

Journal of

BEINGHUMAN

Know Yourself ♦ Love Being Yourself ♦ Don't Lose Yourself

Journal of Being Human
Volume 1 Number 2

Liquorice Allsorts: Varieties of Human Beings ♦

40 Green Bottles Hanging on the Wall ♦

Why I will walk a mile for Supportive Education ♦

The Mom who Remembered ♦

Perspective for Sale

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EDITOR



There are no longer any facts in the world there are only interests and positions.

My daughter as part of her university studies is doing a module in Social Anthropology. She was pointing out how the same things in one cultural context may be vastly different from those same things in another context. More specifically she spoke of the need to look closely at issues of morality as different cultures define and defend morality (and consequently their actions) in ways that seemingly run contrary to other cultures.

Social Anthropology

[http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1469-8676](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1469-8676)

We decided that we were talking about relativism, more accurately cultural relativism and the problem of relative morality. My own position was that despite cultural differences and the importance of respecting **pluralism** there are some things that are just wrong.

Pluralism and Realism

http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/socialsciences/ppectorino/ETHICS_TEXT/Chapter_3_Relativism/Relativism_Pluralism_Realism.htm

Absolutism, Relativism, and Pluralism

<http://journalaboutethicalissues.blogspot.com/2010/10/absolutism-relativism-and-pluralism.html>

In an attempt to illustrate I said that I have no problem with polygamy as

opposed to monogamy. But if polygyny is on, I also have no problem with polyandry; it's only fair! I do have a problem (shouldn't we all) with hundreds of people dying from Sarin poisoning. That is not polyandry that is not pluralism.

Some estimates put the death toll from the 21st of August around 1400. We should not imagine that mass gassing has never happened before.

A view on the History of Bio-Chemical Weapons

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/09/02/a-short-history-of-bio-chemical-weapons/>

I was watching Sky News.

"It's like this". A waiter in a café on the Champs-Élysées says to the interviewer. "You are at home arguing with your wife and the neighbours hear it and come over and interfere, it's not their place you know".

He was using the analogy to express his views on the proposed US military strike on Syria as a result of the indiscriminate use of Sarin gas on the Syrian population. But what if in the midst of the (private) argument I thought, the husband starts beating the wife with a brass fire poker? Is it still no one's place to knock on their door?

It seems that the waiter is defending his right to decide what is right and what is wrong and who has the right to judge on such a matter.

I once set an exam for the grade 9 kids.

SECTION D: OPTIONAL BONUS QUESTION [20]

1. Who is the person speaking in the picture below? Please explain what he means by these words, specifically "dictatorship of relativism".
2. Do you believe that this explains to some extent the **apparent** breakdown of institutionalised religion and the absence of universally shared morality, truths and rules in the world today?



"We are moving toward a **dictatorship of relativism** . . . that recognizes nothing definite and leaves only one's own ego and one's own desires as the final measure."

Pope Francis the newly elected head of the Catholic Church also had this to say.

"But there is another form of poverty! It is the spiritual poverty of our time, which afflicts the so-called richer countries particularly seriously. It is what my much-loved predecessor, Benedict XVI, called the "tyranny of relativism", which makes everyone his own criterion and endangers the coexistence of peoples".



Pope Francis

Another view, Stephen Fry & the Catholic Church

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6L1xvdZMC10>

So are the rights and wrongs of Sarin poisoning to be decided on the basis of whim, personal interest and desire?

I am not going to suggest that the issue is either relativism or absolutism, that things are always black or white. Things are mainly grey, a murky muddy fetid grey and in respect of philosophy these terms are technically complex.

Relativism (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy)

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/relativism/#5>

So the blue side (Georgia, Russia, Colombia, United States, Syria, Iran, Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Serbia, Rwanda, Congo DRC, Egypt, Taliban etc say that they, as nations and often as segments of one nation against another segment are fighting for and defending that which is true that which is right and that which is just.

To infuse as much exasperation as possible the green side (Georgia, Russia, Colombia, United States, Syria, Iran, Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Serbia, Rwanda, Congo DRC, Egypt, Taliban etc say that they, as nations and often as segments of one nation against another segment are fighting for and defending that which is true that which is right and that which is just



“Our battle is righteous!”

