You are more than your physical body. You’re more than the psychological set of functions called ‘mind’. You’re a continuous flow of Life Energy, a Higher Self, an immortal Soul, a Child of God, an Essence beyond space and time. This energy enlivens your body and mind, without it you’re dead. Dead matter.

We are Essence, and our Essence manifests a Self, a human being in space and time. The Self is conceived and born in a body that will die. The transition from a being beyond space and time to the confines of an earthbound human is a tough landing. It is traumatic, because the universal consciousness of Essence has to be transferred into the limited vehicles of body and mind. Their capacity to process information is reduced to 40 bits per second, in a world that delivers 40 million bits to process each second. The human body and mind have needs, biological and psychological. We need food and shelter, and we need to meet, to share, to attach. If these needs are met, the transition from the limitless universe to earth-bound life is facilitated.

The situation becomes more difficult, when our parents are not available to help us, because they’re exhausted, busy, disturbed or just unskilled. Then our needs for attachment, affection, belonging and understanding are not met. We start losing contact with our Essence, because we’re overwhelmed with stimuli from our body and the outside world. We are confronted with chaos, and we experience a terrible, horrible loneliness, a black hole. We’re not able to understand what’s going on. We start to split off energy from the stream of life, which freezes in limited representations of ourselves and the outside world. Our awareness of our Essence and our Real, our Higher Self diminishes. This loneliness becomes intensified when parents are abusive: Those who should be there to take care of our needs are the one that neglect us, reject
us or use violence against us. Every one of us has experienced this – more or less. It’s part of the human condition that all of our needs can never be perfectly met.

We are born as an Original Self, with the potential to be whole, but under the pressure of the circumstances we’ll have to do with less. Our true nature is whole, loving and grateful – as its basic condition. If body and mind are confronted with neglect, rejection and abuse, our life energy, the energy of our Self, is split off. The flow freezes – in parts. The awareness of our Original Self diminishes, and the frozen parts become the cornerstone of our ego, the core of our identity.

**First Order Dissociation**
When our fundamental needs for attachment are not met, the experience of loneliness, of being excluded from the social world, can be terrifying, even paralysing. The experience of the black hole separates us from our true nature. This is what autistic children and schizophrenics go through. They are stuck in what I call *first order dissociation* – the person is caught in a cage of loneliness, abandonment and fear: the black hole.

In the brain, these fundamental experiences are stored in the amygdala, an organ in the limbic system, which is designed to detect danger. This amygdala is activated when aspects of the environment are recognised as dangerous. Then it will trigger stress reactions – *fight, flight or freeze*. The amygdala can also be overwhelmed, when the stress response doesn’t lead to disappearance of the danger a person experiences. Then the result is dissociation: representations of the stressful environment and reactions to them are stored together. Then those reactions can be triggered if similar stimuli from the environment appear. This first order dissociation is so painful that the organism must find ways to avoid the pain connected to it. The black hole is covered from awareness.

**Second Order Dissociation**
Most people find a compensation for the first order dissociation. They develop alternatives in their thinking, feeling and behaviour. These allow them to overcome or cover the experience of abandonment, so that they’re not confronted with it all the time: They learn to avoid it, to find a way out of the abandoned state and adapt to the outside world by making concessions. They give up their autonomy, their spontaneity and their creativity and turn to rigid patterns in feeling, thinking and behaviour, which allow them to survive. Some of these patterns allow the person to be accepted by parents and peers, as these were discovered in Transactional Analysis:

- Be Perfect
- Be Strong
- Please Others
- Hurry Up
- Try Hard.

These patterns create circumstances that allow the child to be accepted under certain conditions. The need for attachment is met, but under the surface, the child feels a permanent threat of rejection in case the conditions are not fulfilled.
Other ways to manage a person’s inner state and to overcome the pain of the first level dissociation are addictive behaviours. If the threat of the abandonment comes up, the person takes to food, work or drugs.

In one recent session I discovered a clear example how an addiction to sweet food was installed: a little girl was put in a high chair when her mother started ironing while watching television. When the girl started crying to catch mother’s attention, she didn’t turn to her and spend time with her. Instead she put a bowl of chocolate cookies on the food tray of the high chair, offering a solution the girl wouldn’t get rid of all her life.

Another client told me how she had been locked in a cellar as a little girl. Her need for attachment was severely frustrated, because she didn’t know when she would ever be freed from her loneliness. This was enough to let her develop a phobia of elevators later in her life. When I went with her into an elevator with open doors, she jumped out of it immediately when the doors started to close, creating security from the experience of connection to this primal state of abandonment. Many behaviours, which seems irrelevant at first sight, serve the purpose to avoid the awareness of the existential black hole.

To avoid this state, we develop adaptive behaviours, addictions and phobias. We also can create or reinforce physical symptoms. Some parents tend to pay more attention to their children when they are ill than when they are healthy, and that can mean that a child can start discovering and developing symptoms, which would never have come to the surface in a relationship that was healthy from the beginning.

The three roles in Steve Karpman’s Drama Triangle – the Perpetrator, the Rescuer and the Victim – are also forms of second order dissociation. They all avoid the awareness of the black hole by turning towards another person and offer a way to structure time, strokes and relationships in exploitative patterns.

The awareness of this dissociative process dates from the beginning of the 20th century. Charles Samuel Myers described an Emotional Personality and an Apparent Normal Personality. The Emotional Personality is in contact the core of the trauma and emotions can barely be controlled. The Apparently Normal Personality avoids the contact with the horror and the pain of abandonment, at the cost of spontaneity and creativity, caught in patterns of artificial attachment through adaptive behaviour or destructive habits to avoid the even greater pain of being disconnected from Essence. These patterns of avoidance are what I’m calling second order dissociation. They are solutions to an enormous problem: the pain of the child when the needs for attachment are not met.

