

UNIFIED HEALTH

A Clinician's Forum

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Attitudinal Healing

An interview with
*Gerald Jampolsky, MD &
Diane Cirincione, PhD*

Springtime Renewal & Rejuvenation • Essentials Oils in Clinical Practice

A Review of Food Drying Techniques: Implications of Nutrient Retention

Phytochemistry Modes of Activity: Hormesis • Egalitarian Medicine

Key Entrepreneurial Skills for Successful Healthcare Businesses

Attitudinal Healing

An Interview with Dr. Gerald Jampolsky, MD and Dr. Diane Cirincione, PhD

Interview by Matt Laughlin



Gerald Jampolsky, MD is a graduate of Stanford Medical School and a child and adult psychiatrist. He founded the first International Center for Attitudinal Healing in 1975. There are now dozens of Centers/Groups located around the world offering free emotional support for children and adults with life-threatening illnesses, relationship challenges, etc. as well as a host of other services.

Diane V. Cirincione, PhD is a therapist, businesswoman, and author/co-author of several books. In addition to her masters and PhD in clinical psychology, she also holds a BS in organizational behavior and has founded and owned four companies.

They have lectured worldwide on psychology, psychiatry, mental and physical health, the power of change; attitudinal healing; grief and death and other life transitions; interpersonal relationships; and education and business as they affect both our personal and professional lives. They have both been the recipients of numerous international awards and have appeared on dozens of national TV and radio programs.

Jerry and Diane have written most recently *A Mini Course for Life* and *Finding Our Way Home* as well as *Love is Letting Go of Fear*, *Change Your Mind-Change Your Life*, *Forgiveness: The Greatest Healer of All*, *Love is the Answer*, and over a dozen other books published in 30 plus languages. Over the last 25 years they have worked cross-culturally in 54 countries together and are the recipients of

numerous international, humanitarian awards. In 2005 Dr. Jampolsky also received the *AMA Pride in the Profession Award*. They are married and reside in Hawaii and Northern California. Contact them for more information on their books, radio show, lectures, events, podcasts, newsletter, etc. at www.jerryjampolskyanddianecirincione.com

UH (UnifiedHealth™): Thanks for taking the time to interview with us. For readers unfamiliar with your work and the International Center of Attitudinal Healing, we are including a description of the history and approach of the center with this interview. A good place to start is to ask, how did this come to be? What compelled you to commit your life to this kind of service?

JJ (Jerry Jampolsky, MD): In 1973, I was divorced after 20 years of marriage, depressed and angry. I was an alcoholic and an atheist, and was stopped by the police for drunken driving. My whole life was in tatters. At that time, my friend, Judy Skutch Wilson, introduced me to a manuscript of what is now a book called *A Course in Miracles*. When she told me it was about God and spiritual transformation, I said, you know I'm an atheist, I'm not interested in that kind of stuff. But, she asked me to read just one page, and I thought, well, I could do that. I heard a little inner voice that said *Physician Heal Thyself; This is Your Way Home*. I had a transformative experience that I have never really been able to put into words accurately, but it was a feeling of oneness with a Higher Power; God. A feeling that somehow God's will and my will were going to be one, and that my life was going to change. I became a student of *A Course in Miracles*, and it was initially challenging to me; it was a thick book and I am dyslexic and a lot of the language is of a Christian nature and I come from a Jewish background. But as I read it and began to apply some of the principles to my life, I began to find a sense of peace that I had not had before. I began to forgive myself

and other people.

About five or six months later I was making rounds at the UC Medical Center in San Francisco with an oncologist, and I watched as a seven-year-old kid asked the oncologist, "What is it like to die?" Here the child was dying with cancer and he asked an honest question and the oncologist changed the subject and asked him about his bowel movements. I began to look around and thought, well where do kids go for this? I realized that children turn to people they can trust, and on this particular pediatric oncology ward it was the cleaning woman they turned to, as though they knew she would give them an authentic, warm answer. I noticed that these children had no where to go to talk about serious things like death.

