



*"The day came when remaining tight in the bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom"*

## *Transformational Gestalt Practice*

## Program Prospectus



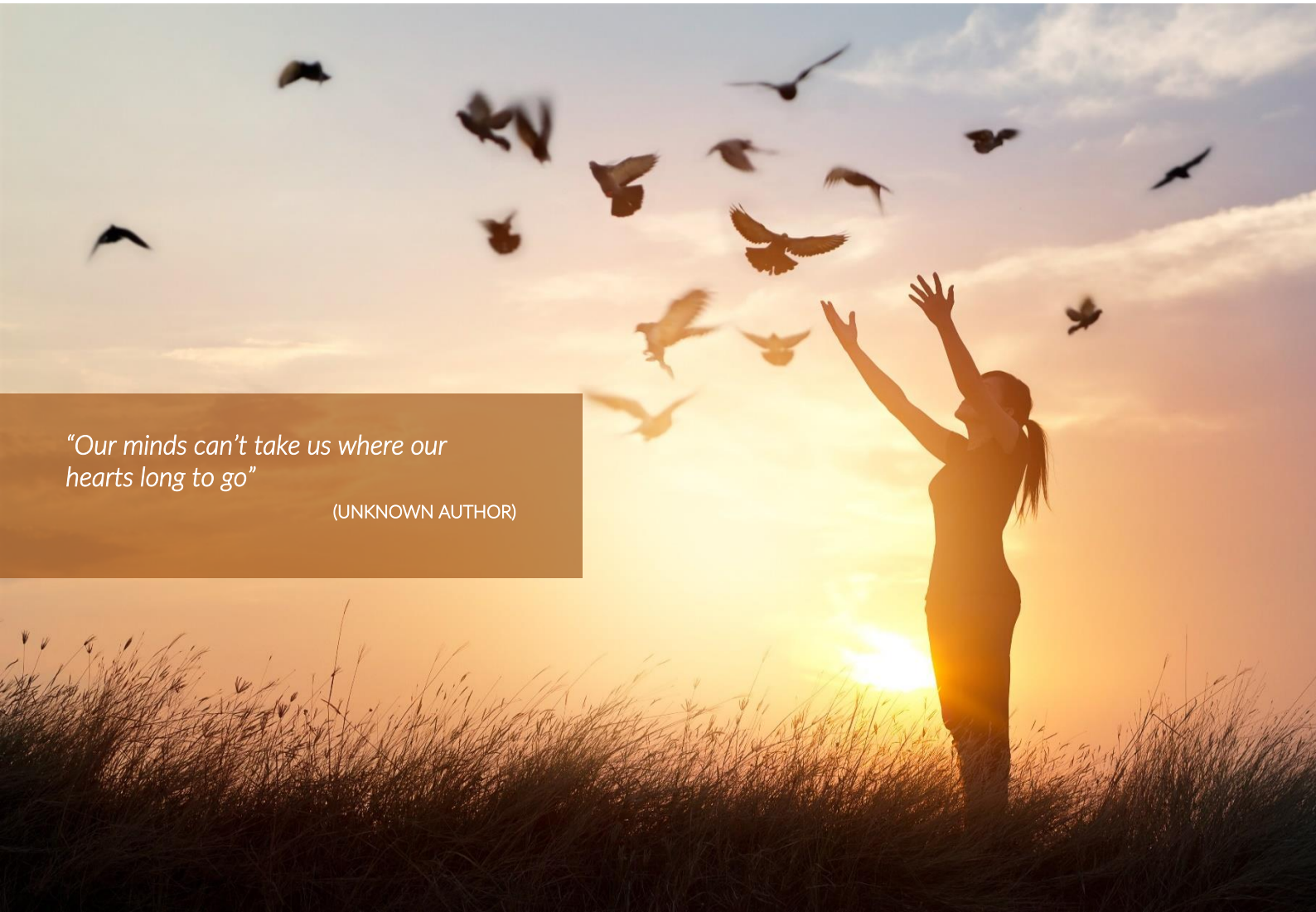
# Introduction

This Prospectus outlines the training for **'Transformational Gestalt Practice'** currently offered by Opening To Grace, Australia (OTG). This program is a personally tailored individual program designed to introduce practitioners and those in ministry to an overview of the Gestalt modality, so that it can be integrated into existing practice and ministry.

