The Connection Between Psychiatry and Synchronicity

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This month’s edition of Psychiatric Annals, guest edited by Bernard D. Beitman, MD, presents a series of articles on “synchronicity” and related features to do with spirituality and intuition. In an era when our patients are particularly stressed by economic pressures, affecting their relationships and exacerbating various disorders — even limiting patient access to care — why do we stop to think about such topics? Although medications have increased our capacity to treat major disorders, we now have to face the limitations of such treatments. In the meantime, while we wait for neuroscience, genetics, and imaging studies to bring us the “next breakthrough” or “paradigm shift,” it is perhaps prudent to examine aspects of humanity such as synchronicity.

A good psychiatrist should know medicine, neurology, and psychopharmacology, of course. We should know the differential mechanisms, differential effects, and side effects of available medications. How to diagnose medical causes of presentations of psychiatric symptoms is also essential. But the wondrous aspect of psychiatry is that it deals with much more. Our field explores what makes this conscious life we have either mean something, become a blur, or become so painful that it can’t be tolerated. We seek the answers for how to get beyond the business of living and derive meaning from the beauty of being conscious.

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A legitimate part of psychiatry is helping to make the most out of the human experience. It’s beyond pathology — it’s concerned with how we develop the best of our human traits. How can there be pathology without a concept of what leads to a happy life? Here’s to synchronicity!

Here’s to being as fully aware as we can be! Here’s to striving for a full conscious life that goes beyond day-to-day survival.

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