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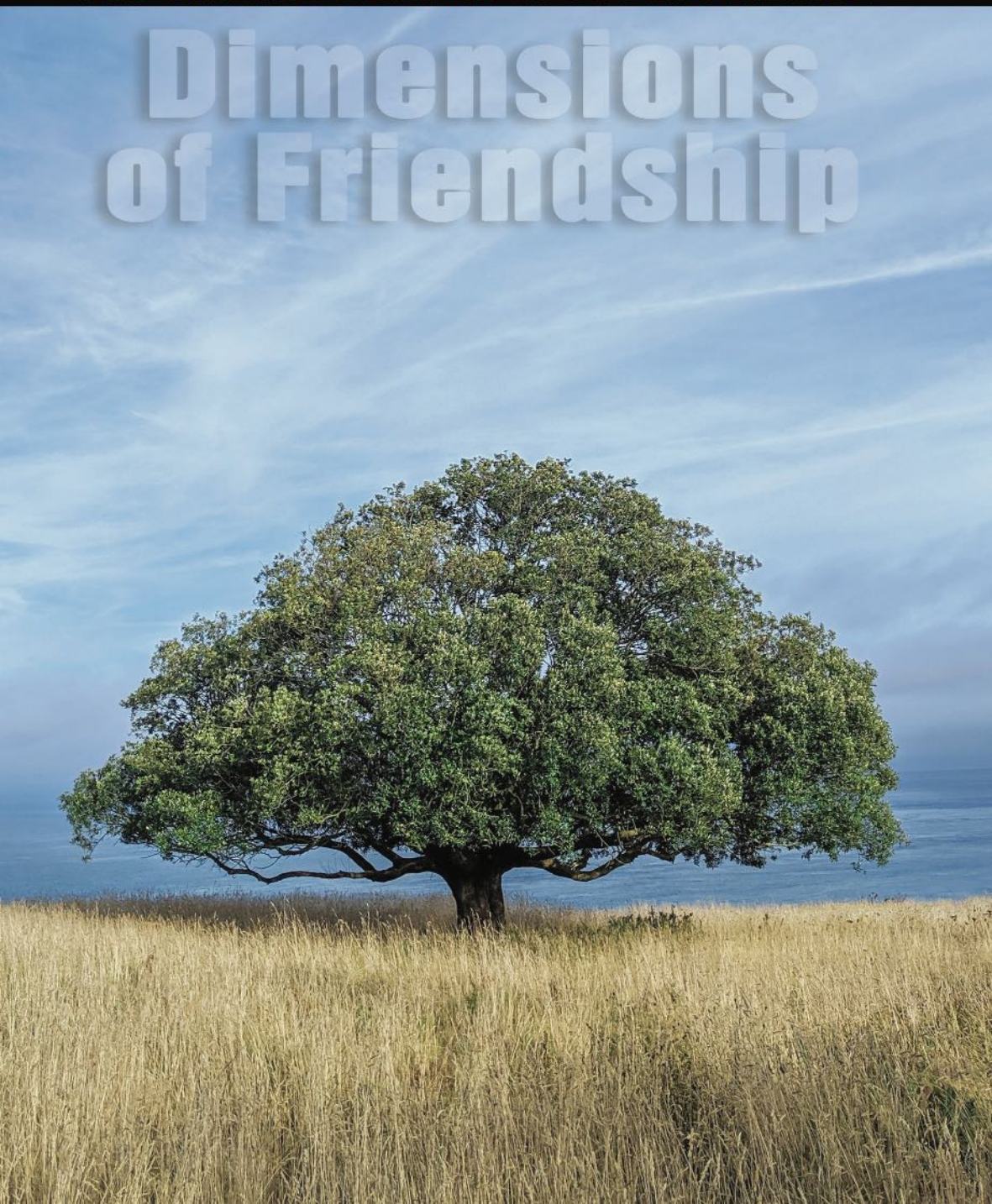
Dimensions of Friendship



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Journal of The American Academy of Psychotherapists

VOICES

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

Friendship is a sheltering tree.

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge

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We Go High by Mary de Wit

Penelope Norton

Penelope Norton, PhD, practices psychology in Ormond Beach, Florida. She and her husband have three adult children. This is the 24th issue of *Voices* that she has co-edited.
penelope.norton@gmail.com

Editorials

Weaving Friendship

Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

I begin this day on a walk with my friend Linda, a 20-year ritual at 7:50 on Thursday mornings. In my longing and quest to be truly known, Linda knows me well, as we have met in all kinds of Florida weather, atmospherically and emotionally. We have shared our stories of raising children and teens, aging, moving, the ups and downs of our marriages and our relationships with our siblings, and this year, gently, our very different political views. I am renewed by and grateful for this weekly meander, which although geographically to nowhere in particular, has marked so many mileposts on our lives' journeys.

Most, if not all, of my clients bring friendship concerns into their psychotherapy. And I am no stranger to the ebb and flow of connection, friendship, loss, and loneliness. In the past 5 years, a friend of 30 years lost her long battle with multiple sclerosis. I've neglected and lost a friend due to the overwhelming demands of a personal crisis. The political views of another long-time friend have created too much strain on the bridge between us; I do not know whether our break is temporary or permanent. Yet, I reconnected with a high school friend from 50 years ago, finding an easy synchrony with her despite the years of geographic and personal distance. COVID has challenged everyone, including me, to sift through and distill the importance of many connections. The rhythms and patterns of friendship seem both knowable and mysterious. Sampling this day's clients yields exam-

ples of the centrality of friendship in our work.

In play therapy with 7-year-old Isabella, highly intelligent and new to her school, she discloses that peers reject her for "knowing too much." Isabella's heart feels others' rejections, although her intellect is unstoppable. Psychologist Steven Pfeiffer (2015), a specialist in counseling gifted children, posits that children like Isabella need support for their emotions and for their intellect. Isabella delights in teaching me about frogs as she plays with reptiles in the sand tray: "Do you know they shed their skins and eat them?" Indeed, I did not know, and I tell her I am glad to learn. On this dimension, I know it will be many years before a peer will come along who can truly meet her.

Sixteen-year-old Elena feels "deadly bored." With a gleam of wisdom she tells me she broke up with her boyfriend because she is "not ready for a relationship." But, her one reported source of connection is her friends; to her they are lifesaving. Elena seemed to have read the very words of Carol Gilligan, whose research underscored the safety net aspect of teen girl friendships while navigating through the anxieties of differentiating a self (Gilligan, Lyons, and Hanmer, 1990). Another teen, intellectually challenged with learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder, reports that her friendships are entirely virtual. These teens connect by making avatars of one another and by creating online film and art related to the fantasy story lines that they enjoy. In e-connection her artistic talent is both mirrored and affirmed, while protecting her from rejection of peers at her public high school. I am impressed by her resourcefulness in creating an adaptation for friendships that works for her.

Numerous clients in the middle adult years struggle with friendships. Late-30s Sara underwent an unspeakable trauma. Raising two kids while trying to inch her way forward, she has housed and supported several different friends and family members, adding to her emotional load of trauma recovery and single-parenting two kids. Sara exemplifies the research of Shelley Taylor (2002), who found that under stress, women increase caretaking of others. Pete, mid-40s, has lived for 3 years with a woman who wants to marry him. Pete has many friends with whom he plays sports or fishes. His girlfriend has no friends; her single minded pursuit of Pete leaves him feeling strangled and pressured. Janet, in her mid-50s feels lonely, rejected by the women with whom she was in lock step while their children were classmates in elementary and middle school. The group has disbanded as the children have scattered into different high schools and activities. She had not been aware that these friendships were not based on mutual interests or deeper connection but were really about proximity in space and time.

On this particular day, I see two clients who, though lonely, have emotional wounds that make friendship challenging, if possible at all. Middle-aged Ingrid is physically challenged and has dissociative identity disorder. In our recent work, she has been building collaboration and cooperation among her alters. Ironically, it is work involving a kind of friendship. She has recently remembered the kindness of a foster family with whom she lived briefly as a child, coming into contact with inner resources for greater kindness to herself. Middle-aged Bruce presents with severe post-traumatic stress disorder from child abuse, with recent multiple losses as well. He often takes comfort with prostitutes, the transaction protecting him from his fear of intimacy, but leaving him with more emptiness and longing. He has low expectations that he can have more, but his tenderness toward his two dogs, one of whom is disabled, gives me hope for him.

And, this being Florida, there are my many senior clients. Friendship in later life

is associated with greater happiness and life satisfaction, whereas self-esteem is more connected to kin-keeping (Dorsey, 2016). Re-investing in new relationships after loss is an essential senior skill. Seventy-eight-year-old Carol has been lonely throughout her life, but especially since her husband died just shortly before the COVID quarantine. Carol has wrestled with remaining in Florida versus moving across the country to join her daughter and her grandchildren. Presently, Carol has cobbled together an unlikely group of people for daily dinners, though she is not sure whether this is a group of friends or just people with whom she eats. But, she is enticed by being needed to help with her grandchildren and their two working parents, choosing to move; I believe she has chosen well. Undaunted and persistent, she is building friendships in advance of her move by Zooming with groups in her upcoming location. Barry is similarly lonely and sad. He lives in a senior condo with his wife who is slowly fading with cognitive impairment, and their children are far away. Barry's wife believes she is fine, and he mostly plays along with her denial, which only exacerbates his loneliness. His one friend, with whom he discussed world events, has been trapped in Europe due to COVID. The biggest boost to his mood has been his following through on my recommendation to volunteer at a local food kitchen for the homeless, where his labor is appreciated; the biggest drain to his mood has been his estrangement from his adult daughter. Carol, Barry, and other senior clients model for me something of my future self, with the hope that I will have the grit to pursue that which will maintain my zest for life as long as possible.

Home from my office at last, I begin preparing dinner, enjoying the colors of the vegetables, the smells of dinner preparation, and the hands-on interaction with materials to product a meal. My daughter calls, and we FaceTime. I am so happy that we are together while cooking. I connect to memories of my mother and grandmothers—canning peaches and tomatoes, green beans and whatever was in season, in the kitchen together talking and laughing all the while. The companionable friendship of women is something I had hoped for with my daughter. We talk until we can no longer cook one handed.

Dinner with my husband is a nightly ritual, part of the glue of our nearly 50 years together. We share the details of our day, skirting carefully around the many confidences we hold in our respective professional work. We talk of our children, observations of the natural world, upcoming plans. Due to COVID, we are missing our usual dinner rush to choir rehearsal. Twenty years' singing and breathing in synchrony in choir has bonded us to many friends. Choir or not, dinner together is larger than the words of conversation, the synergy made all the more precious by the awareness that we have so much more time behind us than ahead of us.

At the end of this day, this issue of *Voices*, after nearly a year of preparation, has included thinking, writing, and experiencing friendship in many layers, akin to progressively opening a Matroyshka doll. Collaborating with Jonathan on this issue has connected us by more than what we have done, although we both like to edit, or by what we have discussed, although we share many similar views on a wide range of topics, but also by the inexplicable—inherent in friendship—felt sense of connection. Sharing trouvaille with Jonathan these past months has allowed me to witness and admire his giftedness as an editor, his thoughtfulness and skill as a therapist, and his dedication to what matters to him—his family, friends, patients, the Academy and *Voices*. I am grateful to my husband, John, and to Jonathan's wife, Nancy, for their support in this endeavor. With this

issue I added a new layer to my friendships with Doris Jackson, with whom I previously partnered in editing *Voices*, and with Victoria Danzig, whose grief yielded for *Voices* such beautiful photos; I have also added new levels of camaraderie with so many friends who stepped up in support of the issue, friends who truly, by Ros' Feierstein's criteria, are virtuous friends, for whom I have deep admiration, and who share my love for *Voices*, and for whom I want to give my best. Throughout the issue are articles by friends I've made, particularly in the Academy, from workshops I've led or workshops I've attended, from groups in which I have participated, and from shared professional experiences.

I see my own relationships with my husband, my daughter and sons, and their families, as the warp threads on which my life is woven. The threads of my patients' and my own friendships vary in design, repetition, color, and texture, filling the empty spaces on the warp. When open, as when a person is lonely, spaces on the loom invite new threads. Woven too tightly, the new threads constrict; too loosely, the strength of the weave is reduced. A true weave is smoothly textured and constant, requiring patience, diligence, and art, in which the whole is so much greater than the sum of the parts. ▼

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> So long as we love, we serve; so long as we are loved by others, I would almost say we are indispensable; and no man is useless while he has a friend.
>
> —Robert Louis Stevenson, *Across the Plain*

Jonathan Farber

Jonathan Farber, PhD, practices clinical psychology in Washington, DC, and Chapel Hill, North Carolina. He works with adults, children, and groups, provides clinical supervision, and leads workshops at American Academy of Psychotherapists conferences and salons. He's been a professor, a bike shop owner, and a national champion triathlete. He's a past editor of *Voices*, which is still his favorite journal, and he's grandfather to Hiram and Rina, who want to see their names in print.
jonathan.farber@gmail.com

Voices of Friendship

After an exhausting 4 years of the divisive Trump presidency, and over a year of pandemic-induced isolation and digitized relationships, my friend Pennie and I felt it was a good time to explore the experience of friendship in a *Voices* issue. What is a friend? Who would be a good friend? For whom? What makes a friendship deep or meaningful?

One essential element to friendship is the sense of specialness given and received. There is something in the process of forming a friendship, where we connect with a distinct individual, that just might provide a pathway out of our isolation and a bridge across our divisions, something that says this one, this one, this one is my friend. Friendship between two people accomplishes a magic like the definitive first breath exchanged between mother seal and pup, that tells them this is the one out of all the thronging, barking herd on the ice floe. A friend cannot be simply exchanged for another, no matter how wonderful, no matter how similar. Hence the risk of rejection in the process of forming a friendship, and the risk of loss in depending upon one. While I could not fault or judge someone who does not try—what could be more rational than eschewing companionship with those fragile, fickle, mortal, and occasionally homicidal humans?—I find myself encouraging most people to take the risk, learn from their mistakes when they get hurt, and try again.

I've had friendships throughout my life. Neighbors, classmates, officemates, and colleagues and coeditors in the American Academy of Psychotherapists. I've had friends with whom I swam, working our way through mathematically complex workout patterns of varying

lengths, intensities, drills, and strokes, pushing through aching shoulder and burning lungs together. I've shared adventures hiking up mountains or across deserts with friends, and conducted some friendships mostly by mail, or email. I've had friends with whom I had little in common, and no shared activities, but whom I met for lunch monthly, hunched towards each other, focused more on the conversation than the bad food. I've had friendships based on discussing the psychotherapy we were in, and friendships based on discussing the therapy we practiced. I've had friendships where we pondered growing into manhood, and friendships where we pondered growing into old men. The olfactorily sensitive among my friends have told me they like the way I smell, which makes me wonder uneasily about those who—for no reason I could see— never wanted to be my friend. I've never had sex with friends, which I think is because I've never been able to enjoy sex without falling in love.

I'm saddened when I observe friendships built upon exclusion or hatred of a third party, or on any category of person, an "other." My own identity has never been well-rooted in my own skin... I helplessly identify with almost any disliked person. Decades of work understanding, supporting, and empathizing with all sorts of people, many of whom are disliked in the world, at least when we get started, has only worsened this tendency in me. Seriously, I don't just sympathize with the disliked person: I feel that I am the disliked person.

When we use the concept of "depth" in psychotherapy we acknowledge how little we know about a person from what we see on the surface. If there is one thing that a career in psychotherapy has taught me, it is that I don't really know someone based on their membership in any sort of category: income, race, religion, age, sex, college, political party, or automobile choice. Coming to know a person in depth is to discover a unique path through the maze of human possibilities, and the development of a friendship is even more intricate: It emerges amidst the reciprocating dynamic of two people choosing what to reveal next based on what they just learned about each other. The more Pennie and I thought about it, the more fascinating questions we had about friendship. How do friends choose each other? What are the different benefits people derive from friendship, and what costs are they willing to endure to establish or endure a friendship? What are the challenges to be overcome in deepening a friendship? What ends a friendship? How do friends lost through alienation or death still affect us?

In this issue of *Voices*, we can't offer you straightforward answers to those questions, but we do present you with the raw material: stories and more stories of friendships. Pennie compares them to strands woven together on a loom; I think of them as a spontaneous chorus, the insanely complex but somehow coordinated sound of all the spring birds outside your window at dawn. Read these stories; then replay them slowly and carefully in your mind, and listen for the undertone: the singular heartbeat of each friendship.

Here is the story of one of my friendships. I was riding on a train, on my way back to college from a visit with my grandfather, when I realized that every single time I'd ever told him about an accomplishment or success, he'd smiled and congratulated me, amplifying my celebration. Also, that he'd greeted every last failure or disappointment (at school, sports, dating, money, whatever) with sympathy and compassion. He never once shamed me, nor made me feel bad about myself for it. I said to myself, "That is the best friend I will ever have in my life," and 50 years later, that still feels true. Reflecting

now, I'm struck by both the differences between us that made it an unlikely friendship and by the mystery of the bond between us.

His name was Eliyahu, Americanized at Ellis island into Albert, where Farberman was shortened to Farber. Everyone who knew him described him as gentle and kind. His family home in the southern Ukraine, not so far from Odessa, was a dirt-floored shack, and his first job, as a teenager there, was setting type by hand—by hand, as in one metal letter at a time—for a Yiddish newspaper. When we went to see Ben Franklin's 1765 hand set press in Philadelphia, he told me that it was just like the one he'd used in 1915 and that the term "upper case letter" came from the fact that the capital letters were stored on the upper case above the work bench. His father and older brother Yankel came to the United States, and the rest of the family was supposed to follow, but World War I made travel impossibly hazardous, and they waited out the entire war. They swam the Dnieper River at night to avoid the Cossacks, who could be relied upon to harass, rob, and murder Jews. They crossed Europe on foot. "I spent a day in Paris, and a night in London," he used to say, with the half smile and mischievous eyes that told you a joke was coming: "I suppose I should have done it the other way around." If this was a reference to sex, it was the only one I ever heard from him. I was fascinated and thrilled by sex, and his reticence on the subject was one of so many differences that we didn't discuss. If I could only have one more conversation with him, I would ask him to explain things I've puzzled over for so long.

Al's reunited parents could never agree on the year of his birth—1899 or 1900—but Al and Yankel both went to pharmacy school, and saw it through, even as it painfully dawned on them that in this country, the physicians have more prestige and pay than the pharmacists (the reverse of the status hierarchy in their impoverished Old World). The brothers opened their own little drug stores in adjacent suburbs, and Al's store grew to include two other pharmacists, sales clerks, a delivery car, a lunch counter, and a cosmetics counter. My little brother and I routinely pillaged the toy department and the candy shelves when we were in town, but I really got lost in the books. Al was always urging us to take whatever we wanted, but our parents put down firm limits. Al and Yankel had married women who couldn't stand each other, and there was something a little furtive about his late-night phone calls to Yankel. "It's your Uncle Yankel," he would tell me. "Uncle Yankel"—the rhyme was another joke that never grew old for him—and he'd put me on the phone to say hi. I didn't see the point, but I obliged him.

Once when I was 8 or 9, on the morning walk to his drugstore, I noticed that he sometimes smiled vaguely and said nothing after I'd finished speaking. I asked my grandmother if there was something troubling him that would have distracted him.

"You were walking on his left side, weren't you dear?"

"Yeah. So?"

"He's deaf in that ear. Can't hear a thing. Walk on his right."

When I asked him about it, he said with some amusement, "Deaf in the left ear, blind in the right eye. It's never bothered me. I've been this way since I can remember." He was 6 feet tall, even though he walked bowlegged, eventually with a cane, because he'd had rickets as a child. I'd been raised with good nutrition virtually forced down my throat, and good medical care whether I went willingly or screaming, and took it all for granted. His equanimity about his fate baffled but fascinated me.

When I became interested in dating, he told me, "In my village, we used to say that

before you marry a girl, consider her mother: that's what you'll have in 20 years," and he looked at me like I should savor this wisdom. My grandmother's voice came sharply from the next room, "He didn't hear that in any village. We heard it last night on the Carol Burnett show." His grin—caught in the act—melted any irritation I might have felt at having been deceived. Soon we were both laughing over it. That grin was the same one I saw when he'd ask me to guess where the music in the dining room came from. A speaker hidden in a china cabinet was quite an innovation in the early 60s, but he asked numerous times, and every time, for whatever reason, I pretended to be surprised, and we laughed together.

When I didn't choose to have a Bar Mitzvah, he was disappointed but gave me a few hundred dollars on my 13th birthday anyway. When he heard I'd lost it on early tech stocks, he astonished me and banished my shame by sympathizing and then replacing the lost money. It's been in the bank since, the foundation of my savings to this day because, against all subsequent good advice that would have made me a rich man, I could never return to the stock market.

Al loved jokes about smart aleck Jewish waiters and porters who survived by their wits, and he always sided with the underdog. He believed strongly in birth control and abortion, because he'd seen what unceasing pregnancies did to women's bodies. He was glad for the chance to employ Blacks when he could, and voted as staunch liberal Democrat, except once. Elderly Yankel was shot dead in a robbery of his store, and that was the year Al voted for the law and order candidate, Nixon. I think he felt betrayed by the coalition he'd supported. He tried to sound proud to have changed sides, but I knew him well enough to hear the hidden ambivalence or guilt when he talked about the election. I was passionate about politics in those years but couldn't bring myself to give him a hard time for abandoning our shared values.

As an angry adolescent, I remember marveling at his equanimity and tolerance. A car would honk at us walking across the street, and I wanted to give them the finger or shout obscenities. Al just waved patiently and kept walking. It was obvious to me that he knew everyone in town, and everyone knew him, and I feared that he lived without the freedom to be himself. Now as an adult, I've grown to be just as embedded as he was, and I haven't needed that freedom because I haven't had the anger. There are some problems eased by simply growing older.

When he retired and sold the store to his employees, the community held a block party for him on the little plaza in front of the store. Hundreds came. They came to thank him and to tell their stories – he was uncomfortably embarrassed and said it was like sitting through his own eulogy. One man told of the time Al came in in the middle of the night to open the store and dispense medicine for his sick child. Several told the same story about not having the money to afford a prescription. "Just give me the change in your pocket," he would say. "But Al, that's practically nothing." "That's fine, that's all it's worth, because it probably won't do you any good anyway."

He always admired outspoken and intelligent women—which I associated with the desperate years the family had survived with his mother as the sole parent. He seemed so impressed by my first wife, so charmed by her wit and assertiveness, that he never once complained that I was marrying a non-Jew. He was endlessly proud of his own wife, Sarah, who truly was outspoken, and traveled the country in the '50s giving speeches and raising funds to support the newly reborn state in the Jewish homeland, and the

return after two thousand years of painful exile and prayer of our indigenous people to the land of Israel. They were both deeply proud of the early successes of new nation at assimilating millions of penniless Jewish refugees, who had been seen as subhuman in the Moslem and Christian countries where Jews had been oppressed and murdered.

Watching Sarah lose her intellect and formidable sense of purpose to Alzheimer's truly broke his heart. Although he insisted on taking care of her at home for years, he made it difficult for the rest of us to see her, eventually admitting that he was protecting our memories of her. When I was in college, he started sending me the kinds of cookies she'd made when I was younger, claiming that they were from her. I am glad now that I never let on that I knew. They always arrived stale and crumbling, and probably hadn't been very good before shipping, but I ate every crumb, and felt held by my family.

Al never truly understood what I was doing in psychology, though he wasn't directly critical. He tried gently to encourage me into medicine, but I wasn't having it. "What could be more complex, more fascinating, more worthwhile, than to understand and heal the human body?" "Oh gee, well, let me think. Perhaps the human *mind*, Grandad?" Eventually he gave up, and he was there to see me graduate with my doctorate from Duke, in my cap and gown with my daughter on my shoulders, and hear former governor Terry Sanford say, "Congratulations, Jonathan."

Afterwards, I took him with several classmates to meet my mentor, the man who founded the Duke clinical program. Irving always insisted on teaching the fundamentals of interviewing to the first-year students, and he taught his marvelous method where an interview, initially about objective facts, deepens seamlessly into a deeper conversation, and eventually reaches the exploration and insight that are the foundation of any depth psychotherapy. Supervision with him in my internship year was the best psychotherapy I've ever had. Irving was in his 60s, at the height of his influence in the field and his ability to intimidate students. But Al had 20 years on him, years spent across a counter from customers in all kinds of difficult circumstances, drawing them out, supporting them, stitching himself into the life of the community.

We saw Irving straighten up, and he looked younger and more respectful as they began talking. Al casually asked him about his work, and then his background, growing up in the Bronx. My classmates and I learned more about Irving in the next half hour than we had in the previous 5 years, as he shared facts and then emotions. We high-fived each other afterwards—Dr. Interview himself had been interviewed—but I suspect Irving knew what he was doing for us. I wish I could ask him, but he's gone too.

As he weakened, Al and I typed each other longer and longer letters, which is where I finally began learning about the childhood he'd never shared. When I wrote that I was starting my own practice, he wrote back, "I have one piece of advice for you Jon. Keep your overhead low, so that when somebody needs a break you can give it to them. I always did that, and the feeling it gave me was worth more than the money ever would have been." It was great advice. I'm glad I took it.

We had a last visit, when he was in his home, on his deathbed. In the daytime, a new nurse arrived and introduced herself. Noticing her accent, he asked where she was from. "The Dominican Republic." "Ah, and is Balaguer still president there?" "Yes, he is," she says, and I can see her begin to relax and smile at him. I leave them to it, wondering *How the hell does he know that? He still reads a lot, I suppose, but...the Dominican Republic?* I take a last walk through rooms I'd known my whole life, and see some of the furniture

that is in my house today. It goes with nothing we own, but I can't be parted from it, and my wife Nancy understands.

That night, though, is difficult. He's in bed, his muscles spasming in sequences that make him almost appear to be swimming in the sheets. He looks so small and wasted that his glasses look huge on his drawn face, but there is an unexpected moment when the spasms stop, and in the sudden stillness he locks his eyes on mine and says one thing to me before the spasms resumed. He said, "Dying is hard work, Jon," and I expect to use that frame when it's my turn. I called him a few days later, right before he died, when my first son was born. I said, "His name is Ezra," and he told me the Hebrew meaning of the name and exactly where the word first appears in the Torah.

Today I have grandchildren of my own, and sometimes I wonder how much time I have left. I don't have my grandfather to turn to for advice because a friendship across a large age divide means that the older friend cannot live to see the arc of the younger one's adult life, and the younger one will spend most of life missing the older friend. I often feel that I don't know what do with my grandchildren to give them a relationship like the one I have valued so deeply. I think of books to read them, jokes, stories, games, outings, and then I forget most of those ideas when I need them, or they just don't seem to work with the kids. This sends me into a downward spiral that Nancy interrupts by reminding me that a relationship is two people, and that I don't have to—I can't—do it all. Then I remember how my granddaughter brightens and streaks into my arms when I arrive, or how her brother reaches for my hand without looking when we cross the street—he knows it will be there.

Long after Roger Mouse's death, Godric bids him a proper goodbye:

> When friends speak overmuch of times gone by, often it's because they sense their present time is turning them from friends to strangers. Long before the moment came to say goodbye, I think, we said goodbye in other words and ways and silences. Then when the moment came for it at last, we didn't say it as it should be said by friends. So now at last, dear Mouse, with many, many years between: Goodbye.
>
> —Frederick Buechner, *Godric*

Carla Bauer

Carla R. Bauer, LCSW, is in private practice in Atlanta, Georgia. A second career therapist, she brings over 25 years of corporate experience, as well as an earlier journey in theological studies, to her understanding of people and their struggles. Psychoanalytically trained, she seeks to blend psychodynamic and attachment orientations with a contemporary relational presence. When she can't be on the beach, the colors of the beach are on her! As editor of *Voices*, she offers her voice to AAP.
crbauer01@bellsouth.net

Friends at the Soul

Our theme, *Dimensions of Friendship*, explores the transformational aspects of friendship, across its lifespan and ours, from the mysteries of the initial draw into a new friendship through its development—and sometimes its ending. I thank guest editors Penelope Norton and Jonathan Farber who envisioned and curated this issue and all of the authors who responded to their call.

In his novel *The Chosen,* Chaim Potok (1967) pens a father advising his son on the Talmud's instruction that a person should do two things for himself: acquire a teacher and choose a friend. Says he, "A Greek philosopher said that two people who are true friends are like two bodies with one soul" (p. 79). The story goes on to illustrate such a friendship between a seemingly unlikely pair, born out of what appeared to be an ordinary, even adverse, initial childhood meeting yet proving transformative for both over the course of life. The book was given to me by a similarly impactful friend, upon our graduation from college nearly 40 years ago.

Diana is Colombian but had spent many years in Africa where her father's work moved the family from country to country. It was from there that she came to Louisiana for college and there that she returned for summer vacations, and it was in the letters exchanged during those breaks that our friendship deepened. Hers were no "I'm fine. How are you?" scribbles. They were filled with reflections on a world then beyond my experience (Africa would only claim a part of my heart and soul some years later), and they called out from within me responses to the big questions of life. We wrote from our souls. We continued to write across the years – from graduate schools in different states and then after her return to Colombia to rejoin her family and establish her career.

Over time, as our lives went in different directions and got busier, the letters eventually became less and less frequent, and we quietly drifted apart. Nevertheless, even across long silences, the friendship remains an important part of me.

I have often reflected over the years on how much I miss both that friendship and the person I was in those letters. It was not a false persona but a deeper side of me that for a long time seldom found voice elsewhere. Periodic attempts to rekindle the letter exchange never quite took, but the pandemic gave us a new chance to reconnect. The combination of a world in existential crisis and the slowed pace of isolation were just the impetus for meeting again on the page—albeit now an electronic one, somehow less satisfying than the ink and airmail stationery of old. On the heels of that reconnection, the Atlanta Jewish Film Festival's virtual 2021 event brought the reshowing of the classic film version of *The Chosen*, after which of course I had to re-read its sequel. Before I re-read the rest of this favorite author's corpus (for a third or fourth time), I think it is time to dig out a pack of letters and revisit this friendship of my soul—and this part of myself.

I generally hold my friendships for life, even if eventually from afar, and the pandemic has provided opportunity and motivation for checking in on others across those distances. In some cases, reconnections have been rich, friendships deepened; in others, the mix of politics and different responses to the pandemic have revealed a divide that we can't cross, at least not right now. As we move back out into the world, which friendships will remain energized by pandemic reconnections? Which may have been lost?

In this issue, contributors—too many to name—offer their reflections, stories, and pictures of friendships formed, held, and lost. The issue includes two sub-sections. In the Mirrors: Friends on Friends set, three friendship pairs share their stories of connection. In the Friendship Project collection, 20 authors respond to a call for a paragraph or short piece in reflection on friendship. Throughout the issue, authors tell of long friendships stretching across the life span, as well as momentary connections that left their mark. Some share stories of reconnection, while others recount the sad and troubling end of friendship, whether by move, rift, illness/addiction, or death. Others write of being on the outside of friend circles. Authors also address professional friendships, including their ethical mandate and value. Reviews further explore friendship as depicted in a film, a novel, and two professional books.

In this issue, we also publish David Donlon's outgoing presidential address as presented at the American Academy of Psychotherapists 2020 Virtual Institute & Conference. While our traditional publication of the presidential address is usually independent of the particular theme of the issue, this year we also publish Jonas Horwitz's introduction of David. Together they paint a beautiful portrait of friendship.

If you read something in *Voices* that speaks to you, let the authors know. Keep voices reconnecting.

To the day we can again gather in friendship! ▼

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Roslyn E. Feierstein

Roslyn E. Feierstein, PhD, ABPP, is a clinical psychologist who closed her practice of 32 years and retired from the Veteran's Administration pain and trauma departments. Presently, she is sailing the Bahamas with her spouse of 50 years on their sailing vessel, No Boundaries II. During this pandemic she is exploring Caribbean cultures and is available for virtual therapy as a volunteer. She offers, "I have learned more about life and myself by sailing. Get out there and live your dream!"
helmerf@aol.com

A Virtuous Friendship

Making important and lasting friendships has always been a daunting task for me. As a child, I had playmates who, when their home lives were deemed too dangerous, could be banished from any friendship with me because of my mother's irrational fears for my safety. In school, I was taken out of the mainstream and placed in advanced classes, not the best path for making friends with peers. Later, in junior and senior high school, I became a "friend-therapist." In those relationships, the other person received a listening and caring ear, and I received early career training. When I learned about sexual abuse of a friend over a game of Pick-Up Sticks, I made my first mandatory report to my grandmother and teacher. The authorities were called in to help. Even this therapist friendship did not endure the exposure and "help," although in hindsight I would say I was behaving in accordance with higher ethics of friendship. My relationships with my teachers were far richer and more gratifying to me than relationships with my peers, though, at least my older brother's friends liked me because I loved the outdoors and was a true tomboy. I went to school and Brownies but hung out with the teachers and Scout leaders and ran errands for them.

There was a hopeful moment when I moved into a new neighborhood with four girls, including myself, and 15 or more boys. We had our own football team and played for hours, but ultimately, the neighbor girls were not as interested in the outdoors as I was. One of them, I later found out, was forbidden to play with me because we were Jewish. At the time, I concluded girls just did not like me and that making a sustained friendship would always prove elusive. As an adult, I have found myself admiring and

envying other women who were able to tell me about lifelong relationships that began in college, in high school, or even in their elementary years.

In the first of his three kinds of friendship, Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics,* ca. 340 B.C.E./2011) described his idea of the utilitarian friendship, based upon extrinsic benefits to the participants. Whether participating in outdoor games requiring more than one player, or practicing to become a therapist, my early attempts at friendship fit this first model.

In my 20s, I realized that relationships required transparency and intimacy, but I avoided this; it felt like too much and too messy, and I was never at ease. Although I thought that profound acceptance and reciprocity maintained a marriage, I did not see how to apply that to women and friendship. These beliefs and feelings were huge obstacles to self-disclosure, closeness, intimacy, and enduring friendship. Eventually I did have women friends, mostly in the American Academy of Psychotherapists (AAP). AAP women seemed accessible and like-minded: we all had insecurities, issues, and strengths; and in the process of observing I was able to form more meaningful new connections.