The program consists of individual teaching and mentoring face-to-face and/or online sessions with PDF study material (Unit Guides / Readings / Handouts) delivered in approximately eight units (depending on learning needs).

This program is unaccredited and has no academic component other than keeping a personal Reflection Journal for your learning and various experiential tasks with each teaching unit.

There may also be an opportunity to come together in face-to-face or online Gestalt process groups with other online participants throughout your program experience (depending on participant numbers at any given time). You will be able to tailor this program to your own needs, and journey at your own pace, within a 6-12 month period.



*"Our minds can't take us where our hearts long to go"*

(UNKNOWN AUTHOR)

# About Opening To Grace

**Opening To Grace** is a therapeutic and healing centre based on the Central Coast of NSW. Opening To Grace originated from the Terrigal Gestalt Institute founded in 2005, which primarily trained Gestalt therapists face-to-face in a four-year formation program.

OTG now offers programs in Transformational Gestalt practice, various professional development workshops, and Gestalt Healing Retreats. Also offered is personal Gestalt therapy, Clinical & Professional Supervision & Mentoring, and Gestalt Spiritual Direction.

OTG offers profound relational training that is creative and holistic, equipping practitioners to provide an enriching and creative space for their clients.

*“Know that true Joy is not the absence or opposite of sadness and pain, but the willingness to embrace it all.”*

(JEFF FOSTER)

