Integrative psychiatrist, Dr. David Gersten wrote:

*Are You Getting Enlightened or Losing Your Mind? — A Psychiatrist's Guide for Mastering Paranormal and Spiritual Experience*

to help bridge that gap.

http://www.areyougettingenlightened.com/

There is a huge gap between what the average person believes and the way the average psychiatrist practices. Integrative psychiatrist, Dr. David Gersten wrote *Are You Getting Enlightened or Losing Your Mind? — A Psychiatrist's Guide for Mastering Paranormal and Spiritual Experience* to help bridge that gap. “Getting Enlightened...” plants the seed of spirituality deep into the heart of psychiatry. Going far beyond showing the importance of spirituality in all healing, “Are You Getting Enlightened...” attempts to help lead the field of psychiatry, which has largely become a biological field, into the future.

Dr. Gersten strives to destigmatize spirituality, altered states of consciousness, visionary experiences, extrasensory perceptions, paranormal phenomena, and other important experiences so that patients can discuss them without being labeled crazy by their psychiatrists. It's important to help people identify their miracles and embrace them. Not simply an observer of unusual experience, Dr. Gersten has experienced a wide array of spiritual and paranormal experience.
Spirituality is one of 3 gaps in medical school education, the other 2 being nutrition and sexuality. It is Dr. Gersten's experience that, when patients sense that their doctor is open to spiritual and paranormal discussions, they will often open up for the first time in their life and begin sharing. These are some of the most transformative experiences people have, but people have not felt that it is safe to talk to a psychiatrist about such experiences.

Dr. Gersten, through “Are You Getting Enlightened Or Losing Your Mind?” takes on a large task, namely a radical change in psychiatry that includes:


2. A vast compendium of Paranormal and Spiritual Experience, the likes of which is only equaled by a dry encyclopedia, which lacks practical relevance, or the healer's touch. It is very important for people to know what to call their unusual experience. Having a name for your experience provides great peace of mind, and allows for you to integrate and grow from that experience.

3. Two new Maps of Consciousness, providing a new way of organizing and understanding the full spectrum of human experience. The map called “States of Consciousness” took nearly a year for Dr. Gersten to visualize and conceptualize. This map is the framework that helped him organize the full spectrum of human experience.

4. PsychoSpiritual Assessment (PSA), a powerful tool for mastering all human experience. This is a new holistic psychiatry, a new diagnostic system, and a new treatment model. PSA is the starting point. It does not ask, “What is wrong with you? What is your problem?” The first step in PSA is, “What is your main concern?” A main concern can be a symptom, problem, goal, or experience. Having a spiritual experience is not a problem. In terms of your main concern, it's an experience.

5. While “Getting Enlightened” is not structured as a how-to book, Dr. Gersten works with dozens of mental imagery techniques along with other mental fitness techniques. First you need to know what to call your experience. Then, you need to know how to deal with it.
“Are You Getting Enlightened Or Losing Your Mind?” provides a new way of looking at all human experience, from depression to the yogi’s samadhi — placing mystical experience, spirituality, God, miracles, and love at the heart of the healing process. This book de-stigmatizes visionary experience, ESP, visits from the departed, and the entire arena of paranormal and spiritual experience, so that people can openly discuss these issues with their doctors and become empowered in the process.

Dr. Gersten's own spiritual and paranormal experiences started as a very psychic child growing up in a family in which no one commented on his psychic knowings. His spiritual quest took him to India in 1978, where he began to take baby steps in living teachings of Eastern masters. In 2003 he plunged into Native American spirituality. Native American spirituality, among other things, provides a philosophy and techniques to help us get profoundly connected to the earth (the wind, the rain, animals, etc). His influences include Sathya Sai Baba, Ramana Maharshi, Jesus, the world's sacred texts, and a number of Native American healers and leaders.

“At first my spiritual path felt like it was about 3-feet wide and relatively easy to fall off of. Over time, my path became more like Germany’s Autobahn Highway, so wide that it's impossible to fall off. Over time the difference between spiritual and material life disappeared. We bring spirituality to our understanding of everyday life, but spirit is the hidden foundation at the core of our being. It's the energy underlying all matter. It's the Infinite Intelligence that created the visible and invisible universe, starting with the big bang. But, it's not so important what I believe. It's more important that patients from all religions and spiritual orientations can feel comfortable dealing with spiritual issues in our healing relationship.”

At least as important as being able to name your experience is an understanding of what the mind is...and how to tame it. The Vedas write about the “antahkarana,” the instrument of the soul, consisting of the mind, the ego, the intelligence, and the will. Dr. Gersten has spent years trying to understand the antahkarana and then applying his understanding to clinical practice.
Dr. David Gersten practices Integrative Psychiatry and Nutritional Medicine out of his office in Encinitas, California. He regards his work as truly holistic, truly about the body, mind, and spirit. His psycho-spiritual counseling involves interactive guided imagery, meditation, use of the breath, and body-centered-trauma-resolution. He published Atlantis The Imagery Newsletter for 7 years, and served as the imagery consult on 18 books published by Rodale Press/Prevention Magazine. He writes a monthly column on Alternative Medicine for The Life Connection Newspaper. (David Gersten, M.D. • Miracles or Madness: A New Psychiatric Paradigm) About one-third of his articles deal with psycho-spiritual issues.

“Are You Getting Enlightened Or Losing Your Mind?” – The Mind Map
http://www.areyougettingenlightened.com/MIND-MAP.html
“Are You Getting Enlightened Or Losing Your Mind?” – The Five Sheaths
http://www.areyougettingenlightened.com/blank.html