Both, blue and green are prepared to die and kill for this defence; if you doubt this click on the links below.

Wars of the World

<http://www.internationalrelations.com/about-internationalrelations-com/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_on_going_military_conflicts

<http://www.warsintheworld.com/?page=static1258254223>

At the end of the day there are facts; indisputable facts. Hundreds of people, men women and children were killed after being exposed to Sarin (as opposed to the other *less horrible ways* in which hundreds of thousands have died by shooting, bombing, stabbing or beheading! Really?)

I have always said that the hope I have, the hope that is not based on being cynical, is the law, the social contract. I am not so naïve as to believe that the social contract is about preserving truth it is and always will be about interests and positions; I'll agree to this if you agree in turn to this. So the United Nations Security Council does not appear to be about truth or right. It is often unambiguously about interest, position and horse trading; most of the time in my estimation.

In a world where **apparently** everything is relative, where there are no shared moral absolutes, no universally shared truths or universally defended and upheld rules, where for some (not all) religion has become a damp squib that carries no moral weight or direction, an arbitrator is needed a referee, an umpire whose job it is to stipulate and enforce the rules and most importantly hold those responsible accountable for the actions they have taken.

The thing is, are we all agreed that we are in fact playing the same game and if we are do we all agree to the rules of this game and further, to abide by these rules? What happens when the rules themselves are wrong?



On a number of occasions over the years at the school in my job as the school counsellor I was involved in and initiated

interventions with statutory agencies that resulted in the court sanctioned and enforced removal of children from their parents. In most cases unsurprisingly the parents of the removed children fought tooth and nail to prevent the removal. I was once taken to court by an irate mother who charged that I had violated her human rights. It was truly very sad.

We make choices seemingly freely and sometimes but not always we are held accountable for the choices and thus the actions we take.

Is there any justice in the world?

<http://jeffweintraub.blogspot.com/2013/07/is-there-any-justice-in-world.html>

My question is this; **are there things that are wrong under any circumstance, things that are true under any circumstance, and rules that are universally shared irrespective of anybody's relative position by all peoples of the world?**

Make a list and let me know.

If there aren't, how do we judge that which is right and that which is wrong?

If there aren't how do you hold people accountable for their actions in violation of these things?

If there aren't what will be said to those who were killed by Sarin gas?

What will each of us say to ourselves about those who were killed by Sarin gas and all the others killed in various places who have become words on a page, names on a list?



QUOTE

There is only one meaning of life; the act of living itself.

Erich Fromm

ESSAY

Liquorice allsorts: The varieties of human beings.

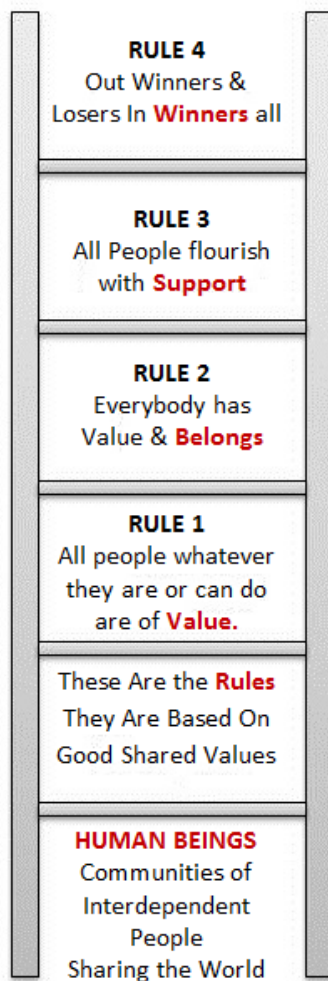
The basis of inclusion, whether pertaining to the psyche, the family, the school, the community or the nation is the reality and importance of diversity. The natural diversity we find inherent in being human, in humans and the human experience. It is how this issue is dealt with that determines whether inclusion of the diverse elements will be part of the whole.

Based on my own experience, years of grappling trying to reach an understanding that was respectful, true and useful, observing people and most recently working on the inclusion programme at the school, this is the way I

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have come to understand the notion of the diversity of human beings and their experience. It is clear, simple aims to be not value neutral (vehemently so!) and is I believe true.

