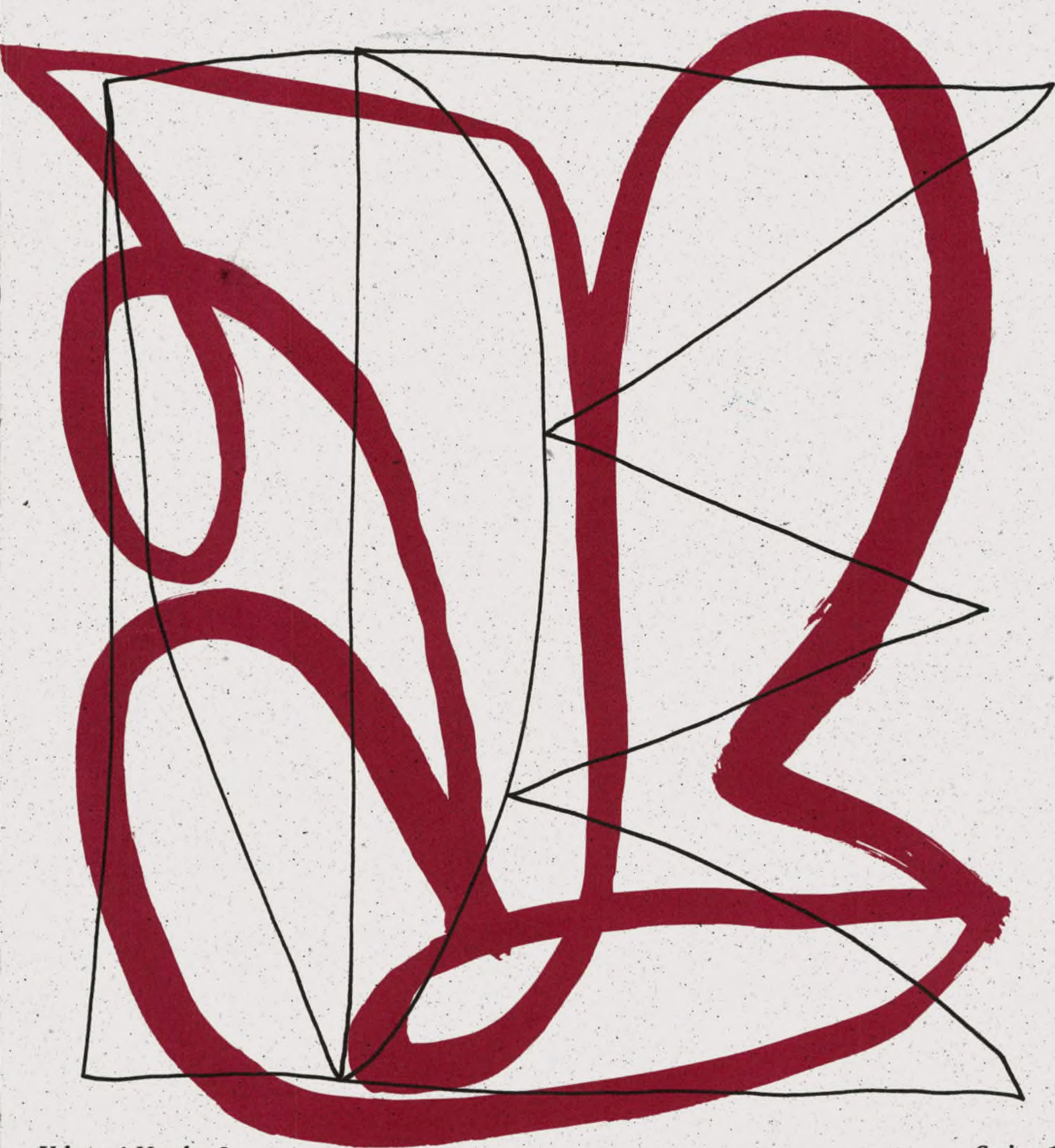
REFLECTIONS:

NARRATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL HELPING



Volume 4, Number 2 Spring 1998

A Journal for the Helping Professions

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NARRATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL HELPING

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REFLECTIONS' purpose is to publish narratives, personal accounts that describe and explain the process of helping others and shaping social change over time. The journal seeks to build a literary tradition and a record of wisdom for critical study and fruitful discovery. It encourages stories that convey a sense of immediacy, portray practice across diverse populations and capture the range and variety of strategies and systems within the helping professions. Priority given to articles that provide new understanding of practice. The journal publishes stories of professional helpers such as ethicists, psychotherapists, community organizers, case and group workers, policy makers, family and child practitioners, health and mental health care providers; and educators, researchers, and administrators in the helping and academic professions.

REFLECTIONS' central theme is narrative inquiry of professional practice. It publishes personal accounts of professional action designed to aid and support human and social development. The stories have a literary presence, offer new perspectives on practice, and demonstrate the conceit of failure as well as success. The narrator explains the reasons for the action and freely identifies the mistakes made in the practice. The purpose of the narrative is not to demonstrate achievement; rather, it is to capture the experience.

THE NARRATIVE STRUCTURE: A narrative is a story worth telling. Narratives are personal stories that give readers a fresh perspective about the practice of change. Written in a temporal sequence and or within a thematic structure; narratives recount the helping process. Narratives are explored within a contextual frame and supply a rich textual description of the experience: they take into account time, place, action, persons, behavior and interaction. Narratives explain and describe events; results; conflicts; complicating actions; and how, why, and what was done. In narratives the writer evaluates the experience, whether or not there is a resolution, and explores the meaning ot the experiences. Some narratives end with a coda, that is, a perspective on what occurred.

WRITING INSTRUCTIONS AND SUBMISSION: Manuscripts are peer reviewed. Articles appropriate to the journal's purpose are reviewed anonymously by members of the Executive and Editorial Board. Articles are accepted based on their contribution to practice knowledge. Publication decisions require about four months.

1. Authors are expected to use the most recent APA publication format.
2. The manuscript length depends upon the temporal sequence of the event.
3. Include on separate page a brief abstract written in the same style as the narrative.
4. Place identifying information such as name, affiliation, address, phone and fax only on cover page.
5. Send (3) printed double spaced hard copies of the manuscript to the editor.

Upon acceptance of the article for publication one (1) copy on disk in Rich Text Format (RTF) for IBM compatible or MAC and one(1) hard copy will be requested. Submission of narrative poetry and photography is encouraged.

Names of persons and organizations mentioned in the articles published in REFLECTIONS **have been changed to protect their privacy.** REFLECTIONS **disclaims responsibility for statements, either fact or opinion made by contributors.**

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// REFLECTIONS:
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Cover	James F. Sullivan
Original Art	Beth Abels, Leatitia Burns, and Russell Rossetto

NEWS AROUND *REFLECTIONS*

A generous benefactor gave us a marvelous financial contribution aimed at helping to increase our reader base so as to expand the universal conversation about *Reflections*. Complimentary subscriptions were sent out to a variety of persons in universities and colleges and in the helping professions.

. . .

A portion of this issue is given over to a special series: "Teaching and Learning" (Janet Black). *Reflections* invites editors, narrators and readers to organize a special series to be considered for publication, and/or to propose a special issue on a particular topic. It appears, from our experience, that the subjects/topics proposed are current and unusual, such as the two most recent specials: "Loss of Home-land: Insights from Strangers" (Golie Jansen and Marion Aguilar), and "Transformative Learning and Teaching" (Susan G. Nummedal and Diane Gillespie). Our forthcoming special is "Forgiveness" (Charles Garvin).

. . .

Our subscribers do blow *Reflections'* horn. Gisela Knopka said it is a wonderful journal, and Stuart Kirk said there is nothing quite like it. Of course we like getting affirmation—we also like feedback that suggests improvement. Surely you have noticed the improvement in our copy editing. The two staff members, Russell Rossetto and Vilma Chemers, and board member copy editor Marilyn Potts, are to be credited.

. . .

We initiate our first retrospective with Ruth Middleman's narrative, published in *Children* (1969), with current commentary. We plan to publish a second retrospective (Summer 98), to honor Howard Goldstein, (a member of our editorial board) recently appointed as Interim Editor,"Family and Society." Stanley Witkin, who was a member of our editorial board, has been appointed the editor of *Social Work* . Witkin's discussion about scholarly writing in his initial editorial in *Social Work* (March 1998) confirms *Reflections* purpose. **(Look where you can go from *Reflections!*)**

. . .

John A Kayser, the editor of "Writing Narratives," and I have been having an ongoing conversation about whether narratives should make a point. His view differs from mine in that he argues that "narrators of stories about professional helping need to make an explicit point in their narratives." In this issue, he uses his essay "New Narratives for a New Century: Comedy, Romance, Mystery, and Tragedy in the Helping Professions" to test out whether a story can stand on its own. My perspective is stated in the following quote– it's always good to draw on the literati when you're engaged in a debate. "Life and love are life and love, a bunch of violets is a bunch of violets, and to drag in the idea of a point is to ruin everything..." D. H. Lawrence. Many of the authors that write for *Reflections* agree with John's perspective. Both of us want to enlarge this conversation, so please join us. By the way, his plume de nome for me (my conceit) is–his "treasured senior colleague." I'm pleased he put treasured before "senior."

. . .

In our next issue (Summer 1998) we shall publish commentary on some of the practice narratives in the issue; along with Joshua Miller's interview with Ann Hartman, Professor Emeritus and the former Dean of Smith College School for Social Work. She is a prolific writer about family practice, practice theory, and current theoretical developments in social work. Josh's narrative "Violets Seed," and "An Interview With Mitch Ginsberg" were published previously in *Reflections.* He is a faculty member at Smith.

. . .

Certainly there are many stories about practice that have yet to be told. Consider submitting your practice/teaching narrative. □

Sonia Leib Abels, Editor

Correction: Regarding the contradictory volume numbers provided on the cover and table contents of the last issue Winter 1998; as you may have guessed by now, the cover is correct in stating volume four.

And the Angels Sang

by Paul Abels

There was a great deal of rumbling in the corner of heaven reserved for social workers. The angels were surprised because this group was usually fairly calm, supportive of each other, usually thinking along the same lines, though not always as sensibly as some of the angels believed appropriate. Although they preferred staying out of squabbles, the angels had been instructed to find out what was going on and to remind the parties involved that they had earned a place in heaven, a most desired location, mainly because of its harmony and tranquillity. The turmoil they were causing did not resound like a heavenly choir.

The loudest protestations seemed to be coming from the group surrounding Jane Addams, who was involved in a rather serious bit of dialogue with Mary Richman and, in fact, was waving a finger in her face. "It 's you and that charity organization society stuff again that has led to this silly business down there," she was yelling. The silly business turned out to be something called the 100th anniversary of professional social work. "Even you have to admit that social work is more than a 100 years old–the first charity organization here started in 1877." "Amen," chanted Reverend Gurteen, "and I started it." And don't forget Hull house opened in 1889, and three years before that the Neighborhood Guild, a settlement house, was opened in New York City by Stanton Coit. Some in the audience turned to him smiling. "Where do they come off with this' only 100 year' idea?" asked Amos G. Warner, "some early welfare historian?" Richman, a little subdued, muttered, "Sure we are right about being older than that, but you see they added the word 'professional'; that's where they got us." "That's just like you," responded Jane, "you're not willing to organize the community; they ain't got me. Professional nonsense. I don't intend to let anyone kick me out of my profession, certainly not these youngsters who haven't ever had to fight city hall and don't have any sense of history." "NASW should know better," muttered Florence Kelly. "It's just another one of those public relations spin organizations put out to engrandise themselves." "Now you're being a little harsh on them, Florence," said Ellen Starr, "celebrations are an important way to bring people together. That's what they are trying to do. Fund raisers know that has to be done, isn't that right?" she asked turning to the crowd. DuBois, one of the

founders of the NAACP, and who was in the middle of a conversation with Brian Mullanphy, founder of Travelers Aid, acknowledged the importance of celebrations, and how it connects people to their roots.

"How did they arrive at 1898, anyway?" asked Dorothy Dix. "NASW has a picture of me on their poster as having made a contribution to social work, and I died in 1887. Seems odd to me" "Well," said Edward T. Devine, the first director of what is now Columbia University School of Social Work, "it's because our school offered the first social work class at the Charity Organization Society Offices." "Not so!" shouted Graham Taylor. Chicago had a course two years before you did. We had them at the Chicago commons in conjunction with what is now the School of Social Service Administration." Heads nodded up and down and back and forth, and there was a little side fight going on as to who was first and who was right. Dr. Brackett from Simmons College tried to make a bid for having taught some of the first courses, but was not heard above the crowd.

"Well someone ought to help them get their history straight," complained Robert Woods, a former settlement director from East End House in Boston. "One of their publications says Simon N. Patten coined the term 'social workers' in 1900. I used the term social work in an article I wrote in 1893, and others used it before that. It's a plot to keep people from knowing how important the settlements were in the development of social work." Patten, a mentor of Devine, and active in social welfare, silently moved to the rear of the increasingly growing crowd.

"Why are you taking all this so seriously?" asked Julia Lathrop. "We know what we did. If they want to define a professional as a person with a BSW or an MSW, so be it. They might soon say it can only be a person with a license." "It makes no difference," added Lillian Wald. "After all, just remember you were the ones who taught those first courses in those first schools. We set the stage. Let's see the hands of those of you who taught those early summer courses before it became the N.Y. School of Philanthropy." Up went the hands of Jane Addams, Mary Richmond, Zilpha Smith, Graham Taylor, Mary Simkhovitch, and numerous others. "They have us down as social workers, even if we wouldn't be accepted as professionals now," affirmed the Abbot sisters, almost in unison. "Humph," groaned Jane Addams with a shrug. "Humph, humph," echoed Richman, as she and Addams hugged each other.

"Let's have our own celebration," said Grace Dodge of the YWCA, "and we can honor all of those economists and sociologists like Franklyn Fraser; religious leaders and reformers like Charles Brace; all the people who did the early poverty studies; young men and women from all those settlements; and all those friendly visitors..." "And the people from the Salvation Army!" someone shouted. "Everyone who helped make social work a caring profession concerned with social justice." "Ain't I a woman," Sojourner Truth joyously shouted , "and a social worker, too?" A bright light and warm spirit enveloped the crowd.

"And let's everyone drink a toast to Columbia University for all they have done. Here's to you, Edward, first or not, and to all those other firsts. SSA and Boston, the first to call themselves a school of social work. Case Western, first in group work." Voices from the crowd began to call out. "And don't forget the people who worked to clear out the slums and build public housing, and the community centers and Y's, and the Red Cross," shouted another. "And those in the hospitals," Cannon added. "No, we won't forget anyone!" the group trumpeted.

Happy 100 plus Anniversary to Social Workers... ALL OF US!

It made the angels very happy... and they brought the champagne. Jacob Riis took their picture. □

(All references to who did what first, and the dates, are reported as the "truth" in some written documents. These are available to interested parties.)

Kaddish for Joe

Understanding across differences is a guiding principle of social work practice. It is a value which is often difficult to achieve, especially in our personal lives. The journal entries shared in this article represent my efforts to make sense of the relationship with my father-in-law; a relationship that reached across many differences—across time and age, cultures, religions, and the experience of his loss of his homeland. With the help of Maria Lugones' image of "'world' traveling and loving perception," a very special "tour" through the Holocaust Museum, and the model of Marion Van Binbergen Pritchard, a non-Jewish social work resistor, I was offered a window into his world and a mirror on our relationship and on myself as a social worker and teacher.

by
Kathleen H. Millstein

Kathleen H. Millstein, Ph.D., Associate Professor, School of Social Work, Simmons College, Boston.

Understanding across difference has been a value and guiding principle of my twenty-five years as a social work practitioner and, for the last ten of the twenty-five, as a social work educator. I have struggled to figure out what factors get in the way of my understanding and continuously seek models to help me when I inevitably find myself stuck. For the past few years, I have found Maria Lugones' (1990) image of "'world' travelling and loving perception" very helpful. Simply stated, she urges that we move beyond "arrogant perception" in which we view "other" from the position of the society in which they are defined as outsider. Instead, she suggests that we "travel" to their "worlds," the culture and meaning systems in which their identities are shaped and formed. By travelling to someone's "worlds" we can understand "who it is to be them and what it is to be ourselves in their eyes. Knowing another's 'worlds' is part of knowing them and knowing them is part of loving them" (p. 401).

My relationship with my father-in-law was one that was frequently conflictual, often close and ever challenging. It reached across many differences—across time and age, cultures, religions, oceans, and the experience of his loss of a homeland. It was a relationship caught at times in misunderstandings and "arrogant perceptions," his and mine.

After his death, in a most unlikely time and place, I was offered a window into his world and a mirror on our relationship and on myself as a social worker and teacher. It is this experience of "'world' travelling and loving perception" that is shared in these journal entries written in the ten days from his hospitalization to the last night of the shiva after his death.

February 6, 1996

He is a man who saved empty cereal boxes and bread bags and paper bags and rubber bands and those green trays they use for vegetables......stacks and stacks in the kitchen on all the counters, on the dining room table, on the floor around the edges of the room......He threw little away. You never knew when you might need them....

The cereal boxes were neatly stacked five and six box-

es high and four and five boxes deep....occupying the ornate chairs in the dining room, chairs with their brocade seats still covered in plastic. The boxes sat erect and proper like guests at a formal dinner. Just last Sunday, after 20 years, I asked him about the boxes as I went to move them. "Don't bother them," he said, angry and impatient. I didn't understand. I couldn't understand. Only he understood. "Things are hidden in those piles. Someone might find them. They might get taken. Leave my things alone. I know what I am doing. What's the matter with you?"

We didn't understand. Philip, his second son, and Jonathan, 25 (his oldest grandson who, along with all of his other grandchildren, could never do anything right), and I (his shicksa daughter-in-law, wife of Philip)... we did not, we could not understand.

There was a pile of eyeglasses amid the miscellany collected on the table. Six or eight pair. Ladies' glasses with upswept wings. Scholarly horned rimmed glasses covered mosslike with the white film that covers aging plastic. Bifocals. Reading glasses. A black, thick rimmed pair with 3/4 inch ear pieces of 1950's vintage, sort of like the ones Buddy Holly wore. They were my favorites. I picked them up and put them on Philip. To finish the look I selected a cap from the many piled on the table. Handing it to Philip, I asked him to put it on. The effect was wonderfully absurd. Philip was seated in the one empty dining room chair with Buddy Holly glasses and plaid wool cap. The guest of honor among the other guests. I began to laugh. Philip began to laugh. Jonathan began to laugh. It was such a release to hear laughter in this room, in this house. We continued to laugh until we realized that *he* wasn't laughing. He stood hurt and confused, shuffling his slippered feet. "I don't care if you laugh at me. I need these glasses. None of them really work. I need them all. I never know when I will need them. What is the matter with you? You don't understand." Only he understands. I tried to explain, but it made no difference. I kissed him good-bye and left with a sigh.

Now, he lies silent in a hospital bed. No one knows why he collapsed. He went upstairs to get a paper and he fell. He wasn't alone, thank God. Freddie from next door was there and called 911. My brother-in-law Charlie phoned us midday on Saturday after Freddie called him. I answered the phone. "Hi, kid. Where's the brain of the family?" "With which of the many brains in this family would you like to speak?" I responded. I knew full well that he wanted to talk to Philip, but wanted to respond in kind to his flip tone. I walked with the portable phone into the office and handed it to Philip. When Philip got off of the phone, he turned to me and said, "Joe's in the hospital. It's all over."

February 10, Shevat 20 5756

Joe died this morning. He was 91. He finally got his wish and traveled to Chicago. We often kidded about death, referring to it as a trip to Chicago. I'm not sure why Chicago. Joe picked the place. He had never been to Chicago. He thought of it as the spot where the railroad from east and west met. The center. We would talk about the stockyards. Whenever Philip or I travelled to Chicago, we would call and let him know that we had arrived in "that place" and he would laugh.

Joe, for as long as I knew him, was expecting death. In the last ten years with his wife Rita's illness and death, he professed a yearning for death. Yet, it is strange. He would never talk about death except as his trip to Chicago or as a wished for state of release from what he saw as the misery and loneliness of his life. He could never *really* talk about his death—or Rita's, for that matter. He couldn't plan for future contingencies like long-term care or his funeral. I don't think he ever really wanted to die.

"I don't need nothing," would be his reply to our offers

of a new TV, a better fan, even a birthday cake. He didn't need anything, because on one hand he believed he had it all and we should understand that he was in control and totally self-sufficient, and on the other hand he believed that he wouldn't be here long enough to enjoy it. No need to travel. No need for books beyond the Torah. No need to go out to dinner. "What do you need that for?" was his response to our new possessions.

He didn't know what to do with me either. Irish by birth and a "fallen away" Catholic, I didn't fit into his worlds; non-Jews weren't supposed to be trusted. When I helped in Rita's care and listened to his stories, he was grateful, yet wary. When Philip and I guided our children through Hebrew school and Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, he was proud but bewildered. How could a shicksa do these things? My doctorate and the fact that I earned a "good living" further helped to earn his respect. As the years went by, he grew to count on me and I came to count on his counting on me. We became friends. I was different from the Irish he knew as customers in the hardware store. I didn't fit his image of the Irish, a bit like he didn't quite fit in a single family house on a tree-lined street in a suburb of Boston.

Joe never really left Olevsk. The Poles, the Russians.... transmuted in America to all who were non-Jews....were always lurking in the shadows, lying in wait. The front door in his house had three locks, as did the back. Windows were always closed with moth balls lined up like white candy mints between the storm window and the inner pane. The moth balls were protection against the insidious threat of invasion by villainous ants, *mourashkas* as he called them in Russian. On hot summer days the kitchen window was opened just enough to grudgingly permit the insertion of a metal strip with a small fan in the center. In the living room fans would rest on stools, noisily moving the heavy air. Joe would sit and drink his hot tea in a glass.

After Rita went to the nursing home, he would make a dozen pancakes, eat six with tuna fish and save the other six for the next night. He read the Torah in books with bindings reinforced with silver duct tape, leaving notes to indicate the sections which reminded him of recent news events or moments from the past–always moments in Russia. Joe marked the passage of days with the Hebrew calendar and the Saturday Torah and half-Torah portions.

The only western calendar day that he observed was July 4, the day his boat landed in Philadelphia. We would sit in the yard and he would describe his life in Russia. His grand uncle, Avram Joseph, owned the ice house and was the only one in the town who could read and write. His grandfather was Shimon Levi and his grandmother was Hindel. It was in their house that services were held for the community. Joe learned his Hebrew from helping with these services. On Hanukah, in good times, each of the children in the family would get an orange. Joe did not want to leave his grandfather to come to America. He remembered his grandfather's tears at their leaving.

February 11, 1996

Joe was buried today. We travelled on Route 128 to Sharon Memorial Park in the pouring rain. I was silent for the ride.

We are early. When we arrive, we see the announcement sign and Joe's name. Philip stops, reading the sign aloud sadly saying, "My Joseph." The sign makes it all real. We drive to the grave site. A small canvas canopy and an open hole draped in green. "Is this the right place?" Philip gets out to look and comes back shaking his head. It is clear to us all that this is the right place.

Before he reaches our car, another car approaches and a funeral-type person rushes out anxiously and officiously to inquire if we are here for the Millstein internment. He confers with Philip. Philip gets into the car annoyed. "What does he think we are here for? Now he wants us to go back to the en-

trance to line up, so that he can lead us back to here." Disgusted, frustrated, sad, quiet, he drives us back to the entrance. We line up behind two other cars, which clearly had not transgressed by passing beyond the entrance unassisted. Jakov, Uncle Jack, Joe's brother who is 85, gets out of the first car in line. He stands in the pouring rain in his Florida polyester suit and khaki short jacket. Our son, Matthew, goes out to give him an umbrella and he walks over to our car. I lower the window and take his hand. He is crying. He looks up at the rain and says, "Sad day for a sad man. Sad man for a sad day. He was never able to enjoy anything. He couldn't take any pleasure." I had nothing to say and lamely offered, "He lived the way he wanted to live. It was his choice." Shaking his head, Jack said, "It could only be his way." Only Joe understood.

February 12, 1996

We are sitting shiva at Charlie's just a few miles from Joe's house. This is Joe's community, at least his community for the last forty years. Visitors stop in to pay their respects. He has very few contemporaries to share memories, so we sit politely and chat. Everyone is in agreement that Joe's death was a blessing. He was lonely and unhappy. He lived a long life. He didn't suffer. He and Rita did a good job raising their three doctor sons. We chat about how difficult and stubborn he could be. Someone recounts how he would argue with the Rabbi out loud in the middle of services. Another talks of working with him at a rummage sale and his love of bargains and bartering. The grandchildren sit in a separate room talking and playing games. I join them and try to talk to the older boys about their grandfather, his life in Russia, his adjustment to America, the struggles of understanding him. They listen politely, but it is clear that the children do not know him just as he was unable to know them. Looking around, I wonder what Joe would think about all of this.

February 15, 1996

When we arrived in Washington today for the Council on Social Work Education meetings, Mary and I went right to the hotel. Avoiding the pull to register and officially enter the world of our work, we quickly deposited our bags in our room and hurried across the street to grab a sandwich at a small deli. We had a mission, a mission we resisted yet pledged to fulfill.

I picked a "Beaver Cleaver" from the menu, bologna and cheese on white bread....very American I thought to myself; pefect for the nation's capital. I refilled my water bottle and we hailed a cab. As we got in, we asked to be taken to the Holocaust Museum. The cabby didn't know what or where it was, or maybe he couldn't understand our English. We repeated our request as I showed him the tickets and address. Traffic was halted and horns tooted while he waved over another cabby for consultation in a language we couldn't understand.

Finally, we were on our way. Driving by the Taft Bridge and along Rock Creek Park into the center of the city, we ate half of our lunch. I found myself remembering bits and pieces about the Washington of my childhood. I thought about the school I went to in third and fourth grade, Holy Name in Northwest. I was bussed in from Maryland to an under-enrolled school in a Black neighborhood. A priest cousin had recruited my sister and me, and my parents, ever obedient to priestly requests, had agreed to this educational adventure. It was not a political decision for them, simply a matter of faith and obedience; somehow that made me sad. How odd it was that I didn't remember much about being one of the few white children in the school–just sparse, yet vivid, images of singing songs on the school bus on the hour-long ride from DC to Maryland and of being with the nuns. I smiled as I recalled Sister Catherine Thomas, my third grade teacher. On cold days she

let me put my hand in the pocket of her habit as we walked to Mass.

I stared out the window at the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, the big golden horses on the bridge crossing into Virginia, Lee's house on the hill, the Arlington Cemetery, and, finally, the Washington Monument just as we pulled up at the museum. We made our exit from the cab slowly, our deli wrappings and unfinished sandwiches clenched in our hands, crumbs on our coats.

I sighed and looked at Mary. We were both dreading what lay ahead. With ten minutes before our appointed ticket times, we focused on finding a place to finish our lunch, knowing that there would be no eating in the museum, at least not in this museum. Sitting on a cold wet bench on the side of the building, we ate and made small talk about school, the conference, dinner plans. Chilled, we moved toward the entrance. Before pushing open the large glass door, I stopped and turned to look at the gray sky and metallic blue Potomac. Silently, we entered and proceeded through the security system.

I was immediately lost. Mary and I wandered. We couldn't find the coat check, the entrance to the permanent exhibit, the elevator. I didn't know where to turn. My eyes were drawn upward toward the metal beams that crisscrossed the tall ceiling, prison-like bars against the exposed light of the sky that now seemed too far away even to imagine. Three times we were given directions by gentle museum workers who seemed to speak extra kindly, extra softly. They understood. Daily they bore witness; I couldn't imagine how they could do it.

At the beginning of the exhibit, signs directed us to take an "identification card." I opened my card and saw a picture of Rachela Rottenberg, born May 19, 1920, in Sandomierz, Poland. I read her story and waited as Mary finished reading her card. We then," identification cards" in hand, entered the stark barren elevator. It was just Mary and me as the car ascended with a set of images being projected on the wall. I don't know what the brief film was about. I couldn't look. We walked out of the elevator into a corridor of exhibits. We were in Europe in the decade before the war. I stood before the screen

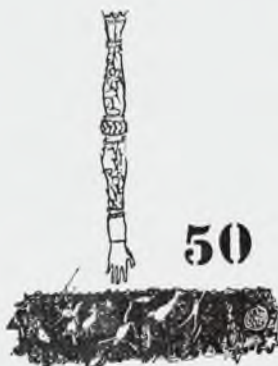
which showed footage of Russia in the 1920's. I watched the village life, the horse-drawn carts, the booted men and scarved women and "saw" my father-in-law Joe. He was 15 when he left this movie in 1921. His village was burned by the Poles. He and Mamasha, Beryl, Jakov, and Ettle walked from Olevsk to Antwerp and waited to make passage on a boat. It took two years to get to Philadelphia and then to Cambridge to join their father. Meyer had left the village four years before they did. He had to; otherwise he would have been conscripted by either the Poles or the Russians. Conscription for a Jew meant inevitable death.

