

# FOREWORD

In this epic tour de force, psychiatrist Charles Konia tackles issues that have afflicted humanity throughout recorded history, offering brilliant new insights into the predicaments that people have brought upon themselves. Konia believes that emotional illness is far more severe and widespread than is realized, and he concludes that societies—for the very reason that they are shaped by emotionally damaged individuals—are themselves sick.

Time and time again, experience has proven that political solutions and social programs fail miserably. While advances in technology are enormously valuable and continue to bring us remarkable conveniences and unending distractions, people remain as dissatisfied and unhappy as ever. Why, with all of this “progress,” do we still find ourselves in a world filled with violence, oppressive political regimes, religious fanaticism, racial hatred, sexual repression, child abuse, misogyny, pornography, drug and alcohol abuse, and all the other manifestations of human misery? Dr. Konia provides new insights not only to the root cause of man’s predicament, but he also suggests the way out of the trap. He examines society in a radically different manner, exploring the character of the individuals who gain the power to control the lives of others.

Building on the work of Wilhelm Reich, M.D. (1897-1957) and Elsworth F. Baker, M.D. (1903-1985), Konia grounds his analysis in two key concepts—life energy and “armoring.” Reich held that humans, in common with all living organisms, possess a unique biological energy. He further postulated that in man the majority of emotional illnesses, as well as many physical diseases, are the result of a block in the flow and metabolism of this life energy. Armoring refers to the actual physical contractions that form in the body in an attempt to defend itself against experiencing painful feelings and emotions. This armoring process, according to

Reich, also reduces one's vitality, the capacity for love, as well as adversely affecting sexual functioning.

Much of non-Western medicine is grounded in an acceptance that there is a life energy, and it is called by different names in virtually every culture. Reich chose to call the energy "orgone" (from the word organism) and saw it not as a mystical concept or construct, but as a real entity that could be scientifically measured and studied. Reich's ideas were radical in his day and remain so. Modern classical science, with all of its advances, has failed to recognize what should be apparent to them—that there does exist a real energy that drives life, that *is* life. Present-day science, including twenty-first-century medicine, moves forward with this central piece of the puzzle missing, but it is doing so in a strictly mechanistic fashion. Scientists and researchers world-wide cannot see life except as a combination of complex chemicals that somehow, somehow in the distant past, came together to create the spark we call life. But life itself remains a complete mystery, and emotional and physical disease continues to be viewed solely in terms of chemical imbalances, genetic abnormalities, or other aberrations of a malfunctioning machine.

While classical scientists have closed their minds to the idea of a life energy—any talk of such a thing is viewed as hocus-pocus, not worthy of consideration let alone scientific investigation—Reich's ideas have continued to influence great thinking. This is evidenced here by Konia's compelling work, which moves into uncharted waters with a dynamic, scientifically based exposition of orgone energy. What Konia presents is a major paradigm shift, a wholly different approach to understanding human functioning and society's irrationality.

If Reich was correct, and armoring is the culprit, then preventing its formation must become humanity's first priority. We can only speculate when and why, in the distant past, man first began to armor. But we do know that armoring begins at the very beginning of life, in the first hours and days after birth. And we know that it forms as a defensive mechanism when the newborn's *complete* needs are not met.

The newborn baby requires far more than to be fed, diapered and clothed. She needs to have deep emotional and physical connection with her mother as soon as she enters the world. This

is not possible if she cannot be with mother on an almost constant basis. She must, following delivery, remain with mother, be breast-fed on demand, have her cries promptly responded to, be touched and caressed, and have deep, open and loving eye contact with mother and others. When the newborn does not have these needs met it causes distress, and the suffering infant has only one way to handle this distress—and that is to physically contract. The long-term consequences are dire, and unless there is immediate relief, this armor remains for life. This reaction to emotional distress and pain is involuntary and occurs before any organized thought processes have formed.

Unfortunately, today's practices do not consider the complete and genuine needs of the newborn. Separating babies from their mothers in the hospital following birth, restrictive swaddling, mandating that they only be placed on their backs—an uncomfortable and unnatural position—and painful circumcision are just some of the widespread practices that cause armoring and permanent damage. Prevention rests with overcoming the universal mistaken belief that because an infant hasn't yet developed rational thought or conscious memory, there can be no lasting effects from early traumatic experiences.

As Konia so poignantly illustrates, how we treat the newborn will determine the ultimate health of the individual as well as the health of the society to which he will belong. *How we treat infants matters most of all, and therein lies the fate of our world.*

It is my great hope that Reich's pivotal ideas will be embraced and that he will, one day, join the ranks of Socrates, Aristotle, Giordano Bruno, Vesalius, Galileo, Semmelweis, Lister and virtually every other exceptional individual who broke new ground by speaking the truth. All suffered ridicule and defamation and sometimes death before their ideas were ultimately accepted.

Reich, himself, was prosecuted by the Food and Drug Administration and brought to trial, where he refused to defend his scientific discoveries in a court of law. Convicted of having failed to obey a court injunction, he was sentenced to the Lewisburg Federal Prison where he died.

We are indebted to all the individuals who carry on the legacy of Wilhelm Reich's work. They have remained committed to the idea that he was one of the major scientists of all time and that his

discoveries have extraordinary potential to improve the condition of humanity. We are especially indebted to Dr. Konia for the years of labor that have gone into writing this enormously important book.

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