The next day in my meditation I had a sense of guidance to start seeing children who were facing death. I had a sense they would be wise spirits in young bodies teaching me and other people another way of looking at life, another way of looking at death, and that bringing them together in a peer support group might prove to be very healing for them. I started a small little center, now called the International Center of Attitudinal Healing, based on this fundamental belief in the ability of ordinary people to be of great help to one another. The center was all volunteer work, and it began to expand in ways I didn't have any plans for. We began seeing the brothers and sisters of children with cancer, and peer support groups for individuals infected with HIV or AIDS also started forming. From there, people began wanting further training and the center kept growing. Things just expanded and I began writing books based on the principles of the center, such as *Love is Letting Go of*

Fear, and Teach Only Love: Twelve Principles of Attitudinal Healing.

UH And you both have a new book out based on Attitudinal Healing.

JJ We actually have two new books. We published a book that came out a few months ago called *A Mini Course for Life*, with a foreword by Carlos Santana. Just recently released from Hay House is *Finding Our Way Home – Heartwarming Stories That Ignite Our Spiritual Core*.

UH So, Jerry, your work has really evolved since 1975.

JJ I had no plans for it growing as it has. I was just trying to heal myself and heal my own mind really; do my best to listen to an inner voice guide me in what to think, say or do - to realize that forgiveness is just as important as breathing.

UH In recent years a lot of research is emerging which confirms the power of one's attitude on overall health and wellbeing.

DC (Diane Cirincione, PhD): That's true. One study conducted at Yale which Jerry and I often reference was published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. The main discovery was that among a group of over 600 older individuals those with a more positive attitude and self-perception of aging lived an average of 7.5 years longer than the participants with less positive perceptions towards aging.

UH I found an excerpt on the International Center for Attitudinal Healing website that struck me; it reads: "*Attitudinal Healing is based upon the premise that every person possesses an essential quality of being that is constructive, creative, compassionate and peaceful and that it is possible to access this quality at any moment through our conscious choice to do so. Our definition of this essential quality is love. Attitudinal Healing asserts that it is not people or circumstances that cause us to be upset. Rather, it is our own thoughts, feelings and attitudes that create conflict and distress.*" This really seems to speak to the core of this approach.

DC At the heart of it, we believe it essential to make inner peace, or peace of mind, our only goal, and we feel there is a place in our heart in which that peace has always existed and that it's connected to a Higher Power. It is possible to experience inner peace even when there is chaos going on around us. We can choose peace rather than conflict; we can choose to experience love instead of fear; we can choose to be a love-finder rather than a fault-finder. We can choose to teach only love; because that's really what we are.

UH Would you share an example of someone in your programs who expressed this capacity to experience inner peace in the middle of chaos?

JJ There are so many examples. One of them I recall from when we were in Croatia a number of years ago, doing work with refugees as well as people living there. There was a professor at the university who shared a story of how bombs were going off all around him, while he was crouched under a table, fearful that he was going to be

killed. Suddenly, he remembered the principle that it's possible to experience peace of mind even when there is chaos going on all around you - and his fear disappeared. It was a life-altering event.

DC Another recent example of someone experiencing a sense of inner peace despite challenging and uncertain circumstances recently came to be at a group at our International Center of Attitudinal Healing in Sausalito, CA. There was a woman who was in a Person to Person Group for adults committed to applying these principles to enhance the quality of their lives. She said, my son is in Afghanistan and I am just going crazy with fear and anxiety, as though I were being bombed here at home; my letters are full of fear - why doesn't the center start a support group for parents who have sons and daughters in Iraq and Afghanistan? They did that, and soon she stated she was living in the present, in a constant state of loving and forgiving. She was experiencing a sense of peace that she never had before, despite the same circumstances.

UH Something that really strikes me about The Principles of Attitudinal Healing is how each principle seems to be based on core values also shared by many spiritual traditions or religions, yet the principles are presented in a general, accessible way to people. Was that your intention?

JJ The intention was to create something that we call practical spirituality, based on universal spiritual principles. But it doesn't have any 'dos' or 'shoulds' and treats everyone as equals. In other words, everyone is an equal teacher-student to each other. The result was that people literally from all faiths can identify with The Principles and adapt and use them because they are so universally applicable. It is not a place where we give advice. Instead, it is a place where we do our best to practice unconditional love, practice infinite patience and do our best to let go of the grievances and judgments we may have about others and ourselves. It is a place to let the love flow, and be directed by the heart rather than the ego, which is so much filled with fear.