LADDER TO HEAVEN



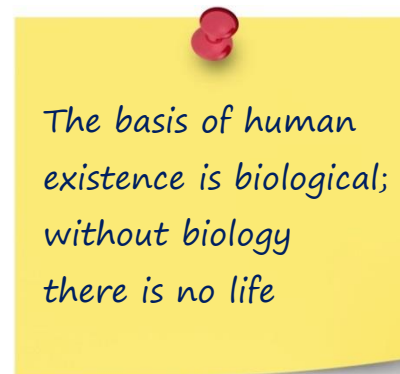
Street guitarist (Marcello Calabrese) plays Stairway to Heaven - YouTube
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3AqnMsB_no

Stairway to Heaven Jimmy Page Eric Clapton and Jeff Beck - YouTube

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOAgNEmw32A>

The rules, yes the rules. Is there a single instance (not in a school education programme) where human beings gladly share and respect the same good rules? Anyway I am going off on a tangent; back to the liquorice.

The basis of human existence is biological; without biology there is no life, if there is no body no soma there is no human life.



The basis of our personal existence is neuro-biological, the body and the brain. We find the origins of our individual lives in our biology, our neurology our genetics.

The varieties of human experience

<http://bjp.rcpsych.org/content/154/4/459>

The interaction between our neuro-biology and the exigencies (demands, pressures, requirements) of living in the world presents each of us with our unique human being.

Where the biology came from in the first place, creation, evolution is a position of

faith which I respect and don't claim to understand.

My description above might suggest to some that I do not believe that we each possess a soul, a psyche, a mind, a spirit – I am not suggesting that to be the case at all.

What I think is true is that while mental/mind states arise from physical states they are not reducible to physical properties, they are epiphenomenal (a secondary phenomenon separate and resulting from another). Put simply our minds exist and are different from our bodies when we are alive but when we are dead, when there is no longer no soma, there is no longer a mind, a psyche.

Alternatively some believe that the brain is the mind, psyche, soul and spirit and that these so called independent phenomena can be broken down into neural elements isolated as specific locations in the architecture of the brain.

The mind-body problem: neuro-physiology of looking and seeing
http://www.weizmann.ac.il/neurobiology/labs/barash/Shabtai_Barash.pdf

I am neither a student of philosophy nor neuro-physiology, so forgive my ignorance, I am trying to describe what I think is true.

So each of us has a biological, neurological and genetic origin. Even when the neuro-biology of a person started out as one thing and was changed

by something else, including in-utero, biology and neurology will still form the fundamental description of the person.

So if a neonate suffers brain damage due to anoxia at birth, febrile convulsions, foetal alcohol syndrome, traumatic brain injury (falling off a horse with no helmet), and exposure to nuclear radiation (I worked with a child who grew up in Chernobyl) we are still left with a neuro-biological reality that can be delineated descriptively.

BBC News - Chernobyl's legacy recorded in trees
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-23619870>

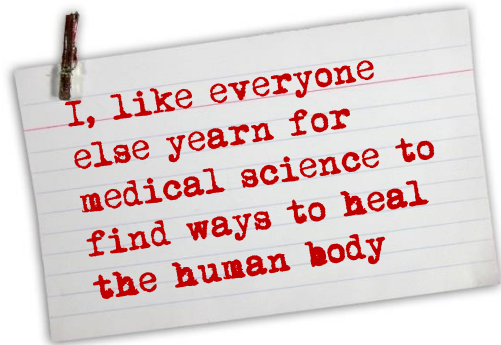
I am neither being indifferent to nor trivialising the reality of pathology or illness or the tragedy of these on the lives of children, parents and people generally.

I have learned very well that a vital component of working successfully to identify and provide support to children and to get parental support for this was to recognise, acknowledge and understand the parental grief; the loss of not getting *the child they hoped for* and the tragedy of ill children.

Welcome to Holland
<http://www.our-kids.org/Archives/Holland.html>

I, like everyone else yearn for medical science to find ways to heal the human body, find cures for all illness. I pray that ethical stem cell research creates ways for

damaged human cells to be regrown and bring life back in myriad ways. That genetics will find ways to remove or deactivate diseases that ravage us.



