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## IV *Reparenting Ourselves*

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"There is a secret person undamaged in every individual."

PAUL SHEPARD

The unconscious is timeless. A taste or smell or sound that accompanied strong emotions of the past can renew those forgotten feelings — just as the sound of a radio in an empty room once did for me. So can an innocent event that triggers some past anger, embarrassment, or pleasure. The holograms of all past experiences that were important to us are stored in our brain cells, just waiting to be reentered. When we find the path into them — whether we stumble on one accidentally or consciously search for it — past time is suddenly the present.

There is no single way of reentering the past. Often, a teacher, therapist, or trusted friend becomes a surrogate parent who makes us feel safe enough to begin the journey. For some, hypnosis is a time-honored bridge. For many others, meditation, a gentle form of self-hypnosis, allows us to turn inward. (You will find a sample induction at the back of this book.) Often, the company of others with similar experiences helps to build a bridge over the shame or fear that has been blocking the path. Sometimes, a whole group begins to change, and because we share that group identity, paths for our own change are opened up, too. These and other ways of journeying backward in time are discussed in chapter 4.

If the broken places are so deep and painful that the conscious mind resists in order to keep functioning — just as the child also covered them up in order to function and survive — their existence may be more difficult to explore and may need a safer environment and more consistent process, as Alice Miller's personal example shows us. In general, the deeper the wound, the more an empathetic guide or at least a personal commitment to a trusted process is necessary before the unconscious that has protected us all these years will make the journey home.

But the point of the journey is not just healing. It's also recovering the truest, most spontaneous, joyful, and creative core of ourselves.

If any of the stories you have just read strikes an emotional chord, that's a possible signal from your inner self. If anything in the present brings you unreasonable pleasure or sadness, that's a clue, too. The important thing is to make the connections between past and present. And, of course, not everything is in our power to know. We need faith in a future that will redeem the past.

When I think of my mother, for instance, who was my parent but could not be her own, I find comfort in these lines from Cherokee poet Marilou Awiakta:

MOTHERROOT  
Creation often  
needs two hearts  
one to root  
and one to flower  
One to sustain  
in time of drouth  
and hold fast  
against winds of pain  
the fragile bloom  
that in the glory  
of its hour  
affirms a heart  
unsung, unseen