

He teaches students how to touch inner self

By DEL HOOD
Associate Editor

Time after time he lost money on the stock market, and Len Pellettiri wondered why the laws of luck and chance were not working for him.

He had accepted a mechanistic view of the world until this happened. If you played the stock market, the prices were supposed to go up at least part of the time.

Being an inquisitive type, Pellettiri began to examine the nature of luck and coincidence and started feeling uneasy about the ideas he had absorbed growing up as the son of a Protestant mother, a Catholic father and a resident of a Jewish neighborhood.

How, he wondered, could these religious groups all be the chosen people of God?

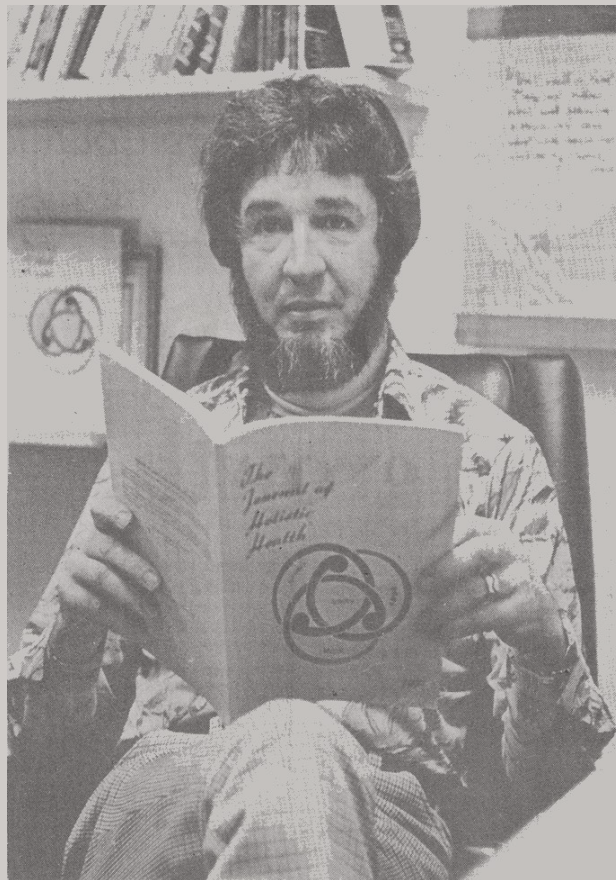
Pellettiri, an English instructor at Grossmont College for the past 10 years, went to college, earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and continued his quest for the answers to his nagging questions about life and the universe.

Eight years ago, trying to find a way to calm a hyperactive son, Pellettiri got into meditation. He found it helpful.

Today Pellettiri is in the front ranks of the New Age disciples, pushing such ideas as holistic health and transpersonal education.

Body, Mind, Spirit

He recently stepped down as editor of the *Journal of Holistic Health*, a publication that focuses on self-healing and maintaining the health of body, mind and spirit. His doctoral dissertation is entitled "Writing for the Whole Person," an application of transpersonal concepts to the teaching of composition.



Len Pellettiri, apostle of New Age thought.

“Writing can be a way of helping a person discover himself,” says Pellettiri. “We need to write not only with our own hands but with our whole body. We should be aware of our feelings.”

In one of his classes, Pellettiri, 49, takes students on inward journeys, what he calls “guided fantasies,” through the device of meditat/on.

“I think it makes for an interesting class,” said Pellettiri. “I invite students to examine their values, to stretch their minds.”

Not all students who enroll in the class can relate to what Pellettiri is trying to do. They transfer to conventional classes or contract for private conferences.

But some of those who make it report that their experiences in meditation and fantasizing have given them new perspectives.

“I learned about sentences and paragraphs and spelling also, but to me the most important things that I learned were the insights that I got on life, living and my own feelings,” one student wrote.

Transpersonal education is an application of transpersonal psychology founded by Abraham Maslow, a belief that man longs to transcend his aloneness and belong to the cosmos.

Pellettiri believes that the holistic health movement is part of the “respect revolution” that has been going on in this country for several decades, a revolt against established ways of doing things.

“People have all kinds of resentment and hostility toward doctors, and the doctors are feeling very upset about it,” says Pellettiri.

The holistic health movement says people should take care of themselves, and doctors should teach them how to do it without resorting to drugs. The American Holistic Medical Association has been formed to advance that concept.

Reducing Stress

Many modern illnesses, says Pellettiri, are caused by stress.

“The cheapest, easiest way to reduce stress is to meditate. It’s far better than taking pills that have all kinds of side effects.”

Holistic health, which is attracting some physicians, incorporates the practices of ancient cultures like psychic healing, acupuncture and the various meditative arts.

“Modern science is examining and finding much validity in many ancient beliefs and religious practices,” says Pellettiri, who attended a conference

in Japan last year of scientists from around the world who are probing on the frontiers of the mind.

There is no desire on the part of the holistic health practitioners to supplant Western medicine, says Pellettiri, but only to build a bridge.

“It’s largely Eastern thought and Western technology that we’re wedding,” he said.

Pellettiri believes humans have gone about as far as they can technologically without wiping themselves off the planet.

“What we need is not more pills or more machines but something different,” Pellettiri says. “New Age thought is coming out.”