

Book Review

Spirit into Form: Exploring Embryological Potential and Prenatal Psychology (2021) by Cherionna Menzam-Sills. Cosmoanexis: Prenatal & Life Sciences, 429 pages, ISBN-13: 9798700119771.

Not only is *Spirit into Form* an excellent, well-researched and supported embryology text, it goes further to explore our spiritual essence and how that essence is incorporated into our physical form starting at or before conception.

The author's credentials for writing such a comprehensive text includes a PhD in prenatal and perinatal psychology; training and experience as an occupational therapist, massage therapist, and dance/movement therapist; certification in body/mind psychotherapy, authentic movement, bodynamic craniosacral therapy, and craniosacral therapy; registration with ISMETA as a somatic movement therapist and educator; and authorized as a continuum movement teacher by Emilie Conrad. She is also a senior tutor at the Karuna Institute and an approved CSTA supervisor in the UK.

Numerous diagrams support the embryology sections of *Spirit into Form* and the reader is invited into self-exploration through multiple well-detailed exercises. This excellent embryology text transforms into a life text with its blending of physiology, psychology, and spirituality.

Chapter one sets the stage, opening with the following words:

This book is a reminder, an invitation, a call to fully, consciously embody who we truly are. As we come into form in the months following conception, we have the opportunity to merge our mysterious spiritual essence with the shapes we enfold ourselves into. We form into physical bodies with the assistance of an original blueprint. Our genes and our spirit interact with that blueprint and with the environment around us. (p. 8)

Chapter two, Meeting and Being with Your Early Experience in Healing Ways, then details why we would want to encounter these early experiences and how to work with them. Successive chapters explore development from preconception through birth and beyond to bonding and becoming acquainted with the new world we have entered. This is all done while skillfully blending scientific details with psychological and spiritual dimensions.

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For me, the real gift comes in chapter 14, diving into connections between birth and death with a tenderness and respect that frequently brings tears. Here are a couple of examples of the richness available:

Insomuch as death occurs as each moment passes, aversion to death will render us unable to meet life. (p. 375)

Our thoughts, too, pass by like clouds in the sky, unless we attach ourselves to them. With such attachment, we freeze, limiting our options, densifying our fluid tissues, blocking the flow of the river of life. Like the embryo suspended in its inner ocean, we float within fields of vibratory frequencies, supported by the unknown, nourished by the mystery. A vast ocean of amniotic fluid lights our souls, ignites our cells, and invites us to dance. Each waltz with the not knowing prepares us for the final letting go of this life, portal to eternity. With death, we are liberated at last from time, at least for awhile! (p. 378)

There is still more. Chapter 15, Prenatal and Birth Experience, Shadow and Potential, provides the finishing touch. Using lyrics from Simon and Garfunkel's "Sounds of Silence," this is a discussion of "shadow" that you will not forget.

I will leave you with Cherionna's own closing words.

When we return to the blueprint, the potential awaiting us revealed by shining the light on the shadow, we emerge from the dream of who we learned to be into the reality of whom we are. Love. Embodied love guides us, expresses through us, for a purpose possibly far beyond our individual knowing. (p. 380)

Reviewed by
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