Relationships at this stage were for the pleasure of one another's company, the second of Aristotle's categories of friendship.

Through experiences in supervision, psychotherapy, and the peer relationships in AAP, I began recognizing that sustaining a friendship required not just self-disclosure but authenticity. I have been influenced by Jourard (1971) who examined intimacy and friendship and what factors define and sustain friendships. Aiming for authenticity and transparency in a relationship is paramount, and authenticity is predicated on acceptance of oneself and of the other. I had always thought that people who had many friends were natural talents. I discovered, later than I wish I had, that friendship is really a learned skill. Along the way, I also had to face the fact that my own need to withdraw into solitude had been a factor. I was able to see that this tendency interfered with my ability to nurture friendship, even when potential friends, such as with AAP women, were readily available to me.

In Aristotle's view, the highest most valuable form of friendship is the virtuous friendship. This is a friendship based on mutual respect and admiration for the virtues in each other. Although other forms of friendship may be worthwhile and sustainable, the virtuous friendship represents the highest form of closeness based on shared life values, mutual acceptance, respect, and authenticity. It is a collaborative journey to create and sustain a virtuous friendship.

In my late 30s I met my best friend, who calls me her BFF. It is an honor and a comfort to know that we respect each other; it is a joy to connect with each other on many levels and to savor the ways that our likenesses and differences cement our relationship.

We share so much ground on our paths in life: the Academy community, family connections, psychotherapy, cooking and food, reading, music, travel, and practicing fitness. We face our fears together, as when we performed in the AAP talent show and when we shared our zip-line adventure. As we sort through the threads that create our separate life tapestries, a third, parallel tapestry is created and co-exists as our shared journey.

We are particularly present with each other during hard times, and we protect each other by being able to discuss what we observe in the other, with a protective form of

judgment. She will call me out when I am unkind, for instance, and I will tell her when I see her falling into one of her familiar traps in her relationships with others. These qualities illustrate another of Aristotle's qualities of the virtuous friendship: shared love of virtue.

Becoming someone's friend is something I do not take lightly. Nurturing sustained friendships requires high levels of relational closeness, mutual acceptance, kindness, interdependence, self-disclosure, and investment. Sustaining the friendship requires management of one's own core life commitments: e.g., children, job, grandchildren, etc. My friend has other friends. This is important to me because it is important to her. I choose to have few deep friendships, because I have also come to recognize the value that solitude has in my life.

I would love to be able to name that tune or remember lyrics as she does, or create a limerick for the direst of situations, as once when I lost my hearing to a virus, and another time when the towns and docks flooded, confining us to my sailboat. I admire her creativity, truthfulness, spontaneity, and the skillful way that she conducts therapy. Resolutely, she admires my science brain, accepts my fastidious ways, and appreciates the strength in my interpersonal reserve. It is still extraordinary to me that in this friendship I am accepted for who I am. ▼

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They cherish one another's hopes. They are kind to one another's dreams

—Henry David Thoreau

Friends Furever by Jillian M. Thomas

Mirrors: Friends on Friends

Woman and Her Dog by Mary Margaret Hart

Of the Same Ilk

Louise Will-Wallace

Louise Will-Wallace, PhD, retired in 2018 after 27 years at the VA and now is in psychotherapy practice in Falling Waters, West Virginia. She enjoys her 3-year-old grandson and expects a second one any day now. She also enjoys nature, boating, camping, and artistic projects. Says she, "My two Golden Doodles, cat, and wonderful husband love to relax together with me while overlooking the Potomac River from our deck."
louise2212@gmail.com

Lisa Smith Klohn

Lisa Smith Klohn, PhD, is recently retired from a government job with Social Security and is enjoying an expanded private practice in Columbia, South Carolina. When not at work, she can often be found with her husband and two cats at their cabin in the North Carolina mountains, where she aspires to be a gardener and hiker but mostly ends up puttering around outside and enjoying the woods.
lsklohn@yahoo.com

Lisa: Of course, we must start with the "ilk" story. You came to the South Carolina State Hospital to work after I had done my time there, and John Stonecypher, the colorful head of the psychology department, kept trying to recruit me back with various offerings. I think he finally thought he had me when he offered you up, stating, "I've just hired someone… and she is of your ilk!"

Louise: At the time neither of us knew how correct he was: You did not take the job, and I did not last a year there.

Lisa: I agree, and so although we didn't actually meet then, at least I knew of you.

Louise: I think we met at the hospital briefly but did not pick up immediately. Then I started a private practice and mailed out notices, and you sent me a referral. I invited you to dinner to thank you, and our friendship began!

Lisa: I remember being kind of floored by that.

Louise: What floored you?

Lisa: I'd never received a thank you note for a referral, let alone a dinner invitation! By the time we met for dinner, I vaguely knew who you were, but I had no idea about how you had come to be in South Carolina, what you'd been through with the death of your husband, or that you were raising your son and working and trying to make your way in a new place.

Louise: After a few dinners together we started a women's psychology monthly dinner that lasted a few years, right?

Lisa: As I recall, that was a remarkably interesting constellation of women—we had a couple of rather heated dinners, didn't we?

Louise: They were not all of the same ilk!
Louise: In the meantime, our friendship grew, and we started doing walks and hikes: Breast Cancer Awareness walks, several years of half-marathons in Nashville, Myrtle Beach, and Virginia Beach, and the Virginia Creeper.
Lisa: I liked to tease you by referring to us as elite athletes—we did accrue quite a number of those participation medals.
Louise: One of the things I love about you, Lisa, is your sense of humor. There have been many times when we've laughed so hard: Remember the time you fell out of your chair because I asked what the band's question was—when the answer was always "Hell Yeah."
Lisa: Apparently, you'd forgotten how to play a drinking game—whatever the question, yell "Hell Yeah!" and take a drink, but no—ever the good little scientist, you were neither answering nor swigging until you fully understood the intent of the question. Still cracks me up.
Louise: We enjoyed a lot of long talks on those trips and grew closer. New Year's Eve became a thing, including your husband and whoever I was dating at the time.
Lisa: Yes, I have known you through three major relationships…I'm glad you ended up with Mike. There was one that really worried me, though, but you already know that.
Louise: You were right about him of course; I have always loved your insight. You have also shared with me much of your life and struggles over the years. You joined me at the American Academy of Psychotherapists (AAP) for the first time in Toronto. Since then, we have attended multiple times together, mostly rooming together.
Lisa: Yes, I remember being curious about AAP, and of course I will never forget Toronto. You sat with me as I cried for 2 hours straight after my first process group. Rooming together—often with our third partner in crime, Wendy—has been so much of the experience of AAP for me.
Louise: Of course, we've had years of being in the same AAP family group also. The intimacy in our friendship has been so special and rare; I cherish it as it has evolved over so many experiences.

Then the big test! I moved away to West Virginia to be closer to my son. Leaving you was the hardest part of leaving South Carolina, and you are the only part I still miss.
Lisa: I miss having you in the same town and miss the comfort of knowing that if I wanted to, I could reach out and ask you to meet for a drink or a walk. I love that about you—you're almost always game for anything.
Louise: Then another big test! We co-chaired the 2018 Institute & Conference. Would we argue? We never had, but we heard horror stories. We did great, with no tension (at least I don't remember any) and the best part was our weekly call with each other.
Lisa: I don't remember tension either—exhaustion once it was over, yes, but no tension. It probably helps that we're both a wee bit conflict avoidant! But seriously, I trust you, and I know you'll follow through with what you say you're going to do. I think co-chairing gave us a chance to know something about each other's skill set. I remember being impressed that you weren't afraid to ask anyone to do any sort of favor for us—I hate asking for help, but you probably already knew that about me.
Louise: Yep, I knew that, and I learned to appreciate your organization and creativity. Same ilk with enough differences to keep things interesting!
Lisa: Hell Yeah! ▼

Tom Burns

Tom Burns, PhD, is a long-time member of the American Academy of Psychotherapists, living in Tennessee. He has collaborated on *Voices* and a variety of workshops and is co-chair of programs for the 2022 Institute & Conference in Memphis. He loves encounters with landscape, hanging out with family and friends, and futzing around with poetry.
burnsvoices@gmail.com

Red Oak Dream—Ten Associations

This is an account of the slightest dream or maybe just a fragment of a dream. It didn't feel like a complete story; there were no words or well-defined story line.

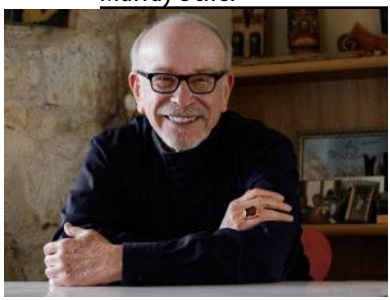
I am with my friend, Murray, escorting him to an initial therapy session. We approach what looks like the building where I first started private practice. As we enter the space I am struck by the whole-hearted, ruddy hue of the wood paneling: red oak.

1. Murray is a master of Zen equanimity, unconcerned when it becomes clear that the situation is not as it first appeared. Rather than an individual consultation, it's group therapy, with a new group of people. Men. He welcomes the change in format. But I leave, realizing that in his stead I would have been anxious, stirred-up, albeit intrigued.
2. It seems important that we were speechless throughout the dream. Was some kind of idealized, pre-verbal state being enacted? (Note to self: explore this with my therapist.) Or maybe words were just unnecessary. My wish for symbiosis? God, I hope not. (Again, consult therapist.) When I told another friend about the dream, he was reminded of Genesis 22, the binding of Isaac when Abraham took Isaac to be sacrificed. They don't talk on the way up the mountain or ever again. I'm intrigued that perhaps some dark motives are being revealed here. It reminds me of a Murray axiom: "We choose our friends, and then we put up with them."
3. The walk to the building is reminiscent of our 20-year, weekly ritual—hiking Bays Mountain here in Northeast Tennessee. Different from the dream though because we chatted ceaselessly.
4. Although it's unclear in the dream why I was accompanying Murray, it parallels a mitzvah he did for me early in our friendship. He volunteered to drive with

me 8 hours in a single day to attend an important pre-surgery consultation. Very generous, I think. Of both of us. Him to offer. And me to accept.

5. Murray's eager engagement with the therapy group of men reminds me of his comfortable way with all people. It's noteworthy to me that the therapy group was composed of men only. Murray engages eagerly, it seems. He's unafraid of befriending men in deeply meaningful ways, and from him I've learned to recognize my own appetite and capacity for the same.
6. An ancillary lesson within the dream: Loyalty requires no need to exclude others, as exemplified by Murray's openness to getting close with others in the group. My youngest daughter, age 10 at the time, once pronounced, "I have to have more than one best friend." Murray and I have checked that box often.
7. In life, as in the dream, when Murray wants to do something, he does it: wears artsy shirts and sneakers, travels to Vietnam, facilitates a large group experience at an Academy event, reads all of Proust. No effin' problem. I recognize my envy here, though my stronger sentiment is competitive—pride, for example, in my study of James Joyce.
8. Our way of being together in the dream held great significance. Our anxiety-free separation at the end demonstrates our individuation, closeness without fusion. Each of us can take care of himself, no need to worry. In the dream it went without saying. In the real life of our friendship lots of hard questions might get asked, but our persistent awareness is that we're two different people.
9. Murray's Zen-like presentation in the dream echoes a running joke between us. Years ago, he returned from a trip to Bhutan conspicuously relaxed and unbothered. Transcendent even. Yet, within a month or so he was back at his edgy baseline. I harass him whenever possible, suggesting that another trip to Bhutan is in order. Murray often retorts with some version of "fuck you," which delights me.
10. Several years ago Murray left Tennessee for Texas, an ending of sorts, life and death. I now compete with his associates in Austin—what one mutual friend refers to as our ongoing custody battle. Murray and I have achieved a new balance and rhythm. We still have "walks"—brief check-ins or sometimes more drawn-out phone conversations. Having lost fathers too early, we both are veterans of separation, letting fatality run its course but not submitting to it. We remain available to one another; we say good bye, and then start again.

Murray Scher



I Am Not Doubting Thomas

The first time I read *Red Oak Dream* I thought it was a love letter to me. Then I thought it was a love letter to our friendship. I now wonder if it isn't a love letter to the hoped-for better self in each of us as we struggle through life. Or is it just a sweet meditation on a dream? As he always does, Tom reveals deeper and deeper layers in his thought and being.

Murray Scher is a Fellow and past president of the American Academy of Psychotherapists as well as a Fellow of the American Psychological Association. He practices in both Austin, Texas, and Jonesborough, Tennessee. He has been a psychotherapist for 50 years and is still amazed at the fulfillment he finds in the work.
mhscher@earthlink.net

We first met when Tom called me about some reference to an article I had written. We chatted briefly. He lived only a half hour away, and he was appealing on the phone, so I thought I should pursue further contact. I didn't. Sometime later, a mutual friend mentioned that he knew someone who lived near me and that I should get in touch with him. When he said it was Tom, I called. So began 20-odd years of regular lunches, hikes, dinners with both our families, bocce games at our lake house with him and his two daughters. When we sold the lake house, I delivered the bocce set to Tom to give to Elisabeth, his younger daughter.

I had almost 30 years' experience as a therapist when we met and thought I was pretty good at the craft, but my ability and depth increased dramatically as our friendship matured. Tom's loving, respectful irreverence toward me has helped me not take myself so seriously. His willingness, if not eagerness, to poke me humorously has abraded some of my narcissism. His sense of humor is one of the most sophisticated and brilliant I have ever encountered. At the end of our weekly 2 hours together, he regularly made a joke cleverly related to something I said when we first sat down chez Wendy's. He listens, retains, and massages ideas and words in ways that I try to emulate.

He is from the Midwest, and I realized one day that he never complains. While he likely thinks I complain all the time, I educated him, informing him that I am from New York and I do not complain, I report. I think he snorted. He does tease me endlessly, and I love him for being unafraid of me and not put off by my cleverness, wit, or power. All of this has made me a better therapist, if not a better person.

Having a friend who knows the difficult and lonely dance we do in therapy and can listen and respond is a great gift. We are honest and direct with each other about questions, worries, missteps, and fears in our work. I know I can depend on him to tell me what I need to hear, and I trust he feels the same. Loving support from Tom goes a long way in easing what is a lonely endeavor.

The hardest part of moving from Tennessee to Texas was leaving Tom. Ten years later it still saddens me, despite our frequent phone contact. I love having been in his dream, abiding in his glorious unconscious as warm and golden as the glow from red oak. ▼

Our first email connection many years before:

Hi Michal,
I stalked your email down from the member website. I wanted to re-emphasize how much pleasure I took in meeting and spending time with you during the workshop. I think you're pretty wonderful. I also hope to see you at I&C. -----
Take Care of Yourself,
— Tyler

Hi,
Got home couple hours ago, and just checking e-mails. Thank you for your "delicious" e-mail. I like our connection, which can grow -----
And yes, I will be there for the I&C. See you there.
Michal

Tyler Beach

Tyler Beach, LICSW, practices individual and group psychotherapy in Durham, North Carolina. He has developed an expertise in a group of therapies known together as Experiential Dynamic Therapies. His involvement in the American Academy of Psychotherapists has served as a home base for deep connections and friendships as well as plenty of growth moments.
tylerbeach78@gmail.com

Michal Rubin

Michal Rubin, PhD, has 30 years of psychotherapy experience in a variety of treatment settings. She earned her BS in chemistry from the University of Illinois (1978) and her MA and PhD in child and family studies from the University of Wisconsin (1980, 1985). Currently she practices psychotherapy in Columbia, South Carolina. As an immigrant into the United States she has an affinity to minority groups, always engaging with curiosity and awareness of *not knowing*. She develops friendships through the intermingling of otherness and sameness.
michalrubin53@gmail.com

An Unlikely Friendship:
Reflections on a Holy Moment

The special moment I want to talk about regarding our friendship came many years after we met. The moment between us happened in my second year of a 3-year nervous breakdown. So much unfiltered pain was erupting into my consciousness from my childhood, and I couldn't seem to find ground. By this point, the pain and panic had begun to invade my daily life, where initially it only visited at night. I'd just ended 14 years of therapy with a therapist I dearly loved, but I knew I needed something else. And although I'd found a new therapist, we hadn't had much time to gain a lot of ground. I was in the depths, and the people in my life seemed to be unable to tolerate the places it could take me. I'd always been a master of deception when it came to my pain, and it was so easy to put that pain just out of reach to others in my day-to-day life. I didn't even have to try most of the time. And yet, there was also a place inside me that seemed surprised that my psychic pain was not visible. I felt like I looked like Edward Munch's famous *Scream* painting, but others didn't reflect that back to me.

You, however, knew about my breakdown and had been with me in multiple ways, mostly by phone, since the beginning. And it was during this second year that we had an

experience together that I will treasure always, one to which I can and do still turn. In Zen, they talk about a sort of non-verbal transmission that can be spiritually transferred from one person to another. That day, that encounter, felt like a transmission was being given to me.

It happened at a Summer Workshop. By this time, my nervous breakdown was a part of my daily experience. I would fall apart internally daily, rarely noticeable by anyone, though to me the experience was a psychic earthquake. On my third day at the workshop, I was with you and David, your husband, in the hot tub. As was the norm for me those days, the panic and dread hit somewhat randomly, almost like being visited by a poltergeist. It hit fast that day, yet I thought I could instinctively hide it the way I usually did. As David got out and left the hot tub, a little something released inside of me. Most wouldn't have noticed much, other than that I probably looked preoccupied and worried. But you, with your perception, looked at me and saw underneath. With a look of seriousness, you cocked your head slightly and said something to the effect, "You look really fucked up." Your accent shocked me awake and into the connection with you, with my pain now front and center. There, in the state of Washington, an Israeli woman, Jewish, 25 years my senior, saw me. Not my mother, not my therapist. You saw me, a gay man, raised in a southern, very WASPy, antisemitic family. You saw my agony, and in that moment, something inside told me to let myself be known, as I was. I just sat there and talked to you about my pain, my growing sense that I could not bear it, and how ashamed I was to be in this place with no end in sight. In fact, as I explained it to you, I'd started to feel worse.

Slowly, without any sense of sentimentality, you leaned your upper body out of the side of the hot tub and again stayed connected but separate from me. Despite your seriousness, you didn't look concerned, or reassuring, nor did you come close to me and scoop me up. Instead you stayed in your place and said in your thick Israeli accent, and I will never forget these words, "You know, Tyler, you are really crazy." There was a long pause again with that look of seriousness. "The problem is that you don't love your crazy." I know this may sound strange, but I cannot remember ever having felt this loved and accepted in my life. Here I was, my agony and complete sense of breakdown in full view. I was indeed crazy, and to have it stated in this way was the ultimate mirror. I never expected you to run away in shock, but I was startled at how matter of fact you were in your relation to me. I just could not deny how undisturbed you were. But I could also not deny that you saw me as clearly as anyone ever had. These two things had never gone together before in a person's relationship to me when I was in pain. With you, my craziness and corresponding suffering were not problems to be solved. They were just facts. My agony was not an emergency that made you so anxious that you had to rescue me. It was something that was honored. And I was still your friend, Tyler. And at this moment, I was just Tyler in the middle of a nervous breakdown: this southern gay man who lost his father as a child, grew up with no mirrors, and was trained to digest the pain of all the surviving family members.

Yet here I really was seen, and I was not an object to you. In a hot tub with my best friend who was an Israeli woman 25 years my senior — the 7-year-old boy in me could have never imagined this moment, with this person. But it was happening. And it was all okay for you. Something shifted for me that day. I now had been seen in my most base state. A pain that no lover could tolerate seeing and that my mother would have tried

to destroy inside of me to avoid her own pain. My pain was real and just a part of who I was. Nothing special. I've never felt that held in my life since. There was a holy, spiritual element to what happened for me in that moment. My agony did not subside, but a grace presented itself alongside my pain.

It was just another day, if those exist, during Summer Workshop. I was emotionally busy managing simultaneously your presence, Tyler, and that of my husband. You guys didn't know each other yet. Not really. I was aware you were out of sorts. There was an awkwardness in this kind of navigation of two intimate relationships at the same time. You and I have been friends for a while. We met when I was at the tail end of my own emotional abyss. It felt as if we have both been holding an emotional scarf, you at one end, and I at the other, improvising an authentic dance. There was no pretending in the dance, no "I am fine" makeup in our encounters. The colors of our sadness, from the beginning of our relationship years before, were flowing with our movements.

I was relieved when David left the pool and we were left there, alone, you and I, and there was no longer a need to manage the awkwardness. We were facing each other — a moment in a hot tub with a best friend, a moment that would seal a covenant.

I saw your face and recognized that you were immersed in a pool of pain. I remembered my own immersion in the depth of pain, and in a way, I felt a yearning for the space where I am present with my naked truth. I understood it was your turn though. There was sacredness being there with you. An immersion together, not just in pain, but in a Mikveh, a ritual pool, seeing your naked moment and knowing of it from my own travels. In the Jewish tradition, immersion in the Mikveh is thought of as a transformation, a rebirth, a journey out of the narrow and constricted womb one has outgrown, towards a new consciousness.

Reflecting back on my crazy time, I knew it was a rare period of honoring myself for the freedom I took to love my craziness, daring to remove inhibition and to experience my depression and pain. My husband was the one enabling me to dive as deep as needed. And right there, in the hot tub, a Mikveh of truth, I wished for you to have the experience of loving the uninhibited crazy self. I knew what it meant to be allowed to go to that depth of despair knowing someone is there, at the edge, waiting, witnessing, calm, loving. I sensed that you could go there, and I just believed you would be coming back up, grabbing the edge of the pool, and emerging, somehow changed just a bit. It was then, that moment of sharing the experience of loving our craziness that it felt as if a covenant of a friendship was sealed.

That last thing you said above, about your belief that I could go there and come back up, resonates with what I felt transmitted from you. You have always believed in me. Expected a lot from me. I love that about you. I never felt it to be a demand. It was so hard to feel normal in those days, and for my sense of crazy to be known like this allowed the adult me to stand with the child me. You were not making a distinction. I feel loved by you, and I love you. ▼

Hang Time I and II, by David Pellegrini

Peggy Brooks

Peggy Brooks, PhD, became a member of the American Academy of Psychotherapists in 1995. Some of her most important friendships have developed in the Academy. She is retired from private practice and is Professor Emerita from Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. She is a mother and grandmother. Peggy lives in Asheville, North Carolina.
pruthbrooks@gmail.com

Snapshots

Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards.

—Soren Kierkegaard

One way to portray this friendship of 40 years would be to honor my friend's photography talents with a few snapshots of my own.

Snapshot: I have a picture of us at a surprise birthday party I gave for my husband in Atlanta, 1980. There we are, still in our 20s, brightly beaming at the camera, with that kind of naive optimism in our faces that only relatively privileged young people who haven't experienced much tragedy can show. Confident, unfettered, untraumatized, strong, determined women. That strength and determination will be tested in the years to come.

We meet in Atlanta, both of us taking our licensing exams to practice psychology. (Back then, the test was paper and pencil!) We are starting our professional lives, enthusiastic about everything, both happily married, or so we think. I start a private practice after a short stint as clinical director of a mental health center. She recruits me to do research and testing for a developmental disabilities clinic. We both end up practicing in the same office building. We are in workshops and a year-long training at Pine River Psychotherapy Associates together, solidifying our connection.

Snapshot: My daughter's home birth. My friend is a great photographer and is there to take photographs of the birth, and of our cat, his paw over his eyes as I start

pushing. She holds my feet so I can push my daughter into life. I am exhilarated, a high like I've never felt before, and exhausted. She brings breakfast the next morning; I still taste the homemade blackberry jam on toast.

In our mid-30s, severe challenges arise. There ensues at least a decade of loss, change, survival, and adaptation, with intervals of good times, as well. My marriage fails, and I

am heartbroken for years, putting every ounce of my energy into mothering and working to survive. Her marriage also ends. She develops an autoimmune disease that takes years to diagnose properly. The next decade is difficult. As my grandfather used to quote from the Bible, "The evil of the day is sufficient unto itself," and that is how it felt to me: just getting through a day was an accomplishment. Still in Atlanta, we see each other infrequently. I move to Massachusetts to create a life on my own terms; she eventually moves to South Carolina to remarry. During these years, our friendship is sustained primarily through American Academy of Psychotherapists (AAP) workshops and conferences, although I do remember a visit to her childhood home where I got to know her parents.

Our mothers had strikingly different personalities and this has continued to be a source of curiosity to me in the dynamics of our friendship. Her mother was practical, very intelligent, sarcastic, not very empathic—an achiever, a college professor. My mother was self-reliant and intelligent, comparatively humble, but she was a good listener, nurturing, and reassuring. Our fathers were the reverse: Her father was nurturing, empathic, and humorous; mine was charming and funny with a sarcastic wit. These differences have influenced how we have been as therapists as well as friends. She is forever offering me very good practical suggestions, many of which I have ignored, but others have shaped my decisions; I think I have been an empathic listener with her.

Whenever stressed, I tend to withdraw. I have lost other friendships because I did not keep up and we stopped communicating. Without the opportunity to see each other at AAP events, even we might've lost touch. I give her credit for reaching out to me when I've been overwhelmed and uncommunicative.

Snapshot: I am with other AAP women at her wedding in Columbia, decorating the marriage trellis with flowers. Her dog Max is there. Her parents are there. It is such a happy time, surrounded by loving friends.

Snapshot: We are at Camp Unleashed in the Berkshires with our dogs. My puppies are 10 weeks old. We are taking them all canoeing. Someone snaps a picture of us getting ready to shove off, the puppies' cute little heads barely reaching over the edge of the canoe. Her dog is 2 years older and teaches mine everything they need to know. The history of our friendship wouldn't be complete without mention of our four-legged friends: Bitsy, Atticus, Max, Callie, Misha, Rowan, Juniper (hers); Bartholomew, Sarah, Molasses, Lucky, Ollie, and Emily (mine).

Snapshot: While attending an AAP workshop led by Murray Scher, we are working together. I am crying with an intensity that shocks me, feeling the anguish of my loneliness. Remembering this experience with her recently, I am surprised to learn she thought I was criticizing her for not being nurturing enough. She says she has been trying to prove to me her ability to nurture for all these years. We laugh; I think she was just being a good friend.

It strikes me that we've had very little conflict between us. Our very steadfast support for each other is remarkable. It's not as though we've agreed on everything; we've just allowed for differences in a way we might not in another relationship. Perhaps this is true of most friendships, though I can think of some I've lost over conflicts.

Snapshot: I've adopted a son at midlife. He is 2 years old when I bring him to Toronto for the AAP conference. She connects with him immediately, playing with the rocks in planters of the hotel lobby. He is a happy social little fellow who brings me a lot of joy.

Some years go by. We both end up living in Asheville, now here for more than 13 years. She lives around the corner, a house suggested to her by my son when he was about 7, connected by a ball field where we have dog walks and dog romps.

Snapshot: My son develops a seizure, becomes unconscious from what we learn is mosquito-borne La Crosse encephalitis; he is taken by ambulance to the hospital. In the tiny ER room, she is holding my hand during the spinal tap; the doctor's hand shakes as he inserts the big needle. I struggle to keep my whole body from shaking watching it.

Her beloved husband dies. He is another part of this friendship story, being a friend to both me and my son. There are dog deaths and new puppies.

Snapshot: We are at her house to euthanize one of her dogs, the last link to her husband. It is still winter, but we are outside because of the pandemic. This dog has survived cancer far beyond expectations but it has taken a toll on my friend. Now, my remaining dog Emily is the last of the doggie foursome that has filled our lives for a decade.

Having her living around the corner has been a lifesaver this pandemic year. She has a recurring chronic illness. I try to nurture her with homegrown food and smoothies when she can eat. A good day is when one of us will walk to the other's house and sit on the porch and chat.

To describe this particular friendship is really to describe a history of our lives as we have lived them so far and how we have supported each other through the years. These snapshots are of course not the whole history and leave out layers of complexity invisible to the eye. Even some obviously big events have been omitted. These snapshots are really just a few randomly accessed memories that might be different if she were writing or if I were writing on a different day. And thankfully, there are now memories of hundreds of ordinary days where we've just checked in, or gone clothes-shopping (her choice, I am reluctantly convinced), or walked, or watched a movie.

Snapshot: There is another picture in my mind's eye. It's late summer, a sunny day on top of Big Bald with its commanding 360-degree view of blue sky and mountains. We're hiking with our dogs; she's snapping pictures as usual. We stop at the elevation marker to pose. We look into the camera. We are no longer young or unfettered, neither overconfident nor pessimistic. We are simply there together, with our knowledge of what we have created and an appreciation for bright moments like this one.

We have endured. How fortunate and how grateful I am to have had her as a friend all these years.

Thank you, Kay. ▼

Hallie Lovett

Even after seven decades, HALLIE LOVETT, PhD, continues to be amazed by the delights of living and practicing in Vermont, where the closeness of the natural world grows more nurturing and instructive than ever while her largely rural practice continues to manifest the universality of the human struggle. Says she, "Overall, the balm of friendship soothes the inevitable terrors and darkness that visit me, holding this fragile web together."
hallielovett@gmail.com

MeshugaNuns

As I thought about the theme of friendship, quirks of fate came quickly to mind on an early, dark Vermont December morning. These are the strokes of luck that we happen into and can't quite fully appreciate sometimes until years later. Nevertheless, they become pivots that shift our views of ourselves and the world. True friends enlarge the experience of both our inner and outer worlds in a mutually reciprocating and gratifying affective pattern. Memories of model scenes reverberate in our psyches down through the decades, contributing to the processes of identity and character development, coping strategies, and defensive styles. Intense experiences of another's cultural, religious, and political heritages can elicit jolts of awareness of difference that make our emotional and cognitive worlds larger, richer, and more complex. In their call for papers, the editors of this issue quoted Eli Shafak, author of *The Forty Rules of Love* who says "every true friendship is the story of unexpected transformation." These memories recall such moments of grace and gift.

I have been powerfully identified with my mother's Irish and Celtic roots since her death over 30 years ago and have a deep interest in Irish history and literature. This has been further nurtured by many trips to the Republic of Ireland along with an 8-year consultation teaching group therapy in Belfast, Northern Ireland. These travels, along with the friends and colleagues gathered over the years in their country, have combined to bring home in powerful and disturbing ways the connection to the land for the native Irish. I began to understand firsthand the imprints not only of colonialism on the Irish character but also of earlier invasions of Anglo Saxons

and the loss of both land and language. This history of land stolen and a people turned into a displaced peasantry of impoverished tenant farmers is deeply rooted in the Irish psyche. It took 150 years after our Declaration of Independence for the murderous Irish War of Independence against Britain, only to be followed by the Irish Civil War and the division of the country into Northern Ireland and the southern 26 counties of the Irish Republic. This tragic division within a country the size of Indiana not only birthed the "Troubles" but is recently revived anew with Brexit and the possibility of a new "hard" internal border. The vestiges of the Irish famine echoed in my family in the clockwork certainty of never, ever missing a meal and a readiness to celebrate any event with too much food and alcohol. Vermont, the Green Mountain state and the place of my birth, became a familiar topography for the Irish immigrants who came north from Ellis Island and Boston to settle. As railroad workers, quarry men, factory workers, and common laborers, they were soon followed by the Irish nuns and priests who ministered to the growing flock of faithful Roman Catholics.

In my junior year of high school, I attended the Eastern States Model United Nations. The blur of trying to adequately represent the war-torn country of Cyprus paled as I ended up at dinner the first night sitting next to another young delegate from Brooklyn. We fell to chatting readily, but what mightily impressed me was the fact that she hardly ate anything. By the next day I began to understand that as an observant Orthodox Jew, most of the food at this New Hampshire college was off limits to her. To this Irish-French Canadian bred Catholic from a small town in Vermont, most of what she told me seemed both hard to imagine and very compelling. There was a synagogue in my hometown of Bennington with a part-time rabbi, and several stores in town had Jewish owners. There were a number of doctors and at least one lawyer, but there were certainly no Jewish kids in my parochial high school. There were more kids in her class at Abraham Lincoln High than there were in my entire high school and grammar school combined. We became bosom buddies that weekend, then pen pals in an era well before email and rapid-fire social media. She invited me to her Sweet Sixteen party. I had no idea what a Sweet Sixteen party even was. She drew me a detailed outline of what to expect and said that she would meet me at the Port Authority bus terminal in Manhattan. I'd saved money from babysitting and lawn mowing, and my mother contacted her parents. The green light was given. I have travelled to many places since that day in 1965, but few trips have had me as excited as that bus ride. I had with me the New York Daily News (5 cents in those days), a map of New York City, and *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Lois indeed met me in the electric and organized chaos of Port Authority, and we stopped at her father's delicatessen in Manhattan, with more smells and bustle, to say hello. We took the subway to Brooklyn. It is no understatement that I was star struck by not only the city itself but Lois's ability to maneuver her way around with such confidence and familiarity. Every sense was heightened.

We got settled in her bedroom, toured the neighborhood, and then it was time for dinner where, when asked what I wanted to drink with my hamburger, French fries, and peas, I promptly asked for a glass of milk — a staple at every meal in almost every Vermont home —having no idea that this is not what you do in a Kosher home. Her family was totally gracious, another realization took root, and they got me a Coke. What was new was dizzying. Her friends hugged and kissed when they ran into each other! They hugged and kissed me! They knew a lot more about sex, and her girlfriends talked about

it. I, who had only kissed and hugged my parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and siblings and who was just barely getting into the guilt-ridden experiment of making out, pretended that I knew all about this and exhibited an ease that impressed myself. It was thrilling and sweet, and God knows I needed the practice. The party was equally eye-popping with tons of gifts—frilly girl presents like clothes and cosmetics alongside lots of books on contemporary topics. There was great gab and excitement, and the food was almost decadent—with cakes and sweets and egg creams. The next night we went to the World's Fair in Flushing with her sister and two older boys who were freshmen in college. We wandered from exhibit to exhibit, and "Rhapsody in Blue" was playing next to a huge fountain with blue water when one of the guys and I became separated from the other three. I am not making any of this up. At first, I was a little worried since I had no idea where I was in the biggest city I'd ever set foot in with some almost man I hardly knew. Remember that we certainly didn't have cell phones. I did remember her address, 706 Avenue X, and his name. He turned out to be entirely gallant and squired me back by bus to her duplex safe and sound with another sweet goodbye kiss well before midnight. My entire world opened up that weekend.

