechanisms is in the

personal awareness of the cocoon. Often defense mechanisms operate at an unconscious level, whereas, for all the participants, a keen awareness and close relationship to the cocoon was evident. *'I think I have a cocoon with a periscope....laughs uproariously.....i sort of see myself as being in a yellow submarine'* (participant 2). This ability to clearly see and acknowledge the cocoon in itself seems to give rise to the possibility of transformation. *'I kind of see it as a process, you know...that your cocoon gets bigger in a sense but less restrictive, its expanding, but has less hold over you....you're still in it, but you're making it more transparent all the time'*. This last statement again seems to reflect the paradoxical nature one encounters with long-term practitioners and teachers who try to convey a deep understanding or wisdom through the limitations of ordinary language.

#### CULTIVATION OF COMPASSION FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS THROUGH ACKNOWLEDGING OUR VULNERABILITY.

This is another of the key points in the teaching of Shambhala and is often expressed, therein as 'the genuine heart of sadness'. All participants reported, without doubt, that the practice of meditation directly led to an increased capacity for self-compassion and subsequently, compassion for others. *'I think I was a pretty tough character before I started practicing, there was kindness there of course but there was a lot of defenses'* (participant 3) There is an increasing ability to open to their sense of vulnerability which emerges from sitting in meditation, focusing on the breath, experiencing the space and allowing whatever arises to arise. Being able to sit with vulnerability then becomes a powerful component. *'because I am able to allow myself to feel vulnerability, there is actually a strength in that. I can hold the sense of vulnerability without needing to shut it down and act tough, to harden off, so there's*

*a re-valuing of vulnerability not as threat but as being of value in itself.*' (participant 5)

#### OPENING TO ANXIETY AND THE CULTIVATION OF 'FEARLESSNESS'

Participants were asked if they thought that the practice of meditation helped them to deal with anxiety and fearful situations. All five responded affirmatively to this, saying that there was a definite correlation and also that this was a cumulative effect over time. *'I think it's a sort of cumulative, that the more I step into fearless situations, you know, not foolishly but have some awareness and em.....the more that I deal with my own fear, the further I can go along with it and the more confident I feel and meditation has helped with that. You know, really just that steadiness of being able to sit and always come back to the present moment, whatever that holds.*

(participant 3) This instruction of always coming back and staying in the present moment seems to be very significant in terms of opening to anxiety and being able to sit with it. *'I believe that the core instruction of stay, em, you don't need any more than that. And you can apply that right up to panic attack, and that's what I've done, because you stay, you can actually dissolve it.'* (participant 4). It also emerged that this ability to sit with anxiety is correlated with consistency and regularity in practice.

*'its been part of the testing process of meditation that, when you meditate consistently, that then becomes your base layer and you sort of take it for granted, then you might just drop off in your practice and then I can see it (the anxiety) coming back, I can see the bits coming back bit by bit, accumulating and accumulating'*

(participant 1) So does meditation provide a protection against that? *'I'm not sure its protection....you could phrase it like that but I think a more correct way would be to say that you create space in your mind to accommodate it'* (participant 1).

## COMPARING MEDITATION WITH PSYCHOTHERAPY.

As all five participants had personal experience of psychotherapy alongside their meditation practice, the question was asked as to whether one had helped the other. It emerged that all five had found that the practice of meditation and psychotherapy were very complimentary. *'through that repeated process of going in there (psychotherapy), like meditation its almost like another tool that's expanding your sense of self up to the stage that it gives you enough to go off on your own you could say'* (participant 1) One of the participants who had done a lot of personal therapy over the years was not convinced that the therapy was always beneficial *'I've been in psychotherapy all my life...laughs.... You know, in and out, and sometimes I've found it beneficial and sometimes I haven't.....I found that some of the therapy I've done has more been leading towards me being a functioning human being in this relative world... which has never worked, its never gotten me to function.....laughs'* (participant 3) This participant is currently engaged in a method of psychotherapy that is spiritually based and is finding it much more beneficial than previous forms of therapy tried. *'its really delving deeper into my patterns, into the sense of my perspective, what I hold true and is it true? You know, fixed things in myself, just as a way to understand my experience more as opposed to a way to fix something that's broken.'* (participant 3). It was generally acknowledged by all participants that, whilst they strongly felt that meditation practice is a great addition to psychotherapy, there are many people who practice meditation, even long-term, who have never tried psychotherapy and so are very unaware and disconnected from their shadow side. *'its well documented that a lot of people go into the meditation path and they should be in psychotherapy because they've jumped over emotional stuff that they haven't dealt with and its glaring, and its affecting their ability to do their meditation path*