People drawn to the attitudinal healing programs often find that they are on a spiritual pathway. For me, I happen to call where I am going the Home of God, to that which created me, which I believe to be Love and Light. Not the God I thought of as a kid - a personified old guy in the clouds with gray hair that was going to punish me or beat me up if I did something wrong or pardon me if I did something right. I believe this home to be Love and Light. As we go along this pathway, the world we see changes to such an extent that it disappears and we become one with light. We come to realize that we are part of the Light of the world, and we see our light and other's light join each other and miracles begin to happen. I once wrote a one-liner about this that other people found very helpful and it goes like this:

*Your Light is all that I see and is
but a reflection of the Light in me.*

I find when people, myself included, intentionally create a sort of music in the back of our mind - regardless of where we are or who we are with - we can choose to see the light in others and see that as a reflection of ourselves. That allows us to feel peaceful. This doesn't mean we use denial in any way or that we don't do things, or that we are

History & Overview of the International Center for Attitudinal Healing

THE BEGINNING

In 1975 there was virtually no emotional support systems for people affected by catastrophic illness. Most people in the U.S. were no longer living in extended family situations and rarely died at home, as they had a generation before. Instead, illness and dying were largely relegated to hospital rooms where the medical problem was the only focus. In this setting, the emotional and spiritual experience was often one of fear and painful isolation, with few opportunities for people to open to a deeper experience.

While making rounds on a pediatric oncology ward, Dr. Jerry Jampolsky overheard an 8 year-old boy ask his doctor "What is it like to die?" The doctor ignored the question and changed the subject. Jerry wrote: "I think the physician was fearful of addressing the question. When I investigated this further, I discovered that changing the subject was not an uncommon response to this question."

Jerry later wrote in his book *Teach Only Love*, "I discovered that children usually look for someone they can trust, who will give them honest replies to these questions. On this particular ward, this turned out to be the cleaning woman. The kids seemed to know they would get honest, direct answers from her. I began to wonder generally where kids could go to talk about such serious things as death and found that there was no safe place where they could talk."

Jerry founded the Center to create a safe place where kids with cancer could talk. With the help of several volunteers, Jerry started the first support group of its kind for children coping with life-threatening illness. Even though Jerry is a psychiatrist, one of the first principles he established was one of equality, and invited everyone to leave their "credentials at the door," encouraging everyone in the group to see themselves and each other as equal -- including kids, volunteers, and Jerry. The cleaning woman demonstrated to Jerry that an approach to emotional and spiritual support didn't necessarily require an expert. To Jerry, this woman demonstrated that the presence of such simple qualities as kindness, equality, and a non-judgmental honesty are powerfully therapeutic. Jerry later remarked that in approaching the subject of death in this attitudinal climate of safety everyone found some aspect of their lives that was trapped in fear and in need of healing. This idea that "we are here for our own healing," even as we help others, has become a core principle at the Center.

THE CENTER TODAY

Over the last 30 years we have served more than 40,000 people free of charge. Today, the Center offers support not only to children but to people of all ages. Services are still provided by trained volunteers, just as in the very first group with children. The primary criteria for serving at the Center is the willingness to be unconditionally loving, non-judgmental, and personally authentic.

STRETCHING AROUND THE WORLD

What began as a single group for children has grown into a movement that has reached around the world. Dr. Jampolsky and his wife, Dr. Diane Cirincione have lectured around the globe on Attitudinal Healing and with the support of the Center have been instrumental in helping communities throughout the world to establish local Attitudinal Healing centers and groups of their own.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION

The Center has been featured on numerous TV and radio shows including **60 Minutes**, **CNN**, **The Today Show**, **PBS's The Visionaries**, and in two documentaries: one by **Mr. Rogers**, and another by **Phil Donahue** called **Phil & The Kids**, which won a Peabody Award.

In 2005, Dr. Jampolsky received the *Pride in the Profession Award* from the American Medical Association "for advancing the art and science of medicine." Together, he and Dr. Cirincione have received the Sadat Peace Prize, the National Caring Award, and a number of other international awards.

Since founding the Center in 1975, Dr. Jampolsky and Dr. Cirincione have authored 16 books that have sold close to 7 million worldwide, including the international bestsellers *Love is Letting Go of Fear* and *Change Your Mind, Change Your Life*.

www.attitudinalhealing.org

www.jerryjampolsky.com

passive amoebas. On the contrary, it means that we move through life with love being the only thing there is, that we believe love is the answer no matter what the problem is, whether it's an illness, financial difficulties, a problem with your parents, war, poverty, etc.