My ongoing education about Judaism and Jewish people hit a dry spell when I entered the convent after one year in college and spent the next 5 years there. Lois was off to Vassar. I had another enormous stroke of luck when the Mother Superior sent me to the state college nearby to study psychology, thereby enabling an escape from the confines of both the novitiate and the small Catholic women's college I'd been attending. I was able to major in psychology in an excellent program with two terrific professors who'd come from Washington, DC—one as a professor who semi-retired with his wife to Vermont and another, his former student and a recent PhD. Supportively, they encouraged me to apply to graduate school. I can honestly say that at that time I couldn't have told you the difference between George Washington University and Georgetown, but George Washington it turned out to be, and my brand-new husband and I were off to Washington for what we thought would be a few years.

Those few years turned into 40, and along the way, in our new bustling city environment, in this large urban university, in this profession, suddenly, in what was a wonderful reprise of meeting Lois, I seemed to be surrounded by Jewish classmates, professors, neighbors, supervisors, and eventually colleagues. I met people from other religions and cultures of course, but great good fortune found me in the company of three special women, one of Italian and Irish descent and the other two of Ashkenazi Jewish heritage. All of them were from New York or New Jersey and had migrated to DC. We didn't know in those early days that we were destined to become The MeshugaNuns.

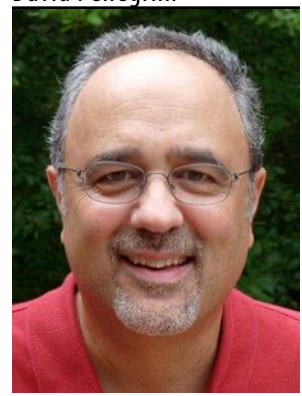
A memory that signaled the course for this life-saving quartet still shines. As a foursome, we visited Ireland the first time together for a conference that we turned into an extended holiday. Jokingly, we characterized this trip as "the Catholics take the Jews to Ireland." Being together in Ireland was thrilling for all of us. Rosemary and I brought them to Bewley's Tea Room on Grafton Street for scones and clotted cream. The meeting was held at Trinity College where we visited the sanctuary-like Great Room in the Library and saw the Book of Kells. As part of our introduction to the Ireland of our heritage, Rosemary and I booked tickets for a production of the John B. Keane play *The Field at the Abbey Theater*. While standing on the street corner after the play ended, she and I both bemoaned what we judged an inferior production and wondered out loud

if we'd misremembered the real quality and importance of the play in the Irish literary canon. Rosemary and I were quite disappointed. Joyce and MaryAnn brought us up short on the sidewalk in a rapid rebuttal as they both turned to face us directly, "What are you two talking about? Why are you complaining? This was a wonderful play. It's not just about a small plot of land in the west of Ireland. Don't you get it? It's about the land! It could well have been set in Israel. It could be about any formerly colonial place in the world! It's about all the tragic prices that have been paid for battles over land and whose it is for centuries! No! For millennia!" It started to rain. Chastened, and newly aware of not only what we'd missed in our narrow view of the play but aware in an entirely new way of what connected us, Rosemary put her arm through MaryAnn's. I did the same with Joyce, and we gratefully walked back to our hotel. These Jews took these Catholics to Ireland. ▼

True friendship is never serene.

—Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, *Lettre A Madame de Grignan*

David Pellegrini



David Pellegrini earned his PhD in clinical psychology from the University of Minnesota and was a Fulbright Fellow at London's Institute of Psychiatry. A former tenured associate professor at Catholic University, his research focused on psychological risk and resilience over the lifespan. He is currently in private practice in Washington, DC, specializing in individual and group psychotherapy and consultation to family business owners and CEOs. In addition, he is an accomplished oil painter and fine art photographer. Recently he has returned to his original creative passion, writing poetry.
dspellegrini@gmail.com

Invisible Walls

The whole dear notion of one's own self—marvelous old free-willed, free-enterprising, autonomous, independent, isolated island of a Self—is a myth.

— Lewis Thomas

There were so many intimacies we shared. So many, over the long course of our friendship. Some of what we shared: Our pride in our accomplishments. Our professional failures and frustrations. Our devotion to our families. Our shortcomings as spouses and parents. Petty grievances, attractions, loves. Our deep and abiding loyalty to each other. We placed a premium on being "straight up," but were forced to acknowledge the ways our insecurities and competitiveness led us down the path of treachery, in ways small and—less typically—large. My friend, he didn't miss much, and neither did I—or so I thought.

We had 30 years of intimate friendship and 30 years of weekly lunches before his passing upended my life and our plans. We were well known at the lunch spots we frequented in what we called "our village." If I ever went to our main go-to without him, our favorite set up guy always asked, "Where's your friend?" Our set up guy, like my friend—unlike me—was Black. He was older than either of us, and worked at our favorite spot longer than we had been going there. He always made it a point of taking special care of us. He knew which hot sauce we preferred and which foods required it to suit our taste. We spoke to him often about why he wasn't waiting tables, or actually running the place, or at least working in the front of the house. He explained to us, without evident ambivalence or apology, why he averred contact with customers. We seemed to be his only exception, though the credit for

that belonged squarely with my friend, I'm sure. It always felt like he was an honorary member of our lunch, part of our conspiracy of connection, a thread of continuity that we valued.

Inevitably, we gravitated to the same lunch selection on any given day, like twins separated at birth. That synchronicity occurred so often that it seemed like a parlor trick to play on others (though we rarely invited outsiders to share our lunchtime), but it made us chuckle every time. We were known there as "two brothers by two mothers."

We had a similarly remarkable synchronicity in our taste for music—not just the usual suspects (classic soul and blues), but hard bop and straight up jazz artists. I knew no one who knew more about music than my buddy, and certainly no one who had a more extensive collection. We both mourned the decline of music shops and the time we spent in them before or after lunch, sampling CDs at the sample bar—a relic of the good old days. I could always count on him being up for a late night at a club or concert. We joked about how someday we would open a daytime club for old geezers like us—whenever we actually *became* old geezers. No time soon, thank God.

To be honest, my friend and I both had a particularly refined neurotic concern with the idea and the realities of aging and the diminishments and indignities it would inevitably bring. Mine started young. When I was in my early 20s, I appealed to my favorite uncle, Gaspari—Casper—if I could ask him a sensitive question. "It's a rude one," I recall saying. "You're my favorite nephew. Ask me anything!" was his predictable reply. "Is getting old as bad as it looks?" Casper laughed so hard at my question that he doubled over his knock-kneed legs. "It's worse than it looks! But there are compensating factors." He had me going. "And what are the compensating factors?" "I've finally reached an age when I don't give a shit what anyone thinks of me. Finally, I have self-esteem!"

My friend loved that story as much as I did and asked me often to retell it. When they finally met at my 50th birthday party, he pressed my then 97-year-old uncle to retell his own version of the conversation, to their mutual delight. From their sideways glances at me, and their conspiratorial laughter, it was clear that I was the goat of that version.

Another commonality we had was the influence of strong fathers in our lives. They were men who retained enormous vitality into late old age, men who remained lovers and charmers well into their nineties. So, naturally, we mused often about the anticipated pleasures of growing into a couple of altacockers together. We referred to it as being set up guys for *each other*. We would face old age together and fight to retain our dignity and essence as long as possible.

We *did* have our differences, to be sure, beyond the obvious white body/black body ones. I often referred to my friend as having the composure and bearing of royalty. Dignity was very important to him, and he was a very dignified man. While knowing that, I never quite saw the roots or the pitfalls of needing to maintain dignity as we barreled down the road.

He grew up in a grand house in a majority Black, industrial city whose finer days were behind it, perhaps forever. His forebears were successful entrepreneurs and his family had a very prominent place in the community. All well educated and sophisticated, they dressed for Sunday dinners.

I grew up a grandchild of Italian immigrants in a tiny row house in a lily white, blue-collar section of Philadelphia. The only thing dressed at Sunday dinner at my grandparents' house was the pasta. Few in our extended family were well educated, let

alone sophisticated. We joked about how there must have been some kind of racial mash up whereby his family's wealth and sophistication counterbalanced the pervasive prejudice he still had to overcome, whereas I had plenty of assumed White privilege to mitigate my family's relatively humble beginnings. That serendipitous class difference was the equalizer, we mused.

We were uncommonly proud of our friendship. We lightheartedly joked that racial differences did not—could not—divide us. Naively, we felt we had risen above race. We were post-racial, like Obama's presidency—though he preferred Hilary, to be honest. He was more cynical about race in America. I was more positive, more naïve. He did not think that the country was ready for a Black president and predicted a backlash. When Trump was elected, all he did was shake his head and say, "I told you so."

Somewhere during the Obama milieu, on the way to Trump, a shadow began to fall between us. It started with complaints of fatigue from late nights and lunches cancelled in favor of mid-day naps. There were calls complaining he was not feeling well. There were intimations of non-specific medical issues and reports of doctor visits. Like the proverbial frog, I comforted myself that the rising flames licking the pot of water we sat in would not consume us. It was just the process of aging, nothing more. The companionship of aging together had just begun for him sooner than I anticipated. But then the slow pile up of trouble signs kept coming and coming.

In the end, it was the frequent avoidance of eye contact that seized my heart and shook me. In my mind it suggested to me that I best go away, like he was no longer with me, no longer cared. I felt abandonment, both hurt and anger. And then, like a bolt of lightning, came a sudden realization, an intuition that explained the mysteries of our uncoupling. The confrontation that followed was an agony. I never had to confront a loved one about alcohol addiction before. I had read about tough love; I had even counseled others to give it a try. However, I had never felt the deep and lasting sting of limit setting that goes both ways in any such personal terms.

After the intervention, there was an apparent brief respite, where the recovery process offered hope of renewal and a return to our companionship. But the distance was still there. What sat between us, like a stone, was the fact that whatever our closeness, my friend never felt safe enough to let me in on his struggles, even as he got caught up in a downward spiral. How had I missed it? As I looked back, I realized that I had never seen him do anything more than nurse a single drink on a social occasion. How had he kept himself from drinking in front of me?

Later, during one of our last times together, I asked him to tell me what I had done—or not done—to suggest that his struggle with alcohol was not safe with me. Why was I not safe? Why could our friendship not contain it? Why did he not reach out to me for help?

His confession—or his accusation—rocked me: "I couldn't bear to see the look of disappointment in your eyes, the disapproval that I thought I'd see. I couldn't bear the possibility that you wouldn't want me as your friend if I were a *messy* Black man." Those words, and my fear of the truth of them, dismantled my sense of self to this day.

We had never acknowledged, before this last intimacy, how much my own implicit racism and unconscious assumptions played into how we viewed each other and how they affected our affiliation with each other. The two of us created a shared world between us. We avoided acknowledging, though, how I was only a visitor to his personal

world, and he to mine. I was proud to carry our cross-racial friendship with me in my separate world—likely the better for how I felt about myself in that world. I would occasionally hear about how he bragged about me to his homies, and I would return the compliment with mine. I didn't reckon that I was undoubtedly bragging as much, if not more, about myself as about him.

Unfortunately, during our long yet still too-brief journey together, I did not recognize how much my friend's maintaining dignity in the face of his "White friend" had to do with my own unexplored, unexpressed, and disowned racism in my heart and the challenge I would inevitably have imposed at the time to be confronted with it. To my deep sorrow and enduring regret, I failed to grasp how much my investment in my own perfectionism inevitably presented a barrier to the authentic intimacy I longed for with my friend. Nor did I guess at the lethality of it, the pain and pressure it engendered, and how it prevented him from receiving the support that he needed and that I longed to give.

Coda

In the years since my friend's sudden passing, I have managed largely to avoid our favorite go-to lunch places. I have taken fewer walks up the hill by myself to stroll the neighborhood, people watching like we used to love to do. I still feel lingering grief, as well as anger over losing my friend in mid-life. I am still stunned that my plans were upended like a cart of spoiled fruit from a rusted wheelbarrow and fearful of whatever additional losses are still in store.

Above all, I long for a deeper acknowledgment with him of my own complicity in maintaining the racial divide between us.

Sometimes I think, thank God he is not around to see what damage the pandemic has done to the neighborhood, to the shopkeepers, the wait staff, the familiar people living on the street. I can see him shaking his head, looking at me with doleful eyes. I can hear his grumbling at the boarded up establishments. In some ways, this period of quarantine has been a welcome excuse to stay away from the places that evoke memories of what I've lost, a reprieve of sorts. As I write this, though, I find myself turning to thoughts of the inevitable re-openings, the renewal, making up for lost time. Perhaps I will be able to take him with me in spirit to tour what has survived intact, what has been left behind forever, and what is new, both in my heart and in the neighborhood we both loved and shared.

Commentary

My first reaction to reading "Invisible Walls" was respect for the author's courage and humility as he bared his soul and allowed witness to his abject pain. My next reaction was to acknowledge the devastating effects of untreated alcoholism on the alcoholic and on those who love him.

Although I knew better, as a person in long term sobriety myself, I found myself looking for the signs or tells that would have revealed to the author that his friend was in danger. There were no glaring examples. An alcoholic becomes skilled in hiding his shameful secret from self as well

as close family and friends, so it would not be unusual that the author's friend was able to hide his addiction for many years/decades. But the time always comes when it can't be hidden. His friend may have been able to function quite well for a long time before that became impossible. The term "high functioning alcoholic" is defined as a person who "may seem more able to maintain a semblance of normal life by continuing to perform and succeed in their careers or other tasks. To varying extents, they may also be able to maintain relationships and physical health and may have been fortunate enough to have so far avoided any serious infractions with the criminal justice system" (American Addiction Centers, 2020). It is helpful for the non-alcoholic to understand the concept of tolerance. Tolerance develops when the brain adapts to alcohol's persistently disruptive action on behavior and physical functioning. Therefore a person on the path towards addiction may be able to consume and tolerate large amounts of alcohol without showing the adverse effects. The author's friend may have developed a tolerance that enabled him to remain functional.

The author's friend was able to keep his secret hidden from himself (first) and also from the author and perhaps many others. Denial is a well-known part of the journey of addiction. Denial presents a tremendous barrier for people suffering from alcoholism because the alcoholic may not want to or be able to admit that he/she has a problem. The author's friend's behaviors, as he navigated the stages of addiction, are all too familiar to those in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) recovery. Many alcoholics in denial try to "control" their drinking in an effort to prove that they can, believing that they can stop anytime they want to do so. The alcoholic will often drink before going out to meet friends and will nurse one or two drinks over the evening. They will return home and drink after the event is over. The author would not have been privy to this pattern.

The author wishes he could understand how their intimate friendship, lasting over 30 years, could be unraveled by his friend's alcoholism. Although they came from different backgrounds, socioeconomic groups, and races, he thought their friendship had an underlying trust and honesty. For him, the "deep and abiding" loyalty to each other seemed to be the bedrock of the friendship. Surely the shared intimacies, the common interests, the willingness to be vulnerable and reveal each other's innermost thoughts and feelings, devotion to family, and the agreement to be "straight up" would have allowed this secret to be revealed. The author acknowledged and addressed the presence of competitiveness, insecurities and also "treachery" in this friendship. I wonder whether by tolerating and ignoring these darker sides of friendship the author was participating in his friend's denial.

It is well known in the AA community of recovery that alcohol is cunning, baffling, and powerful. The urge to drink becomes a compulsion that cannot be controlled by will-power, religious beliefs, or therapy. Without a commitment to recovery and the support of a recovery community, the compulsion will grow more powerful than any person, place, or thing in the alcoholic's life. The AA program teaches that the alcoholic becomes dishonest and selfish and causes great pain and distress to loved ones.

The author's friend, an African American male, who came from a family of means where "dignity" must be maintained, had much to live up to. He had to uphold the sophistication and success of his ancestors as well as the strength of his father, placing a lot of pressure on him. The author's friend clearly did not want his best friend to see the side of him that was falling short and sliding down the "messy," out-of-control path of addiction. The shame experienced by those suffering from addiction is intense and is usually manifested by withdrawing and isolating behaviors. His withdrawal from lunches, concerts, and late-night activities signaled the changed behaviors that became part of the downward spiral. He also developed health and medical problems that were occurring more and more frequently, interfering with their time together. It would have been difficult for the author to attribute these behaviors to alcohol abuse. These problems could be explained by health issues and aging without suspecting alcoholism.

The plan that these two friends had to grow old and face the aging process together with "dignity and essence" was derailed. They would not be "altacockers" together. There are so many losses that accompany untreated addiction as the untreated disease "hijacks" and changes the untreated individual. It is a tragedy. It is not an exception but a common occurrence that the disease may cause the alcoholic to die years before his/her time. Many of those who love this

person are left with anger, hurt, guilt, remorse, and feelings of abandonment and betrayal. Since honesty and trust make up the foundation for solid, healthy relationships and friendships, the loss of these cornerstones can be terrible. The author's quest to explain how he could have missed the signs is, unfortunately, a common one.

When the secret is finally revealed and treatment begins, as happened in this story, there is usually a renewed hope that all will be back to normal and will be as it was before. Not so, as the road to recovery, for those who make it, is long and full of challenges. Recovery helps those who embrace it become deeper and more authentic persons. Some will be unable to recover from the physical and medical problems and will die long before their time.

The author may find some peace by attending an Al-Anon program (for those affected by another's alcoholism) as well as attending open AA meetings (where anyone can attend without identifying as an alcoholic). The courage shown by those in attendance in the rooms and stories from those participating in the programs can help those whose lives have been forever changed by alcoholism.

Fortunately, there are many opportunities for the author to look at how his implicit racism and unconscious assumptions contributed to the uncoupling of the friendship. Doing this personal work will both honor the friendship and hopefully invite insights about his unconscious process. It is very apparent that the author has lost something rare and precious, and his sorrow moved me. I wish that this part of his journey will offer solace and resolution to the author in this final chapter of their friendship.

—Maureen Martin, LCSW

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> If a man does not make new acquaintances as he advances through life, he will soon find himself left alone. A man, sir, should keep his friendship in a constant repair.
>
> —Samuel Johnson, from Boswell, *A Life of Johnson*

Marilyn Schwartz

Marilyn Schwartz, PhD, has been a psychotherapist in private practice in Washington, DC, for 45 years. She co-created and co-directed the Adult ADHD Center of Washington and has been a consultant to the Smithsonian Institution. As a long-term member and fellow of the American Academy of Psychotherapists, she is chair of the Ethics Committee and has presented ethics workshops locally and nationally. Marilyn is deeply grateful for having amazingly caring and supportive professional friends, who inspired this article.
drmarilynschwartz@gmail.com

Professional Friendships as an Ethical Practice and Key to Therapist Well-Being

(Author's Note: This article reads similar to how a professional friendship evolves: a formal beginning giving way to the joy of intimate sharing.)

At the national meeting of the American Academy of Psychotherapists in November 2020 during the height of the COVID pandemic, I offered an ethics workshop with one main message, "Don't go it alone." In a time of uncertainty such as the pandemic, with its undeniable threats to our lives and our loved ones and significant changes in how we practice, reaching out and connecting with colleagues was our number one strategy to navigate our personal and professional lives. Connecting with our professional colleagues has always been a critical factor in ensuring that we're doing our best clinical work, managing the emotional demands and risks of practice, and building satisfaction in being a psychotherapist.

Surprisingly few professional articles have been written on the importance and nature of close professional relationships between therapists, in spite of the fact that our professional codes of ethics stress their importance and call for on-going consultation with colleagues as a means to ensure professional competence in our work.

- The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics requires that "Social workers should seek the advice and counsel of colleagues whenever such consultation is in the best interests of clients" (NASW Code of Ethics, 2017, 2.05a).
- The American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics requires that "Counselors take reasonable steps to consult with other counselors or related professionals when they have questions regarding their ethical obligations or professional practice" (ACA Code of Ethics, 2014, C.2.e.).

More specifically, our professional codes require us to seek consultation with colleagues to assess our effectiveness. Research has demonstrated that therapists may be ineffective in self-assessing impairment of their functioning or diminished competence (Johnson & Barnett, 2011).

- The ACA Code of Ethics requires that "Counselors take reasonable steps to seek peer supervision to evaluate their efficacy as counselors" (2014, C.2.d.).
- The NASW Code of Ethics requires that "Social workers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague's impairment that is due to personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties and that interferes with practice effectiveness should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action" (2017, 2.08.a).

The American Psychological Association (APA) Code of Ethics (2017) also specifies consultation with colleagues as an important way to maintain professional competency, especially when distressed. But, unlike other professional ethical codes, the APA Code doesn't require psychologists to reach out and help a troubled or impaired colleague. In an article entitled "Competence, Ethical Practice, and Going It Alone," the authors call for a revision of the APA Code to reflect a shift from individual responsibility for competence and self-assessment of functioning to a recognition of the need for an interdependent approach. They conclude that "the only way we can truly practice ethically and competently over time is with the input, support and guidance of each other" (Barnett & Corcoran, 2018, p.21).

Barnett and Corcoran (2018) recommend that all psychotherapists pursue the development of and active participation in ongoing collegial relationships, which they call "competence constellations." According to the authors, through active engagement with colleagues in an open, honest, and transparent manner, psychotherapists may receive the support and assistance needed to more effectively manage the many challenges, stresses, and difficulties faced in their professional and personal lives. They point out that ethical decision-making in our work is never a solitary activity; consulting with colleagues is always recommended, especially from a risk management perspective.

In view of the above, it follows that developing a cadre of close professional friends, whom we trust and can rely upon for consultation and emotional support, is critical to doing our best work and practicing ethically. It is important to better understand the nature and development of these professional friendships so that we can adopt a more intentional approach to cultivating them throughout our professional lives. What follows is what I've learned about how professional friendships evolve and how they contribute to good work.

1. It Takes a Village

Research has shown that the more robust a person's circle of close relationships, the happier and healthier the person is (Sohn, 2016). I believe this is also true of professional relationships. It serves us well to have a wide range of professional friends with different theoretical orientations and areas of clinical expertise. A primary reason for this is that even when a patient is referred to us or finds us through Google because their presenting problem matches our expertise, the patient's clinical issues might look quite different once therapy begins. In that case, it's good to have a go-to person when you need help with a problem outside your areas of expertise. For example, one long-term professional

friend of mine must think her phone number is on my speed dial. I repeatedly reach out to her when it's become clear to me that I need to refer out one of my patients who is struggling with a serious addiction.

Similarly, certain professional friends come to mind when I need help working with patients with clinical issues at the edge of my comfort zone. These consultations may provide sufficient guidance for me to continue to work with these patients. As an example, early in my practice, I was challenged working with a 20-year-old who revealed after several sessions that she was a serious cutter. A colleague with expertise in self-harm provided me a series of consultations, which enabled me to continue to work successfully with this patient.

Another example was when a long-term patient, a 50-year-old mother of three, showed up for a session dressed like a 12-year-old boy and introduced herself as Patrick. A colleague friend who is an expert on treating dissociative identity disorders insisted that I continue working with the patient because of our strong therapeutic relationship, and then provided the necessary clinical guidance and hand-holding to continue our work together.

There are advantages to being part of a group therapy practice or sharing an office suite where professional friendships can develop and a quick consult can be had by merely passing a colleague in the hallway. Also highly recommended is participating in an ongoing peer group. In my professional home, the American Academy of Psychotherapists, there are peer groups that have formed and met for decades. I have been a member of one peer group for 40 years. It's been a place where I have gotten support for the challenges, stresses, and difficulties I've faced in my professional and personal life and where I've learned the most about myself as a therapist.

2. Qualities of an Ideal Professional Friend

In reflecting on what makes for an ideal professional friend, it occurred to me that such a person would be a composite of my closest professional friends. Similar to our social relationships, not one friend has all the qualities needed for a given situation. So, here is my list of top qualities that make for a great professional friend.

Number one is reliability. It's so important to be able to rely on your professional friends to be available when you need them. This may be especially true during the earlier part of your career when you have less clinical experience and can benefit from more frequent consultations. A reliable professional colleague is someone who will call or email you back quickly when you reach out to them. I chuckle remembering how earlier in my career I so valued a colleague who was a night owl, whom I could call at any hour of the night to discuss a case and its emotional impact on me. It is also great to have colleague friends who meet up with you regularly to have a continuing dialogue around your personal and professional life. As an example, I regard one such friend, whom I've had dinner with about once a month for 40 years, as not only a fellow traveler but a critical anchor in my professional life.

Another valuable attribute of a professional friend is that they are different from you in a variety of ways. It helps to have a few friends who have more years of clinical experience and, as a result, might help you to grow your clinical judgment. Clinical judgment is especially important from a risk management perspective. Therapists are judged in a

court of law not by the outcome of treatment (e.g. if a patient commits suicide) but by their clinical judgment or rationale upon which the treatment is based. Being able to consult with a professional friend who can help you arrive at a solid clinical rationale for treating a challenging patient is invaluable.

It is also critical to have professional friends who are culturally different from you. Professional friends of a different race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation teach you about "the other" and the important intersection between cultural differences and therapy practice. I am very grateful to my LGBTQ friends who have shared the path they've traveled to further my understanding of working with members of this community. I also appreciate how fortunate I've been to co-lead for over 25 years a clinical supervision group with a co-therapist of color. On more than one occasion, he would point out, privately or during our supervision group, my lack of knowledge or sensitivity around racial issues. In hindsight, his occasional confrontations, such as, "Are you living under a rock? How don't you know…?" were an incredible gift to me.

Thirdly, it is important to have professional friends who think differently than you. My best example of this is my colleague who practices therapy in keeping with Socrates' saying, "The unexamined life is not worth living." Her interest lies in mining the deeper or unconscious meaning of whatever situation we're discussing. In contrast, my mind tends to go to the practical first, to understand the realities and challenges of a patient's life, before taking the plunge into deeper realms of understanding. This difference between our ways of understanding clinical situations has enriched us both and, also, has resulted in our exchanges being more interesting than if we were ever on the same page. She and I still laugh about the time we talked non-stop about our clinical work during an 8 ½ hour flight from Amsterdam to Kigali, Rwanda.

Risk management experts would certainly agree that when addressing ethical questions or issues in our practice, it is wise to seek consultations from colleagues who think differently and might be able to offer a different perspective on our situation.

In addition, it is good to have friends who are emotionally different. I've found temperamental differences between myself and professional friends helpful. When I've provided consultations to colleagues, I've repeatedly been thanked for my level-headedness and measured response to their queries. I've often needed the opposite: to hear a more emotional reaction to my situation from my colleague enabling me to recognize the emotional distress of my patient or myself and formulate a better clinical approach.

Ultimately, the most important quality of my close professional friends is their capacity to be both honest and non-judgmental. I cannot overestimate the value of a professional friend being a truth-teller. Truth telling goes both ways. We are both willing to speak a difficult truth about how we see the other falling short in responding to a patient. However, truth-telling is in the context of dealing with our vulnerabilities. As therapists, it can be alarming, embarrassing, and even painful when we realize we've committed a misstep with a patient or potentially harmed them. In my own experience, professional friends with whom I feel safe allow me to drop down into my vulnerability and learn about parts of myself that need addressing to help me become a better therapist. I feel seen and known in these relationships. These are the people I want as my life-long professional friends.

3. Professional Friendship as a Key to Therapist Well-Being

In the last decade, there has been significant research correlating social relationships and close friendships with happiness, life span, and health (Holt-Lunstad, Robles, & Sbarra, 2017). While correlation does not prove causality, I believe professional friendships provide us with help and emotional support and, at their best, a feeling of intimacy and deep connection.

Freud (1937/1964) warned that "the analyst must deal with hazardous materials that require special precautions, lest the handler be gravely injured" (p. 249). Heeding Freud's advice, we might think of our close professional friends as the wagons that circle us, protecting us against the potentially serious negative consequences of being a therapist — emotional distress, burnout, and vicarious traumatization. Close professional friends pick up quickly on early signs of our distress and, even before being asked, offer guidance and support for taking better care of ourselves.

Professional friends are our cheerleaders. They remind us of the value of our work and of what each of us uniquely brings to our work. Professional friends share our joy, our heartache, and our love of being a psychotherapist.

4. Gratitude to Our Professional Friends

In writing this article, I was reminded of my history of being raised by a mother who valued above everything else the many friends she had in her life. After her death, I found a scrapbook with newspaper clippings about her. One feature article in the Baltimore newspaper reported how she not only had an unusually large circle of friends but managed to send birthday cards every year to all 400 of them. I also recall how at my mother's raucous 90th birthday party, complete with an Elvis Presley impersonator, she had in attendance at least a dozen women who were in their 90s and had been friends with her from childhood. Not only was I impressed with the longevity of my mother's friendship with each one of them, but I wondered whether this factor contributed to her own longevity and sense of well-being.

My mother taught me to be grateful for the close friends in my life. When I was 4, she taught me what I believed at the time to be a Jewish prayer to be said at bedtime following the traditional Jewish prayer, the Shema. In researching the origins of this other prayer, I was surprised to learn that it was not a Jewish prayer but a poem entitled "A Prayer," written in 1904 by the poet Frank Sherman. As I remember and recite this poem, it rings true to me even today. I realize how deeply grateful I am for having had such close and caring professional friends over the full course of my professional life.

A Prayer

It is my joy in life to find,
At every turning of the road,
The strong arm of a comrade kind,
To help me onward with my load.

And since I had no gold to give,
And love alone must make amends,
My only prayer is, while I live
God make me worthy of you, my friends.
(Sherman, 1904)

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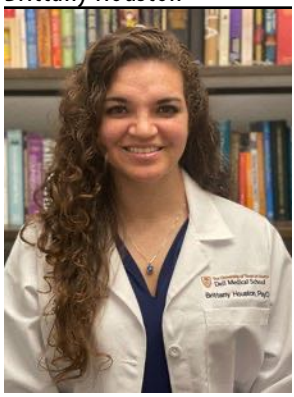
Friendship is always a sweet responsibility, never an opportunity.

—Khalil Gibran

Brittany Houston



Be Well and Be Yourself:
Creating a Culture of Wellness and Connection in a Family Medicine Residency

Brittany Houston, PsyD, practices psychology in Austin, Texas. She is the Behavioral Science Director of Dell Med's Family Medicine Residency where she provides behavioral consultation services to individuals and families across the lifespan to promote overall health. Additionally, she provides education to family medicine residents, faculty, and behavioral health consultants about the primary care behavioral health model, wellness, diversity, and behavioral health interventions. She holds many identities that she cherishes, including but not limited to mother, daughter, friend, wife, biracial, bicultural, psychologist, learner, and educator. *houston.brittany32@gmail.com*

As a behavioral science director in a family medicine residency, I strive to promote wellness and connection for residents and faculty. This mission has undoubtedly become easier since more emphasis on employee satisfaction and health infiltrated the healthcare system. We see slogans such as "Bring your whole self to work" becoming widely recognized. Moreover, work related to diversity, equity, and inclusion aim to make the workplace or place of learning safer. I am an early career biracial female psychologist. Despite these inclusive initiatives, at times I still feel insecure about bringing many of my personal identities, beyond what I mentioned, to work for fear of being labeled unprofessional, uneducated, or uncommitted. Those fears were amplified when I was a trainee. Slogans and conversations are not enough to create the safety to be entirely authentic in the workplace.

I look back on the relationships that had tremendous impact on my professional development, and they all hold one key ingredient: vulnerability. One of the most memorable stories came from my mentor, a woman whom I saw as fearless and unflappable. I will not give you specifics of her experience because it is not my story to tell, but she allowed me to see her as vulnerable. She showed me it was ok to show emotions and seek help and guidance when needed, and I seek guidance from her still today.

When I was a trainee, I was haunted by the words "be careful what you share with your supervisors; their comments will determine whether you get hired one day." This made me feel small and anxious. I carefully chose my interactions and my words, causing me to shrink away from meaningful conversation that may have resulted in

my growth. I did not want to bring my whole self to work. However, when I dove deeper into practicing psychotherapy and gained further insight into myself, I started to take more risks in sharing parts of me with my teachers, supervisors, and mentors. I can remember the first time I felt vulnerable with someone who was evaluating me. I had just received feedback from my health psychology professor on my presentation and paper. I was shocked at the amount of red I saw. My insecurities of being terrible at reading and writing sprung back to me like I was that second-grade girl who was upstaged by her younger sister when spelling the word "blackbird." I was sitting at the dining room table with my dad. My mother was in the kitchen, and my sister was at the table with us, not wanting to be left out. As the words on my spelling list got harder and harder, I averted my gaze away from my dad and toward the ground. When the word "blackbird" came up, I sank further down in my chair wishing to disappear under the table. My sister was tired of waiting for my reply and blurted out the answer. If that was not enough to solidify the thought in my mind, "I am stupid!" being placed in a resource room at school for reading definitely was the cement. Good thing I enjoyed reading, because that very loud thought did not get in the way of me wanting to enjoy stories. By the fifth grade I was placed in a class for advanced reading and was writing my own books.

Despite my resilience in my earlier years, my health psychology grade was the first time I had received a poor mark since elementary school. I pushed myself to ask for a meeting for further clarification, reminding myself of my value of education. I shared my story of struggle and embarrassment with her. I confessed that this was a difficult meeting for me to ask for, but I did not want to let my deficit in writing get in the way of my success. I told her I was hoping to learn anything she could share in terms of feedback and improving my paper. She thanked me for sharing and simply said, "It was very brave of you to ask to speak with me." She taught me some simple grammar rules and different ways to improve my paper and presentation, then asked questions about me as a human being. Her compassion, humanity, and kindness made me feel secure and helped me grow. I probably would not be writing this article without her. We are still friends today and have shared many intimate moments together. That was just the beginning of my bravery, and I am still thankful for her kindness.