Stem Cells

<http://health.usnews.com/health-news/familyhealth/heart/articles/2009/10/15/stem-cells-grow-heart-tissue-in-lab>

BBC News - Pioneering adult stem cell trial approved by Japan

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-23374622>

As I am writing I wonder what happens to the world with a population that lives longer due to medical science; that is if all people, rich or poor have access to such interventions which I doubt.



The gap between rich and poor is bad for our health - Healthy Debate

<http://healthydebate.ca/opinions/income-inequality-and-health>

BBC News - Rich-poor divide accelerating, says OECD

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-22545210>

But that we leave to others in their noble fields of endeavour. My concern is accepting, parenting and educating children as they are whatever that may be.

So what kinds of neuro-biology did we see at the school? Kids who...

- Have blue, brown or green eyes and blond brown, red or black hair.
- Play the piano like a maestro
- Struggle to focus attention on mental sit down tasks.
- Have exceptionally high mathematical ability
- Cannot sit still in a classroom
- Have a high V-max oxygen metabolism capacity and win cross country races easily
- Have a predisposition to chemical addiction
- Have excellent eye hand coordination
- Have cerebral palsy
- Have Down's Syndrome
- Are dyslexic
- Have Asperger's Syndrome
- Have 10% vision
- Are deaf
- Have generalised anxiety

.....Amongst many others

So, a child labelled Asperger's will struggle to distinguish between literal and

figurative. At the school we would have regular fire drill evacuations. The child with Asperger's would run to me and ask where the fire was. I explained that although the fire evacuation siren did sound, loudly, and although every person in the building was quickly evacuated out of the school to a safe place where a register could be taken, there was actually no fire. This was something he struggled to comprehend.

Can we use this descriptive reality in a constructive non-judgmental way?

So what am I endeavouring to say? It's really quite simple. We start with the universal value that everybody has the right to belong and be valued for who they are. We need to be who we are, we need not only to be accepted for who we are but more importantly valued for who we are. The greater that value is seen in action not words the closer we get to the true meaning of justice and democracy.

It is how we, each of us and "society" respond to our variations that I am trying to get to. As a parent, educator, psychologist, not a medical doctor, I am saying that to stay true to the inclusive supportive model we should attempt to be purely descriptive of the nature of the person in phenomenological terms.

Describing things exactly as they are with absolutely no value placed on any description (bracket out value laden words). Get to know it inside and out, do whatever can be done to make things better, easier and more possible by

medical and any other interventions, if it remains in some form or another make peace with it...give it a place to live.

The thing is once the dust has settled and we have done everything in our power to heal and cure we are left with the reality, it is what it is and it is this that I have to live with. It is at this point that the issue of being supportive emerges as the best response to our variations.

...we have done everything in our power to heal, cure... we are left with the reality; it is what it is...now we need to support...

What I am talking about is a support group concept; **support GT**, Grand Turismo. Supportive education and supportive parenting structured towards helping people build lives of value irrespective of who and what they are and what they can or cannot do.



Berry cartoons

<http://berrystudio.blogspot.com/>

The notions of normal and abnormal are so pervasive that we contentedly assume such descriptions of reality to be both real and true and of value.

So here it is. With the inclusive school programme over the years I have come to a conclusion that the fairest way to see people and their lives is to speak of varieties, assortments if you will, not exceptionalities, not differences, not abnormalities, not specialness...just varieties; liquorice allsorts, each person delicious and yummy.



In a school or family setting the key to this idea is to recognise how one variety of person meets the demands of daily living as compared with how another variety of person meets the demands of daily living and thus ascertain what if any support is required also remembering that different contexts elicit different demands and different ranges of potential responses. That is all.

It may seem that the issue here is comparison; the reason we compare is to contrast the differing needs and coping strategies of each person and what they need to achieve success through their own efforts. It takes discipline to stop there and not proceed to judgement, competitiveness but it is really wonderful if it can be done.

The key... is to recognise how one variety of person meets the demands of daily living as compared with how another variety of person meets the demands of daily living and thus ascertain what if any support is required. That is all.

Note: Removing barriers to learning is providing support.

