

*"The brain is an instrument of possibilities, but of no certainties."*

—William James

Dr. Hans Steiner with Rebecca Hall has written a timely and outstanding volume that explores the opportunities we have **to look within** and to unlock our creative potential by discovering the **secret content** of our unconscious minds. Unlike my experience on the couch during two psychoanalyses, decades ago, and sitting behind the couch as a psychoanalyst (for only a few years), Dr. Steiner is not silent. Instead, he discusses the unconscious from an up-to-date neuroscience perspective (Chapter 2). He then provides a step-by-step guide to discover our largely unconscious preferences as we deal with stress, resolve conflicts and deal with ambiguity. This is a journey through art, creative writing, memes and slips of the tongue as well as the content of our dreams (Chapters 3 through 7).

Speaking of dreams (Chapter 7), although his fellow Austrian, Sigmund Freud was wrong about many things, Freud was right about the lasting impact of our earliest interpersonal relationships with our parents and other family members in shaping who we become as adults (Chapter 4). I know from my personal journey, that exploring my unconscious mind was a source of pain, joy, understanding, and eventually acceptance. And yes, there were times when I needed to consciously forgive my parents and myself. I also know that it was possible to use my **will** to change and to transform my true self. This aligns well with William James' notion of *the efficacy of will* – another aspect of our internal reality and a source of compassion and resilience.

It is unfortunate that I am not closer to Stanford University where Dr. Steiner is based. It would be such a pleasure to interconnect with him and his students as they work together to add depth and meaning to their lives through journeys of self-discovery. He is an exemplar leader as judged by the success of his *Pegasus Physician Writers* initiative.

I am also hopeful that in the next edition, Dr. Steiner will find a way to display the art work of Artemisia Gentileschi, Rene Magritte, Vincent van Gogh, Egon Schiele, and Georgia O'Keefe. His descriptive narratives (Chapters 1 & 5) are compelling, but it was only when I went on-line and encountered their paintings, in the moment, that his words came to life. I am also hopeful that in the future, Dr. Steiner will be able to use social media to connect with others around the globe to guide them through their journeys to discover the secrets of their minds within our constantly changing and deeply interconnected world.

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