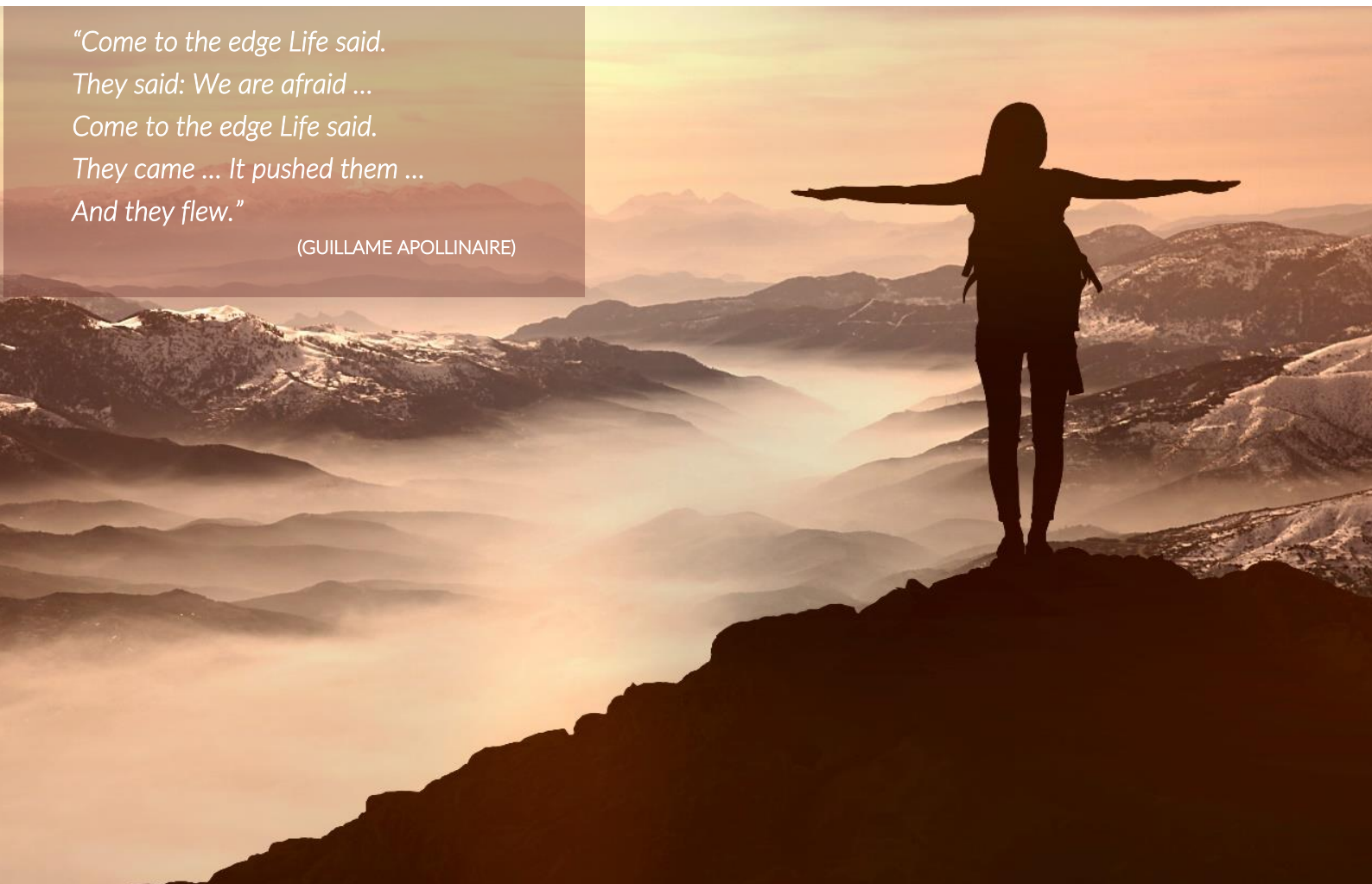


# Our Vision

*“The Opening To Grace Centre has a vision to be a place of healing and excellence. A place that offers therapeutic services, training and professional development, personal & spiritual development, and healing for participants, that is both comprehensive and profound. Our emphasis is on providing our programs through a transpersonal lens of community, connectedness and deep respect for each other.”*

*“Come to the edge Life said.  
They said: We are afraid ...  
Come to the edge Life said.  
They came ... It pushed them ...  
And they flew.”*

(GUILLAME APOLLINAIRE)



# The Gestalt Approach at OTG

The personal, spiritual, and professional development programs at OTG are Gestalt focused with an emphasis on awareness, embodied experience, and relational skills. 'Gestalt' is a German word which has no direct English translation, but which refers to a pattern of configuration: a 'whole' made up of distinct parts, each part having a place within the whole. The Gestalt approach is holistic and awareness-centred and has a central focus on relationship and learning through direct experience.

The Gestalt approach aims to develop self-awareness, understanding and support, enabling us to create a more meaningful and fulfilling life. Gestalt concepts are ultimately empowering, allowing us to live life more fully, improve interpersonal communication and conflict resolution skills, and strengthen our creativity.

Fundamentally, the aim of the Gestalt approach is to heighten an embodied awareness 'phenomenologically' (the immediate experience). This principle in and of itself is profound in promoting healing and growth. Gestalt aims to increase awareness of a person's current functioning in relation to both the present environment and past events so that real choices based on authentic needs are possible. Contemporary Gestalt combines the 'I-Thou' dialogic relationship, with spontaneously created ways of experiencing one's self, the other, and the environment.

The Gestalt approach is a very effective and respectful change process for working with individuals, couples and groups; and supports effective communication and conflict resolution. The Gestalt practitioner essentially provides a space free of judgment or 'cure', and respectfully allows 'what is' to be explored and experienced more completely. Furthermore, the practitioner trusts the process of the other to guide the work, relinquishing any agenda, in regards to the direction of the work.

The Gestalt practitioner in relation to the other is to be present and available, which in turn becomes a rich resource in the healing process. This relational approach to practice creates the way for an authentic and meaningful meeting between practitioner and other, and a fertile ground from which to grow and explore (akin to Carl Roger's idea of 'healing through meeting'). The other is considered the 'expert' on themselves – rather than the practitioner. Hence, the innate wisdom of the other is encouraged and brought to the foreground.

The personal development and formation of Gestalt practitioners is an integral component of the training and is essential in the effective integration and application of theory and practice. Training in Gestalt is quite unique in this respect; 'walking the talk' of self-awareness and authenticity.