What is it like for a person living with OCD, for example, to meet the demands of daily living?

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-23412085>

At the start of each new school year as we waded through the accumulated files (labels) in preparing profiles for the teachers I began to ask myself what the importance of these words were. The nexus of **context, demand and coping** came to be a framework that allowed me to usefully make sense of the labels

ascribed to people, particularly children. I will elaborate on this later.

During my psychology honours year at Rhodes University we were exposed to phenomenological psychology. For me the essence of this approach was the need to be descriptive of the person's reality, bracketing out variables, personal and cultural that hindered seeing the situation as pure phenomena. I began to use these labels not to describe illnesses, disorders etc but to describe the reality of the individual in relation to the demands made upon them by the context they found themselves in. The crucial corollary to this perspective was then to deal with the varieties in relation to the demands in a practical judgemental free manner.

Rhodes University

<http://www.ru.ac.za/>

Lara (Head of Special Education at the school) and I were presenting a workshop to a girl's school in Johannesburg. It was late in the afternoon, we had been presenting at another school the whole day and we were exhausted. So too were the teaching staff in the audience. I didn't have the strength to present the whole inclusion project and then argue it with tired, reluctant teachers who were forced to be at the workshop.

So instead of persisting with the 20 shot I let go and went for the 19 shot; not the top score but still a good score on the dart board.



I asked the staff to break into groups, grab three or four people around them and sit together with pencil and paper and to have their imaginations ready. Off the top of my head I gave them a scenario.

A kid had enrolled at their school for grade 10.

"We have a female human being in grade 10 at a school in Johannesburg who wishes and is required to study and pass at least seven subjects ranging from Mathematics to Life Orientation. She will be required to attend and move around to classes for the different subjects as teachers teach from their own rooms.

Classes each have computer linked smart boards and are situated on three floors with no lifts just staircases. Teachers hand out excellent typed subject notes to all the girls. All girls are required to partake of weekly physical education, usually a short cross-country run over a wetland area in close proximity to the school.

Oh yes, the kid has only 10% vision in her left eye and none in her right eye."

I then digressed to ask the teachers if they knew of any person with "special needs" in their families or their social circles –

amazing when you do this – the reticence and/or the relief is palpable.

I posed the following challenge to the teachers. "Given that this child has the ability to pass matric, what would you do / do differently / change practically to make it possible for her to successfully navigate all of the regular demands of grade 10 to matric at your school?"

I described the situation as it was no more or less, with no use of labels such as illness, disorder, abnormality, special needs etc.

Maybe just being thankful that I chose not to lecture them they dived into the challenge with gusto, loud voices, shouting over each other, animated and eager to use their imaginations in pure problem solving mode, deliciously ignoring the whys and wherefores.

They bypassed the contentious issues.

Is inclusion right? Is it fair to the normal kids? Can we meet their needs? Shouldn't they be at Special Schools? Will they be mocked, tormented and ostracised? Why should I have to teach an abnormal kid in my class of normal kids? Won't they slow us down? Won't my child suffer because they're slow and make puerile demands of the teacher's time?

Why inclusion?

<http://www.csie.org.uk/inclusion/why.s.html>

Inclusion Press

<http://www.inclusion.com/>

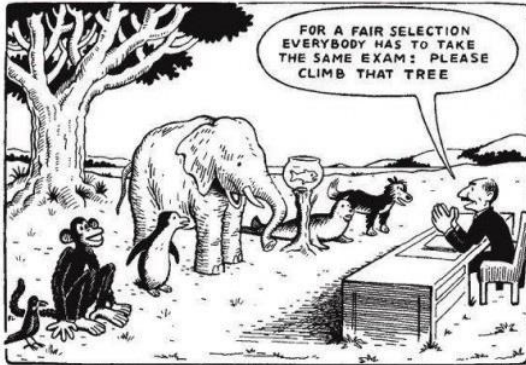
They came up with suggestions, innovations, and strategies which they delighted in presenting back to the whole group.

I'm not claiming that it is as easy as that, it certainly is not. Problems and resistance come with the territory, but even if just momentarily **we can leave** the value laden anxieties and objections behind and just see what is there to be seen and respond to it normally, like we would to any kid who needs support.