I stood, remembering the story Beryl told me several days ago. They were in Antwerp, staying together in one room in a rooming house and checking at the dock daily, waiting for space on a ship. When passage seemed imminent, they were required to put their papers in order. Each one needed a photograph. Mamasha went for her photograph to be taken. Beryl went for his photograph to be taken. Jakov went for his photograph to be taken. Ettle went for her photograph to be taken. Yosel, our Joe, and the oldest of the children, refused. He would not be photographed. Mamasha pleaded with him. Beryl pleaded with him. Jakov pleaded with him. Ettle pleaded with him. Time was short. The ship could leave any time. They all must be ready. He refused. No one understood why. Only he understood. Finally, when their ship was almost ready to sail, he agreed. Grudgingly, reluctantly, silently, he agreed. The photo was taken. The journey was made.

The images on the screen. The photographs on the walls. Joe's frozen image on a passport photo. Birthday cakes

refused and cereal boxes in the dining room. Joe was everywhere. He was my guide. Silently, Mary and I came together as we continued to walk down the gray corridor following the exhibits. Each one's eyes scanned the other, checking in, reaching out, respecting space, and then moving away again.

Time became irrelevant. Several hours had passed, marked only by the throbbing in my bad knee and the fatigue in Mary's face. We were close to the end. The content of the exhibits subtly shifted from victims to those who resisted. The names and countries of non-Jewish resistors formed a border on the wall as we walked the final hundred yards of the exhibit. Under each name was a description of the person and his or her act of resistance. I began to read each description, slowly and carefully. I was looking for something but wasn't sure what until I finally found it. Ona Simaite, Irene Sendler, Marion Van Binbergen Pritchard. I salvaged an envelope from my purse and carefully wrote each name. Mary joined me and asked what I was doing. I told her I was looking for gentile women resistors who were social workers. She joined me. There were not many listed in black letters in the white border. When we reached the end, I was both sad and elated. Joe had led me to these women.



We stood quietly for a few minutes before leaving the exhibit, walking through the final door into a narrow room with barren walls. Standing in the white-brightness, I knew what I had to do.

Assuring Mary that I wouldn't stay more than a half hour, we went to the library/bookstore in the museum. Libraries and books are my solace, still points in the turning world. I yearned for a still point. Entering the store, I immediately felt at home. Books I knew. Books I understood. I passed by shelves labelled by country—Rowanda, Burundi, Serbia, Armenia—reminded of other holocausts past and present. I sighed and moved on to the section of biographies and diaries. My list of names was in my hand. I could find no book by or about my three social work compatriots.

When I shared my dilemma with the clerk, he showed me a section on the Rescuers, non-Jews who helped save Jews. I began opening each book and searching the index for my three names. Finally, in a book, *Rescuers:Portraits of Moral Courage in the Holocaust,* I found a chapter on Marion Van Binbergen Pritchard and began to read. As a young woman in Amsterdam, she had hidden a Jewish family After the war, she had come to Boston. Boston! My heart leapt and my spirits rose. Cliche, but apt description of my joy at this discovery. Marion had worked as a social worker at Jewish Family Service and later at Beth Israel Hospital. She was retired and, as of 1992 when the book was published, living in Boston and in New Hampshire. I hurried to show Mary my find. It gave a meaning to Joe's presence as my guide through the museum. I felt better, closer to Joe and to a piece of myself.

It was time to go. I bought a pin that said "Never Again" and we left the museum.

February 16, 1996

In the midst of a busy conference day, I didn't think of Joe until about 6:30 P.M. when I woke up from a nap. I had lain down about 4:30 P.M. and fallen into a deep sleep. I opened my eyes thinking of Joe. It was shabbat, Friday night. Shabbat in his shiva week. I was in a hotel room in Washington D.C. It was shabbat and all I knew was that I had to say kaddish for Joe. I dressed quickly, looked at the schedule of receptions I had planned to attend before an 8:00 dinner reservation, and immediately decided to go to the reception for faculty and alums of the school at which I earned my MSW. I needed a minyan; I needed kindred spirits.

Walking into the semi-dark "Woodley Room," I was intent on my task. I needed ten Jews, preferably ten Jews who knew the words of the kaddish since I only knew the first few and the very last words of the prayer. I saw a Jewish classmate

and friend from home. After hugs and a few minutes of catching up on kids and school gossip, I blurted out, "Judith, do you know the kaddish?"

Not missing a beat, she replied, "Not all of it. Why?"

"My father-in-law died six days ago. It's shabbos, the end of his shiva week and I feel he would want me to say kaddish for him tonight."

She scanned the room, took my hand, and off we went in search of social work Jews who might know the words and make our minyan. Seven attempts later, we had run out of possibilities. No one knew all the words. We moved from the room and into the corridor, a bit discouraged, but still not daunted. Leaning up against the wall in an alcove next to the room, we were surrounded by tall metal racks filled with empty white coffee carafes, used linen napkins, and empty water pitchers. We were silent. Finally I said, "There are plenty of Joe's landsmen, his Jewish family, in this conference center. We have a minyan. No one will get us on a technicality. Let me tell you about Joe and then we will do the best we can saying the kaddish."

So, standing in the alcove, I told Judith about Joe...about the cereal boxes, about his rigidity, about our arguments and my intolerance of his racism and bigotry (especially when I was its object), about the way he was so frightened and unsure that he always had to be in control–always right; even at the expense of his sons' self esteem and his grandchildren's affections. I talked of the many hours over so many years that I had spent listening to Joe, laughing at his yiddish jokes, trying to cajole him out of his sadness, often angry at his stubbornness, struggling to understand, ultimately feeling I had failed, yet refusing to give up. I talked about the Holocaust museum and "finding" Joe in the film. I thanked whatever Higher Being there was for giving the world Joe. Without Joe, I would not have my husband and our two children. I would not have had the opportunity to struggle with our relationship and with myself and to "travel" to Olevsk.

When I was through talking, I asked Judith if she was ready to try the kaddish. She

nodded and smiled and we began: "Yisgadal v'yiskadash, sh'me, rabbo, b'olmo, d'hoo....." We stumbled along until the last phrase, the one we both knew. Together we sang quietly as we stood behind the metal racks of dirty dishes:"Oseh, sholom, bimromov, hu, ya-aseh, sholom, olenu, v'al, col, yisroel, v'imru, omen." "May He who establishes peace in the heavens, grant peace unto us and unto all Israel; and say, Amen."

Shalom havarim. Goodbye Yosel, my friend. I finally think I somehow understand. See you in Chicago and we can talk about it.......over a glass of hot tea.

As social workers and teachers we are frequently striving to "world travel" as we work to make connections with our clients, students, and communities. We may call our efforts empathy, connected learning and teaching, or cultural sensitivity. Regardless of the name, we are attempting to understand "other," often from a position of dominance and power. Frequently our efforts are not as successful as we would like. Sometimes we are aware of our thwarted journeys. Often, we are not. As Simone Weil stated, "Someone who does not see a pane of glass does not know that she does not see it" (as cited in Young, 1990, p. 39).

How do we make bridges from our own experience into the experience of others? How do we "travel" to another's "world" without trivializing and with a full recognition that we will never fully "know"? As I reflect on these journal entries and the experiences that they represent, several things come clearer to me. The ways that we construct ourselves as both connected and other and view our experiences as both the same and irretreviably different have something to do with being able to enter into and identify with another person's context and with knowing who we are.

The museum offered me

an opportunity to enter my father-in-law's cultural and historical context. The museum was designed to help me and others step into a darkness, stripped of our names, holding Jewish identity cards. This stripping away permits us to transcend the position of "other" and to identify, often through recognizing shared feelings. Museums, movies, and literature are all possible vehicles for creating this simulated context. We can never feel the actual experience or appropriate it, but we can connect to it, if only fleetingly.

However, context alone is not sufficient. I needed to "see" Joe as my guide and to "find" Marion Van Binbergen Pritchard, a non-Jewish social work resister who could mentor me through my experience in the museum. I needed a way to ground myself in my own experience as wife, as mother and daughter-in-law, and as social worker. I needed to position myself not only as a possible oppressor but as a potential resister. I was then able to view myself as Joe might have viewed me and to "see" him more fully. How we empathically engage the "other" and "'world travel" is based on understanding and relating to our own experience just as much as it is on understanding and relating to theirs. It is a humbling, complex, and highly personal process; for to "see a pane of glass" is to see our own reflection. □

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Peace and Social Justice – The Challenges Facing Social Work

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Compassion Fatigue: When the Helper Needs Help

This narrative is a first-person account of the impact of physical and emotional death on my life and the shattering of my illusion of invincibility and invulnerability. After several years of conducting psychological debriefings to emergency services personnel and developing training and graduate curriculum on crisis intervention theory, research, and practice, I was lulled into a false sense of security by thinking 'it could never happen to me. I was wrong. The basic tenets of crisis intervention and primary and secondary traumatization are discussed with relevancy to clinical practice. Concepts are exemplified by case study and application to personal experiences.

by
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Author's Note

The reflections of situations experienced by the author have been altered only to the extent necessary to protect the identities and privacy of those involved. A special note of appreciation to the men and women who have devoted portions of their lives to providing assistance to those in need, even at the risk of their own physical and emotional health.

Nothing can make up for the absence of someone whom we love, and it would be wrong to try to find a substitute; we must simply hold out and see it through. That sounds very hard at first, but at the same time it is a great consolation, for the gap, as long as it remains unfilled, preserves the bond between us. It is nonsense to say that the gap will be filled; it will not be, but on the contrary, it will be kept empty, and so helps us to keep alive our former communion with each other, even at the cost of pain. (adapted from Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

As a Senior Mental Health Clinician with five years of experience working with individuals, families and professionals in crisis, I thought that I had witnessed it all and understood crisis theory. I was mistaken. It was not until a confluence of events in my own life occurred that I came to understand truly the impact that crisis has on an individual and came to appreciate the extreme pain and fear that often characterize those in crisis. This personal narrative reflects my own spiral into a state of crisis as I dealt with the impact of physical and metaphoric death, loss and grief in my own life.

Crisis Means Danger and Opportunity

In the Spring of 1987, I started work as a Senior Clinician with a community-based Emergency Services unit located in a community mental health center in one of the largest metropolitan areas in central Virginia. Initially my job responsibilities involved carrying a case load of six crisis clients per week and being on call weekly and on occasional weekends. I learned early on that the job was unpredictable and carried with it a great deal of responsibility. I was responsible for making the call as to whether or not there was cause, from a mental health perspective, to hospitalize individuals involuntarily who were suicidal, homicidal, or unable to care for themselves to the point of being a danger to self or others.

One of the first things I learned as a crisis worker is that the Chinese term for crisis *(weiji)* is composed of two characters which signify danger and opportunity (Wilhelm, 1967). I

quickly learned Slaikeu's (1990) definition of "crisis" as a temporary state of upset and disorganization, characterized chiefly by an individual's inability to cope with a particular situation using customary methods of problem solving and by the potential for a radically positive or negative outcome.

I can deal with this, I thought, as I started a five-year stint with the community-based crisis intervention program. I had grown up in relative poverty in an abusive and crisis-oriented family, with an absent father and a traumatized mother who coped as best she could with what life threw her way. This often involved dissociation, generalized anxiety, and panic attacks. As a child, I developed the ability to suspend my own reactions to situations, learning early on that a consistent foundation of support would not be forthcoming. My childhood experiences prepared me well, and as a crisis clinician I quickly became known for being unflappable, able to face and confront whatever situations were thrown in my path.

Primary Traumatization: The End of Naivete

Primary traumatization is described by Mitchell (1983) as any experience that results in unusually strong emotional reactions and that has the potential to interfere with the ability to function. As a clinician on an Emergency Services unit, I experienced the more gruesome, traumatic sides of life. As a direct line worker, I witnessed many traumatic events of those in crisis, and worked closely with fire, rescue, and police personnel (SWAT and hostage negotiation) responding to tragic events. My job was to listen, provide support, validate thoughts and feelings, and normalize experiences. But what about my reactions to the situations I witnessed? What was I to do with the intrusive imagery that accompanied me through most days?

Client Situations that Haunted Me:

The woman, desperate for a child, carrying a bundle with her around the trailer park, her dead dog, swaddled in a blue blanket, cradled in her arms;

The terrified cat bound to a chair with coat hangers, held captive by a psychotic man, its rotting sibling, found later, locked in the roll-top desk in the basement;

The young girl held hostage at gunpoint by her crack addicted father who later was killed by a smoke bomb exploding against his chest;

The pre-adolescent girl sexually abused by her father (she's the age of my niece, for god's sake);

The Vietnam veteran who insisted on bringing a "worry stone" into sessions, a defused grenade clutched in his palm;

The psychiatrist, the physician, the judge, the police officer (colleagues all) hospitalized respectively as homicidal, suicidal, delusional, and psychotic;

The bright young woman, hearing voices ("your medication is poison," "he's the devil"), killed the demons during a wild, high-speed drive down the wrong side of a four-lane highway ending in her death and the deaths of three others (the papers said suicide; I knew better);

The minister seeking help for his kind, frail, bed-bound mother, her bedroom ceiling a cockroach version of an L.A. freeway, her legs frozen in a cast of excrement two years in the making (she died two weeks later);

The gentle, sensitive, shy young man, traumatized as a child and prone to anxiety, nearly killing us both after overdosing on Lithium and forcing my car off the road;

The middle aged woman in the back seat of the police cruiser, naked and masturbating violently with a cross, her face contorted with inner rage, her curses spat out in madness;

The man hearing voices that his mother, his father were the devil and should die, weeks later the mutilated, rotted bodies found stuffed down a water culvert;

The suicidal client who pulled the trigger while on the crisis hotline, the bullet entering his eye, coursing though the gray brain mass and splattering when it hit the inside back of his skull (blue-grey eye replaced by glass);

Gunshots, helicopter rotors overhead, spotlights, flashing

blue and red lights, sirens, doors slamming, police radios crackling, news vultures circling around.

While it was easy to identify which events impacted me after my direct involvement, it was only after several years of informally debriefing my colleagues that I came to realize that listening to the stories of my colleagues and conducting psychological debriefings of emergency services personnel impacted me. I was finding it more and more difficult to shake some of the gruesome images described in debriefings, and some of the images became so vividly imprinted upon me that it was as if I had actually experienced the event. I came to recognize what I was experiencing as secondary traumatization, or compassion fatigue. I was becoming numb to these images and increasingly I experienced them as "stories" rather than "narratives"; fictionalizing their experiences, I sought safety in distancing myself from the pain of reality.

Secondary Traumatization

Awareness of secondary traumatization evolves out of conceptualizing emotional contagion as an affective process in which individuals experience emotional responses parallel to another person's actual or anticipated emotions (Miller, Stiff, & Ellis, 1988; Prichard, 1996). Figley (1995) suggested distinctions between primary and secondary traumatic stress disorder:

> Secondary traumatic stress disorder is a syndrome of symptoms nearly identical to PTSD, except that exposure to knowledge about a traumatizing event experienced by a significant other is associated with the set of STSD symptoms, and PTSD symptoms are directly connected to the sufferer, the person experiencing primary traumatic stress. (p.8)

My position as a crisis clinician entailed conducting psychological debriefings to Emergency Services personnel throughout the state. My colleagues and I heard the narratives of dozens of EMS personnel who needed to tell their stories and to have their reactions normalized. During debriefings emergency respondents describe in gruesome and stark detail the sights, smells, touch, taste, and sounds of traumatic events. Images of many of their experiences inhabit the same place as my own memories. With time, it becomes difficult to distinguish between them. These are the nightmare images that visit at night . . .

Secondary Images that Haunted Me:

A firefighter working a train wreck, with an ax, liberating the flesh of the dead from the tangle of a wrecked train;

An elderly woman in a rocker on her back porch, perhaps seeking relief from the heat, her bloated watermelon-like corpse bursting the rocker after a week in the steamy humidity of a Virginia summer;

Five teenagers en route to the excitement of the county fair, the car and bodies a merged gory mess the height of my knees, crushed by a tractor trailer;

A young, blond haired, blue eyed girl in a sun dress playing on the side of a country road, dead within hours, her stomach eaten away from ingesting pesticides sprayed on the roadside;

A young man alone in his apartment on a Saturday night, the radio on, brains, blood, and skull fragments splattered like fireworks on the bedroom wall, a gun still in his mouth;

A baby lying quietly on his back in a crib, a stuffed brown teddy bear at his little feet, blue-faced, broken ribs, the smell of white baby food vomit filling the air, total stillness;

A psychotic father cradling his infant daughter, the torso he made headless, the head lying in the bathtub;

The group of men scuba diving in the cool, clear water, their Lieutenant floating away, throat slit and knife in the back . . . it was called fragging–killing the superior officer to avoid being killed by his inexperience;

A young attractive couple taking a drive in the cool Fall at dusk, desperate screams for help, the smell, the taste, the sound of burning flesh, hair, and rubber comingling as she is trapped in her car

beneath a burning tractor trailer and burns slowly to death, flames extinguished and re-ignited over the eternity of a two hour span, her husband uninjured watching in horror. (Only later, after I conducted the debriefing with men and women, bloodied and still in their emergency gear and smelling of burnt flesh and rubber, did I discover the victim was a colleague and a friend.)

The list goes on, and it pains me to this day to reflect on the primary traumatic stress experienced by the victims and their families, the secondary traumatic stress experienced by the emergency respondents, and now the compassion fatigue experienced by me as witness to those secondarily traumatized. The emergency respondents will have the scenes of traumatic incidents forever imprinted in their minds; these images, described to me in graphic detail during debriefings, are now part of my memory, as if my own. While I was fortunate at the time to have the love and understanding of my wife, an MSW who also conducted psychological debriefings for emergency services personnel, I sometimes wonder about the compassion fatigue we experienced with one another due to the nature of our jobs and our supportive relationship.

Crisis as an Experiential Phenomenon: Helping the Helper

One of the hazards of working in the crisis field in a large metropolitan area is that almost anything that one experiences in one's own life, outside of the job, pales in comparison. And significant traumatic events may seem trite and trivial in light of the experiences of many of the clients with whom one works daily. Thus when I simultaneously lost two of the most significant people in my life, through death and divorce, I was little prepared for the crisis state into which I was thrown.

When I initially learned of my father's cancer, I handled it through working, an area in which I felt I had some measure of control. I developed training programs on death and dying and on secondary traumatization of professionals dealing with loss and grief, while continuing to pick up new clients dealing with grief and loss issues. I realize now how desperately I was trying to understand death and attempting to gain some control over my feelings of helplessness as I watched my father, my friend and mentor, experience a slow, painful, drawn-out death.

With the healing gift of time, I look back now with great appreciation for my father's handling of his death, and am amazed at the ability of the psyche to push the hurt and pain aside, to allow me to recall the power of bearing witness to my father's dying. I recall sitting at his bedside in the hospice, holding his hand and lapsing in and out of sleep with him . . . dreaming about camping with him and going through a whirlwind tour of the times we had together. We had a short ritualistic farewell . . . words are forgotten now, but the look in his eyes and the feeling of connection will be a part of me forever.

After five years of ministering to those whose lives had been turned topsy turvy and helping others deal with the fallout from the inevitable traumas of life, I watched helplessly as my own life began spinning out of control. This can't be happening, I told myself repeatedly. This was a too mundane and everyday occurrence compared to the tragedies I witnessed nearly every day on the job. I felt in control when talking a jumper down off a bridge; why was this affecting me so? People die, people divorce everyday . . .

Compassion Has a Price: A Hazardous Background

When conducting psychological debriefings with emergency personnel, I often suggest to participants that everyone has a situation out there that has his/her name on it. We may not yet have encountered the call that will throw us into a state of emotional disorganization and disequilibrium, but inevitably the call comes. What determines whether a particular individual will react to a specific situation depends on the "hazardous background" of the person.

Even as my personal life began to unravel, I watched with somewhat detached professional curiosity as I became unable to cope with the simplest crisis situations.

I was raised by an emotionally unavailable father and

an emotional unstable mother who abandoned the family during my adolescence. I had spent too much of my childhood providing emotional stability for my mother to learn how to connect with many of my own feelings. Now that I was being put to the test, I had nothing from my background from which to draw. Crises happened to my mother and to clients. . . not to me. I could handle anything, like my father. . . but death was handling him. . . I didn't have a role model for dealing with this. My family background did not provide me with the tools to cope with my own anxieties, fears, and insecurities; and my education, while helping me to understand what was happening to me, did not prepare me for the experience of utter despair and feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.

Vulnerability

An important component of falling into crisis is one's vulnerability. When we are no longer able to cope using our usual repertoire of coping behaviors, we feel extreme vulnerability. During this time there is great opportunity for both productive and destructive growth (Slaikeu, 1990). The hazardous material that left me vulnerable and defenseless began with my wife moving out three months prior to my father's death, and peaked six months later on our anniversary date. Certainly the stress of extremely difficult professional responsibilities contributed to the vulnerability. I was familiar with dealing with the death and loss experienced by others. It was out there, external, apart from me, and safe. The more I viewed grief and loss as something that happened to others and was external to me, the more isolated and separated I became from my own emotions.

Man Overboard: A Precipitating Event

The crisis experience is precipitated or touched off by a specific event (Slaikeu, 1990). It is the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. I had witnessed many such incidents in my work as a crisis clinician.

The final straw for me was the comprehensive examinations in May for my doctorate in social work. Ironically, the focus of my examination was crisis, primary and secondary traumatization. I continually put off preparing for the four-day examination. When I did begin to gather information to study, I found myself unable to focus on the content. I could no longer evaluate the material in an objective, analytic manner. My head was exploding, and I felt saturated with feelings of hurt, pain, sadness, and loss. I felt in desperate need to get out of my head and into the feelings that saturated my being. Everything I read appeared so insignificant compared to the grief that I was experiencing myself in the moment. How could I be studying about crisis in this academic way when my own life was in an inexorable slide into crisis, and when emotions over which I had no control were overwhelming the cognitive safety and security of the academic pursuit. It was with great difficulty that I humbly acknowledged to my Chair that I could not pull myself together to take the exams. At last I gave in to profound grief.

Treading Water: Coping Behaviors

In many ways I feel that I forestalled the crash until that summer when I knew that I would have more time to deal with my personal issues. For the two years prior to the death of my father and the death of my marriage, my primary coping behavior was extreme overwork. In the six months prior to his death, I was employed full time as a crisis clinician, maintained a half-time private practice, and taught three graduate MSW courses as an adjunct faculty member. For a time, work very effectively allowed me to avoid dealing with my grief.

How many times had I helped clients in crisis examine their coping behaviors and strategize how to cope with a stressful situation? I found myself going through my own list of coping strategies now. I exercised fanatically, shared my feelings in individual and group supervision and in training, processed with anyone who would listen, and tried an antidepressant (but stopped after one day, unable to accept that I was really *that* depressed and feeling too much like one of my "clients"). I tried alcohol but failed miserably at this desperate attempt to deaden the

pain and decrease my anxiety (it increased my anxiety and made me feel even more out of control). When I came to the end of my coping list, I was confronted with the terrifying realization that my life was spinning hopelessly out of control and that I didn't know how to fix it.

When I recognized that my primary line of defense, immersion in academia, no longer offered comfort or even a safe hiding place, I knew that I was in for a rough ride. Requesting an extension on my comprehensives, I rode out the conclusion of the three courses I was teaching, allowed my private practice to dwindle, and suddenly had a great deal of free time. I also became involved with a wonderfully nurturing and supportive colleague who cradled me through the storm. I needed the relationship for survival, and I will be forever grateful.

Drowning: The Precipitant

The fallout from events leading to a crisis is the "precipitant." With the pressures of comprehensive exams, private practice, and adjunct teaching gone, and finally the time available to grieve, I recall almost consciously giving myself permission to slip into an abyss of grief, loss, and despair.

My chest was tight, the sharp pain I'd been experiencing the past several days undiminished by my feeble attempts to rest on my office couch. Convinced that I was having a heart attack, I wrote a quick note to my twin brother, Jon, and called my doctor. He saw me immediately, reassured me that the EKG indicated no abnormalities, and scheduled a stress test was for the next morning. I slept fitfully, the pain still omnipresent. My appetite gone, I forced down a light breakfast, drove the five miles to the clinic, and was seen immediately. I was drawn, tired, rundown, fatigued. As the nurse wired me for the stress test, I rested on the edge of the examination table. The nurse explained that the test consisted of monitoring my vital signs as I walked on a treadmill of ever increasing incline. This would continue until my pulse reached 162. Before any activity started, the nurse took my resting pulse–it was a sky high 164. The test continued, with the technicians deciding to allow my pulse to climb to 180. I passed the test and my pulse dropped to 140 after the examination.

What was happening to me? I felt as if I were going crazy. My thoughts were like molasses, and I felt a sense of derealization when communicating with others; when engaged in conversations I felt that I was a disembodied person watching myself from a distance. When I slept at all, I would frequently wake in the middle of the night, heart pounding with extreme anxiety. I found myself pacing the floor at night, knowing that I needed to sleep, but unable to close my eyes. I lost 25 pounds in the course of six months and was now a gaunt skeleton of my former self. While I was not suicidal, I did experience intrusive thoughts of my own violent death–my head being decapitated or blown off with a shotgun. My head felt completely muffled, as if my thoughts had to seep through thick baffles of cotton before emerging, or as if my voice were muffled by submersion in water. Feeling completely helpless with and hopeless about my situation, I experienced crying spells and would tear up with almost no provocation. I was raw, my defenses gone, my emotional core exposed to the world.

The Search for Meaning: Resolution

Is there ever true resolution? Viney (1976) suggested that resolution evolves through a process which includes restoration of equilibrium, cognitive mastery of the situation, and development of new coping strategies. Slaikeu (1990) defined positive resolution as working through the crisis event so that it becomes integrated into the fabric of life, leaving the person open instead of closed to the future.

My experience suggests that resolution occurs through making sense of what has happened and attaching meaning to traumatic experience, recognizing and accepting that one is forever changed by the experience. The dual loss of the support of my wife and the death of my father threw me into disequilibrium and disorganization. My view of myself as invincible has been forever altered. It took months of living minute to minute, then hour to hour, and

finally day to day before I could feel that some kind of equilibrium had been established–different from before, but equilibrium nonetheless.

I used the doctoral comprehensive exams in October as a concrete task to pull me through my painful grief. I passed, and immediately handed in my resignation as a crisis clinician. Finally I could breathe. I was beginning to accept the reality of the death of my father and the meaning that it held for me (disappointment that we hadn't had more time together, that he had not been more "real" with me, that I had never known many aspects of his world, grief over what might have been, but never was, in our relationship, loss of the idealized father and acceptance of the *reality* of our relationship). With the one-year anniversary of my separation from my wife, I began to accept this loss (it would take much longer to rebuild the trust shattered by feelings of betrayal and abandonment and to trust in *myself* and my ability to make good decisions).

I took several measures to simplify my life; I cut down on the private practice, completed the doctoral course work, and settled into a very simple, uncomplicated relationship with a wonderful woman. I felt in many ways reborn, that I had entered a maelstrom and emerged alive. I will never be quite the same person. Crises change us forever.

Crisis *Is* Opportunity: Letting Go and Moving Forward

It has been several years now since my divorce and I have come to terms with thinking of myself as "divorced." Though we reside in different parts of the country, my ex-wife and I maintain a friendship. The loss of my father has been more difficult, psychically. I have learned to integrate the physical absence of my father with the previous emotional one and learned to appreciate him for who he was in life and what he means to me in death.

Perhaps the most important lesson I learned was that crisis comes in many forms. It need not be a natural or human-made disaster, such as those experienced so frequently by police officers and firefighters. It is the meaning that is attached to the precipitating event that holds the key to understanding the crisis. Crises are frequently misunderstood by those experiencing them. All too frequently the focus is on the precipitating event rather than the meaning attached to it. We as mental health professionals and academicians also need to be wary of perceiving ourselves as invincible to that which we are treating and/or studying. We need to beware of the seductive feelings of invulnerability that may accompany being an academician or a mental health professional.