I remember those experiences when I am promoting the wellness of medical residents. Current initiatives that block out an hour of wellness during didactic time, or ask them to track their wellness goals for proof of engagement, are well intentioned. I completely agree with the wise words of Michelle Obama (2019), "You have to plan your joy" (1:47), whether in or outside of designated wellness time. I am just not sure that faculty or others should be the ones designating what that time will entail. However, whenever I conduct support groups or have meetings to discuss different coping strategies, the words of my friends currently in their family medicine residency program ring in my ears: "Mandatory wellness is not wellness; wellness cannot be smashed into an hour of a busy clinic or during didactics." At times I feel torn between providing this education, to make sure everyone has coping strategies, versus promoting the use of wellness time that would serve them best. With the latter, I fear personal wellness time will not be used for wellness. Furthermore, the words of a former faculty member, "Those who need it the most won't reach out," echo within me. When that thought comes to mind, I feel anxious and strengthen my focus on creating spaces to encourage connection and well-being.

I am always wary when wellness becomes associated with behavioral health. I struggle with the message it sends that wellness is something separate from their education: it's only a behavioral health thing. Wellness then adopts the long-held stigma that's been associated with mental health for too long. If a person is not well, then it is their fault. These ideas serve as additional barriers to challenging the systems, practices, and language that impact wellness. One of these words is professionalism: It has been misused in a way that creates anxiety and the need to be perfect in front of faculty, inhibiting interpersonal authenticity. It is a pernicious double-bind in which there is both encouragement and prohibition for reaching out. When program leaders share something personally valued, loved, cherished, or feared, it lets trainees know that their personal reactions and values are not taboo. I have seen this accomplished with something as simple as a jeopardy game in which residents guess their faculty's greatest fear or favorite movie. Activities like these humanize faculty and invite vulnerability. I sincerely believe in the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) statement that "Self-care and responsibility to support other members of the health care team are important components of professionalism" (2020, p.50).

I am happy to give residents tools, but I ask myself what I can do to truly to inspire wellness without burdening the ones that I intend to support.

The ACGME (2020) description of well-being refocused me in my mission: "Faculty members create an effective learning environment by acting in a professional manner and attending to the well-being of the residents and themselves"(p.14). The environment goes beyond the 1 to 2 hours I get with residents over Zoom in our support groups. Environment involves how we are with each other, the conversations we invite, the pieces of ourselves we make visible, and the actions we make to promote our own and others wellness. I want to re-create that unapologetic connection that inspired me to approach uncertainty, challenge injustice, and stay true to my values: a place where they can be themselves, reach out when needed, and find support. Brené Brown (2018) emphasizes that human beings are hard-wired for connection. There is no connection without vulnerability. I believe this is more difficult and vital in the era of COVID when people at work are often some of the very few people we see regularly. My question is, "How can we expect residents to be vulnerable if we as faculty are not vulnerable?" And I mean all faculty, not just the behavioral health.

ACGME (2020) makes clear that well-being must be "modeled, learned, and nurtured in the context of other aspects of residency training" (p. 50). Wellness curricula for the residents should also be prescriptive for all the faculty. For example, when I ask for shout outs or kudos in a meeting to access gratitude, I share first, to open the lines of communication and model recognizing small acts of kindness. What we ask of residents, faculty should do as well, whether engaging in a gratitude exercise, sharing weekly struggles, or scheduling PTO, in order to create community and psychological safety.

In a year in which struggle has been endemic, I have seen residents and faculty alike risk violating the societally reinforced notions of harmful applications of professionalism and share their disappointments about racial injustice, their fears and sorrows when violently losing one of their own, and beautiful moments that make them who they are and tell each other what they value. Through these experiences I have felt comfortable bringing identities that did not seem welcome previously. I would not have shared my pain related to fear of living as a Black family in America, for example, or the joy and strug-

gles of breast feeding. Education got it right when designating social-emotional learning as a key component of education. Through vulnerability and authentic check-ins residents are encouraged to gain self-awareness. Making space for wellness time and staying connected to our values promotes self-management. Asking what happened instead of what's wrong with you moves us towards connection and social awareness. Promoting advocacy, assertive communication, and effective listening sharpens relationship skills. Finally, allowing vulnerability to discuss their educational needs results in responsible decision making. Wellness is not fragmented into professional and personal well-being. If we are truly meant to bring our whole selves to work, then I focus on the well-being of the person as a whole. It is time wellness follows the trend of healthcare in pursuing overall health.

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> One friend in a lifetime is much; two are many; three are hardly possible. Friendship needs a certain parallelism of life, a community of thought, a rivalry of aim.
>
> —Henry Brooks Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*

Isolation

Tom Large

Five a.m. and still dark,
here on my front porch
sitting with the cicadas
a thousand tiny tambourines
shimmering, shimmering.

There's one particular soloist,
much louder than the rest,
just a few feet away in the grass.
He's chirping insistently,
calling for someone who isn't there.
I want **to reach out to him** and say,
"Give it up for tonight, man.
She's not coming. She's not answering your call."
It's always hard not hearing back,
week after week of isolation
and you never sure the virus
has left your friends untouched.

Now my companion is silent,
then tries again louder,
then another silence, then three more urgent chirps.
I want him to have **roommates** to go home to,

Someone there to hear him say,
"No, she wasn't there tonight,"
a friend who knows from experience
that offering solace at a time like this
would only deepen his loneliness.
Better to share a joint with him
and put on his favorite album
and at sunup walk with him to the dining hall,
to the breakfast line of sleepy undergraduates,
one of whom you recognize,
and she's the one who calls your name
and later she's the one you marry,
the one who's already turned on a light
in the dark house behind you
and has started the tea kettle
and put out two mugs on the kitchen counter.
She is the one who will want to know
if you had brought in the morning paper
but who will not look at the dismal headlines,
reports of violence and spreading disease,
before she pours the tea.

The Circle of Light

Victoria Danzig

There is time— like your watch time — and then there is internal time where it feels like it was yesterday or a million days ago. I rotate back and forth in time, but everything reflects back to the moment my love died.

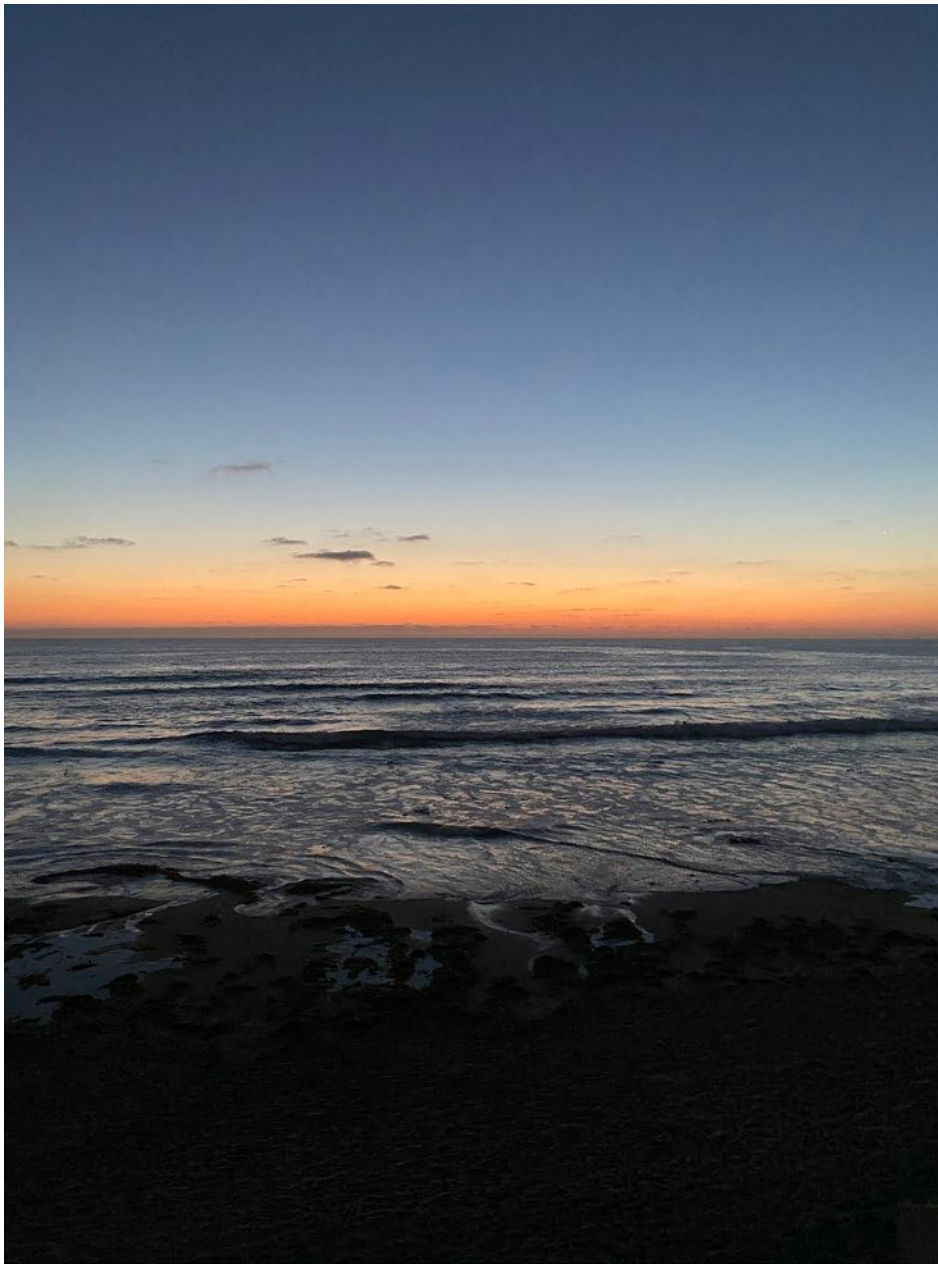
These sunset pictures are my way of connecting with Alan with a ritual. Every night he left his home office to sit in a chair in our living room to watch the sunset.

I give you the opportunity to see what I see when I think about him, what a happy marriage I had, and how I honor his memory. Perhaps you can use my photos to remember the ones you love that are no longer on earth?

Today marks the 2nd anniversary of Alan's passing and the end of my life as I knew it for 34 years.

Victoria Danzig, LCSW, is in private practice in La Jolla, California, and loves taking pictures of the sunset. She spends as much time as possible fishing on her stand-up paddleboard and hiking in the Sierras with her new puppy, Ruby. She is starting a new chapter by becoming certified through the California Institute for Integral Studies in Psychedelic Psychotherapy and Research, www.AITenergyhealing.com.
victoriadanzig@msn.com

Slipping and sliding into night—just a wisp of memory of Alan and a beautiful evening greeting.



Movement and stillness at the end of the day—there is something dark and deep that I cannot understand, though I seem to be part of this stillness if I take a deep breath and hold it.

The fog came in tonight. There are so many ways to look at what is unclear and foggy in our lives: COVID and what we have all lost, each of us dealing with levels of denial, acceptance, and fear. I think about a foggy freedom now that I am alone.

Life goes on…

I will miss you—your warmth, your energy, your light.

Our sphere of influence—it shifts. My heart opens as I observe you.

The moon woke me and begged me to share her with you.

Abby Zeveloff

Abby Zeveloff, LCSW, is a psychotherapist in private practice and an adjunct clinical instructor at the University of Utah's College of Social Work. While she could technically be practicing from anywhere during the pandemic, she is located in the basement of her house in Salt Lake City, which she shares with her husband, son, dog, and pet fish. *abby.zeveloff@gmail.com*

I Grew Up Jewish in Utah

"I grew up Jewish in Utah" is the tired refrain for my life. There were countless hours in my own psychotherapy answering the question of why I often feel like an outsider—"I grew up Jewish in Utah!" It is a decent punchline to buying a house on a street with one of the oldest coordinated Christmas decorating traditions in the nation—"Ha! I grew up Jewish in Utah!" The semi-aloneness of the pandemic (if one can feel alone when holed up in a house with one's spouse, child, dog, and fish) has provided time to reflect on friendships. Many of my relationships have seemed to dissipate over the past several months, with the weather getting colder and remote school demanding more of parents. In my neurotic moments, I wonder how I have failed to create closeness. Here again, I can point to "I grew up Jewish in Utah!" In childhood, I was included, to a point, in my Mormon friends' social activities. I questioned whether I was a friend or an opportunity for conversion when classmates invited me over to read scriptures. Looking back, I had little in common with high school friends other than that the three of us were not Mormon.

But perhaps the "I grew up in Utah" is just a scapegoat for my own insecurities with closeness. My New Yorker parents moved around North Carolina, Wyoming, and Utah in the 1980s, creating a clannish experience for our family. My sisters and I ingested the idea of family above all else and witnessed our parents' struggles to develop close friendships. In my 20s and 30s, I was drawn to people I admired—not the greatest recipe for reciprocity. However, the elevator ride of being the close confidant (with a convenient guest bedroom for a dramatic break up) to being insignificant had its own draw. I could hone my skill at having value out of being helpful, creating an

easy entry to clinical social work. In the pandemic, my clients are the only people I regularly see outside of my family. Perhaps this proximity of intimacy is part of my struggle with friendships. The therapist has a role, and I can feel close-ish without having to fully explore my own relational insecurities, want for attention, or desire to pull back.

I now understand the comfort of my parents' clannish behaviors despite knowing the small world it could create for myself and my family. In quarantine, my 5-year-old son, therapist husband, dog, and I all have our parallel play. My husband and I see clients at different ends of the house. My son does remote kindergarten and builds elaborate Lego creations. Our dog occupies her spot in the blue chair. Recently we all piled into our camper van and rolled through the red rock desert of southern Utah, a little pod of Jews on Christmas. "What more could I want?" I thought as we listened to college CDs, made burritos on a camp stove, and snuggled together in our sleeping bags.

When the pools were closed this summer, we spent weekends at a small reservoir in the mountains. One afternoon, my son met twin boys visiting from California who serendipitously shared his birthday and a love of Legos. They ran around collecting pine cones and trying to catch small silver minnows in their hands. As we buckled him into the car for the ride home, he said, "I had such a good time. I already miss my friends."

Commentary

I share with the author—to the extent I understand her—the "difficulty in being both fully 'in' and at the same time basically separate from 'the world out there'" (Bromberg, 2001). She *grew up Jewish in Utah,* with all that was involved in being inside or outside. I was uniquely suspect in the culture of blended families—my branched-off family and two source stepfamilies—holding among other things, secrets about its larger narrative, betrayals, and loyalties. I'm not equating the author's experience of alienation or otherness with mine. Nobody expected me to pay homage to Joseph Smith or convert to the Latter-Day Saints. Yet within my first family, certain key figures were revered, and allegiance was an issue. For me, and perhaps for the author, adaptation was key. The author describes, also, a well-honed skill in being helpful and in acting as a confidant. Familiar territory for me. But more than my associations to, and guesses about, this pandemic-triggered, short memoir, I love its resolution: the tender story of the author's 5-year-old son, who apparently has little problem with serendipity, readily buckles-up with others, and creates, cherishes, and then misses—friends. No fusion or alienation is suffered. Just run around with chums, collect stuff, and try to capture some elusive fish.

—Tom Burns, PhD

Bromberg, P. (2001). *Standing in the spaces: Essays on clinical process, trauma, and dissociation*. Abingdon: Routledge.

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The other day, I was thinking about a Zoom happy hour with my best friends (weekly at the beginning of the pandemic, and now every other month or so), which I organized and yet barely said a word during. This is not unusual. When I am in a social grouping but can't think of much to say, I fluctuate between shame and boredom. How can I feel like an outsider when I am the central person who pulled these friends and brothers together? I know they love me, and I love them, but...

Often, I connect my silence to my experience of having moved frequently as a young child, as

my father took positions in different locales. At other times I think it is more about my mother being a Holocaust survivor and a refugee. After they arrived when she was 9, her birth family never spoke of their life in Antwerp or of the family members murdered. My mother was definitely an outsider, and I was outside to her. She was beautifully present to the family and the community in her caretaking, but she was emotionally remote. My mother lingered as an outsider, even to me. My father, in contrast, was the successful leader of a prestigious religious community. His need to be inside of everything and everybody pushed me further away. I was wary, believing it healthier for me to remain outside of him.

I relate to the author's musing on the insider role of psychotherapist. When I reflect further on my reticence with my friends during the Zoom gathering, I realized that I tuned out when the talk turned to sports, economics, and politics. Apparently, my interests are mostly around feelings and relationships. I love talking feelings and relationships. I sometimes wonder if the intensity of my work and talking all day with my clients at such deep levels makes the small talk less interesting or if I just have less energy to engage and less need for connection. Does my discomfort with my friends make me a better therapist, or does being a therapist make me less tolerant of superficial social connections? It's a chicken and egg thing.

I oscillate between feeling like an insider and outsider. At times I long for the safety and security of insider. But more often, I am attracted to relationships where I am the outsider. I am so intrigued by learning about others and what they have to teach me—it seems that being an insider can be intellectually, culturally, and artistically limiting. Exposure, perspective, empathy—the opportunities to grow when I am the outsider—are limitless. And so, as I am writing this, I am coming to my truth that the insider/outsider distinction is a false one—it is an ever-changing dynamic of relationship with self and other. As a therapist, I love being the outsider transforming into the insider. Initially I know nothing of my client's world, their language, their desires, their pain. And then, with time and work, and deepening connection, I do.

If I should ever meet the author of this piece, I would look forward to getting to know her and together becoming insiders of the outsiders.

—Daniel Turetsky, PsyD

> It is in the thirties that we want friends. In the forties we know they won't save us any more than love did.
>
> —F Scott Fitzgerald, *Notebooks*

Steve Eichel

Love and Friendship in the Time of CORONA:
How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love the Quarantine

I am a traveler. So I never expected this.

In 2019 B.C. (Before COVID) and in years before, as I posted pictures of my latest travels on Facebook, it was not unusual for friends to ask, "Do you really work at all?"

A girl I dated when I was 15 told me that my biggest character fault was impetuousness. My first wife described me as "eternally discontented" and "restless." Wanderlust has always been part of me, in fantasy as well as my real life. I used to fantasize about riding my bike cross country. I loved TV shows about wandering cowboys and motorcyclists. *Then Came Bronson* was one adolescent favorite. On the Sci Fi end, *Star Trek*.

How often have we therapists compared our best work to "traveling" with our patients, "accompanying them on their journeys"? That's part of my traveling (yours too, I suspect).

But the last time I flew on an actual journey was for the American Academy of Psychotherapists (AAP)'s Southern Region conference in March 2020. The day after I came home, I drove to Philadelphia International Airport to pick up my wife, who was returning from a visit with her family in Florida. Following that, my list of upcoming travel plans included meeting with my AAP family group in rural Virginia for our annual retreat in April, flying out west for an AASECT conference in May, flying out to Georgia for AAP Summer Workshop in June, then out to Montreal in early July (and a road trip after that), a visit to my cousins in Colorado and my stepson in California in August (following APA in DC), and then the Big One, the one we'd saved up for since 2011: a Viking river cruise in France with good friends in September. This would be followed by the annual NAFC

Steve Eichel is a licensed and board-certified psychologist, a certified sex therapist, and an active member of the American Academy of Psychotherapists. During the pandemic, in addition to camping and hiking, he fulfilled an adolescent dream by purchasing a Mellotron (an early keyboard sampler made famous by the Beatles, Genesis, the Moody Blues, and other progressive/psychedelic rock bands). He is slowly but actively learning to play this instrument, along with several new synthesizers.
steve@dreichel.com

conference in Las Vegas in October, then the AAP Institute & Conference in November...and on and on. As I said, I am a traveler. But that was B.C.

In March 2019, my wife Terri retired from her position as in-house counsel and chief of human resources for a large federally-funded health organization. Prior to that, we both led very active professional lives, and my frequent traveling (much of it sans spouse) kept life interesting when we were apart, which was fairly frequently. Now she was home 24/7, and as I have a home office that meant it was likely I would see her between patients throughout the day. But enrollment in a number of adult education classes and a few active friendships took her out of the house several days per week. Post-retirement, we did not have that much more opportunity to be together...or to clash. Until March 2020.

Before I met Terri, 20 years ago, I was not much of a camper. But I was intrigued when she told me about her experiences. She'd spent a few sweaty weeks backpacking on parts of the Appalachian Trail, among other places, with her first husband. Two months after we met, we went on our first camping trip, to World's End State Park in northeast Pennsylvania. Most memorable experience there: I got chiggers.

And yet a flurry of camping trips followed, over the next few years—the honeymoon period of our marriage, I guess—and we camped in Shenandoah National Park, the Dolly Sods and Seneca Rocks in West Virginia, and Acadia National Park in Maine. As a new couple and then newlyweds, we loved the isolation, the slight edge of adventure on challenging hikes, and what we began to refer to reverently as tent sex.

But our camping trips ended in our 4th year of marriage, ostensibly because of two consecutive wash-outs in heavy rain. While bad luck with weather undoubtedly contributed, what was also going on was the typical, gradual evolution of an intensely passionate relationship into a warm and content one as we both continued in our careers and engaged in other forms of more personal and individual pursuits. I became chair of the Psychology and Law Committee of the Delaware Psychological Association at the same time that I also began serious training in sex therapy. I rejoined and committed deeply to AAP, and for 10 years, until the pandemic forced cancelations, I attended every Summer Workshop, Institute & Conference, and Southern Region workshop, as well as my AAP family group's annual retreats. As I progressed in my sex therapy training, in 2011, I began and incorporated the now-defunct Delaware Association for Sexology. In 2012, I became president of the International Cultic Studies Association. In addition to my practice, I was also actively teaching as an adjunct in two universities. People who knew me well described me as hyper-busy.

Over that decade Terri and I had our fair share of challenges in our relationship, some fairly common, some unique to us. We are both on our second marriages. We both have baggage.[1] Terri and I are expert at irritating each other; my worst fear about her retirement was that we would slip below the famous "Gottman 5:1"[2] that bodes ill for the future of a partnership. Still, throughout those challenging years, our friendship remained, and we somehow managed to remain sexually intimate, and I scarcely ever questioned my love for my wife, or hers for me.

1 "If you don't have any baggage, it means you haven't done any traveling" is a favorite saying of mine.

2 Long ago, John Gottman and his colleagues (2005) discovered that, for a marriage to thrive, there needs to be at least five positive communications to a partner for every one insult. This ratio held up in a number of studies, and the basic 5:1 concept has been applied to other social relationships by institutions including Harvard Business School.

First hike in White Clay Creek State Park, April 2020.

The pandemic introduced an entirely new chapter in our relationship. For the first time in our 20 years together we have been together every single day. For a year now. With a surplus of unscheduled time and nowhere else to go, we began taking walks wherever it was safe: around our neighborhood and in nearby parks. Our walks became a way of tracking nature's progress through the seasons; with few reasons to rush, these walks slowed down. For the first time in years, I truly stopped to smell the roses (well, the magnolias, actually). I finally see the beauty that has often been close at hand. Terri, always a languid birdwatcher, began installing birdfeeders and making sure they were always full. Our backyard began resembling an aviary. Simply making coffee in the morning became a delightful experience, with the entertainment provided by our morning visitors.

I've lived in Newark, Delaware, for over 20 years, the longest I have ever lived in one place. I now consider this home, in a way I never even felt about my native New York City, and it quickly became clear to me that walking in nature was going to be my psychological savior. Prior to the pandemic, I had hardly set foot in our local White Clay Creek Park (WCC). With nowhere else to go, and the need to remain socially distant from family and friends, we began hiking the trails in WCC. There were very few people on the trails at that time, few cars on the road, and no air traffic whatsoever; the silence was a precious gift.

Planning the Big Tour of Pennsyltucky

With all travel plans canceled but some progress being made on containing the virus, we decided to do something we hadn't done in many years: a camping road trip. We are blessed living where we do: Mountains, lakes, and beaches are all within a few hours'

Early spring blossoms in our neighborhood.

drive. We'd been to the Adirondacks twice before but never camped there. I began making reservations at campsites that would take us through much of New York State, including the Finger Lakes (wine country!). Then, when we were about to leave, New York closed its borders to much of the east coast, including Delaware, so I canceled our reservations and began looking into Pennsylvania. We began on familiar ground: at the Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania in Wellsboro. I had day-hiked the famous Turkey Path numerous times over the years. It's where I went to celebrate getting my PhD. Terri and her first husband had backpacked Wellsboro's Rim Trail for a week. To ease into our trip this time, we rented a cabin rather than set up our tent. The weather—not unusually for the inner regions of Pennsylvania—was unpredictable. Rain and sun alternated with such frequency that we couldn't tell what would happen from one minute to the next. We hiked part of one trail, but the Turkey Path was closed due to weather damage and, I suspect, pandemic-related staffing shortages.

I had hoped to have a bit of an escape from Trump's America. One old joke about Pennsylvania is that it's Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, with Kentucky in between. Thus, the term "Pennsyltucky" came into common usage among Philadelphians and was later immortalized by a popular character with that nickname on the TV series, Orange is the New Black.

Unless we were in a town or on a major road, we had little to no cell or internet coverage. When not hiking or engaged in necessary camping chores, there was little beyond reading and listening to music we could do (and with no internet, our music choices were limited). Oh, and talk. And talk. And so, talk we did. About anything and everything. Unfortunately, especially at my age, it is impossible to avoid retelling stories, and more than once my wife gently reminded me she'd heard something before, and when I continued, she understandably became a bit firmer. I was fine with this. There

Terri and me hiking the Rim Trail in Wellsboro.

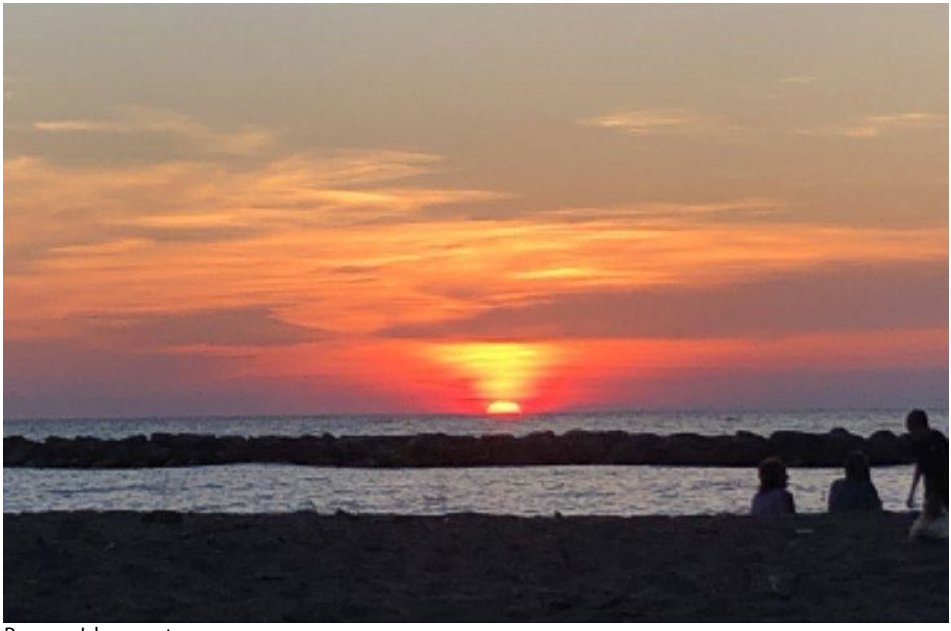
was always so much to look at all around us; I could stop talking altogether. And when it grew dark, we'd watch our campfire, occasionally enhanced with extra color from some chemicals I'd purchased.

From Wellsboro we headed west, stopping off at various places for short hikes until we reached Erie, PA. I'd always wanted to visit Presque Isle, a park (much more of a peninsula than an island, "Presque" being the French word for "almost") that juts into Lake Erie. A psychologist friend of mine who once lived in Erie had told me it was beautiful and well worth the long drive to the farthest corner of the state from Philadelphia, and he was right.

A colorful campfire.

We didn't camp in Erie either; instead, we stayed in a motel, the kind where every room has its own entrance and exit, thus eliminating social contact. We spent 2 days exploring the beaches in Presque Isle.

From Erie we headed south and a bit west, to Ohiopyle State Park, from where we were once washed out, years ago. The park borders the northeast arm of West Virginia and the mountainous northwest arm of Maryland, and in addition to hiking and camping, the area is



Presque Isle sunset.

extremely popular for whitewater rafting and other water adventures. Clumps of people, generally without masks, congregated at various points in the Youghiogheny River. We steered clear of them. On one of our hikes, we found a bare-chested young man in khaki shorts picking or looking for something in the middle of one of the Mid-Atlantic's many premier patches of poison ivy. I shouted out a warning: "Dude, you're in the middle of a humongous patch of poison ivy!" He replied he wasn't worried; he'd already gotten poison ivy once before. I reminded him that poison ivy was not like a virus…it's the gift that keeps on giving. You don't develop immunity to it. Whereupon he sat down in the poison ivy patch, leaving Terri and me to ponder.

Leaving Ohiopyle, we headed across almost the entire state again, to our next to last destination (and our last time camping out). We returned to where we started 21 years ago: World's End State Park. Our circle was now complete. The weather was less than perfect but did not prevent us from playing in the appropriately named Rock Garden of the park.

My Pandemic Lesson Learned

And so… What have I discovered, what have I learned?

The simplest learning is that I am much more of a homebody than I realized. My immigrant, German-Jewish family climbed the socioeconomic status ladder in my childhood: I was born in the Bronx and spent most of my childhood in Bayside and then Douglaston, Queens; my last childhood home (we moved to Somerville, NJ, when I was 12) was my fifth residence. Then came college and a return to New York. Then graduate school and a move to Philadelphia; I lived in a total of five different residences (including two houses) over those 25 years. I had no intention of leaving Philadelphia—Philly

Terri in World's End State Park.

is a great town that has only gotten better since I left!—but I jumped on the opportunity to move into a new house Terri had bought the year before because her Newark, Delaware neighborhood was zoned to allow professional home offices. I moved into our house in 2001 and opened my Delaware office in 2004 (I closed my Philly office 2 years later). While we used to discuss the possibility of moving to Colorado, California, or Oregon (to be closer to our children, both of whom live on the west coast), it is clear to me now: During the pandemic, I learned that I never intend to leave.

But I learned something deeper. I have been missing the hell out of AAP, and although I'm thrilled so many of us have found Zooming to be a reasonable substitute for in-person therapy, I have not. Southern Region in March 2020 was the last live event of any kind that I attended and the last time I socialized. Yet the pandemic has impacted me in a totally unexpected way. I feel an internal calm I don't recall ever feeling before, at least not for more than a welcome moment or two. Terri, my wife of almost 20 years, really is my best friend, my truest companion on this journey. With her, I experience a feeling that is new to me, a feeling I would describe as stillness and contentment. ▼

A pandemic painted rock, one of several we found on our hikes.

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The Men Who Love Too Much

Lewis Lipsitz

The men who love too much
have started meeting again
every two weeks now
in the church basement room
and each of them has a new
version of the old problem.

Jimmy says these older gals
only want sex from him; something
he was restless for but he now
feels like he's somebody's toy.
His emotions don't matter.
They want an appointment
with a penis, he says,
not an actual guy.
Robert says he sometimes needs
to cry and women turn away, as
if he were a little boy pissing in his pants.
Herb says they are all so opinionated
and he's tired of fighting just to be heard.
Aaron is desperate when his wife
leaves him for the weekend.
"I'm a hopeless wimp," he says.

Doug is the only one who isn't suffering
right now, but he knows it's coming.
The new girlfriend has given up her golf obsession
so he can visit. He predicts it'll last
about three months.

"How'd we get this way," someone asks
and they all wonder. "We've got to help
each other to change." But for now
it all feels so right
sometimes.

I was, and still am, the operations manager of a homeless shelter in Northwest Georgia. As the operations manager, I am in charge of designing the program, staff hiring/retention, financial reconciliation...well, a lot. We are a small non-profit, and I tend to wear many hats. The best work that I do is with our residents (who we refer to as guests). I can't legally call myself a counselor, and frankly, I'm anxious about having the title soon. It seems the more I learn, the more I realize how complicated and nuanced therapeutic work is. That said, I've been incredibly lucky to have mentors along the way that offer me guidance. This has been everyone from my professors to the guests with whom I work.

Because our homeless shelter is long term (we had one guest stay for almost 2 years), I'm in the unique position of working where the guests live for months at a time. In the building, my office is nestled between two dorms where there are typically 16 men on any given day. This makes demarcation and boundaries complicated sometimes. While I try to plan meetings and sessions with the guests, I've found this work to be more improvisational regarding schedules. While working with "Joe," I was a student in a psychology graduate program and working through my practicum.

A Final Home for Joe

The last time I saw Joe was November of 2019, and he was in the midst of a methamphetamine binge. This isn't uncommon: We call it "coming in hot." Joe wasn't asking to come back into shelter. He had recently gotten out of prison (again) and was looking for food to stock the shelves of his dilapidated house on East 17th Street. It was a house his mother had left him in her will, already condemnable, but a place to call his own, nonetheless. A week ago, I was told by a guest that Joe had been found dead on a couch in this house, not from the overdose that I suspected, but from cancer.

Joe and I worked together for cumulatively a little over a year, and the news of his death shook me. Joe was a unique and smart man: imaginative, capable of leading others. He liked to read and told me that he had notebooks of poetry that he'd written over the course of his 50 years. His favorite book was *God's Debris* by Scott Adams, a surprisingly philosophical treatise from the creator of the comic series *Dilbert*. And yet, Joe is like many of

Brian Harris

Brian Harris is from Rome, Georgia. After graduating with an associate degree from Young Harris College in the early 2000s, he moved to Atlanta where he managed restaurants for over a decade. Brian moved back to Rome in 2015 and began taking courses at the University of West Georgia while simultaneously working with the homeless population. He received his bachelor's degree in 2018 and master's in 2020 and continues to work with the homeless by managing a shelter. Brian hopes to soon be licensed as a professional counselor. *p.brian.harris@gmail.com*

the other men that I've worked with at the shelter: somehow alone, entrenched in dangerous heuristics, resistant to authentically opening up, while impossible to close.

There was no one to memorialize him at the time of his death: Allowing him to somehow accompany me as I move forward seems a small honor that I can lay at his feet, or ghost, or shadow, or debris, or whatever.

