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Psychotherapy and the Arts

Founded in 1964 by John Warkentin, PhD, MD and Thomas Leland, MD

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Art is the activity by which a person, having experienced an emotion, intentionally transmits it to others.

—Leo Tolstoy

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Editorial

Creative Writing, Creative Thinking

Our theme, *Psychotherapy and the Arts,* explores how these two disciplines impact and reflect each other. The arts—whether literary, performance, or creative—expand our ability to express the deeper truths of life, sometimes taking us where we do not otherwise have the language or means to go. Art can take us into lives and worlds beyond our own lived experience as well as give us insight into our own. Whether the power of fiction to tell universal truths or poetry to capture a profound emotion, the ability of music to stir the soul, or the visual impact of a painting or sculpture that touches or expresses something deep within us, the arts move us beyond our words and beyond ourselves. They open us up. They help us name our unknown knowns.

The relationship between the arts and psychotherapy is bidirectional. Each recognizes the power of the other in the common pursuit of insight and expression. Any form of art can have therapeutic impact, directly or indirectly enhancing the formal work of psychotherapy. And bookshelves and film catalogues are filled with examples of the arts depicting psychotherapy, exploring the mysterious power of the therapist's couch, or expressing the pain of mental health struggles.

I am not an artist. My awkward stick figures will not be calling out for me to pick up a paintbrush! But I do know the power of art—be it a painting, a piece of music, a novel, or a film—to touch my soul. Reading fiction is my first love, providing such rich explorations of other worlds, universal truths, and personal insight over my lifespan. (Film similarly so.) And writing is often the process by which I figure out what I'm thinking, recognizing my own truths most clearly as they flow through my pen (or my fingers on the keyboard). So, it is not surprising that my first published piece of writing was a review of a novel—a story in fact about the intersection of art and psychotherapy, reviewed for *Voices* (Bauer, 2015) several years before I become editor. Carol Gilligan's (2008)

Kyra explores a woman's relationships with love, the arts, and therapeutic boundaries. Her parallel explorations of psychotherapy and the arts depict both realms as similarly supporting and supported by structure and boundaries. Kyra's story, though different from my own, helped me process some of my own experiences with therapeutic boundaries, art helping to illuminate life. In similar ways, I turn and return often to the reading journey for new adventures beyond my own world and fresh insight into my life. Through the arts, I reach something within that otherwise eludes.

This theme arose in part from observation of the many energetic posts on the Academy's list-serv about what people had been reading and watching throughout the pandemic. Not all related to psychotherapy, of course, but I imagined some connections around art illuminating this surreal experience in our lives. Interestingly, authors focused not on the arts of fiction, film, and story but primarily on the creative and performing arts of painting, sculpture, and music. But whatever their art form, they wrote of similar experiences of art touching something deep within, something not accessible by the language of therapy alone, whether from the couch or the therapist's chair.

For this issue of *Voices*, authors considered how works of art or the act of creative expression have opened them up to new insights or therapeutic healing. David Pellegrini illustrates the importance of following one's creative path with clinical vignettes of two clients whose lives were opened up to their fullness through leaning into creativity. Ann Reifman relates the experience of another individual whose life was opened up through attunement to his artistic expressions. Z Rosenzweig shares his own story of being both psychotherapist and artist, exploring how painting has provided both a creative outlet and another way of truly seeing the other. Murray Scher describes the inspiring impact of a favorite painting and the parallels art holds for understanding the power of therapy. Paula Freed narrates her journey of therapeutic healing through sculpture. Harmon Biddle draws parallels between transference and transformation in psychoanalysis and art from the experience of seeing her paintings converted to glass sculptures by another artist.

Kathryn Van der Heiden's retrospective revisits a former Institute & Conference dedicated to creativity and documents some of the ways artistic expression has grounded her own life. Belinda Novik explores parallels between music and psychotherapy, showing how similar skills are applied to conducting a musical ensemble and leading a psychotherapy group; commentaries by Steven Ingram and Grover Criswell reflect upon how her insights tapped into their own experiences of the relationship between music and psychotherapy. Marilyn Clark shares a vignette about the power of music in her life and clinical work. Also highlighting the power of music, John Rhead explores the ways in which art is psychotherapy and psychotherapy is art, each informing the other.

Penelope Norton narrates how the creative process of baking helps her balance and refuel the energies of her psychotherapy practice. Mary Welford's review of the documentary film *The Artist and the Astronaut* and new poetry by Neal Whitman round out our theme.

In a potpourri section, Tim Willison brings creative expression to the broader theme of psychotherapy, penning an invitation to the profession that recognizes both its challenges and rewards.

A selection from the *Voices* archives, drawn from several similarly themed issues over the decades, fills out this issue. Renee Nell (1968) editorializes on the relationship between art and psychotherapy, elevating creative self-expression over more codified definitions of art as the greater source of therapeutic value. Wilfred Quaytman (1968) explores the psychotherapist's writer's block and the importance of sharing our clinical insights with others in the field. Albert and Diane Pesso (1975) write of the origins of psychomotor therapy in the art of dance. Sue Galler (1975) draws on her experience in viewing films for parallel ways to better see the full patient before her, while Robert Hoffman (1975) investigates the relationship between fiction and reality (truth) in the stories shared in psychotherapy. Warren Jacobs (1980) writes of achieving insight and healing through poetry. Finally, Brad Sachs (2003) returns us to the theme of writer's block, debunking our most common excuses for not writing.

As this is another in a trend of recent issues needing to be substantially filled from the archives, the two articles on writer's block seem particularly pertinent as they speak across the ages. As editor, I am left wondering what is going on that fewer people are writing today. Are we not bringing critical reflection to our practices in the way that our Academy fore-members did—or are we just not documenting that reflection, not sharing it? It is easy to fall into the self-doubt of "I don't have anything to say" or the belief that one needs to be an expert to write. But as someone who often needs to write in order to crystalize my thoughts, I know that writing can begin as a process of exploration as much as from a position of having something to say.

I find myself remembering a narrative model of case conceptualization that I learned in my psychoanalytic training. In contrast to factual presentations for consultation, this narrative approach has the therapist tell a brief story (two pages) of a clinical experience with the patient in such a way that the reader feels both in the room and the clinician's vulnerability in the work. I found it a powerful method, consultations made all the richer because the vignette tapped into something deeper in both the narrating therapist and those hearing the case than facts alone could reach. Art illuminated clinical insight. I might need to revisit this model with some of my current caseload where the therapy feels stalled, see what gets shaken loose in the process, see where new clinical insight dawns. I encourage readers to find their own modes for sharing their clinical experience and insight with our readers. When we write, and share, we all learn. And when we write, *Voices* carries the Academy's voice of the person of the therapist into the wider field of psychotherapy.

Our Summer/Fall 2023 theme, *Inviting the Unconventional,* will mirror our 2023 Institute & Conference in exploring psychotherapy in uncharted times, as upheaval of old systems and challenges to the status quo open the way for new clinical approaches and for broadening the accessibility of psychotherapy to more diverse populations.

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

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David Pellegrini

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Articles

Walking the Creative Path in Life and Psychotherapy

Are you a born writer? Were you put on earth to be a painter, a scientist, an apostle of peace? In the end the question can only be answered by action... If you were meant to cure cancer or write a symphony or crack cold fusion and you don't do it, you not only hurt yourself, even destroy yourself. You hurt your children. You hurt me. You hurt the planet...Creative work is not a selfish act or a bid for attention on the part of the actor. It's a gift to the world and every being in it. Don't cheat us of your contribution. Give us what you've got.

—Steven Pressfield, *The War of Art*

Creativity is a gift bestowed on every one of us, though some are blind to its presence and fail to benefit from its potential to enrich our lives. But creativity is not just a gift to each of us—it is an action, a commitment to persevere in that action, a stance in the world through which we restore ourselves and breathe vitality into our lives and the lives of others.

Consider the endless variety of narratives that form inside each of us regarding the role of creativity in our lives, some encouraging us, others stifling. When we ignore our creative impulses, or find them blunted, how do such constrictions increase our susceptibility to convention and the agendas others hold for us? How, then, do we show up in the world? As we tune in to our creative selves as therapists, and to the variety of messages and self-narratives that perhaps promote, perhaps restrict, our own creativity, we open up a broad and deep avenue of

exploration with our clients and the ways in which their creative self-narratives enhance their resilience or distort their emotional lives and adjustment.

A Brief Creative Autobiography

Twenty-some years ago, as I approached my 50th birthday, I began to reconsider deeply the role of creativity in my life. The more I pondered the issue, the more I felt a sense of urgency to reach a better understanding of the implications of my own relationship to creativity over the years.

Like many of my childhood peers, I was obsessed with sports from an early age, most especially baseball. My first professional aspiration was to pitch in the major leagues. However, it was my passion for the arts, literature, and creative writing that made me feel uniquely me. Through my high school and college years, I considered the relative merits of a life as a writer, an English professor, or an artist. Unfortunately, my fears and a streak of practicality held me back. How could I make a living that way?

Even more debilitating, my self-judgments sucked much of the joy from my artistic and literary pursuits. I was obsessed with the sense that I could never remotely meet my own artistic standards. My aesthetic taste was, on the one hand, a blessing that enriched my life. I knew what a great painting or work of literature was, and I took great pleasure from the master works I absorbed. On the other hand, I knew enough about what made a work of art and literature great that I also knew my own efforts would fall far short of my aspirations. If I could never paint like Rembrandt or write a poem like Theodore Roethke, why bother? Ira Glass's (2016) recent discussion regarding the creative impediments that breed in the gap between taste and talent showed me that I was far from alone in struggling with this dynamic.

Late in college, in an unconscious move to try to free myself from my judgmental self, I developed an independent study program to promote creativity in childhood through poetry writing. I knew that if you caught children young enough, they were largely fearless and unbridled in their creativity. My first effort was with a group of 3rd and 4th graders in a local public school, which culminated in a school-wide poetry festival, to great fanfare. That led to a reprise in a residential psychiatric treatment program for children and then a poetry writing program with troubled youth at the South Boston Boys Club. South Boston was a neighborhood in turmoil in 1969, as it stood on the cusp of forced integration through busing. In the end, what moved me most turned out to be my deep personal encounters with my poetry students more than the stir of personal creativity itself.

With the strong encouragement of my college mentors, I took a surprising and somewhat impulsive sharp left turn. I put my pen, camera, and art materials down (temporarily, I thought) and started graduate study in clinical child psychology, where I felt more confident of professional success. Early career pursuits being the consuming force that they were for me, it would be some time before I would return to my own inner longings for personal creative expression.

A Case of Re-Enchantment

The only divine reality is the unspeakable beauty of the world.
—Charles Burchfield, American painter and visionary artist

I think that beauty is not a luxury, but that it ennobles the heart and reminds us of the infinity that is within us.
—John O'Donohue, *Beauty: The Invisible Embrace*

Twenty-some years ago, around the time I began taking concrete steps to forge a sustainable creative practice, a client of mine referred his best friend, Terry, to me. He described Terry as "living in a dark, gray morass he can't seem to escape." My client felt that the exuberant person he grew up with was disappearing, slowly but inexorably, into that grayness. Terry was a tough case who had frustrated the best attempts of prior therapists to help him. In encouraging me to take Terry on, my client was confident that I would find the work rewarding if only I could get a glimpse of the mordantly funny, smart, creative, and empathic guy who was "still in there under the gray cloud."

Terry walked through my door with several stipulations in hand. His basic message was essentially this:

> First, don't try to cheer me up or give me strategies to cheer up. Second, don't tell me we need to try different antidepressants—I've tried them all. It's like giving pain meds to someone under anesthesia. I already am numb. Third, don't try to talk me out of any of my beliefs. I believe what I believe—life is disappointment. (personal communication)

Maybe it was his sardonic delivery, or the sheer cheekiness and surprise of his opening gambit, but I laughed out loud. "Discouraged yet?" "Not at all," I recall saying, noting that he could prove to be one of my easiest cases—I wouldn't have to lift a finger to try to change him. I'd enjoy the breather from other clients who were pressing me to try harder to help reduce their pain. He returned the laugh. "Good one." Mordant wit—check.

Terry had in fact tried virtually every psychiatric medication on the market, to no avail. He had tried virtually every type of therapeutic practitioner as well. Inpatient, outpatient, no treatment, you name it. One psychiatrist even convinced him to give ECT a go for his recalcitrant depression, to no effect. Occasionally, he considered suicide but felt too much compassion for his parents to leave them with that legacy, much to my relief. When I asked him to identify the worst aspect of his depression, he said it was the total lack of pleasure in the aspects of life he used to enjoy. The boredom and anhedonia were the worst of it, not the crushing sadness, although he felt that too.

The genesis of Terry's depression a decade earlier was very clear. He could name the day—the day his older brother died, at 40, from a particularly aggressive cancer. Terry adored his brother, whom he described as the one who brought the sparkle, the joy, the vitality to an otherwise colorless family life. When his brother died, "the music died." Without his brother, Terry could no longer "sing along." Life became a joyless exercise in going through the motions. His enchantment with life and the future evaporated. He insisted that he did not want to talk about the loss and its impact, at least not directly.

What then? What were we to do with our copious time together? We certainly would not spend it on what Terry called "shrink talk." Instead, we gradually got into

a rhythm of what we called an ongoing conversation about "creative beauties." Terry's exquisite and refined aesthetic sense was his one personal attribute that he held in an unqualified positive light and did not disown. Even when he claimed to no longer find pleasure in beautiful works of art or writing, he was willing to bring me samples of what he thought I would (or should!) savor. We spent months and months exchanging such creative works, sometimes reading poems or literary passages aloud to each other, sometimes passing art books back and forth.

It was quite some time before Terry turned over the beauty card that was most meaningful to him—a reproduction of Van Gogh's *The Starry Night*. Van Gogh painted this exquisite work of imagination from the window of his room in an asylum in Saint-Remy-de-Provence, where he admitted himself not long after the self-mutilation of his left ear. It was a painting that Van Gogh himself considered a failure. What lent *The Starry Night* such special meaning was revealed slowly over time. Terry's late brother was his Theo, his rock, the one who looked out for him, like Theo was for Vincent. That was the conversation in which the dam broke, and the unmetabolized grief for his brother came pouring forth.

In the months that followed, Terry took several trips to New York to sit in front of *The Starry Night* at the Museum of Modern Art, where he talked to his brother about how to do life without him. After considerable hesitation, he set out on a pilgrimage to Saint Remy, where Van Gogh's room was preserved as it was during his stay. It was his first significant travel since his brother's passing. Standing at the window from which Van Gogh painted his iconic masterwork, Terry described being awestruck by Van Gogh's transformation of pain into exquisite beauty. Recently, I made the same pilgrimage and stood at the same window in the same room, thinking about Terry and marveling at the transformative power of art.

My experience of Terry was a wonderful illustration of how art can help counteract disillusionment and despair (Adams, 2021) and "exhort and console its viewers, enabling them to become better versions of themselves" (de Botton & Armstrong, 2013, p. 5). At my urging, Terry began to look outward at the world, rather than predominantly inward at his own loss and suffering. This was perhaps the only explicit therapeutic directive I ever offered Terry—or at least the only one with which he willingly complied. He began to look at the world around him "through Van Gogh's eyes," searching for moments in nature and in life that inspired a sense of awe and wonder. Finding such moments became Terry's creative path to a gradual re-enchantment with life as it actually was in the present moment.

A Case of Misdirection and the Resonance of Passion

> *We do not choose our enthusiasms; they choose us. The difference is huge. We can acquire an enthusiasm, learn it from someone else, of course, be influenced by those around us, but if it does not occasion resonance within us, it will be a passing fancy. Re-sonance means to "re-sound," to set off echoes within us, to perseverate within, as a tuning fork hums long after it is struck.*
>
> —James Hollis, *What Matters Most: Living a More Considered Life*

John came to see me a few years ago because of what he described as an "existential crisis of identity" that left him with periodic waves of anxiety and pervasive self-doubt. In mid-life, he was a very successful entrepreneur who had made a small fortune that meant little to him. A serial idea-generator, he was a poor operator, and he knew it. Running businesses bored him, so serial startups and rapidly monetized exits were his modus operandi. I questioned whether he was perhaps leaving his businesses prematurely, leaving money on the table. If true, I wondered why that might be. His response was essentially, "If I have to do this business one more month, I'll die of boredom, or I'll kill it from neglect."

John came from an extraordinarily creative family. His mother was a prize-winning writer. His sister was a very accomplished and widely exhibited oil painter. His brother was a classically trained musician with several original sonatas under his belt. John, on the other hand, was known for being "his father's son." His father was a very successful business executive who, unlike his son, stayed with the same company his whole career, climbing the ladder to the executive suite.

John had a facility with numbers and a desire to be close to his father. Having interest in his father's business pursuits seemed to be the clearest avenue to garnering his attention. Unlike the designated creative members of the family, John and his father were esteemed for being "sensible" people. Thus, great business success was predicted for John from a young age. Never mind that numbers and business did not fit with John's bookish pursuits, his active imagination, and his dreamy nature. Those counterfactuals were simply overlooked in his family. Gradually, he overlooked them as well.

Over time, loved ones noted that John's sweet nature had taken a darker tone. Angry outbursts became increasingly common. He became infamous for his tendency to pick a good fight. Mostly, his behavior turned toward the passive-aggressive, especially towards his spouse, who enjoyed the freedom to pursue her own passions unconstrained by financial worries. His alcohol intake increased. More and more, he drank alone late at night. By the time John came to see me, he was riddled with guilt, shame, and frustration. It was clear that John was at a critical juncture, not just in his career, but in his life more broadly. His psyche was clearly unwilling to continue cooperating with the fate to which he had consigned himself.

It turned out that I was not the first to misdiagnose John with attention deficit disorder (ADD). Based on that notion, he was willing to give stimulant medication another go. Like a good soldier, he tried his best to stick with a business venture for longer than was typical. He tried taking pride in the freedom his sacrifices provided for his wife and his children to pursue their passions. Yet the symptoms of his misdirected choices continued largely unabated.

Once it dawned on me that we were barking up the wrong tree of deficits, I began pushing to see what we were missing. Where were *his* passions and the childhood enthusiasms that fired up his life force, before he succumbed to his family's agenda? What did his soul, his psyche want? What kind of life might he be willing to die trying to build? John claimed—rather weakly—that all those embers of passion and creativity had long grown cold.

Not long after we abandoned the ADD misdirection, John confessed that he had a secret ambition to write a novel, an ambition that he had harbored since his creative writing classes in college. It was an enthusiasm that he never allowed himself to prioritize

over making money for the family. He had no confidence that he could or would ever bring it to fruition. His reasons were a shopping list of insufficiencies: lack of talent; lack of time "on the scoreboard;" it was a "vanity" project that was of no significance to anyone but himself. And yet he could not let it go—it haunted him and left him feeling deeply disappointed in himself.

The more we discussed what his life would be like if he gave himself over to his secret ambition, the greater the sense of urgency rose in him to just do it. It soon became clear that he had actually done more writing than he had first let on. Eventually, he brought in a chapter of this book that no one—including his wife—had ever seen or even knew about. Could I really have been surprised that it was a beautifully written family drama about frustrated ambitions, the burden of expectations, and the ways in which they distort character?

Following one's true purpose in life—especially if it entails a mid-course realignment of life pursuits—typically requires sacrifice to go along with the reward of living fully as one's authentic self. Fortunately for John, he had more than enough money on hand for a lifetime. With encouragement—mine and, more importantly, his wife's—John announced that he was officially done with business, much to the disappointment of his now elderly father, who thought John's exit was impulsive! Henceforth, he declared, he was a writer, a vocation he pursued with vigor, with no signs of ADD, and with enough success to keep his creative self-doubts contained.

Although the ride down that passion trail, begun in mid-life, was far from smooth, John reported an increasing sense of integrity and wholeness. He often said to me in the following years, "Writing saved my life." His behavior and demeanor gradually were infused with the gratitude that generally accompanies self-discovery and the freedom to pursue life on one's own terms.

A Final Reflection

As I crossed the 50-year marker and re-opened the door to my own creative longing and frustration, the universe provided me with ample support for my mid-life's journey. As my identity expanded to include artist and writer, a new stream of clients showed up—like Terry and John—whose journeys were parallel in some important ways with my own. Their work served to reinforce my own intentions, and vice versa. We have been great companions for each other along our respective creative paths.

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Art, Psychotherapy, and the Often Surprising Process of Change

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Psychotherapy and art propelled my friend to make a profound change. It happened 30 years ago and I continue to reflect on the message of his journey.

"Max" was an artist, more specifically a painter. He was around 45 years old, gay, extremely smart, a political activist, independently wealthy, and somewhat lonely... to name a few of his characteristics. He spent most days painting, going to the gym, doing something politically active, walking his dog, and having meals with friends. He was in therapy.

When Max was painting, he usually sat on a stool and worked on a large canvas on the wall, sketching, painting, staring, repainting, staring, repainting, over and over. Next to the large canvas, Max had placed a small one. Occasionally, he would stop focusing on the large canvas and "take a break" (as he called it) by painting on the small canvas.

At one time in his life, Max was painting many canvases of lighthouses in New England. I have no idea how many he completed, but many of his friends have at least one of his lighthouses in their homes or psychotherapy offices. (Max had a lot of therapist friends; he was an excellent therapist himself, helping many of us with our issues.). Max's smaller canvas was often filled with nude men. He claimed that painting these men helped him to relax, move away from his primary work, and be able to return with more energy and creativity.

At some point, Max's therapist suggested that he switch the canvases. So, Max began painting nude men most of the day on a large canvas: sketching, painting, staring, repainting, staring, repainting, over and over. Occasionally, he would stop focusing on the nude men and take a break by painting lighthouses.

The switch was profound for Max. After a short period of time, he decided to move to San Francisco. Within a few months after his move, Max fell in love. Within a year, he had many people who wanted to buy his paintings.

The shift of canvases allowed Max to examine his life in a new way. He had often thought of moving to San Francisco, a kinder place for gay men than was his hometown in those days, but he had never acted on these

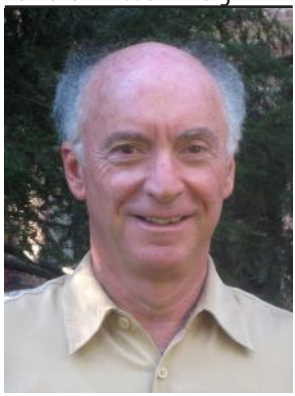
thoughts. Once in San Francisco, where presumably there were more available gay men and where Max was happier, he got into a serious relationship. And once in San Francisco, the market for his paintings of nude men burst open. While Max did not financially need to sell his paintings, it was certainly affirming to him that people wanted to (and did) buy them. The shift in canvases was a simple and profound move for Max.

Over and over, I think of this story for myself, for my friends, and for my patients. What is the large canvas in our lives? What is the small one? Do we need to switch them? What parts of identity are working? What parts are not? How can we shift our primary focus from what is keeping us stuck to seeing other parts of ourselves and more of who we want to be? ▼

Through art there is an opportunity to connect with the unconscious which can foster increased self-awareness.

—Laurie Ponsford-Hill

Edward Z Rosenzweig



My Artful Relationship

Z Rosenzweig, PhD, is a clinical psychologist, now retired after a gratifying practice of 45 years. He was educated at the University of Virginia, Emory University, and Harvard University yet has received most of his true education from life experience. He is now enjoying the pursuit of art and as much leisure/relaxation as he can manage. He has called Atlanta home for his adult life.
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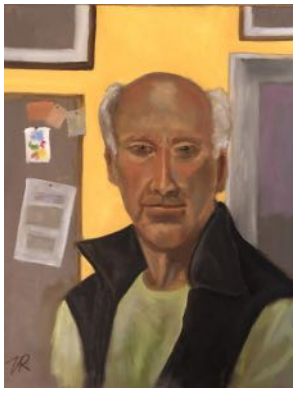
Friendship is the transmuter of all relationships... the ultimate touchstone of friendship is not improvement, neither of the other nor of the self: the ultimate touchstone is witness, the privilege of having been seen by someone and the equal privilege of being granted the sight of the essence of another, to have walked with them and to have believed in them, and sometimes just to have accompanied them for however brief a span, on a journey impossible to accomplish alone.