# The Essence of Gestalt ...

- **Existentialism** - 'here & now' awareness / responsibility for one's own choices
- **Field Theory & Holism** - a belief that we are all connected / appreciation of the whole person: mind, body, spirit & emotions, as well as the individual's unique field of experience
- **Dialogue** - the practitioner's approach is relationally focused with the practitioner as an active participant in the process - relating with respect, curiosity and authenticity
- **Phenomenology** - awareness of self as experienced now: cognitive / emotional / body responses / awareness of self in relationship to others - 'embodied awareness'
- **Experimentation** - exploring new ways of being and relating that are potentially more growthful / working through unfinished business and blocks to awareness & integration



## What can participants expect to gain from our program?

The aim of the Transformational Gestalt Practice training program at OTG is to provide participants with a profound relational, creative, and experiential experience that will enrich their lives both personally and professionally; and provide identifiable professional and ministry skills that can be integrated into current practice and ministry.

Our training provides participants with a short, basic introduction to Gestalt practice, through a contemplative spiritual lens, with identifiable skills that can be immediately integrated into current professional practice and ministry.

## Who May Apply?

Applications for the online training in **Transformational Gestalt Practice** are invited from experienced practitioners in the health or education sectors, and those in ministry, who would like to integrate the Gestalt method into their existing practice and ministry.

If you are unsure of your eligibility for enrolment in this course, please contact Dinah on 0439 752 710 for further discussion. Some experience of personal / spiritual development is recommended to navigate the material.

Applications for this individually tailored program can be submitted via email to [dinahbuchanan18@gmail.com](mailto:dinahbuchanan18@gmail.com)

Dinah will be in touch to discuss how to proceed. You will need to include in your application your reasons for wanting to do the training and include a current resume.

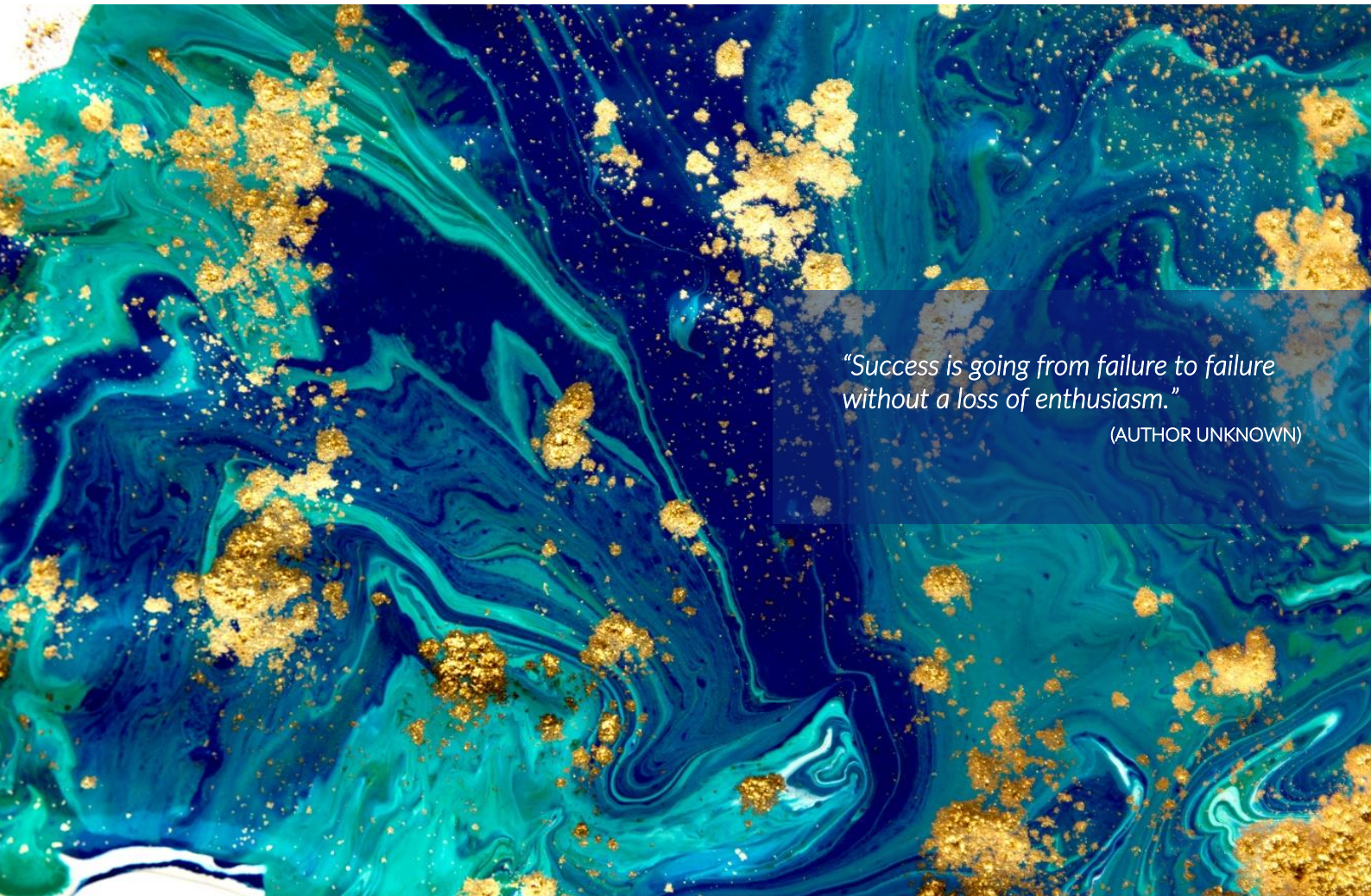
**(Application form is provided as a separate document).**