We first began working with Joe in late May of 2017. He had recently been released from prison after being charged under the family violence act and convicted for making felony terroristic threats, as well as misdemeanor criminal trespassing. Penal codes sound worse than the actions they represent. During an argument over a utility bill, the woman Joe was living with called the police. Upon their arrival, the woman claimed that Joe had threatened to kill her. When the police searched him, they found only the utility bill (addressed to her) on his person; since Joe wasn't on the rental contract, he was technically trespassing. In another version of this story, where both the woman and Joe were wealthy, this scenario would have likely been dismissed as a lovers' quarrel and no charges brought. However, this happened in a low socioeconomic area, between two people who were clearly struggling, and our judicial system seems to punish people for that. It didn't help that Joe had spent most of his early adulthood in and out of prison.

I find that the men we work with are often vague about their histories during our initial intake assessment. Most of the staff at the shelter approach our work with therapeutic ideals and intentions, but the inherent power dynamic interferes: One of us is homeless, and the other has a bed to offer. During a lot of intake assessments, guests see themselves as "trying out," and they feel they need to say the right things to impress us.

Joe's approach to the intake assessment was one of brutal honesty, but it didn't seem like he was laying-it-all-on-the-table for transparency purposes: It seemed like a challenge. "Here are all the reasons to say no. And when you say no, you'll confirm what I already know: that there's not really anyone interested in helping someone like me." For example, when asked about criminal histories, most guests will let us know about current charges or convictions for which they're on probation/parole, but "forget to mention" earlier ones. Joe's answer: "misdemeanor criminal trespass, felony terroristic threats, theft by taking, theft by receiving, possession of burglary tools, possession of drugs outside of container, possession of illegal substances, intent to sell illegal substances, aggravated stalking, obstruction of a police officer, four DUIs, and some other charges that I can't remember, but they're there, a lot of 'em. I've been in and out of prison for 32 years." Similarly, when we ask about health conditions, many guests downplay diagnoses, maybe out of fear of some exclusion criteria that might be an excuse to reject them. Joe's answer: "Hepatitis C, skin problem, bad back, muscle atrophy in left thigh that prevents standing for long periods, depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, personality disorder, dent in my head, allergic to bees, can't breathe if stung." I list these two categories (criminal and medical) specifically because, again, many guests play down anything that might be seen as a cause for us not to allow them to stay. Joe's answer and demeanor seemed to be a way of throwing everything in the air and saying, "Fuck it, here I am. Your move."

Over the next few months I learned more about Joe and his history. His mother had lived in a house a couple of blocks away, and Joe sometimes lived with her between prison stints. When she died, the house had gone to Joe, though it wasn't clear if there

was a will (it seemed more like a next-of-kin scenario). I learned that Joe's relationship with his mother had been rocky at best. She had struggled for years with mental illness, substance use, and poverty, and Joe and his brother had spent their formative years acting out, experimenting with various substances, and testing the law and any other limit. They often failed those tests, and subsequently, it seemed to me that they were raised by a neglectful mother and punitive justice system in equal parts. Upon his most recent release, Joe saw the family home as a light at the end of a tunnel. But there was a problem: Joe couldn't get the house unless he had a bank account in his name, and a bank account required a state-issued ID. Without the ID, Joe was trespassing on property that was rightfully, but not legally, his. Frustrated, Joe had come to the shelter in the hopes of a brief stay while he secured his credentials.

A point of healthy contention amongst staff at the shelter has been the speed at which we require guests to begin actively working on their treatment plans. I feel it is important to allow some downtime when guests first arrive. In many ways, they are landing hard upon what can seem to be another unstable situation, and it's easy to give in to the Freudian repetition compulsion by continuing to cycle through emotions and behaviors that lead to instability. I believe we need to create an atmosphere that invites them into a trusting and stable relationship with us, one that validates their *being* before they are tasked with *doing*. Other staff members feel there isn't time to lose and that, if we begin by letting the guests take a breather, they will inevitably resist working on their (or maybe *our*) treatment plans. In Joe's case, one of our case managers jumped straight to work. He began to advise Joe about the house (which still wasn't legally his), insisting that it was more valuable to tear it down and build a new house. Though his intentions were good, he failed to see the ways that this wasn't an option for Joe. He couldn't afford to build a house, and he couldn't live at the shelter while he saved the tens of thousands of dollars such an endeavor would cost. The house also held symbolic significance for Joe: It was a place that he'd survived into, and it gave him hope that he could fix that which for much of his life had been broken. Joe dismissed the case manager's advice and went about doing things the way he wanted. I think Joe interpreted the rush to get to work on a case plan and the unsolicited advice as attempts to undermine his autonomy, and this initial friction planted the seeds of what would become a divisive relationship between Joe and the case worker.

I was working as a night manager at the time. I arrived in the late afternoon and worked until the following morning. Perhaps because of Joe's reaction to the advice of our case worker, perhaps due to the non-directive styles of counseling I was learning, or perhaps out of my own experience of being given time, space, and autonomy, I chose to just be with the guests in the role of a companion rather than a service provider, boss, or house manager. Much of my time was spent hanging out with the guests in the evenings, and it was in this role that I felt I was really able to embrace the Rogerian notions of unconditional positive regard, congruence, and genuineness. I wasn't in the position of holding them accountable for their treatment plans per se, therefore, much of my work revolved around just listening to them and validating their experiences. There were long evenings spent on the smoking patio or in the office discussing their histories, struggles, successes, interests, relationships, careers, health, friends, enemies, and anything else that concerned them.

I discovered that when given the space, freedom, and stability to grow, we do! The

direction that growth takes, however—indeed, the person that we become—is based entirely on the way we've come to understand the world vis-à-vis the cumulative integration of all our past and present relationships and their implications. Joe was accustomed to oversight, rules, and regulations, yet he was primed to grow against those forces because, in his experience, they had been punitive. Prison doesn't rehabilitate people; it conditions them to search out subversive ways of social survival which, more often than not, lead to recidivism. Joe spent his formative years learning these ways, so by the time he reached middle age, he had what might be called an advanced degree.

Joe quickly applied for a state identification document, opened up a bank account, and set the wheels in motion to get the family home in his name. In the process, he learned that he could work on the house legally, but he couldn't live there. That being the case, Joe left early each morning and worked on various projects around the house a couple of blocks away. We would swing by on occasion to check on his work and take him lunch. Each time we visited, Joe seemed to be making progress. Though it wasn't what his case manager suggested, everyone felt this work was helping Joe move in a positive direction. His days were spent doing hard but rewarding physical labor, and when he returned to the shelter each evening, he would relax and socialize with the other guests. Maybe he was experiencing a corrective emotional experience that might offer him a new template or counter-narrative.

It was during this interval that Joe and I spent the most time together, and I learned that he was an intelligent man. When I brought my academic work into our conversations, he not only kept up but often introduced new ways of understanding tough topics through simpler analogous stories and explanations. This was when Joe asked if I was familiar with *God's Debris* (Adams, 2001), a book written by a Sunday comic writer that he said was deeply philosophical. I jumped to encourage his interest and ordered a couple of copies. When they arrived, he quickly paged through sections of the book, pointing out ideas and questions that had obviously stuck with him.

One idea that seemed particularly pertinent to Joe was the argument that Newtonian causal/mechanical physics and our own free will cannot both be true. Scott Adams presents this argument by asking the reader to imagine a penny that has been imbued with consciousness. The penny understands that it is going to be flipped from time to time. The penny also understands itself to have free will. Therefore, when the penny is flipped, if the penny wants to land on heads, and it does, it is a confirmation of free will. However, when it doesn't land with the orientation it desired, it is due to God's omniscient knowing and free will, i.e., God's master plan. Adams suggests that, while simple physics explains what is really occurring, our consciousness adds a layer of mediation that gives us the illusion of free will or interprets its temporary absence as evidence of God. Joe agreed with Adams and fell hard on the side of physics. Frankly, I can't remember what my position was. I probably argued with him for the sake of argument, because I just enjoyed the debate. His engagement with the book and his determined support of physics over free will seemed to speak to a quiet anger Joe felt as he moved through the world. Cruel and unfair things had happened to Joe, and he suffered because of them. If Joe had free will, he would be implicated as a participant in the creation of his unstable life. I get it. Given the circumstances, I might seek the same abdication.

Over time, Joe began to recruit other guests from the shelter to help him work on his house. This seemed good for some of the guests because it appeared to give them

some purpose. The work also supported the social community that we try to cultivate here at the shelter. Under the common cause of helping one of their own get back on his feet, I felt the guests were forming beneficial relationships that would continue to foster growth after they moved out. Maybe a form of paying it forward, so to speak.

Things didn't wind up that way. After a few weeks, the guests picked up on the fact that they weren't as closely monitored while at Joe's house, and his home became a hub for minor drug trafficking and substance use. It wasn't long before some staff members caught on to some of these activities, and the case manager and I confronted Joe. He denied it, but we knew he was lying, and the seeds of division that had been planted months before suddenly sprouted and grew. Joe decided he was better off on his own in the home which, at this point, was legally his. He spent his small savings to get the water turned on (no other utilities) and moved out of the shelter and into his house. Normally, this would be a moment of celebration, but, as a staff, we all saw this as reactive and likely detrimental to Joe's well-being and stability.

Our worst fears were confirmed time and again over the next few months. When we saw Joe on the street or he visited the shelter for food and to shower, we all noticed that he was losing weight quickly, his teeth were decaying, and his face was covered in sores. Guests that knew Joe reported that he was actively using just about any substance he could get his hands on and that his home was open for business of any kind. Driving by his home, we saw his front door was wide open all the time. Day, night, summer, winter, rain, snow: It just didn't matter. The house was open, and there was a flurry of traffic in and out. It also appeared that Joe was decorating his property with discarded items from the neighborhood. His yard was full of used car parts, pieces of home exercise equipment, broken furniture and appliances, and more: objects that must have had some significance, at least to him. He even hung an old neon restaurant sign over his front door. Everyone that ventured into his house walked under unlit squiggly glass letters that spelled "hometown cooking!"

Joe's appearance wasn't the only indicator that things weren't moving in a prosocial manner. When he visited the shelter, he was often agitated and spoke nonsensically. He became increasingly harder to manage when on the property. He'd show up asking to take a shower, and someone would let us know that he was in the dorm as if he'd moved back in. He'd ask if he could have some food and proceed to take more than we could offer, at the cost of the men with whom we were currently working. He asked to come and wash his clothes; a guest told us that he was trying to sell methamphetamine at the shelter, and we asked him to leave. After that, we didn't feel comfortable with Joe on the property, but that didn't stop him. He knew our schedules and began to get one of our housebound guests to let him in while we were absent. We felt forced to ban Joe from the property and program. We didn't involve the police, but Joe's actions were leading us in that direction.

It's hard to know if Joe's declining health was due to cancer or drug use. I imagine it was probably a mix of both or that each was fueling the other in some way. What I do know is that Joe came back in late May of 2018 and asked if he could have a bed. He'd gotten involved with a woman, and that relationship had led to more charges and a two-week stint in jail. After getting out, he decided he needed to get away from the woman and substances altogether. He talked about going to a local mental health facility and participating in their outpatient substance-abuse program. The woman was living in his

home, and he wanted to start the process of getting a restraining order against her. He had a little bit of income from doing handy-man work, and he wanted to save up enough money to get his water turned back on. As a staff, we had some serious conversations about his return and the stipulations and boundaries we'd need to put in place. We decided it was worth a shot.

I'd like to say we got some good work done. I'd like to say Joe took the opportunity to make some positive moves toward stability. I'd like to say Joe and I rekindled what had been lost. None of those things happened. After staying with us for a little over a week, Joe spent the day working on his house, and when he came back, well . . . he came in hot. It was storming outside, and I met him at the door to let him in. Standing in the rain, he told me he had some great news: He'd gotten married to the woman, and they were building a life together. "We've figured out money, and we're gonna fix the house, start a business, buy some cars, go on a honeymoon, and live happily ever after." Joe came in, grabbed some of his belongings, and walked back out into the rain.

I find myself wondering about free will—the things that we think we're in control of. I wonder if we all aren't more like Joe than we'd like to admit. But at the same time, there's something beautiful about walking into a storm imagining it to be a sunset. There's something powerful about the way we come to believe we're escaping gravity when we run or jump. I wonder if our perception of being free is itself proof of free will.

The last time I saw Joe was late 2019. He showed up at the front door of the shelter and rang the doorbell. I barely recognized him. His hair was long and matted, his torn clothes hung loose around his bony frame, and his eyes were sunken and dark, pupils like having come from a prison hole. Still, he smiled and shook my hand as if we were old friends reuniting, and in some ways, we were. He bashfully grinned and told me he'd just gotten out of prison again, volunteering, "It's that dope. It gets ya." I invited him in, but he told me he really just needed some food and then would be on his way. I asked him about the house, and he said that a lady friend had watched over it for him while he'd been locked up. I asked if she was his wife, and he looked confused. "I've never been married, Brian!" he said laughing. When there's so much to hold on to, you let some things go. I grabbed him some food, and when I returned to the door, Joe was outside singing quietly to himself. When I opened the door, he stopped singing and remarked, "I'm gonna come back soon man. Not yet, but I'll be back here soon. I just need to get the house in order." It was a sort of send-off of good measure: a polite lie. We both knew he wasn't coming back soon. The penny wasn't landing that way, whether by choice or physics. He'd found something, or something had found him, and this wasn't a crossroads; it was a dead-end road or an off-ramp or a cliff. I gave him the food, and Joe walked down 18th toward Maple, where he'd turn right, then left onto 17th toward the house that he'd grown into. The strangest part of the encounter, perhaps made more significant by his recent death, was that he seemed content in a life that he was choosing to live in his own way. He made a decision not to accept my invitation inside. He made a choice to go back home. It seemed that his quiet anger had become a quiet resolve. Joe had found a way to exercise free will, and it didn't seem like learned helplessness or giving up. Maybe it was surrender, in a spiritual sense. He seemed happy. We could, and perhaps will, argue the cost of his choices, whether this was free will or simply a body set in motion decades before, but, regardless, it was obvious that he was content to go home in the end.

A couple of days after hearing about Joe's death, I called the coroner to get details. When I didn't get an answer, I left a voicemail. When a coroner returned my call, he explained that he had been in a continuing education course all day, which I find somehow ironic. When I inquired about Joe, the coroner explained that some relatives had claimed his body, and he'd been buried in Fayetteville. Perhaps it was his brother's family, although his brother is serving a life sentence. Perhaps some distant cousins got word and felt an obligation to him in death that they hadn't felt in life. It's hard to know. I also learned he hadn't died in his house after all but in a Rome hospital due to complications of COPD. I find myself wondering if he died from COVID, another unanswerable question. It seems to me that it's easy to find incompleteness everywhere surrounding death. So perhaps it's best to end somewhere else.

There are new owners of the house on 17th Street.

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Commentary

I find it a moving tribute to a man hell bent on resurrection and vengeance, and a thoughtful commentary on the dilemmas facing those that seek to assist.

I see the crux of the dilemma faced by everyone as expressed in this statement: "If Joe had free will, he would be implicated as a participant in the creation of his unstable life." When Joe lays out all his priors, he's making a claim of victimhood, acknowledging what has happened but denying his responsibility for his own part. The dilemma faced by the helpers is expressed by the two extremes of helping (taking care of) versus directing (and sometimes punishing).

The question of free will may be up for debate, but people have one thing even a conscious penny lacks: agency. We can do things that have consequence that affect the course of events. And chaos theory shows us that even Newtonian physics cannot predict complicated outcomes.

The most useful guide I've found for dealing with this is a statement by Lao Tzu (ca. 6th century B.C.E.): "Whenever we lose the Great Way (the Tao) we get benevolence or righteousness" (*Tao Te Ching*, Chapter 18). Our author, when he errs, tends toward the benevolent side, the case manager to righteousness. For myself, I translate Lao Tzu to mean that the Way is compassionate accountability: to hold myself and others accountable for all we do while doing so with all the compassion I can stand. I found the article to illustrate that dynamic conflict in virtually everything he described.

—Roy Clymer, PhD

The Loneliness of Men

Lewis Lipsitz

I caught a cab to the Montreal airport
and the driver, a middle-aged man, weary
looking and badly shaved, asked how I was.
"Tired," I said, "haven't slept well."

We stopped at a long light: men arguing in French.
a young woman in a purple skirt who was smiling at someone.
The driver said, "tried sleeping pills?"
"Yeah," I said, "and they weren't all that effective."
He turned: "I haven't slept much in three years."

People blew their horns. He pulled into the slow lane.
Then came the story: his wife's breast cancer and how
she wanted him to sit by her at night during the treatments.
She lost one breast then the other. Two years night after night
she cried and held his hand.

The airport came into view --curved glass and hubbub.
"How is she?" I asked. "She died a year ago," he replied.
"I still can't sleep. I lie there listening to the radio and I can't let go."
"Have you tried Xanax," I suggested, "or Ativan?"
"Definitely, he said, "but I got addicted,
used more and more and it scared me."
"Yeah," I said, "yeah."

"It's the lot of men to be lonely," he said, "that's just the way it is."
"No," I said, "maybe you can talk to someone. You've been through a lot."
"Sure," he said.

We were there. I checked for my ticket. We shook hands.
I took hold of the suitcase and rushed to the security line.
When I got home I was unpacking and thought of writing him,
but realized I had not asked even his name.

Steven A. Ingram

Steven A. Ingram, DMin, LPCC-S, has a private practice in West Chester, Ohio, seeing adults in individual, couples, and group psychotherapy and offering supervision. In practice for three decades, his interests are trauma, grief, character development, and teaching clinicians spiritually integrated psychotherapy. A member since 2004, he currently serves as secretary of the American Academy of Psychotherapists. Steven is a husband, father of two young adult children, violinist, and woodworker.
Dringram79@gmail.com

My Worlds of Friendship

Anais Nin (1970) wrote, "Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born" (p. 193). Looking back over my life, I am astonished to see how each friend along the way has literally opened a world inside me that was foreign, scary, and yet so very welcome.

One of my earliest experiences of friendship was with Lou. He was 32 years old, and I was in the seventh grade. I met him at a table tennis exhibition at the local youth activities center. He was ranked 3rd in the state. I was participating in a ping pong tournament at school and asked him to coach me so I would win. He agreed. My mother was alarmed when I announced that Lou would be coming to the house to coach me. He arrived atop his motorcycle and beneath a head of curly hair; we met daily for 2 weeks.

The day that I won the tournament, Lou offered to take me out for ice cream to celebrate. Sounded good to me. "It's not right for you to have a friend that old," my mother said, but I hopped on the back of his motorcycle and we celebrated. I admit that, like my family, I too found the relationship to be strange. Much later in life, I realized that they were concerned Lou would act out nefarious desires, and maybe the possibility was there, but there was no sexual boundary crossing. When I told my mother that I would like to go away with Lou and live with him, she slapped my face, but I was attracted by the way Lou could actually see and understand me, in ways that my family did not.

My older brother was summoned home from college to have a meeting with my parents, Lou, and me. My brother asked why Lou wanted to be around me, and Lou began to reflect who I was: "He is tenacious when he wants to do something...curious about everything...and has a good heart." My family reluctantly agreed but continued to interrogate Lou, and soon he got it: "The relationship does not mean that much to me." A black shroud moved across my heart, and I blocked my tears by employing my anger to appear grown up. My relationship with Lou ended in my driveway.

It wasn't too many months later that I took up with a new—non-threatening — friend: a violin. It has been a constant friend now for 45 years. It was a respite from my mother's loneliness, chronic pain, and depression. I loved it and immersed myself in practicing. My first teacher, Mike, became the concert master of the Louisville Symphony Orchestra where he performed for years. During one of their performances, I went back stage to his dressing room. I hadn't seen him in over 10 years. After our warm greetings, he changed to a more serious tone and asked, "I've had many students but none worked or progressed like you did – what was going on?" "My mother was depressed," was the gist of my answer. My bedroom where I practiced became my sanctuary; playing along with the recordings of master violinists was my way of staying alive.

Violin, my new friend, introduced me to my first best friend, being part of a group, a spectrum of emotional expression...and girls. Violin encouraged me to see beyond possessiveness in friendship, and I learned that relationships deepen and multiply when shared.

James and I hit it off immediately with a quick cynical repartee, playing the Bach Double Concerto for two violins and sharing our fantasies about girls. Before we had driver's licenses, we spent endless hours together. James' mind had a practicality that pulled me out of my idealism and OCD, into action. For example, I believed it important to build a ramp for us to launch ourselves into the air like E.T. the Extraterrestrial. James spotted the plywood, obtained the cinder blocks, and soon we actually were airborne on our banana-seated bikes.

When I gathered for the first time to play my violin with other string players in a group, my body resonated in ways sensational. Anything that good had to be sinful. Harmonizing in thirds, striving anxiously for resolution, and playing in unison opened up my world of engagement with others. Although I did not know those musical words yet, now I know them and use them as metaphors for relationships. I also learned that I can be off in my own world while in a group. Once, in rehearsal, I was just playing along merrily without looking up at the conductor. Finally, I looked up, and to my horror (I was extremely shy and introverted) Mrs. Gerhart was not directing—even though everyone was still playing—her long arm extended, index finger pointing with baton extended right at me! She yelled my name and said, "You haven't looked at me for twelve measures!"

I was pleasantly shocked to be noticed because I did not really believe I mattered enough to be included in the group, and I still am astonished sometimes when someone points out that I am not paying attention to them, off in my own world. Mrs. Gerhart was the first strong woman who called me into a relationship with her, and I still love her for it. She took me seriously when I had a hard time doing so myself.

My music teachers in Ithaca, New York, challenged me to use the whole spectrum of my capabilities with the violin. From scrunching the strings with passionate abandonment, to shifting higher without fear of not finding the right note, to the controlled balance of the bow that produced the yearning sensation within my heart — these are just a few of the ways they pulled new worlds of experience. Recently I saw a picture that conveys, at least for me, the full richness of life expressed in violin playing. It depicts a young girl in a flowing dress, dancing with abandon, all within the body of a violin. Sunlight enters through the f-holes above her, as if it is the life-giving power that quickens her expressive truth.

Violin also shaped my introduction to girls and helped me see that my fascination with them was to be celebrated, rather than something to be stifled for religious piety. Let me explain. Yehudi Menuhin (1976) wrote, "Its shape is in fact inspired by and symbolic of the most beautiful human object, the woman's body. There are no straight lines in the violin; every line is curved and bent, embracing and delicate. We speak of its parts anatomically: head, neck, shoulders, waist, belly, back – and bottom" (p. 7). That was the loveliest eroticism I had ever read in my life and enabled me to make love without apology—and in public! When I played in church, I felt the deliciousness of a forbidden pleasure. To this day there are some passages that I play which cause me to actually shudder, as if any minute physical movement is too intensely positive to bear.

Throughout my adult life, too, there have been friends who have opened up the many worlds that live within me: worlds of community, worlds of relationships, and worlds of expression. In her autobiography, Shania Twain (2012) wrote (but I don't think she was the first to say it), "A friend is someone who knows the song in your heart and can sing it back to you when you have forgotten the words" (p. 354).

I still struggle, though, to overcome my assumptions that to be a good friend I must not bother others or that all my friends are busy and do not have time for me. So I do not reach out unless I am truly desperate, even though every time I have reached out, my friends have been truly wonderful. This recurrent struggle is expressed in my long-standing misreading of the title of the 1976 book by English and Pearson, *Emotional Problems of Living*. I thought that emotional responses to living were the problem and didn't understand that living *is* an emotional response. I thought the message was that one should avoid emotions, and I projected onto my friends that they would help me remain emotionless. Instead they keep opening new emotional worlds to me.

When I do finally reach out, my friends invariably affirm the adage "that which is most personal is most universal." They, too, struggle with reaching out. They, too, forget what is important to them, wonder if they have made a difference in life, obsess in pointless attempts to predict or control the future, despair over their loneliness, and ask why the issues they dealt with years ago still show up at deeper levels. These days I try to cultivate friendships without the excuse of a crisis. I "bother" my friends to simply connect with them, in a particular moment of life. I like to think that I am learning how to live in a world where my friends help me—in the words of Anais Nin (1969)— "... postpone death by living, by suffering, by error, by risking, by giving, by losing" (p. 190). Recently, when I regressed by asking a friend if I could talk with him about a dilemma that I feared was a waste of time, he did not even bother to say yes or no. "I love you," he replied, and from there, we began the conversation. ▼

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Letter to a Friend Dead One Year

Lewis Lipsitz

You might imagine you've missed a lot,
but so much is exactly as it was.
The weather hasn't varied.
My pond froze, but the fish
survived. Seventeen-year locusts
appeared, died and vanished.

On the personal side, G and R hold hands
then argue as they always did.
I tried getting together with J again
and it was the same old. We think
we love each other; failures
have taught us nothing.

Your girlfriend has kept herself busy.
It's said she's not doing well. Your ashes
remain on her mantle.

I drive by your house once in a while.
It's rented. I haven't heard anything about your kids
—probably a good sign.

The election was a hurricane of flag-waving,
a Walmart of lies, money seeping undetected
like radiation. And knowing how it turned out,
worse than you can imagine, you might be glad
you missed this one.

I still dream a lot, but don't remember them
the way I used to.

Doris Jackson

Doris Jackson (Wellesley Class of 1969), a clinical psychologist practicing in Cambridge, Massachusetts, earned her PhD from Boston University. She is a former editor of Voices, co-chair of the American Academy of Psychotherapists Scholarship Committee, and a Fellow of the Academy. Therese Barclay (1889-1989, Swarthmore Class of 1911) wrote many pages of letters, some of which are excerpted here, to an enduring circle of friends.
dorisj@comcast.net

Speed the Bird!
Fifty Years of a Circulating Letter

In 1911 my grandmother, Therese Spackman Barclay, graduated from Swarthmore College and began a group correspondence with 13 of her sorority sisters. This took the form of a Round Robin letter. She would write a letter and post it to the next Theta on the list, who added her own letter and sent "the Robin" to the next one on the list. When the resulting packet of letters came back around to her, my grandmother eagerly read 13 letters from her far-flung friends. Then she took out her old letter and wrote a new one—often 10 or 12 pages—and mailed the package on. She saved her old letters in a drawer.

I have 120 of these Round Robin letters now in my possession—a unique trove, documenting my grandmother's life as it unspooled, in a way that her many other, more casual letters to friends and family did not. This article offers excerpts from the letters that highlight the friendships among the women of the Round Robin (RR) circle. Transcribing them has been both delightful and painful for me.

It was delightful to "hear" her voice and to learn new details of life in the big old house on Lippincott Avenue, where my mother grew up in what seemed to me a charmed community. Delightful because Barky was so much fun and because she took such pleasure in the people in her life. As the first of her 13 grandchildren and the one who created her nickname, I always felt close to her. We were both avid readers; as a child I read all the Victorian and turn-of-the-century children's books that had been hers (Frances Hodgson Burnett, Louisa May Alcott, the Little Colonel books). Some of our shared jokes came from these. When I was 7, she took me to my first Broadway show—Mary Martin in Peter Pan. *Two years later we saw* My Fair Lady. *When I was about 10, she whispered a joke to me with the punchline*

"B-I-T-C-H"—the first time I heard a grown-up use a bad word. We were in the car with my parents and two of my siblings at the time, but that joke was private.

The painful part of transcribing the letters was that they made me sad. Sad because of the losses she suffered, and sad because the past is, in the end, a closed door. Even more, the details of her full and useful life sometimes make me feel I do not measure up. For one thing, I married late and did not have my own children. For another, I took up the strange profession of psychotherapy. Barky didn't get it. Despite her ready sympathy for others, and her tenderness for the suffering of her friends, Barky's personal code—as you will see reflected strongly in the letters—was that you don't dwell on your pain. How enthralling it was for me, in my early 20s, to encounter people who believed in naming and exploring difficult feelings! Choosing a profession in which I help people speak about their pain was a serious departure from the stoical family style that Barky exemplified. That style, though fairly typical of her generation, can be jarring as it comes through in the letters. Even so, this record of a lifetime of sustaining friendships gathers emotional resonance over time.

* * *

Barky lived in the town where she grew up, in Riverton, New Jersey, in close proximity to her widowed mother and two maiden aunts. She married the boy down the street, Richard Barclay, who had studied agriculture at Penn. He eventually started his own business as a commercial beekeeper, hiring out his hives to pollinate other farmers' crops. He was often away for several weeks, traveling into farm country in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. In her letters, my sociable grandmother details the pleasures of her life at home in Riverton, a small community just outside Philadelphia, where she enjoyed cultural activities and maintained a rich network of friends.

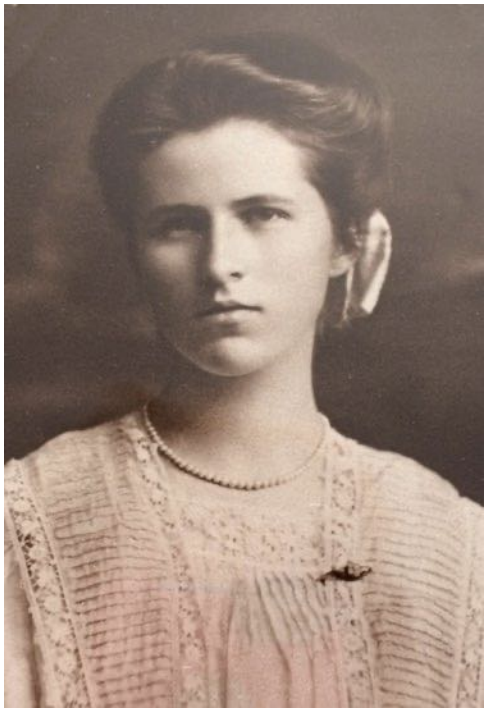
The first letter I have was written in 1915, describing, in a lighthearted voice, the birth of her first child. Her letters glance at the impact of World War I—she witnessed rallies and parades and refers to the war work of friends who went "over there." But mostly she dwells on her growing family and takes delight in her children being "happy and dirty." In her busy life with four children she managed an impressive number of visits with the women of the Round Robin—whether house parties at the Jersey shore (my grandmother's idea of heaven was a house party with her beloved friends), or evenings in town (Philadelphia), or events at Swarthmore. The college always occupied a central place in her universe.

The letters reflect her family's decline from relative comfort into straitened circumstances. Even before her husband's sudden death in 1938, Barky had gone to work part-time as a librarian, following the footsteps of her two maiden aunts, who ran the Riverton town library. Widowed at 48, with children in college, she went to work full time. Then, as the 1930s gave way to the 1940s, her letters chronicle the grueling home-front realities of a mother with two sons at war. Through it all she poured out her words to these friends from her college years.

Swarthmore College in those days remained close to its Quaker roots. The plain speech—which my grandmother used at home with her children and her Quaker husband—had been used at college and crops up in the letters when she addresses one of her friends directly. I grew up hearing this form of address as a sign of intimacy, comparable to a French speaker's "tu-toi." To me there is an extra measure of tenderness when she addresses one of the circle of friends that way: "Caroline thee is happy now, I know, to have the new little one."

"Peg, thy nice letter just came today."

"Barky"—her enduring nickname, a grandchild's version of her married name, Barclay, was coined in the early 1950s. She dashed off her letters in a voice full of humor and wry commentary. Her tone was self-deprecating, striving for the comic side of her domestic struggles. Her personal code, as I have said, forbade direct complaints, despite the many losses she sustained in life. That makes the times when she writes more directly of painful events seem especially meaningful to me.



My grandmother was an only child. Her father died when she was 2, and she grew up as the much-cherished darling in a household of Victorian women—a widowed mother, widowed grandmother, and two maiden aunts. ("The aunts" appear often in her letters.) Her gregarious and fun-loving nature rejoiced in the company of young people—her beloved college friends were a happy world for her. In later life she was thrilled to have a houseful of equally gregarious children and their friends and to report on their doings. She had a wide circle of friends. But the importance of the Round Robin (RR) friendships throughout her life was significant—they were like a protective layer of siblings or cousins, neither of which she possessed. Perhaps only to these friends would she have written some of the truths of her heart.

The following excerpts from her RR letters, chosen from each of five decades, illustrate how these friendships were woven into her life.

Riverton, New Jersey
Dec 5, 1917

Dear Girls,

I've seen so many of you recently it's hard to think of news...

It was splendid to have Margaret & Betsy *[Margaret Gatchell was a RR member living in in Peachbottom, Pennsylvania, and Betsy her baby girl]* here for such a nice visit. Margaret is just the same old peach ...And Betsy is a dear sturdy little lady with not the slightest vestige of a look of her mother—I looked in vain for widow's peak or any other means of identification but I guess her sound sleep is the only one I found. Honestly girls, it was bedlam getting those three *[little Betsy plus Barky's 2-year-old son and new baby]* to bed at night. Our nursery dripped & overflowed with bands, shirts, stockings & didies—just different enough in size to be right for one of the three bears! You who were here on Thursday evening have some idea what excitement we lived in.

We are not far from Camp Dix here—not so surrounded as Ethel at Westbury, but near enough to go over with things to eat for the boys. On Thanksgiving the Red Cross

chapter loaded automobiles with pies, candy, apples oranges etc. & a band of women served food to a mob of boys who lived too far away for 24 hours' leave to get them home. I was so disappointed not to go but mother has been sick for 5 weeks and was too miserable to be left alone so Nan and Aunt Elizabeth went and Dick & I stayed home with her. Tom Taylor is over there thee knows, Priscilla. Gertrude I know how you feel about Walter *[Gertrude's husband]*—I'm sure Dick *[Barky's husband]* is more needed here—& he's too old for this draft by 8 months, but he feels things are pretty serious. I hope no more of us will have to have our husbands leave so far off.

April 3, 1918

Dear All of you,

It's late at night for me—10:30—but Dick is away & I'd rather write you now in the calm than in the morning in the presence of my offspring. The Robin seemed so slow in coming this season. Do any of the rest of you count on its coming almost 4 times a year—sort of quarterly?...

Since Mother's illness I have done little to tell of except caring for & sewing for the children. It's been a hard long winter—with so much sickness. I take the children home every day to have part of the day with Mother. Although Walter *[then 3 years old]* is pretty strenuous, she counts on seeing them both & it makes a little break in the long days. Last week Anna Miller took Walter & me two nice rides—one to Camp Dix and one to Swarthmore to bring Betty, Clara & Lucy—3 young Riverton Theta's—home for Easter.