Epilogue: Rising from the Ashes

Now I live in a beach house on the coast of Maine with my two cats, a mountain bike, and a kayak. I continue to work at maintaining a reasonable teaching load in my faculty position in an MSW program, consult regularly with crisis teams and mental health clinics throughout New England, and strive for intimacy in relationships with friends and family. The intrusive images of death and dying that once filled my head have been supplanted by the sights, the smells, the sounds, the taste, the feel of the Maine coast–deep magenta sunrises over the Atlantic that awaken me most mornings. . . ever-changing sunsets that end the day with me most evenings. . . the sound of ocean breezes, beckoning. . . and sea gulls. . . chimes. . . and water lapping at the shore. . . the smell of fresh salt water, brine, sea grass.

Like the mythical Phoenix, I am rising from the ashes. □

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Tortillas and Salt: Lessons across North America

This is my story about educating social work students (and faculty) about poverty and privilege in the first and third worlds. The story is one of shared learning. Through this story, an intertwining of many stories, I share the experiences of students and faculty as we traveled to Mexico to learn about poverty, interconnection, and interdependence across the Americas. The story is also about the value of intense immersion experiences in maximizing student growth. The lessons provide a frame for expanding our ability to educate social work professionals on the impact of growing poverty, structural inequalities, and growing global interdependence.

by
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In August 1995, I arrived in Mexico at the Cuernavaca Center for Intercultural Dialog on Development (CCIDD) with a class of graduate social work students from a mid-sized private university. Unsure what to expect, I was anxious and excited about the opportunity to experience the poverty of Mexico and view the impact United States (U.S.) economic policies have on the lives of the most vulnerable of Mexico. I was hopeful that I could help create a learning environment where the students could grasp the complexities of the issues. What I experienced surpassed all my expectations. Together with the students, I witnessed many faces of poverty, its causes, and its consequences.

The Center, located 50 miles south of Mexico City, offered an ideal setting for a two-week immersion course combining experiential and academic learning. We were joined in that experience by students and faculty from Montreal, Quebec. Together, we were women and men of many races (black, white, Asian, Hispanic), ages (18 years to 50 years), and classes (middle and working). We were part of a truly North American experience with teachers and learners from Latin America, Canada, and the U.S. as well as Africa, Europe, and Asia.

The curriculum (Schmitz, 1997) was tightly structured. Participation, daily reflective journaling, and discussion were required. Social work faculty and the CCIDD program staff developed a schedule flowing between experience, lecture, and discussion. Before the experience, I purposely provided little context so the students were immediately immersed in their own responses and feelings. Readings were carefully chosen to provide a grounding in culture, history, U.S.-Mexican relations, and economics. Short stories familiarized the participants with the culture on a more feeling level. The class met once before the trip to discuss the readings and again after the trip to reflect on issues of re-entry.

This story is an interweaving of my experience with family stories and student learning. Much of the experience was a shared one. Just as the learning shifted between the collective and the individual, the heart and the mind, the present

and the past, so does the story. Students and faculty participated in experiential learning supported by discussion and lecture on liberation theology, the role of the Church, economics, history, human rights, and empowerment. The timing of the experiences, educational sessions, and discussion-reflection provided students with a new awareness of issues. The intensity of the experiences opened students to the importance of the knowledge. Without the intensity, it is difficult to shift to such a dramatically new level of understanding.

The students provided their own context. Many were young and middle class with limited life and professional experience. Referred by prior students, they came expecting a life changing process. While most were excited, some were also fearful, anxious, and unsure. Most were raised in the Midwest, a few in the East. One brought the depth of international citizenship. Although some had experienced life traumas, only Kenya, born and raised outside the U.S., had experienced the naked poverty viewed through our CCIDD experience.

In two weeks, students learned what could have taken years. Most had little experience of the economic, social, and political conditions of Mexico. I sat with the students on dirt floors as individuals and families told of life amongst poverty, disease, death, and oppression. I watched as students struggled with guilt trying to absorb all that was seen, heard, felt, and thought. I struggled with them against being overwhelmed. Daily time for quiet reflection and journaling, guided group reflection, and discussion helped translate their experiences into learning.

As Kenesha states, "Before going to Mexico . . . I held some of the stereotypes that are common in the U.S. I did not have too much exposure to Mexico. . . [although] our text helped." Rhonda adds, "This was not only an educational excursion for me, but a life changing one." "In the past I thought of Mexico as a far away country and I had no part in their community. By taking this class, I wanted to see first hand how this other community lived. What I really learned was that community among the poor in Mexico very much involves me as an individual."

Immersion

The orientation to the city, the country, and the educational process on day one is transitional but cannot prepare us for the tender, touching, and powerful experiences we begin just two days into the class. People with little to share open their homes and their lives to us. As we enter homes to listen to families, I am aware of the mutuality of the learning. My role as participant and educator leaves me in the position of participant observer. The duality of being outside the process and immersed in the process at the same time come together at the intersection between the personal and the political. I watch and listen to the students, CCIDD staff, and families noting not only student learning but also families watching, processing, and sharing. I constantly monitor student response as a basis for facilitating discussion and reflection. I also watch and feel the families, imagining the lessons they are taking away. My personal reflective journey—passionate, personal, warm-hearted, and intense—can be expressed only through my poetry, art, and stories.

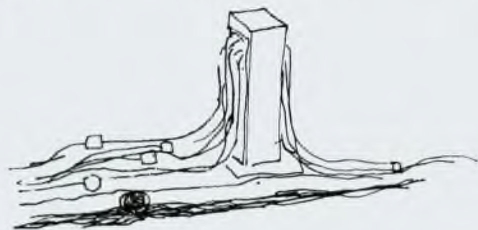
Eyes wide. You watch.

Eyes wide. You watch.
You share.
Mother and child. Open.
Alive.
Surrounded by death.
Surrounded by life.
Surrounded by hope???

We visit a squatters' settlement and a remote indigenous village suffering from extreme poverty and isolation. We participate in a Christian-based community meeting and visit with local change agents, academics, labor leaders, social workers, and health professionals. Each experience provides a context for discussion and learning. Our first experience is a very moving, rich, passionate visit to La Estación.

Experiencing La Estación

As we walk through the squatters' settlement known as La Estación, we see a poverty we expect but a hope we do not.



Families live in small one– or two-room huts made of metal, wood, or sometimes brick, many with dirt floors. Wires run off city meter boxes providing illegal access to electricity. Families now have access to running water not far from their homes and while there are no bathrooms, a minimal sewage system exists. We stop to talk with families who graciously welcome us into their homes, sharing the story of their lives with us. An older, widowed, childless woman tells about life for the elderly poor in a country without social security and Medicare. A young woman of 25, the mother of four, tells us of her husband's murder and her struggle to raise her children through her domestic work and her needlework. Another tells us that she recently threw out the father of her children. She can no longer take the drinking and the abuse.

We see women struggling to survive. Children and families with vision. Children working. We hear of the men, machismo, drinking, violence, and murder. They help us understand what it means to be without an adequate education and health care. . . with no hope of making a living. The women and children continue the struggle to earn money for food, some education, survival. They continue as a family. There is life within the poverty. A softness and respect exists between mother and children, brothers and sisters, that surprises us. Families have dogs for protection and companionship. Many cultivate beautiful gardens in their small spaces.

Little girl, I don't know
your name
but I see your life.
The poverty
The hope
The illiteracy
The love.

Reflection, Discussion, and History. Overwhelmed and exhausted, we return to rest, reflect, and journal. I retreat to my room to quietly contemplate and integrate what I see and feel. I consider, as well, student faces and postures, pondering on the meaning of their quiet response as preparation for the group discussion I will help facilitate later that day with CCIDD staff. Students responses are raw and painful after this first immersion. In spite of the desperation and the despair, the softness within the children does not go unnoticed. The group reflections help students sort and process.

As Derek reflects, "The group process helped me find out how others felt and thought about what I saw." Olivia expands, "Today I felt many emotions. . . . We discussed in our groups the emotions everyone felt. The processing made me pull together the meaning in my experience. I compared the lives of these people to the lives of poor inner city Americans. There are great differences, yet similarities. The children here have hope in their eyes unlike some of the young children I work with."

During the evening, a scholar from the University of Mexico provides a lecture on the history of Mexico and U.S.-Mexican relations resulting in the current conditions. Because of the intense immersion experience, student interest is height-

ened. The lecture then increases their understanding of the context of what they have seen and are about to see and hear.

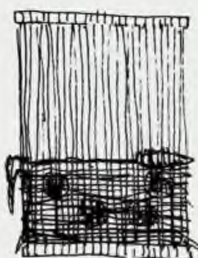
Day four begins with a visit to the home of a woman who spent many years in La Estación and is now an indigenous organizer. As she tells us her story, she weaves in the process of her growth and emerging sense of empowerment, growth sparked by a soft-spoken priest we later meet.

Ofelia, the Priest, and Community Empowerment

From a small, remote, isolated village to Mexico City at the age of 12, a domestic servant with positive and negative experiences. She married while still an adolescent, moving to the squatters' settlement with her husband's family. Five children. Years of isolation and abuse. Shame. Ofelia struggles to raise her children without running water, a sewage system, or adequate health care. She and other women experience growth when a priest comes to the settlement–La Estación. He asks, "What are your problems?" The women answer, "We have none. . . " So he educates, and they learn.

Through his work, the priest works with the women first in recognizing the needs of the community, then in learning how to impact change. The women learn to work with and pressure public officials and politicians. They are successful in getting running water and a minimal sewer system into La Estación. Ofelia is able to start a small store. The women start offering day care and work on health care. Ofelia keeps her children in school and eventually leaves her husband after years of drinking and abuse, when he abuses one of her children.

Through her organizing, lobbying, and advocating, not only does the community grow but so does she. Illiterate well



into adulthood, she learned to read and write with the help of her children. Math becomes a necessity in order to make the store run. And as she grows, she finds she must leave La Estación. She first lives in an apartment, supporting her children as a domestic worker with the added pressure caused by the need for transportation to support her work and the children's education. She is lucky and is given enough money by a European woman to buy a small piece of land. In her struggle to build a home, she again organizes a community of people. Together they build the cooperative responsible for building the home we now sit in as well as nine others. They are quality homes on a hillside far from the settlement. Habitat for Humanity has now joined their effort.

Today her children—four in all—are successfully grown. Many are college educated. All are working. Four beautiful grandchildren quietly and respectfully play in the home as Ofelia educates us in her very eloquent fashion. Today is Saturday and she must baby-sit so her daughter can earn extra money. Ofelia's organizing goes on. Now she is an organizer of domestic workers. She has learned to speak publicly. She talks of growing more assertive. She talks of participating in international conferences. She talks of educating other domestic workers. She talks of educating the young people about family planning and life planning.

Ofelia is also an educator of Americans and Canadians. I am mesmerized by the telling of her story. Her presence is calming, dignified, and powerful. As the story of her life unfolds, I am drawn into the strength and growth. Through the telling of her story, my depth of understanding about the interplay between community empowerment and personal growth expands: A young, very bright, resilient girl struck out on her own. She lacked the knowledge and skills to build her life in the directions she wanted. A priest devoted to liberation used a small community group to educate and empower. The women then worked together to facilitate change for the community and themselves. In Ofelia's case that growth has continued for both the community and the individual, though they have gone in different directions.

Transitions. *Rhonda frames the response of many with her observation, "Her strength struck me first." Kenesha's comments reflect her amazement, "She left her husband because of abuse and took her children. She also helped organize domestic workers, ran a store, started a home building co-op, and much more without a formal education. She has provided education for her children, however." Olivia feels this experience is pivotal: "Ofelia has done the kind of organization and advocacy that I have gone to school to learn. I think I probably learned more from her experience and sharing." "She has great leadership abilities and used these to organize whatever community she was in to improve their poor conditions," noted Christopher.*

The lessons from this day are reinforced and deepened by visits with other communities and community leaders–indigenous and professional. We later meet with the priest, adding depth to our understanding of the respect and quiet patience necessary in educating and supporting the community as the women gradually came to understand their oppression and their rights. Eventually he helped them to take the steps to action which precipitated significant community change.

Over the next several days a sociologist from the University of Mexico provides an academic lecture, a labor leader tells us of personal and professional growth, and a youth leader attending the University shares his growth. I ask the students to question what they see on multiple levels and what it means to the families and to themselves as individuals and as social work professionals. We discuss and experience the intersection between the personal and the political, their roles as social workers in personal and community change, and the role of social work in health care, economic and community development, program development, and empowerment.

The Blanket Man: The Firing of the Messenger

Are you a fugitive from justice?
As a man child you worked hard.
You learned to read and write.
You learned your rights.
You became a teacher of others.
They came to fear you. You were outcast. You are a fugitive for justice.
Are you alone?
You left your town to start again. Work. You must work hard.
The injustice continues.
You work hard.
The young. The Old.
Hard work. Abuse. Discard.
You work hard.
But the young . . . .
It is not right.
You must stand. Twenty join.
You must educate.
The flyers. The talks.
The knowledge grows and the owners watch.
More flyers. Where do they come from?
¿Quien sabe?
Spies. Traps.
They try to trick you.
You are too smart. You are too many.
Habemos muchos.
There are a lot of us.

They call him the "Blanket Man." He is a storyteller, a teacher. He teaches the power of education and moral conviction. He understands the importance of taking a stand and fighting for justice and fairness, whatever the cost. For him, the struggle started early. He started working in a factory when only 12. He taught himself to read, then started reading the labor laws. After organizing and striking, he was fired. The others withdrew in fear of hunger. How can you fight when in fear of hunger? Off to the city for another start. A good worker. Many years of commitment and labor. A family to support, so he works. There comes a day, however, when he recognizes the abuse of the children in the factories and he must once again take a stand. He organizes while dodging the bosses. Others help. He outsmarts them. Eventually they fire him and he fights, but the laws don't help.

Labor lessons impact the family and the community. Because he keeps his struggles to himself, the distance grows between the Blanket Man and his wife and children. But when he shares, they join and find a way to move forward together. With openness, it is hard to divide

and conquer. Now he works with others in an artisans' collective making a living with respect.

The intersection between the personal and the political. I am overwhelmed by his presence, my response, and my inability to communicate through words without translation. His natural leadership and quiet story telling ability still leave me processing my emotions and knowledge. I am frustrated by the language barrier yet may have learned more because of it. I am forced to listen without verbal response. I listen with all my senses and respond through my presence. Monitoring my response, watching students, and reading their journals, I am able to develop a guide for the student discussion. Students are encouraged to talk about what they see and feel and eventually to discuss the implication of those experiences for social work professionals trying to understand the impact of poverty on individuals, families, and communities in Mexico and the U.S. We talk about the growing consciousness of this labor leader, his work community, and his family.

> *As Christopher reflects, "He fought hard for others' rights and even risked his own life... He also had doubts. He even quit fighting at one point and thought only of himself. . . Now I will always think of [Blanket Man] when I have doubts of my own. . . He emphasized the importance of his family and even admitted his mistakes."*

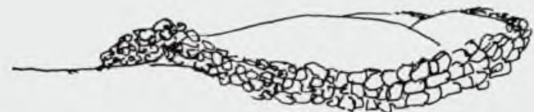
The students begin to connect the issues of labor, social work, and economics, as well as the role of the social work profession in economic development and change, at multiple levels. Follow-up experiences on days six and seven with a youth leader and then a potter who has become an indigenous change agent reinforce the lessons, moving us into a discussion of gender relations.

The Potter and the Youth Leader: The Destruction of Machismo

This settlement exists along a creek. It was once tucked away quietly. A settlement of potters with no services or land ownership. There was always the threat that the government would take their land. As population increased, the land became more valuable and accessible, the water in the creek less drinkable. So Tomas led the community in struggling, resisting, and fighting. They now own the land and have roads, water, and sewers. Along the way Tomas learned to read, write, and educate. His symbol, the dolphin, signifies peace, gentleness, and intelligence. *Ellen reflects the learning of many with her comments: "He brought out how important it is to have plants and animals around you. . . 'It is not human to live without them'."*

Jaime is only 20 years old and has already been a community leader for four years. He comes from a family that knows, values, and supports education and independence. At a young age he learned of liberation theology and became involved in empowerment through small Christian groups. This is where he learned about poverty, privilege, and interdependence–the need to organize and educate. He fights for liberation.

While they model for us the many men who are committed to their family and community, they tell us of the problems with gender relations and the machismo. *"He [Tomas] talked to us about the machismo in his country and why so many women are left alone to raise their children" (Olivia).* Tomas drew for us the connection between machismo,



lack of a viable future, alcohol, and family planning. *"He talked about machismo and the problems of men" (Christopher).* Jaime confirms and expands. These men and others tell us about the struggles and the work of the women; the need to educate the men.

Change Agents. These visits prompt a discussion on the process of change. The *"so-*

cial work group reflection helped me [Kenesha] to hear what other people thought and got out of our experiences. I also think it helped everybody release tensions that had been building up." We reflect on the difficulty of facilitating attitudinal and behavioral change, particularly on issues of gender relationships and oppression. I meet with students to reflect on their experiences and integrate those experiences with social work knowledge and practice. We talk about the interplay between the rights and responsibilities of individuals, families, and communities.

Students are asked to reflect on similarities to and differences between poverty in the U.S. and poverty in Mexico, and on the potential role of social work in remediating the issues of poverty on the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice. The knowledge and awareness growing out of our experiential and didactic lessons provide a basis for our upcoming visits with service providers. *As Susan stated, "I found this [group reflection] really helpful to hear what other people felt and thought. It helped me to pull together and focus all my jumbled thoughts."* With week two we move into visits to local clinics, services, and programs involving discussions with human service professionals. The students have enough knowledge to ask insightful questions about the role of professionals with disempowered individuals and communities.

Social Work and Health Care in Bleak Surroundings

Over the next several days we meet with professionals and para-professionals, visit an orphanage, hear views on the care of the elderly and disabled. Shifting discussion–the need for practice to flow across levels of intervention. The intensity of my own struggle increases. The personal and the political. . . pain. . . few resources. . . huge needs. Social workers and health care professionals talk of women, social transformation, and service delivery with compassion despite desperate surroundings. They talk of the need for services with social transformation. Women and children are dying from poverty and poor nutrition. Children live in the streets, forming gangs that become families. The AIDS crisis is growing. Good services for the disabled if there is money, none for the poor. High rates of breast cancer and domestic violence impact the lives of women. Death from botched abortions.

Mujeres Pobres. . .
Tell me how you survive.
I see your faces everywhere.
You work so hard.
Tell me how you survive.
The men, they drink, they beat the children,
they beat "their" women,
they have lost their way,
their hope.
Tell me how you survive.
I see you on the street.
I see you at the bus.
You surround me at the market.
There is not enough to feed the children.
There is no place to live.
Tell me how you survive.
Where do you go?
What is your story.
Tell me how you survive.

Carmen is a social worker who tells of men drinking, women beaten, and social workers confused. She talks of asking women, "Why do you stay with a man who beats you?" And a woman answers, "With him I have one man to beat me. If he is not here, the other men will hear and come into my house and rape my daughters and me." So social workers learn to work with the women and the men to change the home.

The daily construction of a new program of life is needed for change. Carmen talks of needing a lot of consciousness and awareness to be a social worker without hurting yourself and society. Families need education, awareness, and information. Economics, machismo, nutrition, sexuality, and relationships are intertwining problems with interwoven solutions. The solutions come from the strength, richness, and hope of the people. Social workers work with the current human crisis but to work with that crisis without working on changing social conditions leaves social workers as a part of the social control.

The needs are so great and the cost so high. For many, alternative health care fills the gap with soft music, massage,

the drink of life. The *Espacio de Salud* (Alternative Healthcare Workshop) rose out of the neighborhood as an integrated part of a center developed by community residents to meet their needs–child care, classes, training, and health care. Local residents are trained, empowered, and employed to empower and serve. The need for holistic health care is impressed upon us. The parts of a person cannot be segregated. The physical, emotional, and spiritual are intertwined.

We hear about and see the conditions of families in poverty with no programs to provide cash, health, or housing benefits. Events like these add depth to our discussions of social policy, methods of service delivery, and the role of social work on multiple levels.

> *Kenesha, Ellen, and Christopher comment on the knowledge and growth: "Macro/micro—we need to understand both, how policy changes people. . . No one is self-sufficient. . . Involvement with family and community, hope versus resignation. . . 70% poverty. . . Child abuse and neglect, abortion and family planning. . . Homelessness/ housing. . . Empowerment/ education. . . Community building."*

These are the dilemmas which stuck with the students to surface during group reflection.

We are now ready for our last immersion experience, perhaps more intense than the first. It was the most difficult for me because of the hopelessness. The level of isolation and poverty are outside student experience, providing a context for evaluating the impact of poverty with no perceived avenues for exit. *"They were so poor and such a contrast to my life that it seemed unreal" (Olivia).*

Death and Desperation in the Village: No Way to Make a Living

Poverty comes in many forms. In a very remote village we experience a poverty of desperation and hopelessness. Chased into the hills 500 years ago by the Spanish, the indigenous still struggle for survival in small villages. They live on land with little water. Rugged countryside, difficult to cultivate.

Children begging. Families telling tales of violence, death, and despair. The isolation is mental, economic, and physical. Hunger is daily. Families make a living primarily by making and selling baskets. We visit Isidro. He's a proud man. He, his wife, and their six children welcome us. They are gracious in finding rice bags and logs to put on the dirt floor of their home so we can sit while they talk. They have few blankets and no furniture as we know it. I wonder how they keep warm in a hut made of corn husks. It must be cold at night with the wind blowing through. Begging, watching, lack of hope, baskets.

Tortillas and Salt. Where Are the Beans? Isidro tells us that most days his family shares one meal of tortillas and salt. But some days there are no tortillas. "Sometimes we have beans." But not often. Meat? No. Education can be supported for only one child—the oldest son. There is no money. The baby, Ruth, is sick, dehydrated from diarrhea. A simple disease to cure but deadly for a poor mountain family with no money. But this is one of the lucky families. Their connection to CCIDD provides a market for

their baskets and help with medical bills. A safety net few families here have.

Life and Death in the Village. Life and death in the village blend together in ways difficult for us to understand. Our next family shares their story of life amongst death. The mother-grandmother talks of death and murder in the village. Her daughter-in-law sits with us, nursing one baby, talking about losing her last baby to disease. Men killed with machetes. The father-grandfather killed. Three of her sisters are widows. We recognize the desperation and the connection between the drinking and the lack of jobs and hope, and a murder rate as high as we see in our own city. Students easily make the connection to home and see the complexity with a new understanding.

I understand only too clearly that hardship and desperation do not erase the humanity, the connection, the commonality among us. I marvel that amidst such desperation, there exists some hope.

The love between mother and child is apparent as she sits, sharing with us. In Isidro's home, family bonds are apparent through the expression of mutual love and sacrifice. One of the students reflects on the connection, the hope.

While hiking to the top of a mountain to visit people of a remote village, I discovered that quietly and gently my hand had been taken captive by a small six-year-old boy. Quickly, my mind and my heart also became hostage—hostage not to a small boy but rather to a series of incongruities about children who live in poverty. After all, having no electricity, only a community well for the entire village, corn stalk houses, dirt floors, lack of immunizations, less than a tortilla each day to eat, and the chance to die from simple diarrhea, the children should be sad, lethargic, sick, and depressed.

But the figure at the end of my hand spoke a different story. Yes, he was skinny, underweight and dirty, BUT he was also energetic, smart, inquisitive, and gentle. His eyes were not dull as I envisioned but sparkled radiance and mischief. For a short time I was in love. (Suzanne)

The People and the Environment

Families and professionals teach us the connection between the environment, poverty, and a quality life for all. "To be human is to live with animals and plants and to have the chance to learn" (resident, La Estación). Toilet paper becomes symbolic. Mexico is a country with some of the best toilet paper in the world. It is at the same time a country where 70% of the people cannot afford toilet paper and the sewage system cannot handle it. It is also a country with poor access to safe water. Water is vital for survival but for many it is difficult to access and brings disease.

> Water . . . . Agua . . . . many words in many languages. Valuable . . . . vital . . . . life giving . . . . life taking . . . . squandered . . . . polluted . . . . wasted . . . . squandered by the wealthy. . . . Misused by nations. . . . The poor . . . . The isolated die from lack . . . . Die from pollution.
> Lessons Learned

Oppression, Poverty, and Social Work.

Without the artifacts, the language, and the symbols of our own culture, and the guilt, anger, and pain of our own history, it was easier to see the impact, the trappings, and the pitfalls of poverty. Through their graciousness and openness amongst extreme poverty, families taught us of hospitality and hope, of desperation and hardship. Students were able to view the difference between poverty with hope and poverty without hope. They learned of hunger, pollution, illness and health care, education, and housing. They also learned that we didn't have to leave home to see the degradation of poverty without hope.

"I [Ellen] have learned that poverty in Mexico, as well as other third world countries, affects us all in one way or another. I've learned that regardless of these people's impoverished conditions, they

still had laughter." "I [Rhonda] was able to see how people suffered from oppression every day and lived. . . The struggle to survive was a reality for these families." "I [Derek]became acutely aware that there are human needs not being met in this country [U.S.] as well."

Students arrived, frequently unaware of Mexico, global relationships, economic interdependence, and the multiple roles for social work intervention. Interspersing experiential learning with lecture, reflection, and discussion provided a context for understanding neoliberal economics, NAFTA, multinational corporations, the need to understand and participate in economics, and the power of individual and community action. Academics taught us history. Church and indigenous leaders taught of the struggle for liberation. While the experience was based in Mexico, the knowledge was translated back into practical implications in the U.S.

As Kenya, the student from South Africa, reminds us, "It's all about transforming the world we live in for the whole of society." Others reflect, "I realized that more needs to be done than charity work. Mexico needs some serious structural changes." "I need to be involved in some aspect of social change."

Ofelia's life experiences were full of lessons on the role of education, empowerment, and action in precipitating individual and community growth and change. Ofelia, the youth leader, the social worker, and the Blanket Man all provided lessons on the importance of support and family. And many, including the social worker, Ofelia, the youth leader, and the potter, spoke of the impact of unequal gender relationships. Students who might have been defensive and confused about discussing the impact of gender inequality at home could see the impact clearly outside their own culture and use that learning to reflect on the issues at home.

As framed by Olivia, "Women carry the burden and endure the most hardship all over the world. Not a new fact but deepened in my heart by the pain and the constancy of women's struggle."

Students learned the value of policy practice. They learned that the connection between the poor and the privileged is interdependence rather than dependence.

"I [Christopher] have learned that our policies are affecting the Mexican people for the worse." Kenesha added, "I learned that I need to stay educated on factors relating to public policy."

Experiencing a nation with a poverty rate of 70% left students understanding the disastrous effects increasing poverty and abusive welfare reform will have on the U.S. The value of a safety net for low-income individuals and families was apparent.

"I [Ellen] cannot reconcile the waste of human potential I saw while in Mexico. . . This [poverty] may not be violence in its stereotypical form . . . nonetheless it is violence, violence of another nature."

As reflected in their discussions, journals, and evaluations, students came away understanding more about the ongoing oppression of the indigenous people across North America.

Ellen summed up the feelings of many: "Being in Cuernavaca, Morales has left a very vivid image of oppression with me that I will never forget."

They learned about the struggle for liberation in Chiapas—about the connection between violence and the written word. Written reflection on the experience gives indication of the impact.

Christopher commented, "I learned more about the extent of poverty and the connectedness of all of it and us." Kenesha stated "People in poverty have similarities regardless of the country." Still another, Olivia, reported "I learned that I need to become more aware of the poverty of other countries and how they impact the U.S. and vice versa." "People live in poverty not because of choice but structure of the country" [Ellen]. White students learned that

they must not think they can be "the solvers of the world" [Susan]. They must instead enter the struggle with persons of color and develop ways to stop the oppression.

Understanding about the need to expand historical knowledge and access to accurate information on current global events grew. Students saw an expanded role for social work in the change process. They're learning to ask *"Who benefits?"* They understand now that those who labor frequently do not benefit from that labor. Students reflected on the need to find accurate media portrayal of current and historical relationships.

"I [Rhonda] have learned that watching the news and reading the paper aren't enough. I need to find reliable sources of information."

"I [Susan] have to become more involved and stay aware of what is happening in the U.S. and other countries and how my own actions contribute to the poverty and injustices of the U.S. and other countries."