## Participants who live away

At OTG we have developed our programs so that participants can access our training remotely and online. The teaching and mentoring components are conducted individually (and sometimes in groups) via face-to-face and / or online sessions, and Library resources may be available by post or online, upon request. The course facilitator (Dinah) will also retain regular e-mail and phone contact with participants, to meet individual training needs.

# Course Outline

- Overview of the Gestalt approach – embedded in contemporary therapeutic theory
- Phenomenology & the Contact Cycle– awareness and the contact boundary
- Field Theory & Dialogue – being part of the bigger picture, relational themes
- Impasse & 'Experiment'– bringing therapy to life
- Creative Media 1 – Objects / Art / Sand-tray
- Creative Media 2 – Dream-work / Metaphor & Imagery
- An introduction to contemplative spirituality and practice



*“Success is going from failure to failure  
without a loss of enthusiasm.”*

(AUTHOR UNKNOWN)



# Gestalt Evolution

Gestalt training has evolved over the last couple of decades to keep pace with more contemporary therapeutic ideas and approaches. The strength of the Gestalt approach has always been in its relational focus embedded in a field context, its emphasis on 'here-and-now' embodied awareness and dialogue, and its creative and experimental approach to therapy.

When Fritz and Laura Perls were formulating the Gestalt approach in the 1940s / 1950s they drew from the therapeutic field of the time including the work of:

- Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic approach
- Martin Buber's 'I-Thou'
- Kurt Lewin's Field Theory
- Carl Rogers' person-centred approach
- Moreno's psychodrama
- Zen Buddhism
- Jan Smuts work on Holism
- Wilhelm Reich's work on Body Armour
- Gestalt psychology (Goldwein, Kohler et al)