DC When love is the answer, love becomes everything there is and all there is; it becomes our inner reality and is reflected back to us by others. Our job is to live one second at a time with that consciousness, making it a timeless, eternal moment, an instant where there is no space and no time. This is an internal experience and in no way implies cultural or theological "sameness," but rather a deep recognition of our universality of being part of Creation.

JJ It's like watching a sunset; when you're really watching a sunset, you're experiencing the majesty of the universe and you've lost the experience of time and space where every moment is for joining and giving. If you come back and analyze that sunset, all of a sudden your mind is working away and you've lost the joy; you're stuck in your head. That's really the difference between making your intellect your God or Love your God.

UH Our readership is comprised of healthcare professionals of many disciplines. What are your thoughts on how clinicians might apply principles of Attitudinal Healing in their practice, or make available the approach in a practical way?

JJ First, we and a number of other people in medicine and psychology and the social sciences have been unhealed healers. This is reflected in the many conscious and unconscious judgments we hold against those we serve. So, to simply recognize when we're making a judgment on a patient - that they are a bad patient for not taking their medicine, that they're a pain in the neck, or whatever the judgment - is to see we are separating ourselves from that person. As we mentioned earlier, one of the things we find very practical in working with other people in the context of Attitudinal Healing is to remember they are our equal. We come to see they are teaching us all the time. If a clinician has difficulty experiencing or seeing a patient as loving, then they can choose a compassionate view and see patients as fearful, giving out a call of help for love. Your heart opens up with compassion as you get rid of the blocks to seeing another as teacher, or as calling out for love. I believe compassion is part of our natural inheritance, and we separate ourselves from the Love and Light within by making these judgments. We do this as physicians, therapists, social workers, chiropractors, lawyers or whatever practice in which we are involved.

DC When all is said and done, it's our relationships that are the most important; being of service or help to others. There is more to life than making money, more to life than these material things. As we stop making judgments about other people, we open ourselves to really learning from others. The good you see in another person is really something in yourself that you are just projecting out on the other person. When you really see that, you come to see that all relationships are for joining, whether you are a practicing clinician, speaking with your neighbor or talking with a family member. All relationships present an opportunity to return to oneness. Healing is really another way of healing the illusion that we are separate from each other. If you commit to the premise that this second is all there is

and if you decide to give all your love to everyone you know, instead of fighting with everyone in your mind, you begin to bring light out of darkness.

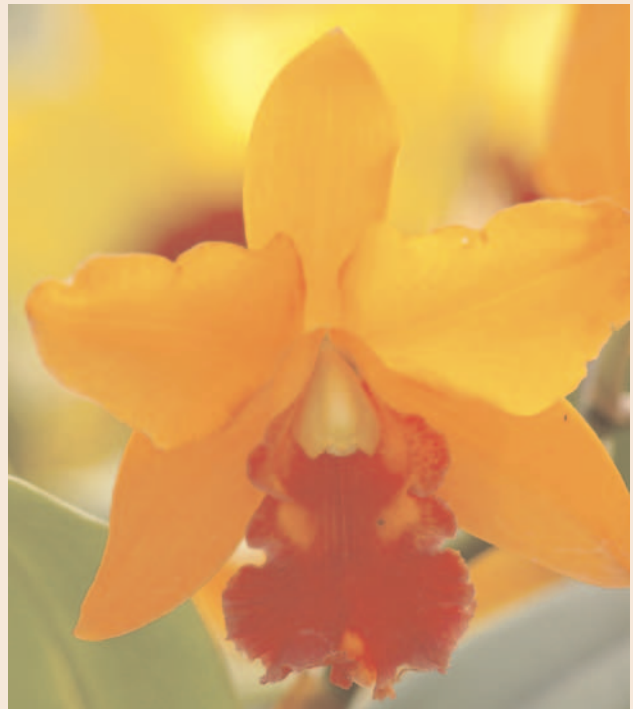
UH So in a sense, working as a clinician is not only an opportunity to forgive oneself but also to express love.