At Camp Dix Walter thought each of about the first 2 dozen men he saw was "Norman," my cousin, a sergeant in the artillery, who is to go across any minute. I hoped to see him but saw no one I knew except Thomas Rothwell Taylor, who was hopping around in some sort of setting-up exercises on the greensward & just <u>wouldn't</u> see us! It surely is a tremendous place & we saw lots of interesting things. One batch of men in gas masks impressed my son greatly. Only today he said "I saw dose sodgers wid funny sings on faces. I guess baby sister would cry" meaning, I take it, that <u>he</u> had been inclined to cry but refrained....

June 25, 1918

...Like most of you we are working our garden hard. So far I have put up peas & strawberries & asparagus. I would have done cherries this past week but Mother has been very much worse and I have practically lived down home. She won't be with us much longer now—and it's just up to us to be unselfish enough to be glad for her. She has been ill now for nearly eight months in pain much of the time—and I have never imagined such patience & courage as she has shown in trying to stand everything & spare my two aunts & me.

Love to you all.
Therese

Barky's mother died of breast cancer in November 1918, and the following year Barky and her family moved in to the big house her parents had built when she was born. Her aunts—Nan and Beth ("Aunt Elizabeth")—continued to live there as well, and they figure prominently in her letters.

March 12, 1919
(rec'd March 10)

Dear Folks—

...

I wish I had one or all of you women here this minute. I'm sitting on the edge of the little boat house swinging my feet over a pebbly beach and about to lose my pumps. My eldest is casting muddy stones into the river and wiping his hands each time on the best coat he owns... Crows are calling over my head and I have to stop and gawk at the water and sun & sky & smell the nice wet smell & give thanks I'm out doors. I feel as though I'd been shut up all winter. As Peg said, aren't we interested in babies any more? Here I've been watching for the Robin the past three months to brag about being the first to be mother of the multitudinous number of three children—and the all absorbing topic is politics instead. I have a new son *[born January 25, 1919]* and some of you perhaps don't know it. His name is Richard for his dad . . .

Young Richard, often called Dicky, Dix, or sometimes Buddy,—and not to be confused with his father Dick—was from the first a tough, adventurous, daredevil of a boy, whose mischief seemed to delight his mother. In one letter she writes placidly, "The children are all well, and Buddy very bad..." Her older two, Walter and Emily, were outgoing and athletic, and all three kids were devoted to each other. In 1921, with little Dicky not yet 2, Barky missed her much awaited tenth college reunion because of family illness. In June both her aunts had serious surgeries, and her husband had an attack of appendicitis. She had been frightened that she might lose these people, who were the foundation of her life.

August 5, 1921

Dearly Beloved—

Reading remarks upon that reunion hen party I feel most awfully guilty. I suggested this time & I feel as if I'd asked you all to a party & then forgotten the date!

... it was an awful month. Nan with one serious operation (breast) Aunt Elizabeth with a mastoid operation & Dick with an appendicitis attack plumb between. All that in a month. Really I got panicky after it was all over. Those two aunts are all of my people I have in the world & I remember when things were thickest thinking how can I bring up these children all by myself. It sounds silly now I know. Dick is apparently O.K... Both aunts are off to Maine—really convalescent, I hope, & here I am safe on 37 acres of scenery with 3 perfectly live wires *[her kids]*. Only you all with your fathers & mothers yet—so many of you have both, too—you can't know what it feels like to have nothing back of you sort of. The losing of your mother is something to have behind you all right. If you can ever get it behind you....

[The house party with her friends at the Jersey shore, which she had proposed in her letter of June 1919, had been cancelled. Now she was stuck in rural Pattenburg, New Jersey, where Dick had taken a house for the summer so he could be close to his agricultural customers.]

So please, everybody that can, consider yourselves invited here to Pattenburg for from 3 to 5 days any time between September 15 and October 15 that suits you best—will try to find out some how. Of course it isn't a bit like coming to a real house party at the shore—but as a better than none measure, this is beautiful country & if you like roughing it at all the bungalow is really comfortable—though we dress by yellow candle light.

... Here are a few
Disadvantages:
Dishwashing
Meals
No auto, if no husband
Fierce wallpaper
No ocean!
Advantages:
A really nice fireplace
Really nice porches
No chance to spend cash
No room for husbands or babies
A hill guaranteed to reduce if taken afoot
No mosquitoes.

Of course, if Peg & Sport come in we'll have the dish washing attended to! (Weren't they the domestic two?) I really would just love to have you, though of course it would mean army cots for some & a bit of crowding. You come here on Lehigh Valley RR from either Easton or N.Y. to the foot of our hill—Pattenburg the original back to nature resort—trees, pigs, chickens and all that sort of thing.

But of course if anyone can start a seashore scheme, it would be more fun—there's nothing like the sea & I'm awfully homesick for it this summer...

[She goes on to report family news and what she's been reading, then in a post-script returns to her almost plaintive invitation for a gathering of the friends.]

...Since we've been here I've been singing to the kids a lot nights (& to myself if they won't listen.) It's made me remember a lot of old songs. Honestly now, who do these make you think of—?

The cherry in the glass
Honey—honey—
Rose in the bud, the June air's warm
Waltz me around again Willy
Maple Leaf Rag
My cousin Caruso. (Poor old Caruso!)
[He had died that week, on August 2nd, 1921.]
Put on your old grey bonnet

Oh I'm crazy girls.
Good night. T

Seriously though I mean this house party stuff. I missed so many nice visits this spring, Gilk & Peg & Caroline and now you & Caroline, Sport. Please all of you, pause & consider! Come on. I'm game for 3 to 5 days within the last 2 weeks of September or the first 2 weeks of October. Of course there really isn't a thing to come here for except a roost to see each other.

I am touched to read, in the following letters, that five of the friends responded to this plea and made the trek to Pattenburg to sleep in army cots, leaving husbands and children

behind. Barky described their weekend together in glowing (and facetious) prose in her next letters. In a summer when she couldn't spend her usual weeks at the Jersey shore, couldn't take part in the gathering of her beloved college friends at reunion, and was reeling from the work and worry of those family illnesses, these women rallied to her. I love them for that.

About this time (early 1920s) Barky and her husband had the big house on Lippincott Avenue that they were now sharing with Barky's aunts reconfigured as a two-family house. They created another kitchen and added some bathrooms and had the house wired for electricity; this division into two units was to prove invaluable.

In another letter from the early 1920s Barky recounts a visit to Buck Hill, a Quaker retreat in the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania, where many Swarthmore friends had summer homes. She and her husband Dick and little son Walter traveled in the luxury of the sleek automobile owned by Frank and Priscilla Griffin (the beloved Round Robin friend whom Barky often addressed as "Perskill"). I'm sure it suited my sociable grandmother down to the ground to see so many friends for dinners and afternoon calls, although I would guess my more reserved grandfather enjoyed it less. Barky wrote:

...That Buck Hill party was the grandest thing, people. Perskill and Frank and Dick and Walter and I went up to Buck Hill for over Labor Day—in Griffins' new car—with Anne and Ralph and the little Bakers. We got there Saturday noon and had dinner that night with the Swarthmore bunch visiting Mabel and Alice. Kay Wolff, Martha Speakmans, Ive Darlington. On Sunday afternoon we had the fun of a call from Ruth Verlenden & her new fiancé, and went to Alice's for another Swarthmore dinner party. Those are merely the festivities, but the nicest times are those in between, which stick in your mind....

"The nicest times are those in between, which stick in your mind ...."

In the late '20s there was a yearlong gap in the writing of the Round Robin letters, and at one point Barky wrote maybe the "poor old bird" should be laid to rest. However, she and a few stalwarts did their best to revive it and ultimately succeeded. She was recovering from an unspecified surgery when she wrote the following letter, which highlights her devotion to the theater and her enjoyment of Philadelphia's other cultural pleasures. Her children were at that point 13, 11, and 9, and baby Betsy 3 years old.

February 29, 1928

Dear Robinites,

Anna Griscom and I have decided we can wait no longer for the poor old bird. Was he snowed up in the northwest—west or east? I spent four weeks in the hospital vainly awaiting him and... I have looked longingly. I'm sure it was no later than September when I wrote it last. The house party seems a thousand years ago. ...

I certainly never was meant to sit around in the house. I ought to be sewing like a house afire, but I'm just perverse enough not to want to stick a stitch. Last Saturday we took the children to see George Arliss in The Merchant of Venice. I always did love that play, and read it to them one night beforehand. The setting was the most gorgeous thing ... and the presentation the most satisfying to me since Irving—and I've seen Marlow and Sothern, Mansfield & Hampden since. The kids were thrilled

Next week Alec, Miss Exely and I are going to have dinner at the Art Alliance and see

the Road to Rome exhibit. Some dissipation for me after my early-to-bed months! They have an exhibit of oil paintings and water colors on there (the Art Alliance). I stopped in the other day but they were tame and uninteresting I thought, after the Academy. I loved the exhibition there this year...

Love to all
Therese

Peg, thy nice letter just came today.

Barky never says directly how my grandfather's business was impacted by the Depression, but by the late 1920s she was holding a job at the Riverton Library, where her Aunt Nan was librarian. In the following letter she rejoices that the Round Robin has been revived. The Barclays now have two kids in college, and this letter tells of the oldest, Walter, working three jobs to help with his college expenses.

October 7, 1934

You nice people—

How nice it was to hear from you all again. I surely did pore over the letters and only wished they were all there, from a completed bird. How to begin after so long a lapse, when the past year has been such a full and busy one! It's a help that many of us got caught up a bit at Anna's luncheon, and Sports'.

Florence I imagine many of us were thinking of thee on Howard's wedding day—and very lovingly....

When last I wrote Walter was torn between choosing Swarthmore and Middlebury as a college. Now he has been a year at Swarthmore, and Emily is a freshman at Middlebury in Vermont. It seems very far away. You who have lost them to boarding school even younger—can't imagine how lost we feel without them.

...Walter is scratching along to earn his way this year and has three jobs, all of his own procuring. I am so proud of him—in spite of mediocre marks, he carried last year a heavy schedule of work for his working scholarship and made his letter in track, for pole vaulting. He brought home awfully nice boys this last year....

I can't resist including her reference to the Lindbergh kidnapping trial:

January 4, 1935

...Today I saw several of 1911 Swarthmore people at one of our T.C.S. lunches. We have very good times together meeting every month and are very fond of each other in spite of being a variety of contrasting types. Emma's daughter's engagement shared popularity as a topic with the Hauptmann trial. I'm continually amazed to find many do not feel him guilty. I've felt so strongly that he was. Poor Mrs. Lindy. How awful to have to testify.

We've had some very interesting talks this fall by a Dr. Wolf, an authority on Sociology, who has met with our "conversation" group every two weeks, and given us the material he has been preparing for a lecture course. It's been great fun and starts discussion...

Well, I must cease and send all the love I can get into that last inch and a half! *[of paper]*

Nan, to think thee was in the hospital instead of in the islands when I looked at the camp on August 14th! I was driving home from a visit in Vermont with Dix and a friend of his. I do hope thee is ok by now— T.

May 24th, 1937

Dear Gals,

...Today was the Alpha Beta tea at Ellie's—and most of you need not be told how nice it was and what fun we had. Florence and Caroline better come East often so we can get together. I hated to tear myself away at the fatal hour of four.

...Walter is leaving college to get a job instead of going back for the 5th year he'd have needed to graduate. A mistake, no doubt, but he is "raring to go" & has a good opening. He wants so much to be self-supporting ... I felt very strange when he told me the clothes I bought him now would be the last I was to buy for him. I'd love to have him going back to graduate and would be willing enough, if I could, to subsidize a bit. He of course knows we can just barely swing the 3 younger educations.

Hurry the bird!

August 1938

Dear All,

Not much time to write as I start in about an hour to pick up Betsy from a summer tour—to Walter in Albany *[where he was working his first full time job]* and Emmy in Connecticut where she is teaching swimming and tennis at a camp in Lakeville. *[Emmy was fresh out of college.]*

It's such fun to be getting the bird more often, so that we know the summer doings of each—before Christmas! Our chief event so far was the trip to Middlebury for Emily's commencement. It was interesting to take in a whole weekend of another college's "doings" and we enjoyed every minute of it.... The commencement address was by Duffus of the New York Times staff, and I must say I got more out of his talk than of Mr. Einstein's at Swarthmore.

[She goes on to describe the beauty of the Vermont countryside in spring, contrasting it with thoughts of war and devastation going on in the world.]

Dix is beginning to behave like himself. He came home soon after the cast was off his leg, after 13 weeks, and he limped terribly. He is very thin and has no appetite. *[Dick Jr., referred to as Dicky or Dix, had broken his leg badly during a downhill ski race at the Dartmouth Winter Carnival. Her older son Walter pointed out to Barky that Dix was on track to win, if he had kept up his time until the bottom. She replied, "Well, he didn't get to the bottom."]*

Must away now—my time is up and it's hotter by the second. Love to you all, especially the grand babies. Whenever there's a house party I'll be at it!

Perhaps there was another letter in 1938, but if so it's missing. It would have told of the sudden death of Richard Barclay Sr., from heart attack, in November of that year. He was 53. I remember being told that he died in his sleep—that Barky woke up one morning to find him beside her, lifeless. Naturally the whole RR circle would have spread the word to one another by telephone, and would have sent individual sympathy letters. But, as with other significant deaths throughout the years, the RR letter I would most like to see, to hear more about it, is missing. I don't know if she felt she could not write at these times—although when did she not write about what was going on in her life?!—or that she in after-years intentionally destroyed these letters that would have revealed more about her most painful losses.

In any case, the next letter I have is from December 1939, more than a year later. There is reference in it to a packet of RR letters getting lost, which accounts for some of the gap. The letter tells of Walter and Emily both living at home and working new jobs, while Dick Jr. is working three jobs to be able to complete his senior year at Middlebury, all while learning to fly in anticipation of the war. Betsy was still in high school.

Barky refers to the fact that she and Betsy had moved in with Aunt Nan in order to rent out their larger side of the house for 6 months.—clearly a way to bring in some needed funds. Their tenants, friends of the family, had a little baby, and she says how much that baby "did for me" during that sad year—her only reference to the loss of her husband. Now England and Germany are at war.

December 1939

Dear Girls,

Just a week till Christmas and when has "Peace on Earth" seemed so far away. It all seems so hopeless, and those of our vintage all feel that we've been through this travail of spirit before. But I won't start a holiday letter on those lines....

Dix got home from college last night. Beside being President of DU chapter, manager of intermural sport, out for ski team and holding down three jobs to put himself through senior year, he has taken up flying in the course the government put in 10 New England colleges. He is crazy about it and has soloed already. Can talk about nothing else. How he gets time I know not for there is a lot of studying involved in the theory of flight, aeronautics, etc.

...I have taken *[a]* place at the Moorestown Friends School Library—just mornings, but I really love it and enjoy a school atmosphere and the kids. It's much more discipline than library work, and I <u>don't</u> like being on the enemy side of the fence—with the teachers!

I still go to Riverton Library nights, or did till I folded up a few weeks ago and finally went and had my tonsils out. I was so glad to have the bird to read while in bed....

Walter is home here, started over again in Philadelphia with the same firm (J.P. Kemper Co.) and besides working on his father's estate and supervising the bee business has made a good showing at his own job. I just thought when I read your letters of several boys starting off in their fathers' work, how different it's been for my boy, whacking his own way and taking care of all the loose ends for me too. He's so good and conscientious... Not many boys of 24 could have done a better job than he has this past long year, and I am so proud of him. Dix looked so brown and well compared to Walt last night. I knew he was thin and tired, but the comparison showed it up.

Dear love to all the babies and their grandmas. I had a rented grand baby last year when we rented our side of the house to Nancy Biddle Russell, who was my flower girl 25 years ago. The six months of little Joan just spoiled us (and her too, Nance says) but what the feel of that year old baby did for me was well worth the moving out, or doubling up. Happy New Year, in spite of all. T.

October 16, 1940

...Yesterday the boys signed up for the draft. They were quite gay about it last night, but Walter chafes at the idea of having to ask the local draft board's permission to leave

the United States. Not that he has the remotest chance, or desire to, but the fact of the restriction. We imagine that if drawn he would be exempted on the basis of agriculture—farm and bee business.... But for Dix there is no possible excuse not to serve. ...*[So he]* has enlisted in the Navy's pilot training program...

I can't say I am happy about this... Well I clutch at every minute that I have all 4 home, as now, for when Dicky goes I'll feel the final splitting up will start. I wished so for him to go on and study. He would have loved to get his Masters this year,...

March 16, 1941

...Walt is deferred for farm and bee business, praise be!

Young Dick is in Jacksonville and says they're "really in the groove." He'll like it next month when they get flying again. So far it's been three weeks' stiff drilling—8 classes a day. He likes it better as time goes on, at first his letters were non-committal. All his class but 5 were sent to Jacksonville—the huge new aviation base. The other 5 to Pensacola, no one knows why. Where did Sam Underhill go, Ethel?

There's something I've thought of saying before and Anna BG gives me an opening. At fifty, or whatever age, be just a little more considerate and loving all the time to your men, now. Some day you'll be glad maybe. I never thought I'd be left.

June 24, 1941

As the war loomed, and Dick Jr. was training as a navy pilot in Florida, Barky began a letter with very gloomy outlook. The United States had not yet entered the war and Barky thought we should not be involved in helping England with anything other than arms and equipment and "our prestige." Her class of 1911 reunion had evidently been cancelled, but she drew comfort from those members of the RR family she had managed to see in person.

...It was such fun to see Gertrude and Sport. I felt like a new woman—and so sawed off when you both pulled out and left me. I still feel terribly cheated about our 30th reunion.... I sat home here alone, the Sunday. I had hoped for people like Gilk, Gertrude and Caroline to be here, and "troubled deaf heaven with bootless cries, and looked upon myself and cursed my fate" *[quoting Shakespeare]*. Someday perhaps we will get together for a seashore house party again, but I doubt it. I did have a perfect Alumnae Day reunion with Margaret, hearing all her news, and a perfect catching upping with Gilk at Priscilla's.

...I downright hope Russia and Germany swallow themselves. But I fear Hitler will go through the Reds like cheese. Where can he get so many German soldiers, anyway? Let's

all will the Balkan states to do some revolting about now—poor souls, I guess they can't.

My boy gets his wings the middle of August—2 months sooner than the training was supposed to last. They surely have crammed them through, and he wrote that when they see new boys arrive they pity the poor devils for all they'll have to go through. He loves the flying and thinks the training has been wonderful, but not the regimentation. Have I told before that he and his room-mate get up at 4:30 so they won't have to get up at 5?

I'm sitting on our porch, Nan's end, and glaring at the cherries still on the tree. I have picked, sunned, jellied and jammed cherries, and you'd never think one had been picked. I'm glad they're rotting for my hands will never come white if I go on, and I feel so wasteful not to use them...

T.

The war comes ever nearer, as Dick Jr. prepares to go overseas as one of eight fighter pilots aboard a heavy cruiser. Meanwhile, her older son is chafing at not being in uniform.

Sunday Oct 5, 1941

Dear Gals,

What an exciting day was yesterday for us. Dicky got home from Jacksonville at long last! He has been in the Naval Hospital there for a month with typhus fever!

I wrote in my last letter that he'd "get his commission in the middle of August" and instead it was on Oct. 3rd. They had bad flying weather for several weeks, and then he finished up—the last two days (including catapult practice) with fever. He went to the hospital Saturday before being commissioned. Such a sick and homesick boy! You can imagine how "fit to be tied" I was... He feels ok now but is so thin—lost about 16 pounds and is a funny color, having been very tan and now is a sickly, sallow color.

Now he has three weeks leave and I hope I can feed him up... He's to report at Newport and be sent by first possible means to his ship, wherever it is (he doesn't know) and be one of 8 aviators on board a heavy cruiser. Two men to each plane. They carry 4 scout planes. They are catapulted off, and picked up from the water by derrick. Sounds chancy to me.

...

We have all examined the $300 worth of uniforms and $42 worth of sword (only worn for dress parade) which he had to buy before he got his Ensign salary. On ship you pay for room and mess, so you can see where the pay goes that sounds so tempting. He says, though, that he's learned flying as it's taught nowhere else.

Well you can see from all this, what my heart and mind have been upon...

January 25th '42

Taking her daughter, Betsy, to Swarthmore for an entrance interview, Barky turned elegiac about her own college days there, where she and her Round Robin friends had been students together.

I spent the time while waiting... in the old English room, thinking of the people who had taught me there. Dr. Lowes, scholarly and inspiring. Dr. Goddard, human and enthusiastic, scrambling his papers. Miss Batchelder with yellow jonquils in spring, (Gilk, remember writing themes, the Spirits of Spring written to her?), gentle and imaginative.

And Miss Lape—meticulous and witty, cutting one's thoughts free from fuzziness and sentimentality. I was very grateful to them all and the kindly fate that let me be educated where and when I was...

June 7th, 1942

Dear All,

It's a hot Sunday evening and I'm writing on the porch. Already commencement at College seems long past but the fun of every minute is clearly in my mind. It was good to see Beulah among us—I can't remember when I've seen her last—and Margaret. Nine is a large number to gather of our 13, and the trouble involved for Ellie in correspondence was certainly appreciated, for our enjoyment was incalculable (can't spell it!).

Barky often attended commencement at Swarthmore, and this year nine of the Round Robin circle had gathered for the event, with RR member Ellie Simons Bassett, who lived near the college, arranging to entertain them for dinner at her house. Clearly this visit with her old friends was balm in the midst of troubled times.

Barky reports that her youngest, Betsy, has been accepted at Swarthmore. She says they will double up and rent out half of the house again if they can, which will help pay for Betsy's college. Her own job as school librarian at Moorestown Friends' is in jeopardy because of gas shortages. The ever-present concern for her son Dick continues, and now there is the prospect that her son Walter will enlist.

We don't know where Dick is now—somewhere across the Atlantic on convoy duty between Iceland, Norway and Russia we surmise. His letters take weeks to come and his last said he'd had no mail since he left March 1st!

Walter is terribly restless and talks of enlisting. I'm petrified for fear he will. Of course he may not be deferred indefinitely and he would hate to be just drafted if, by lining things up now, he could get something he likes. <u>What</u> would I do without him?! I hope the honey season and the peach crop keep him too occupied to go on with this. We may be picking peaches in August and September—help is of course plenty scarce.

In December 1942, Barky sends a letter packed with news, reflecting the intense ups and downs of life lived in the midst of war.

December 14, 1942

Dear All—

I've so much to say. I'll waive the Japanese question and get down to brass tacks! I shall attempt to fill in a few dates that stand out during the fall I <u>thought</u> would be so calm and flat, with Bets away.

<u>September 1st</u>—I got home from New Hampshire and was persuaded by Bets during a 90 minute ride on a 5th Avenue bus that she should go to Middlebury instead of Swarthmore, after a family hish hash. She left four days later. I might say that her sister and brothers are contributing nearly half the money necessary for this. I think they are swell people.

<u>September 10th</u>—Dick, whom we thought in Iceland for the duration, called up. Said he was on his way home and wanted to get married, as he had two weeks. Next day he gave his gal her ring, but her father felt they ought to wait, as they couldn't be together.

September 13th—Engagement of Lt. Junior Grade R. M. Barclay announced to Patricia Lundrigan. We are all very fond of her. Dick met her about 18 months ago at Middlebury Carnival. Neither of them have seen, or looked at, another girl or boy since. She's tall, thin, lovely skin, wonderful sense of humor, and a lovely spirit. She fits into our four just wonderfully. She's only 20 and Dick 23, but seems older. He left—for somewhere—September 23.

September 29th—Walter learned he would not be deferred again for collateral dependents.

October 8th—Dick left for Africa, though of course they didn't know the destination. He's been with convoys from Iceland to England, Ireland, Scotland, and three times to Russia—a horrible trip where many more cargo ships are lost than we're ever told. The German planes shadow them always, knowing somehow where they're bound, even when convoys are sailing under sealed orders—... This time convoyed to Africa, where he flew over Casablanca. Catapulted off in the hour before dawn the day of the attack, and found all the maps accurate to the closest details. Well—he wasn't shot down, though 3 out of the 12 planes were. The crew of one were rescued. Said he got some gun fire on his tail feathers....

November 20th—Suddenly he called Pat here in U.S. Said he had another leave and they'd get married. He came up to us for dinner with Pat and said "Wednesday is the day" and so it was. He had the senior aviator's car for his honey moon. The aviators said they wouldn't let him back on the ship if he didn't get married!

November 23th—Walter received his Washington appointment.

November 25th—nice simple dignified wedding, only about 20 there, in the Presbyterian Church in Germantown. Walter was best man and Em maid of honor. Bets, by sitting up all night in the Rutland train station, got home for the wedding. The girls wore wool dresses and silly little hats and looked sweet. Pat's grandmother, who brought her up, is lovely. We had a nice informal reception in their apartment and then Dick and Patty departed for New York City looking too utterly happy....

November 27—Dick and Pat drove to Boston to report. The only reason they were not in that awful place—Cocoanut Grove—is that they were detained at Navy headquarters. Duncan Elliot, who loaned Dick the car, his wife and several others of Dick's friends from the ship were inside and died. *[The Cocoanut Grove fire was an infamous tragedy. A fire in a popular Boston nightclub trapped people inside and many died, including many servicemen on leave.]* Dick and Patty were to join them there and arrived with the fire engines. We've given thanks for this, as you may believe. To think of coming through battles and back, to die in that holocaust.

When reports came through on the radio Sunday morning, Walter said it might just be the place they'd go—good orchestra, etc. Then at 5 P.M. we got a telegram saying "We're ok—Pat & Dick" but in between——!! Pat wrote me Monday, while Dick had gone to meet Colonel Elliott, Duncan's father. Poor kids, they were in all the horror of

the outside. But we can only think, they were safe.

December 5—Walter left for Washington for the duration. He's in Office of Strategic Services *[the OSS was fore-runner of the CIA]*. He says it's interesting as can be—and hard. He's studying like the dickens. He had just one week to wind up his affairs.

December 10—letter written from Dick said he was sorry not to see Pat again (they'd left Monday the 7th). Letter from Pat still in Boston, said 3 wives had stayed on hoping the aviators could fly back for a weekend. They'd gotten a Christmas tree and presents together, but were disappointed.

The story of this wedding and several other precious visits from Dick Jr. are painful for me to transcribe, knowing what is to come. He was killed on D-Day, June 6, 1944, flying reconnaissance into France for invading British forces. He was 25. He is buried in the American cemetery in Normandy. There is no surviving letter in my possession telling about the receipt of this news. At first, he was reported "missing"—so they hoped he would turn up, as he had so many times before after daredevil scrapes. However, in the following excerpts from her 1945 and 1946 letters Barky contends with the reality of his loss.

March 9, 1945

...I suppose I should tell you that Dick was recommended for the flying medal and Distinguished Flying Cross and Purple Heart. So far Pat has only received the DFC, with a very fine citation. I'm glad she has it for it means something to her. It doesn't to me I'm afraid.

Walter has read the records that came to Washington eventually from London, and Pat Kinsey, who signs himself to me "Your additional son," went to the RAF headquarters in London and went through them there. Both say we can have no more hope. Patty says "I'll be one of those people I've never had any use for, that hope after there is no hope."

September 1945

....The girls got home last week and from our calm meals for two (Nan and me) the table had to stretch suddenly to 16 on Sunday and the beds all filled miraculously and a surge of young life took over (what isn't rented of) the house.

Sunday we had *[in addition to Emily, Betsy, and Patty]* 3 marines, 1 navy flier, 1 army flier, 1 artillery captain, 1 infantry lieutenant, Walter from OSS in Washington, and Steve Cary conscientious objector....

Walter is on furlough and is waiting to hear whether they will be discharged directly with the folding up of OSS or whether the army can reassign them to army of occupation! He says he can easily be the last man out of the army, having no points for overseas duty.... Now is the time we have to believe Dicky won't be coming home, a final realization.

Although my grandmother was sparing of words about it, both in the Round Robin letters and in life, Dick's loss was deeply felt and was implied forever after— both in her letters and in the family.

Pat Barclay, Dick's widow, stayed close. For 3 years she and Barky's daughters Emily and Betsy were inseparable. They set up a decorating studio in Philadelphia, "Barclay, Barclay and Barclay"—their specialty was painting Pennsylvania Dutch designs on cottage furniture (it was a thing, in the late' 40s, trust me.) Then they ran a shop on Martha's Vineyard, a branch of the Country Store in Concord, Massachusetts. They were hired to model sports clothing for the store's catalogue—all three were beautiful, though Barky doesn't ever mention it (against her code to brag)—then they spent the summers of '45 and '46 living together on the Vineyard. When Barky wrote "my girls" in the Round Robin, it now meant the three of them.

July 18, 1946

Dear Girls,

This was a welcome letter. I kind of hate to let it go.

...we had an excellent time at our 1911 35th! reunion dinner. Had good speeches—Joe especially...

Margaret went home with me and we went to the shore the next morning for a week. We talked and talked but not enough! Walter drove her home to Mount Holly and said afterward—"Mother she's a wonderful person!" As if I had to be told!

...I heartily approve of a house party, *[responding to a suggestion in one of the letters]* preferably with some sea and sand, but emphatically with all these Robin writers.

My three girls are all at Edgartown again having another wonderful summer. If my aunt is as well as now I plan to drive her up to see them in my August vacation.

Love n kisses
T.S.B.

After the war my grandmother was able to buy property at the New Jersey seashore and to build a holiday cottage which became the center of family gatherings for many years. Her refrain of "let's have a house party at the seashore" could now be backed up with real hospitality.

The women of the Round Robin circle continued their community. Forty years into their Round Robin letters Barky wrote the following excerpt after hearing of the death of one of the husbands.

June 29th 1951

Dear Girls,

This news about Oscar has, as Sport says, taken the heart out of writing the Round Robin. I can't think of Nan and Oscar apart, and how tragic that he never was to live in the new Virginia home after all the happy planning and working. I think of thee Nan as one undaunted, but Ellie and I know she's in for a lonely business. *[My grandmother and her friend Ellie were the only other widows at that point.]* Anna B.G.E phoned Sara, Nan's sister, so at last we found that Nan had gotten to Canada, and that Oscar knew her and Irwin....

I've written this much, Nan, hoping to save thee a little, and I hope I have it correct. Also if thee doesn't feel to write at all it will give the faraways an idea what happened. We are almost like family though, so I hope thee will tell us thy plans if any are yet possible.

In March 1953, Barky describes several trips to Boston, where her daughter Betsy's first


JANUARY 31, 1954 THE SUNDAY BULLETIN

Circulating Letter Keeps Former Swarthmore S

robin letter has kept some members of the freshman class of 1911 at Swarthmore College in cl

child, Peter, was born, and where she stayed overnight with her dear Gilk, Round Robin member who lived in Cambridge. Then she recounts a hilarious weekend at Chatham, New Jersey, where she and a friend took care of her daughter Emily's 1-year-old twin boys. After details about all the babies (she now had eight grandchildren, of which I was one), she returns to a familiar theme—inviting all the Round Robin friends to join her at the Jersey Shore. She was still running the Riverton Library.

I fully deserved to be fired from my job after all these alarms and excursions, but was stunned after the Annual Meeting to get a raise instead. Not so much, but welcome…

Priscilla, I'm all for a reunion if still extant in '55. I'm hoping to entice Peg, Ethel and Nan to my cottage in June, and all you in Philadelphia vicinity can come pile in upon us. Anna B.G and Priscilla know the way and have been brave enough to trip it before.

Love to each and every.

T.

Although she suffered grievous losses, my grandmother found joy again in her later life. She often traveled to visit the women of her precious Round Robin circle, and she was a beloved and devoted grandmother to the eventual total of 13 grandchildren. After 24 years of widowhood she married again, in 1961, when she was 72. With her second husband, she enjoyed 20 years of very happy companionship. She lived to be 100, and died deeply mourned. If she is in heaven, I believe it looks a lot like the Jersey shore (circa 1920), and is populated by a house party of her beloved friends.

Epilogue

The foregoing article told something about Lt. Richard M. Barclay, a lost World War II aviator, the uncle I never met. Reading the letters about him, with their tension, their desperate relief each time he survived, and their terrible blankness when he was lost, was wrenching for me. In putting together this article I came to realize forcefully how much unnamed grief hovered over our extended family. Barky also outlived her older son Walter, a charming and beloved father of four, who died in 1963 in his 40s.

There was a pattern for my grandmother. Either she did not/ could not write RR letters about the biggest losses in her life—her mother's death, her husband's death, the news that her son was missing in action after D-Day. Or else at some point she took those letters—the ones I would most like to see—out of the pile, not wanting to expose her private pain for others to read. I think she was aware that her RR letters were a legacy she would leave behind, and her sense of privacy, of decorum, led her to destroy them.

My uncle's widow, Pat Barclay, married again in 1948. She moved away, had five children, and almost never saw Barky again. In fact, I never met her, although I heard stories from my mother about those summers on the Vineyard. Pat sent Christmas cards but resisted attempts for visits. I can only think it was too painful for her. Finally, in the mid-1970s, Barky and her daughter Emily (my mother) traveled to her town unannounced and dropped in. The three had an emotional reunion, during which Pat took Barky aside and told her, "I haven't forgotten a single thing. Not one thing." Barky was deeply touched. "She didn't have to tell me that," she said later. Pat lived into her 90s. After she died one of her daughters got in touch with my Aunt Betsy. We learned from this daughter that the death of Dick Barclay had been a powerful shadow in the life of their family as well.

Barky's own life story, however, did not end in tragedy. At age 72 she married her old friend Joe Willits, another member of the Swarthmore class of 1911, whose wife had died. Joe was a charming and humorous man, an economics professor who became dean of the Wharton School at Penn and later served on the board of the Rockefeller Foundation. Their marriage was an inspiration—one of the truly happy unions I ever saw up close. They were a magnet for us grandchildren; we loved them both, and as young adults saw them often. They had 18 happy years together. My own late marriage in some sense honored hers. In that, as well as in shaping her letters into this article, I feel my ongoing connection to her.