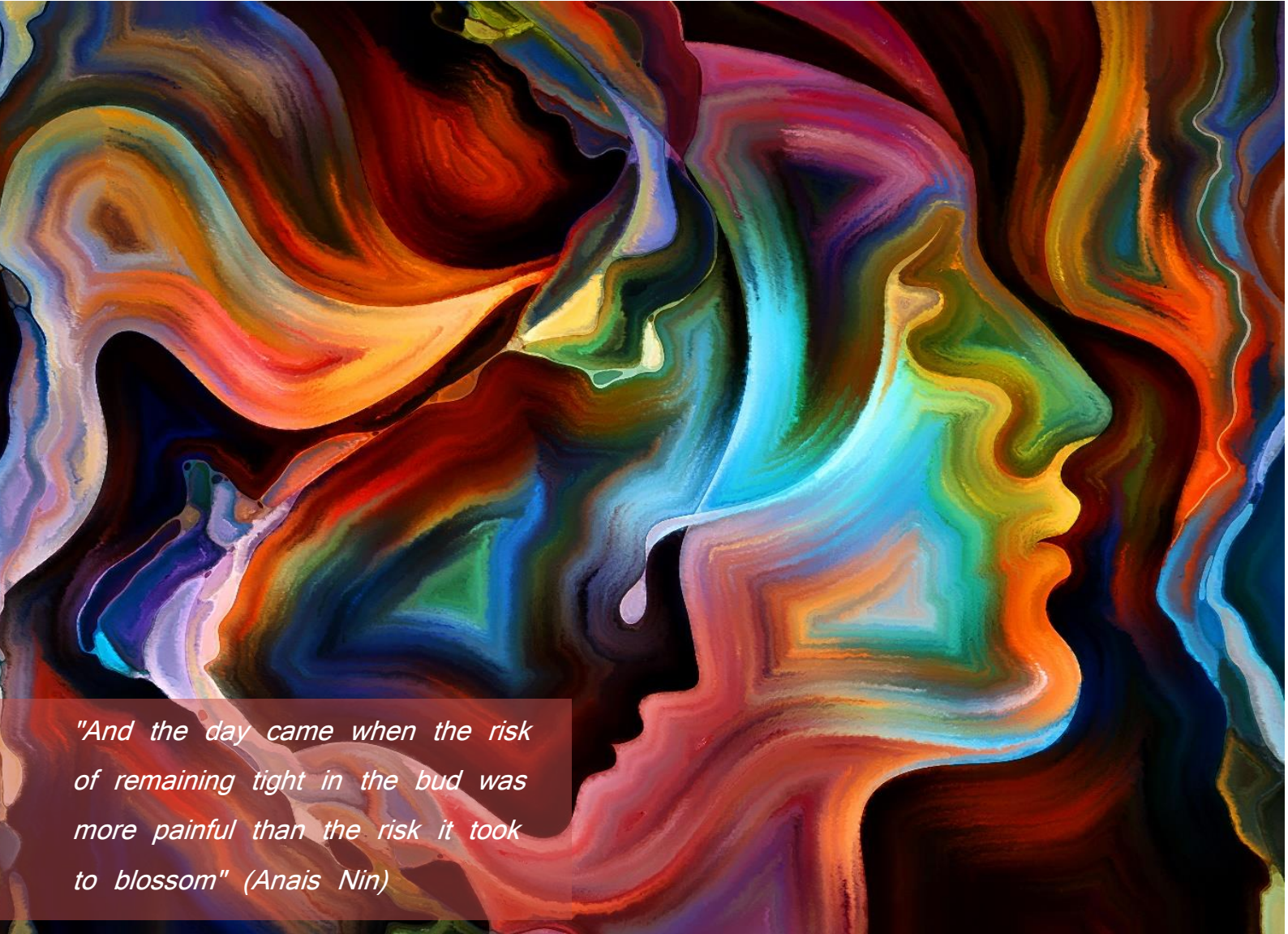
As Gestalt has developed and evolved over the decades we can now identify with other contemporary ideas and approaches including:

- Narrative Therapy
- Inter-subjectivity
- Somatic Therapy
- Acceptance and Commitment therapy
- Strengths based therapy
- Elements of CBT
- 'Mindfulness' & Contemplative practices
- Contemporary relational themes in counselling and psychotherapy

Our curriculum still covers the main traditional Gestalt themes of:

- Phenomenology – awareness and meaning making
- Dialogue – I-Thou relating
- Field Theory – Inter-connectedness: a systems perspective
- Experiment – the creative heart of Gestalt
- Paradoxical Theory of Change - accepting 'what is'

These are linked to more traditional themes in the contemporary therapeutic tapestry of thought and ideas. All is embedded in a transpersonal framework of 'compassion and love', and in seeking an authentic and powerful connection to self and other.



