International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/nhyp20

A Tribute to John G. Watkins, PhD: “Leave a trail of wisdom …”

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Published online: 08 Jun 2012.


To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00207144.2012.675293

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Jack Watkins at the age of 9 already showed a keen interest in
astronomy when he received a one-inch rifle site telescope from his
parents. At age 12, he made various star observations and published
his findings in the Journal of the American Astronomical Society. A small
telescope brought visions of celestial worlds to this young boy and a
desire for “wisdom” impelled this boy’s later move to academic halls.
However, he soon discovered that universities teach only knowledge,
not wisdom. As a young man of serious mind, like a true Dao-Tsai,
he searched for “The Way”—what man’s striving is all about. He tra-
versed “The Way” for almost a century (98 years) and discovered that
all life is a promise; a challenge, an exciting exploration, and that one
must become a complete individual on one’s own in order to experi-
ence true oneness with a universal ocean of life energy. This man is
John G. Watkins.

It is indeed an immense honor for us to pay tribute to this man.
John Watkins had become a mentor, guru, father, artist, teacher, friend,
trainer, and colleague for many people. Many have been inspired by
his academic self, therapeutic self, his resonance, and humanity in help-
ing people to recognize the multiplicity of their inner resources and to
actualize their potential.

There is no doubt that Jack’s life was really a legacy of gifts. He
undertook a career of giving. By painstakingly fashioning many a
young psychologist, colleague, child, and client, he gave them sym-
 bols of his wisdom and about being human and himself. He gave
them the gift of learning, the gift of laughter, the gift of tears, the gift
of understanding, the gift of love, and, above all, the gift of healing.

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In his book *The Therapeutic Self*, he quotes the wise old psychoanalyst, Wilhelm Stekel, who is reputed to have looked up from his deathbed, as if to grasp the meaning of the hundreds of lives, which he had treated, and, just before dying, whispered, “It’s all a matter of love.” This is also so true in Jack’s case. His gifts matured into psychological wisdom that influenced the careers and lives of so many people, clients, and professionals alike. He once said: “Medical Practice can save a life; Psychotherapy can improve its quality, creating love, peace and lasting happiness.”

Jack cultivated not only a reawakening of what we are—our self—but also an understanding of fundamental human values such as compassion, trust, hope, and, above all, the interdependence of humans on each other. This is a gift from him in a time when love seems to be fading and hatred and despair rising, when human values are forgotten and only differences remain. Jack Watkins’s life may best be described as a golden journey; a discovery of self-energy, resources, and potentialities, which he believed is so implicit to each human being. Finally, his life reminds one of an inevitable “quitting time.” However, Jack Watkins’s life will leave a trail of wisdom for future generations. That “life should not merely be valued for its quantity measured in chronological time, but for its quality measured in experiential time.”