

Positive Disintegration Podcast
Episode 3: Dąbrowski, Philosophy, and Influences

Chris Wells, Emma Nicholson, and guest Bill Tillier
November 30, 2021

Emma: Welcome back everyone to Positive Disintegration, a framework for becoming your authentic self. I'm your host, Emma Nicholson, the business analyst who specializes in using business tools and techniques to explain Dąbrowski's theory on my YouTube channel, Adults with Overexcitabilities. I write the Tragic Gift blog and I'm the technical director of the Potterversity podcast. With me today is my resident co-host and expert on positive disintegration, Chris Wells, a Dąbrowski scholar, researcher, and therapist in private practice. Welcome back, Chris.

Chris: Thanks, Emma, it's great to be back.

Emma: I don't know about you, Chris, but I'm excited about today's episode because we've got our first guest on.

Chris: I'm excited to have our first guest, too, finally.

Emma: Our guest is someone who you've worked with, who has enormous amount of expertise in all things Dąbrowski.

Chris: That's right. I feel really grateful for Bill, for helping me learn about the theory, for providing me resources, for being my friend, and I'm excited to have him on the show today with us.

Emma: We're going to be talking a little bit about who Dąbrowski was, with a bit of an inside insight into whom the actual man was behind the theory. So, I can't wait.

Chris: That's right.

Emma: Today's guest is Bill Tillier. Bill received a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Calgary and went on to complete a Master of Science degree at the University of Alberta. It was there that he met Dr. Dąbrowski and became his student. Upon graduation Bill worked as a forensic psychologist for over 20 years before developing a neuromuscular disorder.

Over the years, Bill maintained his interest in Dąbrowski creating a webpage, promoting and distributing Dąbrowski's original works and helping with many Dąbrowski conferences. Bill has now retired and spent much of his time volunteering in keeping the Dąbrowski archives up to date. Welcome to the show, Bill.

Bill: Thank you very much for having me, Chris and Emma.

Chris: Welcome. We're so glad that you're here with us today.

Bill: Well, I'm happy to be here and, again, thank you for having me.

Emma: Bill, you've got a heap of experience in working with Dąbrowski's theory, and also working with the man himself. Can you tell us a bit about what it was like working with him and what sort of person he was?

Bill: That's always a question people ask, and it's always a very hard question to answer because I feel that I've never met anyone in my life like Dąbrowski. He was one of a kind, and as I said, I've never met anybody that I felt was even close to him. And he had a couple of characteristics that really stuck out, one was that he was tremendously empathetic, and you felt his presence. When you talked to him, you felt like you were the only person in the room and that you had his total, undivided attention. He made you feel somehow that he was really understanding you. He was extremely intelligent. I've never really met anybody as intelligent, I can honestly say that, but he was also very, very humble and he never put himself in the center of things. He never put himself at the front of the line, you'd often turn around and you wouldn't be able to see him. He'd be at the back of the room. He was very humble.

The other thing that stuck out about him was he had an unbelievable energy level. He was relentless in pursuing work on his theory, and he had very high standards for the people that were around him, but he held himself to the highest standard. It's funny because I was reminiscing that often he would work until 11 at night and Marlene, his assistant, one time told me a funny story. They'd gone overtime until about 11:30 at night. And he stepped out of the room and Marlene said that they had assumed he'd gone home, and they were putting their coats on. And he came back in, he had just gone to the washroom. He came back in, and they went until two in the morning. And invariably, after our sessions at the meetings, it would be winter in Edmonton and often quite cold. And his house was about 15 or 20 blocks from the university. And I would offer him a ride home and he would never accept. He always said, "No, I must walk." He walked everywhere. He was always walking.

Emma: Do you think he had overexcitabilities himself?