*"And the day came when the risk  
of remaining tight in the bud was  
more painful than the risk it took  
to blossom" (Anais Nin)*

# Professional Development and Supervision Hours

Participants for the online program will be able to claim professional development hours and individual supervision hours over the duration of the program.

*"Fear knocked at the door. Love answered  
... and there was no one there."*

(SUFI MAXIM)



# Program Features

## RESOURCES

The OTG Library has a range of books available for use in person or via post. Participants also have access to Gestalt articles.

There is a copy of the Library Resources available upon commencement of the course.

## LEARNING AND TEACHING RESOURCES

OTG makes available to participants the following resources (via USB / Dropbox):

- Unit Study Guides – Unit Aims and Learning outcomes / Course content
- Unit Readings – relevant readings from a variety of sources
- Unit Handouts

## TRAINING VENUE (for face-to-face sessions)

Springfield, Central Coast, NSW

## CONTACT

Dinah Eades Buchanan

PH: 0439 752 710

E-mail: [dinahbuchanan18@gmail.com](mailto:dinahbuchanan18@gmail.com)

## POSTAL ADDRESS

9 Marcus Close, Springfield, NSW 2250.

## PAYMENT

The course is costed individually based on course material provided, face-to-face and / or online time (usually one and a half hours each session), groups attended (if applicable), and admin time, over the life of the program - payment will be required following each session. There is also a deposit upfront (amount to be paid notified on enrolment).

*Please enquire re individual payment plans when you enroll for the course.*

# OTG Program Facilitator

**Dinah Eades Buchanan** is the primary Program Facilitator for the training program.

At OTG the focus is on providing professional training and a personal / spiritual formation experience that is relevant, contemporary, creative, and grounded in the solid principles of Gestalt practice and contemplative spirituality.

We are committed to providing a combination of support and challenge through a creative, relational and embodied framework, individually and within group process.



*"You cannot heal a single human being,  
even with psychotherapy, if you do not  
first restore his relationship with Being."*

(MARTIN HEIDEGGER)

# Facilitator Profile



## **Dinah Eades Buchanan**

Program Facilitator

M.Couns., Grad Dip Gestalt Therapy, Grad Dip Spiritual Direction, PACFA Registered

*"It gives me great delight to see others open to the possibilities that the Gestalt journey has to offer. As the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, so the intangible 'more' awaits us ..."*

Dinah is a Gestalt Counsellor & Psychotherapist, Clinical Supervisor, Spiritual Director, Educator and Retreat Facilitator with many years of experience in Counselling, Child & Family Health, Gestalt Therapy, Group Training, and mentoring, Clinical & Professional Supervision. She has offered therapeutic services for over 25 years on the Mid North Coast, in Sydney and on the Central Coast, NSW. She has also been a Gestalt Trainer / Facilitator for the past 15 years. She currently has a private practice on the Central Coast, NSW. Dinah is also an adjunct lecturer for Avondale University on the Central Coast, NSW.

Dinah's particular focus includes personal/spiritual development, working with Dreams & Metaphor / working with Depression/Anxiety and Grief /Bereavement. Dinah has a special interest in integrating spirituality and psychotherapy and understanding psychological crisis through a transpersonal lens. Dinah also runs workshops on working with Dreams and Imagery and other therapeutic topics.

Dinah has a passion for assisting others to discover their inner strengths, move through difficulties, transform their lives and realise their full potential. Over the years Dinah has developed and delivered workshops and courses to do with Dreamwork & Imagery, Working with Shadow, Integrative Self-care, Relationship Enhancement, Conflict Resolution, Practice Management, Integration of Spiritual and Gestalt Concepts and more.

## Other OTG Services

### Therapy, Clinical Supervision, & Spiritual Direction

Dinah is also available for counselling, therapy (individuals and groups), Clinical Supervision for clinicians and those in ministry, and Gestalt Spiritual Direction – please contact Dinah on 0439 752 710 (+61 439 752 710 for overseas applicants).

### Professional Development

#### Can I go on to do more Gestalt training?

For participants who are interested in further Gestalt training, this course is a good basis and stepping-stone to further training. OTG also offers other Gestalt Professional Development workshops & seminars. Please see website for further details.