—David Whyte, "Friendship," *Consolations* (2020)



With enough living and experience, each of us can reflect and have some capacity to tell our story in a meaningful way. We discover our own truths and principles which guide our living. This self-narrated story is a way of making sense of our experiences, and it gives us the capacity of expressing our core beliefs in a coherent and substantially cohesive way. Where am I and how did I get here? What is my identity, and what are my recurring patterns, and what do they mean for my place in the world?

I actually did not set out consciously to become a psychologist. I thought that psychology would be a good grounding for my eventual and expected entry into the family grocery business. I would learn useful knowledge and understanding of human nature and apply this for working effectively with employees, developing productive advertising, and other real world, practical applications. However, as I approached the end of my formal training, I realized that the familiar grocery business would not be enough to sustain me for a lifetime. I needed something more. It was exciting and energizing

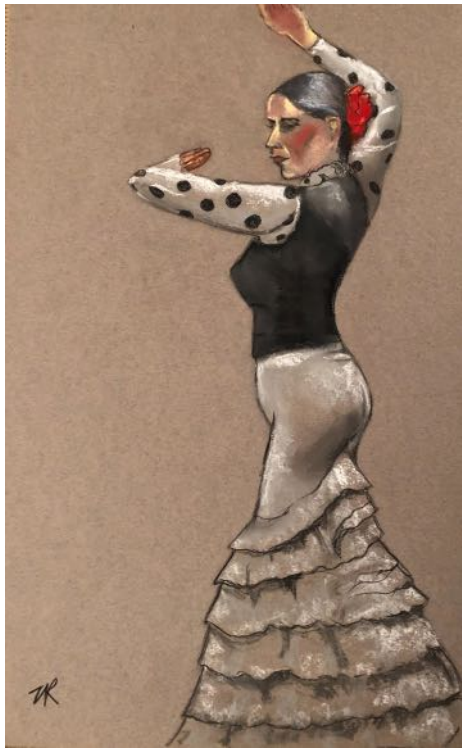
to foresee a professional life of frequent engagement, of enhanced status in the community, and a pretty good flow of income. I sought out ideas that felt synchronous with my own views and deeply held beliefs, even if I could not adequately articulate what those were. So, I went about my work with a regularity that fit my need for order and predictability. I took pride in my burgeoning career and the work that I was doing—writing psychological reports that were more akin to character studies than dry reportage of test results and statistics. I enjoyed the creative writing aspect of report writing. As well, I found joy and even excitement in connecting with new patients and was eager for the journey we would share. However, there still seemed to be something missing, elusive to me.

As a lark, I enrolled in a drawing class and found that I had discovered an inner resource of which I was unaware. At the end of a typical work day, I would feel spent from the intensity of the personal engagement and the effort of maintaining presence in the consulting room. My energy was depleted. However, almost immediately I found an excitement and energy in art such that those afterhours sessions activated a different and wondrous part of my brain. I had a hard time settling down and going to sleep after art sessions. As I did when I first discovered the world of psychology, I immersed myself in this new world—studying, practicing, seeking out teachers/mentors. When I was thus engaged, time was altered, and I found myself in the zone. My 50-minute bladder gave way to hours at the easel without urgency or hunger or thirst. Yet I was still basically identified as a psychologist, and this art thing was a pleasant diversion. I did not call myself an artist.

> For 42 years, I have earned a living as a psychologist. I have shared the joy, grief, heartache, confusion, and relief with people who have become dear to me—I have shared in their lives, given of myself in return, and have been changed in the process. This has accorded me a rich and gratifying professional life and has presented me with opportunities and challenges. Much of this work involves listening not just with my ears but also with my heart. I also look and notice, and I take in the nuances as well as the deeply engraved character in their faces and bodies...

Such was the beginning of my artist's statement for a solo art show I presented 7 years ago, 4 years before I stopped my practice of clinical psychology. While I emphasized the influence of my professional practice on my development as an artist, the converse seems equally true. Each informs the other. Underlying all of this is my core belief that everything emanates from the relationship, whether with a patient or with a model/subject. There is (or was) anticipation and expectation of facing the other with some excitement as well as anxiety. Will we connect? Will we go beyond the superficial to the more sub-

stantive? Will I be able to convey my having truly seen the other? In either case, it is a dynamic process without foregone conclusions. It unfolds.



In the course of my practice, I worked with children as well as adults. Or as I frequently quipped, I worked with children of all ages. As a bridge between the world of psychotherapy and the world of art, I'll refer to the work of D. W. Winnicott, the noted British pediatrician and psychoanalyst. For him, the relationship was essential and it was always co-created. Much of what he introduced and elaborated, therapists have come to embrace as universal truths—the real versus the false self, the holding environment, the sense of being versus doing. The capacity for being (the ability to feel genuinely alive inside and to maintain a true self) is fostered in his view by the practice of childhood play. By playing, he meant not only the ways that children of all ages play, but also the adult play of making art or engaging in sports, hobbies, humor, meaningful conversation, etc. At any age, he saw play as crucial to the development of authentic selfhood, because when people play, they feel real, spontaneous, alive, and keenly interested in what they are doing (Winnicott, 1971).

For Winnicott, psychotherapy was all about playing in this way—not in the sense of joking around, but in the sense of a mode of interaction in which spontaneity and authentic action supplanted disengaged interpretation. He created the Squiggle Game, a technique of communicating with children through drawing (Winnicott, 1967-1968). First, he would make a squiggle, a twisted or wiggly line spontaneously drawn on a piece of paper. The child would then add elements to the drawing, and the analyst and the child would both comment on its meaning. Then the analyst would transform the child's drawing, and then both would comment further on the drawing. This provided both evaluation and ample interaction between the analyst and the child. He believed that creative communication and play occur in the "third area," "transitional area," or "area of experiencing"—the space between persons where contributions from each overlap (Winnicott, 1971). For him, this play was serious. It is also a good metaphor for the play and communication that can occur between therapist and patient in an ongoing manner. It is an invitation to engage and the invitation can be declined. Since my office was set up to be child friendly, there were art materials, games, toys, and puppets available. Some adults found this disconcerting. In fact, one adult patient was openly dismissive and disdainful of these "toys." As she sat with a basket of puppets at her side, she talked of her painful childhood and her dysfunctional, rejecting mother. Wordlessly,

she touched the puppets while she talked with me. As the session progressed, I noticed that as she talked of these painful experiences, she delved deeper into the puppet basket. Before we were done for the day, she had slipped her hand into one of the puppets and was actively engaged in communicating through the puppet. She felt free to play. This was an important pivot point in our talk therapy.

The bridge between psychotherapy and art goes in both directions. Training and experience as a psychotherapist invariably inform one's creation of art. My own preferred subject matter is people, and most of my work (play) centers around portraiture and figurative subjects. I came to the making of art relatively late in life as a creative outlet. I was drawn to people. In painting, I had found another way to look at people and describe them without words but with line and color. No matter how much I have tried to be objective and portray the literal, invariably I add my own imagination and perception. Like with my pursuit of competency in psychotherapy, I have sought out training and experiences that, along with considerable practice, have moved me along and helped me to grow. I have also had the good fortune to meet and study with some gifted artists and teachers and have felt welcomed and encouraged, and this warm interaction has meant the world to me and encouraged my development as an artist. It has been crucial to have had witness to my evolution and for me to be seen as taking this pursuit with seriousness and commitment.

Some years ago, I attended a meeting of the Atlanta Psychoanalytic Society where a psychology colleague (who is also a gifted artist herself) was the featured speaker. She was doing a live demonstration with a professional model, and she was emphasizing the interactive process of creation. Her initial illustration was to put a mark on the paper and note that that first mark was the beginning of the process. Each successive mark was in relation to the original mark and all the marks that followed. To me this was an

innovative way to view the making of art. Subsequently, she invited the audience (all psychotherapists of different orientations and approaches) to engage in an exercise. One entire wall had been covered in drawing paper. Participants were invited to come to the wall and begin their own drawing of the model. They were then replaced by another group who built on the initial marks to develop the drawing further. Then, a third set of artists came to the wall. So, in essence, each of us was relating to the model as well as to all of the previous marks by the myriad of participants. This evening experience was quite rich—the paintings were not interpreted as such but there was much stirred up by this multi-layered experiment, and participants felt invited to talk about their experiences in this large group Squiggle.

In my own artistic practice, I tend to favor realism. From time to time, I will indulge my non-objective spirit by doing a version of the Squiggle. I'll start by dropping blobs of watercolor paint on the painting surface, mostly choosing colors that appeal to me in that moment. I'll then move the paint around and let the edges blend and merge. After a while, I'll look at what I have produced and look for what has emerged as an image (sort of an artistic Rorschach) and then develop what appears to me. I am thus interacting with the marks I have made and fundamentally interacting with myself. I see what is there to be seen and enjoy what has come spontaneously. Some of these have become my favorite creations.

I look back with interest at all that I have experienced and believe that I have come to an informed perspective. Having attained some senior status as a clinician, I consider that I am in mid-adolescence as an artist. My orbit as a psychotherapist is eclipsed by the orbit of my developing as an artist. I worked for 45 years as a psychologist and have been identified by that role and status. For the past 20-some-odd years, I have also identified as an artist. When I retired from active practice, I did not give up the

identity I had worked so diligently to develop but have now grown into an additional identity—I can call myself an artist. These are not mere labels but rather ways of representing what is essential about me and what is critically important to me. This is not an end point, but what follows next for me remains to be seen. ▼

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I applied streaks and blobs of colours onto the canvas with a palette knife, and I made them sing with all the intensity I could...

—Wassily Kandinsky

Murray Scher

Portrait of an Unknown

In art there is only one thing that counts: the bit that cannot be explained.

—Georges Braque

Uncle Jared has been with me for about 55 years, most of that time in my consulting room. He has been a constant source of joy and contemplation. I think he has quietly enhanced my ability as a therapist and also affected me as a person. He asks little and gives much. He is gentle and warm albeit a bit sad. He is stiff but kind. I have loved him and appreciated him always.

Perhaps I should talk about how we met. I was living and working in Binghamton, New York, and had begun collecting antiques. I discovered a lovely woman, Mrs. Cone, who sold things from her home shop. One day while visiting her I saw him, hanging on a wall in her shop. He was beautiful, and I fell in love. She told me he had been in her residence, but her husband had retired and brought home paintings from his office and so she had no space for this painting. She told me she called him Uncle Jared as that was a character in a book she was reading at the time a picker approached her with the painting. (A picker goes around to residences and buys whatever they will sell and then resells what has been found to a dealer.) Mrs. Cone too had loved him. She believed he was mid-19th century and perhaps painted by Chester Harding. Harding was a well-known artist who had worked in the Binghamton area and by happenstance also in Tennessee, where I later lived. That was after Uncle Jared traveled with us to Texas from New York. He is back in Texas now, as I could not be separated from him when we are not in Tennessee, which is the greater part of the year.

He is unsigned, but once on a visit to the National Gallery in Washington, DC, I found the room with

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Harding's work and walked right up to his paintings; having lived with Uncle Jared, I recognized the work of his creator. In a way I am glad he is unsigned as he might be too valuable to keep around if he were. My wife and I agreed that were there to be a fire in our house we would save our child, each other, the dog, and Uncle Jared.

The frame of the painting is original and was gold leafed. Mrs. Cone decided to clean it and inadvertently messed up the gold leaf only to discover it was silver leaf under the gold. She liked the effect and left it, as have I. Imperfection so often enhances art.

I think another reason I fell in love with Uncle Jared is that he reminds me of my favorite painting in the world, which is a portrait in the Pitti Palace in Florence. It is

by Titian and is usually called *Portrait of an Unknown* or *The Man with Grey Eyes,* and some think it is a portrait of the Duke of Northumberland. In any case they resemble each other to my eye, and that makes me love him even more.

This is a painting where the eyes follow you, and that has always made me feel observed, cared about, and held to a high standard. He thought enough of himself to have his portrait painted, or someone else did, and so I must try to think well of myself at the same time encouraging my clients to do the same. He is well-dressed and formal, yet not without softness and a certain kindness. He invites but in a restrained manner, which is much of how I am when a new client enters my consulting room.

As the therapy progresses it mirrors my relationship with Uncle Jared, whom I have studied carefully to try to discern what he is about, how life has affected him, and what his pain is. I must do similar searching with clients and try to listen carefully to them just as I watch carefully with Uncle Jared. All this takes place under his benign and gentle gaze.

Oddly, I have many paintings in my consulting room, and they are all landscapes, which provide tranquility and bring the natural world into the interior. In recent years I added another portrait, but it has always been Uncle Jared who held the commanding space. Portraits appeal most to me, and yet I have bought landscapes for the room, which has surprised and puzzled me. Perhaps it is just what was available when I searched for art. Or perhaps I yearned for the silent contemplation of the joys of nature.

I am passionately interested in and attracted to works of art, both fine and decorative. When traveling I invariably spend much time in museums and am always enriched by the experience. I believe my work as a therapist is enhanced by the contemplation of beautiful things. I take much solace in an often painful and destructive world to know that there are so many who value beauty and the work of one's hands.

The Italians say *Ritratto d'Ignoto*, which is translated as *Portrait of an Unknown*. That seems to me to aptly describe every new client who enters our consulting rooms. We see the person but have no knowledge of the richness and depth of the life they have led and what that has made of them. It is only through silent contemplation and careful listening that the intricacy of their being reveals itself.

I adore being along for the journey into self that clients share with me, at the same time knowing there is something hidden and inscrutable just as there is with Uncle Jared. He is unknown in some ways and can never be known, and in a way, I love that about my clients, too. Every facet of themselves that they reveal is likely accompanied by many other facets I will never see. Nor should I. Would Uncle Jared be as appealing to me if I knew everything about him? I might be more comfortable with him, but would he stimulate me as much? Probably not.

I often try to figure out what art is and must confess that I never come up with a complete or satisfying answer...what I do know is that it is something created by another that moves and invites me or mystifies and changes me. Kind of sounds like therapy, doesn't it? ▼

Paula Freed

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Whatever Comes to Mind

I was 29 years old when I married a man that I didn't want to marry, to appease my mother. Old enough to not enter a marriage that felt wrong and old enough to emphatically state that fact. Instead, I walked down the aisle as a Zombie Bride. Why would I do such a thing you might ask? The short answer: To abandon her wishes seemed unfathomable. To be loved was to obey. To stay sane was to deaden, ergo the zombie.

According to Merriam-Webster, *zombie* signifies a body of a dead person given the semblance of life but mute and will-less by a supernatural force. Will-less so vividly expressed the feeling that had taken over my body. I was neither supernatural nor dead. The term zombie seemed appropriate purely as misnomer for a deadened self in need of resurrection. It took two therapists and three lawyers before I ended that 13-year marriage, longer to realize that my ability to cut off feelings had begun long before I had walked down that aisle.

My experience as volunteer at a mental health clinic stirred an interest to become a therapist. Hunter College School of Social Work accepted me into their program. Unfortunately, but not surprising, the course work illuminated my underlying issues. I appeared sane enough to graduate, but inside I was still enraged with my mother and in the worst emotional shape of my life. My social work training proved insufficient to work with patients, so I returned to Hunter College for their 2-year post-master's program in psychoanalytic psychotherapy. The course work led me to enroll in a psychoanalytic institute and undergo psychoanalysis.

I ended up on Clara's couch, encouraged to speak freely whatever came to mind. Given the tumultuous

relationship with my mother, I had predicted a negative transference, but I came sorely unprepared for how unrelenting that would be. I rapidly turned Clara into my mother without any beforehand knowledge whether she fit the role.

Transference is a tricky process. To work through my feelings, I needed to tolerate conflict and accept my limitations, Clara's limitations, and if all went well, the limitations of my mother. To accomplish such an arduous task, I needed to develop a civilized relationship with Clara so that I might find a safe place to re-experience all repressed wishes, fears, conflicts, vulnerabilities, guilt, and yearnings.

Theory is terrific. Reality is different. I could not deal with regressive and painful emotions that arose without feeling exposed, criticized, or shamed, whether real or imagined, often feeling deprived, unloved, and above all, misunderstood.

Lying on Clara's couch drove me into empty silence. Coming three times a week increased the emptiness. Without inquiry, I was convinced my wishes were too much and that even if I expressed them, they would be rejected. It didn't feel like a projection; it felt like I was trapped in a room with my mother for 45 minutes, three times a week, waiting for the moment when I could escape her. If the goal was to re-experience my past, the transference was in full bloom.

Halfway through my analysis, it occurred to me that my first experience speaking whatever came to mind was not as analysand but as sculptor. First with clay and then stone, I molded and carved visual representations of the unfulfilled yearnings and attachments I wished for but feared. I spoke whatever came to mind, not in words but in lines, shapes, and forms.

Several years after that fateful marriage, I had wandered into an art supply store offering sculpture lessons. Ben, a tall rugged-looking older man with an engaging smile, greeted me. In the space of an hour, he enticed me to join his class. I left the store with a package of oil-based clay and a few clay tools to make a small model. Class was Monday at 10:00 a.m.

Back home, I quickly roughed out a crude abstract model of two undefined figures huddled together. I returned for my first class. Ben's reaction surprised me.

"You did this? It reminds me of Henry Moore."

At the time, I only knew of Henry Moore from a college course crammed with 200 years of art history, but the comparison thrilled me.

"Your form has beauty from all angles. You have a good eye."

Ben walked to a large cabinet and returned with a 25-lb bag of clay and four clay tools.

"Okay, now you are going to reproduce it."

I opened the bag, eager to begin. Ben took a large handful of clay to demonstrate the coil method. After rolling the clay into thin cylinder coils, he attached the ends to create a circular base. He then showed me how to build up each layer of coils using tools to adhere one coil to other. I took to the process immediately. I loved the feel of the clay. In a few weeks, my model emerged into a 2-ft form. After it was fired, I created a gunmetal gray patina, accomplished by spraying on and arduously wiping off metallic green paint, then rubbing the surface with steel wool for rougher texture. The 2.5-hour classes flew by.

Although Ben had other students who would come and go, none worked more than one class. I worked with him for 2 years, often two to three times a week. I was hooked

on clay, more hooked on the joy of being with Ben. He did more than appreciate my work; he valued me as a creative person in a way I had not been able to see or to feel myself. To suddenly find that creative part of me was joyous. My marriage was empty, and my fleeting family ties, though self-imposed, exacerbated my loneliness and withdrawal. I had little purpose in my life. I was passionate about nothing, until I discovered sculpture.

Then without warning, my life as married lady began to fall apart. I awakened one morning and began to sob uncontrollably, unable to pinpoint the emotional pain that emerged. While I regrouped from that moment, I was less able to keep at bay a lingering depression that moved back and forth in intensity. Spending time at Ben's studio helped, but the moment I returned home, so did the pain. I knew only that I wanted to leave my husband.

Later, I met Addie, a woman who lived in my apartment building. Addie carved marble. She came to see my sculptures.

"Your work is good. But you need to carve stone."

"Right now, I'm really loving clay."

"You'll love stone more. It's the ultimate material for sculpture."

"Maybe someday."

The next morning Addie appeared at my front door with a shopping cart that held a hammer, chisels, sandbag, spray water bottle, and a small piece of alabaster.

"This is for me?

"Yes"

"Where am I going to do this?"

She made a beeline for my terrace.

"Is that enough space?"

"I see two chairs and a table. All we need."

Addie and I set up a makeshift studio on the terrace of my apartment where I embarked on my first stone-carving journey.

Unlike molding clay, the work of transforming raw stone into finished form was more tedious. The finishing required endless hours of rasping, filing, and polishing with different grades of wet sandpaper. And unlike my first piece of sculpture I created with Ben, four figures emerged, somewhat amorphous, and it was questionable whether the figures were yearning to connect or aching to remain apart.

Addie stirred a similar attachment as Ben in that she admired my work and pushed me to further find my creative voice. She also was an accepting mothering image that I could relate to and enjoy. In retrospect, the day I woke up sobbing after discovering sculpture was not so much about my life falling apart, but rather the zombie bride was awakening.

I produced 20 pieces of work, first in clay and then in stone, until I stopped sculpting to go to social work school and then psychoanalytic training. I had arrived at that first session with Clara having experienced years of rage toward my mother, rage so intense that I wished to kill her. Before I could address the deeply embedded hostilities that embodied that wish and seek peace to our relationship, my mother died, in 1989, just short of her 79th birthday.

It was shortly after my mother's death that I returned to sculpture. I had a new teacher, Gerry. He was talented, intense, and full of creative suggestions. He encouraged me

to carve marble.

"First make a model in clay," instructed Gerry.

I resisted. My figurative abstract forms had flowed spontaneously to the raw alabaster. I didn't need a model. I didn't need to plan. I begrudgingly roughed out a clay model of a large head. When I began to transfer the clay into stone, it felt frustrating, painful, and then torturous. I chiseled away a tiny section and then slammed down my tools.

Given my success with clay, I put the stone away and began to mold a clay form. I called it *Woman on the Couch.* The proportions were wrong. I couldn't fix what was wrong without making it look worse. I tried to carve it in a large piece of white marble, but getting the right proportions was more painful than molding clay. I labored over the form for months. In a moment of distress, I chopped off a large chunk of the knee, then relegated it to a shelf in the art studio.

I revisited the large marble head. A second head began to emerge. This excited me but did not deter frustration. The same feelings of dread emerged. The minute I picked up the chisel, I felt tense. Before I knew it, I totally lost sight of the form. The feeling in my body was not anger; it was despair. I heard Gerry's voice.

"Easy, girl, stop beating it to death."

His words brought me temporarily out of my mad trance. But I quickly re-entered my beating frenzy. I seemed intent on creating two figure forms with a menacing quality of being trapped in the same body with another and no way to flee. My fellow students asked who were the two faces? The two bodies? I hadn't thought much about the question. It was what emerged as I studied the stone.

I neglected to share my agony with Clara. After my mother died, she became the target of my unexpressed rage in the same way I had experienced it toward my mother: cut-off, while yearning for connection. I didn't always show up dreading every session, but once there I usually felt distant and alone. Gratefully, the feeling disappeared the moment I was on the other side of the door. Poof. Gone. And for the most part temporarily forgotten.

Unlike my mother, Clara was unwilling to tolerate the cut-off. She was relentless, but given my ability to stay deadened, I was more of a painful patient than a patient in pain, unable to see how I projected the same insatiable needs I had always hated in my mother. My feelings around loss were more complicated and deeply embedded than I thought; I also was unwilling to relinquish them.

Then a flyer arrived in my mail for a writing program in Washington, DC: New Directions in Psychoanalytic Thinking. The program seemed a perfect opportunity to further my development as a psychoanalytically-oriented writer. In one of my institute classes, I had been asked to write up my case for a book chapter. I was thrilled to be asked. It would be my first published piece.

While New Directions stirred passions to create, l struggled to concisely formulate ideas that flowed from my work with patients. I revised sentences to no avail and jumped from one topic to another, agonizing over each one. I wrote and rewrote the same 20 pages, wanting to rip them all to shreds.

My struggle baffled me. Two years earlier, I met the deadline for the book chapter with ease all while completing a 25-page paper for my final case presentation at the institute. I wasn't sure what to make of my inability to write a cohesive essay.

As part of the New Directions program, I attended a summer retreat at a delightful

mountaintop resort in Vermont. I arrived there, laptop in tow, hoping my creative ideas would take form in meaningful words. I had never participated in a writing retreat. I had no idea what to expect, but I was eager.

Waves of reverie often came to mind while driving, showering, observing art, listening to music, or getting lost in prose without intention to capture them fully. Other times they lingered long enough for me to self-reflect and gain thoughtful insights. But

I had never put any of these thoughts to paper. I never wrote in a journal or kept a diary as many people do. Not until I began psychoanalysis had I ever jotted down dreams or memories.

That summer, I had my first exposure to the free write. "Write without stopping for 10 minutes," directed our instructor. I stared endlessly at the paper in front of me. Nothing came to mind. Others busily wrote as I sat pen in hand, my blocked thoughts feeding my anxiety.