*because they haven't dealt with the shit'* (participant 4). Another participant echoed this observation. *'there is a danger that people can meditate over quite a long period of time without in fact stirring up their shit, they are in fact tranquilizing it and secretly, you know, they are doing it for that reason, without realizing the down side.'* (participant 5).

## DISCUSSION

From analysing the results of the research interviews it is clear that the concepts of mindfulness and meditation as they are commonly understood are just the tip of the iceberg of a deeper spiritual path, such as that offered by the Shambhala training and Buddhist practices. Meditation prepares the ground for the cultivation of compassion, courage and fearless living. As has been pointed out, the development of courage is not a direct consequences of meditation practice, it is a muscle that needs to be developed by its own practice '*meditation is not a silver bullet to develop courage.....courage is developed by being courageous*' (participant 4), but meditation does help to shape that muscle so that it is primed and ready for use. In particular the sitting practice of meditation helps to develop an open heart which leads to an increased capacity for compassion and the ability to sit with anxiety without needing to change it. This act of sitting with anxiety is really inseparable from the development of compassion, first for our selves, which leads inevitably to a sense of compassion for others. When one sits in meditation, focusing attention on the breath, noticing thoughts and gently returning the focus to the breath, over and over again, a sense of space begins to open up. This space can be at the same time relaxing and disturbing. The relaxation arises because the space gives more room to breathe and move, the disturbance occurs because we become more acutely aware of our own anxiety or we may feel a sensation of 'groundlessness' (Chodron, 1994) which gives rise to a basic existential anxiety, 'the threat of imminent non-being' (May, 1983). If one learns to sit with this confusion, oscillating between feeling calm and feeling anxious then we become acutely aware of our own fragility and vulnerability. We also begin to experience the nature of emptiness. As Trungpa puts it 'when you

awaken your heart in this way you find to your surprise that your heart is empty' (Trungpa, 1984). This emptiness leads to a feeling of vulnerability and 'tenderness' and paradoxically this sensation comes from a feeling of being full. 'the genuine heart of sadness comes from feeling that your non-existent heart is full. You would like to spill your heart's blood, give your heart to others' (Trungpa, 1984). Here sadness is equated with the heart being full, interestingly, Midal points out that the word sad derives from the latin word 'satis' which means 'enough' and obviously this is linked to the word 'satisfaction'. (Midal, 2004). So sadness is not equated with a feeling of depression as we would normally understand it, but more with a sense of fullness, a wholesome experience of reality as it is.

This sequence of events then begins with sitting in meditation, leading to an awareness of anxiety which gives rise to an awareness of vulnerability which in turn gives rise to feelings of compassion. Trungpa goes on to suggest that developing compassion in this way leads to the cultivation of 'fearlessness' or the ability to face anxiety.