Bill: Absolutely. Yes, I think it was really obvious that Dąbrowski had all of the different overexcitabilities. I can give you a couple of examples. In addition to the one that I just mentioned, that he was always very energetic and very active, always walking, always thinking. You could see his intellectual overexcitability. There were times at seminars, he would be trying to express a concept and he didn't like the English phrase. So he would often be thinking and speaking in English and then express something in French or Spanish or Polish, trying to get the exact meaning that he wanted to communicate. It was really quite elegant to hear him speak. He had very strong sensual overexcitability. He always had a Band-Aid on the back of his hand because when he was talking, he would rub the back of his hand and he would rub it raw and have a Band-Aid on it to protect it. And when he was talking, he also had to be rubbing the skin behind his ear. That was also a chronic problem area. But that was an example of, I guess, both psychomotor and sensual.

I think that what stood out for me was that you just felt a tremendous sense of calm and caring and that he was very empathetic and very compassionate. I think that he definitely did have all of the overexcitabilities. When you think about his past, he talks often about the fact that his sister died of meningitis when she was four. And I think he would've been about six and he was terribly impacted by that. As he put it, he had to confront death at a very early age. And then when you think that when he was in high school, the Russians invaded the town he was in, and his high school class went to the front lines in the battle. Some 30 children in his high school class were killed. When you think about the intense emotions that he had as a child and having those experiences, it must have been overwhelming, it's hard to imagine.

Then, of course, he talks about a famous battle that occurred near the village he was in. And as I understand it, there were about 150 dead soldiers in a field just adjacent to the village or town that he grew up in. He talked often about walking through this field as a boy about 11 or 12, I guess, and being struck at the faces of these dead soldiers. Some faces were frozen in fear, but some faces showed a very calm and beautiful expression reminding him of someone being asleep. I think that experience was the first time the concept of levels came to him. And when you think about that as a teenager, that's extraordinary.

Chris: I agree. It's interesting to me how he went through so much, he witnessed so much suffering in his early life between World War I, and he survived the influenza pandemic of 1918, and we don't know what that was like for him in Poland. But now that we've been through a pandemic, we have some sense of how devastating it can be, and then to get his degrees and start working only to have everything derailed by World War II. He went through so much in the first 50 years of his life, just getting himself situated and working through his theory, through these really difficult conditions. It's amazing to me.

Bill: I think there are two things that are amazing. Of course you mentioned the flu epidemic, but his first wife died of tuberculosis. When you think about it in those days, they didn't have the medications we do today. So that must have been hard for him to watch her die of tuberculosis,

unmedicated. I had a chance to study Maslow, and I found it very interesting that I saw a huge parallel between Maslow's childhood and Dąbrowski's, in the sense that both of them had tremendous challenges in their childhoods. But both of them had very, very strong, we'd call it third factor, of course. They had very strong internal energy and internal drive and internal motivation that allowed them to overcome these obstacles, especially in Dąbrowski's case that juxtaposes between the stress and chaos that he faced versus the educational opportunities that he created for himself and the people he studied under. That's just a tremendous juxtaposition. And when you look at the influences on Dąbrowski, it just illustrates if he hadn't had such a chaotic environment, if he was living in stable times, imagine what would've happened.

Chris: It's true. He developed his theory under very difficult conditions. He had no academic freedom until he came to Canada. When you think about it, the first full outline of the theory was in 1949, right? At that time, that was when the communists were taking over Poland. So, from that point, until he ended up in Canada, he didn't work under any conditions of academic freedom. So, it's a huge story. I'm glad that we're having this opportunity with you to bring him to life as a person and help people understand that this theory didn't come from a place of privilege, which some people have claimed lately in gifted ed. People who have no idea who he was or what he did, but it certainly didn't come from a place of privilege. He had to fight for all of this—to even survive through those times in Poland. So many psychiatrists were killed in Poland during World War II. He was lucky to even survive it.

Bill: There was a list of I think it was 130, was it, on the list and only four survived? And he was one of the four.

Chris: Yeah. I don't remember the numbers, but you're probably right. It's astonishing.

Bill: That was in the 1964 one.

Emma: It seems like Dąbrowski had obviously life influences that inputted into his theory. But he had other influences as well no doubt from his studies and from his reading. Bill, can you tell us a little bit about what some of his main influences were? I've seen on your website, you talk in some of your PowerPoint presentations about things like Plato, and I'm just wondering what you thought his main influences were and how it shaped his thinking.