Back in Washington, I spent days reading scholarly papers on psychoanalytic psychopathology to solidify my thoughts. Every topic stirred anxious feelings. Every paper sounded like me. My body sensed a similar feeling of being trapped on the couch in Clara's office struggling to unleash my authentic self, while not totally informed as to what my authentic self might be.

I attempted to bring the conflict with writing into the treatment room.

"Perhaps your struggle to explore patients' material is connected to our relationship," posed Clara.

I wanted a friendly chat about why I couldn't write. I shut down, feeling dismissed. When away from her I saw the validity in what she said, but I couldn't admit this to her. The insight only exacerbated further the regressive and painful insights that made me feel exposed and criticized.

Just as I could not sit with my words, I could not sit with Clara's interpretations. Instead, I continued to write and abandon whatever premise I espoused. The same torture that haunted me in my psychoanalysis and stone carving was now alive in my writing. I wrote and rewrote. Then I threw it all away. Instead of hammer and chisel, I used cut, paste, and delete.

Finally, the day came when I arrived at Clara's office, bypassed the couch, and sat on the chair across from her. Feeling an uneasy ache in my stomach, I blurted, "I can't do this any longer." The exact words spoken between us are a blur. To simply express my frustration and hopelessness about our relationship and not be thrown by her response was enough for me in that moment. I left the session feeling an odd combination of exhilarated and depressed. Not "good for you girl, you spoke and were heard" but rather a sinking feeling about what to anticipate from then on.

The day was dreary. As I drove home, light rain fell softly against my windows. The back-and-forth motion of the windshield wipers pushed me into a familiar light trance. I could not completely identify the emotion that penetrated my body, but I felt an urgency to write.

I returned to Clara's office with pages in hand, again bypassing the couch for the chair. The same sinking feeling flooded my mind and body. It did not deter my mission.

"I want to read what I wrote."

I predicted her response.

"Why don't you lie down and talk about it?"

"I prefer to sit here and read."

She did not rebuff my request. If she had, I was ready to protest. It was the first time in that room I felt entitled to own my needs and expect they be honored. It was some time before I got back on the couch, and although transference did not totally lose its tumultuous flavor, I was better able to take in her words while not completely free from feeling torn between calling for the zombie to rescue and staying true to myself.

For many years with Clara, I moved back and forth between engagement and retreat, trapped in a projected mental state, hearing my mother's voice telling me repeatedly how my feelings and thoughts challenged her well-being. That sinking feeling lingered but also alerted me to look at whether I was keeping Clara from seeing me or that she did see me, and it was to frightening for me to let her in.

I had been adept at falling apart and regrouping without anyone knowing I was or had ever been in distress. D. W. Winnicott (1989), the English pediatrician and psychoanalyst, said of an analytic patient, "It is always true to say when reviewing one of this patient's sessions that if she could scream, she would be well" (p. 116). I knew an important therapeutic shift had taken place in that session. My emotional response to Clara—my need for some measure of reasonable truce—was something I had never dared to do with my mother; it was the closest to a scream I had come to in my analysis.

That day, 12 months after my mother's death, when I had joined Gerry's sculpture class and began beating up stone, my zombie self was slipping away, leaving me alone to feel anger, resentment, despair, and disillusionment. I had felt abandoned by my mother, abandoned by Clara. But the abandonment by my zombie felt far more paralyzing.

I began to write about my experience of molding clay and carving stone and seeing where the process took me. The task was liberating. The more I wrote, the clearer I understood that my turmoil was less about skill than how my sculptural figures expressed a life-giving capacity that mirrored underlying conflicts.

Worse was my inability to stand in front of a piece of marble and not approach it as the enemy. Marble was harder to carve than alabaster, but I was not someone who backed away from a difficult task. Pure emotion was compromising skill, and I felt absence of power to fight it. What had a simple block of stone come to symbolize? Gerry's words, "Easy, girl, stop beating it to death," echoed in my head. What did I still want from my mother, no longer alive, and now from Clara? More important, why I was still symbolically beating them up with hammer and chisel?

My disastrous attempt to create *Woman on the Couch* forced me to acknowledge that my struggle as stone caver and my struggle as patient were not disparate. I was playing out my wish to destroy the imperfect mother, and then imperfect analyst, whenever I willed my stone to veer off the table and smash into a powder, became lost in a beating frenzy, or let my carelessness split the form in two. I seemed to achieve some sort of pleasure from each insidious strike of the chisel that accomplished the task of beating my sculptures to death.

I had tried to carve a figure of a woman with a defined adult female figure protruding from the middle of the form. I named this sculpture *Internalization*, not totally conscious of how much this image mirrored my struggle to preserve myself from evaporating into the self of Clara just as I feared doing with my mother. This sculpture, a bit unfinished, lives happily in my garden among blooming Salvia.

My resistance to Clara's interpretations had been painful and cathartic, a way of feeling alive through loss. I stayed alive in the negative transference in the same way I stayed with the agony of carving stone.

A powerful part of me was not ready to share my words with Clara, or at least not have them open for criticism or introspection. My leap from sculpture to psychoanalysis felt like being pulled under water without knowing how to get back to the surface. My spontaneous action to bypass the couch and read my words was my first attempt to tread

water, but I needed first to feel some sense that I could stay afloat.

Similarly, Gerry pushed me to face the reality of carving marble while I longed for the soothing aspect of molding clay. I identified with that large mass of white marble more than I had been willing to acknowledge. It was not only the destruction of my sculptures that was agonizing but also my inability to tolerate living with them as good enough. I could not allow the flawed stone to be acceptable, just as I could not allow my flawed self to be acceptable. I struggled to be in control of when I needed building up, like clay, and when I could allow parts of me carved away, like stone.

Still, sculpture and psychoanalysis alone were not enough to resolve the complicated feelings I felt toward my mother. Writing whatever came to mind became a critical bridge between the two.

I was astute at abandoning words and feelings spoken to Clara as I left her office, but it was impossible to abandon my words on paper. Unlike dreams, and oft-spoken words, written words do not disappear from memory. They do not take flight back into the unconscious. Writing was like playing with words—words that I could keep only for me—to look at and think about all on my own. I could decide when my words were seen or when I could be seen. I needed to discover me alone with my words before I could discover me alone with Clara.

In all three endeavors, repetition led to discovery and forced me to discover and rediscover the past. In clay, I molded and remolded, took away and replaced, and then molded more. In stone, I chiseled, filed, rasped, and polished, repeating this process until the form looked right, felt right. As writer, I went through the multiple drafts. I cut, pasted, deleted, and then I was apt to put it all back again as it was. I loved it. Then I hated it. Now it worked; now it didn't. And like psychoanalysis, sometimes insight provided change; other times repetition of conflict prevailed. But each regression, while often disorienting, helped bring order to my life. Finally, it all came together, the sculptural form, the resolution of conflict, the final version of the manuscript.

My experience begs the question: Did I need to be in touch with my unconscious to be creative, or did being creative allow me to get in touch with my unconscious? Psychoanalysis awakened me to how my sculptures echoed wishes, fears, and longings. Writing provided a transitional space to better tolerate the psychoanalytic process. But the insight generated from writing about conflict would not have been fruitful without the ongoing transference vicissitudes played out in the treatment room. My relationship with Clara not only moved the working through to a deeper place; it also sufficiently trained me to tackle conflict through writing.

What I know for certain is that without finding my creative self, I would still be blaming my mother for everything that went wrong in my life. Feelings that are suppressed instead of felt cannot be grieved. Only after looking into my mirrors as sculptor, psychoanalyst, and writer would I come to see my real reflection and grieve.

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Harmon Biddle

Transference & Transformation: The Blending of Art and Psychoanalysis

The transparency of glass intrigues me. The illuminative properties of glass suggest parallels between my experience as both artist and psychoanalyst. As an artist, the colors and images that float into my conscious mind, having been deeply held in unconscious memories, are captured as reflections caught in a mirror. Psychoanalysis appears to Freud (1900) as a magnifying glass, making unconscious aspects of the functioning of the human psyche visible and representable. Psychoanalysis is a creative process engaging all of our senses. Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching—all must be employed to fully capture the richness of the human psyche. As a painter, I must lose myself in this sensual experience, allowing unconscious images to flow freely. As a psychoanalyst, I allow myself to muse, as evenly hovering attention connects me with my own unconscious, bringing me in closer communication with the unconscious of another.

Adriano Berengo, of Berengo Fine Arts on the island of Murano in Venice, Italy, has created a fascinating project of bringing artists from all over the world together to transform their two-dimensional works into three-dimensional Murano glass sculptures. Once working in Berengo Studio, Adriano encourages his artists, as they paint, to "think in glass." Then his craftsman works in symbiosis with the artist's creativity. I was fortunate and honored to become a participant in this project. I think it is a metaphor for the best of human nature: to work, play, produce, and reproduce with one another with sensitivity and respect as we create something new. The various properties of glass are at the artist's and glassmaker's disposal for an unending experience of creation.

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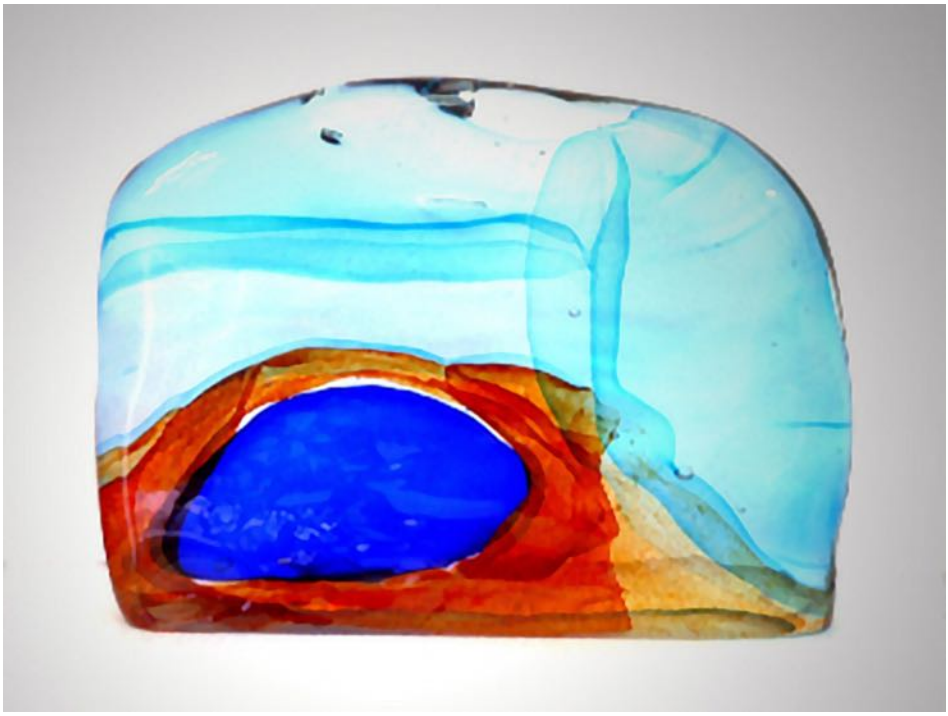
As I experienced this joining together in conversation with Adriano's master glassmaker, I was aware of the similarities between my work as an artist and my work as a psychoanalyst. I have been responding to my unconscious flow of colors and images throughout my life and transforming them to two dimensions on paper. In my mind, they are three-dimensional. So, to have these images transformed, yet again, back to three dimensions is an amazing experience. I can liken this experience to my work as a psychoanalyst, using the myriad of images in my mind and feelings I experience as I work with an individual to bring what is repressed into view.

The painter doesn't work directly with the glass but must know something of its possibilities and limits in order to paint images that can be transformed into glass. The artist is the one in charge, with the glass master acting as his arms and hands. Their communication is very complex as it brings the wishes and expectations of the artist nearer to the technical sensitivity of the glass master, without going beyond boundaries in constructions and interpretations. The analyst and patient have a similar valiance with each other as they craft their constructions.

Freud's (1900) early model of the psychic apparatus, in *Interpretation of Dreams,* was conceived of as "a composite optical instrument" like a microscope, a telescope, or a camera. Psychoanalysis to Freud was like a magnifying glass or a mirror, allowing unconscious aspects of the human psyche to become visible. The process was fluid, going back and forth, as the unconscious, almost magnetically, picked up derivatives to elucidate the images. The colors and images in my mind float forward to consciousness, picking up held affects and memories.

The first time, I worked in the Berengo Fine Arts Studio I was both excited and terrified, not knowing what to expect. I entered the vast rugged warehouse space containing the kilns. Carrying my painting, *Blue Egg,* the one Adriano said he could envision in glass, I met Danilo, the Maestro Vetrai. A small and unassuming man, who spoke no English, took *Blue Egg* from me and began to gaze at it. I had prepared some images of how I thought the transformation could look. He looked at them, briefly, but went back to taking in my painting. We drew our ideas on a chalkboard, and I reluctantly surrendered to his. I knew he saw something I wasn't able to see. It was very difficult to not be



defensive and to let go.

As both a psychoanalyst and a painter, I was intrigued with the psychological and emotional dynamics of the process of moving from a two- dimensional view to a three-dimensional form. I was fascinated with the process of Danilo and me working this out without words. It was like a coupling between two partners, birthing something within each of us.

This first experience of watching Danilo transform my painting into a three-dimensional glass sculpture was extraordinary. It is difficult to find words for the unspoken intimacy between us. It was, all at the same time, his work, my work, and our work. Give and take was essential. At different stages of our work together, Danilo gave me new insights into my own unconscious processes that influenced my paintings. We took each other in. This process of internalization is necessary for him to reproduce another's work in his own medium. And I, the painter, had to let go of my ego and give my creation freely to him with trust and belief that it would be held and contained by him respectfully and lovingly.

As a psychoanalyst, it can be likened to the process in which one's self is given to another through the expressions of words to express thoughts and feelings. I give my thoughts and feelings to a patient and must let them leave me without memory and desire for something to be as it was or as I, or we, want it to be. All is then transformed into the patient's self and the patient's reality as we construct something new, together, that has meaning to us both.

It is almost as with two lovers; to reach true intimacy there must be that freedom and spontaneity, passion, giving, and receiving. I was struck by my spontaneous love affair

with Danilo. As we spoke little of each other's native languages, our communication about our work together was with our eyes and bodily gestures. Our love affair was intense as each piece was transformed. Then we would part, only to come back to a deeper intimacy anticipating another birth of our work together.

These transformations are an incredibly complex interaction of animate and inanimate objects. As the paintings are transformed into glass they, too, become alive. In a painter's mind, the work is three-dimensional. It is only the boundary of the paper that holds back all that I see. When the first iteration of *Blue Egg* came out of a kiln, after hours of extreme heat, it was unrecognizable to me. It was huge and grotesque, resembling the innards of one's body. It looked nothing like my painting. Glass shows that human quality of ambiguity, and we have phobias of mirror images. We may feel both attraction and repulsion for our own productions and, ultimately, our own image (Petrelia, 2009). Danilo was able to see something that I felt no connection to. Some months later, Adriano sent me an image of our first Murano glass transformation of *Blue Egg.* It was beautiful and familiar, like finding a long-lost friend. Again, in my heart, I embraced Danilo, as we held and contained our co-creation.

Transference is a human phenomenon. It is not only within the domain of psychoanalysis but a continuous human experience of transferring unconscious yearnings and wishes, ultimately for connection, onto the other. It manifests in a myriad of ways. It can be frightening, thrilling, aggressive, mysterious, ambiguous, sensual, and much, much more. Counter-transference challenges us, as psychoanalysts, to not only take in these projections the patient is giving to us but to genuinely let ourselves identify with those expressions and be transparent with ourselves as we encounter our own unconscious yearnings and wishes. For artists to allow Danilo to take their work and transform it, they must unconsciously indentify him with someone from their life: the father who holds the creative expression of love and hate, or the mother who takes whatever the child gives and is attentive to all meanings. This productive coupling results in imagination, fantasy, symbolization, and creation. It is an aggressive and loving experience, leaving those involved in a state of excitement, disappointment, and ultimately finding something, seemingly outside of one's self, which represents some inner meaning of the continuation of love and loss.

What comes to my mind is the experience of being able to see beyond what one can conceptualize. Maybe this is optimism or hope. I think it is more the capacity to have an illusion of what could be. One can picture something, in mind, and manifest it in some creative way. This is how I paint. This is how my paintings expand to a wider dimension. It is how I work as a psychoanalyst. Over the years, I have worked with a number of men with addictions. Just believing that this is possible is like moving from a two-dimensional view to a wider scope.

One of my patients, a male in his early 30s, reduces, at times of anxiety, his experience to a concrete two-dimensional interaction. His yearning for an object is transformed into yearning for a substance, static in nature, but providing him with a false sense of connection with another. In this preverbal, sensual, and erotic experience, his fears are obliterated as he sinks into an almost purely bodily connection with a fantasized internalized good object. This intensifies when there is a break between sessions. His two-dimensional behavior is, unconsciously, a substitute for being with me. It can in-

volve drugs and sex and invariably leaves him feeling empty, sore, and hungry. To move this action into a meaningful communication between us is as delicate as transforming a two-dimensional image into the mirroring of glass and ultimately into a three-dimensional communication within the transference/counter-transference relationship.

Herbert Rosenfeld (1960) in his paper, "On Drug Addiction," describes this phenomenon:

> I shall first describe the manic mechanisms which are mainly used by the drug addict to control paranoid anxieties, such as idealization, identification with an ideal object, and the omnipotent control of objects which may be part of whole objects. Under the dominance of these mechanisms all frustration, anxiety, particularly persecutory anxiety, is denied, and the bad aggressive part of the self is split off. The drug symbolizes an ideal object, which can be concretely incorporated, and the pharmacotoxic effect is used to reinforce the omnipotence of the mechanisms of denial and splitting. (p. 467)

Rosenfeld goes on to say that the individual hallucinates an ideal object with whom he feels united and identified. Rosenfeld describes these individuals as looking as though they have reached the depressive stage when, in fact, they have not regressed to the state of satisfaction of the infant at the breast but to a phase of infancy where the infant uses hallucinatory wish-fulfillment fantasies in dealing with his anxieties.

I mention this work because I think it is controversial. Controversial because there is a question about how fruitful working in analysis with someone with an addiction can be. It is dependent upon flexibility and a continual widening scope, while maintaining necessary analytic boundaries. For the patient to relinquish the addiction, there must be a growing belief and trust in an alternative dependency. The work is very difficult, fragile, and sensual. Our important communication is often without words. What he is able to imagine, am I able to take in, his fantasy permeating mine, without my losing mine? Similarly with Danilo, I had to have a flexible ego, allowing me to take in Danilo's sensory mind and let it join with my sensory affective images inside me. In a sense, I had to allow his internalized image to permeate mine.

The art of psychoanalysis and the psychoanalysis of art will continue to be inextricably woven together. Art that speaks to us depicts raw emotion. Raw emotion stimulates artistic reflection. Danilo's and my work together is primitively and organically created. There are no castes. Each piece is unique. Just as with our work in psychoanalysis, each moment is a new and flexible one, if we can allow ourselves to visualize unending transformation. My work with Danilo is an example of how our unconscious thoughts and feelings can speak together and create meaning. Adriano Berengo's visionary work of bringing these mediums together expands the boundaries in art. It is a metaphor for communication and participation among people and a lesson for us in our analytic work, in whatever we have the courage to construct with each other.

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Kathryn Van der Heiden

Kathryn Van der Heiden, MS, MAT, LPCC-S, has been in private practice for over 40 years. After graduating in 1975, she trained at the Cleveland Gestalt Institute for 4 years and became an art therapist in 1986. She is in the process of winding down her practice, looking toward retiring. Being a therapist has been a deeply rewarding experience. She has grown in a multitude of ways and had the privilege of training with some of the best therapists in the country. Her trajectory in the Academy of Psychotherapists has included being a regional chair, being voted onto the Executive Council for 6 years, serving as president, and being voted in as Fellow. Life continues to be a journey of growth and learning.
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A Retrospective: Art and Psychotherapy—Keeping Creativity Alive

In 1990, I chaired an American Academy of Psychotherapists (AAP) Institute and Conference (I&C) on the theme of "Psychotherapy as Art: Keeping Creativity Alive." The presenters were long-standing psychotherapists and psychiatrists, counselors, art therapists, pastoral counselors, and child therapists. The idea was to explore the richness that can be experienced in psychotherapy via the modalities of creative exploration. Creative modalities open the process of accessing not only the conscious events that color the lives of clients and ourselves as therapists but also various unconscious ways in which we and our clients might be finding ourselves stuck.

Creativity is a process of full engagement. Creativity implies that we allow our conscious as well as our unconscious to flow. Wishing for that flow is tuning to an artistic process. My first and most beloved art teacher used to say and repeat the phrase, "Paint what you see, not what you think you see." Talk therapy is sometimes limited when it does not take into account the power of the unconscious, which can more easily be reached through that which engages the senses and goes beyond words...like art, music, dance, stone carving, or metal work. These modalities can be therapy that, without words, opens us to the character rigidities that we carry in our minds and in our bodies. When we can truly experiment with that flow and feel it fully, it is transformative. We move beyond form and function into expression in its purest form.

The presenters at this I&C were well known and recognized in the field of psychotherapy at that time. They were practitioners of their craft as well as writers and art-

ists, interested not just in the mind but also in how the processes in our bodies and the ways we experience ourselves in this space we occupy affect us. These are only a few of those presenters: Elaine Rapp, Richard Olney, Ed Tick, Reuben Bar Levav, Sonia March Nevis, Richard Erskine, Violet Oaklander, Stanley Krippner, Charles Johnston, Carl Whitaker, Alexander Jasnow, Joseph Zinker, Raymond Lovett, Alex Redmountain, Norman Shub, William Kir Stimson, Vivian Guze, Harriet Wadeson (one of the originals in art therapy), and Meredith Dallas. Among their many workshops were some on stone carving, poetry, structure and flexibility, art therapy, and dreams. It is with sadness that I remember that some of these wonderful teachers have passed away since 1990. I remember them with fondness and knowing that they helped me to shape the way I practice my work as a therapist. Learning about the various ways of self-expression and the use of art forms to enhance and engage more with the unconscious through the arts was life giving. It opened me to a greater awareness of myself and the work I was doing in my consultation room. I was drawn to the multitude of ways to find more authentic self-expression, both personally and in my practice. The expansion in modalities gave me space to learn from some of the greats in the field of psychotherapy. Their work increased my vision and understanding of how resistance to change is paralyzing and gave me ways to open up the flow.

My learning from these presenters built on my own prior experience with the arts and psychotherapy. I have been an art therapist since 1986, and I remember a class that I took while studying for my masters in art therapy. I had always been drawn to studying art but was discouraged, as many people were, because the idea was that one could not earn a living that way. Studying art in the form of drawing, painting, and sculpture emphasized the importance of delving into areas that cause discomfort emotionally and coming through it with a new awareness of what was possible. I grew intellectually and emotionally and found a growing understanding of how our emotional lives are not just verbal. The power of the unconscious became visual for me, it became auditory. It came alive in renewed flexibility in my muscles and clarity in my thinking. This was quite magical.

Being a practitioner of psychotherapy, I have learned that it is at best a fluid interaction and connection between two people. At worst, it is an intersection of how our mutual egos and places of pain remain unsolved, and we are reminded of the baggage we still carry. Inclusion of modalities of creative expression can sometimes make the difference. Even when not directly used in session, they can make the difference in the person of the therapist who comes to session. In sessions with people who had difficulty with self-expression, asking them to allow themselves to depict while withholding personal judgment about what they were creating was a tool that allowed them to unearth a core of what their inner experience was. As children we often spontaneously draw and tell stories with our creations. The stories are often not linear, and the magic is lost when a teacher or parent tries to make logical sense of what the child has drawn. It is only with honest inquiry into the drawing that we can learn about what the representation means to the child. That is not much different with adults trying to describe their inner experiences. Often adults will balk at the suggestion that they represent without words what they experience, and they are often surprised by what emerges. I have often given the homework to make collages of moments of experience without internalized judgment. Using the creative impulse can sometimes unlock the emotional reality of an experience

of living.