#### SHAMBHALA TRAINING MORE DETAIL:

Looking again at the Shambhala training, we see from the chart (appendix 1) that it is an elaborate system of training that can amount to a lifetime of experiential study if that is what is required. This paper is taking a closer look specifically at the 'Way of Shambhala 1' with its five weekend 'level' courses and its five 'Everyday life' courses which are designed to run for five weeks each, one night per week. These courses could be easily undertaken in a year, part time, by attending a local Shambhala centre. The six themes that have been discussed in this paper evolve in a progressive way throughout these courses with a regular personal practice of

meditation being encouraged and fostered from the very start. A reminder of these themes is as follows:

- 1) Development of mindful awareness through the practice of meditation.
- 2) Basic ground of existence seen as essentially good or unbroken
- 3) Excessive defense mechanisms seen as a claustrophobic 'cocoon'
- 4) Cultivation of compassion for self and others through acknowledging our vulnerability.
- 5) Opening to basic anxiety and the cultivation of fearlessness.
- 6) Development of courage and bravery.

These themes are addressed more or less in sequence throughout the training, a brief overview of the five level weekends is as follows:

LEVEL 1: Introduction to meditation. 'we glimpse unconditional goodness as the ground of our existence. Opening to ourselves, with gentleness and appreciation, we begin to see our potential as genuine and compassionate human beings'

LEVEL 2: 'Meditation practice allows us to observe how we create a cocoon of habits to mask our fear. We begin to experience that there is no fundamental obstacle to experiencing basic goodness.'

LEVEL 3: 'Developing fearlessness by examining our habitual tendencies, we are willing to experience our life without relying on the cocoon. We begin to engage the world directly and extend the attitude of fearlessness to our activities'

LEVEL 4: ‘Daring to experience the sharp edge of reality, we move forward with gentleness, increased awareness and inquisitiveness about the world, as it is. We can extend ourselves to others fully and with kindness.’

LEVEL 5: ‘Communicating with the world gently and fearlessly, our awareness is sharpened and we find the open clear sky of mind-a delightful source of wisdom and uplifted energy. We trust our nature enough to let go into the present moment.

(Shambhala Office of Practice and Education, 2008)

The accompanying ‘everyday life courses’ expand on the weekend Level courses with discussion groups and dialogues, also introducing students to elements of Buddhist psychology.

#### AUTHENTIC PRESENCE:

The goal of this training is that the students develop what Trungpa called ‘authentic presence’ (Trungpa, 1984). He goes on to describe the qualities of this state in some detail, discussing both ‘outer authentic presence’ and ‘inner authentic presence. The former is experienced as a sort of charismatic quality and genuineness that is felt by others. As regards the latter he says ‘inner authentic presence comes from exchanging yourself with others, from being able to regard other people as yourself, generously and without fixation.’ (Trungpa, 1984). This is of particular relevance for the practice of psychotherapy as it seems to go a step further than Roger’s core conditions of empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence. (Rogers, 1967). While Rogers says that, with empathy, we enter into the client’s world, without ever losing the ‘as if’ quality (Rogers, 1967), ‘Authentic presence’ suggests that we see no

separation between ourselves and others, and so there is no need for an ‘as if’ quality. This would seem to be far more potent and powerful as a therapeutic encounter. Traditionally, psychotherapy would argue the need for maintaining the ‘as if’ in order to protect ourselves and prevent ‘burn out’ from happening, but perhaps the burn out occurs precisely because of trying to maintain this quality of separateness. The therapist has such a fear of taking on some of the client’s problems or illness that this fear leads them to eventually develop an illness themselves. When Trungpa speaks of ‘renunciation’ he means renouncing ‘anything in his experience that is a barrier between himself and others’ (Trungpa, 1984). For a therapist to have this kind of presence it would be a genuine and true empathy, without holding anything of oneself in reserve and would surely be of far greater benefit to the client, allowing them not only to be heard by the therapist, but to be *felt* and *experienced* by the therapist. Trungpa emphasises this point when speaking of the ‘healing relationship’ needed between therapist and client, he says that through this genuine and ‘authentic’ encounter the client begins to heal because he knows that someone has communicated with him completely. (Trungpa, *The Sanity we are born with*, 2005). Naturally such an encounter would require courage and compassion on the part of the therapist, qualities which, as has been previously discussed are part of the fruition of the meditation path and specifically encouraged and cultivated throughout the Shambhala training.

#### POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT:

The main theme emerging from this study is that the practice of sitting meditation leads to a deeper awareness of oneself and one’s process and this can only be of benefit to someone who is engaged with psychotherapy, whether as a client or as a psychotherapist. The training offered by the Shambhala organisation serves to deepen

and expand on the awareness gained through sitting practice, leading to the cultivation of compassion and the ability to work with anxiety. This is of enormous benefit to the practicing psychotherapist, who, by cultivating authentic presence, can considerably deepen their capacity to manifest Roger's core conditions that have come to be regarded as essential ways of being and working in the Humanistic and person-centred tradition of psychotherapy.

It also emerged in the findings of this research that there are long-term practitioners of meditation who would benefit from personal therapy. *'there is a danger that people can meditate over quite a long period of time without in fact stirring up their shit, they are in fact tranquilizing it and secretly, you know, they are doing it for that reason, without realizing the down side.'*

(participant 5).

Further research could be carried out in this area to investigate the potential dangers of meditating over a long period without ever having addressed underlying emotional issues in therapy. Baehr (Baehr, 2009) has highlighted the dangers of embarking on a meditation path if one has a fragile ego to begin with, but there would appear to be also a danger that someone with a strong ego could potentially develop a stronger, even impenetrable ego if they haven't ever looked at their own emotional issues in therapy.

## CONCLUSION

This paper set out to examine Shambhala Buddhist teachings and the Shambhala Training that grew from these teachings, as devised by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche. It also sought to explore whether the experiential nature of this training was of value from a therapeutic perspective, both for the client in therapy and also for the therapist. From an in depth review of the Shambhala literature and comparison with a cross-section of psychotherapy literature and also in depth interviews and analysis with five Shambhala practitioners, it would appear very much that there are significant benefits to be gained by client and therapist alike from an engagement with this training. The regular practice of meditation leads to an increased awareness which is really a necessity for anyone wishing to engage with psychotherapy. The experience of psychotherapy itself also leads to increased awareness, but often the beginning client has become so defended that they are unaware that they in fact are lacking in awareness of themselves and their process. Meditation offers a way to cut through this and foster a self-awareness in the client which would then allow them to engage more deeply with the psychotherapy process. The Shambhala Training also goes beyond the basic meditation practice, using mindfulness, teaching the students to become aware of and work with their defense mechanisms, basic vulnerability and basic anxiety, whilst at the same time cultivating compassion for themselves and others and acknowledging and realising their own strength and agency. It would seem that this has considerable therapeutic value by itself, and would offer a significant enhancement to anyone engaged in personal therapy.

It is the view of the researcher that Shambhala training could be usefully incorporated into any psychotherapy training, adding a powerful experiential component, leading to more fully equipped therapists emerging at the end of training.

Finally, it would seem that there is much that meditation practice could offer to the practice of psychotherapy and also that psychotherapy should be seen as an important part of the meditation/spiritual path, a meeting of the two traditions could only be of benefit to all concerned. There have already been many attempts at this type of integration but there is potential for much more. The experiential growth that ensues from a meditation practice and the practices of a spiritual path may well be, developmentally, a missing component from the traditional practice of psychotherapy that, when added, will pave the way for a new generation of more authentically present and engaged practitioners.

