

Stanislav Grof, M.D., Ph.D.

Dr. Stanislav Grof's professional career has covered a period of over 60 years in which his primary interest has been research of the heuristic and therapeutic potential of a large subgroup of non-ordinary states of consciousness that have great therapeutic, transformative, heuristic, and evolutionary potential. He coined for these states the term "holotropic," meaning literally "moving toward wholeness (from the Greek holos = whole and trepo/trepein = moving toward something). This research activity can be divided into the following periods:

1. Four years of laboratory research of psychedelics – LSD, psilocybin, mescaline, adrenochrome, adrenolutine, and tryptamine derivatives – DMT, DET, and DPT (1956-1960).
2. Fourteen years of research into psychedelic psychotherapy. Dr. Grof spent seven of these years (1960-1967) as Principal Investigator of the psychedelic research program at the Psychiatric Research Institute in Prague, Czechoslovakia. This was followed by seven years of research of psychedelic psychotherapy in the United States.
3. The first two of these years, he worked as Clinical and Research Fellow at the Henry Phipps Clinic of The Johns Hopkins University and in the Research Unit of the Spring Grove State

Hospital in Baltimore, MD. The following five years, he held the position of Assistant Professor at Johns Hopkins and Chief of Psychiatric Research at the Maryland Psychiatric Research Center in Catonsville, MD. In this capacity he headed for several years the last surviving official research project of psychedelic therapy in the USA.

4. From 1973 until 1987, he was Scholar-in-Residence at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California, where he developed jointly with his late wife Christina Holotropic Breathwork, a powerful non-pharmacological form of self-exploration and psychotherapy combining accelerated breathing, evocative music, and a special form of bodywork. They have used this method in workshops and in professional training in North and South America, Europe, Australia, and Asia.

5, They have also worked with many individuals undergoing spontaneous episodes of non-ordinary states of consciousness, currently diagnosed by mainstream psychiatry as psychoses and treated by suppressive medication. The Grofs realized that these episodes are actually psychospiritual crises or crises of spiritual opening and coined for them the term “spiritual emergencies.” They discovered that - if they are correctly understood and supported – they have great therapeutic potential and lead to profound positive inner transformation. (Click here to read:

Understanding and Treatment of Psychospiritual Crises (“Spiritual Emergencies”).

During these years of psychotherapeutic research, Dr. Grof has made the following contributions:

Contributions:

Developed theory and practice of psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy and described it in his book **LSD Psychotherapy**, which has been until this day the only comprehensive treatise on this subject.

Published over 160 articles and 22 books discussing the theoretical and practical implications of modern consciousness research for psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy. His books have been translated into 23 languages.

Created a new extended cartography of the psyche that includes, besides the biographical-recollective level and the Freudian individual unconscious, two additional domains – perinatal (related to the trauma of birth) and transpersonal (the source of ancestral, racial, collective, phylogenetic, karmic, and

archetypal experiences).

Developed, with his late wife Christina, Holotropic Breathwork (a method of psychotherapy that uses non-ordinary states of consciousness induced by faster breathing, evocative music, and focused body work), and the Grof Transpersonal Training (GTT), a comprehensive training program for Holotropic Breathwork facilitators that has certified over 2000 practitioners in various parts of the world. (Click here to read: [“Holotropic Breathwork: New Perspectives in Psychotherapy and Self-Exploration”](#)).

Formulated jointly with Abraham Maslow, Anthony Sutich, Sonya Margulies and Jim Fadiman the basic principles of transpersonal psychology, a discipline that explores the full spectrum of human experience, including holotropic states of consciousness, and attempts to integrate spirituality and new paradigm science. In 1993, he received from the Association of Transpersonal Psychology (ATP) on the occasion of its conference in Asilomar, CA, celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of its existence, a special award for his contributions to the development of this field. Transpersonal psychology has been rapidly growing since its inception in the late 1960's. At present, it is being taught at

several American universities and accredited schools, has two special journals, and symposia at psychiatric and psychological conferences. Associations of transpersonal psychology also exist in many other countries of the world. (Click here to read [A Brief History of Transpersonal Psychology](#) (PDF/21 pages))