In the late 1970s, I applied and was accepted at the Jungian Institute in Zurich. I was working on my doctorate at the time, at the Union Graduate School. My thesis was that in doing therapy the therapist needed to be tuned not only to the language spoken but to the particular intonations. Some clients had accents that were unfamiliar to me but had a rhythm and intonation that captured my attention. What I knew from personal experience, having been raised in a multicultural and multilingual home, was that the sound of the language spoken was telling me a story just as the words did. The variety of the sounds expressed in dialogue held emotions and memories. The slips of the tongue told a story. It was a formative experience for me and helped me to know that hidden in each one of us is a language that we can only hear if we silence the noise of avoidance. I was focusing my ears on the changes in accents both in emphasis and tone. What ensued were engagements with clients that surprised us both and filled us with a sense of awe as memories emerged like figures on paper, drawn with color, or the magic of carving stone and seeing something appear that I had not expected.

Speaking and hearing different languages growing up filled me with a kaleidoscope of colors, sounds, and emotions. The languages moved with ease in conversations at the dinner table and our humor with mixed metaphors allowed for the expression of delight and uproarious laughter. Being in school back in the United States after living abroad was a most difficult experience, where the creativity of language was quickly lost. In those early days of the 1960s, I experienced being verbally misunderstood and bullied for not being like everyone else. Why did I not speak American correctly? Did I think I was special because I spoke French or Dutch? I was still re-learning English, and those experiences were unfortunately of being shunned and feeling ostracized.

I gave up doing my own art at an early age, thwarting my own growth, and only picked it up again when taking my masters in art therapy. And I gave up singing in choir in the 9th grade, after being shamed instead of helped and coached by the music teacher. It took a long time before I was able to own my creative gifts in both language and expression of feelings and return to art and music. Art helped me to come alive.

I have now been involved in singing in a World House Choir (WHC) for 8 years and sang in a community chorus for about 5 years before that. These experiences have been life-changing, both directors bringing a corrective experience to that earlier high school shaming. The WHC works on bringing inclusivity and a sense of community of all people. It does not exclude anyone. At present we have at least 20 returned citizens in our midst, returned into society from prisons. Theirs has been an amazing part of the work that choir director brings to all of us. It becomes a way to express visually and auditorily the power of change that is possible in being seen, heard, understood, and invited into community—multicultural community. We recently sang in a program for the Martin Luther King Day celebration. Because of the Covid pandemic which continues to circulate, everyone in the choir and most people in the room were masked. It is quite possible to sing with a mask on, though it requires practice. I experienced the power of the music, the intensity of the multicultural group, and the beauty of the expressions that we hope will lead to more justice and equity in our community and the world. I experience the compassion that we show to people who, once incarcerated and having served, bring their new found freedom and joy into their art forms.

The choir has become a community that I return to again and again, and my heart

grows and my troubles fall to the ground, silently but empowering what I feel and what I believe in. It has become a form of group therapy that warms my soul and pushes me to know that I have talents I never took seriously. I sing and feel empowered to learn more and more difficult tunes and rhythms. We all blend together, growing more connected in our lives as our voices blend to create a coherent and empowering message about inclusivity, to heal pain imposed by judgment and fear on many humans all over the world. We sing to bring words of peace, love, and understanding to others and to ourselves. It has been an opening to my heart and spirit in ways that stretch me. I knew I could sing but always felt belittled that I had difficulty reading music. I am now understanding that as I can memorize the lyrics easily and learn first by learning the sounds, the written words make a home in my brain and in my heart. At least half of the singers learn that way, and we are supported by the choir director. I also realize that by giving myself space like that, I eventually can and do recognize the written music. The art of singing has been empowering in ways that I never imagined it could be. Art and music are inexorably linked to a therapeutic reality.

When I sing in a choir, not even knowing how to read the music but feeling it so intensely that it flows from me, I feel a joy that seems unmeasurable, and I am moved. I am not alone in this. Music and art have been the mainstays of every culture. They have given us a way of communicating with images both the joys, the sorrows, political breaches, and more. Artists use their art and music to warn us of both the beautiful and sometimes sinister or sad parts of life. It also is a way of lifting us to look at that which can be changed for the good of all human beings. In these times, the art can also make us aware of the needs of the planet on which we live.

Several years ago, we were in the southern part of France and had the opportunity to walk into caves with prehistoric creations on the walls. It was daunting to see to what lengths humans would go to tell a story about what they saw and were experiencing. The trajectory they had to take was daunting and without clear walking paths. Still, they found walls on which to draw migrating animals and in doing so left stories about their own migrations and experiences. Did they presume to leave it as a history of their own experiences for those that might discover the work? We will never know, but the art on the walls was inspiring and moving. Seeing the work of many great artists and experiencing their pain and grief and utmost joy is always inspiring. Humans have been making art as a way of conveying a multitude of expression for thousands of years. It is a language of that which cannot be sufficiently expressed with words. How could it not enhance the practice of psychotherapy?

So, the theme of the 1990 I&C was a sort of experience of coming home to myself. Art is a kind of life's blood for me. I come alive when singing and introspective when painting or drawing.

What stays with me from that I&C is the workshop I took with Elaine Rapp. She was talking about her process of being a stone carving artist. She revealed that she was often torn between teaching at the university and wanting to return to the studio where her unfinished stone carvings waited, calling to her. When asked how she dealt with that pull, she said that she had to teach when she was teaching and save her art for intermittent breaks.

I am in the process now of retiring. I think of it more as moving forward into the nooks and crannies of self-expression that I have neglected as I worked long days lis-

tening and helping others realize their potentials, soothe their emotional wounds, and live into the fullness of their lives. I look forward to spending more time in the creative pursuits that bring fullness to my own—more time singing and making art.

I relax into the creative process and remember that at the last event of that Institute and Conference, David Hawkins, president of AAP at the time, stood up at the podium to give his final speech and surprised us by singing it. It was the perfect end to that event.

Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.

—Pablo Picasso

Music That Stirs My Soul: Cinquains Inspired by Antonio Vivaldi, *Le Quattro Stagioni.*

Neal Whitman

> "Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* portrays a year filled with hope, flowering growth, flourishing abundance, and the quiet gathering of energy for tomorrow."
>
> —Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, liner notes August 27, 2022, Blossom Music Center, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.

La Primavera

bird song
friendly chatter
the end of lethargy
prompts me to make a "to do" list —
fresh start

I stir
as do the leaves —
hoe-in-hand, loosen soil
so my garden can breathe again
fresh air

dusk falls
tree frogs echo
the promises we made
to renew our vows and cherish
each day

L'estate

rising
the sun and I
feel ready to tackle
what may come, no matter how hot
the day

voices
children at play
they skitter and scamper
like voles and field mice in meadows
at play

neighbors
chat on the porch
the moon rises, hopes, too …
were the days longer and our dreams
bigger

L'autumno

biscuits
warm, oven-baked
dunked in breakfast black tea
the morning cool, but not chilly
splendid

flannel
and foliage
our favorite fashions
outerwear for people and trees
woven

even
urban dwellers
call it the Harvest Moon
its gilded splendor is mythic
world-wide

L'inverno

somehow
in sleep I hear
the faint falling of snow
under my blanket, like a hare,
burrowed

with care
fear of slipping
I tread the icy path
perhaps in the mail box today
answers

cozy
the two of us
I'm in my element
crackling logs and the smell of pine
nightfall

Illustration from J. J. Grandville's Un autre monde (1844)

Belinda Novik

Belinda Novik, MSCP, MD, PhD, is a licensed psychologist in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, with additional training in psychopharmacology and medicine. She teaches and writes about the intersection of psychology, psychotherapy, ethical psychopharmacology and informed consent, and the dangers of medicalization of human distress. She has worked in both academia and private practice. She was the director of Behavior Science at Duke Family Medicine, teaching residents and medical students to use their eyes, ears, brains, and heart. In private practice she worked with adults in all life stages. She is an amateur musician, wife, mom, surrogate mom, and mentor to many exchange students and also interested in technology, nature, home cooking, and walking, a lot.
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Music and Psychotherapy

I can't help but notice how being in both group and individual therapy uses some of the same kinds of skills and perspective necessary in musical groups. I've been active in music and psychotherapy for many decades but only recently have come to notice how my skills as a psychotherapist help with both leading musical groups and being a member of them. I play in several renaissance consort groups, where a group of 3-10 musicians will gather to play music from the 15th-17th centuries. I've been a wind player in the past but have switched up to early strings, the viola da gamba. I own three sizes, tuned slightly differently: a treble, tenor, and bass. Depending on the group and the need of the moment, I will play on any of these.[1]

How do musical consorts use some of the same skills as psychotherapy?

Set the frame so members know what to expect. We meet weekly at the same time and place with the frame in mind. Our renaissance instruments must be tuned to A-415. These days N95s must be worn. We start and stop on time. We declare what we're bringing to the group (what instruments will be played). And there is an expectation of constructive kindness when expressing an opinion or giving feedback, because players who feel attacked or are nervous cannot produce good tone, and that hurts the group effort.

Then we bring on the skills. The leader must listen

1 You can have a look at some viols and hear their music from this site of a professional group led by friends of mine: https://roseconsort.co.uk/

to all parts at all times while continuously monitoring and adjusting one's own playing. Not everyone can be a leader. It's a bit like having three heads. One must set the tone of the piece: Is it a simple melody with repeated themes, a complex interweaving of parts, or a piece that highlights one part over others? Since members of the group have different background experience, skill levels, expectations, and needs, selecting the music to be played is much like finding the strengths of the group and building on those rather than harping on weaknesses and causing blocks, resistance, or increased non-productive frustration. Since feedback is sometimes welcomed and sometimes resisted, it pays to have a sense of how it might be received and whether it is the proper time and place for feedback.

What makes it interesting?

Like psychotherapy groups, if anyone is aggressively critical, the quality of the group experience degrades from the anxiety that is generated. Anxiety kills the music, while eager anticipation heightens it.

The amount of concentration required is enormous. Not only is the music on the page often written in old notation and in musical clefs beyond the usual treble and bass clefs of modern music but also the alto and tenor clefs commonly are used in early music. Every part of one's body is also engaged. This requires a certain mental flexibility to change clefs, sometimes mid-piece, and not be thrown by the shifting of those mental gears. The brain has to track the particular instrument and clef of the moment. The eyes have to watch the music, one's own instrument, and the other players simultaneously. The ears have to track one's own tone, of course, but also all the other parts at once. And, the arms, hands, and fingers need to play those notes without intervening tension, so breathing is important, as is a kind of trance-like focus of attention that I find quite similar to leading therapy groups. As group leader, I'm both receptive and generative and so, too, is my role in a consort. Members of the consort/group probably need the ability not only to focus but to dissociate a little from the rest of the world to concentrate enough on the music in the here and now, and in doing so, we are transported across time and place. Music speaks to the experience of humans from long ago, and as it happens their trials and tribulations are the same as ours. We can learn from their music and poetry though separated by many centuries.

Group Dynamics

Weaker players lean on stronger players for guidance, timing, tone, and expression. Weaker players need complete safety, encouragement, role models, acceptance, and the willingness to make mistakes and keep going.

The ethic in the group is to keep on playing. Don't quit when you make a mistake; find your way back in…others will often help by calling out measure numbers. You must be willing to proceed without perfection. Don't dwell on missed notes or rhythms because that only impedes others. Keep on. And, of course, consort playing is also like sex: If it's good, the group is tuned in to each other. If it's bad, usually someone isn't listening; they are absorbed in their own world and disconnected from the others.

And there's the issue of trust. I've been playing with some people for 48 years. Our

mutual trust is enormous. Trust comes from the openness to change, the responsibility of playing up to your level of experience, following your part, listening to the others, and adjusting where necessary. Or sometimes, forging on to support the group's rhythm and tone until they can catch up — while knowing when to stop a train wreck and when to let it all sort itself out and play on. Some can be trusted early on; they are fine musicians with gentle souls who know how to be in a group. Others take much more work to trust; they are in their own orbits, don't know how to get along with others, think that their parts have to be everyone's focus, or steal attention from the group's efforts because they don't understand or value the group experience. Sometimes their own perfectionism gets in the way of the group effort, as they can't tolerate their own mistakes and have a tantrum when they err, causing the whole group to stop for them while they recover. It feels a bit like coitus interruptus because as the musical momentum builds there is a drive to finish the piece and quitting midway through is a definite buzz kill.

The power of the group is more profound than any individual player.

Dealing with difficult group members.

I won't diagnose consort members, but people do bring their personalities with them. Take Clara, for instance. When given feedback she freezes and things get worse. But, she knows herself, and she compensates by contributing what she does well: i.e., caring, concern, and material support for the group. If the leader is wise, she is accepted and the group adapts by playing things that she can accomplish without getting lost. If the leader doesn't adapt, Clara will continually be lost and her part of the music will be lost, which depletes the group of energy and tone.

Or Beatrice, who only listens to herself and makes the whole group stop when she misses even a single note, oblivious to the dynamic of the group where the majority wish to push through, or the time wasted while she conducts her own practice session in the middle of a rehearsal. Individual practice sessions, unless agreed upon in advance, should happen outside of group time.

And Karen, who is always late, in her own world, in a tizzy, and thinks that apologizing repeatedly makes it all ok so she can repeat the same behavior the next week.

I run two different groups. One is for those who can handle novelty and who strive to make music together while also enjoying the old favorites that bring joy and comfort, like putting on the old favorite sweater. The other is open to those willing to try, and the musical goals are more modest. It's a place to learn, to gain strength and confidence, to stretch oneself just a little, and to enjoy the support, warmth, and friendship of being on a common journey.

What about individual lessons?

Whew, much more like intense powerful individual psychotherapy. The teacher knows your strengths and every weakness, even those you have no idea about. The teacher tries to find ways to communicate that you can process and make use of. The process is one of feeling totally exposed, naked in front of a master, and so vulnerable. So there needs to be trust there, in order to tolerate the feeling of being so thoroughly seen, known, and hopefully cared for. Lessons make me anxious as a student. I usually sweat

through all my clothes in a lesson, no matter the temperature. Some people cannot tolerate lessons at all. Some never learn, no matter how kind, persistent, or clever the teacher is. Consort lessons are a bit easier to deal with because no individual is the constant focus. There is time to learn from other's mistakes and time to recover from one's own.

I am also a student in a group led by a master, which is a great joy and privilege, perhaps the apex of every week. This master knows the ability of every member and what they and their instrument can and cannot yet do. He selects music to suit the group as it is, each semester with a new program and new learning. The master is respected, but he also respects the students, who range in age from 18-75, all in the same group. There is always support for the new players. We can start a semester sounding rather rough, but we finish 10 weeks later with a concert we can be proud of. Ten sessions to bring this disparate group into harmony...it's quite miraculous, and I'm filled with gratitude for the opportunity to be a part of it.

A final note

Like psychotherapy, participating in or leading a musical group is a labor of love, growth, and striving. It takes curiosity about finding the keys to clearer truer expression, a path toward making beautiful music. It offers an opportunity to be able to express oneself in an understandable way to others, to fulfill a need to belong, to be heard, to have community, and to reach back into the past while being grounded in the present.

When it's working, and the group achieves a moment of perfect harmony, there are chills and sighs, satisfaction and gratitude. Our bodies seem tuned to such harmonies—are hungry for them—and that keeps us striving and learning and reaching for each other.

Commentary 1

This writer is exhaustive in presenting the many ways in which psychotherapy is parallel to participating in musical groups. I enjoyed wondering about my own participation in therapy groups and musical groups. As a violinist, I first played chamber music as a high schooler. I was shy. The leader asked me, "Can you see, Steven?"—meaning, could I see the music. Another player said fondly, "Yes, I can see Steven." Being noticed allowed me to relax and play the music. The psychodynamics, for me, set the frame for participation. This memory came to mind as the writer said, "Set the frame so members know what to expect." There are explicit ways to name the frame (time limits, etc.) and there are implicit ways that the frame for interaction gets named.

How to present feedback is an art. The writer remarks that "feedback is sometimes welcomed and sometimes resisted." I wondered how her group actually engaged in the art of feedback. When do they talk about the skills of articulation (which may be about rhythm and intonation), and when do they give feedback about a player's sense of presence in the room? For example, "Is there anything that you would like to get off your mind before we continue?"

The writer's comments on anxiety caused by aggressive criticism allowed me to wonder about ways that I have experienced anxiety "killing the music" in a therapy group. I have experienced a member of group therapy walking out in response to the intensity they experienced. I've never experienced a person walking out of a rehearsal or performance. So, I find myself imagining this writer's next article about the many ways she has helped musicians recover from debilitating anxiety and experience how some anxiety creates anticipation.

String pedagogues suggest that the soul of the player is exposed when playing a bowed instru-

ment. (Maybe singers would say the same thing because of the importance of breath control that can only be accomplished with relaxed muscles of the voice box and diaphragm.) All the muscles must be in balance because of the many movements of the bow and the left hand. The writer says that "Every part of one's body is engaged." I would like to read this writer's third article regarding the many parts of the body which are engaged.

If consort playing is like sex, I am wanting to join. I loved the way this writer reflected being tuned into one another as a result of mutual respect and trust grown throughout the years of knowing partners. Consort playing, like sex, can be a "place to learn...enjoy the support, warmth, and friendship of being on a common journey." This sounds fantastic.

While I appreciated the examples the writer gave for the section about dealing with difficult group members, I could not help notice that all the examples seemed to be women. I am aware that the characteristics described could also be demonstrated by other genders, so was left feeling uneasy and curious about this slant. It was like a discordant note was played for me, and I wondered why it was there.

Thanks for this article...I look forward to more compositions!

—Steven Ingram, PCC-S

Commentary 2

Back when I was working with individuals and groups in psychotherapy, I was often interested in the role music played in their lives. It would tell me much about them, something of a non-verbal diagnostic tool. What kinds of music did they like? When did they listen to it? Had their musical tastes changed over time? Was music part of the pivotal events of their lives? Were they drawn to the lyrics or the melody? Did they gravitate toward particular types of music when happy or excited, sad or depressed? Did they play an instrument or had they ever? Exploring any of these questions would take us into personal experiences sometimes hard to access by more direct means. My hearing what music was to them helped me tune in to them more accurately.

If I were to have a conversation with the writer of this article, I would be interested in what has drawn them to renaissance music and when that started, what inspired them to learn the many instruments they play, what has motivated their long history with several musical groups? How has this investment of time and energy made a difference in their lives? How has their musical expression made a statement about who they are?

In one of my times of nocturnal reminiscing about this article, I went off remembering a string of my own pivotal musical events: being part of the chorus in high school; climbing off a plane in London learning Van Cliburn was playing that night and getting box seat tickets, a few years later hearing him at Tanglewood; having season tickets to the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra for the past 40 years; scores of times dancing, especially at Academy events; being moved by a group of children from Mississippi singing "This Little Light of Mine" at the 1963 March on Washington, an event where Peter, Paul, and Mary and Joan Baez also sang; graced by a young student playing the violin on the patio in front of Notre Dame in Paris before it burned, and the street person who yelled at anyone leaving without giving the student some money; being in an open air bar in Texas listening to Slaid Cleaves (Craig's son) and then at his father's funeral; hearing Leonard Cohen at Carnegie Hall and going to the Metropolitan Opera on the same weekend to celebrate my 75th birthday; relishing in the fact that all three of my children play musical instruments; currently singing with the World House Choir, promoting justice and inclusivity. Put all of these together and they say something about me, but exploring the depth and meaning of each experience, not to mention the accumulation, would take some time. Even then, my ongoing affairs with rock and roll, the blues, and jazz might get missed. This bundle of experiences is provided only as a way of illustrating how all of us have our musical history and that it often is a door to a deeper understanding of who someone is, especially if that someone happens to be a client. The person sharing might also feel very vulnerable in the telling, because those hearing might miss the importance and dismiss the tales as just another travel log.

I thought the author's comparisons between giving private music lessons and these dynamics of sensitivity working in psychotherapy to be very accurate. My only addition to this well written article is that the sensitive subject may be the music itself.

—Grover E. Criswell, MDiv

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Music takes us out of the actual and whispers to us dim secrets that startle our wonder as to who we are, and for what, whence, and whereto.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Imaging With the Lark

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The first experience I had as a *traveler* was with my mentor, Helen Bonny, who was my *guide*. These terms, traveler and guide, came out of the early psychedelic research in Maryland. Helen, as the staff music therapist, had designed music programs to assist persons in therapeutic settings such as psychedelic therapy sessions. As my guide, she introduced me to the amazing power of music to transport one into spontaneous experiences of imagery. [1]

As time passed, I entered into training with Helen and eventually became a trainer myself of the method she named Guided Imagery and Music. Helen had musical expertise as both a classical violinist and music therapist, as well as a deep connection with her own spiritual journey. She knew that people could have transformative experiences just listening to music. This was born out when she introduced research volunteers to the music they would later hear in their psychedelic sessions. Often, they had meaningful experiences simply with the music. The music that was used in this work came basically from the Western classical tradition.

Helen's inspiration has been contagious. Today the work, now called the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music (GIM),[2] has spread to many countries. It is practiced as a psychotherapy modality by music therapists, psychologists, and psychotherapists.

I share with you a special memory replete with coincidences, a bird, music, and a beautiful cathedral. I arrived in Canterbury, England, at my hostess's home a day before I began teaching a GIM training course. She invited me for a walk near her home. As we walked and chatted, she suddenly stopped and pointed up to the sky where there was a bird moving upward as if caught in a breeze. She said, "That's a lark ascending!" We both immediately shared a common reference: Ralph Vaughn Williams' glorious piece of music titled "Lark Ascending." I had never seen a lark ascend, and I shall never forget that moment.

1 Watch a brief film explaining a GIM experience http://www.marilynclarkintegrativepsychotherapist.com/resources.html

2 For more on the Bonny Method of GIM, see https://www.ami-bonnymethod.org/ and https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeneZ_6zN8dsmAGB92hecVw?app=desktop

As the training got underway, I was happy to be with these students who were nearing the end of their training and would go on to bring GIM to new populations. We were delighted to learn that that very week there would be a local performance of "Lark Ascending." The venue, Canterbury Cathedral, was within walking distance of where we were all staying. On the day of the evening concert, the group chose to use the music program titled "Expanded Awareness," which ends with "Lark Ascending." In GIM, the therapy is usually done in dyads: one as traveler and the other as guide. While the guide provided presence and support, the traveler listened and responded to the music. Both members of the dyad experience the music program, though differently. During this Vaughn Williams piece, the travelers responded to the rich imagery evoked with feelings of sacredness. When the music ended, they slowly, quietly, and with gratitude for the beauty of music and the inner world of their psyches, shared the profound, transpersonal experiences that were had with that program.

Early evening came, and we walked to the Cathedral. We sat together and despite a very full cathedral, we could see and hear the performer perfectly well. The violinist was a diminutive Asian woman, young and beautiful. She wore a light blue satin dress with a skirt that looked like flower petals. She brought "Lark Ascending" to life before us, swooping and dipping like a bird as she played her violin. It was magical. We were mesmerized by her artistry and once again felt the profound beauty of this piece of music.

Music gives us so much on so many levels. Giving ourselves the time and permission to sit, close our eyes, empty our minds of thought, and then listen to music can be one of the best things we can do for self-care. Music is there as an unconditional presence in our lives. Try it! Find a comfortable, quiet place to sit or recline (no sleeping now!). Take some slow, deep breaths, and let your mind focus on relaxing your body. Then start the music. Let the music take you where you need to go. It will. Having a guide beside you will help you focus and go into a deeper state of consciousness where the music will continue to be with you. ▼

Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time.

—Thomas Merton

Art as Psychotherapy and Psychotherapy as Art

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First, let us remember the title of this journal: *Voices: The Art and Science of Psychotherapy*. We don't have to limit ourselves to examining the ways that art can be used in psychotherapy. We can also acknowledge that psychotherapy itself is in part an art form. Although scientific instruments might be used to precisely tune the various instruments in an orchestra, the music that they play is based on the artistic inspiration of the composer and the artistic inspiration of the musicians who play the instruments.