Friendship à Deux

Wendy Satin Rapaport

1.Daylight Friendship

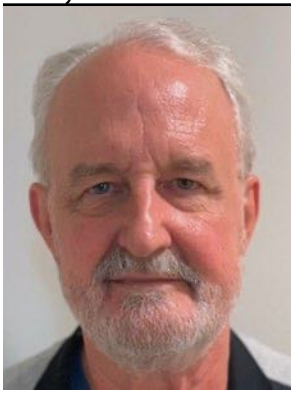
You are all smiles.
I am perfect
in your reflection.
Satisfying
to you and me.
We bask.
So special.
The sun is shining
on our *us*.

2. Nighttime Friendship

I wonder what you meant by that
a gnawing
not to forgive.
You were there.
My mother died.
I was imperfect too—
the moonlight back,
still shining
on our *us*.

Convergence by Janet Svirsky

Cliff Ayers



Cliff Ayers, PhD
Washington, DC
ckapsych@aol.com

Lesson Learned

Following an undergraduate degree from Georgetown University, I pursued a doctorate in clinical psychology and moved to Falls Church, VA, with my girlfriend. As fate would have it, my new neighbors were two other Georgetown graduates, Bill and Scott. As fellow Hoyas we had an immediate connection. Over the following years, Scott and I became close friends and remained so through the length of my relationship with my girlfriend and Scott's marriage to his wife and the birth of his two daughters. Although Scott traveled frequently for his work in foreign trade, we spent considerable time together and he became my best friend. We shared everything about our lives, and I came to trust him implicitly.

The trading company Scott worked for was often cash-strapped, so it offered exorbitant interest rates for short term bridge loans, and I took advantage of the opportunity to loan them money for profit. After all, my friend was on the inside, so what could go wrong? At that time, Scott was negotiating an increasing number of deals in Slovenia, and he began to tell me about his infatuation with a young woman there. I disapproved, but Scott's life in Slovenia was really none of my business. We had our own special bond of trust. Scott decided the time had come to start his own business and began to gather financing. I decided to risk some of my own savings in hopes of a big payoff. To be on the safe side, however, I required that the funds be put in an escrow account that would require my signature to be released.

Then my world exploded. Scott announced that he would leave his wife and children, and his Slovenian girlfriend would be coming to the States. I was horrified. I had never imagined it would go so far. I asked about his plans for his own company and discovered he had never deposited the money in an escrow account after all. He had spent it all on his affair. At first, I was in disbelief that he could have done such a thing to me. I immediately ended the friendship. Only after further reflection did I realize Scott's narcissistic actions were mirrored in my own narcissistic belief that while he was cheating others, he would never cheat *me*.

Ronda M. Bostick

Ronda M. Bostick, LMHC
Daytona Beach, Florida
flourishccfl@gmail.com

Sisterhood and Friendship Through Fortitude

I have wanted to be a member of Delta Sigma Theta since I was a little girl, when many of the women in that sorority influenced and inspired me. I belonged to one of their youth outreach groups, Delta Teen Lift, from fifth grade until I graduated from high school. Part of my selection of a college hinged on whether there was a Delta chapter on campus. There was, and 18 years ago, when inducted, I joined 350,000 sorors in our membership, among them some of my closest friends and confidants. From outside you could never understand. From the inside you could never explain.

Black Greek letter organizations are unique in the expectation of a committed lifetime of service and community uplift. Of particular importance to me is Delta's public motto, "Intelligence is the torch of wisdom," with its emphasis on education as well as service. Through community education and service I have had many unique opportunities for belonging and friendship. As postgraduate co-advisors for the collegiate chapter at Bethune-Cookman University, I got close to Carla and Valdrena. As we mentored college-aged members by meeting with them, counseling them through their activities, and participating with them in service, Carla, Valdrena, and I spent so much time together that we became like family: We watch one another's houses, do barbecues, baby showers, beach days, and brunches together as though we are family.

Many opportunities for participation, personal growth, and fun are benefits of belonging to Delta. In one sister event, I took a graduation trip to Dubai; in another I was offered a retreat focused on spiritual, mental, and financial health. In addition to service, we Deltas are known for our Step Shows, exhibitions and contests of African American Dance. Getting those step moves perfect involves shared frustration and laughter. We are also known for our long sister chats about life—dating, men, family, and work. Some of the best moments of my life have been spent with Deltas.

Lady Fortitude is an official symbol of Delta Sigma Theta and is embodied in a statue at Howard University, where the organization was founded. Her symbol represents strength, courage, hope, wisdom, beauty, and femininity as depicted by the 22 founders of the sorority. When questioning whether I could succeed in graduate school or pass the licensing exam, Lady Fortitude's ideals offered me strength. Even recently, when a difficult client challenged my expertise, causing me to wonder, "Can I be the therapist this client needs?" I was able to reach back toward the client and forward with courage, both from and with the support of Lady Fortitude and my Delta experiences. ▼

Dinner with Soho

Mendie Cohn

Mendie Cohn, PhD
Brooklyn, New York
nmcohn@earthlink.net

Television ads for cruise companies are very enticing, and being very seducible, I booked a river cruise several years ago. When I was younger, I was so shy that I could not even make phone calls to strangers let alone talk to them in person. But as I have aged, I've become quite a magpie, and I talk to whoever will listen.

When you call a company to book a cruise, you reach one of their travel planners who then makes the sale and all of the travel arrangements. Included in the arrangements are a lot of personal details, such as occupations, birthdates, food restrictions, and preexisting medical conditions. Soho, the young woman who was booking our cruise, and I got to talking and spent 2 hours on the phone gabbing.

The executive offices of the cruise company that I booked with are located in a suburb of Los Angeles. Because I am a native of LA, I go home at least once a year to visit family and friends. I had a trip scheduled for a few weeks after talking to Soho, and we planned to meet for dinner while I was in LA. We met again the following year when I made my annual visit.

Soho is in her early 30s, almost 40 years younger than I. Our age difference hasn't prevented us from getting close. Once we get together, whether in person or over the phone, we talk and talk and talk. We have gotten to know each other pretty well (after all, she already knew my husband's and my occupations, birthdays, food sensitivities, and medical histories), and we thoroughly enjoy one another's company. We remember each other on birthdays and holidays and catch up either on the phone or via email several times a year. It has been wonderful and expanding for me having a friend who is so much younger but who feels like a peer. I look forward to the end of the pandemic so that I can once again make my annual trip to LA and have dinner with Soho. ▼

David Doane

David Doane, PhD
Perrysburg, Ohio
dsdoane@hotmail.com

Friendly, but Not Friends

There are patients with whom I am very friendly. There are patients with whom I am only a little friendly. There are no patients with whom I am friends. Being friendly and being friends are different. A friend is someone with whom I am free to be myself. With a friend I have no job to do, I'm not in charge, and I'm not the control in the situation. I speak freely and don't expect what I say or do to be therapy or therapized. As therapist, I may tell a patient I feel friendly with them, I may tell him or her I can imagine us being friends, or I may say I don't feel friendly with them—each statement being true and presented as grist for the therapy. ▼

Bruce Ellman

Bruce Ellman, PsyD
Beverly Hills, California
drbruceellman@gmail.com

Bobbie

Each week sitting in the waiting room, I would sneak a peek as she exited my therapist's office. She was slender, tall, and raven-haired with a breezy deposition. We glanced at each other, sharing quick, fleeting smiles. I wondered to myself: I know her, but how? Who is she? And why am I overcome with such a warm feeling of familiarity?

This went on for months until we bumped into each other at a mutual friend's celebration. Our chance encounter took us both by surprise and after a moment of adjustment, we fell into fond recognition. Though we shared this particular friend, we soon realized this was our first real meeting. She bore a striking resemblance to a woman I barely knew from synagogue, but Bobbie and I had never met outside of our therapist's waiting room until this party.

That fortuitous encounter nearly 20 years ago paved the way for Bobbie's presence in my life. We've shared meals and hikes with our spouses, joint clinical consultation (with the therapist whose waiting room birthed our friendship), milestone birthdays and family deaths, B'nai Mitzvah and other lifecycle moments, referrals, and summer camp (her son was my son's counselor). Bobbie even attended an American Academy of Psychotherapists Institute & Conference!

Seven years ago, we formed a leaderless peer group in the style of the Academy. Greater intimacy has brought more challenge. With Bobbie, I bump into a familiar, painful dilemma of getting close to a woman who both cares for and hurts me. Her

emotional presence, skill, and warmth steers this sticky situation into an opportunity for mutual expansion and growth.

So much happens inside the therapist's office...who knew what riches the waiting room offered?

My New Best Friend

Jonathan Farber

Jonathan Farber, PhD
Chapel Hill, North Carolina
Jonathan.farber@gmail.com

When my wife first bought the electric tea kettle, I was not interested. I'm always hungry, and I never could see the point to a beverage with no calories. Tea and coffee are just bitter and watery: Plain water itself tasted better to me. When a waiter or friend offered tea and coffee at the end of a meal, I always declined. I have a patient from England who began serving himself tea from my waiting room. "I'd stopped drinking tea 20 years ago," he said, "but it really is a lovely thing to do." I nodded as if I understood, but I was faking it. I always imagined that as I grew older, I would learn to slow down and savor experiences, that my focus in time and space would narrow. I'd tend my own backyard instead of rushing off to national parks; I'd spend the afternoon preparing dinner instead of going to three grocery stores and the farmer's market, only to order takeout anyway. For years, I kept getting older and not changing.

Something novel is happening with the tea kettle, though. When my wife made her tea, the digital readout appealed to my inner technogeek: Watching the temperature climb one number at a time, from 66 to 212, was slightly hypnotic. I remembered drinking mint tea in Israel where my elderly host, a refugee from Morocco, casually plucked leaves from his garden and placed them directly into the teacup. When I found some forgotten bags of mint tea in the back of our pantry, I began a progressively more interesting, more sensual ritual of tea preparation which became an experience in itself. The kettle has a long S-shaped spout, and if the kettle is tipped too far, some water sloshes from the lid onto the counter. So it must be tipped only slightly, letting the water course in a smooth and steady stream through the spout, through the air, and into the cup. Mesmerizing wisps of steam ascend slowly from the cup, as the water gradually darkens. I've been learning exactly how long to let the bag steep for a taste that is strong but not bitter. Warming my hands and fingers on the sides of the mug is the next stage of my ritual, and I've learned the feel of the mug that tells me the tea is cool enough to sip. Finally I feel the thin trickle of intense heat from my mouth down my throat. This ritual is familiar to millions around the globe, but to me it is an entirely new world. I sink more deeply into my chair with each sip, and the warmth that spreads from my shoulders, down my back, and through my entire body tells me that I'm relaxing and slowing down right now. Who knew I would join with so many others?

Lisa Kays

Lisa Kays, LICSW
Washington, DC
lisa@lisakays.com

Don't Fly Away, Friend

In the late summer and fall of 2001, I completed my 3-year tour in the Peace Corps in Benin, flew home, experienced 9/11 from my mother's home in Colorado, then hospitalized my mother for a severe depressive episode, moved us both back to our hometown of Kansas City, hopped a plane for Washington, DC (I had a couch to stay on), and within a few weeks had landed my first job at a non-profit focused on international conflict resolution. As you can imagine, I was not in the most grounded, calm, or connected state.

At that job, I met Jenin. Jenin was a few years older than me. She would insist that I leave my desk and go on walks with her, because Americans work too hard. On these walks, I learned about her upbringing as a Palestinian-American in Palestine with her three sisters, surviving bombings and war, and her love and devotion to olive trees (and oil) and fresh spices, like sumac. I still have a jar of zaatar and one of sumac that she gifted me fresh from Palestine when a relative sent it to her that I use on recipes she taught me. I make these when I'm missing her.

She convinced me to complete the offer for a master's in journalism I was about to reject and taught me to look at American culture differently. She and two of her sisters, who lived locally, would invite me for weekends so I wasn't alone ("Why would anyone want to be alone as much as you Americans?") and we would breakfast on scrambled eggs with zaatar and pita bread and olive oil. They laughed heartily at my refusal to try their homemade yogurt. (You cannot make yogurt in your house! That is not to be trusted!) They taught me to curse in Arabic and then laughed maniacally when I did it, casually, having no idea how bad what I was saying sounded.

Jenin humored my limited palate ("Hamburgers, again?!?!") and indulged my preferences for American cuisine over her preference for Thai or Indian. She also taught me the beauty, generosity, and warmth of picking up the check and letting it be picked up. ("It's so American and isolated to pay separately. Why not pick it up? It *feels* so much nicer.") When I ran a marathon, she showed up to watch, even though complaining before mercilessly, "But what is my role? I just stand there and cheer, and you run by for two seconds? This makes no sense!" When my mother visited and our relationship was tense, Jenin was the one who insisted, "No, she is traveling, you have to make it special!" and taught me to make a nice salmon dish and find places to take her.

Jenin was my first, but not last, sister-friend. She expanded my view of myself, my culture, my relationships, of how to be loving and to be cared for by a big sister, which previously I had only been. I adored being under her wing, under anyone's wing, for the first time. When Jenin married her long-time boyfriend and moved to Italy, I thought I was fine. I had left many friends before, to go to college, to leave college, to leave Benin. She stayed with me for a few days before her flight, after her apartment was packed up, and as I was running from work to therapy and back to work, she texted me. I had locked the gate when I left and not left a key, thereby locking her in my apartment on the day she was supposed to fly away. ▼

The Magical Rope

Hilla Keren

Hilla Keren, MSW, RSW
Toronto, Ontario
hilla.keren@gmail.com

Background:

Two 6-year-old girls who grew up in a kibbutz had never been separated from each other since birth (on this kibbutz, the children lived together until adulthood). Entering school meant that for the first time these children met students and teachers from outside their community. This specific community consisted mostly of Holocaust survivors and World War II refugees, so very few families had surviving grandparents or extended family. The young adults who founded the kibbutz had little time and few resources to attend to emotional or psychological needs and concerns, so these two girls had to figure out how to cope with separation anxiety on their own.

First grade, between two friends (age 6 or 7):

L: "I must go home before my parents yell at me."
H: "No! You can't leave now in the middle of the game!"
L: "Here, take this rope (imaginary). This is how it will work: When you miss me pull it closer; when you need to play with other kids let it loose."

At the opening of the new school year we used this rope quite often. If we really missed each other, we pulled it tight; if we needed some space, we let it go loose. At times, our rope was able to stretch across the Mediterranean Sea. We spent hours discussing the length of this rope, its magical power, and who would have control of it while there was a dispute about anything — the need to be with other kids or demands from our parents.

L: "Have you been feeling the rope? I saw you from far, and I squeezed it. No one saw it right?"
H: "No! No one other than us can see it or feel it. And I felt the rope and pulled it tighter."
L: "I felt your pull on the rope."

No one can really see it or feel it, but we do. We always do!

And 60 years later the rope is still there, both strong and flexible.

I live in Canada; she lives in Israel. She is a CEO of a million-dollar industrial company; I am a psychotherapist. We meet once every 2 years, and we hardly ever communicate in between visits. When I come to visit my family (she lives in the same community that they do), we make sure we have our uninterrupted few hours together. No husbands or siblings invited, not even grandchildren, except babies if babysitting is necessary. There are no moments of awkwardness or introduction, no need to explain details about things that occurred during the gap in time. One of us just begins the conversation with something challenging from our work or relationships, and then other picks up. Together, we solve our problems, consult, laugh, cry, and clarify.

Psychotherapy:

Whether working with adults or with children, I find myself anticipating and listening for that remarkable moment when a client draws from their own inner natural wisdom. It's always a unique moment of self-determination and clarity known only to them and often expresses their creativity and resourcefulness. Even when I am hearing the most painful personal stories of injustice, hurt, or abuse, I am making space for them to discover their own magic rope. ▼

Matthew Burgess Leary

Matthew Burgess Leary, PhD
Bethesda, Maryland
drleary@matthewleary.com

My "Grandfather," My Friend

I first became interested in him when I started to explore my American Academy of Psychotherapists (AAP) lineage. You see, he's my AAP grandfather: the person who introduced the person who introduced me to AAP. After meeting and talking a little bit, we found that we shared an interest in cheap hotels that cost under $80 per night that we could split two (or three) ways for the conferences, rather than staying in the conference hotel for over $200 per night. In rooming together, and often driving to and from conference meetings together, we started to forge the bond of our friendship. I particularly remember the feel of curious and supportive conversations we would have after a day of workshops, continuing to process what was stirred up in us.

But as much as we can get intimate at AAP and get to know something of each other's innermost thoughts and character, I like to know more about people's context. I like to know about who's in their world and how they relate to the key figures in their life. And I like the sense of consistency and presence that comes in a more nuanced way when I have regular contact with someone. My friend and I developed just that, somewhat as a natural growth of our interest in each other, somewhat out of intention and commitment to get to know each other better, and somewhat, at first, out of the serendipity of having overlapping times that we were commuting for several hours from work to home. It was in these weekly phone calls that we forged a stronger bond and got to know more deeply about the people in each other's worlds. We supported each other through various struggles each of us have had with our wives and showed interest in the nuances, struggles, and joys of parenting our children. He is one of the people I can count on to really recognize how hard it has been for me and my whole family to struggle with my wife's and children's long-term, debilitating chronic illnesses.

While it may seem small in the grand scheme of things, one of the losses of 2020 for me has been this consistent contact with my friend. Since he no longer travels due to COVID and has more demands at home, our contact has been far less frequent this year. I miss him. ▼

Honoring the Mysteries of Connection

Carole Light

Carole Light, PhD
Scaly Mountain,
North Carolina
carolelight@hotmail.com

I treasure my friends, although many of them are scattered across the country. My husband, Alex, was my best friend for the 28 years he was in my life. Six years before he died, we moved from Atlanta to the North Carolina mountains, an isolated place of great natural beauty. We nurtured old friendships but didn't build a new local network.

About 3 months after his death, I asked the Universe (others might call it praying) for a local best friend. I asked when blowing out birthday candles, when falling asleep, when seeing a hawk, and at any other mystical moment.

On Earth Day, 4 months after Alex died, I ventured out on my first group hike up a nearby mountain. A former patient of mine was also in the hiking group. She came up to me to say hello and said she wanted to introduce me to someone who was also on the hike. This introduction was to a woman who had just moved to our mountain town. Her husband had died 3 months before Alex. She was a hospice social worker (I trained hospice volunteers), had lived in DC most of her adult life and knew several people I knew there, and had been in therapy with like-minded therapists. We talked and talked, finding shared interests and parallel life experiences.

Thus began a lovely connection, a deep friendship that has continued, for 14 years.

Finding this friend seems to have been a response to my deep soul request, albeit from an agnostic who didn't believe in the power of prayer. I think of this to help remind myself again and again to balance my rational skeptical self with an appreciation for mystery and the majesty of the unknown. ▼

Self-Centered

Alan Marcus

Alan Marcus, PhD
Bethesda, Maryland
dralanmarcus@gmail.com

I lent him several hundred dollars when he was unemployed and needed a place to stay. He was living in a hotel. He had serious health problems.

Years passed and he finally paid me back. He continued to have health problems including a serious heart condition. He is an entertainer and did a one man show. I was hosting a conference and thought to myself, I could ask him to be the entertainment for the conference. He could make some money, and it would be a draw to the conference. I emailed him with the idea. He responded by saying I was self-centered and that I had nerve to reach out to him and suggest that he be the entertainment for a conference I was hosting. I thought I was creating an opportunity for him to make some money. He didn't see it that way. He said I was self-centered and ended our friendship. We have not spoken in 3 years. ▼

Jacob Megdell

Jacob Megdell, PhD
Petrolia, Ontario
jacob.megdell@gmail.com

To Jim Guinan

I met Jim Guinan in the Fall of 1969, during the start of my senior year at the University of Michigan. With a draft lottery number of 43, I knew that after graduation the following April I was very likely headed for Vietnam. I was terrified. A friend who ran encounter groups in which I often participated told me of a psychotherapist who lived in Bowling Green, Ohio, a 90- mile drive from Ann Arbor. She said he was a good friend of the first therapist I had seen previously at the University Psychology Counseling Center, when I was having a very difficult time adjusting to university life. So I called Jim for an appointment, and one evening I drove the 90 miles to Bowling Green to meet him.

Jim was on the staff of Bowling Green University's Counseling Center, and he also had an office he had constructed in his garage. One of his first statements was that he had the right to lie to me. Minutes later he invited me to arm wrestle, which led to us throwing each other around the room in a full-blown wrestling match. As we stopped wrestling, Jim said to me, "You're very gentle." These words, like many of his statements to me over the years, were like Zen koans, shaking up my self-perceptions and nudging me into moments of meditation. In a subsequent session, he said, "The way to double bind a double bind is to make the implicit explicit." He wrote an article (I think it was for an issue of *Voices*) about the mutual exclusivity between institutionalization and intimacy. And he would speak of the Aristotelian virtue of Eutrapelia, the ability to have a good time doing whatever it is you happen to be doing. Once, many years later, when my daughter Anna was 6 months old, I took her with me to meet Jim. Crawling on the floor in his office, she was able to extend her arms to lift her torso and uttered plaintive cries. I picked her up and said, "Jim, I don't know why Anna is crying like this." Jim responded, "Because every cell in her body is crying out to walk, and if you keep picking her up, she won't learn how."

I experienced Jim as larger than life and full of life. He was always welcoming and warm toward me, never critical or shaming. Once I arrived 15 minutes late for an appointment, apologizing as I entered his office. He replied, "You're not the late Jacob Megdell are you?" In another moment, I asked Jim if I could work with and learn from him. He told me to go learn from five other therapists first. Eventually, a period of 18 years followed when I did not see Jim, when I was doing various jobs, gaining a broader "liberal education," attending West Georgia College for a master's degree program in 1973, followed by moving to San Diego for a doctoral program in 1977, and finally returning to Ann Arbor in 1988. During these years, I experienced, worked with, and learned from many more than five other psychotherapists. When I re-connected with Jim, he welcomed me as a kindred spirit, colleague, and friend.

As I was considering writing about my relationship with Jim, I remembered a moment from 50 years ago, when I was leaving him late in the evening to drive the 90 miles back to Ann Arbor. He put his arm around my shoulders. "You see that bright star," he

said, pointing up into the darkness, not sure which of the zillions of stars he was referring to. "Two guys who love each other are hugging and saying goodbye, see you soon." As I was driving home, a poem appeared to me: an entire, complete poem about Jim. I pulled off the road to write it down. Sometime in the last 50 years, I lost the poem and could remember only a few words of it. As I was hesitating, vacillating over whether to write about my history and friendship with Jim, suddenly the entire poem came back to me, inspiring me to write and submit my remembrance to *Voices*. Here is the poem:

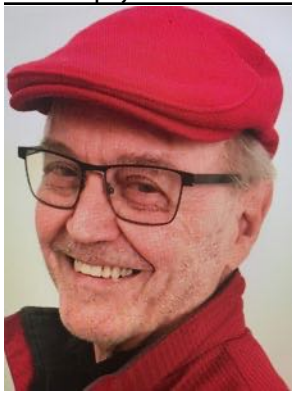
Keeping A Giant Warm

I know a giant who lives in a constellation
with redwood arms and volcanic laughter
and stars glowing in his hair.
When morning kicks and pulls,
demanding attention,
he stretches and yawns with new day excitement,
showering the world with firework energy,
his arms trembling to wrestle and embrace,
his legs to dance and support.

And, when darkness falls, and cold winds whisper
through stars, freezing light,
a tear falls from his glacier eye,
easing shadows through the night
and sadness through my sleep,
a sadness that comes from
not knowing how
to keep a giant warm.

Abrupt

Don Murphy



Don Murphy, PhD
Decatur, Georgia
Doncm38@gmail.com

For 40 years we had been good friends; I had watched this talented, vigorous man deteriorate under the weight of bipolar illness. In his last few years he was a "Howard Hughes" kind of hermit, living in squalor. Seeing scary evidence of a stroke, in my last visit, I called for EMTs, against his will. Still vivid in my memory is his wild-eyed countenance as they carried him out in a blanket, having been unable to maneuver a stretcher through the chaos in his home. In the hospital the next day he refused to acknowledge me, angry that I had called for assistance. Then he died.

Margaret Nichols

Margaret Nichols, PhD
Atlanta, Georgia
Mnichols.aap@gmail.com

Still Growing After All These Years

My friendship with Abby began as a romantic relationship in December 1984. I was attracted to her vibrancy, love of life, and unique sense of humor, which she saw that I understood, appreciated, and enjoyed. We quickly became involved with each other's family, reflected by the fact that our first date was attending her niece's dance recital. My brother's family adored her, and they, especially my niece, were very disappointed when we broke up 10 ½ years later. We never lived together but spent 2 to 3 nights each week at one another's homes. We were excellent traveling companions, something I subsequently found was rare. For example, I agreed to go Graceland because it was important to her that we visit this cultural icon together. On another trip to Orlando, however, I drew the line and refused to accompany her to the Tupperware museum. She relented and did not press the issue.

We broke up in July 1995, 6 months after I stopped drinking, began attending AA meetings, and obtained a sponsor. We had minimal contact for several years. She explored other romantic relationships while I invested my energy in staying sober, working the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, and developing friendships that were not romantic in nature. In AA, I learned a great deal about how I had mishandled intimate relationships. My desire to keep the peace led me to ignore my feelings, resulting in repressed anger, which I drank away. This had damaged many of my relationships, including the one with Abby. Eliminating the numbing effects of alcohol forced me to recognize and learn to appropriately deal with negative emotions.

This took some time for me to do. Abby and I reconnected several years later after each of us did individual work on our core issues. We gradually began building a genuine friendship based on honesty, personal autonomy, mutual respect, loyalty to and support of one another. She has taken care of me during the recovery periods following several surgeries over the past 5 years. I am available to do the same for her if and when she needs my help.

I still have work to do on myself and have not yet achieved my desired level of emotional maturity in my interactions with Abby. This is evidenced by my behavior with her while driving back from a recent vacation at the beach. We encountered a slow-down in the flow of traffic due to road construction. I was looking at a map, finding an alternative route home, and did not see a sign instructing us to turn if we were to stay on the state road I had selected. She asked me if we needed to turn, and I quickly responded, "No, stay straight." (I thought she was trying to deviate from my selected route.) When it became clear that we were in fact on the wrong highway, I did not admit that I had missed the sign. This resulted in a full-blown argument about how I am reluctant to admit when I am wrong, holding on to my indefensible position even when it gets me in trouble and makes me look ridiculous. I am generally willing to own up to my mistakes with others but stubbornly maintain, "I am right" with Abby. It is a silly and self-defeating habit, and I am working on being aware of it and changing my responses!

This relationship is important to me and I am committed to doing my part to make it as healthy as possible. We generally have a lot of fun, continuing to appreciate each other's sense of humor and laughing a lot together. We have been able to have frequent contact with one another during the COVID crisis, as both of us have been carefully wearing masks and social distancing. My relationship with her has allowed me to avoid the loneliness and social isolation that many single people have had to endure while enabling me to also have the alone time I desperately need. She needs quality time with her friends without me, and she has been able to have that. She is clearly my best friend and, for all practical purposes, my life partner. We have become a family that functions remarkably well, and for that I am grateful.

Riding the Bus with Eddie

Penelope Norton

Penelope Norton, PhD
Ormond Beach, Florida
penelope.norton@gmail.com

Eddie and I met in the vegetable garden between our two homes in semi-rural Michigan when he was 4 and I was 3. He was the eldest of four boys, and I the eldest of three girls. Our choices for playmates were few but for one another and our respective siblings. I did not realize his importance to me until sometime in my late 30s: While studying Bowen family systems, I was instructed to list sibling influences, and since I did not have a brother, to list someone from childhood who was "like a brother." I knew Eddie's parents and his grandparents, who lived across the street with Eddie's Aunt JoAnn, a teenager. JoAnn was Eddie's hero; she rode motorcycles, played softball, and was admired for her brazen toughness.

With regard to the sibling aspect of my relationship with Eddie, we did teach one another some things about our perceived gender roles. With his red hair, freckles, and green eyes, Eddie was both sensitive and a daredevil. He taught me to use a jackknife, to catch frogs, and to kill snakes. He tried to teach me to ride a two wheeled bicycle; he seated me on his stripped- down bike at the top of a small hill and gave me a slight push. It did not end well. I tried to get him to be a father to my doll, "Peggy," but he beat her with a stick until her rubber skin cracked.

We spent a lot of time together riding the school bus, probably 45 minutes or so twice per day. We were at the farther reaches of our school district, so we were first on and last off the bus. We were also youngest and smallest, as the bus carried children from kindergarten through high school. We were a kind of protection for one another from the larger kids, as well as companions who shared the remains of our lunches on the way home. Two memories stand out.

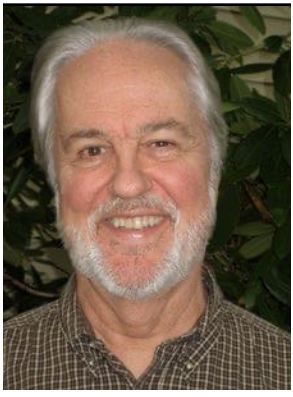
In the first, it is a bitterly cold winter morning with deep snow on the ground. The bus was packed since we were only a couple miles from the centrally located high school where Eddie and I would transfer to another bus to take us to our elementary school. That morning, our bus made an unexpected stop in the middle of the road. Everyone got

rowdy while waiting to see what would happen. Soon, another full bus pulled alongside ours. Our bus driver opened her window, leaned out and said, "Can you take the two little ones? I'm out of gas. The others can walk." First-grade Eddie and I were escorted to the other bus. When we reached the bus transfer spot, I told the transfer manager, a gruff middle-aged man, that our bus had run out of gas. On the return trip that afternoon, we saw the transfer manager. He said, " You should have told me where she was; I had to drive her whole bus route to find her." On our way to the next bus, Eddie said to me, "Without you, he wouldn't have even known that the bus ran out of gas. He should have said thank you."

The other bus story occurred near the end of the school year on a hot spring day. The buses were not air conditioned, we were not allowed to open windows, and they were crowded with perspiring kids. After everyone else was dropped off the bus but second-grade Eddie and me, we rumbled down the rural dirt road, and I vomited my lunch on the bus floor. The bus driver stopped the bus and made his way down the aisle menacingly toward us screaming "How dare you do that to my bus! I'll have to clean that mess up!" I froze. As the bus driver walked away from us and re-started the engine, Eddie put his arm around my shoulder and said, "He can't be mean to you, I'll get my cousin JoAnn to beat him up."

Eddie moved away when he was 9. On our last day on my swing-set he said, "Aren't you sad you'll probably never see me again?" He had more foresight than I. What I learned from him about friendship is that some friends are irreplaceable. ▼

John Rhead



John Rhead, PhD
Baltimore, Maryland
jrheadphd@gmail.com

Friends Don't Let Friends

As the U.S. Congress was gearing up for an impeachment trial of Donald Trump in 2020, I wrote him a letter, with copies to all the members of Congress. The theme of the letter was the slogan I heard many times growing up: "Friends don't let friends drive drunk." In the context of my youth this slogan was applied quite literally as a reminder that I should be ready to forcefully take away the keys from a friend about to drive a car after imbibing too much alcohol.

My letter to Donald Trump was meant to invite this man, who is so clearly obsessed with others' loyalty to him, to consider that it might be an act of loyalty from a true friend to take away his presidential keys. Of course I pointed out that the intoxicant which was causing his impairment was power rather than alcohol. I also suggested that failing to wrest the keys of power from the president was likely to result in great regret in the future for everyone involved in the impeachment process when, in his impaired state, he caused great harm to many people.

Behind my writing of this letter to the president and the Congress was my memory of an alcoholic uncle who had the good fortune of being alone in the car when he killed

himself in a fatal crash while drunk. I wondered how his wife could have dealt with her regret had she allowed him to take their children with him on that fateful day. The worst scenario I could imagine would have been for the children to have been killed in the crash while he himself escaped unharmed.

One of the things that people in therapy get is a potential friend in their therapist, or a number of potential friends in the case of group therapy. While such friends very rarely are in a position to forcefully intervene, they can point out in a forcefully loving way when unconscious forces are impairing one's capacity for good judgment or even reality testing. The smell of alcohol on a person's breath might be ignored in many social situations, but hopefully would not be ignored in a good therapy group. Similarly, while many friends might go along with a person's claim that all their marital difficulties were because of the defects in their spouse, a real friend would suggest to their friend their own contribution to the dysfunction in the marriage.

I never sent my letter to Donald Trump and the Congress. I was afraid it might have the impact that I hoped it would and that some of the loyal "friends" of the impeached president might, perhaps at his subtle suggestion, retaliate against me. My friends with whom I have shared this story of my undelivered letter are sometimes amused at my grandiosity in assuming I could have had such an impact. I can get in touch at times with some shame for my grandiosity and also for being too cowardly to go ahead and send the letter in spite of my fears. However, as things have unfolded, I have also been relieved that I did not take the chance of making myself the target of the rage of Donald Trump and his more blindly loyal friends.

In my most ideal fantasy of the letter had I sent it, the president would have been jolted into seeing those who were taking away his keys through impeachment as true friends whom he could ultimately thank. Naturally, such a fantasy leads to even greater grandiosity in terms of the credit I imagine that I might have received. Like psychotherapy, friendship is complicated. ▼

We Get It

Page Robinson

Fresh from Florida, Cindy showed up in 8th grade at my small Virginia Country Day school with Farrah Fawcett wings and puka shells. Cindy had lived many places for unpredictable durations. Her dad, a horse trainer, drank too much—like my mom. She got it.

Cindy had never had a best friend; I'd never had a sibling. She was too afraid of my mother to spend the night at my house, so I spent every weekend night and every holiday/summer break night at her house. Every single one. Except for Christmas Eve and Christmas, my loneliest nights of the year.

Forty-three years later, with no need for frequency, and always when it matters, she calls. "I'm in love with a guy with addiction issues." I don't ask why. No need to explain it. I get it. ▼

Page Robinson, LICSW
Washington, DC
robinsonpage@gmail.com

Kathryn Van der Heiden

Kathryn Van der Heiden, MS
Dayton, Ohio
kathvdh@gmail.com

Lost and Found

She was my very first friend that I met when I started in the École Primaire D'Ain Diab in Morocco. We were both 5 years old. One day, I asked too many questions, and I was to go outside and stand on the steps and wait to be re-admitted. It was boring standing there, and the time dragged. Then the door to the other classroom opened, and a girl stepped out and stood on similar steps outside her classroom. We looked at one another, and she stuck out her tongue at me. There are many ways to attempt contact. So I returned the non-verbal greeting. We were laughing so loudly at the end of 5 minutes that both of our teachers came out of the classroom and asked us to come back in. Colette and I became best friends in a friendship that lasted for 6 years until my family moved back to the United States. Then we lost touch.