Bill: At the beginning of his life, his interests were very broad. He wanted to be a journalist and he was very influenced by music. He was a musician and he thought about being a professional musician at one point. He was also tremendously influenced by art. And as I understand it, he had a sizeable art collection in Poland that he accumulated throughout his life. Now, when he was in his master's studies, I believe he was studying philosophy. One of his best friends committed suicide. And he decided to devote his life to study why people commit suicide and

what he could do to understand the problem. So, I think that those influences at the beginning were very important to understand, to set a context for where he later went.

Now, when he started the study, his influences were very broad. He began studying philosophy and was very impacted by the major philosophers. One time I asked him, I said, what book should I read to get insight into the foundations of your theory? And he said, read Plato. At the time, I didn't really appreciate that. But later when I tried to dig down into that, you could really understand where the idea of multilevelness came from because Plato essentially said reality is based on different levels. And he was also influenced by people like Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, and later by the Spanish philosopher, Unamuno, and by Karl Jaspers. So he had very broad influences from philosophers.

As well we have to remember that he was also a physician and a psychiatrist, and he was influenced by the study of neurology. And he studied people like the English neurologist, John Hughlings Jackson, and Charles Sherrington, as well as the famous Polish neurologist Mazurkiewicz. He was also influenced by other psychiatrists, for example, Janet and a couple of other existential psychiatrists. When you add those elements together, you get a real, a very interesting blend of different approaches. Dąbrowski took a very unique approach to philosophy. He combined two approaches that are usually seen as opposing, that is he took the school of essence and combined it with existential.

So Dąbrowski's idea was that we're all born with a fundamental, unique, authentic essence. It's our job to bring that essence out into fruition. And that most of the time, the individual's essence is suppressed by social forces. So you try to blend down to your social peer group and you lose your individual authentic essence. Now Dąbrowski came up with the interpretation that in order to express your essence, you had to use the choices you had available to you on a day-to-day basis. And that's where the existential aspect of the theory comes in. In that sense, whether or not your essence comes out depends on the choices you make in your life every day. And Dąbrowski would say to use one of his concepts, the individual has to shape their personality toward the expression of their individual essence through or using the choices they make on a day-to-day basis. And the fundamental bedrock of those choices is multi levelness.

When you are able to recognize the higher versus the lower, it gives you the opportunity to choose the higher. And in making that choice, you are affirming your essence as you see the world, as you perceive reality. And that then allows you to draw your essence out from the bedrock and make it part of your everyday life, what he called personality ideal.

Chris: And you also get the chance to reject the aspects of yourself that don't align with that vision or that ideal.

Bill: Let's dig into that a little bit deeper. Now, it's very common when you're growing up to be shaped by social forces. And one of those very strong forces is parental forces. My dad was a fireman. I want to be a fireman like him, or you're shaped by your peer group at school. You're shaped by your community. You're shaped by, perhaps your parents are religious and belong to a

particular religion. You're shaped by your broader culture. So all these forces are the initial shapers of your personality, and it's natural that at the beginning, the individual essence that defines your authenticity as a unique person is overshadowed by those social forces. So part of the idea of the theory and part of the idea of positive disintegration is the idea that those initial forces create an integration of your personality based on external factors, based on external influences.

As the person develops, and the dynamisms get stronger, the idea, for example, the idea that your internal motivations come to the surface, and you may say, let's say as a teenager, well when I was six years old, I wanted to be a fireman like my dad, but now that I'm 14, I don't think I want to be a fireman. I feel like I want to be a scientist. Where does that feeling come from? It comes from in the person's essence. And the challenge of the individual is to use insight, to look within themselves, to discover that essence, to discover what kind of person they really want to be. And in that process, you'll also discover the kind of person that you don't want to be. I'll give you an example that I've used before for my own life. My uncle and my family and my brother were hunters, and they went duck hunting. And when I was young, I wanted to get my hunting license and go with them.