My graduate training in psychology was based on what was then called the Boulder model. It got this name because it originated at the Boulder campus of the University of Colorado. The central thesis of this model was that graduate training in psychology should teach students how to be both researchers and clinicians.[1] Researchers were of course presumed to be scientists who knew how to deal with objective data. Clinicians, on the other hand, were expected to integrate the findings of scientific studies into the more creative process of psychotherapy. I remember hearing the term "clinical intuition" as something that my fellow psychology students and I were supposed to cultivate. The connotations of this term seemed to imply that the clinician psychologist should be somewhat of a psychic who employs the opposite of scientific objectivity. Intuition is presumed to be the ultimate example of subjectivity. Similarly, the creativity of the artists is presumed to be subjective in nature.

I left graduate school and took my first job at a psychiatric research center, where the scientist half of the Boulder model gave me the credibility to get in the door. Once there I had to call on my clinical intuition to conduct the

1 As psychology as a discipline was striving for acceptance in the professional world, the PhD gave it credibility as a science. The Boulder model seemed to me to be an attempt to affirm that there was also credibility associated with offering psychology as a clinical as well as scientific discipline. I think the Boulder model is what allowed me to claim a pre-doctoral clinical traineeship at a nearby VA hospital for a year. As far as I know, I was the last one in my doctoral program to have this opportunity, as the up-and-coming PsyD degree focused almost exclusively on clinical matters. I partially envied those who got PsyD degrees and could claim a psychology doctorate without having to go through all the rigorous scientific training, and partially felt proud of my being able to claim expertise in both the art and science of psychology.

kind of research we were doing. It was 50 years ago, and we were studying the many uses of psychedelics, mostly LSD. Most of what we did was called psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy. As scientists, we designed research studies and collected objective data that we analyzed in the most logical of ways. As the psychotherapists conducting the highly specialized form of psychotherapy, we had to call on the deepest parts of our clinical intuition. Intuition was used to some extent in selection of research subjects, dosage of LSD (within the parameters of the research protocol), therapeutic interventions during an LSD session (verbal vs. non-verbal and many nuances within each category), and musical selections.

As I got my on-the-job training in this psychotherapy specialty, I was required to work with mentors and supervisors to learn how to conduct psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy. Perhaps more importantly, I was required to have my own experience on the receiving end of psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy in order to have direct experience with the absolutely subjective part of this powerful process.

Part of my training and initiation into the world of psychedelics brought me into contact with, and gave me great appreciation for, another art form: music. We used music extensively during LSD sessions in order to help the person taking this journey surrender into the flow of the experience engendered by the psychedelic medicine. A woman named Helen Bonny helped us to develop and refine the use of music in these psychedelic journeys.

Helen was also developing Guided Imagery and Music (GIM), a music-centered form of therapy that looked a lot like psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy but without the psychedelic (Bonny, 2002). It also came to be known as The Bonny method and is used in many places around the world. In some sense, it was the older process of guided affective imagery developed by Hanscarl Leuner (1969) in Germany, but on the affective steroids of music.

One of the ways I came to appreciate this powerful therapeutic use of music was in my job at the psychiatric research center. Sometimes we would use music without any psychedelic. My scientist part sometimes built this into the structure of a research study by having some people assigned to a control group that did not get any psychedelic. My clinician part sometimes used music alone in preparative sessions before the actual psychedelic sessions. In both situations, it was sometimes quite surprising to see the depth of experiences people sometimes had even without taking any psychedelic medicine. Spiritual traditions have demonstrated for millennia that music, and certain types of sound in general, can open one up to such deep and powerful experiences. I had not seen how this can relate so directly to psychotherapy until it was right there in front of me.[2] Of course those who practice the art-based psychotherapy specialty of music therapy have known this for a long time.

In my agency work and private practice since leaving the research world, I have rarely used music in psychotherapy. As far as I am aware, this is because of my need to be seen as a respectable and credible psychologist to whom people would make referrals and whose services insurance companies would cover.

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2 Or perhaps inside me. I had never heard, or heard of, Gounod's *St. Cecelia Mass* until it was played during a psychedelic journey of my own that was part of my training. My heart exploded in rapture, and I wept so powerfully with each swell of the music that I thought I would surely die. Even now, 50 years later, as I think of it, I am close to tears.

I am left pondering whether it is more accurate to describe psychotherapy as a science-based healing technique or an art form that produces outcomes for scientists to study.

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> Of the healing arts, therapy is surely the most literary, since it involves the telling and revision of a story. And of the literary arts, therapy's the oddest and most intimate, because the story is told for one listener only, and that listener becomes a collaborator in the shaping of the tale. No listener is ever asked to work harder, or to take more of a hand in the work of bringing order to the broken pieces of a narrative.
>
> —Mark Doty

Penelope Norton

After Practicing Psychotherapy, Making a Pie

When you have that deep kind of hunger that is part longing, what's better to eat than the best apple pie.
—Elizabeth Berg

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The emotional forces we therapists attract in our work can be hazardous, because as Susan Cain (2022) notes, "the place you suffer is the place you care. You hurt because you care" (p. 94). The sadness, grief, and longings of our patients accumulate in our psyches, impacting our work as well as our personal lives. Further, the emotional labor in which we engage is exhausting and can lead to anxiety, depression, and symptoms of secondary post-traumatic stress and emotional exhaustion. Emotional labor is defined by Hochschild (1983) as "regulating or managing emotional expressions with others as part of one's role, to affirm, enhance, or maintain the well-being and status of others" (p. 165). "The emotional work of enhancing the status and well-being of others is a form of...unseen effort, which, like housework, does not count as labor but is nevertheless crucial to getting other things done" (p.167). Therapists certainly expend emotional labor with our patients, and we are often likely to expend greater emotional labor in our roles as parents, friends, and partners. As a mother, wife, sister, friend, and therapist, I am emotional labor's poster child. I need a variety of emotional re-sets that return me to myself. For many, a form of artistic expression is particularly helpful in restoring mood, resolving psychological conflicts, gaining perspective, and reactivating positive emotions (Abbott, Shanahan, & Neufeld, 2013). For me, one such artistic re-set is making pies.

First, pie making connects me with play, a well-known antidote to stress. As a child, I loved to make mud pies,

to feed my dolls or my sister. I discovered how to bake pretend fish using milk weed pods. And I longed for a light bulb powered Easy-Bake Oven, a bridge too far for my parents' budget. This play cooking was genuine play, for the delight of it, as opposed to the labored play with which I coped with adverse circumstances, or in which my child clients engage in my playroom. Baking and cooking were some of my first forms of fun.

Pie making also gives me the satisfaction of working with my hands. It is an important form of changing channels from working so much with my brain and emotions to working with the sensory experiences of hand movement and touch. For me, the use of my hands seems to rest the overused parts of myself, evoking time to let my thoughts emerge, to calm my emotions, and to connect with those, the world over, who engage in the basic and essential task of food preparation.

Next, pie-making grounds me through its connection to my own history, family, and culture. Maintaining awareness of these deeper, longstanding family connections, I learned from training in Bowen family systems, are an important means of reducing the intensity of stressors by widening perspective. In my family culture, pies were a means of showing love. First, they had historical importance from my English ancestors, who had mined coal in England before mining salt in Michigan, carrying beef- and vegetable-filled pasties (pah-steez) in their lunch pails, then having pie for dessert with dinner at home. Moreover, pies were so central that to know another was to know and remember their favorite pie: cherry for one great-grandmother, cranberry for another, apple for a grandfather, raspberry for my dad, and pecan for my mother's English through Alabama roots.

I could set my calendar by the pies in season as well: rhubarb in the spring, peach and berry in the summer, apple and pumpkin in the fall, and mincemeat or pecan in winter. I observed family pie makers close at hand, absorbing the craft in ways larger than memorizing the measurements or the steps. There was connection in the side-by-side kinship of women: my mother, grandmothers, and great-grandmother. For me, now, after hours of the emotional and cognitive challenges of work with clients, making a pie restores me to myself. It is the same type of sensory grounding I recommend for clients, an endeavor so engaging to my five senses that it rests the overthinking and anxieties of the day. And, "No one who cooks, cooks alone. Even at her most solitary, a cook in the kitchen is surrounded by generations of cooks past, the advice and menus of cooks present…" (Colwin, 2010, p. ix). I am known by friends and family for my pies. My children often sat in the kitchen observing while I worked. One of my sons has taken up the pie-making craft, and he, too, is known for his pies.

A particularly special day frequently comes to mind while making a pie. When my daughter was in late elementary school, she hopped off the school bus one day, saying "Pi Day is tomorrow, and we have to make some pies." Seizing the moment, together we made individual pies for her, her classmates, and her teachers, using most of the flour in the kitchen, all the fruit on hand in the fridge and freezer, and skipping making dinner altogether. The next day, dressed as Einstein, she proudly took our pies to school. I sometimes believe her chosen career, in the field of math, harkens back to that day we shared.

Recently, I reconnected with a friend of a friend, who had met me some 30 years before in our mutual friend's kitchen in Maine. She said, "When I last saw you, you were fully engaged in making a berry pie." It was a lovely way to be remembered.

Filling:

Preparing the filling returns me to my own tastes and preferences. My tastes and preferences are sometimes disguised when listening to clients, a form of masking of myself. For example, in the location where I practice, I am in a minority political group, and my views remain largely unknown to my clients as I listen to their outrage about the political state of things from their perspectives. Attending to my own tastes is a form of returning to myself.

I usually prepare the filling before I prepare the pastry. Most of the pie-making women I have known have a signature pie. My grandmother's signature pie was an apple, made only with Northern Spy apples, an older variety known for tartness, which is less available today. I prefer a filling that is both tart and sweet. Perhaps I am drawn to that flavor combination as a reflection of my capacity, shared by many therapists according to Cain (2022), to experience that which is bitter-sweet, preferred taste synesthesia that is simultaneously happy and sad (p.187). That being so, I have two favorites, cherry and rhubarb-blueberry.

Rhubarb, a medicinal vegetable also known as pie plant, grew in my parents' garden. Rhubarb has a storied multi-cultural history. Thought to have originated in China, it is still used in Chinese medicine for stomach ailments. The Greeks also used rhubarb as a medicinal plant. It is widely used in middle eastern and in Russian cooking. Rhubarb made its way to Scandinavia, the British Isles, and North America. I kept a secret cache of sugar in the garage of my childhood home so that in the spring, I would cut a tender stalk of tart rhubarb and eat it like a stalk of celery, dipped in sugar. It was almost a forbidden fruit. My mother canned rhubarb for use as a sauce for pork or chicken or a topping for cake or ice cream. I have been delighted to find rhubarb growing in a Maine summer rental, purposed for at least one pie. For now, I scour the supermarket for the first sign of rhubarb, to chop or freeze for use, just in case. It is my most hoarded frozen food. I use the freshest, slimmest, reddest stalks, which have the best flavor and texture. Commercially frozen rhubarb, while reminiscent of the garden fresh, is, nonetheless, tougher and less flavorful. Slicing and chopping rhubarb for pie is a connection to childhood, to springs and summers past, and a favorite taste of tart. It may not be accidental that I am so fond of this healing plant in my culinary repertoire, as caring and serving are shared endeavors in both healing arts and culinary arts.

Blueberries, too, have happy memories and associations. My sister and I would pick them with our family in the woods of northern Michigan. My children loved blueberry picking in Maine, eating more than they gathered, to enjoy later in pancakes, milk and sugar, or pie. My daughter honored the humble blueberry by naming her blue gray cat Blueberry. Blueberries are grown now in many locales, each with slightly different qualities, almost like people from different cultures. Cultivated high bush blueberries are grown in Florida, where I now live, ripening in spring. They are large, plump, and sweet. Blueberries are cultivated in New Jersey and in Wisconsin, thanks to research by an obscure, independent researcher, Elizabeth White, who was seeking an agricultural use for her sandy acidic soil (USDA, 2012). I benefit from White's solitary work in her own locale and feel a kinship with her in the solitary nature of the work of a psychotherapist. Cultivated berries are tarter than Florida berries, somewhat smaller, and grow on bushes more resembling wild berries. My favorite berries, though, are the tiny, tart wild

blueberries of Maine or northern Michigan. They are more trouble to gather, because they are so small, but their taste is uniquely gratifying. As I sort and wash them, I sample a few, while measuring out two requisite cups. I mix flour, sugar, and a bit of cornstarch to add to separate bowls of blueberry and rhubarb, to set aside awaiting the pastry. I am reminded of how many tasks in life require separate steps before synthesis is possible.

The Art of Pie Crust:

There is an art to making pie crust. For me, there is an immersion in the feeling of making pastry, not unlike Eugene Gendlin's (1978) idea of focusing on small but important sensations. I frequently recommend sensory grounding techniques to clients with anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder. No surprise, then, that the sensory elements of pie-making are important for my own stress reduction. Humble tasks, including baking, when fulfilled with thoughtful attention, reflect care for the task, the product, the legacy absorbed and given, and the self. I measure with care as a mindful meditation. Carefully, I add flour and salt, and fat for cutting. I prefer simple, unadorned pastry recipes, no vodka, sugar, or vinegar for me, although, occasionally, I add toasted oatmeal. The 2 cups of measured flour must be medium to low protein flour for the best resulting flakiness. Neither cake flour nor bread flour will yield the desired result. Unbleached flour avoids the intermediary chemicals and yields a better taste.

I can still hear my mother's two knives, "cutting in" the pastry for pie. I prefer cutting the fat into the flour by hand, with an old-fashioned cutting device, checking for the resulting desired texture with my hands. Cutting in can be a satisfying outlet for the day's frustrations. It is cutting (severing, detaching) that is important to pies, not a messy mashing or bullying. — Some client stories, from my psychotherapy practice, have cut into me; to be an agent of cutting in yields a kind of relief or re-set, including

only me, the emerging mixture, and the pastry cutter. — My daughter usually prepares her pastry with a Cuisinart, for speed. But, she recently texted me that she had made an apple pie, her husband's favorite. She texted," I used ur [sic] crust strategy, the dough was so much better." Apart from methodology, it made me happy to have been in the kitchen with her.

As I cut in, I attend to the texture I am producing. The result of the cutting should yield a coarse meal like tiny peas, no large, sticky clumps allowed. When, along with the visual, I feel through my hands and fingers that the cutting has produced the right texture, I add the chilled water, slowly and patiently, a spoon at a time. The pastry should lightly adhere. Light adherence involves the sensory feeling of the pastry, learned from making all the pastries that have come before. I associate light adherence to a story from childhood about a girl who loved her doll so much, that in holding it tightly to her body while sleeping, she melted the doll's face. The moral, of course, was to avoid holding those we love too closely, lest we wound them. Light adherence achieved, the mixture is flattened into a ball with my hands.

Ambient temperature and humidity are among the sensory elements considered in making pies. Growing up in Michigan, even in summer, it was cold enough to prevent gummy products. I have adapted to my Florida home, avoiding making pie on particularly humid days and adding cooling as necessary to the time of year. Sometimes at this juncture, I will pause to chill the dough further. Mostly I do this because of heat and humidity but sometimes because other pressing tasks only allow me to savor pie-making in bits at a time.

How I roll:

Methods for rolling out pie crust are as varied as choices of ingredients or methods of cutting in. Some use thin spindles (French rolling pins), some bottles, and others, like my grandmother, use a conventional rolling pin on a floured tea towel; my daughter uses a specialty silicone mat which has measurements written on it for the specific size of pie. I learned from my mother to place the dough between two sheets of wax paper, the bottom sheet of which, when lightly moistened, adheres to the counter. I enjoy the proprioceptive physicality of my large, heavy rock-maple rolling pin and the strokes in rolling the dough. I exert minimal pressure, allowing the pin's weight to do the work, and achieving the desired result, two round crusts, without overworking the dough. Overworking produces toughness, not tenderness. Overworking in life, as well as in psychotherapy, is counterproductive. This is another juncture at which slight cooling of the dough may be beneficial in hot or humid kitchens. Cooled or not, I carefully peel the bottom (more likely to be stuck) wax paper from the dough and lay one crust in the pie plate, saving the other crust for the top of the pie.

Pie plates are also an element, a setting, for the pie, not unlike feng shui in design, or the setting for a therapy session. My grandmothers all used tin plates coated with smooth enamel, hence the vernacular descriptor, "pie tin." Aluminum and disposable pie plates are readily available now, although they offend my environmental sensibilities. My son and daughter-in-law gave me a ceramic plate, decorated with the flowers of the Pacific Northwest, where they live. I love it, and it adorns my kitchen. Often, I choose glass for my pie plates because glass yields an even doneness and allows me to visually

check the browning of the bottom crust as it bakes. These intermediate crust checks contribute to the ultimate quality of the product.

For blueberry rhubarb pie, the prepared rhubarb goes into the pie crust first, to layer the tart below the sweet. If the rhubarb is on top, it will crush the berries, diminishing the texture and the overall filling. I layer the blueberries over the rhubarb and distribute two dabs of butter over the fruit, to enhance the palate qualities of the resulting filling liquid, creating more of a soft syrup instead of a thinner juice.

Top crust, venting, and joining:

Joining the crusts is a metaphor for boundaries, including the importance of creating vents for excess steam. I work hard to maintain boundaries for my clients that are strong and create safety. I am sometimes less effective at creating protective boundaries for myself. Boundaries have been more difficult since the onset of COVID, where I sometimes practice at home via my computer or video chat with clients, who are at home rather than at my office. My own kitchen is, however, a safe place. And, while joining the pie crusts, I benefit from embodying boundary-making.

Top crusts are another idiosyncratic element of pie, the purpose of which is to both seal in the enclosed filling to enhance its cooking and to vent the steam. A slow leak of steam is an effect I strive for in psychotherapy and in pie-making. Too much steam results in explosions or undesirable ruptures. Too little steam results in a gummy, undefined crust, a blurring of its identity with the filling elements.

One method for pie venting is the lattice top crust, where strips of pastry are woven across one another, like the Scottish plaids of my origins. Another method involves using a pie bird, a kind of ceramic bird-decorated-chimney centered in the middle of the pie through which steam escapes. I prefer to use decoratively cut vents in the top crust. These can be in the shape of a fruit, or of a droll smiley face, or placed in random patters on the crust.

The edges must be sealed, crimped together with the bottom crust along the top edge of the pie plate, which usually has a small glass shelf for that purpose. Decorative thumb and finger crimping is often shown in photographs. Decorative pastry add-ons such as leaves or hearts are popular at exclusive bakeries. I find that pressing the crust edge lightly with the tines of a fork is the simplest, with the least working of the dough. Now, I add a pie shield, a thin circular band of aluminum, over the crimped edge before baking, to protect the joined edges from burning. As I place the shield, I am reminded of baking with my mother-in-law, a home-ec teacher, who used a simple, practical method of shielding by using a square of aluminum foil with an "x" cut in the center. I muse about protecting that which is joined: seams in sewing, wood in construction, marriage, and the therapeutic container. Joining, by itself, is insufficient without protecting the connection.

Baking:

Baking the pie also has elements to consider. My great-grandmother baked for all her 87 years in a wood stove, having developed the art of regulating its temperature. I was privileged to watch her do this in the 1960s. The troubled labor of the stove meant

that baking day included breads, savory and sweet, pies (plural), and sometimes a roast or a casserole. My grandmothers used gas stoves, with their mesmerizing blue lights. My mother, my daughter, and I use electric ovens with their insulated, even temperatures and moveable racks. I remind myself of the progress I have made as a therapist to maintain an even emotional temperature. My early attempts at self-care required so much more effort than they do now. I have benefitted from the encouragement of colleagues and supervisors and from many years' experiences to engage in self-care more intentionally and more frequently.

I bake most pies at 425 degrees Fahrenheit. A method to better cook the bottom crust involves heating the oven to 400 degrees, placing the pie on a center rack and re-setting the temperature to 425. This causes the lower heating element to come on as the pie begins to bake, crisping the bottom crust better.

The length of cooking time varies. After 30 minutes, I check that the vents remain open or re-insert the knife if the top pastry has closed them. With long tongs, I remove the pie shield. I wait for the browning of the crust and the distinctive bubbly blue syrup rising from the vents. If the top crust is not browning or the syrup is not bubbling, I cover the whole pie with foil for a few minutes to seal in the heat, then remove the foil for the last few more minutes until the pie filling is bubbling, the crust browning and crisping. Checking back in with important elements of my work, adjusting, tweaking where needed, continuing to focus on quality control is part of my craftsmanship.

Given the emotional darkness I have absorbed from the office, I also need more time in the light, with opportunities to absorb emotions from the light end of the spectrum. When the pie is done, I set it, with pride and satisfaction, on a wire cooling rack to cool and to set the filling. When I serve it, after cooling, the rhubarb has formed the desired shiny pink bottom layer, covered by the syrup coated blueberries. I delight in the pleasure of my family and guests enjoying the pie for dessert or sneaking the last bit in the pan the next morning for breakfast. Perhaps unbeknownst to them, the deeper joy was all mine.

The German author Hermann Hesse (1988) writes, in his book *Wandering*, "Home is neither here nor there. Home is within you or nowhere at all" (p. 53). Through making and serving this pie, I have returned to my home within. ▼

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Tim Willison

Potpourri

Invitation to the Profession

This being human is a guest house
Every morning a new arrival
A joy, a depression, a meanness...
Welcome and entertain them all...
For each has been sent as a guide from beyond.
—Rumi, "The Guest House"

Years ago, part of my job was to go to federal penitentiaries to interview felons for possible admission to drug treatment. The most difficult interviews were with the child molesters. They were brought into the room, sometimes chained, always simmering in shame, and usually unable to look me in the eye. Invariably they described a history of early violation that led to their horrific crimes. They were rarely admitted, whether or not they qualified. The treatment program was staffed by recovering folks, many of whom had served some time and most of whom had been neglected or abused in their childhoods. Because of their backgrounds they worked hard in their recoveries to keep their hearts open to difficult people who had made mistakes, and they were usually impressively successful. But child molesters were a bridge too far. The general consensus was "let them rot." They had no room within them for the humanity of those who had offended in this way. That space was filled.

Interviewing the offenders was painful, heart-breaking, and uncomfortable. I expected to feel disgust, but their self-condemnation was so thorough, their fear so palpable, I could at first find only pity. But as conversation continued and I connected to the person behind the crime, the distance engendered by both disgust and pity fell away, and I began to feel for and with them as human beings in distress. And that is when I started to feel uncomfortable. I began to feel complicit, as though

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allowing myself into their experience was somehow condoning their horrible actions. I felt a real visceral discomfort, an internal sense of stretching, while trying to hold at the same time connection to them and my knowledge of the things they had done. The temptation to resolve this tension by moving toward pity, disgust, or condemnation was strong. I wanted to look away from them.

To be human is to have blind spots. As a therapist, it is simply true that our clients pay the price for what we do not see. I work hard to see better, but I am still acutely aware of the limits of my vision. What is essential is that I work to make room for everything. The ugliness I reject defines and highlights my limits; I don't condone what is awful, but I accept it as human rather than reject it as other. That distinction is key. I don't excuse the horrific act of the child molester—I frankly can't really even think about it—but if I deny his humanity and the painful scars out of which his behavior arises, I compromise my own. What I refuse to acknowledge and engage, I will inflict on others in one form or another. The limits I set on my compassion coalesce into harsh judgment and intolerance. Projection, targeting another with the unpleasantness I cannot stand to face, is a ubiquitous staple of human interaction and bedrock psychological process.

As an example, Charles Eisenstein (2020) published, on his website, an article titled "From QAnon's Dark Mirror, Hope." When it was recommended to me by a friend, I knew I had to read it, and I hated having to do so. I much preferred to think of everyone in QAnon as a despicable idiot deserving only my hatred and ridicule. Despite my neo-hippy espousing of universal peace and love, it is also true that I sometimes like having someone around to hate and despise. We all hate. But I, like many, have historically done my best to deny the hatred that is a natural part of being human. Because my hatred denied wants to be lived, there is sometimes relief, even satisfaction, in having a good solid object I can hate with abandon. I suspect something similar is happening with QAnon members. We need to get better at hating. My hatred owned is an opportunity. My hatred rejected is a weapon. In the words of the Dalai Lama (2011) and many others, "We are all connected." And in the words of Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1974), "The line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being" (p. 168). I want to condemn those fools, but there is a real way in which I am those fools. We are, like it or not, joined at the hip. So, I will read that damn article again, because I have to look where I least want to.