JJ Yes; it is important to realize that the judgments we make on our patients are really grievances we hold against ourselves. The more we lay those judgments aside and express love instead, the closer we are to realizing our oneness. The more creative we can be about finding ways to express our love for one another the more fulfilling life can be. I remember one time when Diane and I were going to Connecticut from California for a surprise visit to our friend Dorothy for her 50th birthday. We bought a lot of cellophane, ribbons and bows and we had the taxi driver wrap us up in the cellophane as though we were a gift. We were at the door and we couldn't even press the doorbell because we were all wrapped up, so the taxi driver pressed the button for us. Dorothy's husband, Hal, opened the door and says, "Oh my gosh, Dorothy, you gotta come down here and see this!" (Laughter) That's just it; finding new ways to express this love is a joy.

UH As I became more familiar with your work, I was struck by how much you both have done together over the last 30+ years. Did you always know you would work together in this way?

JJ When I met Diane, none of my personal relationships worked, and I had the feeling that this kind of relationship that we have today was not going to happen to me. I joke with Diane that I did not have a spiritual experience when I first met her. She said that when she first saw me, she saw a light all around me. And I told her that was not the way I felt; I had a testosterone experience. (Laughter)

In all seriousness, I really feel that Diane is an Angel that came into my life in 1981; my soul mate. We have devel-



oped a relationship in which we feel we are one heart, and we're there for one another to help remind each other who and what we are – and where we are on our spiritual pathway. Every day, we get up at 4:30 in the morning and do a short prayer of gratitude for being alive another day. Then in our minds we dematerialize our bodies reminding us of our truest state and send love to all those people in the world we know are hurting or suffering from lack of love or from illness. After that, we get up and do some stretch and yoga exercises, we do a lesson from A Course in Miracles, light a candle and meditate for 20 minutes. Then we either go to the gym three times a week or take an hour and a half meditative walk on the beach. Sometimes we find that we have to start the day over maybe three or four times to remain in a loving state of mind. The ego is so easily distracted. And we're just works in progress. Every day there are temptations to make judgments or hold grievances. We're not there yet, but we do our best to be here in this moment.

UH I was moved by the joy you seem to share in the work you do, whether writing, speaking engagements or helping with Attitudinal Healing around the world.

JJ A lot of people that come to the lectures want to see if we walk our pathway. And on stage, people can quickly tell if you're honest. We tell stories about ourselves, including the mistakes we've made. We find sharing one's vulnerability and telling stories is really important and healing. This book coming out in April called *Finding your*

***Twelve Principles of Attitudinal Healing**

Twelve principles define the core of Attitudinal Healing. These principles introduce the dynamic of choice into a psychological process. Each principle offers an opportunity to step through the fear, conflict or separation we may be feeling, and often recycling, and to make a choice to experience peace of mind instead, even in extreme situations. Attitudinal Healing defines health as inner peace and healing as letting go of fear.

1. The essence of our being is love.
2. Health is inner peace. Healing is letting go of fear.
3. Giving and receiving are the same.
4. We can let go of the past and the future.
5. Now is the only time there is and each instant is for giving.
6. We can learn to love ourselves and others by forgiving rather than judging.
7. We can become love finders rather than fault finders.
8. We can choose and direct ourselves to be peaceful inside regardless of what is happening outside.
9. We are students and teachers to each other.
10. We can focus on the whole of life rather than the fragments.
11. Since love is eternal death need not be viewed as fearful.
12. We can always perceive ourselves and others as either extending love or giving a call for help.

* Visit the center at www.attitudinalhealing.org

Way Home is a book of stories about detours we have taken, mountains we have climbed and the many people that have impacted us. But we're both works in process.

UH Standing where you are today, with decades behind you both, what would you offer to people in the way of wisdom or guidance for navigating this life?

DC I would offer a question that has helped guide me throughout the years and that is this: Whenever I am making any decision, am I making that decision based on love or am I making it based on fear? My experience is that the way I answer that question at any given moment pretty much dictates my experience.

JJ What works for me is feeling that I have a live nine-year-old inside me who wants to come out and play, and wants to experience his innocence and the innocence in other people. I don't count my age wrinkles, I count my smile wrinkles. I like humor. I was talking at my friend Larry's 60th birthday party and I said, you know 60 is a great age, because you no longer care what people say about you. But boy, it really gets better when you're 80, Larry, because at 80 you don't remember what people say about you! (Laughter)

DC We like to find new ways to laugh at ourselves, and not take ourselves so seriously. If you're not fearful of dying and you're not making judgments, and you're not getting caught in making your peace of mind dependent on others or what the outcome is in life, you're free.