Attempted to provide a solid theoretical basis for transpersonal psychology by exploring in his writings its relationship with various revolutionary advances of new paradigm sciences – Karl Pribram’s holographic model of the brain, David Bohm’s theory of holomovement, Rupert Sheldrake’s theory of morphic resonance and morphogenetic fields, Gregory Bateson’s generalist approach, Amit Goswami’s science within consciousness, Ervin Laszlo’s connectivity hypothesis and the concept of the Akashic field, and others.

Drawing on his observations and experiences from 60 years of his consciousness research, he proposed a radical revision of fundamental assumptions of psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy. This involves a vast extension of the cartography of the human psyche by adding the perinatal and transpersonal domains; recognition that the roots of emotional and psychosomatic disorders reach far deeper than infancy; discovery of new

therapeutic mechanisms; change of therapeutic strategy by relying on the self-healing intelligence of the psyche; acknowledgement of spirituality as an essential attribute of the psyche; and seeing consciousness as a primary attribute of existence rather than product of neurophysiological processes in the human brain. (Click here to read: [Revision and Re-Enchantment o Psychology](#), pdf).

In over 30 years of cooperation with Dr. Richard Tarnas, he demonstrated that archetypal astrology is an invaluable tool for psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy and a “Rosetta Stone” for consciousness research. Click here to read: [Archetypal Cosmology: A Brief Account](#), pdf and [Holotropic Research and Archetypal Astrology](#), pdf).

Founded the International Transpersonal Association (ITA) and functioned for many years as its president. Organized jointly with his late wife Christina nine large international conferences of this association: in Boston, MA; Melbourne, Australia; Bombay, India; Santa Rosa, CA; Eugene, OR; Atlanta, GA; Prague, Czechoslovakia; Manaus, Brazil, and Palm Springs, CA. (Click here to read: “[The Past, Present, and Future of the International Transpersonal Association \(ITA\)](#)”, pdf.

In 1982, he was invited by Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer as special consultant for the science fiction movie *Brainstorm*, and later by 20th Century Fox for the sci-fi movie *Millenium*. At present, Dr. Grof is interested in returning to this work in a project that would use the extraordinary special effects available today to portray various holotropic states of consciousness; he believes that today's superb digital technology would make it possible not only to believably portray mystical experiences, but actually induce them in audiences on a large scale.

Christina Grof died on June 15, 2014. A memorial web site for her is maintained at: www.christinagrof.com

In 2015, Dr. Grof resumed his travels abroad, bringing transpersonal psychology and Holotropic Breathwork to China, Israel, Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, Chile, Ukraine, Russia, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Croatia, Spain, and the Isle of Man.

Since April 2016, he has been married to psychologist and artist Brigitte Grof, born Ashauer, who has practiced and taught Holotropic Breathwork for over 30 years. Since their wedding, the Grofs have been living in California and Germany, conducting seminars and breathwork workshops worldwide. Their joint travels

took them so far to China, Hawaii, Iceland, South America (Chile, Ecuador, and Easter Island), Austria, Czech Republic, Sweden and France. They were presenting and exhibiting their artwork and giving talks about it at the International Transpersonal Conference that took place in Prague in the last week of September 2017;

2018 they were conducting workshops and training in South America (Argentina and Peru); a seminar and Holotropic Breathwork workshop in Switzerland (Basel); and a five-day workshop at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, CA.

In August 2019 his life's work encyclopedia “ **The Way of the Psychonaut**” got published and the documentary film about his life and work got released “ **The Way of the Psychonaut- Stan Grof and the journey of consciousness**”.

In May 2020 he launched together with his wife Brigitte Grof their new training in working with Holotropic States of Consciousness, the international **Grof® Legacy Training** (www.grof-legacy-training.com).

Curriculum Vitae:

Education:

1950-56 Student at the Medical Faculty of Charles University in Prague, Czechoslovakia.