Joseph Campbell (1991) famously said, "Where you stumble there your treasure lies" (p. 8). I believe he was speaking to individual process, but it has collective relevance as well. As a culture, perhaps a world, we are stumbling everywhere right now around race, gender, power, and much more. Everything depends on our willingness to stumble around in our individual dark mirror in order to begin to form creative collective answers. The darkness we refuse to embrace is the darkness we project with a special kind of vicious brutality fueled by denial of terror.

The imperative as an individual in this culture is to reach through our individual suffering toward our common humanity. The imperative as a therapist, as a clinician, is magnified. Our effectiveness as clinicians is directly proportional to our willingness to go to those places we don't want to go and inversely proportional to our righteous certainty. As clinicians, we harm primarily through ignorance or hubris; I have done both. Despite endless training, boundless good intention, and years of experience, I have harmed those who came to me for help because of that which I did not know and that of

which I was so sure. I feel the flames of shame even now thinking of a woman, a client, I held in her grief—allowing myself to think that my warm intentions would be enough to heal her violations. My naivety and my failure to adequately examine my own motivations led to further wounding of this woman. It also resulted in enormous necessary consequences for me. In ways I will write further about at a later date, this failure on my part became a catalyst for years of deep, painful personal introspection leading back to open wounds in early experience that profoundly affected my relationship to intimacy and compromised my clinical judgment. I am, finally, grateful for the opportunity to do this work. It has changed my life. But it came at the expense of another.

It will always cause me pain and shame to know that I deepened the suffering of this woman. She came to me in agony. I made it worse. Because we are human we will fail, but it is also our humanity, coupled with accountability and hard work, that makes the miracle of healing possible. The way to minimize this kind of harm is through having the willingness to face dark ugly truth. Tremble if you need to. Burn if necessary. But don't turn away.

This profession is not for the timid or the squeamish. Courage is required in the preparation for this work and the doing of it. You will sometimes find yourself sitting alone in a room with someone who has done terrible things. People do awful things. Often they do awful things because such things were done to them. If you are not prepared for this you are not prepared for this profession.

I have worked with men who violated young children. I have listened to the horror of what they did, and I have heard the horror of what was done to them. I have watched some of them get better and others go to prison for the rest of their lives. I have witnessed the thick viscous embedded shame that permeates every moment of their lives. I have worked with men and women who have killed others, sometimes casually. Some of them have been tormented by what they did. Others were dead and empty inside. Walking dead. Still breathing but unable, because of what they had done and the deficits or traumas that led to their choice to take a life, to be present and conscious in their own lives. Their eyes were flat and lifeless. Even those that got better forever carried the scars, bore the weight, of their actions.

I have worked with men who have raped women and brutally beaten spouses and girlfriends, often initially justifying their actions because of what she had done. Some of them, the lucky ones who got good help and were able to use it, I have watched dissolve into pools of tears, shame, remorse, and confusion, then slowly begin to re-form a tentative trembling person able to feel the pain of others and acknowledge their own suffering.

I have worked with clients who have killed animals, in a rage, or to see what it felt like, or in order to try to locate a conscience. I have struggled hard to sit with them with an open heart (and quite frankly with prayers) and watched them painstakingly inch their way back toward their humanity.

We live in a brutal world. You will see this in your office. This is not polite work. Sometimes those who have done the worst will self-disclose surprisingly quickly, maybe in a first session, watching your face very closely to see whether or not they made a mistake in coming to see you.

It is all unreasonable, often horrible, and gut-wrenchingly tragic. In every direction. You will be challenged, to the core of your being, to stretch in order to meet the difficult,

sometimes horrible, other. If you turn away from this challenge, you will do damage. I did.

I thought you should know so you could decide whether or not you are up to it. If you are, and I genuinely hope that is the case, then please approach the work with both curiosity and ongoing, unflinching self-assessment. And beware of righteousness. Moving from an open heart is essential, but it is not, on its own, adequate. Courage is also required. And help. If your work is characterized by introspection, open-heartedness, and leaning on the counsel of trusted others, you will likely do a lot more good than harm.

I began this piece from a place of indignation. After speaking to my own mistakes, my pointed finger has softened, and I find myself instead humbled by the enormity of the task. The suffering around us is huge, and we all have our frailties. This being human is both endless challenge and miraculous grace. How is it possible we are here? If we approach being with humility, wonder, and curiosity, we stand a good chance of living a life that leaves others grateful for us. If we approach our work in the same way, we will serve as balm on the lacerated souls of those who come to us, and the wounded will heal.

So often it is the poets that lead the way:

> *There is a brokenness out of which comes the unbroken,*
> *a shatteredness out of which blooms the unshatterable.*
>
> —Rashani Rea, "The Unbroken"

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Movie Review

The Artist and the Astronaut
Film
Directed by Bill Muench, Wide Awake Films
2022

The film *The Artist and the Astronaut* is a documentary about artist and activist Pat Musick Carr and her late husband, astronaut Jerry Carr. They seem an unlikely couple, but the film reveals the many ways that their relationship worked over more than 40 years. The film is both about the space program and about art and civil unrest in the 1960s, but it is also very much about the relationship between these two very interesting people. Pat and Jerry didn't meet until the 1970s, and when they married in 1979, Pat was 53 and Jerry was 47. They had already lived full lives and had previous marriages, grown children, and satisfying careers. That alone may have been enough to make their marriage successful, but an added element was obviously very important. They each had a lifelong passion: space for Jerry and painting and sculpture for Pat. And when they got together, they sought to understand and appreciate each other's passions.

In addition to bringing their own passions to the marriage, Pat and Jerry brought some common experiences of loss. Pat's first husband died from cancer after a long marriage and raising three children together. Jerry suffered many losses of peers in the space program. They also shared a history of some uncertainty in their own abilities, which seemed to make them humbler and more accepting in their relationship with each other. Jerry was made commander of a mission at a time in his career when he questioned whether he was ready for the challenge, but he overcame his uncertainty and was ultimately successful. Pat, while with her first husband at the Ivy League college where he was football coach, doubted her own intelligence and ability to relate to faculty and others at the college. She sought psychological help and was advised to listen and ask questions. She took that advice and eventually returned to school, obtaining both a master's and a doctorate. She also became very active in the civil rights movement.

Just a few years before they met, Pat heard that the Skylab space station would be visible. She went outside, and as she saw it crossing the sky, she thought, "I wonder who those guys are?" Meanwhile, Jerry was up there admiring the beauty of outer space. So, they brought their individual passions to their relationship, but they also already had an appreciation for what was so important to the other.

In the film, Pat shares her three rules for art:

- If it falls down, try again. Don't give up.
- Don't be in a hurry. Look and think.
- Don't be afraid to tear it down and start again. Look for a better way.

Although Jerry never describes these as his rules for success in the space program, they are exactly the traits that helped him achieve his goals. Pat and Jerry seemed to apply these rules to their relationship as well. So along with humility, acceptance, and a knowledge of loss, they shared a passion for perseverance. Jerry, having retired from the space program, was all too happy to apply his skills to helping Pat with her art. One might expect a retired astronaut to feel entitled to admiration and a focus on his past accomplishments, but Jerry never seemed to expect any special regard. And Pat didn't treat him like a returning hero. She treated him like a partner in all their endeavors. Perhaps this couple had a unique set of traits and experiences that helped their relationship to flourish. But there may be some lessons in their story for the rest of us.

In couples counseling, we're told to turn toward each other, be curious, listen, and ask for connection. This movie highlighted how important those actions are for anyone wanting to sustain a long-term relationship.

The film is not currently playing anywhere other than film festivals, but in the coming spring/summer it will be available on demand streaming services.

Cinema is a mirror by which we often see ourselves.

—Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu

Winter, 1968

Renée Nell, EdD

Guest Editorial:
Art and Psychotherapy

When I was asked to write the guest editorial about art and psychotherapy, I felt that this was an easy topic to write about. When I started to think about it, I was amazed and angry for not having any ready-made answers. Instead, all that awaited me were questions and more questions: What is art? How did it get linked up with psychotherapy? Is art therapy an extension of art, or is it something else? And in what way is art helpful to the patient? My own answer to the last question is that it is not art that is beneficial to the patient, but creative self-expression. The distinction I think, is a critical one, and it is to this issue that I wish to address myself.

Art is not a thing, but a process which culminates in a work of art. In order to create a work of art it is necessary to transcend an individual experience, to link it up with a universal (archetypal) experience and express it in a skillful manner. That man seeks for something beyond himself seems to be a universal experience. For the child the fairy-tale fulfills this quest with princesses and far away castles, Lilliputians, and giants—the adolescent looks for his answer according to his own needs, either in search for God, or in the mysteries contained in UFO's *[sic]* or other science fiction creations—in therapy the search for the self brings the desire to be in touch with something beyond the ego back into one's own inner universe.

The artistic quality of the fairy-tale, the myth, and the search for self, depends on the talent of the individual. Talent is a combination of a rich flow of images from the unconscious, an ego structure strong enough to contain them, and an ability to express these images in original and skilled form. An artist is a person who possesses these three qualities: awareness of images from the

Dr. Renée Nell has specialized in doing things that others have told her cannot be done. Her latest creation is The Country Place, a halfway house for bright and creative "borderline" patients. It is a milieu therapy center and Dr. Nell functions as chief executive, therapist and cook. She introduced a creative therapy for film makers and Disney cartoonists in Hollywood and was a therapist at Stuyvesant Polyclinic in New York. She received her graduate degree from Columbia and her training in Jungian Analysis. She often teaches Jung's art in professional seminars and was credited with AAP's successful 1964 Meeting on Creative Use of the Unconscious by Artists and Psychotherapists.
New Preston, Connecticut

unconscious, ego-strength, and skills.

The psychotic experiences the reverse of this. He is a victim of an unselective flow of universal archetypal images which overwhelm his weak ego-structure, and find symbolic expression void of any skill. The richness of the images might indicate that we are dealing with a talented psychotic, but this still does not make his presentations works of art, because the element of choice is lacking, as is a conscious commitment to art or the availability of learned skill. The artist is in charge of his inner experience—the psychotic is victimized by it, the artist has channels and tools for relating his experiences, the psychotic is but a channel for his random upsurge of images. What the artist and the psychotic have in common is a closeness to the dark, dynamic forces of the unconscious, and all that art and psychotherapy have in common is access to unconscious images.

I think of the unconscious as the creative part of the human being, and just as everyone can dream, everyone can create, untutored, an image, a rhythm, a dance-like movement. It has become an increasing part of psychotherapy to free the grown-up to enjoy the noncommittal flow of creative material in playful activities so natural to the child. No matter what media are used, be it brush and paint, drums or words, the results are not and should not be a "work" of art. There is no such thing as "art" therapy. What does exist though, is creative therapy. Its goal is the unquestioned acceptance of a symbolic content expressed with no concern to communicate anything to anyone, with no obligation to adhere to objectively validated skills of a craft. In fact, creative therapy is carefully avoiding the use of skills, crafts and principles. This is probably one of the reasons why skilled artists generally find it difficult to partake in spontaneous creative therapy. Their knowledge of the craft gets in the way. What counts in creative therapy is the authenticity of the inner experience.

It was unfortunate for art that the liberation of such authentic self-expression was called at first art-therapy, and was then mistaken for art. The result is that the artist perhaps for the first time in the history of art, has abandoned the commitment of elevating his personal experience to a universally valid level, that he denies an obligation to the principles and skills of a craft. Many an artist today has become satisfied with an expression of his unconscious self answering to nothing and nobody, unconcerned with making himself intelligible to others. The artist seems to be as isolated in his communications with himself as are the neurotic and the psychotic. While self expression has become a tremendous liberation for a large number of persons, by no means just patients in psychotherapy, it has impoverished art as a unifying experience lifting man out of his isolation. The unifying principle has fled into commercial art, and art in the deeper sense, as defined above, has practically disappeared from our lives. Painters, poets and composers can hardly make a living today and their products are not wanted.

It has been taken for granted that the creative experience is good and important as well as liberating. It is not often said why this is so. Creative self-expression is generally an expression of a symbolic experience in a symbolic way. Symbols and symbolic actions can arouse tremendous emotions, like the burning of draft cards. The symbol of the flag represents a total country, the fatherland, allegiance to it, and quite a number of other things that are felt and experienced as very real by those understanding its meaning. The appeal of the symbol is the appeal of the numinous: i.e., something that cannot fully be expressed in words, but conveys an experience as intense as life itself. There is something

in the experience of great art or great nature, like the Grand Canyon, that touches us deeply and cannot be described fully. This is what we would call the numinous expression in art or nature.

Our time has become barren of numinous experiences. Gods and spirits have disappeared from our universe. Concepts like God, Heaven and Hell, father, ancestry, have lost for a large number of people their numinous awe. Concepts containing a certain degree of numinosity are outer space and the Mohole. The concepts of Freedom and Love are among the few numinous experiences left. While children can experience the potency of the symbol in fairy-tales, the adolescent looks for it in the radiance and awe-inspiring symbolic intensity of psychedelic hallucinations. Our need for the symbolic experience now comes in through the back door of drugs.

Expressing something from deep within, which has no words, can become an experience of cosmic oneness and selfhood satisfying to every person, healthy or sick, talented or not talented. I do not deny that the spontaneous insight which often flashes into one's mind when looking at a painting can be most satisfactory to the patient and illuminating to the therapist as a verbal explanation. I regret, nevertheless, that creative therapy often deprives the person of just that nonverbal experience of his symbolic self-expression by hastily offering "This means That" explanations. The process of meditation and awe that creative self-expression could induce is thus supplanted by an intellectual process of labeling. The result is that the psychic and numinous experience are partially destroyed and deprived of their therapeutic value. To use brush, paint and canvas in order to experience the super-dimensionality of the symbol in a non-verbal way is probably the most important nourishment that we can give to ourselves. This is the essential contribution of creative therapy to psychotherapy.

I still do not feel that I have found the answers to the many questions posed by the topic, but in my search I hope to have clarified my point of view: that art is really quite removed from psychotherapy, that creative self-expression is a symbolic experience necessary to all men and especially to the cure of the psyche, and that the numen is valid as the means to fulfill mans *[sic]* need to reach beyond himself. ▼

All art is a revolt against man's fate.
—Andre Malraux, *Voices of Silence*

Winter, 1968

Wilfred Quaytman, PhD

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Psychotherapist's Writing Block

In all modesty, I must state at the outset that I believe I am something of an expert on writer's block in psychotherapists. In the first place, I am the unhappy possessor of a writer's block of my own— having published not more than half a dozen papers in the last 20 years. I have scores of ideas, hypotheses, convictions, and feelings, as well as words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and sometimes even whole pages in my mind. But putting them down to paper is quite another thing, I have discovered.

This is what I mean by my writer's block—there are many things that are important to me that I would like to express and share in writing and somehow, through the years, I have failed to do so. In my feeling, it is like a stone wall that I cannot penetrate. And this is a particularly frustrating and painful experience that I believe is shared by a significant number of psychotherapists (as well as other professionals, no doubt).

I have attempted to wrestle with this problem in many diverse ways, such as involving myself in discussions with colleagues, engaging in advanced seminars on treatment and countertransference problems, self-analysis, additional personal analysis and many similar measures, all to no avail. In final desperation, I decided to write this paper as a last resort, in an attempt to understand and begin to cope with the problem of psychotherapists' writer's block.

I have come to a sharp awareness of the existence of the problem through still another channel. As clinic director of a large community mental health center, I have talked, discussed, conferenced, and been involved in supervision with a couple of hundred psychotherapists in the last fifteen years. In the course of my professional functions, I have discussed their patients' problems and have attempted to guide effective development of their treatment. And

apart from treatment aspects, I have observed in these therapists a myriad of new, original and creative methods of working with the emotionally disturbed. In discussing their treatment problems, the therapists would often come up with original approaches, startling innovations, new formulations, significant explorations and successful outcomes that had been neither previously attempted, nor written up in the literature. In my mind, my response would be, "This is great. Probably some struggling therapists in Los Angeles or Chicago or Boston are trying to cope with the same problems and perhaps not making progress. And if only therapist X sitting here with me could write up his experience and publish it he might be able to help other therapists who are undergoing similar difficulties with their patients." I would then verbalize this to the therapist and he usually appeared pleased but rather surprised, even shaken at the thought that there was anything particularly original or significant in his treatment approach; and even if there were, that anybody else could possibly profit from his experience.

From time to time I would again bring up the suggestion that therapist X attempt to write up a certain case that he had been extremely successful with in some new or unique way. Invariably, he would respond with something like, "Well, maybe someday I'll write it; or not now, or I'm too busy,"—and most frequently the paper was not written. My efforts have been responded to by the writing of papers in only a few rare instances. But by and large the response has been an almost completely negative one.

I have made similar catalytic attempts in my capacity as editor of the Journal of the Long Island Consultation Center. In this role I approached therapists whom I knew had been working on important projects, new studies, or new treatment approaches, and tried to stimulate them to write papers in these areas. While these efforts have been slightly more rewarding, I still believe there is an enormous reservoir of unwritten, significant papers that should be written and published.

What is appalling about this situation is the enormous waste of the creative experiences and energies of thousands of psychotherapists. Moreover, it is my conviction that there is inestimable damage to psychotherapeutic progress in general through the failure, on the part of blocked psychotherapists, to communicate in writing their vital new ideas, developments and discoveries. As professionals, we all understand and fully agree that performing a treatment service for patients may be productive and useful to them and to society, but this is not enough. Intellectually, we understand that it is our responsibility to share our methods and experiences with other therapists who are possibly struggling along the same lines. We understand that, as novitiates, we ourselves learned our skills in this way, and that it is our obligation to carry on this kind of teaching, via writing, with others in our profession. Nevertheless most of us fail to write.

At this point I can visualize the sophisticated, cynical reader looking up from this written page, glancing at the dozens of unread journals and books on his shelves and thinking: "Fiddlesticks! We need more writing like we need the plague. There's *too much,* not too little, being written in our field. Some of it is very good, but a lot is useless crap." Perhaps, but that is another issue and beside my present point. Or possibly the two issues, in some subtle way, are connected—the plethora of papers and books on psychotherapy published by a small handful of prolific writers, as against the yet unpublished or never to be published, possibly just as useful or more useful papers that have failed to be written by a much larger number of blocked psychotherapists.

My purpose in the writing of this paper is to try to help myself, to raise questions about writer's block in psychotherapists, to stimulate discussion, and to encourage the writing of papers that deal with the problem of writer's block and attempts to resolve it.

In thinking about the factors responsible for writer's block in psychotherapists, it is obvious, of course, that in each individual therapist with this block it is his own particular character structure, life-style, unresolved conflicts, or whatever that are responsible for the problem. Nevertheless, I have observed some common factors and I feel it might be useful to outline the problems of five therapists and their writing problems.

1. **Psychotherapist L. W.**—I recognized old feelings of my own when therapist L. W. stated that whatever he might write would be of little value, unoriginal, not creative, and could in no way further the advancement of our knowledge. This was coupled with a strong feeling of intimidation about the great contributions of past and current writers. L. W. put it this way, "Who the hell am I to think that I can write something that is really important? All these writers that publish so frequently are famous, successful figures in our profession, and what they have to say is obviously important and significant. If I wrote, it would probably be a big nothing."

2. **Psychotherapist A. D.**'s feelings were similar as he revealed that his fear of competitiveness with powerful, established writer-figures in our profession was so intense as to inhibit any attempt to write. A. D. had many fascinating therapeutic experiences but refused to even begin to write on the ground that his material could not possibly be *profound* enough compared to the wisdom he attributed to contemporary writers.

Discussing the problem with A. D. helped me realize that old castration fears were reawakened that I had believed to be well resolved in my analysis. It occurred to me that these fears were probably resolved for most life purposes, but perhaps creative writing is a special type of ego activity which stirs up feelings of threat at a much deeper unconscious level.

3. **Psychotherapist T. E.** Like most therapists, and contrary to popular legend that they mainly "listen," T. E. was essentially a very *verbal* person. That is to say, he derived great gratification in talking, and took every opportunity to do so. Verbal communication about his feelings and ideas was a most important life experience to T. E. And while he was reticent and unproductive in *writing* about his therapeutic experiences he was anything but shy *verbally*.

T. E. did a great deal of talking about his ideas and experiences with colleagues, friends and his wife. (I sometimes got the feeling he talked about little else.) When T. E. shared his experiences with me verbally the discussion appeared to have a unity, a wholeness and an entity and completeness of its own. It was almost as if the act of talking about his experience involved a gratification or value, apart from and perhaps greater than the *content* of the verbal communication itself. Thus, when I suggested that he share his unique and highly creative experience about a child in treatment, not with just myself, but via the printed page, with hundreds or maybe thousands of other therapists, he looked at me with a very blank expression and said "These people you are talking about who might read a paper of mine in a Journal are not real to me. You are real to me as I sit here and talk to you about it. I get an immediate response from you about my experience, an immediate *feedback*." For T. E. there appeared to be no conception or, at least on the surface, no reality about an audience *out there* who can read about his experiences and respond to them. T. E.'s need for feeding, for instant gratification, was

apparently satisfied when verbal communication took place, and it made the act of writing about the experience completely unnecessary. A corollary of this seems to suggest that T. E. showed great difficulty in accepting the frustration (via the writing of a paper), involved in not receiving the aforesaid verbal feedback *immediately*.

4. **Psychotherapist W. A.** revealed a feeling of dread about exposing his experiences to what he perceived to be the final *irreversibility* of the printed word. He saw this as a responsibility of awesome proportions in which, once something he wrote was set down in print, it could never be undone. This was in contradistinction to his verbal communications which could, as he saw it, be altered, and even repudiated, if need be, at any time. Thus, the fear of ultimate *commitment*, via the printed word, was clearly involved with W. A. And while W. A., like all therapists, constantly accepted important commitments on many levels of his life functioning, a commitment about *writing* his experiences was too threatening to be permitted.

5. **Psychotherapist E. Y.** I believe that one of the most significant satisfactions derived from writing is a tremendous feeling of gratification that the author receives when he first sees his paper in print. To me, the narcissistic gratification and excitement is quite intense and is comparable to feelings of sexual satisfaction, moments of great insight, and other peak experiences. This feeling, and it is a feeling of ecstasy, can be readily observed in most creative artists, such as painters, sculptors, writers and others who produce and exhibit to the public. It is, I believe, a healthy narcissism involving deep personal satisfaction, a fulfillment of life's highest aims, and self-actualization on the deepest levels. As with any creative artist, whether he be writer, painter, sculptor, or whatever, the intense satisfaction derives not only from the successful achievement of the creative work, but in sharing and *exhibiting* it to others.

I believe that in the case of Psychotherapist E. Y. and other therapists who want to write and have something important to write about and fail to do so, it is a question of denying their healthy narcissistic and exhibitionistic needs. It is as if they are shy and embarrassed and maybe even ashamed to say (via the printed word), "This is who I am. I like what I am. Look at me." When I communicated this hypothesis to E. Y., he became very anxious and eager to discontinue discussing the subject, and I realized immediately that I had hit pay-dirt in his problem of writer's block.

Included in the denial of healthy narcissistic and exhibitionistic needs is a related factor, i.e., a denial of the desire for "immortality." An example of this occurred when I was engaged in a fantasy with therapist E. Y., who I believe was fairly close to deciding to write up his treatment experiences, and I said, "Think of it, five years from now or ten years from now, or perhaps when you're gone somebody will be reading your paper and enjoying it and making good use of it and how does that make you feel right now?" I received a puzzled look in return. I continued: "And, in fantasy, how does it feel to know that your papers, articles, and perhaps books will have been read by many people, will have had a deep impact on them, and that you're remembered significantly in these ways?" The therapist laughed off my feelings and denied that the desire for this kind of "immortality" could possibly be a part of his make-up. Nevertheless, I feel that the need for "immortality" exists in all of us on various different levels, and that the exploration of this area of the problem would be fruitful.