One day, about 10 years ago, I got a note on Facebook that asked if I was the Katie that had gone to school in Ain Diab. She was trying to find me, and I had been trying to find her by inquiring about anyone who had gone to that school.

We have been reaching across time and boundaries of physical space since then. We talk to one another once a month now, and we laugh a lot. It is like we never were apart. My husband and I were supposed to go visit Colette last May, in France near the border of Spain, but COVID happened. We are hoping to see one another in the future. What a treat finding her again has been. ▼

Diana Woodruff

Diana Woodruff, PhD
Snellville, Georgia
dwoodr1230@aol.com

Learning to Love and Endure

While my husband was alive, he would frequently remind me that If it weren't for him, I would not have any friends. There was some truth to this statement. He was a "lifer" in the Petersburg, Virginia community that I shared with him, and I was the new person on the block. My family had moved from Columbus, Ohio to Petersburg because my father had been transferred by the government. It was my senior year in high school, and I could not believe that my parents would make me move. There was no other choice for me. I was the youngest of three, and my older siblings had gone on to college and were not available to take on a 16-year-old sister.

In this southern school I was assigned to a homeroom and sat next to this guy that had the nickname of "Mole." He was the center of the football team and kept his hair

very short. I found him to be strange, and he thought the same about me. I did not address him as Mole. He was Bruce. He was responsible for helping me make a transition to a new school my senior year and eventually was my best friend. What appealed to me about him was his vast connection to family. He was surrounded by them. I thought to myself, "Finally I have found someone who has relatives nearby to visit and to have celebrations with." I married him.

We had 54 years of marriage, and we did share friends. He was a keeper. Now that I am a widow and live alone, I have those memories as lasting gifts, and I continue with many friends to whom I can reach out when I feel the need. I have learned about my capacity to endure and to love. ▼

When Friendship Softens the Ache

Zoe Worrell

Zoe Worrell, MSW
Myersville, Maryland
irishzoe14@gmail.com

"Your friend is your needs answered."
—Kahlil Gibran

When I was young, my family moved almost yearly, so I constantly had to say goodbye to old friends and then work to form new friendships. My template for friendship was built on the idea that they wouldn't last long, so therefore I didn't invest much. Meanwhile, my family, from whom I sought connection and unconditional love, never quite fulfilled my need for attachment. It has taken years of my adult life to sort through this conundrum of being with those who couldn't meet my needs while not knowing how to be with those who might have a better chance of doing just that—years and hard emotional work to be able to know what I needed and where to find it.

I was contemplating this recently regarding my connection with my dearest girlfriend. During a conversation with her about the painful experiences of family bonds that have broken over the years, she mentioned how grateful she was that I now felt like a part of her family. I was deeply touched by this, not only due to the love I felt from her but also because she highlighted something for me that I often overlook—that the void of connection I experienced in my family was not the eternal wound I once thought it to be. Instead, it has been more like a wide capacity available for filling with connection. For me, friendship was the essential alternative—love and connection, in the form of a friend, definitely answered my needs. ▼

Jonas Horwitz

Jonas Horwitz, PhD, is a licensed psychologist in Durham, North Carolina. He obtained his BA from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and his PhD from Virginia Commonwealth University. He is the author of *How to Stop Feeling So Damn Depressed: The No BS Guide for Men* (New Harbinger, 2018). In his practice Dr. Horwitz enjoys seeing individuals and couples, as well as leading long-term process groups for clients and groups for psychotherapists. He is currently writing his next book, *Swimming Through Anxiety: How to Stay Afloat in a Nerve Wracking World.*
jonashorwitzphd@gmailcom

Editor's note: Voices publishes the outgoing Academy president's concluding address. This introduction to that speech was delivered by Jonas Horwitz via Zoom at the virtual 2020 Institute and Conference, "Risking Connection in an Age of Fear & Uncertainty," on November 14, 2020.

Introduction of Outgoing AAP President David Donlon

2020 Institute and Conference

As I thought about David's presidency, I wondered about this question: When trying to lead an organization of psychotherapists who are dedicated to actualizing their authentic selves, what type of community brings forth the greatest life? Would it be a hierarchical structure, where the leader gave the members specific directions? Authoritarianism, as we too well know, is seductive because it does temporarily reduce anxiety, but does so at great costs. David, of course, has spent a lifetime countering authoritarianism, and that is not something he had any interest in bringing to his presidency.

What did come to mind were those communities in nature that are teeming with biodiversity where life is richest. One probably thinks first of the great Amazonian jungles filled with myriad cries of birds and countless insects. But there is another place that has even greater biodiversity. Off the coasts of every continent, underneath cold, roiling waters there are ancient kelp forests brimming with the ebb and flow of life.

Ocean currents traveling for thousands of miles smash against the rocky continents and bring with them the rich nutrients that give rise to incredibly diverse ecosystems. And it is the kelp with roots stretching hundreds of feet to the floor that smooth the ocean swells before they tumble to the shore. That is exactly what David has done for all of us. His deep, calm presence has allowed us to feed, interact, and expand during these turbulent times. I know it may seem strange to compare a man I deeply love to a piece of seaweed, but it was David who first gave me shelter 37 years ago. During a terribly depressing summer, when I had dropped out of college for the second time, I came upon an ad for an organization that he helped found. It was a community mental health clinic that was seeking volunteers to undergo a 6-week training to staff the suicide hot line. David, you and I did not know each other, but at that time your work gave me shelter. A place to breathe. A place to sink roots. And David, you did it again, 19 years later on the first day of my outpatient rotation when I stood in front of you, burnt out, exhausted from my graduate program, seriously contemplating quitting, and you asked me what psychology books I valued. I was anxious and embarrassed, but something told me I could tell you the truth. So I admitted I had come to hate academic psychology and only wanted to read novels. You looked at me quietly for

a moment and then smiled. And once again you gave me a place to breathe. A place to sink roots.

A few years ago, just as I was beginning my tenure on the executive council, I listened to a heated conversation about time and money. Given the enormous amount of hours that the presidency required, (and I am not talking hundreds, I am talking thousands of hours over many years) it did make sense that the question of a stipend should be considered. The conversation meandered—with David staying quiet throughout, until someone noted that the Maryland Psychological Association paid their president $15,000/yr. At that moment, David did something that in my two decades of knowing him, I had never seen before. David suddenly got angry. He then said with a loud clear voice, "If I get paid for this, I will not serve as president!"

That was it. Those were his words. I have never heard a man say that before. If I get paid for this, I will not serve. During this time of fear and distrust, who says such a thing? If I get paid for this, I will not serve. David those words grounded me. Your strength has shown me a way forward. You have shown all of us a way forward. You have allowed us to breathe. You have allowed us to sink our roots.

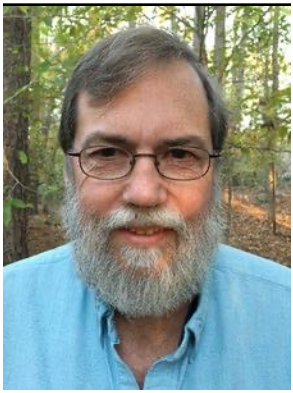
David once described his relationship to AAP like being in a marriage with over 300 spouses. I am sure that his wife, Julia, has found this to be a rather crowded household, but his heart has many chambers. Yet being in relationship with him is no ordinary marriage. Taken for granted? Cast aside or treated like an interchangeable roommate? These are not experiences you are going to have with David Donlon. No, what does happen is that you are going to walk away with the profound feeling that you actually matter. What you think matters to David. What you feel matters to David. And he helps you to believe that who you are matters not only to David, but to the Academy as a whole.

This is one of the many gifts he has given the Academy during his presidency. It is the gift of showing us how he has been transformed by each encounter he has had with each person. This generous unfolding of his spirit has been accomplished during tumultuous times for our beloved organization. We all know that we are an aging community that cherishes our history and our culture of interpersonal encounter, but we are also an organization that is yearning to be relevant to the future. At times these divergent energies clash and the waves can be quite messy, but David exemplifies the best of AAP in that he trusts the process. David's calm presence and deep curiosity was the perfect place to hold forth these competing tensions.

Now these are all fine words, and certainly the kind of words one would expect as a beloved president finishes their term, but there is one thing David does not know. What you do not know, David, is how much we long to renew our vows to you. You have held us with the deepest warmth and the tenderest compassion. Your gentle embrace has allowed us to move closer toward our authentic selves. Our messy wrestling with each other has not swamped you, rather you made us feel that you cherished each rambunctious encounter. Always curious, always open for more. Watching you during your presidency, you have shown us how a leader can not only be vulnerable, but how this vulnerability sustains the passion that is rooted in the ocean floor with strong leaves blossoming toward the surface light. David Donlon, thank you for serving as president of the American Academy of Psychotherapy. We have felt your heart. Now our wish is for you to feel ours. ▼

Editors' note: We want this author to write our obituaries.

David Donlon



Although David Donlon grew up in New York and Connecticut, his introduction to humanistic psychotherapy was in Southern California in the late 1970s. He has been a therapist in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, for the last 39 years, the first 24 of those years before he had ever heard of the Academy. An impulse to attend the 2006 Institute & Conference led to an entirely unanticipated but much cherished stream of experiences leading to this address.
dkdjmt@mindspring.com

Editor's note: Voices publishes the outgoing Academy president's concluding address. This speech was delivered by David K. Donlon via Zoom at the virtual 2020 Institute and Conference, "Risking Connection in an Age of Fear & Uncertainty," on November 14, 2020.

President's Address

Let me ground myself with my favorite humbling lyric: "Among the thoughts that crowd your mind, there won't be many that ever really matter."

Can I possibly say anything today that will be worth your attention? And yet I am truly grateful that you are taking this time to hear me and honor this tradition of the Academy as we end my term as president and start Kristin Staroba's.

To state the obvious, when I first agreed to run for president 4½ years ago, this is not how I envisioned my farewell. I imagined talking while my eyes wandered the ballroom, landing on people I respect endlessly and being still surprised that you were looking at me. OK, I also imagined being a little irritated by the clinking dessert forks and at the folks who were yucking it up in the back waiting impatiently for the dance.

I did not imagine I would be sitting in a chair in my living room staring at a light on my laptop. Throughout our great pivot to a Zoom-based Academy, I have been continually aware of the half-fullness and half-emptiness of our cup. The pain of not being able to be in-person with you clings to me unrelentingly. On a simultaneous track, the experiment of seeing how much of our AAP magic can be experienced through electronica has been unfolding and provides not only solace but also excitement. We are quickly innovating to preserve some of what I, and I imagine most of you, believe to be precious. I swim in the half-full cup with a full heart for what we are maintaining through our separation.

Neither half ever recedes. The half-full cup and the half-empty cup stay near the center of my awareness all the time. I love being with you/I miss you terribly, I love the connection we have in these times/I pine for what is missing. It seems artificial to move to either side of the experience without bringing the other along.

I once had a psychic tell me that I spent one of my past lives as a monk in the dark ages. It's not that I think there's literal truth in that, though I think it would be cool if it worked that way. But I do know that since childhood I've been attracted to the story of monks preserving what's precious through the bleak times.

No one foresaw what would unfold during this two-year term. Not the physical separation in the pandemic and the cancellation of our Summer Workshop for the first time in 63 years, of course. Nor being in the grip of the highest level of anger in our divided country since Vietnam, nor that 8 minutes and 46 seconds of a cell phone video

would propel the country into the widest discussion of racism in, I guess, ever. Nor that 11 months before that, one of our own members would propel the Academy to finally begin to figure out how to confront our own racism and shameful lack of diversity. Nor that 8 months before that one of our members would propel us into examining inadequacies of sexual boundary protections at our gatherings. We have made a start in engaging with the challenges of our present and our past.

To be clear, I was neither the leader nor the driving force nor a key player in encountering any of these challenges. I was not the key player or the driving force behind the re-design of our website, nor our fundraising initiatives, nor our investment reallocation, nor renegotiating our contracts, nor the continued publication of our unique and esteemed journal, nor the organization of our archives. I could go on. Having a president who was out front on any of these fronts wasn't necessary. It wasn't necessary because the innovation and leadership in the Academy springs from all quarters. How can I show due gratitude to all those contributions? If you know me, you won't be surprised to learn I made a list of people to thank for their efforts over the last 2 years: the committee members, *Voices* editors and contributors, newsletter editors and contributors, and workshop presenters. Before even including financial donations and listserv posters, that came out to 543 names. Reading those might, just might, try your patience. But narrowing down whom to single out is like trying to decide where to draw the line on whom to invite to your wedding. I ask each of you to trust that you have been in my mind and that I value what you gave, and that I typed your name last week while thinking of your contribution.

I will, however, express my gratitude towards four specific groups.

The executive officers are the core of the core team. Phil Spiro, our treasurer, has been the person I relied on most heavily to see the terrain I am blind to. I really don't get money, prefer not to think of it, actually. So, I have pushed all things with a dollar sign to Phil and he has woven his logical, wise tapestries to keep us solid and, astoundingly, make things clear to the rest of us. I tremble at how lost we would have been without him.

Steven Ingram, our meticulous secretary, has kept all those governance details that slip away from me from disappearing into the void. When I would ask for something in a panic in a conference lobby, it was in my inbox before I could get back to my hotel room.

Our immediate past president, Doug Cohen, allowed me to look over his shoulder for 2 years while he was in the center. He was a great tutor, but beyond that he has continued to provide me balance with his strength and clarity.

One of the less trumpeted gifts of the presidency is you get a new friend and partner in the person of your successor. I am so gratified to be followed in this line of presidents by Kristin Staroba. Although we knew each other a little before 2018, in the course of our weekly phone calls and countless emails for the past 2 years my joy in our friendship and my admiration for her wisdom has grown and grown. She has become my primary consultant, and I trust her impeccable judgment more than I do my own. I am delighted to pass the presidency to Kristin Staroba.

The executive councilors, committee chairs, and editors, in addition to their individual duties, have formed an extraordinarily functional working group. While conducting business under Robert's Rules of Order, we have still been AAP. It seems each comment

comes from an integrated heart and brain. And what beautiful hearts and thrilling brains! Each inspires each other's work. Both the ongoing and new projects have all moved forward significantly even during this tumult.

Before a term as president-elect even starts, one is immediately presented with the highest-pressure task of the job: Find chairs for the four national meetings 2 and 3 years away. At times, these huge asks have come down to the very last minute. I knew my term was off to a great start when by the end of Southern Region Spring Conference, 2016, four teams had come forward to commit to chairing. I could begin to breathe. I am forever indebted to Meredith Albert and Adam Klein for chairing our Summer Workshop in Chicago and to Stephanie Spalding and Kristie Nies for our I&C in Savannah. Also to those whose painstaking planning for our 2020 meetings have needed to be postponed until 2022: Maureen Martin, Nelia Rivers, Linda Tillman, Steve Sorrells and Diane Shaffer. If we can be together again, 2022 looks like a spectacular, important, and ground-breaking year.

This year's painful gaping holes in our calendar emerged late. We threw a few things together last minute for What Would Have Been Summer Workshop Week. That I did take the lead on ... and it wore me out. I knew I couldn't gear up for planning an event during I&C week. So, I put out a request on the net to see if anyone would pick up the flag and do a little something for this week, then only 4 months away. In a flash, Meredith Albert had stepped into the chair role and a committee materialized.

Remember those high school chemistry experiments where you put a small tablet into 5 ml of clear liquid, and it keeps building into a rainbow of foam spilling out of the beaker? This virtual I&C was alchemy magic to behold. With a brand-new website registration system to work with, novel scheduling concerns, and a string of quick technological decisions, this wonderful event has been invented and delivered at lightning speed. The Academy owes an enormous debt of gratitude for all the brilliant, fast work put in by this committee.

You want to talk about people having your back? The 11 active past presidents who have done this before me have been in my corner through these 2 years. David Hawkins, Grover Criswell, Lee Blackwell, Murray Scher, Kathryn Van der Heiden, David Loftis, Loretta Sparks, Margaret Nichols, Lorrie Hallman, Gordon Cohen, and Doug Cohen. Your notes of reassurance and bits of coaching I have treasured – whose judgment could I have trusted more?

All in all, the most vital contribution to my ability to perform this role is not from any member, but rather from my wife, Julia. It has been she who has been the initial container of my frustrations and flip outs. And it is she who has provided me with the grounding in love that allows me to spread my heart out from there. For the first half of our relationship she did not have to share me with you. Over the last 12 years she has, more and more each year, graciously shared me with you all. She has also been counting the days until that trend line bends down and I am less distracted and can once more focus on our cozy world at home.

At this point in my life what is precious to me? Deep, unhurried, relational psychotherapy.

Bob Phillips, a Gestalt therapist in my town, once wrote that wounds that are created in a human relationship deserve a human relationship in which to heal. Yes. Those perfect moments when a piece of character armor vanishes in an "Aha!" or is explosively

jettisoned in a torrent of joyous sobs do not come on schedule. Often they happen with unpredictable confluences of life events, previous therapeutic work, and just the right words or tone from attuned, caring others. Witnessing, facilitating, or experiencing those moments for myself is just, well, the best thing on the planet in my book. Seems they happen a lot when AAP is together.

What else is precious to me in AAP – beyond just saying every morsel that passed before my gaze in the last 12 years? I was a very content man at age 53, before I had met any of you. Now I find I am not content without you. I have become reliant on immersion in at least some subset of this group every few months. And, similar to many of you, my growth as a therapist has accelerated since coming to the Academy. I sometimes wonder whether we value the intimacy and connection here because it provides the ground for our personal growth, or whether we value our personal growth because it plows deeper terrain for our cherished intimacy and connection. Which is the ultimate value for AAP? Or are they an inseparable spiral?

What I deeply believe is that the AAP ethos of intertwined development as therapists and development as people is crucial, as is our calling is to continue that spiral of development throughout our careers. That intertwined spiral is not universally accepted in our field. I hope that the Academy will always be a home for it.

I know some see AAP's structure in terms of top down. I haven't experienced it that way. It feels more like one of our circles, or those late hours at the dance. At different times someone moves toward the inner ring, then is called into the center of the circle for a time, then moves back out of the center, and others step in. With some fear of the void, it is time for me step back out of the center.

Sometimes a cliché is a cliché because nothing expresses it better. It has been the honor and privilege of my life to serve as your president. Thank you. ▼

What to Do in the Dark

A friendship poem

Jessica Kester

Curl up and let me
count the notches in your spine
like you taught your boy to count sheep or armadillos on sleepless nights,
like a lullaby sung through the thick slow of time and place,
distance I can't travel to hold you while you
heave and claw air, your animal body unhinged and wild.

But maybe it's better that I mow your lawn,
scrub your stovetop, buy pickles under florescent lights,
save you from the absurdity of normalcy—
washing towels, underwear, his pajamas and khaki shorts—scraps
of your spaghetti-mouthed boy, all full of questions, now silent and strange and starving.

Maybe better to let you live in the thin sharp edges
of his anxiety, in the slanted Os of his obsessions,
your mouth full of a thing—a condition—that
you didn't know until you did,
a wilderness with a porous blood brain barrier.

I'll find you there, in the green dark,
fighting with teeth and tongue and feral flesh
to bring your boy back.
Listen. I'm whispering:
I'm here, helpless, loving you.

Friendship: The Film *Nomadland* and the Novel *Winter Kept Us Warm*

Jim Bird, LCSW

Atlanta, Georgia
jameshbird1@gmail.com

Book and Movie Review

Winter Kept Us Warm: A Novel
by Anne Raeff,
Counterpoint, Berkeley, CA
2018, 304 pages

Nomadland
Film, directed by Chloe Zhao,
Starlight Pictures
2020

In the movie *Nomadland*, Fern, played by Frances McDormand, is a strong, grieving woman who prefers privacy and freedom after her husband's death, yet she makes genuine friendships. She exhibits the psychotherapy axiom that one is most likely to make healthy friendships when one is on good terms with oneself. Fern knows and accepts herself and is comfortable in her own skin. She develops friendships organically without any sense that the relationship needs to be forced. She develops emotional closeness without obligations or the surrender of freedom.

The novel, *Winter Kept Us Warm*, by Anne Raeff, explores the intricacies of friendship, including sexual attraction and marriage, among three individuals who meet at the end of World War II in bombed out Berlin. Isaac and Leo, two American GI buddies, meet Uli, who has chosen aloneness by abandoning her family. Uli is isolated in the wartime rubble. She meets our GIs in a bar. The three form a lifetime triangle of friendship that twists and turns as each individual matures. Their friendship survives many life changes, including geographical distances, as they settle in different parts of the world.

Both *Nomadland* and *Winter Kept Us Warm* explore the simplicity as well as the complexity of the human spirit in the connection called friendship. At one point, Fern says "This is more complicated than I thought."

The novel and the film led me to reflect on my own friendships. I didn't form friendships as a child; I saw myself as an alien and unable to connect. My first real friendship was with Christine, my wife. But I held on too tightly during the early years in that complex friendship and soon realized I needed to look to other friend experiences to balance the load. As part of my therapy, I worked hard to develop friends, even more difficult for me with men than with women.

Both the novel and the film have an underlying theme of grief, the price we pay for connection. If we are close to another, we are vulnerable to the anticipation of grief and ultimately grief itself. I'm glad I persevered at making friends. My friends have made my life sweeter; the grief only deepens and enriches my life. ▼

James McCracken, LCSW

Durham, North Carolina
socialworkerjames@gmail.com

Book Reviews

Attachment Theory in Practice: Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) with Individuals, Couples, and Families
by Susan M. Johnson,
Guilford, New York
2018, 278 pages

It's Not Always Depression
by Hilary Jacobs Hendel,
Penguin Random House,
New York,
2018, 320 pages

Two Books on Friendship: Within Couples and Within Self

Friendship in romantic couples, friendship within oneself, and navigation and repair of inevitable ruptures of close relationships are central to psychotherapy. When asked to review books on friendship, I went through the pile of 10-15 books I'm currently reading and realized that many were published more than 5 years ago (many much more...how old is Ferenczi and Rank's book on the development of psychoanalysis?). So, I am offering reviews on the following two, much more recent, books: *Attachment Theory in Practice: Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) with Individuals, Couples, and Families* by Susan Johnson (2018) and *It's Not Always Depression* by Hillary Jacobs Hendel (2018). Fair disclosure: I hold certification as a practitioner and a supervisor in the model one of the books promotes, and I am working towards certification in the other. So, yes, I am invested in both models, but I don't believe in panaceas, so I believe I can offer fair-minded reviews nonetheless.

Attachment Theory in Practice: Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) with Individuals, Couples, and Families by Sue Johnson—A Primer on Re-thinking Psychotherapy Explicitly Using Attachment Theory as a Guide

For those unfamiliar with Susan (Sue) Johnson and her emotionally focused therapy (EFT), she is a Canadian psychologist who, along with York University psychologist Les Greenberg, developed an integrated approach to couple therapy in the 1980s. Sue and Les eventually parted ways, and while Les went on to focus on emotion focused therapy for Individuals, Sue went on to develop and champion her version for couples and families, and more recently individuals. Her first professional trade book, *The Practice of Emotionally Focused*

Therapy with Couples: Creating Connections, first published in 1996 and now in its 3rd edition (2020), has been a detailed text guide (technically a manual) for interested clinicians to learn the theories, process, tasks, and interventions of the model but has a deserved reputation as overwhelming to clinicians new to EFT because of its depth and detail. *Attachment Theory in Practice* was written for clinicians new to EFT who want a primer on the model without the feel of a therapy manual that would normally accompany a formal training sequence.

After an overview of the research, the book describes the essence of emotionally focused therapy, which is fundamentally guided by Bowlby's attachment theory. EFT developed its bones and muscles through integrating humanistic-experiential (a la Rogers) and structural-systemic (a la Minuchin) concepts and techniques. As readers progress through the book, they learn an overview of attachment theory, emotion theory, and systems theory and how to apply these first to individual therapy, then couple therapy, and, finally, family therapy. The book is a good primer on what seems to matter most to clinicians: how to apply the concepts. Far from the academic rigor of its sibling publication, but remaining immediately useful to interested clinicians, the book explains and demonstrates the iterative and progressively deepening in-session process (Sue calls this "the EFT Tango"... she's a trained Argentinian Tango dancer) as it applies to individual, couple, and family therapy. Readers are given many references for ongoing study if interest persists, but this book is a good and immediately applicable read for clinicians interested in this toolbox.

While John and Julie Gottman demonstrated in their research what many of us already suspected or knew, that friendship was foundational for healthy and happy couples, in *Attachment Theory in Practice* Johnson paints clear pictures of pathways not only for understanding where friendship falls apart but also for how a therapist can help cultivate the conditions necessary for friendship... with others and within oneself. To readers wary that attachment theory should be reserved for infants and parents, or sterile research protocols, I recommend reading this book before throwing the baby out with the bathwater. For clinicians already comfortable with the implications of attachment theory on clinical work and open to understanding how attachment can inform experiential and systemic therapies, this book was written for you.

It's Not Always Depression **by Hillary Jacobs Hendel—A Self-Help Version/ Primer on an Increasingly Popular Experiential Dynamic Therapy**

Experiential dynamic therapies, beginning with Habib Davanloo's intensive short-term dynamic psychotherapy, have evolved over the past 30 years to include the innovative creativity of other scientist-practitioners, including a NYC-based clinical psychologist named Diana Fosha, who developed accelerated experiential dynamic psychotherapy (AEDP), which is the basis of Hillary Jacobs Hendel's *It's Not Always Depression*. While AEDP is a relatively complex model of psychotherapy (Fosha's original text on the model, *The Transforming Power of Affect*, and her many articles available at the AEDP Institute website are arguably some of the most challenging reads I have consumed since graduate school), Hendel does a tremendous job simplifying concepts from the model for the layperson and clinicians alike. Using a metaphor-diagram called The Change Triangle (an upside-down triangle resting on one point), the author helps

readers differentiate among experiential phenomenon which often form the problems we and our clients experience as nebulous: Normally adaptive core-somatic affective experiences and self-states (at the bottom) become blocked by inhibitory affects (anxiety, guilt, and shame at the top-right) and defenses (including secondary defensive affects at the top-left) when we are in post-traumatic compromised states. Through this engaging read, one can easily learn another frame to understand trauma, emotional experiences, defensive coping adaptations and strategies, and a desirable open-hearted state that can be achieved through working towards the bottom of the Change Triangle, regulating anxiety, and processing core emotion to completion. Through the offered frame, the reader is given a way to understand depression and other common mental, behavioral, and relational problems that began as useful survival strategies in familial and social environments but became rigid and dysfunctional defenses against feelings.

While easily useful to clients as a self-help book, therapists can handily glean concepts and techniques central to AEDP to incorporate into their own practice. This is a good jumping block for diving into the AEDP pool (in fact, at an AEDP training I attended in 2019 after this book was published, I learned that many of the therapist participants were also influenced to further develop in AEDP after reading this book). Though not explicitly about friendship, *It's Not Always Depression* is explicitly about befriending our experiences, especially our wired-in core emotions and the adaptive tendency to heal, grow, self-correct, and connect with healthy others. After all, are we not limited in how much we can give to, take in from, accompany, and be present with others by how much we are available to ourselves? In the spirit of AEDP's ethos of undoing aloneness, my experience while reading is that Hendel provides good companionship through this book to develop and deepen compassion, curiosity, courage, confidence, clarity, calm, and connection (her "7 C's of the Openhearted State") for the self. What client and therapist couldn't stand to benefit? ▼

Pandemic and Its Vicissitudes
Voices, Winter 2021

Call for Papers

Deadline for submission: September 15, 2021
Direct questions and submissions to the editor, Carla Bauer, LCSW
crbauer01@bellsouth.net

See Submission Guidelines on the AAP website:
www.aapweb.com
or in any issue of *Voices*

Vicissitudes: a word with many aspects. Dictionary definitions cluster around these: mutability, the quality or state of being changeable; a favorable or unfavorable event that occurs by chance; a fluctuation of state or condition; successive, alternating, or changing phases or conditions; ups and downs; and a difficulty or hardship attendant on a way of life, career, or course of action and usually beyond one's control. Pandemic encompasses all of these: An unexpected crisis, beyond our control, it has brought vast changes—initially unfavorable but some perhaps ultimately favorable—to both our personal and professional lives.

One of the first rules for writing is to write what you know. And our lived experience has been defined by pandemic for more than a year. It's not all we know, but it is most immediate in this moment. In an earlier issue (Winter 2020), we wrote about our initial pandemic experiences: the sudden shutdown, the challenges of transitioning to telehealth, adaptation to prolonged isolation, and the underlying fears and anxieties associated with the rampant virus. More than a year later (a turbulent year of pandemic and social/political unrest), we stand now, finally and hopefully, at the brink of post-pandemic (or at least post-vaccination) re-entry. And we stand here changed by the experience. Even as we seek a return to normal, some things are forever changed. Rather than the *return* initially envisioned, perhaps we enter a new phase of adaptation.

For this issue of *Voices*, consider your evolving pandemic experience and your outlook for (or initial experience of) re-entry: What do you know now that you didn't before—about yourself and your values, about your vulnerabilities and your resiliency, about the world and its dynamics, about your clients or the practice of therapy under new modalities and circumstances? In what ways have you been challenged? In what ways did you thrive? After adapting to the mechanics of telehealth and navigation of a new mutually-lived pandemic experience, what has arisen from this new phase of clinical work? As you adjusted to isolation and social distancing, how has your relationship with yourself deepened? How have other relationships changed?

As you contemplate or begin re-entry, what does that look like? What pulls you outward or holds you back? What do you take with you, in new habits or values? What of pre-pandemic life do you shed? In living and re-emerging from this pandemic experience, with its accompanying unrest, what has surprised you? What anxieties and fears challenge the person of the therapist? What have you observed in your patients? What are you grieving? What are you celebrating? What have you learned about or confronted in yourself? How have you been changed? How has pandemic experience altered your stance in the world and your concerns on other global issues—healthcare, climate change, etc.? Reflect and share, won't you?

Voices welcomes submissions in the form of personal essay, research- and case-based inquiry, poetry, art, cartoons and photography. ▼

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Each issue has a central theme as described in the call for papers. Manuscripts that fit this theme are given priority. Final decision about acceptance must wait until all articles for a particular issue have been reviewed. Articles that do not fit into any particular theme are reviewed and held for inclusion in future issues on a space available basis.

Articles. See a recent issue of *Voices* for general style. Manuscripts should be double-spaced in 12 point type and no longer than 4,000 words (about 16 to 18 pages). Do not include the author's name in the manuscript, as all submissions receive masked review by two or more members of the Editorial Review Board. Keep references to a minimum and follow the style of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th ed.*

Submit via email, attaching the manuscript as a Word document file. Send it to Carla Bauer *(crbauer01@bellsouth.net).* Put "Voices" in the email's subject line, and in the message include the author's name, title and degree, postal address, daytime phone number, manuscript title, and word count. Please indicate for which issue of *Voices* the manuscript is intended.

If a manuscript is accepted, the author will be asked to provide a short autobiographical sketch (75 words or less) and a photograph that complies with technical quality standards outlined in a PDF which will be sent to you.

Neither the editorial staff nor the American Academy of Psychotherapists accepts responsibility for statements made in its publication by contributors. We expect authors to make certain there is no breach of confidentiality in their submissions. Authors are responsible for checking the accuracy of their quotes, citations, and references.

Poetry. We welcome poetry of high quality relevant to the theme of a particular issue or the general field of psychotherapy. Short poems are published most often.

Book and Film Reviews. Reviews should be about 500 to 750 words, twice that if you wish to expand the material into a mini-article.

Visual Arts. We welcome submissions of photographs or art related to the central theme for consideration. Electronic submissions in JPEG or TIFF format are required. If you would like to submit images, please request the PDF of quality standards from Mary de Wit at *md@in2wit.com* or find it on *www.aapweb.com.* Images are non-returnable and the copyright MUST belong to the submitting artist.

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Vision Statement

Our vision is to be the premier professional organization where therapeutic excellence and the use of self in psychotherapy flourish.

Mission Statement

The mission of the American Academy of Psychotherapists is to invigorate the psychotherapist's quest for growth and excellence through authentic interpersonal engagement.

Core Values

- Courage to risk and willingness to change
- Balancing confrontation and compassion
- Commitment to authenticity with responsibility
- Honoring the individual and the community

Full Membership

Full Membership in the Academy requires a doctoral or professional degree in one of the following mental health fields: psychiatry, clinical or counseling psychology, social work, pastoral counseling, marriage and family therapy, counseling, or nursing, and licensure which allows for the independent practice of psychotherapy.

- Specific training in psychotherapy with a minimum of 100 hours of supervision.
- At least one year of full-time post graduate clinical experience (or the equivalent in part-time experience) for doctoral level applicants, at least two years for others.
- A minimum of 100 hours of personal psychotherapy.

A person who does not fulfill the above requirements but who is able to document a reasonable claim for eligibility, such as a distinguished contributor to the field of psychotherapy, may also be considered for full membership.

Other Categories of Membership

In the interest of promoting the development of experienced psychotherapists, one category of associate membership is offered for those with the intent of becoming full members. These members will be working with a mentor as they progress to Full Membership.

Associate Membership

- has completed a relevant professional degree
- is currently practicing psychotherapy under supervision appropriate to the licensure
- has recommendations from at least three faculty, supervisors, and/or Academy members
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- agrees to work with an Academy member mentor
- may be an associate for no more than five years

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For students currently enrolled in a graduate degree program. Application includes acceptable recommendations from two faculty, supervisors or Academy members.

For information regarding membership requirements or to request an application, contact the Central Office. Membership information and a printable application form are also available on the Academy's Web site, www.aapweb.com.

Executive Offices

aap@caphill.com
230 Washington Ave Ext, Suite 101
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