And I looked forward to that almost like a rite of passage. I went hunting and I wasn't very good thankfully. But I went hunting a few times and one time in particular, I shot a duck. I looked at it and immediately I was struck that this was an insane act. It was not something I wanted to do. It was not part of me. It was something foreign to me. And I realized immediately that I didn't enjoy it, and I didn't want to do it again. So that's an example of personality shaping on the dimension of duck hunting. Now Dąbrowski advocated that in creating your personality idea, you would emphasize those things in your hierarchy that more resemble your essence and that you would inhibit or transform those things in your life that least resemble or they're less like your essence. So in that process, you shape yourself in the image of your true essence.

That was one of the issues that Dąbrowski had with Maslow. Maslow advocated through self-actualization that one should actualize oneself as one finds it. And Maslow is quite explicit that you should actualize both the higher and the lower. Dąbrowski said that was a unilevel approach that made no sense because the essence of development is to differentiate the higher from the lower. And that's a qualitative differentiation. And again, to draw that distinction into your real life, into your everyday actions, by acting on the higher and reducing, eliminating, or transforming the lower.

Chris: I just wanted to bring it back to the hierarchy of values, because when I have read about the hierarchy of values in Dąbrowski's work— For a long time, I was thinking about it as creating that hierarchy. Well, this is something that I've come to ponder through discussions with Michael too, but I think the hierarchy is discovered like you described. Because we go through these experiences where we have a visceral reaction to something that we've done or something that we witness. And that's how we realize what the higher and the lower are and that's how we can make these decisions and act on them. But the hierarchy of values is something that we don't talk about enough, I don't think.

Bill: Let me circle back and draw another very important distinction. We talked about Plato being an influence. Plato is also an influence in this sense. Dąbrowski rejected the platonic approach to emotion. Plato believed or wrote that emotion was the enemy of logic. And he advocated that development could only occur through the discovery of the logical forms that shape the universe. And you can only do that intellectually. And that emotion interferes with inhibits and distorts that effort. Dąbrowski rejected that approach. Dąbrowski was also very much influenced by Piaget, and Dąbrowski was a student—literal student—of Piaget. And Dąbrowski endorsed a traditional Piagetian approach to cognition.

But he added in the idea that cognition alone was insufficient to lead an authentic life. In order to lead an authentic life, you had to have emotion, and Dąbrowski he used the terms emotion and values synonymously. So, when Chris mentions the hierarchy of values, what you're really talking about is that hierarchy of essence within yourself, reflecting how you feel about life, about all of the different dimensions that you run into in day-to-day life. And if you are not in touch with your own hierarchy of values, for example, if my parents were staunch Mormons and I grew up in the Mormon church, I would derive my values from the canon of the Mormon church and its teachings.

I think that Dąbrowski's observation echoing Kierkegaard's would be that may not reflect the actual essence or the beliefs of that individual person. And that in order to become an authentic individual, you would have to deeply examine your essence, how you feel about life. And at the end of that examination, again, echoing Kierkegaard, if you chose Mormonism as a way of life, fine, but it's chosen after a very conscious and meticulous comparison and review with your own sense of values in life. I'm reminded that Stuart Kauffman said the faith of the heretic was the strongest and most reliable because the heretic has thought about these things, the deepest, like Bergson, another influence on Dąbrowski. Often, we live very shallow lives where we don't think enough and we don't think deeply enough about what we're doing, how we feel, what we ought to be doing, compared to what we are doing.

Bergson was critical that we live a superficial life and Dąbrowski would encourage people to slow down, not react, but to think and to feel, and to get in touch with the deeper essence of what they're doing in life, how they're feeling, how they're interacting, how they're impacting other people. After that deep consideration, then you decide what to do. And the essence of that, or the result of that, is that you're living a more authentic life. You're not living a behaviorism Skinner reaction approach where everything is just a quick reaction to a situation.

Emma: Even if you take away the speed of reaction, if you are just facing your reactions or your choices on logic, without emotion, you run a dangerous risk of becoming almost ruthless in your decision making. And it cuts out all chances of exercising empathy. So if you don't take into count your emotions and how it makes you feel to do something and granted some people can feel perfectly fine about some decisions. We spoke a bit, Chris in the last episode about, some people don't feel shame and they don't feel guilt, but I think if we completely discount our

feelings, it can lead down a dangerous path by simply running on logic or doing things by numbers and data alone.