## REFERENCES

- Baehr, J. (2009). Buddhist Practice-based Psychotherapy. *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health*, XI (1/2), 107-125.
- Benson, H. (1975). *The Relaxation Response*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Boyce, B. (2011). *The Mindfulness Revolution*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Breakwell, G. M. (2006). *Research Methods in Psychology*. London: Sage.
- Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Chodron, P. (1994). *Start Where You Are*. Boston: Shambhala Publications Inc.
- Chodron, P. (1997). *When Things Fall Apart*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Fromm, E. (1960). *Psychoanalysis and Zen Buddhism*. London: Unwin.
- Gilbert, P. (2009). *The Compassionate Mind*. London: Constable and Robinson.
- Kabat-Zin, J. (1990). *Full Catastrophe Living*. New York: Bantam Dell.
- Kahn, M. (2001). *Between Therapist and Client*. New York: Holt Paperbacks.
- Kornfield, J. (2008). *The Wise Heart*. New York: Random House.
- Leader, D., & Groves, J. (2010). *Introducing Lacan a graphic guide*. London: Totem Books.
- May, R. (1983). *The Discovery of Being*. New York: Norton and Co.
- Midal, F. (2004). *Chogyam Trungpa his life and vision*. Boston and London: Shambhala.
- Mipham, S. (2003). *Turning the Mind into an Ally*. New York: Riverhead Books.
- National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioural Research. (1979). *Belmont Report*. Washington DC: US Government printing offices.
- Rodrigues, J. (2008). *Presence, Clarity and the Space of Receptivity in Counselling*. Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag.
- Rogers, C. R. (1967). *On Becoming a Person*. London: Constable & Robinson.
- Shambhala International. (n.d.). Retrieved February Thursday, 2012, from Shambhala, vision, lineage, meditation, community: <http://www.shambhala.org>
- Shambhala Office of Practice and Education. (2008). *Shambhala Guide Resource Manual*. Halifax: Vajradhatu Publications.

Shapiro, S. L., Walsh, R., & Britton, W. B. (2003). An analysis of recent meditation research and suggestions for future directions. *Journal for Meditation and Meditation research*, 3, 66-90.

Trungpa, C. (1973). *Cutting through Spiritual Materialism*. Boston & London: Shambhala.

Trungpa, C. (1984). *Shambhala, The Sacred Path of The Warrior*. Boston: Shambhala Publications.

Trungpa, C. (2010). *Smile at Fear*. Boston & London: Shambhala.

Trungpa, C. (2005). *The Sanity we are born with*. Boston and London: Shambhala.

Van Deurzen, E. (2002). *Existential Counselling and Psychotherapy in Practice*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Wallin, D. J. (2007). *Attachment in Psychotherapy*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Welwood, J. (2000). *Towards a psychology of awakening*. Boston and London: Shambhala.

