16-123a Relentless Hope: The Refusal to Grieve - 6 Hour Seminar
Martha Stark, M.D.
Friday, June 17, 2016 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Course Description
Dr. Martha Stark’s particular interest has long been in the patient’s “relentless pursuit of the (bad) object.” The patient’s relentless hope (a masochistic defense) is the stance to which she desperately clings in order to avoid confronting – and grieving – certain intolerably painful realities about the love/hate object to which she is intensely attached; and her relentless outrage (a sadistic defense) is the stance to which she resorts in those moments of dawning recognition that the object might never be forthcoming after all. Finally, the patient’s relentless despair (a schizoid defense) is the stance to which she retreats when attachment itself has become intolerable. Martha will offer prototypical interventions designed to facilitate transformation of the patient’s need to possess and control the object (and, when thwarted, to retaliate by attempting to destroy it) into the mature capacity to relent, accept, grieve, forgive, internalize, separate, and move on.

Faculty: Martha Stark, M.D. – is Faculty, Harvard Medical School; Founder and CEO, SynergyMed for MindBodyHealth; Co-Director, Center for Psychoanalytic Studies, William James College; and Former Faculty, Boston Psychoanalytic Institute and Massachusetts Institute for Psychoanalysis. She is the author of six award-winning books on psychoanalytic theory and practice: Working with Resistance, A Primer on Working with Resistance, Modes of Therapeutic Action, The Transformative Power of Optimal Stress, Psychotherapeutic Moments, and How Does Psychotherapy Work?

Learning Objectives
After attending this seminar, participants will be able to:
1. Explain the relationship between the refusal to grieve and relentlessness
2. Appreciate the distinction between relentless hope and relentless outrage
3. Speak to the importance of transforming the defensive need to hold on into the adaptive capacity to let go
4. Describe the process of transforming relentlessness into acceptance and enactment into accountability

Bibliography