Chris: When we think about the history of psychology, Dąbrowski's positioning of emotion as so important, as a part of his theory, was extremely unpopular for that time. So, that was just another thing that he had to kind of overcome.

Bill: It was not only unpopular. It was unusual, it ran counter to the canon of ever since Plato. Our approaches to education were all based on the idea of Platonic learning, that logic was everything and emotion was not even a consideration. Chris, to your point about logic and intelligence, without emotion, Dąbrowski called that one-sided development. And he's made the observation—at the time, we were just coming out of Vietnam. The example we often used was the chemist at Dow Chemical that invented Agent Orange, who had an IQ of 180 and was given all kinds of awards and accolades for discovering Agent Orange, which was used in the deforestation of Vietnam. He had no emotion because he couldn't have done that had he thought about it. Dąbrowski's observation was that the person like that exhibiting one-sided development has done more damage to the world than anyone else.

There's a long list of people, and even examples where their contributions are seen as positive to the greater good. I'll give you an example. Edward Teller was a brilliant scientist who created the bomb that they used on Nagasaki. Teller calculated that there was a 20% chance that the bomb can set fire to the oxygen in the atmosphere and burn the world, and then went ahead with it. There is a man who put logic ahead of emotion.

Chris: So Bill, how did Dąbrowski influence you personally?

Bill: Well, that's again, a very powerful thing for me. I would say that as a child, I had a lot of anxiety and a lot of angst and a lot of energy. When I met Dąbrowski, I still had those feelings. Reading Dąbrowski first, and then meeting him, gave me an understanding or context by which I could understand myself and my reactions. And that was vital to me because I could think of specific times in my life when I had things happen and I felt a certain way, or I reacted a certain way and no one understood me. Later when I read the theory, I was able to understand that in a different context.

I remember saying to Dąbrowski one time, I said, "Dr. Dąbrowski, I'm very worried because I have a lot of angst and I have a lot of energy, but I don't know where to put it. Often, I get depressed because I don't feel I'm contributing enough, or I'm not happy that I'm not progressing quickly enough. And I have tremendous anxiety and I'm worried."

And he put his hand on my shoulder and I remember him saying, "Ah, but this is not so bad." He looked at me in the eye, and I knew I was going to be okay. I felt that he had taken some sort of burden off my shoulders. I felt later, and I don't think it's an exaggeration, I felt that he saved my

life, and he gave me a path out of the chaos that I was in. Later, when he asked me to caretake his theory, I felt a strong sense of loyalty to him, and it was not hard to do because I loved the theory. I was interested in it. As I say, it gave me context to understand my life. I tried to do the best job I could to represent the theory as he presented it. And as I think he would've wanted it represented.

Dąbrowski had a vision that the theory could help people understand history, politics, human relations, social problems, social issues. And that if we could understand these day-to-day conflicts and problems that bedevil the world, if we could understand it through multilevelness, we could see a way out, a way forward. The critical thing, not just forward, upward—because for Dąbrowski solutions could not be horizontal. It could not be just forward or backward. They had to be vertical solutions that would literally lift us up from our problems. That was his vision of the theory. I've done my best to help people who struggling because I felt myself the power of that shift in context, that shift between what is wrong with me vs. I'm okay, I can do it. And maybe you felt that same way, Chris or Emma.

Chris: Definitely. On a personal level, for sure. There have definitely been times in my life when I've had to make that vertical choice and lift myself out of whatever suffering I was in at that moment. But I'm glad that you brought up Bill that it's bigger than just us and our individual issues, that it also applies to our disciplines and our fields and our societies. I know that in recent years—I mean here as an American—we are in dire need of lifting our society up vertically because we are just recycling the same horizontal conflicts again and again, and again, and not seeing progress. It's very difficult.

Emma: For people on a personal level, I think it's a similar thread that once we kind of find out about this theory and it's that shift of mindset. It's the ugly duckling discovery of the fact that you are not a defective duck, and you are a Swan. That shift from, “I'm broken” to, “I'm okay,” is powerful. I think that's something that all three of us have sort of taken up the mantle on. And I think it's probably the one thing that stands out for people that get involved in Dąbrowski's theory.