It would appear that the factors suggested above as relevant in the exploration of the problem of writer's block in psychotherapists, seem to lend themselves to solutions only by the re-analysis of the therapist involved. While this may be true in some instances,

I rule this out as a practical solution because, for all the reasons mentioned above, the would-be writers are insufficiently motivated to go to this great length and expense to solve the problem, nor am I certain that it is necessary. I believe that many therapists have a strong desire to get their ideas in print and would welcome material describing techniques in overcoming their block. In this connection, I feel it would be most helpful if therapists would respond to my paper by forming small discussion groups and writer's workshops to discuss their resistance to writing. Since little is known about the extent of the problem, I would welcome letters from therapists dealing with the nature of their writer's block. ▼

If you hear a voice within you say "you cannot paint," then by all means paint, and that voice will be silenced.

—Vincent van Gogh

Winter, 1975-76

From Art to Psychotherapy

Albert Pesso

ALBERT PESSO: Co-founder of Psychomotor Therapy; President of the Psychomotor Institute; consultant to Adolescent Day Services, McLean Hospital; and author of *Movement in Psychotherapy, Psychomotor Techniques and Training* and *Experience in Action, A Psychomotor Psychology.*

Diane Pesso

DIANE PESSO: Co-founder of Psychomotor Therapy; Executive Director of the Psychomotor Institute; Director of Psychomotor Therapy at New England Rehabilitation Hospital.
Boston, Massachusetts

OUR BACKGROUND WAS ORIGINALLY IN THE ART OF DANCE. Our understanding of the language of movement and our attitudes about life and emotional communication led inexorably to the development of the Pesso System of Psychomotor therapy (PSP). Yet anyone watching a PSP session might well wonder at the absence of anything that might be considered dance and even at the relative absence of much large motor expression. By not including dance in PSP have we not eliminated art from the therapeutic process? We think not.

The art *element* in psychotherapy is certainly not limited to the therapeutic application of the art *form*. Of course this is not to deny the clearly demonstrated value of art form therapies such as dance therapy, music therapy, drama therapy. However it is not the form which is either artistic or therapeutic, but the *person* who is artistic or therapeutic.

It is possible to be an artist and not be particularly therapeutic and it is also possible to be a therapist and not be particularly artistic. The two do not necessarily emerge with the appearance of one. However, it is our opinion that when the two do come together it is of special value to the client seeking individuality, wholeness and creativity. Before going on to show the manner in which we have brought the two together we must first define some terms.

When we speak of art we can concentrate either on the *individual* creating the art or the *art form* within which art is created. Our approach is that art exists within an individual and the forms it takes are the temporal manifest expression of the artistic qualities of the self. With this viewpoint the emphasis is primarily on the individual and secondarily on form—with the expectation that form will arise naturally from the experience of the artistic aspect of the self.

There is another view held by artists that emphasizes form primarily and person secondarily. Under that perspective the person is encouraged to discipline him/herself to the demands of the form until the form is understood and overcome—then the person is free to be creative or artistic within that form. Both views are valid and both contribute their share of artistic creations. Our expectation is that the first approach develops more individuality and the second more technical competence.

Let us examine some ideas about therapy. The generally accepted concern of psychotherapy is the individual in relation to the outer world of society. Among therapists there are those who focus primarily on the development of the individual's true or whole self and secondarily on the relationship of that self to the outer world of society. Other therapists focus primarily on the relationship of the individual to the outer world of society and secondarily on the development of the whole or true self. Both approaches are valid and both contribute their share of increased numbers of comfortable, effective people. Our expectation is that the first approach develops more individual realization and the second more social competence.

Philosophical and theoretical attitudes in art and therapy overlap where they emphasize primarily the individual. In art the polarization is between individual creativity and form. In therapy the polarization is between individual fulfillment and the outer world of society. However, we would not wish to speak of the individual and emphasize the individual in this context without including ideas about the essential self or the human soul. It is in the "wholeness" and "allness" of the human soul that one can resolve the polarities. We share the view that the soul consists of wholeness which includes the potential of form and allness that includes the germ plasm of the outer world of society. Concern with the individual without including such ideas about soul would result in the cancerous growth of individual formlessness and omnipotence.

Our particular involvement in the art of dance, whether in teaching, choreography or performance was rooted in the respect and appreciation of the individual soul. As teachers, we assumed that dance was a human function and assisted students in finding the dance experience within themselves while assisting them in the development of their own bodies as their dance instrument. Thus reinforcing the notion that dance was not something "out there," but something that originated from within themselves. While teaching the craft of dance we never lost sight of the individual.

If dance technique has to do with craft, choreography and performance have to do with artistry. Dance art is the meaningful organization of time, space and sound in the service of communication of meaning. Art must be the business of the soul, for there is where order, organization, holistic tendencies, intuition, rhythm, timing, judgment, design, synthesis, integration, recognition of gestalts and meaning originates. (Don't tell us these things originate in the right cortical hemisphere—the soul simply makes use of the capacities of the right cortical hemisphere.) If the soul contains the seed of all these

things—involvement with choreography and performance was our way of cultivating these seeds.

In teaching choreography and performance we directed our students to discover the inner play of rhythms, to find innately satisfying visual patterns, and those personal paths of movement in space that contained an overall feeling of balance and form. We encouraged them to move genuinely and authentically from their emotional core so that all movement "rang true."

The bridge between art and psychotherapy is to be found among those artists and psychotherapists who share a primary emphasis on the individual. It is here that the distinction between artist and therapist blurs, and artistic and therapeutic results may emerge together. There were those who suggested our work in dance was therapeutic but PSP is a main span in our bridging of art and psychotherapy. We had already developed our artistry and our attitudes regarding the value of the individual soul. Now we had to bring these elements to bear on the fulfillment and well being of the individual in relation to the outer world of society. We would shift from the artistic use of movement—dance, to the interpersonal use of movement—behavior.

We brought skills accumulated from years of watching movement, with all the nuances and shadings of individual emotional expression both conscious and unconscious, to the problems involved in observing and working with interpersonal behavior. Those years put us in the position of being able to note the body language of a client and whether there was a discrepancy between the verbal and nonverbal content of an expression. We brought the capacity for discipline and patience inherent in the act of creation to our understanding of the organic nature of the process of psychotherapy. That is, we were accustomed to the fact that change was organic and had its own rhythms and was not to be forced without damage to the outcome.

However, PSP is not simply the application of our knowledge of human movement to the field of psychotherapy but is an entire psychotherapeutic system which evolved from our knowledge and experience of human interactions. This system, although clearly not dance, shows significant relationship to our dance developed attitudes. PSP contains elements of teaching, choreography and performance. We teach our clients to become sensitive to the non-verbal behavior of themselves and others. This allows them to note if they are moving authentically— (not dancing, but moving, behaving, living as themselves)—from their own centers; and to become sensitive to the meaning and impact of other people's gestures, behaviors and tensions on themselves.

Choreographic and performance elements can be found in structures.[1] The attitude towards a client creating a structure is very similar to the one we have had toward the student in the process of creating choreography. In this endeavor we may tap into our abilities as teacher, choreographer and performer. Artistry is a significant element in

1 A structure is the basic unit of work in PSP. A structure is a reconstruction of a given event, or the construction of a wished for interaction which includes the satisfying expression of all the emotion that exists in a client's body in the form of feelings, tensions and energies of all kinds—tremors, heat, heaviness, perspiration, pain, tingling, etc. In a structure, the client works directly from his/her inner states and controls the responses of other group members in a role playing function that is called accommodation. (For a more complete description of PSP and structures, refer to *Movement in Psychotherapy,* Albert Pesso, N.Y.U. Press, 1969, and *Experience In Action,* Albert Pesso, N.Y.U. Press, 1973.)

the process, for our judgment, timing of comments and interventions, understanding of rhythm, sense of the whole, etc. are ingredients in the creation of the ambience within which the client does the most important act of artistic creation. The creation of a structure when he/she makes use of the exquisite palette of the unconscious as it is experienced in the body/mind and lives that situation and interaction which would permit the emergent unfolding of more of the interactive self.

Artists need not be therapists and therapists need not be artists, that is so. But when we transcend the framing of names through the unification of the whole self, then descend beneath the surface polarity of individual creativity and form, individual fulfillment and society—we arrive at the heart of the matter. We may then pay heed and homage to the undivided essential self. If we chose to be present at and be witness to the endless, ongoing birth of the individual soul, we may make possible the process of healing and be an aid in others' quest to be creative and self-sustaining in the art of living.

The work of the artist is to heal the soul

—Kathleen Raine

Winter, 1975-76

Sue Galler

Reel to Real

It was essential that I rerun an earlier segment of Clara's film. That day, in our session, she had become the Guilletta Massima character in *La Strada,* a tragedienne, begging a stone man for forgiveness, for release from her shame. I was deeply moved by the pathos and terror in place of her usual whimsy. Later, I needed to see her again in "long shot," shuffling leaves on a wooded mountain trail, contentedly solitary. Creating this montage of movie images allowed me to better sense the dimensions of Clara, to reconceptualize the person and her journey in sharper tones and deeper focus, with strident background sounds and slower pacing.

A new way of seeing...

As a therapist, I am aware that I am required, frequently, to use my imagination, to create my own experience of the patient's tale. What I did not recognize, until recently, was the strongly cinematic cast to my imaginings, nor how significant was the style or *mise en scène* which seemed to flow from repeated therapy contacts with each individual and each group.

Why film? Childhood comfort drawn from fantasy, day-dream and make-believe, my restlessness with the constraints of narrative prose, a love of poetry and metaphor, the striking impact of the visual image...these are some of the *a posteriori* reasons I gave myself for total immersion in the study of cinema. I came to film during a life phase which required vicarious, even voyeuristic experience, during a dormant season in my fantasy production, needing a catalyst, a medium, through which feelings could flower intensely, for a brief time, and within a structure.

Through the process of my own therapy and, later, as a therapist-in-training, I discovered the continuity, the "sync" between the aesthetic and therapeutic experiences.

Learning comes in strange ways. This article was written, typewriter perched on a packing carton, because I felt the process would lead to some kind of personal integration. It did. Now I can move on, literally and figuratively, to a new home and to completion of a doctorate and clinical internship in '76. Counted among my blessings are a supportive family—my husband and two children, ages 10 and 13,—a community which I love, a camera, clients, and my own curiosity. I have no answers to my daughter's relentless question: "Mommy, what are you going to be when you grow up?"
Evanston, Illinois.

Like the movie, the therapy hour is structured, time-limited. Like the artist—in film, the *auteur*—the skillful therapist facilitates intensity, working with the technology and disciplines of his craft. It also has been essential that I see the differences between the two "art forms"; that the cinema, in its myth-making function, provides a dream space for public imagination, collective day-dream. Psychotherapy is aimed at private aesthetics, evoking the personal myth, with the therapist himself as a medium.

I cannot explain why I see Lorraine as either Snow White in an animated Disney film or as the heroine of a heavily stylized 1930's melodrama. Nor why David's image-in-my-head is always slightly out of focus, no matter how I adjust the lens. Nor do I understand the surrealistic quality to my interior recording of the sessions of a particular therapy group. Yet I must attend to these filmic impressions: Form and genre, light and movement, the color, pace, tempo of my mediated fantasies are vivid clues to transformations in the therapy hour.

Perhaps I simply have seen too many movies. My own scenario includes a phase as a student of film aesthetics and film production followed by a 'jump-cut' to doctoral work in counseling psychology. For some time, I wrote skewed, analytical notes in darkened auditoriums and then, lengthy critical papers on the films of major directors. Later, in another period of graduate work, I was equally involved in studying personality theories and clinical approaches to psychotherapy. From both fields I learned, essentially, to become an involved observer of my own experience of participation, open to the possibility of seeing the world, briefly and intensely, through another mind's eye.

Engagement with any art form teaches skills of attention, focuses awareness, alters perception. And cinema is intimately connected to the phenomena of human behavior, to ways of knowing the world, even to the processes of thinking, sensing and intuiting. The sense of film is of the inner life, conscious and unconscious, made visible and audible, with its quick transitions, weaving rhythms and free movement through time and space. In film, as in therapy, it is the thought-stream and the feeling-flow of subjective existence which may be traded, encountered and experienced.

As a therapist, no doubt I attend differently to the complexity and subtlety of facial expression and body language because of my years of movie-viewing. The magnitude of the screen image and the close-up shot place the spectator in intimate contact with human face and gesture. Leaning toward a patient struggling through the turmoil of buried feelings is replicated, in film, by the camera's movement forward to capture nuances of expression in an emotional scene. The continuity, the link between past and present which is amplified in the therapy session, is the sense of film itself with flashback, jump-cut, super imposition—even silence as part of the language of cinema.

Film has been called a "dream mode." Like dream, it creates a presentness and places the dreamer-spectator at the center of a flux of images, events and feelings (Langer, 1953). This immediacy, the "now" of the cinematic experience, is analogous to the experiential process of therapy. In both therapy and in film, a sense of direction and pattern vitalize the process. The filmmaker-director and the creative therapist are seeking to express or explicate a core of meanings, motifs, themes-with-variation or permutation. As *auteurs*, each infuses his/her work with personal style, obsession, hopefully, even vision.

> *In the aesthetic of traditional films, the camera tried to remain unperceived, to efface itself before the spectacle it was rendering. In contrast, what counts as new cinema can be recognized... by the 'felt presence of the camera.'* (Sontag, 1969, p. 139)

Susan Sontag's description of contemporary cinema resonates for me to what may be the essence of contemporary psychotherapy.

Just as much of modern art is self-reflexive, revealing the process of the focal medium, so the message of diverse systems of therapy is clearly heard through the medium, the personhood of the therapist. It is the mediating style, the perception and sensitivity of the therapist which may ultimately make of the therapeutic encounter an aesthetic experience, rather than a merely functional communication mode.

Just as the criteria for the aesthetics of film have shifted to include the director's awareness of the very process of seeing, so may the "felt presence" of the therapist be counted now as deeply significant to the art of psychotherapy. It is the therapist's subjective vision, his ordering of the flow of images in a shared experience which must be risked and perceived if he is to be an *auteur*.

When I told Lorraine that I sometimes see her as Snow White or the star of a '30's melodrama, she said the characters were wrong but the tug felt right. She's the Virgin Mary and Queen of the Amazons. Then she asked me if maybe I'd seen too many movies... ▼

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The Camera Lies!

The camera lies!
That is not me on the screen—
But, I knew her once.

—David H. Richter

Winter, 1975-76

Robert S. Hoffman

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The Fictional vs. the Real in Psychotherapy

"For the most banal even to become an adventure, you must (and this is enough) begin to recount it. This is what fools people: a man is always a teller of tales, he lives surrounded by his stories and the stories of others, he sees everything that happens to him through them; and he tries to live his own life as if he were telling a story."

"Everything changes when you tell about life; it's a change no one notices: the proof is that people talk about true stories. As if there could possibly be true stories; things happen one way and we tell about them in the opposite sense. You seem to start at the beginning: 'It was a fine autumn evening in 1922. I was a notary's clerk in Marommes.' And in reality you have started at the end. It was there, invisible and present, it is the one which gives to words the pomp and value of a beginning. 'I was out walking. I had left the town without realizing it. I was thinking about my money troubles.' This sentence, taken simply for what it is, means that the man was absorbed, morose, a hundred leagues from an adventure, exactly in the mood to let things happen without noticing them. But the end is there, transforming everything. For us, the man is already the hero of the story. His moroseness, his money troubles are much more precious than ours, they are all gilded by the light of future passions. And the story goes on in the reverse: instants have stopped piling themselves in a light-hearted way one on top of the other, they are snapped up by the end of the story which draws them, and each one of them in turn draws out the preceding instant... We forget that the future was not yet there; the man was walking in a night without forethought."

"I wanted the moments of my life to follow and order themselves like those of a life remembered. You might as well try and catch time by the tail."

—Jean-Paul Sartre

Thus Roquentin, Sartre's protagonist in *Nausea*, muses on the lack of meaning in his life. He wishes that the events of his life, instead of "piling themselves in a lighthearted way one on top of the other," had some structure, some coherence, some organizing principle. Some meaning. For him, as for many of us in our own lives, the absence of this quality is a cause for despair. And yet he is powerless, if he is honest, to change this state of affairs. Life is just that way.

The telling of stories, i.e. the fictional or dramatic view of life, is one way of confronting the existential given of meaninglessness. How does it accomplish this? In fiction—whether in a published literary work, or simply a human being viewing his own life in a story-telling frame of mind—a spurious meaning is imparted to otherwise trivial events by their connection (the plot) to the final event. "They are snapped up by the end of the story." This connection, or dramatic structure, provides meaning to these events that was absent before. But is this meaning spurious? Are we really deceiving ourselves when we view a life, our own or another's, in fictional terms? Sartre maintains that this sort of imposition of dramatic structure upon our experience is a kind of weakness, a self-deception, a denial of the actual state of affairs. Real life isn't that way at all.

What does it mean to invoke the concept of *real* life? In what sense is my life, as I choose to view it or recount it to others, not *real?* I plead guilty to the charge of fictionalizing my experience, of dressing it up, of clothing it in a structure that another might dispute. Don't we all, in our private thoughts as well as public declarations, constantly tell stories? If this is an inferior mode of viewing things, at least it has the virtue of being inescapable. But is it possible to do otherwise?

The argument that fiction is not life, or rather that fictionalized life is not *real* life, is of little consequence to us unless we have a judge—an arbiter who can decide for us what is real and what is not. Think of what would be required of this person: not merely to decide what is real or meaningful to him, or to me, but to decide actually what is meaningful *per se*. "No," I can imagine him saying as I tell him about myself, "that just doesn't make any sense—stop deluding yourself!" I can imagine myself retreating in embarrassment in the face of such superior wisdom. (Parenthetically, the similarity of this situation to certain approaches to therapy is obvious.)

The important distinction to be made here is between meaningfulness *per se* and meaningfulness *as an experience*. The former is unobtainable, the latter the essence of being human. Our judge does not exist. There is nobody to tell us what is real or meaningful, and what is not. There is simply our own experience. I know what is meaningful for me, and you know what is meaningful for you. There is no other sort of meaning. If my experience of meaningfulness be called fictional or dramatic, then so be it. It matters little what we call it.

When I contemplate my own life or that of another, I am, in the very act of contemplation, investing it with form, with structure —with meaning. I am creating something. I am adding something to the material that I contemplate. If I really get into it, I create a whole novel—with characters, motivations, conflicts, resolutions, climaxes, and so on. If not quite so ambitious, I create a little vignette. If my inclination is more visual than verbal, I create a painting—an image in my mind. There too, there is more to my image than the sensations that allowed me to form it. I have added something. In this sense I am an artist every moment that I am alive. I cannot help it. I am an artist simply *because* I am alive.

It is often said that psychotherapy is an art, but this is usually intended in a narrow sense: the person saying it, most often, is engaged in a dispute with someone who claims that it is a science. More precisely, he will say that therapy is "still" an art, implying that when the therapists really get their act together, it will *become* a science.

The purported distinction between art and science can be misleading, if indeed it is valid at all. It is true that the products of artistic and scientific endeavor are frequently different, e.g. a painting vs. a new antibiotic. But the steps in the creative process can be quite similar. Discipline and logic, for example, are present in the arts, and inspiration in the sciences. (It is reported that Kekule's conception of the benzene ring structure appeared to him in a dream.) The distinction is really trivial.

My own conception of therapy as an art form rests upon a simple observation: that it consists of the telling of stories. It is part of that uniquely human endeavor, the creation of meaning/structure/form/fiction —whatever you wish to call it—that we cannot refrain from doing every moment of our waking lives. There is nothing special about the process, but in calling it therapy we merely indicate that we do it in the presence of another and ostensibly for his benefit. My patient and I are, as always, creating stories, but we're doing it together. We cannot help it.

The word "story" in this context may cause some irritation to those in the mental health professions accustomed to distinguishing "story" from "truth." (One thinks of such things as: parataxic distortions, screen memories, faulty reality testing, etc. etc.) But once again I would submit: there is no such difference. When one eliminates the story from thought and discourse, there is nothing left! Am I to maintain that, in therapy, what my patient tells is a story while what I tell is not a story, but something more? Clearly it cannot be something more. I am, after all, simply human, and not like the omniscient judge mentioned above.

In the beginning my patient tells me his story about himself, the one he's been working on for so long and which serves him so poorly. As things proceed a bit further, he will generate a story about me which, if I disagree with it in some respects, I might label the "transference." Generally, as I listen to his story, I will create my own story about him and share it little by little—my "interpretations." And if I become comfortable enough, I might even share some of my own personal story. Four different stories are being told. As time passes, these various tales become intertwined, affect each other, and thereby become modified. The ways in which these transformations occur are many and complex, and do not concern us here. But the fact of this process is well known to all who participate in the experience of therapy.

Psychotherapy, then, is an art form. It claims no special distinction in this among human endeavors, since all thought and communication are at base the creation and transmission of our personal fictions. But let us not err in the opposite direction, by viewing therapy as an inferior approximation to scientific method. The creation of meaning is the distinguishing feature of being human, the absence of it the ultimate form of despair, and therefore the attempt to create it for/from/with another individual the most fundamental and honorable of activities. ▼

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Winter, 1980

Warren D. Jacobs

At the present time, ´I'm trying to learn how to dance more with life—with my wife and daughters, friends, parents, and others. My poetry talks to me and is trying to help me too.
Atlanta, Georgia

Therapy, Poetry, and Healing

Poetry has always been an important part of my life. I recall when I was in high school, I thoroughly enjoyed reading, discussing, and interpreting poems. There was something about the rhythm and feel of the words and images that made a lot of sense to me. I was fascinated with how so much could be said in such a relatively short space. The feelings were of rightness and completeness, of preciseness and vagueness, and all of these happening at the same time. Poetry reminds me of Oriental brush painting, where each stroke is defined, is symbolic, is simple and beautiful. In brush painting as in poetry, there is a play between the actual stroke (word) and the space surrounding that stroke or word. The white space around the bird or bamboo or waterfall is not "dead space" but has a meaning of its own in relationship to the ink. In poetry, the spacing of a word or letter assumes significance in relationship to the space as well as to the positioning of other letters and punctuation marks.

I don't recall when I first started writing poetry, but I do value that part of me. At times, it has been a direct link to my unconscious; at other times, it has been a way for me to express feelings that I can't share openly. Poetry is direct, yet subtle. It forces me to search for meanings that might not otherwise be readily evident. I am aware of a sense of excitement when I read a meaningful poem. I feel on a search for a treasure that will teach me something in a way that my core will tingle and resonate.

As I write these words, I am struck by how this is similar to doing therapy. Therapy is direct and subtle and complicated and simple and also provides both people with an opportunity to search for and discover treasures. Also, as with poetry, there is the need to wait for the natural process to evolve. I don't consider myself to be a professional poet, who I imagine is disciplined and who

studies and polishes his or her poetry. For me, writing a poem is an experience of the moment, a religious experience, and an expression of a feeling which has its own timing. When I wrote the poem "Intimus," which was published in the *Voices* edition on *Intimacy in Psychotherapy,* I felt something that I would like to share. I had wanted to contribute to *Voices* for a long time and felt a strong need to write a poem on intimacy. I continue to struggle with the issue of intimacy, and so the timing was right for my internal processes to create. I decided to look up the word "intimacy" in the dictionary and found two more words that felt good, i.e., "intimus," the Latin root, and "innermost." I then wrote down the title of the Poem ("Intimus") and the first line, which I included the word "innermost." At that point I felt stuck and decided to wait and see what might happen. What did happen was an incredible experience. My hand began writing, almost as if it was being directed by another power. The words spelled themselves out on the paper and ordered themselves in their own way. The poem was written in less than a minute and stopped when it was finished. I still have some trouble accepting this creation as mine, even though I know it came from me. Perhaps my difficulty is because I'm still struggling with my message to myself.

Thus, for me, a poem "happens," but it is a product of my past, present, and future. I couldn't force it to come, but I suspect that I was patiently nurturing it along until it was ready to emerge. Similarly, therapy is a process that can't be forced; when the "right" conditions are there, when the person is open to the internal creative flow, then the crystallization can occur.