"I [Christopher] have to make sure I get all the information from now on."

"I [Derek] knew nothing about Mexico before reading the book for this class and coming down here. I was ignorant about what was/is happening. I need to keep myself educated."

"Since I [Kenesha] have returned from Mexico, I have changed my thought processes which in turn have begun to change my behavior."

The following comments by Kenesha, Ellen, Christopher, and Olivia reflect the learning. "This was not only an educational excursion for me but a life changing one." "I find myself better educated, more insightful, and more understanding of the issues in Mexico."

"The two-week Mexican experience afforded an introductory glimpse into a worldwide economic system which perpetuates the growth of poverty. But it was just a beginning. In the long run, it will not be the facts and figures that we remember, but instead the faces and the words of the people."

"My feelings were ones of joy, sadness, peace, pain, and anger. Even though in many ways Mexico is vastly different than the United States, there are quite a few similarities."

Integration

The program ended with a group exercise. We, the participants from the U.S. and Canada, worked in small groups to design and sculpt a shift from current conditions to a new world without privilege built on oppression. The sculptures symbolized small community groups coming together for education, empowerment, and community building. A growing interconnectedness between individuals, families, and groups led to a shift in the power, politics, and economics for the benefit of all. We left Mexico with a sadness and a hope. We vowed to work toward change locally and globally.

Students vowed to continue learning as reflected by the comments of Rhonda, "I need to keep learning and searching for the truth."

Student learning continued through the trauma of reentry. Through journals, reflection papers, and discussion, students deepened their understanding of global interconnection and interdependence. Experiences as recorded in their journals provided a basis for writing a reflection paper integrating what they saw and experienced with social work practice, knowledge, and theory. They were required to reflect on the issues of poverty in the U.S. as well as in Mexico.

"I [Derek] still have a great deal of information to process and work through." Ellen adds, "This is the story of a woman who no longer believes in unquestioningly following those that made the rules. . . She knows that power corrupts and that often the people who are making the rules have too much power or are too concerned with keeping their power. This causes them to no longer care if the rules are good and just or if they benefit the people they were in-

tended to help and protect."

Faculty Growth

As a social work faculty member in a country with growing poverty and a world which is both shrinking and enlarging, I struggle with educating students from isolated backgrounds. Our students frequently come to us knowing only a revisionist history of the U.S. Many have little knowledge of the world outside U.S. boundaries and an inadequate understanding of the structural issues of poverty and oppression within the U.S. and across the Americas.

Over the years I have become more successful in educating students about the overlapping historical, political, and economic components of race, gender, and economic oppression. I have seen students awaken to a joy in learning about diversity and an anger at the lack of depth in their understanding of history, interconnection, and oppression. Until I participated in this immersion experience, I had not, however, seen students fully recognize and emotionally embrace the issues of poverty and the need for fundamental change. Here the lessons on the individual and structural issues of poverty and oppression became a part of their experience, raising in them an understanding of the need to make basic changes in their personal and professional lives.

As I was transformed personally and professionally, I became more aware of myself as a teacher, a learner, and a woman. I continue to struggle with integrating the lessons the families taught me. I work to improve my language skills. And I continue to refine my teaching based on the lessons of the trip. I learned the value of guided reflection interspersed with intense immersion experiences and academic lectures about theory and practice knowledge. My involvement in the process provided me with an understanding of student pain and vulnerability. As the students experienced the humanity of those in need, they became open to learning community-based practice, examining the interconnection between the environment and the quality of life for all, and understanding the role of social work in shaping local and global economics and social change. Empathy and compassion provide the basis for moral policy development and enlightened practice. □

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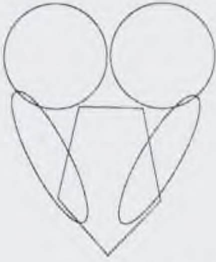

SPECIAL SERIES

Teaching and Learning

Special Editor: Janet Black

The special section of this issue of *Reflections* includes two stories and a poem sharing experiences in the teaching and learning process from multiple perspectives. The practice community provides a rich context of learning for students, academic faculty, and community practitioners: It presents opportunities to amplify the teaching and learning process; examine external and internal forces that support and hinder the development of knowledge and skill; and integrate theory and practical application while engaged in the actual experience. Most educational programs for the helping professions provide students with hands on training. In social work education we use the term "field work" or "internships" for this guided learning model. In academic institutions, we might participate in this mind-expanding experience when we take a sabbatical leave to return to the world of a practice about which we teach. Community agency staff similarly enter this exciting arena of learning when they supervise students and work toward mutually defined educational goals. The unifying force that links each of these arenas of teaching and learning is the interaction between the individual and the environment which enhances the cultivation of knowledge and its application to other avenues of our personal and professional selves. "At the Edge of Discovery: A Year in AIDS" by Robert Neubauer relates a journey of personal and professional enlightenment while "testing the currency of his knowledge and skill" in a return to practice. Stacey Peyer and Kelley Anne Berglund, in "Who's Teaching Whom," share dialogue of growth during a year as student and field instructor "moving through pain and mistakes of their pasts, opening their hearts to an incredible journey" that has had significant impact in their professional and personal lives. Eleanor Nay-Chiles writes about "The Heart of Social Work" on the occasion of being chosen as one of five recipients of the National Heart of Social Work Award in 1997. I invite you to enjoy the stories of these individuals as they embrace their professional growth with passion and tenacity; perhaps it will spark memories of your own stories that you too can share with others.

The Heart of Social Work
by Eleanor Nay-Chiles

A profession of community, of caring and hope
A profession whose goal is to help people cope
A profession of change and adjustment to living
A profession to balance the taking and giving

How do we teach the Marvelous Mystery
The skill for today and respect for our history
The Values and Ethics, the Group and the Ego
Assessment and intervention in Micro and Macro

We must listen and learn as we try to impart
What to some is a science, must be learned as an art
In each learner's style is a kernel of truth
And knowledge is stored until it grows into use.

In a People's Profession where We are the tool
The lessons of life are not all in the school
Though content and theory are a valuable part
If the seed is to flourish, it must be touched by the HEART.

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Eleanor Nay-Chiles was the recipient of the 1997 *Heart of Social Work* Award at the Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting in Chicago.

At the Edge of Discovery: A Year In AIDS

This narrative chronicles a teacher learning. After twenty-six years of social work teaching, I proposed a "return to practice" for a sabbatical year. Because of an emerging commitment to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and a desire to build a knowledge and skill base for a course on the epidemic upon return to the university, I negotiated a volunteer-staff position with the Northwest AIDS Foundation (Seattle), the largest community-based multi-service HIV/AIDS organization in the Pacific Northwest. During the year, I practiced case management, assisted in education program development, and took on numerous other tasks. My report explores how this experience of immersion in a community tested some fundamental understandings about social work practice concommitant with a liberating growth in personal identity.

by
Robert Neubauer, Ph.D.

Robert Neubauer, Ph.D., Professor, Inland Empire School of Social Work and Human Services, Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA.

Nothing's lost forever. In this world, there is a kind of painful progress. Longing for what we've left behind, and dreaming ahead. At least I think that's so.

–Tony Kushner (1992)–

Two Processes at Once

There is no diary or journal. There is only memory, and a scattering of unused documents created with the intention of a soon-abandoned disciplined self-study of what was happening to me, what I was doing, what I was feeling during a sabbatical year. I can't write journals, perhaps because I want to keep memory vital, and memory is surrendered with writing. Memory is vital... daily.

When I was pursuing the MSW at the University of Pennsylvania in the late '50s-early '60s, a pregnant student took leave of absence from the program because she was told she could not be in two processes at once. My narrative attempts to capture the experiences and effects of being in two processes at once. One is professional; the other personal. They are inextricably interwoven for me; so I present them as they happened, as simultaneously as possible.

From September 1990 through June 1991, I affiliated with the Northwest AIDS Foundation, Seattle (Foundation), for a sabbatical leave which proposed a 'return to practice' as its major purpose and its primary context of learning. Unlike others who undertake field or library research, writing or consultation, or a visiting professorship somewhere, I sought to reclaim the roots of my commitment to social work. I wanted to test the currency of my knowledge and skill; to confront the immediacy of client encounters, do staff work, provide services, meet needs. This is a partial report of experiences and learning through case management and the array of mundane staff jobs I undertook which no one else had time to do. A public relations brochure published early in my affiliation identified me as 'Professor-at-Large.' This label produced no end of word plays and induced a deliberate effort on my part to live down

the 'professor' part.

Two years prior to this leave, I began a sometimes torturous, sometimes joyful process of fully accepting myself as a gay man and taking the tentative steps toward making that identity more public. The personal process of fixing that identity needed a context in which I would be in company with other gay people. Since high school, I have searched for and read about homosexuality, gay sex, gay culture, gay identity. For many years, I had not questioned my sexual orientation; but as a child and adolescent of the '40s and '50s, my reading and interactions with others

taught me I was sick, perverted, deviant, unnatural in my feelings, fantasies, and actions. Now, in my fifties, married, with two adult children, I was coming out, scared, anxious, excited, determined, full of both regret and anticipation.

What can one learn being in two processes at once?

First Learnings in Two Processes

Early October, barely knowing what I was doing or why (which happens often when we learn), I was asked to coordinate the Speakers' Bureau. One volunteer had just finished a six-month stint in that position; but his successor was on vacation for three more weeks, and no one else was available in this pressing time to handle the Bureau. October was a critical month for the Foundation because competition for voluntary contributions through the United Way and Combined Fund Campaigns was underway and word needed to get out about the agency's programs and services. Requests for speakers and information tables came from labor unions, government offices and businesses with large staffs and payroll deduction plans, and other community groups who wanted to help their members make considered choices for their donations.

The three weeks as "Acting Coordinator" of the Speakers' Bureau was community learning through immersion. Although I'd often visited Seattle, I didn't know the city and surrounding suburban areas as places where people lived and worked. With maps and directories as critical tools, I set up engagements for Bureau volunteers whom I often had to cajole to take on assignments in unfamiliar areas and, when no one else was available, put myself on the road. From memorizing brochures and pumping staff members for words and ways of expression, to answering inquiring questions and refuting false information, I learned to communicate the mission, programs, and services of the Foundation. From the requests for speakers and display tables, I learned what groups and organizations in the community were especially receptive to hearing about AIDS and supporting the Foundation. In applying my social work skills of guilt-inducement, I learned in a small way how to persuade overworked volunteers to do just one more thing for the Foundation. Through these activities I claimed the knowledge I had prepared myself with and I learned to speak with more immediacy about AIDS, safer sex, and the human needs arising from the epidemic. During this brief period of frantic activity, I felt I became a part of the Foundation, and that the presence of the 'Professor-at-Large' crept into the consciousness of staff.

However, I felt isolated, apart from others, a stranger whose presence was suspect (was I a 'spy' for the administrator?) and whose motives for being there weren't clear. I have forgotten the complete instructions given for an exercise during an in-service training on diversity. We were each facing another staff member, and I think we were to convey to that person something honest, something from the heart, something that we wanted to say to this person that we'd never said before. My partner was someone with whom I had developed an openly outrageous flirting relationship that amused us and many staff members. Confronting him, I said something to the effect that I felt I wasn't accepted as a gay man because everyone saw me only as a married man (information I had shared when asked). He stepped back from

me in shock, then rushed to embrace me, and whispered, "We have to talk." Now I was out, a little bit, and had someone to talk to about why I was doing what I was doing, why I had come to Seattle, what I needed from others. Progressively I came out to other staff members, never making an announcement, never speaking publicly "As a gay man, I. . ." To do so at that time would have been hypocritical. As late as May one of my case management colleagues finally got the message and felt embarrased that he had been so clueless and unaccepting of me; and there was no small shame in me for being less than open and honest with him.

I came to the Foundation with a sum of attitudes about sex that was unhealthy for me and everyone close to me with whom the topic or intimacy of sex was important. Repression fostered those attitudes, and rebellion against repression left me, in middle age, confused, frustrated, ambivalent, ashamed of my sexuality, and deeply closeted. From the first day, the Foundation was electric with convivial sexual banter, every word or gesture a sexual double-entendre. With few exceptions, everyone on staff participated directly or indirectly in this sex talk. Sex permeated the place: hunky, explicit, provocative safer sex posters on the walls; cartons of condoms and lubricant; mounds of literature containing directions in the use of condoms and limitless suggestions for non-insertive sex; collections of sex toys used to demonstrate safer sex practices.

The sexual saturation challenged me. To respond I read more—the Seattle *Gay News*, the Bay Area *Reporter*, the New York *Native*, *Frontiers* out of Los Angeles—to build a gay language for myself. My library expanded considerably with books by gay writers: Ethan Morden, Paul Monette, Tom Spanbauer, Joseph Hansen, Lev Raphael, Alan Hollinghurst. I listened carefully to what people did on weekends, where and with whom to get something of a feel for the Seattle gay community. Living just three blocks from Broadway, the thoroughfare of the gay community, I haunted the open gathering places, but avoided the bars (probably a mistake, but I felt too old to do bars). Nevertheless, the social voyeur in me was thriving. Slowly I began to join the talk, freeing myself to use the words like everyone else, to invite the repartee of double entendre by being the "straight" man. I began to feel less the stranger.

This new-found comfort in talking sex was good for me and, I think, gave others a healthy release also. It was a necessary part of the function of the agency to educate and train others to value their sexuality, especially gay and bisexual men, and to practice sexual safety. Sex itself had to come out, be talked about, joked about, shared, expressed in every possible way, using as many or as few words as possible in as many or as few ways as possible.

Early October 1990, in the Seattle *Gay News*, an announcement appeared for a support group for gay men married to women or in a relationship with a woman. After a day's hesitancy, I called the number listed and spoke to John about my need to join. Within the week, I became a charter member of Seattle GAMMA (Gay Married Men's Association) (Whitney, 1990). We started with three, and by the time I left in June, close to 75 men had come to at least one meeting and a core of men, between 12 and 16, came regularly. GAMMA met weekly, first in John's counseling office, then in a Group Health hospital in Seattle. Our meetings were free-form, no agenda other than a casual check-in with the understanding among us that any new member was given our fast attention if he was there to share his story. In age we were young 20s to mid-70s (yes! and what stories he had), most of us in the 30 to 50 range. There were occasions when the regulars retold their stories with new insights, elaborations, and new truths. I found men like me, men I could talk with, men I could share experience and feelings with who would understand and connect with me from their experience and feelings; I was not alone as I had so wrongly believed. Regardless of age, the shared experiences of our "uncommon lives" led us into honesties and new assertions of self. For me,

there was a further consolidation of my gay identity, an affirmation of myself as a fundamentally healthy person, someone who needed to stop apologizing to himself for his life.

Testing Practice Skills in Case Management

As a case manager, I assumed responsibility for thirteen gay men between the ages of 29 and 50. This caseload was about one-third the usual of a case manager at the Foundation. Among those thirteen individuals were three couples in durable, intimate, longtime relationships. Both partners in two couples had Class IV AIDS diagnoses (in the nomenclature of the time); both partners of the other couple were HIV positive, only one having a Class IV diagnosis.

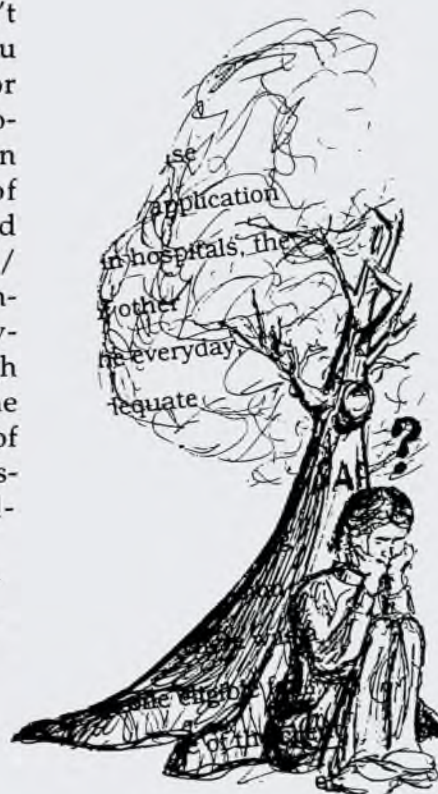
Through case management, I tested the professional skills I thought I had, skills I assumed were the right ones to be teaching, skills that surely had become rusty from lack of direct practice. My first assignment betrayed any confidence I had in myself; I was thrust back in time to the first day in field work as a student. In my head I repeated the student litany:

"I'm only a student." Anxious beyond reason, I requested that someone more experienced in the agency sit with me throughout the interview to ensure that my initial intake gave the client what he needed. I finished the interview humbled by my ignorance and ineptitude. There was much to learn. That message reverberated from the countless times I'd imposed it on students!

Details, the practical, everyday, routine knowledge that other case managers had I didn't have. Textbooks don't tell you how to file an application for SSI, SSDI, or GAU. I was ignorant of the network of people in hospitals, the Department of Social and Health Services, and the providers of other HIV/AIDS services available to Foundation clients. Through the everyday, routine work, through trial and error, garbled phone calls, inadequate preparation of questions, and watching and listening carefully to my colleagues, I learned.

Everything was happening for me in fast time. Shortly after beginning case management work, I was assigned the task of delineating, in a decision-tree format, how the Foundation implemented case management. There was a need to diagram how someone became a client, what decisions made one eligible for what services, what resources were available at what point in the life-space of the client–the precise priority of decision-making. When I took this assignment, I was not confident I knew what case management was, but I knew that my colleagues knew. I reviewed their case records, read some professional literature, reexamined my own work for descriptive clues that would define case management as a decision-making process.

The completed schematic showed that the primary actions characterizing case management at the Foundation were brokering services available within the Foundation or networking with other service providers in the community for services. (In November 1991, Rothman published his model of case management which is strikingly similar to the one I presented to Foundation staff.) Case management moved from meeting most urgent needs (financial support, housing, personal support services) to those which could be worked on over time (application for Social Security Disability, preparation of wills and other legal issues). There was no intentional psychologically oriented counseling; referrals to other resources



were made to meet psychological needs.

From my work as case manager, I developed several teaching records. I wrote these records as I was taught process recording, largely from hindsight. Much service rendering detail is absent from these records; they are more narratives of encounters than descriptions of brokering and networking activities.

What follows are three pieces of work, two that I've not written about previously. I have resisted writing about them because I knew the difficult truths they would exact from me. About one situation (Perry) I've spoken hesitantly in classes as an example of an excruciating test of my professional training; the other (Lawrence and Patrick) has remained completely within memory though it confronted me with the validity of deeply entrenched messages about professional relationships. Then, as a culminating example of emotional risks taken, I've included an excerpt from one of the teaching records (Mark).

Perry

Perry was assigned to me sometime in April, a time when I needed to begin limiting new cases, anticipating leaving at the end of June. It was a beautiful, bright, sunlit day; flowers abounded in the courtyard of the apartment complex in which Perry lived. I thought I had gained competence in initial case openings with new clients through repetitive practice, consultation with colleagues, and the satisfaction that clients received the services they needed. I had found a style for myself in the work; and, from the responses of clients and collaterals, I felt I was making good connections with people. My experience with Perry taught me about humility and called into question my emotional responsiveness to others.

Perry was waiting at a window for my entry into the courtyard. He greeted me at the top of the stairs and we walked the corridor to his door. We entered a huge room empty of furniture. He led me to a small dining alcove with windows on two sides where he'd been sitting in warm sunshine. Two chairs faced each other. He had come home from the hospital the previous day; he looked drawn, tired, worn, yet young, handsome, even vibrant. His speech was slow and deliberate as if he was saving energy by carefully choosing his words and limiting the length of sentences. Perhaps it was just his way with a stranger.

I skillfully began the assessment, not in the order of the intake form, but as our focused conversation unfolded. For a time, he wearily gave me the details I asked for. Finally, fatigued in voice and gesture, he asked if we could finish this in the bedroom so he could lie down. He led the way through the empty room to the back of the apartment where a single bed without a frame was tight against the wall. I brought a chair from the alcove and sat next to the bed.

One of my questions asked him to identify someone to be notified in case of emergency. Briefly, he turned away from me toward the wall. Facing me again, his eyes filled with tears, he said: "I suppose I have to put my mother down." He raised off his pillow, in a partial sit-up, his arm closest to me elevated off the bed toward me. He lay back down, tears falling out of his eyes. I said something like: "If your mother is the person you want to be notified, her name should be in the case record." "You won't contact her unless there is an emergency, will you?" he asked. I assured him that we would not, also saying that I'd include such a note in the file. He began talking sadly about his family, how much he'd lost of their love when he came out, how strained their present relationship was, how miserable he was because of all this, and how frightening it was to now be sick. Throughout this emotional unburdening, he kept making his sit-up gesture, and I remained distant in my chair next to the bed. At no moment did I break faith with my early training and get off that chair and take him in my arms to hold him against his grief and fear. I sat there, professionally empathic, but impassive and distant, as I thought I'd been tought.

Later: I would ask myself why I hadn't begun the whole encounter with an embrace in the hallway at first contact. Later: I felt ashamed when Perry asked me to hug him as he was leading me to the door at the close of the interview. Later:

With others I would ignore, reject, put away forever those false injunctions about not touching clients, about remaining stoic in the face of anguished emotions, about holding back the most human responses of caring, support, tenderness, acceptance, love. Finally: As Perry's health came back, as he returned to work, as he frequented the shops on Broadway where we'd see each other, he would open his arms to me and we would enfold ourselves, pass a few words, hug again, and leave for our separate ways.

I never thanked him for his freeing gift.

Lawrence and Patrick

Lawrence and Patrick were my first couple. Lawrence requested case management after Patrick was hospitalized and his own health was weakened severely. Lawrence would die in February; the first of my men to die, and Patrick would die in May, while I was in San Francisco attending an AIDS Update conference. Several days after my return a colleague said: "Did anyone tell you Patrick died?" No, no one had told me.

Between February and May more than half the people on my caseload died. No death affected me more than Patrick's for reasons I have come to understand through this writing. In the months that I saw Lawrence and Patrick, they took me into their lives. Patrick was sweet, gentle, vulnerable, soft-spoken, humorous, open; Lawrence was edgy, closed off, demanding, aloof from me, irascible. Despite the differences in my perceptions of them as individuals, as a couple they were gracious and accommodating; they were as amused by their conversation as I was. I met a brother-in-law who came weekly with prepackaged, frozen food, prepared by Lawrence's sister. I came to know a volunteer from another agency who did their laundry and chopped firewood. I sat with them and Keith, their close and supportive friend, as the three of them critically appraised the costuming and hair styling in a '40s film showing on TV. I arranged for a volunteer attorney to draft their legal papers, managed contacts with their insurance companies. Patrick and I talked about teaching and coaching. Through this

conversation we transcended his illness and talked of his life, the years of devoted teaching, his love of students and his fellow teachers, and the passion he had for the sport he coached.

Two months following Lawrence's death, Patrick returned to his family in another state, achieving a reconciliation about which we had spoken occasionally that he had doubted would ever happen. I transferred him to a case manager in a comparable program. We kept in touch, however. My last phone call with him plunged me into deep sadness. He had just arrived home from his doctor who confirmed that he had multi-site lymphoma, and he had refused further treatment. The conversation was brief. He couldn't talk; I couldn't talk. We said good-bye. That was sometime in early April, I think.

I refused to accept my colleague's report of Patrick's death. When I asked other case managers, they passed me off to our supervisor who was out of town and wouldn't be back until the end of the week. I seethed in anger, frustration, irritation, helplessness, hopelessness. By the time the supervisor confirmed Patrick's death, I realized how emotionally involved with Patrick I had become, how much I wished I had known him before AIDS, how much I had grown attached to the idea that we had a special relationship, how much I had loved him. In my refusal to accept Patrick's death I realized how deeply I had been stuffing grief since Lawrence's death. I had "numbed-off," just as I had for days and weeks after my father's death five years before. Then, "numbing off" had got me through; there was only one death to grieve, only one loss.

Eventually I apologized to colleagues for my ranting, for venting my anger on them over all the deaths I hadn't fully grieved, and I found some kind of peace in accepting Patrick's

death. I had an attitude problem that prevented me from doing what other case managers were doing regularly: participating in support groups with other service providers offered through the Seattle AIDS Support Group organization. As a group of six case managers, we often relieved one another for a day or two if too much grief or paper work had backed up. We took each other for lunch; we bought flowers; we listened to each other's grief. My attitude was one of self-assurance that I could handle the sadness, the hurt, the loss, and others must have felt that from me. I didn't need their consolation. With Patrick's death, I wanted them to know that I needed them.

I began then to find rituals for myself to focus my grief: lighting candles in my apartment in response to a client's death, buying myself flowers after emotionally draining days, preparing dinners for my daughter and her boy-friend, continuing to bake bread every Saturday while listening to the opera, working out, taking long walks, and sharing with colleagues and members of the GAMMA.

Mark

I began seeing Mark in October. He was hospitalized for a major health crisis. He refused to cooperate with the case manager who visited him in the hospital. On his return home, he was assigned to me. Because his needs were many and varied, and because he accepted (though sometimes reluctantly) my helping him, I saw Mark frequently. In retrospect, what I did for Mark was routine case management (according to the decision-tree model). What he did for me remains with me to share:

Today Mark walked me to the door.

His mother had brought him ginger snaps and he smiled without my having to make jokes. The joy of ginger snaps was enough. After he ate one lying down, he winced and complained of stomach pain and sat on the edge of the bed. When I made a move to leave his side, he slowly lifted himself off the bed. Seeing me to the door was our private, little joke.

One day some months previous when he was recuperating from minor surgery after returning from vacation in Palm Springs given to him by his friends, Paul and Ben, he asked if it would be all right–if I would excuse him–if I would forgive his bad manners–if he didn't see me to the door. I assured him then that I was capable of seeing myself out the door. This became our way of saying goodbye to each other when I visited. "I'm sure you can see your way out," he might say. Or I'd say, lightly: "Don't bother to be polite and get up and see me to the door. I've done it before and I know where the door is."

Today he's dying. He is suffering deep pain. Members of his family moved in from out of state to care for him, abruptly discharging, without informing me, the home health and assistance services I had arranged. The family's sudden appearance and involvement also disrupted the pattern of personal care Ben and Paul had been giving Mark.

Mark refused further treatment for his lymphoma. Pain control was all he'd accept, and that was not successfully managed. I'd been with him for about half an hour. I had come to meet the family, discuss care plans with them, and pick up some old bills to sort out from a bout of seizures and subsequent hospitalization while he was home visiting his family. I told him I'd try to do a good job, finally. He got up, I thought to go to the bathroom. Walking away from me, he said, "I'll see you to the door."

"No, Mark. I know the way. Remember?"

"No. I'm seeing you to the door."

"It's a first!" I exclaimed as I grabbed my jacket and briefcase and hurried to the door as Mark struggled with the lock.

He opened the door with a triumphant smile and leaned heavily against the wall in fatigue, dropping his arms limply to his sides. I opened my arms to hold him; he moved slowly into me and we held each other a long time. There was so little left of his body. I felt no strength from him, only the slightest pressure of his arms and the warmth of his body against mine. It probably hurt him to be embraced, but he never said.

"Take care, Mark," I whispered to him.

"You, too," he said quietly.

Looking down the corridor, back into the apartment, I saw his mother, silhouetted

against the glare of light from the living room windows, watching us, wiping tears from her eyes. I walked back to the office, brushing tears from my eyes, holding back the desire to sob and cry out his name, feeling his warmth as if he were pressed still against me, his hands spreading out on my back. . .

Changing Professional Perspectives

When I proposed the sabbatical leave as a return to practice, I anticipated that one area of knowledge and skill development would be "death and dying." Now, six years later, the thirteen men I worked closely with have died; but it would misrepresent my work to describe it as experiences with "death and dying." Rather, more than anything, the work affirmed life. I found what others before me and since have discovered that there is an acute awareness in the face of death of the wonder of life and what a privilege it is to live, to choose, to feel, to be close to others, to love. I was taught this, by its presence in the lives of some, and by its absence in the lives of others. Another client once said, "I can't wait for this to be over so I can be the whore I was again." I cherish this because I heard in his desire that need to live, to choose, to feel, to be consumed with life not with sickness, drugs, doctors, and case managers.

This epiphany continues to guide me in my personal and professional life. The center of myself has moved significantly. The range of my emotional life has expanded ten-fold. I feel I am more open to others, more honest with others and myself; I recognize and acknowledge the pain and joy of others (and allow myself more joyfulness as well); I take more risks, get angry about the right things, and find mendacity intolerable.