A little prayer from A Course in Miracles we say every day, and bring to mind as frequently throughout the day as possible is the following:

*I am not a body. I am free.
For I am still as God created me.
I want the peace of God.
The peace of God is everything that I want.
The peace of God is my one goal;
the aim of all my living here, the end I seek,
my purpose, my function, and my life,
while I abide where I am not at home.*

JJ I guess the most important thing I can offer is to say that I have found in my life there is a difference between being 'sort of' committed to one's spiritual pathway and being totally committed to it. To simply ask oneself that question is revealing. There is a freedom in committing to living just one second at a time, and to throwing away our measuring sticks for oneself and other people. To realize that the peace of God is everything I want, and to know we are here to be happy; that this happiness is our natural inheritance. We are born that way.

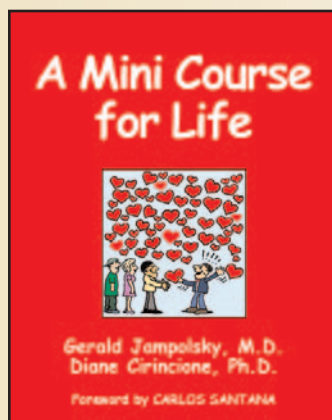
UH Thank you for sharing your time and presence with us, Jerry and Diane. I appreciate how full-heartedly you express yourselves.

JJ I think when we do this, we become transparent; and transparency means having a harmony in what we think, say or do. There is nothing to hide. We wish you well and thank you for allowing us to express ourselves. You teach what you want to learn, so we are listening to what we are saying. We wish you boundless love and blessings; have a peaceful day.

New from

Gerald Jampolsky, MD & Diane Cirincione, PhD

A Mini Course for Life



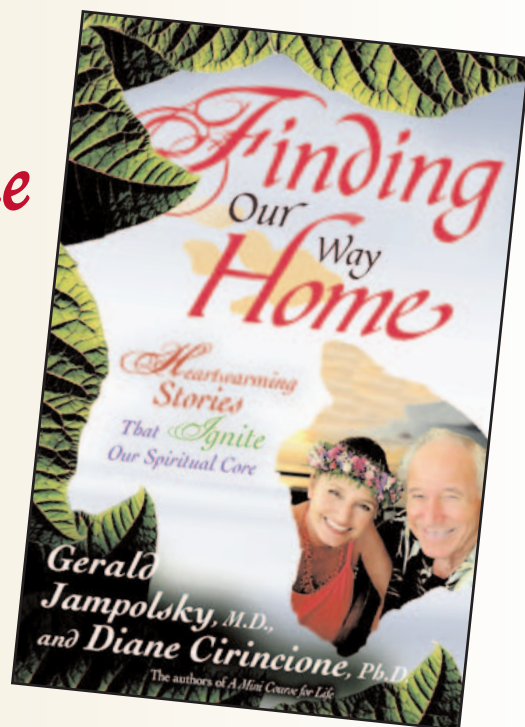
Would you like to feel more fully alive with a new energy and zest for living? Would you like to experience healed relationships with everyone including yourself? How about more inner peace and less stress and fear while learning to release guilt, grievances and blame? If your answer is “Yes” to any of these questions, then for sure this Mini Course is meant for you.

This self-taught course works for all ages from adolescents on and has been successfully used in dozens of diverse cultures worldwide. These universal principles are condensed into a short and simple format that will profoundly affect your life and the lives of those around you in the most positive ways.

Finding Our Way Home

*Heartwarming Stories
That Ignite Our Spiritual Core*

Jerry and Diane demonstrate the daily application of healing principles and practical spirituality as they weave their journey for us as it continues to evolve from the influences around them.



Gerald Jampolsky, MD & Diane Cirincione, PhD are pioneers in the field of practical spirituality. They have written numerous books, lectured in over fifty countries, and have received many international awards. Most recently, the American Medical Association honored Dr. Jampolsky with the prestigious Excellence in Medicine – Pride in the Profession Award for his groundbreaking work in the field of Attitudinal Healing. A new field of psychology, Attitudinal Healing integrates spiritual principles into a psycho-social approach that shifts focus of support from a pathological orientation (what’s wrong with you) to a transformational orientation (what’s powerful in you). Attitudinal Healing is at the core of Dr. Jampolsky and Dr. Cirincione’s marriage and life work together.

For more information and to order, visit us at www.jerryjampolsky.com