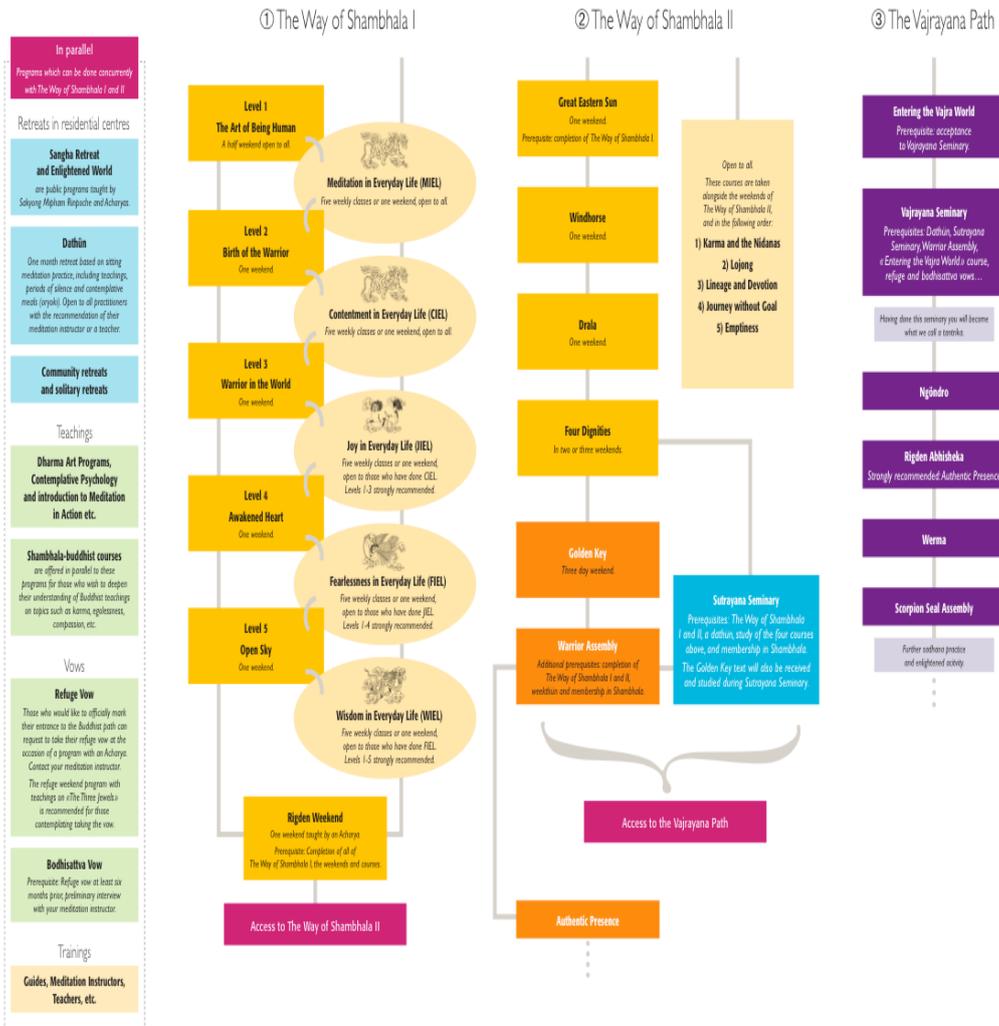
Westbrook, D., Kennerley, H., & Kirk, J. (2007). *An introduction to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy*. London: Sage.

Wilber, K. (1998). *The Essential Ken Wilber an introductory reader*. Boston: Shambhala Publications.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1:

### Over view of Shambhala Training chart



Appendix 2:

SAMPLE CONSENT FORM:

Mark Mc Grath (Researcher)	Siobáin O Donnell(Supervisor)
Department of Psychotherapy	Department of Psychotherapy
DBS	DBS
Dublin	Dublin

The therapeutic value inherent in Shambhala training and the practice of  
meditation

The purpose of this study has been made clear to me. I have been advised that all information I provide will remain anonymous. I also understand that under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997 that I am entitled to access any records containing my personal information.

I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and I am satisfied with the answers given. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason.

I agree to participate in this study on a voluntary basis.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## SAMPLE RECRUITMENT SHEET:

You are invited to participate in a research study exploring the therapeutic value inherent in Shambhala training and the practice of meditation.

The research will be carried out by Mark Mc Grath, a 4<sup>th</sup> year undergraduate student of counseling and psychotherapy at DBS college, and Shambhala Buddhist practitioner.

The aim of the study is to draw attention to aspects of Shambhala training and meditation practice which may positively contribute to the practice of psychotherapy for both clients and therapists alike.

Should you decide to participate in this research, It will involve one recorded interview of 30-40 minutes duration during which time you will be asked questions on your experience as a Shambhala practitioner based on a series of themes ( see attached interview schedule)

All information will remain anonymous. If you are interested in participating then please contact me at :

Your participation would be greatly appreciated and I look forward to hearing about your experiences.

## SAMPLE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE/THEMES FOR PARTICIPANTS:

Questions will be asked emerging from the following themes:

- 1) Development of mindful awareness through the practice of meditation.
- 2) Development of courage and bravery.
- 3) Basic ground of existence seen as essentially “good” or unbroken.
- 4) Excessive defense mechanisms seen as a claustrophobic “cocoon”
- 5) Cultivation of compassion for self and others through acknowledging our vulnerability.
- 6) Opening to basic anxiety and the cultivation of “fearlessness”.