The changes I feel for myself are my debts to those I worked with: colleagues and clients. All that I claim for myself does not diminish the horror of dying of AIDS-related illnesses, or romanticize the suffering, or overlook that the deaths of these men occurred in their young adult years, or ignore the emotional pain of knowing whatever aspirations one had for a long and happy life have been curtailed significantly.

I began the sabbatical fairly well informed about HIV/AIDS. I had prepared myself through extensive reading and AIDS-training workshops. I had collaborated in writing the story of a pioneer AIDS educator who was also a long-term survivor. I believed I was ready to undertake "a year in AIDS." From my preparation, I anticipated being touched emotionally; but I was unprepared for the depth of the effect. Nothing in my life to this point has had as profound an effect on me as being "at the edge of discovery" with people living with AIDS and with those whose work is committed to the HIV epidemic. From early childhood, I learned that controlled feelings were best, that expressed feelings showed one to be weak and vulnerable. From my professional education, I learned to accept the value and necessity of expression of feelings by clients or group members, but I must not betray my feelings in the social work encounter. I no longer believe this. Roles are artifices that tend to separate and draw false lines among people. Professional roles applied artificially foster a denial of the common humanity we share. I learned that, *the true substance of being alive comes into focus when you can see the limits, when you get a glimpse at the other side. Life and death remain faces of the same coin, hard as I try to separate them. I've never been so rich* (O'Boyle, 1992).

A Celebratory End

On June 30, 1991, I proudly marched in my first Gay Pride Parade with other staff and volunteers of the Northwest AIDS Foundation. I carried a long, tall banner proclaiming "Education," one of the Foundation's services. My costume was remarkable: A pair of pink boxer shorts patterned with white condoms whimsically drawn to look like Casper the Friendly Ghost with a reservoir tip (Casper-condoms glowed in the dark too!); On my head a floppy rain hat covered with slogan pins like: **Someone I Love Has AIDS, Safer Sex: Keep It Up!**, and, **It Ain't Over Yet!** On my torso a black T-shirt with an elegant imprint of a Renaissance-styled man drinking coffee framed by the words: **Espresso Thyself**, (A farewell gift from some of the staff); On

my feet purple socks(also a gift) to match the purple markings on my Asics.

For weeks before the parade, staff and about 50 volunteers assembled safer sex kits for men and women. Men's kits consisted of two condoms (one lubricated, one dry), a promotional pamphlet about the Foundation with staff photo and condom use instructions, a small tube of lubricant, and a piece of saltwater taffy (for "after"). Women's kits contained a dental dam, the two condoms, pamphlet with photo and instructions, lube, a rubber glove, and the taffy (for "after"). The kits were packaged in colorful pasteboard.

We marched along. Some of us gave saltwater taffy to spectators, while others distributed safer sex kits to 'adults only.' As if an entourage dressed in pink or black Casper-condom shorts wouldn't have attracted enough attention, we continued along yelling loudly like high school cheerleaders, as loudly to get the message out that we were seriously having fun that day:

"Two-four-six-eight
Safer sex or masturbate!"
or
"Men and women,
Girls and boys
Put some latex
On your toys!"

Throughout the parade route, the crowd wildly supported us with applause, cheers, and cat-calls from friends, and quickly picked up our chants. Approaching the Broadway Market where the densest crowds and the judges' stand were, people began cheering and clapping, cheering, cheering, cheering, louder and louder as we passed. I refused to hold back the tears blurring my vision as I followed other banner carriers into a ragtag formation that would have embarrassed a high school drill team. We were exuberantly flamboyant, and something in me was thriving, a completeness I'd not felt about myself, an exquisite new pride in who I was, what I had been doing, whom I had come to know and love in the past ten months.

As we bent the corner where Broadway East slants off past the Elite Bar and the arterial continues as 10th Avenue East, Alex from GAMMA, waved to me from the crowd. I was joyous; I thought we'd said our final good-bye at the meeting on Thursday. Racing out of ranks toward him, I opened my arms to embrace him. We held each other for a long, last time. He introduced me to his wife; I touched him on the shoulder again, ran off to catch up and hide the tears.

The parade ended as a grand extravaganza in Volunteer Park where other AIDS programs and service organizations had set up booths alongside the array of Gay and Lesbian organizations representing the diversity and unity of the Gay and Lesbian communities of greater Seattle. Several times I completed rounds of the park, collecting more buttons for my hat, receiving helium balloons from a lithe, beautiful man dressed only in a pair of scant, tight black leather shorts, passing bare-breasted women wearing electrician's tape in crosses over their nipples, witnessing the spice, variety, vibrancy of the community celebrating its day with itself.

The next day I would leave, return to my academic life, move from the apartment on Capitol Hill, just a six-minute walk from the Foundation offices on Broadway, that had become more than home to me. For today, I wanted to indulge myself in all the sensations of the Park. I did not want to leave the Park, the Foundation, Seattle. I did not want to lose those I'd come to love, and was fearful of losing those new senses of myself that had grown and been nurtured among them.

Absorbed in regret and overwhelming sadness as I walked back to the apartment to continue packing, I was caught off guard by several people who

stopped to ask where they could get a pair of boxer shorts like mine, how much did I pay for them, would I give them mine. A weight of sadness left as I realized how comfortable I was in my Casper-condom pink boxers, how comfortable I had become with sexual banter, how comfortable with my life, how comfortable with myself. . .

Reflections

Sitting at an information table in the Henry Art Gallery on the campus of the University of Washington, 1 December 1990–World AIDS Day–I watched as a girl of about 11 took one of the condom packets (bright red pasteboard covers with white stylized snow flakes holding one Kimono condom) from the large fish bowl on the table, opened it, examined the graphic instruction for condom use inside the cover, and ran to show her mother and then her father who'd just joined them. They spoke in French; the parents were smiling, not scolding, then pointed her to return the condom packet to the bowl. She folded the packet carefully, looked up at me as she deposited the packet in the bowl, smiled, and ran back to walk through the exhibit with her parents.

This was something extraordinary. I expected to see consternation, disgust, shock, anger, confusion, irritation with my fellow volunteer and me. Instead, I saw a gentle acceptance of the child's curiosity. Perhaps her parents used the opportunity to forthrightly answer questions about condoms and AIDS, and why the museum was commemorating that day as "A Day Without Art." I was left to think about the strong bias building within me that the response of others to anything having to do with AIDS would be hostile.

What, then, was/is the meaning of all this, and how has my life been affected by these experiences? As for some the personal is political, so also for me the personal is not separate from the professional, especially if one acknowledges *always* being in at least two simultaneous processes.

Writing and rewriting this after six years has been its own emotional experience. I have relived, lived through, and re-experienced events, relationships, joys, and sorrows whose cumulative effect I feel anew. Because the experience of the sabbatical changed me, I returned to my academic colleagues with naive expectations that they also had changed. I looked forward to different (yes, higher) levels of intellectual and emotional connections with them; I wanted to tell everyone my story of discoveries. Sadly, few wanted to know what I had learned about practice, how my sabbatical experiences had forced me to reaffirm, disconfirm, rethink, and revalue my senses of practice. I began to feel I had taken on the stigma of AIDS, that I was somehow contaminated rather than recommitted, re-created, renewed. Rather than be engaged around the revelations and epiphanies I had felt, I was to be avoided for fear of contagion. There is a bitterness about this. Ruefully, I concluded that we stifle our emotional lives, keeping ourselves shielded from one another, unfortunately assuming there is a privacy to feelings that are fundamental to the human experience.

In fairness, my faculty colleagues had had an extremely distressing year that proved divisive among them. The embers remain smoldering today and it takes little to bring them to full flame. Many sought me out, some wanting me to be guilty for my absence from the fray, others wanting me to know how bad it had been for them. Individually they could talk about their feelings, but we were denied any opportunity as a faculty to collectively relieve the anger, resentment, and hurt. I know most of my colleagues wished they had been away too.

Since the sabbatical year, I have found lifelines to a separate reality composed of people, places, and circumstances that preserve and express my commitment to the epidemic:

Designing and teaching a course on HIV/AIDS;
Involving myself as a board member and volunteer with the Spokane AIDS Network;
Continuous advocating for HIV/AIDS content across the curriculum;
Serving as volunteer staff for "Strength for the Journey" HIV/AIDS retreats;
and Participating in the return of the NAMES Project-AIDS quilt.

In teaching, I now place highest value on learning in the affective domain, using materials that evoke strong emotional responses from students; and I am freer in my emotional disclosures. When I read student papers, I express my regard for the risks they've taken, the honesty I feel from them, the understanding I find in their writing. I more readily praise than fault. I narrow the distances among us as much as possible, without diminishing the differences in our roles.

Without announcing it in a faculty meeting or hanging a sign over my office door that reads "Queer Here," I wanted to be out and open with my colleagues, most of whom have known me for ten, fifteen, twenty years. Patterns of relationships with me in the accustomed heterosexual identity have been difficult to break. Slowly, colleagues got the drift; some never saying anything to me (maybe it just isn't important?); some expressing shock and surprise; some wanting to know the effects my coming out had on my family. It was/is a difficult subject to broach, for them, for me: how do you start? How do you fit it into a conversation without fear of offense? How can you be inquisitive and interested yet not intrusive? Underlying this, perhaps, is our reluctance to accept and confront changes in one another because of the work that such acknowledgement takes. It demands a significant adjustment in our feeling when we know something more about another than we knew before. Finally, there may be anger that I deceived them, kept them from knowing something about myself until now.

While I have seized many opportunities for disclosure, I have still to develop a language that will express myself fully to those who 'don't know' and most particularly to students. I search for the context, for the timing, for the occasion, for the necessity (Cain 1996). I struggle against my fears, reticence, and residual homophobia as well as the embarrassment others have for me for letting out a secret that should have been kept. In this I've taken on the mantle and rhetoric of the oppressed, and sometimes the irony is unbearable. □

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Who's Teaching Whom: The Parallel Process of Field Instructor and Student

This narrative relates the process between a social work student, a field instructor, and a client in a residential facility for delinquent adolescents. It explores the issues that arose for each of the players and the ways in which they grew and learned from each other during the eight months that they all worked together. The story is told by the field instructor and the student. Particular attention is paid to the countertransference and to the use of a journal by the student to assist in the clarification and management of these issues.

**by
Stacey Peyer and
Kelley Berglund**

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This is a story of three people–a young, eager first-year Master of Social Work (MSW) student; a dedicated, enthusiastic field instructor; and a 15-year-old, angry, neglected boy. We have a number of characteristics in common: a somewhat rough exterior, are often misunderstood, and have a great deal of tenderness just below the surface. We have all been hurt in the past, leaving with feelings of abandonment and a sense of unfulfilled neediness, which we try to cover with varying degrees of success. We all protect ourselves by holding back or by moving ahead in relationships and connections only with great caution. The story is told from two perspectives: that of the supervisor and that of the student. We would have liked to have included the client in this process, but his whereabouts are unknown. We feel that it is important to acknowledge that his experience is portrayed through our eyes.

This is a story of how the three of us moved through the pain and mistakes of our pasts to open our hearts to an incredible journey.

The Instructor (Stacey, or "S")

I was in my seventh year on staff at the Diane K. Smith Center when Kelley began her internship as a first-year MSW student. The Smith Center is a public, locked residential treatment program for adolescent boys and girls ages 14 to17 who are placed by the court as a result of having committed any of a variety of crimes, ranging from property crimes and sex offenses to other violent crimes. Most of the residents have histories of being physically abused, sexually abused, and/or neglected. Their families suffered from multiple problems and in many cases overtly supported their children's delinquency. During my years there, the severity of the residents' emotional disturbance, the amount of gang involvement, and the level of violence had increased. A significant number of the boys were growing up in families where one or more of their role models were active or ex-gang members.

Residents at the Smith Center live in "cottages" of ten each. Each cottage has a treatment team which consists of an MSW (the team leader), three bachelor's-level line staff, and a part time consultant who may be a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist. The MSW conducts group psychotherapy four or five days per week. Family treatment is considered essen-

tial, especially if the plan is for the resident to return home upon release. Individual therapy is provided on an as needed-basis, mostly in response to a crisis or in preparation for a family session. The average length of stay is about eight months. The approach is primarily psychodynamic. Residents are encouraged to verbalize their feelings as opposed to acting them out, to understand the impact of their past on their current behavior and delinquency, and to learn to make more conscious and responsible choices. Behavior modification and family systems theories are also incorporated into the treatment approach.

The Smith Center is a rich agency for clinical training due to the intensity of the available experience, the multi-disciplinary approach and the dedication of clinical staff to training. For four years, I had been a Field Instructor at the Center for the two major local schools of social work. Kelley was to be my seventh student. The seven students and four field instructors involved that year. It was to be the largest and most diverse group with which I had worked at Smith. We had always provided group supervision in past years, but this year the group took on a very different quality. It began to develop rather quickly into a process oriented supervision group in which the focus was transference and countertransference among all the group members and supervisors and between the members and their clients. Much time was spent on addressing the multitude of emotions–including but not limited to anger, sadness, and frustration–that are raised in working with this challenging client group within the intense setting of the Smith Center.

Students are immersed into the activities of the Center, students acting as co-leaders in cottage groups (and multiple family group if it is in existence in their assigned cottage), carrying a caseload for individual or family therapy, conducting some groups on their own, and participating in the daily happenings involving their clients. These might include school conferences, case presentations, or conferences between residents and line staff aimed at conflict resolution.

The process of supervising social work students had become perhaps the most stimulating and rewarding aspect of my job at the Center. I loved my work, and the openness and enthusiasm of the students. I looked forward to the beginning of each new academic year with enthusiasm and anticipation, and the year Kelley began was no exception. What I did not know was that it would prove to be the best training year for me yet, that I would grow more than I could have imagined, and that it would leave me with a sense of accomplishment that would enable me to take the next step in both my personal and my professional lives.

I don't remember much about my first impressions of Kelley. I have decided not to refer to notes of her early work for a number of reasons: We are writing this as a joint project; she does not have the same access to case files as I do; and we agreed to keep the "reporting" as parallel as possible. Also, I want to write as much as possible from memory. It is the existence, after all, of such a rich and emotion-filled memory that makes this story worth telling. The only written material we use are things that we both have access to, such as her evaluations and her countertransference journal, both of which we will discuss in detail.

The characteristics that I remember most are Kelley's youth, naivete, genuine caring for others, and large, idealistic goals. She was enthusiastic about having been placed at the Smith Center and approached this new and challenging experience with an openness and desire to learn. She saw her role in social work more as that of a macro practitioner; she was committed to improving the lives of inner city and gang-oriented youth via program development and community involvement. Kelley had just completed her Bachelor's degree in Exercise Science and saw recreation and sports as a way to connect with and serve at-risk youth in order to prevent delinquency, gang involvement, and drug abuse. I remember thinking of her as rather vulnerable, although she had a tough exterior and a "Don't mess with me" attitude. She considered herself a strong feminist and spoke out about women's issues.

Rick was placed at the Center about one month before Kelley began her field place-

ment. He, too, struck me as vulnerable, with a similar "Don't mess with me" attitude; rather typical of minors at the Center, especially in their first month or so when they were trying to find their niche and prove themselves. Rick had a beautiful dimpled face, huge dark eyes, and long eyelashes. His face was impossible not to notice, and he knew it. He also knew how to use his good, sweet looks and charm to win his way. This is probably what I remember the most about Rick's early days at the Center, along with his intense underlying loneliness, which he tried so hard to conceal. But I saw it. We all saw it.

Rick knew that his father had left the state with no forwarding address. He felt a great deal of shame and sadness about this, and so, rather than tell me, he let me call all of the numbers in his file until I eventually learned the facts on my own.

When confronted with the truth, Rick acknowledged that after his father's mother died about one and one-half years before, his father had become involved with drugs. It was about that time that he told then 13- year-old Rick that he could no longer take care of him and that Rick was on his own. Rick went in and out of placements, on and off the streets, involving himself with gangs and drugs in order to survive. The death of his grandmother was a great loss to him. His father's downslide into drugs was another loss, followed by the actual abandonment of being sent out to fend for himself. Rick had seen his birth mother only once and was told by his father that she abandoned them when Rick was an infant. He denied knowing the whereabouts of any other relative, except to say that he did have a number of half siblings somewhere in the Midwest. Absent his street connections, Rick was essentially alone in the world, with no emotional or social support system.

I had made a habit of asking students, following their first group, if there were any residents with whom they might like to work. I did this because I feel that it is best for the student to experience the first group unencumbered by notions or anxieties about one boy or another. Further, this allows them to observe all residents and their interactions without any undue influence from me. In the case of Rick and Kelley, I had pretty much decided to make the assignment before that first group. I tried to assign the boys with no family contact or visitations to students because they often benefit from the extra attention. I also tried to diversify my students' caseloads in terms of ethnicity, age, motivation for treatment, level of verbal ability, and potential for insight in order to maximize their learning. Rick quickly proved himself to be bright, verbal, and capable of self-exploration, although it was clear that he would be quite resistant based on his tendency to self-protect and his reserved nature in group. Rick was African American and Kelley was Caucasian, as was her other individual client, John. So Rick's case was also a good choice due to ethnic differences. By the time Kelley began at Smith, it was clear that Rick would have no family involved in his treatment. And she picked him out of that first group as a kid who touched her heart.

The Student (Kelley, or "K")

I started graduate school in the fall of 1993 when I was 22 years old. I decided to get my MSW because I wanted to work with adolescents in gangs. I wasn't sure whether I wanted to work in treatment or prevention. I only knew that I was passionate about doing something to address the gang problems in Los Angeles. I didn't know much about social work, but I was advised by a friend that an MSW program would be the logical step to building a career working with gangs. I envisioned the program as one which would help develop my skills and my un-

derstanding of working with marginalized populations. I had no idea that the social work field had a clinical component; I thought that it was all about community organizing. Needless to say, I was in for a big surprise.

On the first day of orientation, all of us first-year students showed up at school to find out where we would be placed for our internships. I was not familiar with the "Diane K. Smith Center." We split up into smaller groups and Frankie, one of the women in the program, told me that she had the same placement. Then another woman, Claire, said that she was placed there, too. I felt relieved to know that I would have some companionship. Claire told Frankie and me that Smith was a great placement. I knew then that I had made the right decision about entering the program. I anxiously and somewhat nervously looked forward to my first day at Smith.

All students were required to go to the agency prior to the first day of field placement to meet the field instructors and to be introduced to the agency. I got there a few minutes early, exchanged my driver's license for a visitor's pass, and was told that my field instructor, Stacey, would be with me shortly. The building was smaller than I had expected. It looked like a junior high school in a small town. The glass partition between the receptionist and me reminded me that it was not a school but a facility which housed juvenile delinquents. When Stacey came out to the lobby, I realized that we had to be let in and out of the door by a buzzer controlled by the receptionist.

Stacey led me to her office. She asked me about myself, how I ended up in the social work program, what my work and educational experiences had been, and how I felt about being placed at Smith. After we talked, she took me on a tour. It looked like a fairly nice facility, as far as juvenile detention centers go. We went inside Stacey's cottage so I could see what it was like. It was barren and depressing. With a tile floor and brick walls, the last thing it reminded me of was a cottage.

There was one big room with a kitchen, and a smaller room for group therapy. There were ten rooms down the hall and a common bathroom with no door. Each room held a bed, a desk, and a closet. I don't know what I expected it to look like, but I immediately felt sympathetic for the boys who had to live there. I knew that they had committed crimes, but I still thought that a more "homelike" environment would be more therapeutic. After we left the cottage, we went to the recreation area. I saw all of the kids, boys and girls, playing games, looking as though they were having fun. I thought that if only these kids, and others like them, who were brought up in gang-ridden environments had been raised in stronger, more well-developed communities, they probably wouldn't have ended up at Smith.

I wasn't sure what to think of Stacey. She seemed like a nice person, interested in me and in my opinions. I felt fairly comfortable after meeting her, but I was still somewhat unsure of what it would be like to work with her. I don't know what I expected her to be like, but of all the people I knew who worked with kids in gangs, she did not fit the stereotype. She seemed more like an outdoor type of person rather than a big-city gang worker. That was actually one of the things that I liked about her, though, because sometimes I felt like a small-town suburban girl in a big city trying to tackle the gang problem. I looked forward to beginning my field placement the following week.

My first introduction to the kids in the cottage was in group therapy. Stacey introduced me as the intern she had told them about and explained the time frame of my internship. The kids were really nice to me. The awareness of the fact that I was very close to them in age is perhaps part of the reason why I felt as if they were sizing me up. Did they think of me as a social worker, the way they thought of Stacey? Somehow I doubted it. That day was my

first introduction to the clinical aspect of social work. I found myself only halfway able to concentrate on the process of the group, with the other half of me concentrating on the kids–trying to figure them out, as they were doing to me.

After group that day, Stacey asked me if there were any kids with whom I would like to work and why. I had noticed Rick in group because he seemed to be very similar to people I had known who had contributed to my developing interest in working with this population. During my four years in college, I had met several people who were in gangs or who had grown up in communities affected by gangs. I had a friend in college who was a member of one of the largest gangs in Los Angeles. At the end of our sophomore year, he was arrested and sent to a state prison to serve a 13-year sentence. I wondered if something could have prevented this. Maybe if enough people in his life had tried to help him...maybe if I could have helped him, he would have stopped engaging in criminal activity. This impacted my interest in working with Rick because he, like my friend, seemed to be an intelligent, sensitive person, not the stereotypical "thug" or gang banger. It reminded me of the fact that people get involved in gangs for a variety of reasons, not just because they want to be criminals. Rick reminded me of a composite of some of the people in my life. I believed that just below the surface of the hard exterior of many gang members was a much softer character. I wanted to be the one to break through the hard exterior. I believed that if everyone could just see what I saw in these "criminals," they would be more willing to help them and to find a better solution than locking them up. Needless to say, I was very excited that Stacey was going to let me work with Rick. I tried not to let it show too much because I was afraid that she would be able to detect just how interested I was in him and perhaps begin to wonder why. I thought that if she knew that he reminded me of men in my life whom I cared about, she might question my motivation for wanting to work with him.

I was also concerned because I was keenly aware that the age difference between us was not significant. I knew that I would have a hard time being a social worker to the kids at Smith when I had a strong desire to be their friend.

S: The initial plan for Rick's treatment included weekly individual psychotherapy with Kelley for approximately 50 minutes to one hour, along with daily group. Kelley was present and co-led the group on two of those days. Rick would also attend bi-weekly multiple-family group (all residents in the cottage were to participate regardless of whether they had family in attendance). Kelley and I agreed that the issue of the therapeutic relationship, while primary in all social work treatment, would be especially in the forefront in her treatment with Rick. I tried to predict the way that Rick might act out his abandonment issues in the therapy by trying to keep Kelley at a distance or by pulling her in and then pushing her away. And so, the work began.

K: Stacey and I talked about the goals for Rick's case. The main goal in working with Rick was to develop a relationship with him in which he could work on his interpersonal skills. Rick needed to learn how to trust, communicate, and be in a caring relationship. These were things which were underdeveloped in Rick as a result of his family history. Rick had a lack of respect for authority figures. He hated having people tell him what to do. He repeatedly stated that he didn't care about or need anyone in his life. These issues were directly linked to Rick's history of being abandoned by the two most significant authority figures in his life thus far, his parents. Thus, the secondary goal was to help Rick express his feelings about being abandoned by his parents.

S: Kelley's attachment to Rick developed rather quickly. He attempted to keep her at a distance, as was expected, and provided her with quite a challenge as he resisted her early efforts to engage him. Early in the year, during group supervi-

sion, Kelley was discussing an interaction with Rick in which he had been rude to her, and another supervisor asked her what it was that she liked in this 'child.' She became tearful, responding as if a statement had been made challenging his worth. As we began to address these feelings and her sensitiveness to such comments and questions, a bit of defensiveness became evident on her part. I never experienced this in our individual supervision, but I saw it in group supervision. As we explored this defensiveness, we learned that it was connected to her feeling often misunderstood (i.e., the "tough exterior") as well as confused and troubled about her level of concern for Rick. Kelley was proving to be pretty raw emotionally. Her feelings were just below the surface, and she often became tearful in both group and individual supervision. Her tears were commonly triggered by her relationship with Rick and what was going on in his therapy. In general, she felt overwhelmed by his sadness and loneliness. She expressed a great deal of anger towards his family and the families of most of the other minors, blaming the families' inadequacies for the minors' delinquency and accompanying pain. Kelley often referred to how lucky she felt to have had the love and support of a close knit family, and how different the minors' lives would have been if they had had a similar upbringing. Kelley did an excellent job as a young, inexperienced student in using her feelings in the service of the treatment. She worked hard to help Rick to identify and verbalize his feelings, and she was consistently empathic.

K: When we first began our work together, I had no idea what to expect. I didn't understand what a significant role transference and countertransference issues could play in a treatment relationship. Almost instantly, I was drawn to Rick's

charm. He had dimples and a smile that went straight to my heart. I thought he was adorable. I knew that he was the type of guy I would have a huge crush on if I met him in my personal life. In fact, he very much reminded me of a friend from school whom I had known for five years. Rick reminded me of my friend in the way he looked at and interacted with me. He was very flirtatious. Also, they were both on their own, without parents. Rick's parents had abandoned him and my friend's parents had both passed away before he began college. I had always felt an attraction towards my friend, coupled with a desire to take care of him. I felt similarly toward Rick and these feelings intensified as our work continued.

I could sense from Rick that he was willing to work with me, even though he was at Smith involuntarily. I didn't fully understand the importance of the initial development of trust in a therapeutic relationship. I tried to dive right into Rick's family issues. I wanted him to express anger and sadness at what had happened to him. Rick vehemently denied that his parents' abandonments had any effect on him. He professed that it didn't matter to him and that he didn't care about either of them because they didn't care about him. My initial response as a first-year student with no clinical experience and very little understanding of the therapeutic process was to want to convince him that they did care about him and that he did care about them and was actually hurt and angry at what they did to him. However, I saw that this approach wasn't working, and it was not helping me to establish a relationship with him. I didn't know what else to talk about with him. I was stuck and knew I needed a new approach. I didn't want him to get mad and refuse to work with me, so I decided not to push this subject. Instead, we began to develop the treatment relationship.

As our work progressed, I

found myself becoming very attached to Rick. I was consumed by thoughts of him, while I was at Smith and while I was at home or at school. I wrote almost all of my papers in school about his case. I desperately wanted to help him, but I didn't know how to do it.

I cared about him and I knew that even though he didn't want to care about anyone, he was starting to care about mebecause of how he interacted with me. In group, I used to feel him looking at me. When I looked back at him, he would grin and I had to look away because he tried to hold on to the look. I found myself enjoying the attention he paid to me. He began asking me personal questions such as how old I was, where I lived, where I went to school, and if I had a boyfriend. I knew that his interactions felt flirtatious to me and I was aware that I found myself wanting to flirt back, but I knew that I couldn't do this and I felt as if I was doing something wrong by even feeling tempted. I thought that I could make up for the love his parents didn't give to him and then he would be okay. I thought that if someone would just care about him and give him a home he wouldn't go back to being a gang banger and a drug dealer. I wanted to be that person. I wished that I wasn't his therapist so that I could take care of him. I thought that even having these feelings was bad and I was afraid that if anyone found out, especially Stacey, I wouldn't be able to work with Rick anymore. I couldn't let that happen, so initially I didn't tell her what kinds of thoughts and feelings I was having. I didn't know that they were countertransference issues and that it was important for me to understand them so that I could make sure they didn't have a detrimental effect on Rick's treatment. Stacey knew that I was becoming attached to him but she didn't know to what extent.

S: By about the sixth week of Kelley's internship at Smith, two things were becoming increasingly clear to me:

1) Transference and countertransference were going to play a large role in Rick's treatment; Kelley's emotional reaction to her work primarily, but not exclusively, to Rick would need to be a focus of supervision, and

2) Termination, now seven months away, would be an issue to be addressed directly and consistently throughout the treatment.

It seems important to acknowledge at this point in our story that the term "countertransference" does not have "one" widely accepted meaning, and to define it for our purposes. Traditionally, countertransference included unconscious, unresolved issues on the part of the therapist that impact on the treatment. In more recent years, it has come to include the wide variety of emotional reactions a therapist may have to a client, regardless of the level of consciousness or lack of same. In my teaching and for the purpose of this article, I define countertransference as encompassing both of the above.