### Gestalt Healing Retreats

Dinah also facilitates '**Opening to Grace**' Healing Retreats at Kincumber on the Central Coast – deepening spiritual journeys with a synthesis of the Gestalt approach and spiritual companioning. See website for further details.

### How can I find out more?

Visit the OTG website: [www.openingtoGrace.com.au](http://www.openingtoGrace.com.au)

Contact: Dinah Eades Buchanan

Phone: 0439 752 710

E-mail: [dinahbuchanan18@gmail.com](mailto:dinahbuchanan18@gmail.com)

Web: [www.openingtoGrace.com.au](http://www.openingtoGrace.com.au)

# F&Q

## What is the cost up front?

This program is costed individually based on face-to-face and / or online sessions, group time (if applicable) resources provided, and admin time over the life of the program - payment is usually made following each training session. There is also an upfront deposit required. Payment can be made by direct deposit or paypal.

## What are the extra costs?

There is an extra cost for recommended textbooks if you choose to purchase them – details given on enrolment.

## How is the course structured?

This program is individually tailored to meet your specific learning needs and personal / professional interest. Delivery of the program is via face-to-face and / or online sessions with the program facilitator (Dinah), and study resources (including Unit Study Guides / Readings / Handouts) delivered in PDF format by email and Dropbox. Experiential tasks usually accompany each teaching unit, and you will be encouraged to keep a personal Reflection Journal throughout the duration of the course. You can pace your learning as you wish, taking your time to complete each unit within your time constraints. The program is usually delivered over a 6-12 month period and must be completed overall within 2 years.

## What happens when I apply for enrolment?

Once your application has been received you will be contacted for an entry interview. Once you have been accepted into the course, you will be notified re payment of your deposit. Once your payment is received you will then receive by email the first couple of units and your first face-to-face or online session arranged. Entry to the program is based on your suitability for the course in terms of professional and personal / spiritual development experience.

## What is the academic / assessment load?

The program is unaccredited and there is no academic component for the course. You will be asked to complete various experiential tasks that accompany each teaching unit, and also encouraged to keep a personal Reflection Journal throughout the duration of the program to support experiential learning.

## What happens if I want to withdraw from the program?

On request, you will be issued with a transcript of units completed; and asked to complete **program** fee payment for those units completed.



# Application Form

## ADMISSION PROCESS

OTG practices a non-discriminatory selection of participants on the grounds of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion or any disability or belief that does not directly interfere with the competent fulfilment of training and practice.

## Who May Apply?

Applications for the training in *Transformational Gestalt Practice* are invited from experienced practitioners in the health or education industries (counsellors / psychotherapists / social workers / coaches / psychologists / childcare workers / occupational therapists / physiotherapists / teachers) and those in ministry (ministers, pastors, chaplains & pastoral care workers etc.) who would like to integrate Gestalt principles into their existing practice and ministry.

If you are unsure of your eligibility for this course, please contact Dinah on 0439 752 710 for further discussion.



# Qualities developed during training

- A capacity for developing self-awareness, self-reflection, and deep personal insight
- A capacity to relate to others in a facilitative and dialogical way from a stance of respect and mutual interest
- A capacity to reflect on and examine the impact of your actions on others
- A capacity to be aware and articulate the impact of others on you
- A capacity for curiosity and enquiry - particularly in regard to self-processes
- A capacity to take responsibility for physical and emotional well-being
- A capacity to understand and practice ethical behavior as outlined by relevant professional codes
- A capacity to learn and grow from life experiences
- A capacity to receive feedback on strengths and growing edges



# Submitting your Application

Please submit your Application TOGETHER WITH A CURRENT RESUME;

E-mail document to [dinahbuchanan18@gmail.com](mailto:dinahbuchanan18@gmail.com)

Application Form is a separate document.





CENTRAL COAST, NSW

Contact: Dinah Eades Buchanan

Phone: 0439 752 710

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Website: [www.openingtograce.com.au](http://www.openingtograce.com.au)