1956 Graduation from Charles University, M.D. degree.

1956-59 Psychiatric residency in the State Mental Hospital in Kosmonosy near Prague.

1959 A three-month course in the Postgraduate Medical Training Center in Prague and specialization examination in psychiatry.

1960-67 Psychoanalytic training analysis with Dr. T. Dosužkov, former President of the Czechoslovakian Psychoanalytic Association, attendance of psychoanalytic seminars, and case conferences.

1964 Fellowship from the Soviet Ministry of Public Health to study Soviet psychiatry, psychotherapy, and research in experimental neuroses in Leningrad, Moscow, and Suchumi, Georgia.

1965 Completion of the postgraduate training at the Czechoslovakian Academy of Sciences, dissertation on the clinical uses of psychedelic drugs, and the Ph.D. degree (Doctor of Philosophy in Medicine).

1966 Examination for the Educational Council for Foreign Medical Graduates. Certified in October 1966. ECFMG #81377.

1967-69 Fellowship for advanced research from the Foundations' Fund for Research in Psychiatry in New Haven, Connecticut. Clinical and Research Fellow at the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science of The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland.

1971 Maryland Medical License Examination at the Board of Medical Examiners of Maryland. Certified in January 1971. Lic. Reg. Cert. No. D 9076.

Positions Held:

1994 —> present Professor of Psychology at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) in San Francisco, CA. He also taught as Visiting Professor at the Pacifica Graduate School in Santa Barbara, CA, and Wisdom University in Oakland, CA.

1987 - Self-employed, conducting professional training in Holotropic Breathwork and transpersonal psychology, lecturing and conducting workshops worldwide and writing articles and books.

1973-87 Scholar-in-Residence at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California. From 1983 to 1987, also Member of the Board of Trustees of the institute.

1969-73 Chief of Psychiatric Research at the Maryland Psychiatric Research Center in Catonsville, Maryland, and Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the Department of Psychiatry And Behavioral Sciences, the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland.

1967-69 Clinical and Research Fellow at Henry Phipps Clinic of the Johns Hopkins University and at the Research Unit of the Spring Grove State Hospital in Catonsville, MD.

1961-67 Research Psychiatrist in the Department of the Study of Psychogenic Disorders and Psychotherapy of the Psychiatric Research Institute in Prague, Czechoslovakia.

1. Participation in a team studying the mechanisms of psychogenic disorders and psychotherapy.

2. Principal Investigator in a project studying the possibilities of the use of LSD and other psychedelic drugs for personality diagnostics and therapy of psychogenic disorders.

1960 Assistant Professor at the Postgraduate Medical Training Center in Prague, Czechoslovakia.

1959-60 Out-Patient Psychiatrist at the Psychiatric Clinic of the National Institute of Health in Prague.

1957-60 Participating researcher in a multidimensional dynamic study of psychedelic drugs and anticholinergic deliogens in the Research Institute in Prague-Krč.

1956-59 Clinical psychiatrist in the Psychiatric Hospital in Kosmonosy near Prague.

1954-56 Student volunteer at the Psychiatric Department of the Charles University School of Medicine in Prague. Participation in clinical LSD research and the study of artistic expression of psychiatric patients.

Awards and Honors:

1959 Kuffner Award for Psychiatry (Czechoslovakian national award granted annually for the most important contribution in the field of psychiatry) for the study of Benactyzine and other anticholinergic deliogens (shared with Drs. M. Vojtěchovský, V. Vitek, and K. Ryšánek).

1964 Fellowship from the Soviet Ministry of Public Health in Moscow to study Soviet psychiatry, psychotherapy, and experimental neuroses in Hamadryas baboon monkeys.

1967-69 Fellowship from the Foundations' Fund for Research in Psychiatry in New Haven, Connecticut, for advanced research in psychedelic therapy.

1982 Consultant for the experiential sequences in the Hollywood science-fiction movie Brainstorm (with Christina Grof). Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Director Douglas Trumbull.