Because of these two realizations, I decided to introduce the use of a "countertransference journal." I had become acquainted with this tool from a social worker named Cheryl Goluch, who had done some training on its use for a local social work graduate program. The essential idea behind the journal is for the student to write about the emotional experiences related to her work and training in a free and unstructured way. My responses would be mostly to normalize, validate, and identify issues for further discussion in supervision. Where appropriate, I would suggest that she address issues in her own therapy. The journal was to be confidential between Kelley and me; no information would be used "against her" in evaluations. Some might wonder about the ethics involved in such an agreement. After all, what if the student were to divulge something truly problematic? I do not see this as a conflict, however, because it is behavior, not thoughts or feelings, that we must consider in the evaluation process. The promise I made was that no information from the journal would be shared with the school unless it had a concrete impact on her work. And if that occurred, I would be sharing information from her work and her process recordings and not from her journal. Although I know that this is a distinction with which some may not be comfortable, it worked for me and was, I believe, largely responsible for the growth and progress that took place for all

three of us. It seems relevant to acknowledge here that there is an ongoing controversy in the field of mental health as to whether or not supervision is a therapeutic process and to what extent it is appropriate to address a student's personal issues in the supervision. Some clinicians feel that it is appropriate only to help the student to identify an issue and then to refer her to her therapist for exploration/ resolution. Some, myself included, believe that it is appropriate to address personal issues as they affect the treatment. I believe that this is truly the only way to effectively develop conscious, self-aware clinicians. According to Burns and Holloway (1990), "It may be appropriate to use counseling skills when the intent is to enhance trainees' understanding of their own reactions, attitudes, and behaviors toward the client." They go on to explain that such techniques may be appropriate in "helping trainees to understand their behavior in the context of the counseling relationship and to translate such understanding into more effective counseling practice." Clearly, the use of a journal in supervision requires a degree of comfort in working within this kind of framework.

To use the journal effectively as a teaching tool, I needed to be open to the process of getting to know Kelley pretty well. I needed to trust myself to know the boundaries between supervision and therapy and to be able to maintain them within the context of this more emotionally laden supervision. I needed to be prepared for the emotion that could, and did, get stirred up for me.

It is to Kelley's credit that she responded with little resistance to the journal. She was, in fact, feeling overwhelmed and somewhat concerned about the intensity of her emotional responses. She seemed to welcome the opportunity to increase her level of consciousness and thereby the quality of her work.

As I reviewed Kelley's journal, two major themes emerged. The first was her struggle to understand why she was so strongly affected by her relationship with Rick. The second theme was that of Rick's acting out his abandonment fears by repeatedly pulling her in and then pushing her away. Closely connected to this theme was the issue of termination.

The first theme was woven throughout Kelley's journal and our supervision. What was the countertransference involved? What issues of Kelley's were involved? And how could she handle these issues effectively in both the personal and professional realms?

Kelley began to understand some of her countertransference towards Rick through her writing and our supervision. At first she was only vaguely aware of a wish to "save" Rick; she was overwhelmed with the feeling of wanting to take care of him. As she wrote and talked about it, she realized that this was a familiar feeling. She wrote of how Rick reminded her of the kind of men that she used to go out with in college, young men who seemed to need caretaking, someone to worry about them. They were also inconsistently nurturing in return, and Kelley had clearly felt hurt, disappointed, and used.

Kelley expressed some ambivalence in acknowledging the connection because of what she perceived as the taboo against having any even remotely sexual feelings towards a client, especially a minor. According to Pope, Sonne, and Holroyd (1993), a therapist or trainee is especially likely to feel hesitant to raise an issue of sexual attraction for a client in supervision when it has a connection to unresolved personal issues.

Once again Kelley was willing and able to let me know about these feelings. By the end of January, she had determined that Rick's inconsistency, or the "come close/go away" dance that he played, somewhat paralleled her relationships with men in college. As she explored this further she realized that, in a way, Rick was a "player" like the guys in school had been. She began to hypothesize that her connection to Rick and her attraction to "players" was based on a fear of true intimacy and relationship. In other words, since there was no chance of a real relationship with any of these men, including Rick, she would not be hurt again.

It was during the month of January that Kelley decided to enter therapy. This decision was clearly related to the emotional impact of her experience at Smith. Over the remaining months, Kelley grew in her understanding of these counter-

transference issues. It was fascinating to realize that she had been struggling with so many of the same issues as Rick. While she was so frustrated by his resistance and his "dance," she too was doing a similar dance in her own life.

Both she and Rick were trying desperately to get their needs for connection met while trying to sidestep the risk of loss and the associated pain. As Kelley became more clear about these dynamics, she became more accepting of her feelings about Rick and less judgmental of herself for "feeling too much." At the same time, her therapy was allowing her the opportunity to deal with her own issues, and she was learning to use her self more consciously and effectively in Rick's treatment; she was developing a professional self.

K: Shortly after I started working at Smith, Stacey suggested we use a countertransference journal in our supervision. I know now that it was because she could see that I was having strong feelings and reactions about my work with the kids, particularly with Rick. She told me that it was optional, but that she thought it might really help me to be able to identify and understand the countertransference issues I was experiencing, many of which were surfacing in my work with Rick.

She told me that the journal was something in which I could write anything I was feeling and thinking that came up in working with the kids. It would be something that only she and I would read. I liked the idea because I could write about my experience in a much more informal manner than the process recordings required by the school. However, it felt a bit uncomfortable at first, as if many of the thoughts and feelings I was having about Rick were wrong, even though Stacey had told me that feelings can never be wrong; it's the way we act on the feelings that matters.

Eventually, after seeing that Stacey's feedback was nonjudgmental, I was able to write more freely in the journal without worrying that somehow it was going to get me in trouble. The journal allowed me to bring things to the surface with Stacey that I was hesitant to verbalize in supervision. Since I still felt that the feelings I was having were somehow wrong, particularly about Rick; I was unsure of how to approach a discussion about them with Stacey. Writing in the journal was, for me, an easier way to bring up difficult subjects. I thought that if Stacey read what was going on with me in the journal first, she wouldn't be shocked about anything in supervision. In addition to utilizing the countertransference journal as a tool to understanding all of the issues that were coming up for me, I started going to therapy. My own therapy was extremely helpful in sorting out my issues and in working on becoming more self aware.

S: The second theme of abandonment and the subtheme of termination was also evident in Kelley's journal on a regular basis. From the very start of her work with him, Rick expressed concern about Kelley leaving at the end of the school year. Even as he denied her importance, he asked me why, given his issues with abandonment, had I assigned him an intern.

Kelley's first journal entry, which was in mid-November, documented clearly the way in which Rick would let her in and then push her away. Within the first two weeks of journaling, Kelley had begun to explore her feelings about terminating with Rick and from Smith. She anticipated it with a sort of dread.

Rick continued his "dance" after winter break, alternating between aloofness and closeness, openness to working on issues and outright refusal to talk. Kelley struggled to handle this seeming assault on her self and her skills and still to effectively manage the treatment process. To this end, she needed to learn to accept Rick's pattern as part of the process, not as a step backward and not as a true reflection of her worth or Rick's feelings about her.

In late January, they had a particularly poignant session; Kelley was able to disrupt the pattern and Rick conceded that it had been a defense. He did not want to acknowledge her importance because he was afraid of the pain he would feel when she left Smith, like the pain he had felt when his father left him. This, of course, was a wonder-

ful insight and a sign of incredible growth. That's how I saw it. Kelley, on the other hand, struggled with knowing in her head it was good but feeling in her heart like the enemy that was going to hurt him as the others had. Her entry that week ended "MAN, TERMINATION IS GOING TO SUCK!" It was written in all capital letters, just like that, and was scrawled across the page and underlined.

Termination is often referred to as the most important phase of treatment. Social workers commonly state that it must be addressed as such throughout the treatment process. In all of my years as a clinical social worker, however, I have never seen another case in which termination was such an overt issue almost from the day treatment began, for both the client and the social worker. And yes, even for the supervisor.

Near the end of February, I had a dream in which Kelley was a resident at Smith and I was her worker. She was about 18 and had nowhere to go upon release. It is very difficult to place a resident over 17 1/2 due to funding issues. In the dream I tried desperately to find a place for her to go when she left Smith. I was concerned about the kind of care she would get, whether the new worker would provide for her as I had, and whether she would get what she needed. In reality, she was preparing to leave Smith and was planning for her next field placement. As students often do, she was asking for my assistance in deciding the type of experience and supervision she would need in her second year. As I assisted her, I wondered who would give as I had. I was aware of feeling protective and concerned. The dream represented a parallel of Kelley's experience as she was worried about what would happen to Rick after she completed her internship. In retrospect, I think that this dream was my first real hint about how powerful the experience of working with Kelley and Rick was for me and about how I might respond to its termination as well.

K: Termination was an issue in my work with Rick virtually from the beginning. Since he had major abandonment issues with both of his parents, Rick resisted getting close to anybody. He did not want to care about anyone ever again because he did not want to re-experience the abandonment and pain.

Rick developed a pattern of interaction with me that was difficult for me to understand and accept. I used to get very frustrated with him and discouraged about the effectiveness of our sessions. He opened up to me sometimes and acknowledged being angry at his parents for leaving him. Usually, after opening up to me in one session, he would be very quiet or try to engage me in storytelling about his life on the streets the next session. At other times, he would get angry at me for things such as changing an appointment time with him. He would become resistant in our sessions and say that he didn't want to see me individually anymore. I knew that his anger at me for changing an appointment time was out of proportion. Eventually, I realized that he understood that he was getting close to me and he didn't want that to happen, so he tried to push me away. However, each time he tried to push me away, he would also seek me out to reconnect by trying to catch my eye in group. I felt him looking at me and when I looked back, his eyes seemed to tell me what he wanted to say. He looked sad and apologetic. I thought I could feel him desperately wanting to reconnect with me.

Looking back, I'm sure that this was at least in part a projection. I couldn't bear the thought of him staying angry and pushing me away for good. I didn't know what I would do if this happened. He had become such a big part of my life and there was no one at that point for whom I cared more. Fortunately, my worst fears were not realized. Each time Rick pushed me away, he came back around. Sometimes he pretended that nothing had happened, and other times he apologized for being angry.

Eventually, I came to understand this pattern of behavior as a defense mechanism he used to try to prevent being hurt again and he, too, came to understand it as such. Still, it was extremely painful to me each time it happened.

When the supervisors explained to me that this pattern was a result of my being a transference figure to Rick, I thought they were saying that our relationship was just about transference and countertransference. I didn't believe that I was just a transference figure to him. I wanted to believe that Rick and me cared about each other for who we were, not who and what we represented to each other.

Eventually, through individual and group supervision, I came to understand that Stacey and the other supervisors were not discounting the "real" relationship between Rick and I, but rather that it was made up of two parts: the treatment relationship and the "real" relationship.

I needed validation that the relationship was real, but I understood that it was a treatment relationship and I was able to keep the boundaries clear. Because I was working so hard at understanding the strength of my feelings, I paid special attention to the need to maintain appropriate boundaries because I knew that if I wasn't careful, they could become blurred.

During one session, when Rick was telling me about a story he had heard about his mother trying to smother him with a pillow when he was a newborn, I began to cry. He didn't say anything about it during that session, but in the next session he asked me about it. When I explained to him that I cared about him and that it was a sad story, he started to cry. That was the first time I saw him sad instead of angry. This confirmed my belief that what Rick and many of the other kids needed was just someone to really care about them.

S: By the beginning of March, Kelley's journal entries reflected her growing ability to see Rick's "come close/go away" behavior as a manifestation of the transference and his feelings about his parents, particularly his father. She was feeling a lot of sadness about his effort not to care about her in order to protect himself.

As she wrote, she began to identify a possible parallel process occurring between them; she, too, was tired of being so vulnerable in connection to her treatment with him and was feeling a bit numb, perhaps in preparation for their termination, now six weeks away.

In group supervision one day that month, nearly all of the students dealt with termination. Kelley was preparing for the release of John, the other resident with whom she did intensive treatment. Almost everyone wept in group supervision that day.

Although I always felt sad when it came time to bid farewell to my students, I began to realize on this day that something more significant was at play and that this termination would prove to be an emotional and challenging one for me, beyond the scope of my past experiences.

K: Rick's pattern of opening up to me and then getting angry and pushing me away continued almost until the end of our work together. Rick acknowledged that he had started to care about me but that he didn't want to, especially because he knew that I would be leaving in April. At the end of January, halfway through my internship at Smith, Rick told me that it had gone beyond caring to "L-O-V-E" (he spelled it out).

Again, he talked about not wanting to feel that way because he didn't want to experience the hurt that would come with saying good-bye to me. I felt good that he cared, but I didn't want him to feel abandoned by me when I had to leave Smith.

Stacey and I spent a lot of time talking about how he played out his relationship with his parents in his treatment relationship with me. We also talked about how the treatment relationship was different, particularly because I wouldn't be abandoning him as his parents had and because he would get a chance to say good-bye to me. This was explained to me as a "good" kind of good-bye, a concept which I had difficulty understanding. How could a good-bye that hurt be good?

Through writing in the journal and discussion in supervision, I was able to understand what Rick was going through and why he was using the pattern of getting close to me and then pulling away. When it first started happening, Stacey was relatively certain that he would eventually come around and not

be angry with me anymore. I was not easily convinced of that and was scared that he would stay angry and never want to talk to me again. But each time, just as Stacey predicted, he would come back.

The last time he tried to pull away, Stacey told me that maybe he wouldn't come around and that he might need to deal with termination by pulling away permanently. I feared this because Stacey had been right thus far. But she also said that maybe he would be able to deal with it differently. I hoped so.

S: Rick amazed me over the course of the final month of his treatment with Kelley. He felt the urge to pull away, fought it, talked it through, and stayed in contact with Kelley in spite of intense fear and anxiety. Kelley was able to see that even though the termination would be painful for Rick, he had grown a great deal from the relationship, and much healing had occurred.

She acknowledged that he was better off for having experienced their relationship. We talked in supervision about how the conscious, planned termination, so different from his father's abandonment of him, would serve to further his growth and would prove to be one of the most powerful and healing aspects of their relationship.

Kelley's last two entries made crystal clear the extent of her attachment and the pain associated with leaving Smith. She wrote, "It breaks my heart to think of not having him (Rick) in my life. Who will take care of him? Who will teach him about relationships? He's working so hard..." Her words also reflected a great deal of humor, and she acknowledged a certain degree of her own irrationality. The final entry was written ten days before her last day at Smith. Rick had been sharing in a session how he used to have no feelings and used to be a "player" with girls. He spoke of how his relationship with Kelley had taught him things that were helping him in his relationship with his girlfriend (a Smith resident) in that he had learned to show vulnerability.

This stirred Kelley up quite a bit and she referred (in her journal) to a therapy session of her own in which she had stated that she felt as if she was "losing a real relationship." (Of course, she was.) She realized that leaving Smith was triggering feelings she had felt upon leaving her family to go to college, and she feared the loneliness. Her final written words were: "The next two weeks will really suck. After having you all be the biggest part of my life and now losing it–really sucks."

On her last day, Kelley and I cooked dinner and ate a good meal together with all of the residents in our cottage. The kids rarely needed an excuse to forego institutional food. We then did a "goodbye group," which is a ritual at Smith. Kelley said goodbye to everyone else before coming to Rick. Rick began to cry when his turn came, and Kelley and I were already fighting tears. Every time he opened his mouth to speak, he could not. A number of minors were excused because they were unable to handle the intensity, and I didn't want it to be ruined for the rest.

I struggled with the urge to rescue Rick as I didn't know how long his sobbing might continue. We encouraged him to take his time and feel his feelings. After what seemed like an eternity (it was probably 15 minutes), he began to speak.

He talked of how hard he'd tried to push Kelley away and how she just wouldn't let him. He told her how much he loved her and that he didn't know how he would make it without her. Kelley and I, and a few of the minors, shared in his tears. Then he offered a most incredible gift. He turned to a minor, "Juan," who had been there close to the same length of time as he had. Rick told Juan that he loved him, too, and wished that he could take Juan with him to the group home to which he was being transferred.

I had known that some incredible work had occurred, but this was far more monumental than I could have imagined. We hope that a solid, safe, therapeutic relationship will provide the healing needed to allow our clients to be able to risk fulfilling and deep relationships in their everyday lives. Rick showed us that this had occurred. He demonstrated it right there in that circle, as it was clear that his love for Kelley had enabled him to love Juan and also had taught him the value of speaking it.

We don't often see concrete evidence of the fruits of

our labor. We all struggle at times and wonder if we are making a difference. In those final moments in that very long and painful goodbye group, I knew that I had. And that was an incredible gift.

K: When it came time to say good-bye to Rick, it was in the setting of a group good-bye with all of the boys in the cottage. We had discussed it in our last individual session, but he wanted to wait until the group good-bye because he didn't want to say good-bye twice. I knew that I would have a really hard time saying all I wanted to say to him, and I knew that I would cry. I wasn't sure how he would deal with it. I really hoped that he wouldn't put up his defenses again. He didn't. Our good-bye was very tearful and emotional and I think that it allowed each of us to see how significant the treatment relationship had been. I had to keep reminding myself what Stacey had told me: that the difficulty we had in saying good-bye was a sign of how deep our connection had been and that each of us would continue to be a part of the other.

Saying good-bye to Stacey and Rick felt like saying good-bye to my family. Stacey and I had built a really good student-teacher relationship and I felt as if I had learned a lot from her, about social work as well as about myself. I felt as if she was one of the few people in my life who knew a lot about me and who understood and was supportive of me. She was also my only connection to Rick. Now that I wouldn't be there, I was counting on her to make sure Rick would be okay, both while he was at Smith and after he left.

S: I felt a great loss after that last day. I had always felt some sadness when the students left at the end of each year, but this time the intensity was greater. I felt bored and a lack of energy to give to the kids. I went on a vacation within a couple of days, and this gave me the time and space I needed to evaluate and understand the depth of the experience with Kelley and Rick.

Looking back, perhaps one of the most interesting pieces of the puzzle was the fact that I questioned why I was feeling so much. And the more I questioned, the more upset I became. Yet during the course of the year, a major focus of my teaching Kelley was my attempt to encourage her to embrace her emotionality and learn to utilize it for the good of her clients instead of fighting it. Whatever happened to practicing what I preach?

I was overwhelming myself with anxiety about feeling too much, just as Kelley had. I acknowledged to myself that this was an issue that I had shared with her all along and that my reassurances to her were just as much for myself.

This narrative began by stating that Kelley, Rick, and I all struggled with issues around abandonment. For me, these issues tend to play out as I fear overwhelming others with my emotional intensity and thus potentially losing significant relationships.

Over the weeks and months following Kelley's termination, I was able to accept my feelings more and to understand that it had been a life-changing experience. I had been on a journey of relationship and connection. The journey had started out slowly; I had no idea that I was on such a path. But somehow, at some point during the year, Kelley and Rick had made their way into a place in my heart that perhaps had been untouched. Rick was a pretty special kid, and Kelley was an amazing student. It's clear to me, though, that what set them apart from the others was their relationship with each other.

What I have come to understand is that my pain at the year's end was not just pain due to Kelley's leaving. Nor was the pain due to Rick's impending "graduation" from Smith. The pain that I experienced was a mixture of many intense emotions. I was feeling so much that it hurt. Much of what I felt was joy at the realization of how beautiful and healing it all was.

I was quite sad, too, of course. Kelley's leaving meant the end of her relationship with Rick and the end of my role in its creation and maintenance. This meant a loss of what had come to be a motivating force and a source of satisfaction for

me over the course of the year. Kelley and I had developed a supervisor-supervisee relationship that had truly worked, and I felt enriched by it and grateful for it. That too would be gone.

About one month later, when Rick left, I again had to let go of another piece of the experience. As I came to understand and accept how all of these endings were connected to each other, I actually began to appreciate the part of me that has these types of emotional responses. And only then was I able to genuinely begin to work through the losses, and to begin to let go.

Stacey's Reflections

The story has been told and I have enjoyed its telling. I have especially looked forward to this part. The more I wrote, the more I thought about things to include. As I read back through the story, it is clear to me that throughout the telling I have shared much of what the experience meant to me. Its impact is far reaching, in ways I am only beginning to comprehend. I continue to learn more about it, and myself, as the days and months pass.

I have been considering the ways in which I could have handled things differently. This article gave me the structure and discipline to think it over more methodically. I've focused on trying to understand in what ways and around what issues my own countertransference may have blocked me or interfered with my teaching. A dear friend recently asked why I felt the need to "dig" for mistakes in what was clearly a positive treatment. But it's not mistakes I seek. I just believe that we can always learn if only we are open to the experience.

As I consider all of the aspects of this experience, it becomes clear to me that the one area that might have benefited from deeper exploration was the issue of Kelley's attraction to Rick. We did not ignore it. We looked at it, I normalized it, and I paid attention to how she handled the boundaries. We considered to some degree how Kelley's own issues might be involved. I did not feel at any point that the relationship between Kelley and Rick was at risk for blurring of boundaries. I just feel, upon reflection, that I scratched the surface enough to be sure that things were "O.K." Beyond that, I fell into the trap described by Pope, Sonne, and Holroyd (1993).

I was frightened by the possibility of a true sexual attraction between a client and a therapist. To some degree, I bought into the taboo against discussing such issues. Pope, Sonne, and Holroyd (1993) reported research suggesting that many graduate training programs do not adequately address the issue of sexual attraction towards clients. They go on to discuss how the open exploration of such attraction and feelings in supervision are essential to understanding of therapists' motivations and ultimately to preventing the potential negative impact on the therapy. By not addressing the issue of Kelley's attraction to Rick more deeply, I was perpetuating the avoidance of such issues in the field of mental health. Also, I was not being the best role model I could have been.

So, what was I afraid of? Why was I avoiding the issue? I believe that I was concerned about a number of things that might emerge if I supervised Kelley more intensely regarding the matter of her attraction to Rick. First of all, my own training lacked depth regarding how to deal with sexual feelings towards a client. All I can remember is the prohibition against sexual contact, which, while of essential and primary importance, should not be the endpoint of such discussion but more appropriately, a starting point.

As a result of my own lack of training and experience, I was afraid of getting into an area that I would not know how to handle. To compound the situation, the sense of taboo made it difficult for me to look to colleagues for help. Interestingly, Kelley was most likely experiencing similar fears. Pope, Sonne, and Holroyd (1993) discuss a number of reasons why therapists avoid dealing with sexual issues and feelings. A few that strike me as particu-

larly relevant in this case are:

1) Anxiety about unresolved personal issues

2) Fear of losing control

3) Fear of being criticized

4) Confusion about boundaries and roles

These are the issues that I would guess most strongly affected Kelley's handling of her attraction to Rick and, in turn, my handling of these issues in supervision.

In summary, however, I believe that due to the lack of training and experience, coupled with my own struggles with the ambiguity inherent in doing psychotherapy and supervision, I feared going deeper. I was scared by the possible consequences of discussing something this intimate with a student. If I took the supervision in such a direction, was there a risk of blurring the boundaries between Kelley and me? What about the boundaries between supervision and therapy? Although I do practice a more broad style of supervision, this does not negate the need for very definite boundaries and role definition.

It has been quite difficult to write these last few paragraphs. I have been tempted to be less open in what has been a very disclosing article. I have felt some fear and anxiety as to what others may think. I believe that this is again because of the powerful taboo against having or speaking of sexual attraction towards clients. I am feeling blocked even at this moment. But I am fighting the anxiety and expressing these thoughts because I am so committed to the learning process. I genuinely believe that it is only through the open exploration of these at hand that we can prevent sexual intimacies between client and therapist. I also believe such discussion can actually improve therapeutic outcomes.

The "gift" of Rick's expression of love for Kelley and Juan was definitely one of the most significant parts of the overall experience. It came at a time when I was really struggling with feelings of hopelessness due to the steadily increasing level of disturbance and sociopathy in the kids being sent to Smith. Closely related to my hopelessness were feelings of self-doubt regarding my ability to have a truly meaningful impact, given the kids' great needs, fewer resources for continued care after release, and the constant pressure to shorten length of stay. My work with Kelley and Rick gave me back a degree of hope and faith in the power of the healing relationship. It gave me a real feeling of success in my own ability to effect change. At first I shied away from taking credit, but the reality is that neither Kelley nor I could have created what we did alone; we were a team and I was the coach. She was brave and bold, which led to her receptivity to my teaching. And her enthusiasm, along with her undying belief in Rick, rubbed off on me as well.

I don't mean to use an old tired cliché, but... I don't think I will ever be the same again. And I know Kelley and Rick won't. I have always been very relationship oriented. But this experience, in addition to restoring my faith in healing, has somehow opened me up even more to the joy of relationship and connection, with all of its accompanying pain. It has often been said that we cannot know the purest joy until we know the deepest sorrow. I experienced tremendous pain at the losses inherent in this experience. That pain continues to fade though, and what remains is faith, satisfaction, and yes, pure joy.

Four months after Rick left Smith, I was offered a position as a Field Consultant at California State University Long Beach, Department of Social Work. I had always known that I would hold such a position some day but did not expect it to be so soon. I had been at Smith for over seven years and the prospect of change was both exciting and frightening. I believe the fact that I had been a part of this incredible experience with Kelley and Rick made it possible, or at least easier, for me to make this significant transition in my life. I am clear that I am a better teacher today as a result. It solidified my belief in the tremendous impact of countertransference as well as the equally great opportunity it presents.

I had long believed that the development of self-awareness was key in the preparation of effective and ethical social

work practitioners, but as a result of my work with Kelley and Rick, I am more focused on its development and my role in it as a teacher. To this day, I continue to struggle with the aforementioned boundaries...when encouraging self awareness and reflection, one must sometimes probe, one must ask students difficult questions, and at times the boundaries are less clear. As is true for many aspects of social work, there is no definitive answer to this dilemma. I continue to struggle to walk the tightrope of therapy/supervision/education because I am so convinced that it is intrinsic to the development of conscious practitioners. And in so doing, I must maintain my own self awareness and always question my boundaries as I work with my students to develop and maintain their own. My work with Kelley and Rick was life-changing for me in many ways. Perhaps most significant was the fact that it assured me that my heart, as well as my talents, were in teaching. And it gave me a piece of measurable success to leave behind.

Kelley's Reflections

As I stated early on in this article, I began social work school with a very narrow understanding of what the profession entailed. I was unaware that social workers did therapy, and I certainly didn't expect to conduct therapy myself. Through my experience at Smith, I learned a great deal about the profession and its breadth. Although I was surprised by the clinical component, I was far from disappointed, particularly as I saw first-hand the power of the therapeutic relationship.

I remained invested in a macro approach to change, especially in my specific area of interest, but my focus broadened. I wanted to find a way to incorporate micro and macro work. I wanted to continue to develop therapeutic connections with at-risk youth in the future since I now knew the ways in which these relationships were central to change.

The majority of my work at Smith was about being able to identify and understand my countertransference issues, which were primarily with Rick.

Sometimes I was able to identify countertransference issues; other times Stacey would point out things I had written in my journal that might be countertransference issues.

I think that when I first began to realize how much Rick was affecting me, I was afraid to admit how attached I was to him. I thought that I might have done something wrong and that I shouldn't have such strong feelings for Rick. I always hesitated to tell Stacey how strong the feelings were, but each time I did, she was very supportive. The journal served as a place where I could first "test" some of my feelings and see how she reacted to them before I discussed them with her in supervision. Stacey told me many times that it wasn't about how I "should" or "shouldn't" feel; she told me to erase that word from my vocabulary.

A number of things Stacey did felt supportive and allowed me to be open with her. One example is that whenever I told her something that I thought might be shocking, such as the fact that I cried in front of Rick or that he told me that he loved me, she never acted surprised. She always explored with me what my feelings were about and what was going on in the therapy.

When I felt as if my work with Rick was focusing too much on his relationship with me and not enough on his relationship with his father, Stacey helped me to see that his relationship with me was exactly what he needed to be focusing on at the time. Without a good interpersonal relationship, Rick may not have trusted anyone enough to help him resolve his family issues. Additionally, the skills he developed in his treatment relationship with me will help him to have good interpersonal relationships in the future.

Terminating from Rick, Stacey, and Smith happened all at the same time. It was something that I had been thinking about since before the winter break. I didn't want to say good-bye to Rick. I wanted to take him with me so that I could take care of him, but I wasn't

sure exactly how I wanted to take care of him. Sometimes I wanted to be his parent so that I could protect him and teach him; other times I wanted to be his girlfriend so that we could fulfill all of each other's needs.