Bill: But it's a Swan with humility, it's not a self-aggrandizing Swan.

Emma: He didn't see his own beauty in the tale. Other people had to tell him that he was beautiful.

Bill: I think that's an important point because today I think so many people equate development with strength of ego. I am strong, I am developed, I am not invincible. That's the opposite of what Dąbrowski meant when he talked about development. So I think in the image of the Swan in the mirror, you've gotta be careful not to self-aggrandize our ego because that's certainly not a developmental feature.

Emma: Chris, did you want to add in on that? Because you talked about that I think in our first episode as well about egotism.

Chris: Well, moving away from that egocentrism is a feature of the higher levels of this theory. I think that relationships are critical, obviously. In the last episode, we talked a bit about the relational aspect of emotional overexcitability and that it's not just having emotions or feeling strongly—it's having relationship feelings and caring about other people. Prioritizing other people over yourself is something that is higher level behavior. Dąbrowski used the word alterocentrism as opposed to egocentrism. That is something critical that we should talk much more about.

Bill: I want to draw another distinction that I think is often misunderstood about emotional overexcitability. It's not a quantitative concept—emotional excitement, just getting excited emotionally. Hysteria is not emotional overexcitability. For Dąbrowski, it's a qualitative feeling. It's depth of emotion. It's a feeling of great connectedness and deepness. And the realization that—well, I can't say that. That's too controversial.

Emma: Just say it.

Chris: Just say it.

Emma: Out with it, Bill.

Bill: Your life as an individual is essentially meaningless, and what you can contribute—the legacy you leave—is what you give other people during your lifetime. Your individual life—your individual accumulation of material, of knowledge of stuff—is meaningless if you don't leave a legacy that helps other people, that touches other people that enriches other people. And I'm going to throw out, can you have advanced authentic development without love? I don't think so.

Chris: No, I don't think so.

Bill: Again, when you love someone, it gives your life meaning, but in the bigger picture, the legacy of love is not what you feel. It's how you make the other person feel and what that then blossoms in their life and is perpetuated in their life. That's emotional overexcitability.

Chris: That's well said, Bill. I like that. I've talked a bit already in the last couple episodes about coming to the theory and studying it. But I want to say that when I first came to all of this, I didn't know what to think of Bill. Because I saw that there were these divisions in the Dąbrowski community. And because I came to the theory working with Michael, I didn't know what to expect from Bill. I felt a lot of anger, honestly, about how things were. And then at one point like a couple years after, almost two years after I'd gotten to know Michael, Bill reached out to contact me about the archive that I had made online, and we started emailing each other back and forth. I want to say, Bill, that I am so grateful that we have gotten to know each other and become friends.

I really misunderstood you at first. So, I am grateful because I feel like we did have to go through a long process of me getting aggravated with you sometimes, or not having patience. But I feel like you always had patience with me, and you have always been really kind with me. I think it's cool that now we have this podcast, and we can have these conversations. Emma and I hope to have you back as a repeat guest to talk about lots of issues in depth. Because you bring a tremendous wealth of knowledge and experience with the theory. We're grateful to have you here with us. So, I wanted to say all that.

Bill: Thank you very much, Chris.

Emma: When I started my YouTube channel, not really knowing a whole lot about the theory or what I was doing, I was very surprised that Bill actually reached out to me as well. I wanted to talk about the videos and about the theory and all that you were saying Bill about showing love and care for other people. I mean, you've given me a lot of your time and knowledge with zero expectation and you know that I'm a reasonably blunt person. So, sometimes you've given me some reasonably blunt truths, but I'm kind of the person that likes that sort of stuff. And it's almost been a fatherly approach to mentoring me and guiding me in the theory.

I think as far as living the Dąbrowski's theory, you're setting a pretty good example in your retiring years in reaching out to people like Chris and myself and helping us along with no expectation for anything in return. If there's one thing that I don't like about Bill, it's his amazing ability to stare at you down a zoom call and absolutely read you spot on and know what you're thinking and feeling and call you out on it and give you advice on it. Thanks for all your help, Bill.

Bill: You're very, very welcome. And if we cannot help each other avoid the quicksand in life, then we're not doing a very good job in living.