Third Order Dissociation

However, these patterns to avoid the awareness of the black hole can lead to new problems. This is especially clear when people turn to drugs to manage their inner state – legal or illegal, the drugs create a dependency, which can be destructive for body and mind. The same is true for driver behaviour: If a person is suppressing her need for autonomy for a longer time, the mind set for a happy life and fulfilling relationships cannot be learned. So the solution to avoid the abandonment can in turn lead to new problems. Stronger drugs, a string of broken relationships, burnout or loss of jobs.
At first sight, these problems have nothing to do with the original abandonment issue, but the painful reality is that they all create new manifestations of abandonment in adult life: the loneliness of being left, divorced, burnt out or fired. This *third order dissociation* is usually the indication for seeking help. This is what we see when clients enter our office: Life doesn’t work for them. They’re excluded, bullied, left and this is a slingshot to reactivate the original trauma.

In most cases, the parts presented to us in our consulting rooms are the split-off parts. Essence still manages a considerable part of our life. People may be functioning well with family and friends or on the work floor but the suffering takes the centre of a person’s attention. That’s what they come for when we see them.

If therapists and counsellors try to re-establish the fragile balance of second order dissociation, the problem will not be solved in the long run. The emotions, cognitions and behaviours connected to it miss one important dimension of life: Essence, Spirit, the Real Self. Second order dissociation is a surrogate for real life, and often the client is aware of this: There is emptiness, a lack of meaning, a going-through-the-moves of living, but not a life.

**Covering the Black Hole**

The problem of scientific psychology is that there is no solution for this dilemma, because in this paradigm, Essence doesn’t exist. In its paradigm, human beings are reduced to psychological systems with a need for attachment, in the shell of a bio-robot. The awareness of what we really are is hidden in psychological constructs like resilience.

In this paradigm there is no need or necessity to address the problem under the problem: the abandonment as a result of disconnecting from Essence, not as a result of broken relationships on the psychological level.

In psychoanalytic schools of treatment, abandonment is an issue. These schools assume that abandonment can be reduced by a corrective emotional experience within the safe container of the therapeutic relationship. The therapist becomes a substitute for the lack of support from the parents and slowly teaches the client that he can do without, because he has grown up in the meantime.

Most of the time this is not enough to let go of the experience of abandonment and the depression that goes with it. Treatment takes a long time, and the building of a strong working alliance to address these issues is difficult. Transference and countertransference issues devour the energy of the client and the therapist, and failure is always around the corner. An inherent problem of this method is also that interpretations within the supporting of the environment of the relationship are the only healing element. This means that the client is exposed to extremely long periods of pain in the sessions. Every element of the trauma must be relived and explored in the safe context of the working alliance. This way of working creates a bridge between the amygdala, where the painful memories are stored and frozen, and the frontal brain, where the experience is explored and understood, finding a language where there were no words before.

**Resolving the Black Hole**

In my experience, a spiritual energy psychology can offer a much better perspective for the resolution of abandonment issues, not by offering a better relationship than the client ever
experienced, but by filling the black hole with life energy, resolving the trauma itself and reconnecting to what we really are: Essence. How do we do this? We need the working alliance as before: The client needs a safe place to learn that something new is possible. In Logosynthesis, this new learning is that the client himself or herself is Essence, and that Logosynthesis can offer a way to live from that Essence.

In a recent demonstration at a conference, I asked for the issue the client came in with, she said: I’m a compulsive eater. If I had accepted this definition of her identity, I would have excluded Essence from her life. Essence is not compulsive. The client’s mind may have found out that a compulsive behaviour can avoid the pain of feeling alone. So I replied that I couldn’t accept this definition of her Self, because I thought she was more than a physical body with behaviour patterns. I also told her that I was willing to accept that a part of her believed she needed to eat compulsively. She eagerly accepted my reframing of her identity statement, it offered a first step on the path out of the pattern. Then we worked with the belief, and she let go of it. As a result she felt one physical symptom after the other, and this seemed another way to cover up the pain of the layer beyond. However, the resolution of the belief was enough to change her eating habits.

We split off energy from our flow of life energy when we don’t have enough support in coping with perceptions, which overwhelm our body and mind. This split off energy is used to create frozen perceptions of our environment – of what we see, what we hear, what we feel, taste and smell. This frozen perception is tied to a frozen reaction of our body, our emotions and our thoughts. Such frozen worlds offer an orientation in our later life: we know how to react when something similar happens and that creates stability, and that’s better than chaos, under all circumstances.

These frozen perceptions are energy structures, thought forms in three dimensions, and the frozen reactions are closely connected to it, usually as reactions patterns of the body.

With the help of Logosynthesis, we’re able to resolve the terror of the black hole in its core. We only need to address the frozen memories of a situation and we can use the sentences of Logosynthesis. Then the library of horror in the amygdala is deleted.

When we do this, many clients are able to restore their awareness of Essence immediately. They then say something like «Mum didn’t have much of a choice then», «My boss seems to stand under a lot of pressure» or «I don’t really need chocolate.»

**Conclusions**
- Abandonment is the core of many psychological problems, if not all.
- Abandonment is caused by the loss of a person’s connection to Essence.
- The experience of abandonment develops when children are overwhelmed by environmental stimuli, while their biological and psychological needs are not fulfilled.
- The inclusion of Essence in psychotherapy opens a whole new treatment potential.
- Only this inclusion has the potential to really resolve deep abandonment issues, because it treats them at the root of their existence.
- The exploration of abandonment issues covered by physical or psychological symptoms may create a deeper resolution of these issues.