I had been struggling for several years with how to get my needs met. Before I went to college, I had been accustomed to living in a very loving home environment. My parents took care of me. When I went to school, I found myself on the other side of the country with no idea of how to continue to get my needs met independent of my parents. Often, I turned to men to meet those needs. It took me a long time to realize that this was a very short- term solution to my problem.

When I was working with Rick, I found that he met a lot of my needs for attention and love. As I look back on the time I was at Smith, I now realize that I had fewer relationships with men while I was there. I have learned that what I really needed was love and attention from men and that I was using the treatment relationship with Rick to fill those needs. This realization has been significant to me in forming a new understanding of myself and has helped me to identify more effective and lasting ways to meet those needs.

During my internship at Smith, I used to think that I was not helping Rick because I didn't really understand what was happening therapeutically with him. There was a lot that I would have wanted to change. However, as my understanding of transference and countertransference issues increased, I began to realize that a good interpersonal relationship was exactly what Rick needed. I also realized that it was precisely because of where I was in my life that I had this experience, this relationship, with Rick.

My connection with him was the strongest thing I have felt in my life and I wouldn't want to change that. It gave him the opportunity to develop his interpersonal skills and to trust and care again. It gave me an opportunity to learn a lot about myself and about the importance of therapeutic relationships. It also taught me how important it is to understand transference and countertransference issues, fundamental parts of the therapeutic relationship.

When I said that I wouldn't change anything, that wasn't exactly the truth. There is one thing I would still change, and it may be because I am selfish and because I still don't fully understand the therapeutic implications of the need for permanent terminations from clients. I would never have said good-bye to him. I still look for him sometimes when I'm near his old neighborhood or in places where I imagine he would hang out. I know that not saying good-bye would not have been the right way to handle the situation, and I'm getting better at understanding the need to terminate completely with clients.

With time, the intensity of my feelings about saying good-bye to Rick has diminished, but Stacey was right; I still carry him in my heart.

K & S

This was a story of how the three of us, as a result of our relationships with each other, moved through the pain and mistakes of our pasts and opened our hearts to an incredible journey. And in the end, we became more open to the risk of connection, to showing our true selves with greater freedom. As a result, healing happened for us all. □

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Retrospective: In the Midst of a Racial Crisis

In the following retrospective, Ruth R. Middleman looks back upon an article she wrote in 1968 after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. We have printed the article, following Ruth's reflections, as it originally appeared in Volume 16, Number 3 of the journal, Children (1969).

by
Ruth R. Middleman

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When she authored "In the Midst of a Racial Crisis" in 1968, Ruth was Associate Professor at Temple University, where she helped open its School of Social Administration, while continuing to teach at the School of Allied Medical Professions at the University of Pennsylvania.

Recently, I reread what I wrote of the experience I had almost thirty years ago, of my work with a group of high school students in the so-called "Motivation Program" (this experience has never really been out of my mind). I wanted to consider what was different now and what has remained constant essentially in these intervening years. I also wanted to think about where I am in relation to matters of race.

Always concerned with communication and its value in human interaction, I notice the subtleties of language, of nuance, of intended and unintended messages. As anthropologist Benjamin Whorf proposed, the very words one uses create and limit what one can think about. I am irritated by the word "motivation." Clearly it is a white person's creation. Maybe it attracted a Federal Grant. But its underlying message is that the students were unmotivated and needed this program to motivate them (actually they were serious and college bound). Better it should be called "Opportunity Program" or some such positive label. I would challenge this terminology now. Then, however, both I and the students seemed glad that there was this special program.

To further examine words, I turn to "whitey." This really dates me. I wouldn't use this now. I don't think it is used at all. What would a white person call herself to accent one's difference these days? Probably "other" would do it. It would refer to a difference and not carry any baggage. What do I think blacks might call white people? Cracker? Honkey? White folk? It's hard to know. My main point is that whitey is out. Vocabulary is so complex. And the vocabulary of teenagers (black or white) has many private words, codes, and symbols, in continuous flux, that are part of their culture. These special words offer privacy, may keep adults out, and may protect them from control or too much intimacy. Many exchanges I simply did not understand in the meetings with that group, but my black co-leader interpreted some of it for me. Without him I would have been lost (or their spontaneity would have been curtailed if they needed to talk only in my language, as they do in school. And what about rap and hip-hop music? Its message is popular, but certainly not part of my world! So much for language.

Now, I am older. I have moved from Philadelphia to Louisville, Kentucky. I am a professor, and I teach others how to work with groups. This

doesn't necessarily mean that I would be better at such a task myself. But I am more seasoned with groups, less naïve, more confident, reflective, and wiser. I may not now have the physical energy that teenagers probably need in a worker. I would stay away from use of "Dr. Ruth" in my work with others and try to avoid all show of power–in words, actions, dress, and attitude toward what matters to them.

I live in the South now. Or is it the Midwest as some Kentuckians say? I am in a smaller, human-sized city whose culture and traditions strike me as tamer, perhaps kinder and less volatile than the Northeast I left. My hair is pretty gray now. This might work in a number of ways: shows wisdom, gains respect, conveys safety, shows distance, accents difference.

I am more sensitive to the big picture, to the politics of the nation and I am attuned to how that context sets the stage for us and affects attitudes and beliefs among races even before actual encounters or any words are spoken. Today's context includes the move to stop affirmative action, pressures to end welfare and "the social programs," hostility to notions of multiculturalism, sentiments for cutting back entitlements and reducing taxes, a love affair with guns despite their human toll, and a proliferation of crack cocaine in urban areas. All these forces affect blacks first. All of these breed greater separation among races, more hostility, more tension.

I remain committed to the values I held thirty years ago: A caring and concern for young people struggling to find their way in today's world. A belief that growing up black exacts a special burden in the culture of the United States. I can empathize easily with this plight. If anything, I am angrier today than I was in the past, angrier that relations between blacks and whites are worse these days despite the resources, programs, and other attempts to accelerate opportunities. In school, in the workplace, in social life the barriers remain. In popular parlance, the playing field is not level. Why, I wonder, do I feel more humble and iffy about how I would be with the teens at this stage of my life? Is it because I know more? Have less faith? Am more impatient? Or because the racial history since Dr. King's assassination is so dismal?□

on being a whitey in the midst of a RACIAL CRISIS

RUTH R. MIDDLEMAN

Never before has it been so urgent for the White community to stir itself from lethargy and listen to what Black people are saying. I became especially convinced of this during my experience in the spring of 1998–immediately following the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I was the only White person in one of the discussion groups for high school students sponsored by the Motivation Program of the Philadelphia Board of Education.

In the shift of middle- and high- income populations from the cities to the suburbs and of vast numbers of poor people from rural areas to the inner parts of our cities, the cities' problems of providing the kind of education their young people need in our changing world have become tremendously complex. Philadelphia -Motivation Program represents an effort to enrich young people's school experience by giving them the kind of personal attention generally missing, in the large city high schools of today. I was brought into the program in 1961 to be a discussion leader for groups of high school students. Since I have special training and experience in working with groups, I was asked to be part of a small team of psychologists and social workers who would meet with the students and their parents to consider the normal problems of growing up in today's world.

The Motivation Program seeks to reach its goals of (curriculum enrichment, parent involvement, and community participation in school affairs through tutoring. Cultural enrichment, and group discussions. One of its major goals is to stimulate high school students to go on to college. To give students and their parents at least superficial familiarity with the "feel" of life, group discussions am held on the campuses of local universities. Implicit in this approach is the expectation that the students will come to feel going to college is worthwhile and that their parents will want them to have such an experience. The high schools select students for the program on the basis of their potential for success in college, given sufficient parental support and personal preparation.

The students selected are assigned to a series of seven weekly discussion sessions held on Saturday mornings. Participation is voluntary. The students in each series form a large discussion group, which is divided into four smaller coeducational groups of about 15 students each. White and black students are often deliberately mixed in one small group. For the first and last session parents are invited to join the students in the large group for discussion. Each large group has two discussion leaders, a man and woman, who may also work together in various patterns of collaboration in the small groups.

The program's discussions are focused on the normal experiences and strains that confront high school students in growing up, on the theory that academic achievement is often impeded by dysfunctioning relationships outside of school life as well as within it. The discussions deal with attitudes, feelings, and opinions; they challenge students and parents to look at various sides of current problems. Discussion leaders ask the group to consider the consequences of various modes of action. Group members learn how to express their own opinions cogently as well as to respect the opinions of others. Each group, as it is ready, discusses a progression of subjects—understanding oneself, getting along in the family, premarital sex, use of drugs. attitudes toward school and teachers, concern about

Vietnam, feelings about one's future in present-day society.

While the leaders help students realize that knowledge of an issue and capacity to look at various sides of a problem contribute to a more adequate approach toward settling differences, they grant that adults do not necessarily possesses better answers than young people. They point out that parents who sometimes feel vexed, troubled, and inadequate can become less authoritarian in their responses if both parents and children talk out their differences calmly and try *to understand* each other's point of view. The leaders place themselves in the middle, between students and parents, siding with neither.

The students enthusiastic response to the group discussions has exceeded expectations. Some students have asked to return for more discussions after their first series has ended; others have stayed through two sessions on the same morning. Many have brought along friends not registered for the program. At times, a student's parent has caught his (sic) enthusiasm and has asked if his (sic) brother or sister could join the group. Because the program is intended to affect student attitudes, it has acceded to such requests whenever possible.

The program has also had a salutary effect on the morale of many parents. They have raised the same issues discussed in the group sessions with the students and worked on these issues further in the monthly meeting for parents, also sponsored by the Motivation Program.

All told I worked with six discussion groups last year. In the first four groups white students predominated, although each had a few black students. In these groups, while the students were honest in expressing their opinions and often concerned with the problems they had with adults, I found the situation comfortable and never really felt I was under personal attack. One of my techniques in approaching high school students was to look accessible: I wore *skirts* and sweaters and textured stockings. While I had no illusions that I looked like a teenager, neither did I took like a professor. I deliberately avoided professional jargon, keeping my vocabulary simple and using the students' idioms. In the last two groups, I found myself on *the spot* as a member of a minority race.

Getting with it

In the sixth group, in which the experiences described in this article occurred, all but one of the students were black. For this group I was assigned to work as coleader with Thomas W. Pierce, a psychologist at the Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic. A black man of great compassion, commitment, and skill, he was greatly admired by the students. Using the students' own language, he employed a simple but psychologically sound approach to group dynamics. His reputation for excitement and honesty had spread throughout the schools. Students clamored to be in his groups. Because he put his stamp of approval on me, thought white, was tolerated by the students and the discussion flowed freely.

Whether it was Tom Pierce's skill as a group leader or simply the students' need to express dissatisfaction with their hectic, restless style of living, I am not sure, but these discussions were more lively, exciting, and stimulating than any other I had known. At times I could not follow the fast interchanges between students. The special words, meanings, and innuendoes that young Black people use when speaking with each other were incomprehensible to me. But most of the time I got the message.

I tried hard to "get with it." In the early sessions I as deliberately confronted with the fact' of being different and asked to give my opinion as a White woman on whatever was under discussion. My stance was to be honest and open, and not attempt to try to justify what cannot be justified.

For example, in the second session, Jane, a militant black girl, who was vice president of her almost all-black high school with a great deal of experience in confronting white school administrators, angrily turned on me. Calling me a White liberal, she said she was sick of people like me with good intentions who had really not helped the Blacks one bit. I didn't understand, she said, because I had never lived in her neighborhood. She said that if I spent a day in her home I would learn something about the noise

and crowded conditions that made studying impossible. When she finished talking, the group looked expectantly at me. For a second, I was set back by the strength of her argument. Then I answered sharply, "You are doing to to me just what you say you don't want Whites to do to you. You don't know me and yet you say you know just what my experiences have been. You lump me in with all the Whites in your stereotype. I am one person and you haven't talked with me enough yet to know what I feel or what I have experienced!" My indignation had a great impact on Jane and on the group. They settled into letting me take part in their discussions. Afterward, Mr. Pierce told me he was glad that I spoke with such force.

Although Mr. Pierce and I each had our own style, professional orientation, and separate stereotyped meaning to the students, we developed rapport as leaders and grew to appreciate each other of our views of life. The searching questions of the students forced us to hold private discussions with each other of our vews of life. I was pleased when, at the end of the fifth session, Mr. Pierce invited me to his home to meet his family. In many ways we became closer to each other than either of us did to the students. Our intense and authentic emotional bond provided a new experience for the students, illustrating what we were talking about when we referred to mutual respect and concern for one an other.

Two days following the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr., we had an especially dramatic session, our final one of the series. The whole Nation was still in turmoil, with all of us–adults and young people–stunned by the terror and irrationality of the event. This dicussion, a microcosm of the whole world's consternation, affords a view of the attitudes and feelings of young black people at that time. Its value lies in the fact that in the group these attitudes and feelings were *openly and responsibly* expressed.

The following notes on this session were originally made to advise the program's director of my feelings of as a group leader about the urgency of providing more young people with such opportunities to express and sort out their feelings if the present chaotic relationships between the races are not to grow.

A Confrontation

This was the week of our final session when we would meet with students in the morning and then with students and parents in the afternoon for a final summing up of the experience. The one white boy did not show up. Judging by my own apprehensions of what might follow the assassination, I was able to understand why he would stay away. Some students in the Philadelphia Motivation Program in a discussion with leader Thomas W. Pierce.

I had telephoned Tom Pierce the day after the assasination to sort out my feelings about it and let him know how I felt. Mr. Pierce, although stunned bv the news, had spent the day trying to help elementry school students in their shock. He said I just had to attend our discussion group the next day. I replied that I had never questioned this because I knew that I could not do anvthing *but* come. What I could possibly say that would have any meaning was another problem. Our conversation generally reassured us that we were together in feeling, just as we had been throughout our earlier discussions.

I mulled over the situation on my way to the university on Saturday morning. I knew that by now I had established a fairly good rapport with the students. They had expressed many doubts and much anger toward white people because of their less-than-equal opportunities in school and work. I knew they considered me honest and regarded me as a person who would accept without retaliation, explanation, or justification their resentments against the world as they found it and against white people in particular. I must admit I was scared, but I counted on the stutents general liking for me, even though I was white, and my previous fairness in considering problems.

When Mr. Pierce and I entered the room, we found in it a girl waiting for us. Her first comment was that one of us better write her a note to take home, because her mother would not believe that our group would really be meeting this day and would wonder where she had been. Mr. Pierce said he would do better than that; he

would telephone her mother and try to get her to come to the afternoon session. While he was gone, several other students arrived, tense and expectatant. I wanted to delay starting the discussion until Mr. Pierce returned so I could have his support. But this was not to be.

Jimmy began it by directing a burning question to me as soon as he entered the room. He went right to the point. He talked tbout being a track star, knowing many white people all his life, liking some of them, and being taught that he should try to like them. But now how could he? He said he was utterly confused. All he could feel was anger and rage against *all* white people for what had happened. He didn't know how he could ever get over such feelings. Finally he wanted to know what I had to tell him about THIS !

So there, out in the open, was the theme that was to consume our energies for the next several hours. In response to Jimmy I told about my telephone call to Mr. Pierce the day before, my own shock and horror, my understanding of why he might feel such hatred, and why I had no pat answer on how he could feel otherwise. A terrible thing had happened. I said I didn't intend to try to talk him out of his anger. But I wanted him to notice that I was *here* this day to talk with the students, to look together with them at how we all felt, and most of all to keep communication open between us. This, I said, was what we had to do this day. I hoped that people everywhere would be able to do the same.

Violent reactions

The precise exchanges in this meeting are impossible to report verbatim. We were so involved that it is hard to remember everything that was said. The students were full of feeling–hate, giving up on white people, hopelessness, the futility of Dr. King's nonviolent approach. To them what happened confirmed the argument that the nonviolence was "way off" as a solution to their problems. They expressed impatience, cynicism, and pessimism.

At one point, Michael turned to me and announced, "If I were you, I would be home hiding under my bed right now." According to the Students, the black revolution would come whether or not they, or we adults, wished it.

I was glad when Mr. Pierce returned. As in previous sessions, he personalized the dilemma of black and white by using the relationship between himself and me as an example. He asked the students what he should do if he were walking down the street with me and some black people he did not know tried to "grease" me. Should he ditch me or go down with me! The students said he should ditch me, that he would be left stranded if he took any other course of action. I would never take him home to my house, thev said. Although I protested that I do have black friends of mine come to my house, they did not seem to believe me because they did not know any black people who had ever been invited to a white person's home.

Mr. Pierce, with great emotion, tried to get each student to consider how he would react in this situation with a white friend. But most of the students had no white friends so they could not relate to the problem. One or two said they did have a white friend, but added, "No, I would not stand up for him." However, their tone and facial expressions indicated that they were undergoing great emotional confusion and that turning their backs on theirwhite friends would not be easy.

Mr. Pierce carried most of the discussion while I responded here and there, serving mainly as a target for the students' bitterness. He tried to get across to them that rioting and self-destruction were not a wise course of action for black people. Adult arguments–his, mine, and later the parents–fell on deaf ears. I found myself utterly frustrated because the young people seemed so set in their attitudes. They kept telling us of how long black people had been persecuted, and of how little our ways and thinking had helped the world. They pointed out that we of the older generation just could not possibly understand how they felt. They said that they did not care whether horrible destruction and death for white and black alike occurrred if eventually things would be better than they were now.

At one point, Mr. Pierce tried some role-playing. He asked each student in turn to "think

white" and me to "think black." This put the students under a terrific strain. At first they said they could not possibly do this, but he persisted. Finally one after another the students made some hesitating attempts to mouth the stereotyped attitudes of white people about black people. Then the idea caught on and the role-playing became easier for them. I did my beat to express black anger. The students shifted for a few minutes into conversing among themselves, pretending they were white people and joking and hooting at what was said. Finally, Robin said softly, "I pity, the white people; they must feel awfully bad right now." Her sentiments were not shared by the others, but were met by bitter laughter. The group was still upset and angry when at noon we moved to a larger room for an afternoon session with parents and other students. I was spent from the intensity of the morning's experience, so I left to get sandwithes for Tom and myself. He stayed with the students.

While I was in the cafeteria, Jimmy came up to me help me carry the sandwishes. He said awkwardly, "I hope you can understand why I had to say what I did to you this morning. I do think you're a pretty nice person and I don't like to think of your being killed but I just have to feel this way and will have to he part of it if it happens." I was very touched. I told him that I understood and still thought he was a fine person. I told him that I had two teenage boys of my own and hoped to live long enough to see them grown, but if I had to die, then I was ready to do so.

Change in tone

The afternoon session had a slightly different tone. We were joined by parents, discussion leaders, and students from two other groups. There were two black students–one very vocal girl and one boy–who spoke against violence as a solution. In spite of being, jumped upon by most of the others, the girl stood her ground. After listening quietly for about half an hour, a 40-year-old father made an impassioned plea for restraint. He told the group he had dropped out of high school but had returned as an adult and had received his diploma only a year ago. He tried to impress upon the young people that advancement was possible, despite all they said about the inferior quality of education in their schools, if they would stick with it and make the most of their opportunities. His opinions seemed to fall on deaf ears.

A mother told of visiting a junior high school where she observed what she described as wonderful training opportunities "better than Bok Vocational High School"–the students learning to make beds, do tailoring, and master other practical skills. She quoted the black principal as saying that the school had obtained the program because the parents had spoken up through their community group. Our students dismissed the training program she described by saving that the white schools got all the good things.

Near the end of the meeting, I said that I had been listening to their message–that they had been telling me all day what I should go and tell my white friends. Now I had a message for them, my black friends.

I said the young people who were at the sessions without their parents should go home and tell their parents what we had talked about today, trying to get their parents interested and active in the schools. I spoke of school improvement being achieved, not on a racial basis, but on the basis of pressure from parents who spoke up for what they wanted their children to have. When some students talked about their parents' not knowing how to speak up, I urged them to help their parents to do so. I also spoke of how such things as the Motivation Program helped to correct the balance a bit.

I left feeling wrung out. I was sick all over–headache, stomach ache, and mainly heartache. In my 25 years of working with groups, this had been the most intense, difficult session I had ever experienced. It called on everything I had as an adult white member of our society–and found me wanting. I thought about all that had been expressed this day, it did not seem to me that the students had changed much, unless being together and ventilating all that feeling had somehow helped to relieve the strain on them. Still, they had been frank; we had heard them and expressed our adult values. Perhaps in their confusion they might remember something

we had said about how much we valued them.

Not long ago, I had a telephone chat with Tom Pierce, who told me two things of interest. He had invited all students in the group to a meeting the week following our discussion and many had come. At this meeting the intensity of the anger had diminished somewhat. The students talked much about how they would carry on, what college life would be like, and how they might try to get along with others in new situations. Jimmy, who still dropped by to see him from time to time, had decided to go to college instead of becoming a tailor. On one visit, Jimmy had asked how I was.

The lesson

What is to be done next? Surely more and more such approaches at communication must take place to help young people gain a sense of their own selfworth and of their worth to the larger community. The separation that exists between black students and white students is the shocking reality of our day. There can be no change of attitude, let alone change of behavior, while the black students cannot even call to mind one white friend. The foregoing experience was limited in its usefulness in bringing the races together in that all but one of the participants were black. For some of the students, having a frank discussion with even one "whitey" was a new experience.

Many months have passed since I had this experience. Much has happened an much has not happened. I find myelf still hearing the students tell me, "Tell this to your white friends..." And I find myself remembering other parts of that discussion:

"Were sick of hearing that prejudice is a disease and that we have to understand that. We don't care that the white man has this problem."

"When the next riots happen, they're not going to be in our neighborhood but in yours."

I can remember the students' lack of concern when I described my own experience with prejudice as Jew as I grew up. From their point of view, it was irrelevant that I had trouble getting a first job. One student noted that prejudice had not kept me from knowing since childhood that I would get to college. It had not made dropping out or giving up part of my family's culture or of mv friends' experience. All I had to do was make some practical choice and continue to pursue my essentially self-confident course. In one fell swoop, a longheld and slightly self pitying memory had been debunked.

I can also remember, with horror, how calmly the students discussed the knife fights in their schools; how vividly they talked about what they would do in a riot–they had all been part of little pieces of such conflict already: how unconcerned they were when I mentioned that my son had, without provocation, been hit in the stomach by a black friend the day after the assassination. I can hear the students tell me that we "whiteys" just do not understand that they see things differently than we do.

In retrospect, it seems to me that the soundest part of the experience was not what we had talked about but how the discussion had been led. A white woman and a black man talked back and forth with each other, as well as with the group, sharing a piece of their own lives and accepting each other's differences. The students might remember this more than our most cherished opinions and philosophies. Did this kind of leadership help them see a possibility of a fruitful exchange between blacks and whites?

I had this experience not simply because of my own skill in group discussions. I could have met with the black students for months and never been part of such intimacy. Partly, I rode along on the rapport developed by Thomas Pierce. I was in the group while the members "leveled" with someone they deeply trusted. He helped them to permit me to participate in their thinking. Partly, it happened because of their shock at losing a great hero.

I know now that this experience has probably altered my life far more than it did theirs. For I am one "whitey" who had the good fortune to see and hear "how it is." Can I possibly transmit this well enough to white people to increase their understanding in time to avoid the kind of holocaust the black students talked about so vividly and with such certainty? Can other white adults possibly learn to change their views of life, reassess their opinions of why and how

things are as they are, and learn to listen! Can I myself learn to hear properly?

I am still carrying the students' message-their warnings, their desperate urgency, their volatile reactions, and their faint hopes for orderly change–to my "whlite friends" on every occasion I find. And I have found many occasions: a program in the auditorium of a prestigious suburban private school; the annual meeting of the board of the local Boys' Club; and my own classes at the University of Pennsylvania.

I know that I am teaching differently now. For I have seen at close range that much that I had once believed about race relations is simply not useful today. I have been working with a racially integrated faculty to prepare for the opening of Temple University's new Graduate School of Social Administration in the fall of 1969. One of our major aims is to bring black graduate students and white graduate students together to work on problems of the urban ghetto.

I believe that the central educational objective of the schools now must be to teach students to live with change and be ready to solve new problems. And this kind of life approach must be taught by adults who are able to accept new patterns and ideas and who have poise and resilience. The first necessity is to learn to hear! □

New Narratives for a New Century: Comedy, Romance, Mystery, and Tragedy in the Helping Professions.

The article is a reflection on the question "what kinds of narratives do the helping professions need to develop in the twenty-first century?" The possibilities and prospects of employing various genre from modern literature are explored. Examples from the author's personal and professional life story are offered as illustrations.

by
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A writer uses everything she's ever known, seen, thought, felt, believed, experienced. . . .Nothing lived is wasted. In any other career, the past is only important in so far as it helped you get to your current position. But not for a writer. Everything in the past and present is vital in creating the future and all its amazing possibilities, every detail and gesture, and memory.

–Gail Mathabane,
Love in Black and White–

A running debate between a treasured senior colleague and I during the past year or so has centered on the question of whether narrators of stories about professional helping need to make an explicit point in their narrative. I have been arguing that narrative authors need to tell us what they have learned by sharing the meaning that they have made out of their experiences. My colleague has argued that narratives should be more like literature and art—where the beauty of the story and/or power of the artistic expression conveys meaning(s) without needing to hammer readers with a heavy-handed "moral of the story."

I have been both intrigued with my colleague's argument and frustrated that the best reply to it I could think of was "Well, most practitioners and academics are not that experienced—or good—in writing literature." Like all good debates, however, it is not the search for "right answer" but rather the challenge of conceptualizing narratives in a new manner that has provided the intellectual stimulation and delight. Without conceding my original position (or "always reserve the right to contradict yourself"), I have decided to explore the possibilities and prospects of using various genre from modern literature in crafting narratives of professional helping.

This endeavor is based, in part, on a growing belief that much of the professional literature in the helping professions is intrinsically insular—it is written by ourselves, for ourselves, and to ourselves. Yes, research and scholarship is important to advance scientific knowledge and practice in a given discipline. However, research rarely gives us wider access to—or influence with—the public-at-large. In addition, it tells almost nothing about what

the life of a helping professional is really like.

As Enrenreich (1985) observes, the helping professions are regarded with deep ambivalence by the public. On the one hand, we are admired for our altruism and willingness to work with difficult people and near impossible situations. On the other hand, we are viewed with deep suspicion because our work often is with those who have been stigmatized and marginalized by society. Narratives framed within the genre of modern literature may help the general public to see us in new ways as we present our work and our lives in their full humanness—with all of its joys and rewards, compromises and limitations, humor and laughter, heartache and sorrows, ambition and need for power, eccentricities, insecurities, and absurdities. Narratives also allow us to perceive ourselves in new ways, as we describe our thoughts, motives, and interactions with others.

What follows are some brief illustrations taken from my own continuing personal and professional journey in social work, first as a clinician, then later as an administrator, and most recently as a social work educator. I do not have sufficient hubris to claim that these vignettes are "literature." Rather, I following Anne Lamott's (1994) advice that a good starting point for authors is writing *short assignments*. She writes: "I [have] a one-inch picture frame that I put on my desk to remind me of short assignments. It reminds me that all I have to do is to write down as much as I can see through a one-inch picture frame. This is all I have to bite off for the time being. . . .to figure out a one inch piece of my story to tell, one small scene, one memory, one exchange" (pp. 17-18).

These narrative sketches, then, are some of my one-inch stories that hopefully convey something comedic, romantic, mysterious, and tragic about my life as a professional helper. This is not to suggest a conceit that my life is somehow extraordinary. Rather it is a belief that each individual life story, while unique to that person, also touches on universal themes common to all. And intellectual humility demands that I should first attempt to use the narrative suggestions I hope others later may follow.

Comedy

"We want your ideas, your thoughts, your feelings . . . . We're more desperate than usual this week."