Poetry is therapeutic and healing for me. On several occasions I have written poems to express a deeply felt emotional experience. When this occurs, I feel uplifted and whole. One time, my wife was out of town and I went to Friday evening services at my synagogue. I felt good there and because I knew I would return to an empty house, I was one of the last to leave. I then became aware of an old feeling of lingering and suddenly felt the need to write a poem. When I arrived home the Sabbath candles were just about to expire and when they did the room was filled with the sweet-pungent aroma of the burned-out tapers. This event also tapped an old feeling of grandparents-home-Sabbath-warmth, and the combination of feelings led to the creation of the following poem:

LINGERING

How fast they burn, those waxen tapers,
Lit by loving hands,
So kind, so gentle.
They sway and bless with golden shadows
That fill the space
With warmth and softness.
How fast they burn, in silent battle,
To end their reign,
To embrace the night.
But at their last, the life still lingers,
The flames retard,
Then quickly bloom.
And as the lights bow to the darkness,

Small wisps of smoke
Replace the glow —
To leave perfume to fill the stillness,
To fill the soul,
To linger on.

Poetry is also fun, romantic, lyrical and life-enhancing for me. I wish to end with a poem that I wrote many years ago, but rediscovered only recently. I really liked finding it and realized how timeless the message is for me:

THE JOYS OF LIFE

The joys of life, manifold are they —
and rich.
Not with tapestries of woven silk,
Gold with a halo of a thousand suns;
But with the deftly interwoven beauty
of the human heart,
The sparkling radiance of magnetic eyes,
Drawing from without,
Reflecting from within.

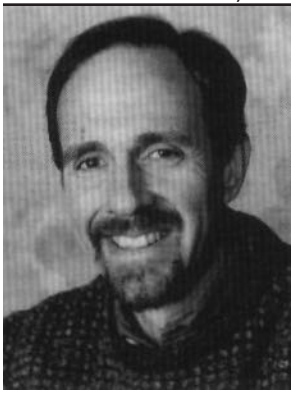
Woven silk, the gold, and suns are
vanity,
Vanishing at the simplest thought.
But heart and eyes,
The joys of life, manifold are they —
And rich.

I am in exile. Like everybody else, I live in a world that is given to me—I am thankful for it. It is not made by me—and that too is very well. But it is not my native home; therefore I make poems.

—Paul Goodman

Fall, 2003

Brad Sachs, PhD



Brad Sachs, PhD, is a psychologist in Columbia, MD. His newest books are *The Good Enough Teen: How to Raise an Imperfect Adolescent and be Perfectly Satisfied* (HarperCollins, 2004) and *In the Desperate Kingdom of Love: Selected Poems* (Chestnut Hills Press, 2004). His next CD is entitled *Songs of Love and the Rain*. He is married to Karen Meckler, a psychiatrist and medical acupuncturist, and together they raise their three children and their dog, Hunan.
Columbia, Maryland

Why You Didn't Write This Article, But Probably Could Have: Encountering, And Countering, Writer's Block

Emerging from college as a self-styled poet who became an English teacher in an effort to make a reasonable living, I have had the privilege, over the years, of teaching writing in a variety of settings—helping preschoolers to write puppet shows, prison inmates to write verse, senior citizens to write memoirs, police officers to write crime novels, psychologists to write self-help books, physicians to write medical fiction, and, naturally, hundreds of elementary, middle, high school and college students to compose just about everything from ballads to book reports, from short stories to critical essays. And once I changed careers and became a psychotherapist, I have, like many other clinicians, encouraged numerous patients to write as well—letters, journals, autobiographies, family histories—in an effort to enable them to better reveal and explore the inner life that often lies hidden behind seemingly impenetrable barriers.

If there's one thing I've learned from all of these educational experiences, it's that almost all people are, at some point, able to find a way to convince themselves that they either *can't* write or *shouldn't* write, and then to subsequently devote great energy, initiative, and industry towards avoiding their dreaded encounter with the empty page.

A second thing I've learned is that, with the right insight and support, almost all people are able to transcend these largely internally-based inhibitions, and find that the very *act* of writing, regardless of what is produced, has profound and enduring healing properties.

In this article, I will attempt to summarize the typical obstacles to writing that I have heard about (and person-

ally experienced!) over the years, and then share some strategies that are designed to enable one to sidestep one's cunning interior censors, and liberate the writer that's been waiting restlessly within.

Excuse Number One: "I Have Nothing Original to Say"

One of the first myths about writing that needs to be either relinquished or extinguished is the belief that you are not entitled to write unless what you have to say is wholly unique, a one-of-a-kind insight or outlook that can be found nowhere else in the canons of human civilization.

The great jazz trumpeter Wynton Marsalis commented, "Jazz was never about arriving as an original. You learn Coleman Hawkins or Ben Webster or John Coltrane, and as time goes by, you start to dissect your learning holistically." The writer Kenneth Patchen put it similarly: "If you are a maker, you will know that somewhere the thing you would do has already been done, and you will set about quietly to do it." And Voltaire observed, 'The instruction that we find in books is like fire. We fetch it from our neighbors, kindle it at home, communicate it to others, and it becomes the property of all."

My belief is that if it's important to you, and you take the time to express it, it will become important to others as well, no matter how familiar it seems. John Gardner advised, "A writer's material is what he cares about." George Bernard Shaw wrote, "The man who writes about himself and his own time is the only man who writes about all people and all time." And Goethe put it most succinctly: "In every work of genius, we recognize our own rejected thoughts."

Excuse Number Two: "I Don't Write Well"

If I had a dollar for every time I've heard individuals rationalize their avoidance of writing by disparaging their capacity to write, I can easily imagine myself like Scrooge McDuck, diving headlong into towering piles of green bills with quacks of unadulterated glee. The reality is, everyone *writes well enough* to articulate their deepest, most important appetites and longings.

William Saroyan observed, "I used to throw things out, saying, 'This isn't great.' It didn't occur to me that it didn't have to be great." Another writer, in the midst of a long novel, confessed in his journal, "No one else knows my lack of ability the way I do... My work is no good... I'm desperately upset about it... it's just a run-of-the-mill book... and the awful thing is that it is absolutely the best I can do." His name? John Steinbeck. The book? *The Grapes of Wrath.*

Excuse Number Three: "I Need to Be Inspired"

Enslaving yourself to cruelly infrequent visits from the Muse is one of the most justifiable excuses for not writing. After all, the feeling of writing when one composes in the incandescent fervor of inspiration is a far cry from the feeling of writing in the dreary shadows of ordinary, uninspired effort, similar to comparing the endorphin-powered intensity of a dangerously illicit sexual affair with the arid routines of a boring marriage.

But the reality is that most writers who write regularly absolve themselves of the expectation that they need to be inspired to produce. Jack London expressed this quite vividly when he averred, "You can't wait for inspiration. You have to go after it with a club." Composer John Cage admitted, "Out of the work, comes the work... I don't try to be inspired. I just try to work very regularly." The prolific Cole Porter once commented, "My sole inspiration is a telephone call from a producer." And Tom Wolfe said, "I find that what I write when I force myself is generally just as good as what I write when I'm feeling inspired. It's mainly a matter of forcing yourself to write."

Excuse Number Four: "I Have an Idea, But It's Not Big or Important Enough to Become a Poem / Story / Article / Book"

Years of coaching young and old writers have reinforced my belief that ideas are like embers: any of them can be fanned into a heat-producing flame, given patience, time, and a little room to grow. The artist Paul Klee, when asked to describe his creative process, responded with the lovely depiction, "I take a line for a walk." Jazz pianist McCoy Tyner told an interviewer, "Sometimes I just hear a phrase, and then that phrase suggests the next. Sort of a domino effect that keeps building until I hear a song."

Playwright August Wilson admitted, "I start with a line of dialogue. I have no idea half the time who's speaking or what they're saying. I'll start with that line, and the more dialogue I write, the better I get to know the character."

Discrete feelings, ideas, images, memories, even single words can all be expanded into something meaningful if we simply take the time to tend to them, to nurture them so that they send down their roots and send forth their shoots. As Henry David Thoreau wrote, "It's not what you look at, but what you see."

Excuse Number Five: "I Give Up"

I recall a memorable encounter with an aging English professor of mine in college at (where else?) a urinal—he was an esteemed writer whose best work, it could be charitably said, was already behind him. It was a dark Providence morning, the sky filled with gray thunderheads, and the rain hurtling down so loudly that we could hear it thrumming on the rooftops. After summoning up my nerve, I cautiously ventured forth with a comment: "Good writing weather, huh?" "Indeed," he intoned gruffly, "but the problem is, it's also good *drinking* weather."

All writers worth their salt will at some point be tempted to admit defeat, and console themselves with the comforting salve of self-justification ("I did my best," "I gave it my all," "I'm really not good enough," "There are more important things to do," etc.). Those who can resist this seduction and stick it out by trudging along are, in my mind, the "true writers."

The words of an anonymous veteran Hollywood screenwriter speak to this reality: "If you want to be a famous writer, keep at it for ten years. By that time, everyone else will have quit, and they'll *have* to hire you."

In reality, there is really only one excuse that, to my way of thinking, accounts for just about *anyone's* writer's block: *the desire to avoid oneself.* The act of writing is a mysterious,

talismanic one, delivering us on a magic carpet of our own making to all that is dark and mysterious, as well as fine and radiant, within ourselves. When we write, we embark on a dialogue with ourselves, a perilous conversation between what is alive and what is dying, what is limiting and what is unlimited, what is visible and what is shadowy, what is known and what is unknowable. Once we write, we are automatically awakened from our daily torpor into a renewed authenticity, and become inexplicably but inevitably engaged in the act of assigning meaning to our small and ordinary lives.

We may soothe and reassure ourselves with any of the rationalizations that I have listed above, but if we are not writing, it is not due to a failure of imagination or skill, inspiration, or will—it's a desperate effort to sidestep our *interior* life so that we can continue sleepwalking through our *exterior* one.

One participant in a writing workshop for psychotherapists that I led complained about his tendency to continuously postpone his efforts to get cracking on the novel that he had outlined endlessly in his head. When I asked what was holding him back at this point, he told me "Nothing now, really, except that I'm busy shopping for a computer—I think that's the final step. The one I've got now is just too old and too slow. I figure I'll really get down to it once I get the new computer—that'll just make everything so much easier."

I led him through a short, guided imagery in which I asked him to imagine that he had a brand new high-powered computer sitting at his desk, eagerly awaiting his presence. As we proceeded, he confessed to beginning to experience grave feelings of anxiety about daring to write despite having the appropriate technology at hand.

Afterward, he told the group, "In my head, this novel is perfect. But once I start writing it, I know that it won't be perfect any longer—it'll be wretched, just like everything else I do." Clearly it was the fear of giving birth to the truths that gestated in his most private realms, and the disillusionment that would accompany the growth of his inevitably imperfect work after his creative parturition, rather than the need for more megabytes, that had become his most insurmountable hurdle.

If our escape from self-awareness is at the root of our reluctance to write, how might we stay put long enough to allow the creative process to unfold? Being that writing is, in essence, a conversation one holds with one's unconscious or barely-conscious self, I have often found that gently teasing this duet up to more available consciousness promotes the likelihood that it can proceed with less encumbrance.

For example, sometimes I will ask patients or workshop participants to interview their inner critic in an effort to become more familiar with his/her tactics so these tactics can be countered more successfully. Some questions to start with would be:

Who are you?
What do you want from me?
What do you want to keep me *from*?
Why do you act the way you do?
Where did you come from?
Who do you remind me of?
In whose voice do you speak?
What do you like?
What do you dislike?

Where am I most vulnerable to you?
Where are *you* most vulnerable to *me*?
What are you most afraid of?
How might we become partners?
What would you lose by working *with* me, rather than *against* me?
What would *I* lose by working with *you*, rather than against you?
How could I honor you?

Likewise, we can ask a similar set of questions of ourselves. Here is a mental checklist I go through when I start to get disgusted with what I'm writing and begin trying to convince myself to toss in the towel:

Why am I writing this? What is my intent?
Am I writing *honestly*? If not, why not?
What answers does this piece provide?
What questions does this piece ask?
What am I holding back? *Why* am I holding back?
Where is the truth in this piece?
Do I need to be bolder?
Do I need to let go of something?
Do I need to end it?
Did I ever really *start* it?
Do I need to get *more* feedback or *less* feedback from others?
Have I taken a risk? If so, where? If not, why not?
Where is the passion?
What would happen if I moved ahead with it despite my grave concerns?
What would happen if I didn't?
Did I say what I *really* wanted to say?

Sometimes, I have found that simply having a few provocative questions or assignments prompts us to dive down and discover the reluctant treasures that are always willing, with patience and persistence, to be revealed to us. Here are some:

What are you afraid to have others know about you?
What is die best way to nurture yourself as a writer?
What issues emerge when you try to nurture yourself?
What is the best way to discipline yourself as a writer?
What issues emerge when you try to discipline yourself?
What are the important repeating symbols in your dreams?
What do you regret most in your life?
What makes you the saddest?
What makes you the most joyous?
What was your most sacred experience?
What is your life purpose? How does writing fit in with this?
Name five childhood experiences that left lasting impressions on you.
Think of an event that left you with a lump in your throat.

What have you not yet figured out?
Describe yourself as a child in the voice of your mother.
Describe yourself as a child in the voice of your father.
Describe yourself as a child in your own, childhood voice.
What is your greatest flaw?
What do you wish you could tell/had told your mother?
What do you wish you could tell/had told your father?

Finally, here are some additional thoughts that can work as antidotes to the often paralyzing fear of telling, with words, in whatever form they take, the tales that are most important to us.

Writing as Self-Discovery

E.L. Doctorow once described writing as being like "driving at night in the fog, when you can only see as far as your headlights." I believe that real writing is not at all the process of transcribing or channeling what we *know*, but more so the delicate process of discovering what we *don't* know, what we don't *want* to know, and what we don't *know* that we know.

It's not important that you have a clear idea ahead of time of what you are trying to say—in fact, it's probably better if you *don't*. Anne Sexton admitted, "It might take me ten pages of nothing, of terrible writing, and then I'll get a line, and I'll think, '*That's* what I mean!' What you're doing is hunting for what you mean, what you're trying to say. You don't know when you start."

Mario Vargas Llosa speaks to this issue in an almost identical way: "What I enjoy in writing... is to discover the possibilities of a story... to discover that something has been pushing me in a direction that I could not expect when I started."

My feeling is that when we write, we create ourselves over and over again. We're entitled to hate what we wrote, but we are obligated to love ourselves for having written, since it is when we write that we are most truly ourselves.

It's All Right to Re-Write

One of the magical things about good writing is that it looks effortless— "*I* could do that," we comment, confidently, to ourselves. Then, of course, when we do try, our efforts fail miserably, and we want to wave the white flag of defeat and retreat from ourselves. But we need to keep in mind what Ernest Hemingway, in his inimitable style, maintained: "The first draft of anything is shit."

Most everything we begin may sound abominable at first, but that doesn't mean that it doesn't have diamonds within it that are waiting to be mined. Kurt Vonnegut explained, "This is what I find most encouraging about the writing trades: they allow mediocre people who are patient and industrious to revise their stupidity, to edit themselves into something like intelligence. They allow lunatics to seem saner than sane."

We must also be careful not to become too vulnerable to what others have to say about our work. Amy Tan relates that a boss of hers once told her that writing was her "worst skill" and that she should plan on becoming an account manager.

The first editor who looked at *The Diary of Anne Frank* wrote, "The girl doesn't, it seems to me, have a special perception or feeling which would lift that book above the 'curiousity' level." And the initial reader of the manuscript for *Madame Bovary* complained, "You have buried your novel beneath a heap of details which are well done but utterly superfluous."

So, in the words of a bumper sticker I saw recently: "If at first you don't succeed, don't be surprised."

Find Your Voice

I have found over the years that everyone, regardless of age, background, intelligence, or education, has a unique *voice*, a particular and distinct way of producing words and phrases with rhythm and sound, a voice that becomes the most true and telling power behind whatever is being written. Your job—*any* writer's job—is to *find* that voice because, really, it's the only one you've got.

Elisabeth Winthrop conveyed this in the following way: "You know it when you have it and you often suspect when you don't, but you don't know how to make the leap from one state to another. When you've found your voice, I think it's like a rider finding his seat on a horse. Your legs are pressed against the horse's sides, and you and the horse move as one. When you have found your voice—your way of telling a story—you and your book are in concert. You move as one."

Often, the experience of finding one's voice is simply a matter of quieting down or exorcising *other* voices, the voices that we were taught to speak with that dampen the tenor and texture of our *true* voice. Stanley Elkin commented, "It's a kind of whittling, a honing to the bone, until you finally get whatever the hell it is you're looking for. It's an exercise in sculpture, chipping away at the rock until you find the nose."

Or as comedian Howie Mandel good-naturedly observed, "Everything that I've ever been punished for, expelled for, or hit for is what I get *paid* for today."

Writing as Therapy

As I mentioned at the beginning of this piece, the act of writing generally holds forth profound and enduring healing properties. To me, Graham Greene explained this most accurately when he observed, "Writing is a form of therapy; sometimes I wonder how all those who do not write, compose, or paint can manage to escape the madness, the melancholia, the panic-fear which is inherent in the human condition."

We must never underestimate the strength of the curative powers that we lay claim to when we take the time to chart our innermost realms with words. When asked why she wrote, Isak Dineson responded, "All sorrows can be borne if you put them into a story." And a character in one of Leslie Marmon Silko's novels declared, "I will tell you something about stories... they aren't just entertainment. Don't be fooled. They are all we have, you see, all we have to fight off illness and death. You don't have anything if you don't have stories."

One final thought about writing, which is particularly relevant to the process of psychotherapy...

To my way of thinking, therapists' engagements with patients are similar to writers'

engagements with themselves—both sets of relationships require great courage and persistence, but are littered with pitfalls that make it difficult to summon the resourcefulness to persevere and march on. But it is by doggedly pursuing, through the sharing of words, the potential intimacy embedded in these kinds of *inter*personal and *intra*personal encounters that we begin the process of transfiguring the ordinary and rescuing and liberating our solitary consciousness from its long and lonely exile. In so doing, we find that we are somehow able to remain alive and, ultimately, to fall back in love with ourselves, with others, and with the world. In that sense, the creative flow that characterizes the process of both writing and psychotherapy carries us all back to the same psychological locale—the beginning, the place where we are one. ▼

MAYBE

I can talk myself out of
Almost any poem imaginable.
The one about my father taking up painting?
Too precious…
The one about watching my kids play in the ocean?
Done about a thousand times already…
The one about the dream in which I was dying?
Too self-absorbed…
The one about the moon
Casting over us its white net of gloom?
Who am I, Mary Oliver?
The one about getting lost in the yearning,
The yearning that flays me with its failed promise?
Well…

—Brad Sachs

Call for Papers

Inviting the Unconventional

Summer 2023

Deadline for submission: July 15, 2023

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*

We are living in uncharted times. As psychotherapists, we are tasked with both joining and shepherding our clients in making meaning of the chaos. The upheaval of old systems and questioning of the status quo afford us an opportunity to be curious about new and old clinical tools to unpack the subterranean internal world and inform healing and growth – including the unconventional. Some of these therapeutic interventions or philosophies may be seen as either alternative or unconventional, yet this full palette of approaches creates potent opportunities to treat the whole person.

For this issue of *Voices,* we accompany the co-themed 2023 Institute & Conference in exploration of the ways that psychotherapy is adapting, experimenting, or evolving to embrace the new, the unconventional, and the chaos of our times with its challenges to prior cultural conventions and modes of psychotherapy. How do we both remain true to our clinical values and orientations and adapt to remain relevant in changing times?

Consider: How has your practice been challenged by the changing times – your understanding of clients and of social or cultural conventions, your approach to your clients' processes of meaning-making and growth, or your previous techniques and models of therapy? What new therapy techniques have you tried to help clients process the upheaval of old systems and status quo and embrace the new and/or unconventional? What worked; what did not? What was hard to embrace; what felt seamless? What first felt too unconventional but perhaps, once tried, became a new practice standard? How has the status quo of your own practice changed?

Consider: How has your awareness of multiple layers of diversity and identity held by both clinician and client evolved? How have previous psychotherapy theories (e.g., psychodynamic, object relations, and self-psychology) been re-examined and rewritten through diverse lenses (i.e., BIPOC, women, members of the LGBTQ+ community)? What ethical considerations have you encountered when practicing in new therapeutic styles or responding to challenges to the status quo?

How has your personal development or "person of the therapist" been impacted by innovation and stagnation in the clinical process? How else have challenges to the status quo in your life and person beyond practice impacted what you bring to your work? ▼

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

Submissions are to be in a Word document, 12-point font, double-spaced, in APA Style, with a 4,000-word maximum. Author's name should not be in the manuscript as all are subject to blind peer review.

Psychedelics and Psychotherapy: Healing and Transformation

Spring 2024

Call for Papers

Deadline for submission: January 15, 2024

Direct questions and submissions to the editor, Carla Bauer, LCSW
crbauer01@bellsouth.net
or to the Guest Editors, Steve Eichel, PhD
steveeichel@gmail.com
and
John Rhead, PhD
jrheadphd@gmail.com
See Submission Guidelines on the AAP website:
www.aapweb.com
or in any issue of *Voices*

PSYCHEDELICS—MIND/MOOD/COGNITION/PERCEPTION-ALTERING CHEMICALS THAT EITHER EXIST IN NATURE OR HAVE BEEN MANUFACTURED BY HUMANS—HAVE BEEN USED FOR THEIR SPIRITUAL AND HEALING BENEFITS FOR ALL OF RECORDED HUMAN HISTORY. Only recently has our culture—including organized psychology and psychiatry—begun to realize the potential and promise (and hazards) of psychedelics. In 1955, the same year that the American Academy of Psychotherapists (AAP) was born, R. Gordon Wasson kicked off the first wave of modern psychedelic exploration with his mushroom experience with a curandera in Mexico—a very interesting coincidence of events.

AAP came into existence when a collage of psychotherapists from different schools of thought came together to foster a particular and somewhat novel way of viewing the art and practice of psychotherapy. They came to view psychotherapy as a very intimate interpersonal process between a therapist and a client that is meant to facilitate the client's journey of deep introspection. Adding the use of psychedelic medicines into this model of psychotherapy can accelerate the journey for both client and therapist. It can also deepen and widen the inner territory being traversed in such a way that not only are psychological and interpersonal realms being explored, but spiritual realms as well. These explorations may facilitate the healing and growth of both client and therapist, and perhaps of the rest of humanity as well. They can also change the reasons for entering into the psychotherapy journey and the expected outcomes.

For this issue of *Voices*, we invite papers that explore how psychedelics have impacted you and your view of yourself, of life, of what psychotherapy is, and of how it should be practiced. How have psychedelics impacted your clients, whether used outside a therapeutic context (recreationally) or within one (i.e., organized psychedelic therapy)? What therapeutic benefits have you seen from psychedelics? What do you think may be possible as the current psychedelic tsunami sweeps the world, and what do you see as the potential dangers? What multicultural and multi-ethnic aspects have you encountered in psychedelic experience, research, and treatments? If there is some potential danger to you personally in going public with your experiences and ideas, the editors will consider anonymous publication.

How has your personal development or "person of the therapist" been impacted by innovation and stagnation in the clinical process? How else have challenges to the status quo in your life and person beyond practice impacted what you bring to your work? ▼

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

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Voices is a uniquely rewarding publication providing a meeting ground with other experienced psychotherapists. A theme-oriented journal, *Voices* presents personal and experiential essays by therapists from a wide range of orientations. Each issue takes you on an intimate journey through the reflections of therapists as they share their day-to-day experiences in the process of therapy. *Voices'* contributors reveal insights inherent in our lives, our culture and our society.

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Guidelines for Contributors

Voices: The Art and Science of Psychotherapy, is the journal of the American Academy of Psychotherapists. Written by and for psychotherapists and healing professionals, it focuses on therapists' personal struggles and growth and on the promotion of excellence in the practice of psychotherapy. The articles are written in a personalized voice rather than an academic tone, and they are of an experiential and theoretical nature that reflects on the human condition.

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.

Copyright. By submitting materials to *Voices* (articles, poems, photos or artwork), the author transfers and consents that copyright for that article will be owned by the American Academy of Psychotherapists, Inc. ▼

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
- has completed or is actively engaged in obtaining 100 hours of personal psychotherapy
- agrees to work with an Academy member mentor
- may be an associate for no more than five years

Student Affiliate

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.

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