Emma: But speaking of your desire to help people and to sort of get the theory out there. And also in your work in maintaining Dąbrowski's work and his archive, are there any particular

resources around the man himself or his influences? Particularly around the philosophy that you'd recommend that people look into further?

Bill: Learning Dąbrowski can be very daunting. It takes a lot of energy. It takes a lot of time. I've read Dąbrowski many times and each time I read it, I see something I didn't see before. I seem to have a deeper insight into some aspect or another. So it's not something you can just sit down and breeze through. That being said, I think that the best thing people can do is to take a dual approach, get the original materials and read them. At the same time I think it's very helpful to read some of the major resources that have fed into the theory. Now, for example, if you read and—this is no easy task—but if you read Dąbrowski and Kierkegaard, or Dąbrowski and Nietzsche at the same time, you will see how those authors separated by so much, by so long, and you'll see how they interweave with each other.

That really shows you that you're on the right track in understanding life and that these people are singing the same song. They've got it figured out. It's not just a theory out of left field. It's a fundamental understanding of human nature that we see, the more we read, the more we see that mutual reinforcement. So, I would say that. Now another thing, I've tried to represent Dąbrowski's ideas on my webpage and the bibliography and biography are available there to download and to look at. Now, I look at myself like the tour guide at the museum. I go along and say, “Oh, here's an interesting exhibition, why don't you go and look at that?”

Or, using my archeological example, I say, “Listen, I'm no expert, I'm me with my unique perspective.” I'm not you, Emma, I'm not you, Chris. I can't show you anything, but here's what I can do. I can point out where you should dig and in guiding you to a location to dig and giving you the shovel and say, “Okay, there, unearth your knowledge, unearth the truth, dig in Dąbrowski, dig in Kierkegaard, dig in Nietzsche,” and you'll spend your life discovering things that will help you, that will give you meaning. It will give meaning to the loss in your life that's inevitable in everybody's life. It'll also give more meaning to the joys of life, to having children, to getting married, to being in love, to experiencing the joy of life. So, as you dig, only you can dig yourself into that process of uncovering your essence and uncovering the essence of life.

Emma: Beautiful.

Chris: That was beautifully said, Bill. Thank you so much. Where do you think that we should go in these podcast discussions with you in the future?

Bill: This is such a broad theory and there are so many important elements that we haven't even mentioned today. Elements that are important to how we live our lives. For example, subject-object and psychosis and creativity. I think that we should schedule some further discussions around some of these areas. And as I said together, dig a little deeper, scratch the surface a little deeper. And I would love to also include people that are living and writing about the theory today. People like Dr. Gallagher, I've never met her, but I'd love to have her on so, that I could

learn from her what she's thinking to be.

And, of course, you've got to convince Michael to do his podcast because I am not the only leg that holds this table up. We have to hear every different perspective we can because we each have a lot to offer. So let's dig into some of these topics more deeply because we can all learn from each other.

Emma: Sounds good.

Chris: Well put Bill, well put.

Emma: I think that's all we have time for today. This has been an amazing discussion. I've learned a whole heap from it. And for everybody who's listening in, if you want to see Dąbrowski's biography or bibliography on Bill's website, you can go to positivedisintegration.com. I'd also recommend checking out Bill's book, which is *Personality Development through Positive Disintegration*. The works of Kazimierz Dąbrowski by William Tillier, which personally, for me, was very helpful in my understanding of the theory as well. Chris, thank you to you joining us on the podcast once again, as our expert.

Chris: Thanks. Although, I don't really feel like the expert today since Bill is here. It was wonderful to have you Bill, and this was even better than I expected. Thank you so much.

Bill: You're very welcome.

Emma: Thanks Bill. Thanks a million.

Bill: Well, thank you for the opportunity.

Emma: And also listeners. I'd like to thank you for joining us again on the podcast. If you'd like to contact us, you can do so through social media on both our Twitter or Instagram at [positive disintegration podcast](https://www.instagram.com/positive_disintegration_podcast/) or by email at positivedisintegration.pod@gmail.com. Until next time, keep walking the path to your authentic personality.