—Headline from an employee newsletter—

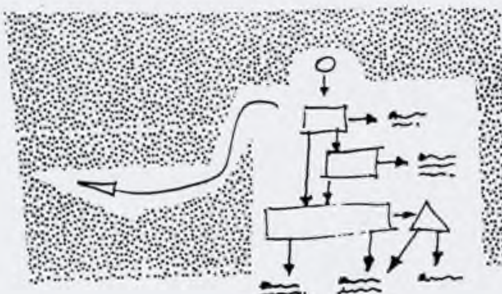
Professional social work may have reached the century mark, but it will not reach full maturity until it publishes its first joke book or humor periodical. I know many colleagues with a wonderful sense of humor and playfulness, yet rarely is such humor captured in the social work literature. Frankly, I am jealous that professions such as psychology and education can create such delightful academic parodies as the *Journal of Polymorphous Perversity* or the *Journal of Irreproducible Results*. Why can't social work laugh at itself in the same way? You would think that once "empowerment" became co-opted by conservative Republicans, we might see the irony and/or get the hint that it was ok to lighten up. But no! Often, I'm afraid, we are perceived by others (maybe, at times, by ourselves) as self-righteous, overly politically correct, and–worst of all–terribly, terribly grim.

The following story illustrates an effort to use humor during an extended organizational crises. [A more extended, traditionally written account (i.e., non-narrative) of this experience appears in Kayser & Garrison (1995)].

It is the first "management survivors" meeting. I am sitting in the executive board room with a sharp, sinking feeling in my stomach. Less than 16 months ago, I changed jobs. What I thought was a long established, financially stable, mental health hospital system is in a deep downward spiral. Assaults come daily from within and without (e.g., budget cuts, sudden staff lay-off, program closures, protracted infighting among staff, competition for patients from for-profit providers). Census has fallen, morale has been crushed, rumors are rampant, and doom and gloom pervades all levels of the organization. The CEO, who a few weeks ago had laid off my boss, Dr. A., along with *entire levels* of senior and middle management, was himself subsequently

dumped by the board of directors. Dr. A. has returned as part of an interim executive triumvirate. (Apparently, the private medical staff had a "small problem" with admitting patients to a private psychiatric hospital which didn't have a medical director!)

This meeting has been called by Dr. A. to meet with all the remaining system managers. He and I get along well. For once, the intrapsychic transferences are aligned within the psychoanalytic astrological constellations. (The person looking for the "good father" has met the person looking for the "good son.") Dr. A. is tall and gray, serious, task-driven, and obsessive about policies and procedures. I also know he has a heart. When he initially was laid off a few weeks ago, he gathered his immediate managers together to say goodby. He cried openly in grief about the hospital he had given so much to, and gave permission for the rest of us also to grieve for our own losses and those of our colleagues.



By now, you are wondering "this is comedy?" Well, as I once read on a bumper sticker, "If you have to skate on thin ice, you might as well be dancing."

Dr. A. begins the meeting by informing us that the new name for the remaining managers group is "IMT" (short for "Interim Management Team,") and why that name was chosen over other possibilities. This is very much part of this organization's culture. When I first started this job, I had to learn a whole new language of programmatic acronyms.

As the meeting proceeds, I can feel the fingers of my depression and survivor's guilt begin to creep in. Not really paying attention to what is being said, I began to construct mental anagrams about this new designation "IMT." With one of those quirky flashes of humor that occasionally comes upon me, I realize how I can change "IMT" to something else.

There is a pause in the meeting as one agenda item is finished. I raise my hand to signal I want to make a comment—the first time I have spoken since the meeting started. I start talking in a slow, somber cadence. (Actually, I am secretly emulating the way Dr. A. usually talks, but he doesn't know that—I hope.)

"I think we should give serious consideration to changing the name 'IMT' to something more reflective of who we are as a management group."

No response, but at least I have the floor.

I continue: "This organization is in crisis, and the employees need some hope or signal from us about who we are, what we intend to do, and what direction we plan to proceed. 'IMT' doesn't really signify anything. We should pick a name that provides a sense of hope and optimism."

Now heads turn in my direction. Dr. A., seated at the middle of table, looks down at me over the top of his glasses, perched half-way down his nose. He asks the question I have been waiting for. (In using humor, it really helps to have a straight man to set up the punch line!) "Do you have a suggestion, John?"

"Yes," I reply. "I have been thinking that if we changed 'Interim Management Team' to 'Interim Management People' we would get the initials 'I-M-P'—which is certainly a much more appropriate designation for any group of managers attempting to lead this organization!"

Laughter from the group erupts. Dr. A. throws up his arms, leans back his head, and lets out a loud guffaw, "Thank you, John Kayser!"

The spell of doom and gloom has been broken. Although the group won't go so far as to actually adopt the name "Imp," we spend the next twenty minutes addressing the morale of the organization. I point out that, with all the budget cuts there has been no regular employee newsletter for sometime and that we need to do something to reestablish communications and to combat rumors. Ernie, an administrative colleague with a journalism

background, proposes starting a one-page double-sided newsletter as an insert in the twice-monthly paychecks. He and I agree to organize this, and we leave the meeting with *carte blanche* as to how to proceed (as long as we do it cheaply).

Two weeks later, the first "edition" appears. On the front page is a cartoon of two CEO-types struggling to sit in the same executive chair, with the caption: "Dammit, Jenkins! This is not what I meant by a merger!" Following this was detailed information about the status of merger talks currently underway between our hospital and our main competitor in the nonprofit health care market.

Although Dr. A. wonders aloud where this is headed, we are on a roll. For the next two years, the newsletter appeared, evolving into an information forum, critic-at-large, humorist, and counselor to the distressed employees of the organization. Each edition contained both timely factual information along with bizarre headlines, slogans, nonsensical awards, and fractured metaphors, my favorite of which is: "We've got to run a tight ship or the bottom will fall off, and we'll sail off in a different direction."

Looking back now, I fondly see this experience as combining *Mad Magazine*-type humor with a focus on promoting individual and group mental health in an organization that, at times, truly was mad. Humor was an important way of dealing with organizational chaos, grief, and loss.

Romance

> *"Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird. It's a plane. It's . . ."*
> –Opening line of a classic superhero TV show–

My wife is a clinical psychologist and we have been married for twenty plus years. A few weeks ago we were having dinner with a colleague whom we have worked and been friends with since before our marriage. The conversation turned to other "professional couples" the three of us knew in common. Our friend, who has a wry perspective on life, made the observation that there often appeared to be an unequal distribution of power in many of these relationships. She gave an example of seeing a clinical social worker at a conference relate to her husband, a psychiatrist, in a passive, dependent, clingy manner. That observation, in turn, reminded me of a remark I heard a field director make at social work national conference. A first year student had told her: "I don't need a field supervisor. My husband is a psychiatrist, and I get my supervision from him." Lord, save our professions and all clients from such as these!

I have been thinking of this conversation ever since, mentally taking inventory of all the professional couples I know, gay and straight. I realized that there are too many variations in these relationships to come up with any valid generalizations. To an external observer, these relationships run the gamut of health in terms of psychological compatibility, equality of economics, divisions of nurturing/affectional responsibilities, and distributions of power.

Finally, I started thinking about these issues in terms of my own relationship with my wife. We are true "soul mates" in terms of values and outlook, but very different in temperament and style. The constant struggle in our relationship is how do we save enough emotional energy to give to each other (and to our late adolescent son) when we both work in jobs which demand that we give so much to others. I thought of the following story from the beginning of our relationship which illustrates the intertwining of the personal and the professional.

The middle 1970s brings my first post-master's job. A social work vacancy opened up in the children's day hospital where I did my second year field placement. Although I have moved back to Minnesota, I apply for the position, and am hired. I pack up, and move back to Colorado without a clue as to what else awaits me. Heading west, I come to realize much later, creates the watershed-crisis of my adult development. I finally have to grow-up.

At age 26, I still am stuck in the adolescent male fantasy that one day some beautiful woman will seduce me, and that's how I'll know that I truly can be loved. In truth, the

women I am attracted to scare the heck out of me. Even worse, I can't really conceive that any woman genuinely would be attracted to me.

I start work in September. The staff welcomes me back, and soon I am deeply immersed in clinical work with children, parents, and families. Mid-October, the unexpected happens. A psychologist on staff asks me if I would like to go to a Halloween party with her. I am dumbfounded. "Are you asking me for a date?" I stupidly ask. Such incredible thick-headedness immediately angers her. (I only learn later of her own struggles to risk asking the question. Much much later, this episode becomes one which she loves to retell, each time enjoying my embarrassment at being such a social klutz.) Somehow or other, we get past my stupidity and her hurt.

I tell her I will go, but only if I don't have to wear a costume. She says ok, but I am sure she is thinking "what a stick-in-the-mud!" She says she'll be wearing one. We make arrangements for the party, and go back to our individual offices.

Of course, immediately I go to the phone book and lookup theater costume shops. Later that week, I rent a great one, thinking "Maybe I'll be able to do this if I am in disguise!"

The night of the party, I come to her apartment in full costume regalia, having chosen a favorite fictional character—the one I believe is closest to my own personality. She opens the door. The light flowing from behind illuminates the blue and red "SuperGirl" outfit that she made. She has long, beautiful dark hair, an oval face, penetrating blue eyes, a strong nose, and an expressive mouth. I confess that the "S " sewn on her chest did not make me think of the "*Man* of Steel." I would have run right there, if I had not been in costume. There I was—deerstalker cap, great cape, English tweed coat—doing my best to have smoke languidly curling from my lips and meerschaum-pipe. I whip out my magnifying glass, and begin to search for clues: "Elementary, my dear Watson."

We both laugh, enormously pleased with ourselves and choice of costumes (which later are recognized as symbolic for key features in our long lasting relationship). "Where is this party, anyway?" I ask. "At the edge of Kansas," she replies mischievously. We drive off into the deep, dark night.

Toto, I don't think we're in Kansas any more. Twenty-five miles past the end of civilization (ok—the city lights of Denver), we arrive at a horse-barn! I do recall some earlier mention that the party would be with "people I ride with," but I did not imagine it would be at the barn itself. The room off the indoor arena where the party is in full force is dimly lit, unheated, filled with people I don't know and am not sure I want to interact with. But hey, we are all in costume, so it really doesn't matter! I drink hot cider, nibble on things to eat, and manage to make small talk. I get lots of compliments on my costume.

As the party winds down, she asks if I want to see "Toby," the schooling horse she is learning to ride. "Sure," I say bravely—mentally counting on one hand the number of times I actually have been around horses. Toby is big, dark, and pungent! Breathing through his nostrils in visible bursts of steam, he responds pleasurably to her gentle "horse talk." Relaxing a bit, I begin to stroke his face, neck, and sides.

After awhile we leave his stall and walk to the end of the barn. The stars brilliantly light the dark sky. It is incredibly cold. We stand close to each other for warmth. I want very much to take her in my arms and kiss her but am afraid to make the first move, afraid to screw up the moment, afraid to do anything. The moment passes, and I take her home—mentally beating myself up all the way for my timidity.

Somehow we survive the first date and begin to spend a lot more time together. The more the relationship deepens, the more torn I am. Pursuing this relationship means giving up much of the things that have kept me safe and insulated from my own feelings and needs. We spend long Saturday walks together, telling each other about our lives, our childhoods, our families. I am incredibly in love, deeply depressed, and riddled with anxiety. I go into therapy.

For the first time, I learn nonpassive ways of acknowledging and expressing emotions. Amazingly, not only does this improve our relationship, it

makes me more effective as a clinician. I begin to gather courage in raising difficult issues with clients that previously had been (mutually) avoided. I discover there is power in being direct and assertive, both personally and professionally.

Over time, we learn to love each other and ourselves during good times and bad, in sickness and health, till death do us part. (We also celebrate our beginnings by throwing incredible annual Halloween parties). While we have other aspects to our complex personas, the original costume metaphors remain. Yet, our imperfect humanness helps keep us in balance—we've come to know the weaknesses of invulnerability and the shallowness of wisdom derived solely from logical deductions.

For the past eight years, we have lived on a small acreage, complete with horses and other assorted domestic animals. Each evening, as I muck out the stall , I see the stars shining in the evening sky. I know they bless our love, bless our lives together. And horses (and their owner), I discover, smell sweet.

Mystery

"Is there any point to which you would wish to draw my attention?"

"To the curious incident of the dog in the night-time."

"The dog did nothing in the night-time."

"That was the curious incident," remarked Sherlock Holmes.

-Arthur Conan Doyle, *Silver Blaze*–

Somewhere in my graduate education, I read or was told in supervision that I should learn to "trust the puzzles." This admonition proved useful advice in clinical work when attempting to discern why a client was behaving in a particular way or when reflecting on why I was reacting in a certain way. It suggests that much of the helping process is, indeed, mysterious.

Which reminds me of two other quotes that I have tried to take to heart as well. Terry Tafoya, a clinical psychologist who is Native American, spoke at a conference several years ago (1992), remarked that "all systems of knowledge are also systems of ignorance." Similarly, Yalom (1989) notes: "The more the therapist is able to tolerate the anxiety of not knowing, the less need is there for the therapist to embrace orthodoxy. The creative members of an orthodoxy . . .ultimately outgrow their disciplines." Slowly, I have learned to trust my unknowing, trying to nurture what my colleague Pam Metz (1997) calls the beginner's mind.

This story, then, is about one mystery that, while unraveles part of it, continues to remain something of a puzzling about professional helping.

It is *deja vu* all over again. Several years ago, I began to suspect that one of my earliest child therapy patients from years past now had enrolled as a student in the social work masters program. It is not clear why I began to think this since this student never took a class from me, never spoke to me at all during two years through the program, never communicated in any way. So how did I begin to suspect there might be a connection?

There are, in fact, only two times I can actually recall seeing this student in person for any extended time. The first was when a group of first year students came to a faculty meeting to talk of their concerns about needing greater cultural diversity in the curriculum and in the student body. As they introduced themselves, I heard a distinctive first name spoken—a name I had heard in only one other context before, a name I had heard only one other person called before. The last name, however, was different. From the back of the room, I looked at the face. The hair, complexion, and glasses looked somewhat as I remembered, only older and more polished. Still, I wasn't sure.

I pushed it to the back of my mind, thinking this was likely one of those transference issues again. It had happened

before. Sometimes I have spied a face in the crowd—some late adolescent or early adult—who reminded me of some child I had worked with in play therapy long ago. I thought of these unsettling experiences as stemming from unresolved feelings about no longer being in practice. While I loved teaching, I often missed doing clinical work. Yet, I knew that if I gave time to practice, I wouldn't be able to write. I wanted to publish, not perish. (Or, as Leonard McCoy says to the Vulcan high-priestess in *Star Trek III*, "I choose the danger.")

About a year later, I came to my mailbox in the front lobby to pick up some material that had been left for me. The student and two children were standing at the receptionist's desk, about five feet away. Seeing the student up close was a powerful jolt. The profile was the same. It took all of my might to resist the powerful urge to walk over to the student and say: "I wonder if you are ________?"

I hung around the lobby longer than needed, hoping the student might give some sign of recognition. Nothing happened. Concluding the business at hand, the student and two children turned and left the building. I didn't feel ignored or avoided. I felt unrecognized.

I went home, took out a box of old client notes, and pulled out the case file. There was a Polaroid picture of the two of us, taken on the day we terminated, plus two-years worth of yellowing process-recording notes from our therapy sessions. A couple of odd items also were thrown in—pieces of information I had heard over the years "through the grapevine" and simply filed away. One was that the student had graduated with honors from high school. Another was that the student had gotten married.

I thought back to the last conversation I could remember having with my ex-client. The student's mother had called me about six years after the child

therapy had ended. The student was then in high school and experiencing some adjustment difficulties. I agreed to talk to the student, and—if needed—to see the student in therapy. When we spoke by phone, I asked: "Do you remember any of the work we did earlier?" The reply was: "I remember it. I just don't understand what it was for." Although I extended an invitation, the student chose not to resume therapy, and I lost further contact.

Keeping the limits of confidentiality, I discussed the present situation with my wife, who pointed out that there might be many reasons why this student would not want to reestablish contact, including the need to preserve privacy about something painful. I had a hard time hearing her counsel. Some part of me wanted the student's acknowledgment that I was important, that we had done good work together, that somehow remembering and reconnecting was essential for continuing therapeutic progress.

As graduation approached, I realized there will be no reconnection. I know I needed to accept that fact and let it go. Anyway, by now I have half convinced myself that I made the whole thing up. Just a "fig newton" of a runaway neurosis.

Nonetheless, I decide to play a long shot. I remember the street address of the mother's house from several home visits I made. I look up the student's address in the school's directory. It is the same. Score one for Sherlock!

Somehow knowing for sure makes all the other parts of not knowing more tolerable. I will never know if the student remembered our therapy, or if the student's choice of a career in social work had anything to do with our earlier work. Certainly, it would be flattering to think so, but on the whole I think not.

Looking back, the biggest mystery is why the whole thing became so important to me. The narcissism of the therapist in needing to see first-hand the fruits of one's own work is powerful. Exploration of this mystery continues, albeit with a different case, in the final section of this article.

Tragedy

"Either get ready for elimination or else your hearts must have courage for the changing of the guards."

–Bob Dylan,
Changing of the Guards–

Like all human activities, social work is finite and mortal. It has a beginning, and it will have an end. At some point, entropy and chaos eventually will coalesce to overwhelm generativity and homeostasis. Social work—as an individual, collective, and corporate enterprise—someday will die (Krueger, 1997).

Cognitively, humans grow to learn that death is a universal phenomenon. Existentially, we come to know that a personal death awaits us all. Organizationally, however, it is much more difficult to grasp that fact that our cherished professions and institutions also must go through a similar developmental course (Cameron, 1983). Because organizations embrace many lives and may exist over many generations, there is a tendency to believe that their life course is infinite. Thus, in countless organizational meetings and retreats, grand vision statements about the future—views of unceasing increases in progress and excellence—have been boldly proclaimed. Rarely, however, is there consideration that the organization or profession itself might cease altogether. Conveniently, these types of omissions help us maintain what Becker (1973) so poignantly termed "the denial of death."

But, as Isak Dinsen notes: "All sorrows can be born if we can put them into a story" (quoted in Riesman, 1993). We need narratives that describe the end game—the way social work dies a bit everyday—just as much as we need creation stories (the way it is renewed and reborn a bit everyday) and maintenance stories (the way it adapts, continues, and perpetuates itself everyday). If we only write about the death of others (e.g., clients with whom we worked), we never have to face the limits of our knowledge, the failure of our methods, the illusionary nature of much of our theories and science. Those cold realities are very much part of the hidden story of the human beings who do professional helping.

The following is one such story. Long before I ever knew anything about narrative theory or began writing narratives of professional helping, I wrote a "mourning paper" in an elective doctoral class (Kayser, 1982). The paper wrestled with a personal and professional puzzle I was struggling with at the time. Why had a treatment failure occurred in a particular family that I had a long involvement with as a clinician, despite enormous amount of intensive mental health interventions? Writing the paper allowed me to achieve some measure of personal and professional closure. I have reconstructed the portions of the paper into the following narrative account.

They call it a "terminal degree." Meaning, I gather, that it is either the end of the educational line or else you die trying. With these comforting thoughts, I take my first steps towards doctoral education. Moving from full time employment to half-time, while also taking a full time course load, I come to work for the first month or so in a complete daze. Not only are research and statistics giving me fits, I have had to relinquish a number of treatment cases—some of whom I have carried for several years. (It is pre-managed care days, when long-term individual psychotherapy was the professional aim of many psychoanalytically-trained clinical social workers.) I am preoccupied with worry and loss about the individual children and adults, and their families, with whom I have been working with so deeply, so intensely, and so long.

In fact, doctoral education has forced me to terminate with a family I have been working with almost continuously since my time as a second year social work student. I was the individual therapist for Mrs. G., seeing her first when her adopted daughter, Alice, entered the children's day treatment program. Later, I treated Mrs. G. on an outpatient basis for several years.

The case presents many complex features. Alice is mentally retarded, has uncontrolled seizures, and relates to her mother in an extremely regressed, hostile-dependent, oppositional manner. Mrs. G. parents in a controlling, intrusive

manner that only serves to reinforce Alice's negativity. Mr. G is placed on involuntary permanent disability by his company for chronic somatic complaints of undetermined etiology. Only Ray, one year older than Alice and also adopted at birth, appears to be relatively healthy and symptom-free. He is bright, verbal, and gifted academically, socially, and athletically.

The parents perceive the company's action against the father as a grave injustice, and have instituted a protracted lawsuit. Eventually, Mr. G. is reinstated, only to die from a massive heart attack shortly after returning to work. Mrs. G. and Alice strongly defend against feelings of sadness and anger. Only Ray, then age 10, is open in expressing grief.

In the years which follow, however, Ray's overall functioning declines. What begins at age 12 as a few localized acting-out episodes (e.g., shoplifting, minor theft) has by age 17 blossomed into major juvenile delinquency (e.g., car theft, burglary, vandalism, substance abuse, and physical assaults). In contrast, Alice's functioning significantly improves. Her seizures are controlled, she acts much less regressed, and does well in special education classes and vocational work settings.

The focus of my work with Mrs. G shifts over time. First, it is to help her parent more effectively by setting age-appropriate expectations for Alice, and to begin dealing with the realities of her child's multiple handicaps. After Mr. G.'s death, therapy focuses on helping Mrs. G. and the family deal with the grief and loss. Somewhat later, it focuses on the endless series of conflicts between Mrs. G. and Ray. Finally, the focus of treatment shifts to examining Mrs. G.'s own masochistic tendencies—her belief that unless she is suffering from crises and trauma, she cannot be loved.

Through it all, Mrs. G. is an eager-to-please client, each week smilingly confronting me with therapeutic conundrums that I try to solve. The case becomes intimately entwined with my own learning and developing competence as a therapist. I find it especially difficult to let this case go, always being impelled by the inner belief that if I only knew more or could somehow increase my therapeutic skills, then some breakthrough or cure would occur. While there was some progress in all areas, the pathological embrace between mother and son intensifies and magnifies over time. At the end, I feel a palpable sense of defeat.

Doctoral education allows me an escape—giving me a legitimate, external reason to terminate the case. Writing the doctoral paper allows me to mourn my own sense of failure in the case. I conclude the paper with these comments: "Failure is both difficult to acknowledge and accept. Yet, when it is recognized, it can lead to clearer perception and understanding. . . about the difficulty in treatment which certain conditions of psychopathology present. It also serves as a reminder that the process of therapy is a human one. . . .its limitations come both from the complexity of the problems per se but also from the imperfections of the therapeutic change agents."

Closure achieved. I move on. Many years pass. I become a social work educator, teaching a class of first year students in an interviewing class. The midterm assignment is to audiotape or videotape an interview with a client from the students' field practice.

It is *deja vu* all over again (times two). I read a paper and listen to an audio tape of a mother dying of cancer. The social work student is working with her to say goodbye to her adult mentally retarded daughter. Although the student changes the names to preserve confidentiality, the case history information is the same. I listen to Mrs. G's voice on tape. She sounds resigned to her death, but there is no hint of false martyrdom or masochism evident. I hear Alice's voice—older, deeper, far more independent and self-reliant. The student does a lovely job of helping the two of them talk to each other. There is a passing reference to an older brother who has been incarcerated for many years and who has no contact with the family.

Midway through the quarter, Mrs. G. passes away. I do not tell the student what I

know. I silently grieve for the hard life of Mrs. G. I say a prayer for all those helpers who came after me, who helped her and her family in ways I could not. Therapy, I realize, is not a continuous process with a clear end. Therapy may focus on helping clients' resolve important developmental crises in their lives, without necessarily achieving total closure on many problematic issues.

I grieve for myself and my obsolete knowledge. I grieve for all those yet to enter the field who will have no idea about the joys, the heartaches, and the pitfalls of doing long-term psychotherapy work. The theory has been declared bankrupt, the therapeutic technology is being lost, and the long-term systems of care have been dismantled.

A new era has dawned, and I must get ready for elimination. Remembering that old supervision adage that a social worker's primary goal in alleviating social problems is to eliminate the need for social workers, I hope to find the courage to accept the changing of the guard.

Conclusion

This article has been an experiment to see if the genre of modern literature lends itself to developing new narratives for the helping professions as they move into the millennium. Pain may be the universe's gift to the poet (Simmons, 1991), but as Oren Lyons notes (quoted in Simpkinson & Simpkinson, 1993):

Life will go on
as long as there is someone
to sing, to dance, to tell stories
and to listen. □

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Book Review: Rewriting Family Scripts: Improvisation and Systems Change

Rewriting Family Scripts: Improvisation and Systems Change by John Byng-Hall.
New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 1995, 271 pp., $35.00 (cloth).

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John Byng-Hall is a Consultant Child and Family Psychiatrist at the Tavistock Clinic. He was trained at Cambridge University, University College Hospital London, and Maudsley and Bethlem Royal Hospitals. He is a past Chair of the Institute of Family Therapy, London.

Dr. Byng-Hall brings a wealth of family therapy experience to the writing of his book, which blends attachment theory, systems theory, and psychodynamic principles. Dr. Byng-Hall takes a unique perspective which applies the individual attachment theory of John Bowlby to family interaction and focuses on helping families to develop what he calls a "secure base" from which to grow. He further describes the concept of a secure base as providing a reliable network of care that gives every member a sufficient sense of security to explore and develop because members know that "the family" will be there for them if and when needed. The author credits much of his appreciation for attachment theory to Bowlby, but adds a unique concept of "family scripts." According to Byng-Hall, these family scripts are self-destructive routines that are so predictable that family members seem to be following a script. He outlines two types of scripts: replicative scripts which transmit patterns from one generation to the next and corrective scripts which derive from family members trying to avoid or counteract uncomfortable past patterns. In either case, Byng-Hall points out that neither the replicative nor the corrective scripts provide helpful solutions to the current family problems. He points to family therapy which is aimed at teaching family members to explore and improvise new scripts as the way to stop the repetition of dysfunctional family patterns.

Rewriting Family Scripts is a valuable resource for clinical practice as many case examples are provided. Dr. Byng-Hall sees families at the Tavistock Clinic with observers watching his practice from behind a one-way mirror. He speaks of the importance of having feedback from the observers to help design creative improvisations and avoid countertransference. He adds a bit of self-disclosure as he discusses case material and is not afraid to look at himself and point out when he feels his upbringing may be interfering or causing him to focus on one aspect of the problem or solution, and avoid or fail to see other possibilities. He ap-

proaches families with respect and gentleness focusing on supporting new behaviors rather than criticizing the repetition of patterns which obviously have not been successful. He encourages parents by reframing corrective scripts as attempts to provide a better experience for their children, than their parents provided for them. In this endeavor, he demonstrates a great deal of patience, as he asks families to enact home situations in his office so that he may lend input and allow the family members to try out new behaviors. He then asks the family "What was the old way of doing things and what was new about it?" In this technique, he offers hope to families that they can change things for themselves. The author claims to have used this technique of enactment at the same time as Salvador Minuchin, but did not know Minuchin or of his technique at the time. Since that time, the author has met Minuchin, and says that the two therapists agree that this is a very useful family therapy technique.

In reading Byng-Hall's work, I was reminded of Michael White's Narrative Therapy and Insoo Kim Berg's Solution-Focused Therapy in that all three focus on the strengths of the family, rather than on the weaknesses, and focus on solving current family problems rather than on exploring past history. All three seem to dismiss James Framo's idea that in order to be rid of the patterns of the past, it is necessary to confront the family of origin. In addition, I saw similarities between Melanie Klein's concept of projective identification and Byng-Hall's use of replicative scripts. The concept of corrective scripts is reminiscent of the object relation's concept of unconscious introjects from the past. However, in the case of corrective scripts and replicative scripts, Byng-Hall seems optimistic about the individuals' capacity to attain freedom from the past through family therapy which is focused in the present problem-solving process, rather than a traditional personal analysis. Byng-Hall remains committed to principles of systems theory, and gives several case examples in which children act out until the therapist convinces the parents to act as a team and stop giving children mixed messages. He also looks at each parent's family of origin in taking a genogram in order to explore how each member's script may relate to the partner's script. I found this concept very similar to Nathan Ackerman's concept of interlocking pathology, except that Byng-Hall places less emphasis on unconscious processes which guide behavior. Although many concepts do not seem new, this author offers a practical way to integrate and use this framework in clinical practice.

The stated purpose of *Rewriting Family Scripts* was to offer a model for change in which the therapist helps the family to feel secure enough to risk improvising in those relationships so they can explore solutions to present and future problems. Through the use of case examples, the author demonstrates how to use his model with families who are struggling with bereavement, family breakdown, disability, and the birth of a new baby. He uses humor, and British phrases such as "I'll ring up the client" or "sorting things out" or "settle the child" which add a great deal of personality and charm to the work. In all respects, the author achieves his stated purpose and provides a comprehensive conceptual framework that illuminates the central issues of family therapy practice. This book makes a valuable contribution to family therapy practice. □

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