1988 Consultant for experiential sequences in the Hollywood science-fiction movie Millenium (with Christina Grof), producer John Foreman.

1992 Consultant for the BMW Museum "Horizons in Time" in Munich, Germany.

1993 Honorary Award from the Association for Transpersonal Psychology (ATP) for major contributions to and development of the field of transpersonal psychology given at the occasion of the 25th Anniversary Convocation held at Asilomar, California, on August 25-29, 1993.

2000 Honorary PhD degree in Humane Letters from the University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont.

2004 Honorary Ph.D. degree from the World Buddhist University in Bangkok, Thailand.

2007 >Vision 97< Award from the Václav and Dagmar Havel Foundation in Prague.

2010 the Thomas R. Verny Award from the Association for Pre- and Perinatal Psychology and Health (APPPAH) for his pivotal contributions to this field.

2012 Honorary Ph.D. degree from the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology in Palo Alto, California.

2018 Honorary Ph.D. degree for Psychedelic Therapy and Healing Arts from the Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) in San Francisco, California.

Honorary Positions:

1980-83 Board Member of the Association for Transpersonal Psychology (ATP).

1982-83 Member of the Board of Trustees of the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California.

1982-85 Board Member of the International Transpersonal Association (ITA).

1974-1982 and 1989-2004 President of the International Transpersonal Association (ITA) and coordinator of large International conferences in Santa Rosa, California, Eugene, Oregon, Atlanta, Georgia, Prague, Czechoslovakia, Manaus, Brazil, and Palm Springs, California.

Major Fields of Research Interest:

Phenomenological, therapeutic, and heuristic aspects of holotropic states of consciousness.

Experiential psychotherapy using psychedelics and non-drug techniques, especially the Holotropic Breathwork, a therapeutic modality developed with his late wife Christina.

Founding and development of transpersonal psychology, a discipline aiming for synthesis of spirituality and science

Alternative approaches to psychoses, the problem of “spiritual emergencies”, treatment of transpersonal crises.

Implications of the new developments in quantum physics, information and systems theory, biology, brain research and consciousness studies for psychiatric theory and the new paradigm for science.

Stanislav Grof Receives Prestigious VISION 97 Award

Stanislav Grof, M.D., Ph.D., psychiatrist, author, one of the foremost consciousness researchers, and co-founder of Transpersonal Psychology, accepted on October 5, 2007, the birthday of President Havel, in Prague the prestigious >VISION 97< Award granted by the Foundation of Dagmar and Václav Havel. The foundation’s philanthropic mission supports cultural and social projects and ground-breaking developments with the potential to bring meaningful change to the future.

Former recipients of the annual VISION 97 award include American neurosurgeon and thinker Karl Pribram, Robert Reich, former US Secretary of Labor, Phillip G. Zimbardo, psychologist

known for his 1971 Stanford prison experiment, MIT professor of computer science and pioneer in artificial intelligence Joseph Weizenbaum, and semiotician and writer Umberto Eco.

Václav Havel, writer, dramatist and former President of Czechoslovakia, describes the significance of this award: “It is given to thinkers, whose scientific work returns science into the framework of general culture, transcends the dominant concepts of knowledge and being, reveals unknown, surprising, or overlooked connections, and touches in a new way the mysteries of the universe and of life.

It is thus an Award by which we would like to bring the attention of the public to spiritual achievements, which in the best sense of the word do not meet the criteria of the established ways of exploring of reality. The awarding of this Prize is not limited to the actual ceremonial act of its presentation but is also accompanied by other events, including interviews with representatives of public media and informal meetings of students and professors during discussions with the laureates and invited guests.”

[Václav Havel's Speech](#)

at the Vision 97 Award Ceremony (3-page PDF file)

[Dr. Stanislav Grof's Speech](#) in accepting the 2007 Havel Foundation Vision 97 Award.
(9-page PDF file)

[A Laudation by Miloš Vojtěchovský](#) at the Havel Foundation Vision 97 Award ceremony. (3-page PDF file)
© 2017 Stanislav Grof [Contact](#)



