



Alexander J. Shaia, Ph.D.

Dr. Shaia, by his biography, practically defines the challenge of the times: how do we discover what is meaningful from the past and combine it with the present? How do we find the balance of our selves in the world? What is the process by which we fully mature? He has a unique history, and it enables him to offer unique perspectives. He is that rare person: someone who has developed both his intellect and his soul.

The early matrix was a large Lebanese immigrant family in Birmingham, Alabama. Traditional, religious and close-knit, everyone in the Shaia family had a place. Alexander was expected to fulfill more than six centuries of tradition and be a priest. Each day, he heard stories of “the old days” and “the old ways” and every Sunday meant church and a great ritual gathering of the clan.

When the time came, young Alexander went to the University of Notre Dame, but not to seminary. The “old ways” called. He studied cultural anthropology and rites of initiation, and received his B.A. How *do* people mature? That question grew into an M.A. in Counseling Education from the University of Alabama in Birmingham and then a Masters of Religious Education from Seattle University. In Seattle, Alexander was on the staff of a Catholic parish, and became part of the restoration and implementation of the lengthy and ancient process of Christian baptism, eventually traveling throughout the United States facilitating and speaking about this significant development.

Drawn by the process of human change he witnessed, and curious to learn more, he completed a two-year program in pastoral psychotherapy at the University of Puget Sound. A few years later, another two-year training beckoned—this time in psychosynthesis at the Psychosynthesis Training Institute in San Francisco.

Finally a decade after finishing his studies at Notre Dame, Alexander entered a full doctoral program in Clinical Psychology through the California Institute of Integral Studies. In that program, he met Dora Kalff, the originator of Sandplay, resulting in postdoctoral training with her in Switzerland, and in 1993, certification in Jungian Sandplay psychotherapy. Dr. Shaia is the first American male to become a Teaching Member of the International Society for Sandplay Therapy and Sandplay Therapists of America.

Throughout the years of his studies, and his subsequent years in private practice as a psychotherapist and spiritual director, Dr. Shaia has also been active as an adjunct faculty member at several colleges and universities, as a conference and retreat presenter, a professional association board member, a ritualist, a passionate public speaker and an author of many articles. With the publication of *Beyond the Biography of Jesus: The Journey of Quadratos, Book I*, and soon *Book II*, Dr. Shaia’s time is now devoted almost exclusively to workshops, retreats and speaking engagements on the subject of the universal quadratos sequence and its manifestation in the four traditional gospels.