We had a belief that if teachers were expected to manage mixed ability classes they had to have a clear picture of the child they were teaching. There were some professional colleagues who fumed at what they saw as a breach of confidentiality by divulging information to teachers. Is there another way?

The issue was not the confidential information; the issue was the understanding the teacher could have of how this particular child coped with the demands of schooling with their particular *liquorice allsorts* and how to channel their education of and relationship with the child accordingly.



A funny cartoon... but there is nothing more brutal than treating each child equally, the same, because it is thought to be fair. If you don't believe me just ask a kid who has no vision, who is trying to run and enjoy a cross-country with her friends in a wetland if it's fair to treat all kids the same.

The answer will be **yes**, treat each kid the same; each must have access to belonging, other kids, quality education, a supportive environment. The answer will be **no**, I am blind don't expect me to undertake written tests or run a cross-country alone in the *dark*.

Sorry if you were expecting a yes or a no, life is not usually black or white, sometimes its black and white....and grey.

The answer will be yes and the answer will be no!

Beacon Liquorice Allsorts

<http://www.beaconallsorts.co.za/>

We all have hundreds of DNA flaws, UK geneticists say.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-20617312>

The Human Genome Project (HGP)

http://www.ornl.gov/sci/techresources/Human_Genome/home.shtml

Human Embryonic Stem Cell

http://www.sumanasinc.com/scienceinfocus/sif_stemcells.html

Blind Teen Keeps On Running

http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/45034031/ns/today-today_health/t/blind-teen-keeps-running-thanks-guide-dog/#.TzkTeU62zII

Adapting Games, Sports, and Recreation for Children and Adults who are Deaf-Blind

http://www.aph.org/pe/art_lieberman1.html

WHO AM I?

I want to be a psychologist...a counsellor...a life coach...

I was visiting a school in Johannesburg as I luckily often did (I am not a sit-at-a-desk-person), one of my favourite schools abundant with potential to do really great developmental and supportive education.



Anyway one of my colleagues at the school a psychologist was going through a tough time and in his difficulties said with regret and frustration that he should have listened to his father and become an accountant.

Now he may have just been having a bad day at the office but my sense was that here was a moment of genuine self-knowledge, perhaps come late.

The key is the line, "I should have listened to my father" and how this line impacted on his self-knowledge and subsequent decisions. I can only speculate as no conversation took place between us around this issue.

Does it mean that he simply and consciously chose to not take his father's **loving and respectful** advice? "You could do anything you set your mind to, I'm wondering if accountancy would be a good match for your personality".

Does it mean that he refused to take his father's **critical and judgmental** advice? "Why are you going to waste your time being a touchy feely head shrinker, get a real career accountancy!"

Does it mean that he refused to take his father's **murderous** advice? "You are just irresponsible, you just can't be a decent person, and you'll end up doing the account books at the factory with me and your uncle because you can't do anything else".

The Father's Love

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/06/120612101338.htm>

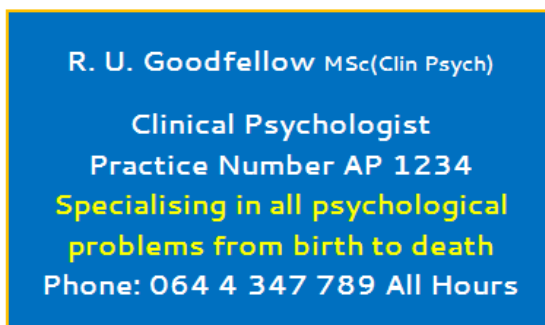
Whatever the path he chose, whatever the words, he was clearly realising that as he knew himself at this point he was in a place where he did not feel he fitted. This life, this doing didn't fit him any longer.

So why had he chosen psychology? The answers to this question are often quite illuminating.

There is a person I care about whom after a number of contacts expressed her desire to become a counsellor and help other people...to do what exactly she never clarified. As I listened to her speak I thought how easy it has become to get

training as a counsellor, not a psychologist, a counsellor, even though the qualification is accepted by Education Boards it is not accepted by Psychology Boards. This is an important and serious distinction with professional and ethical considerations involved.

This reminds me, off on a slight tangent. I had another colleague once, a really good bloke who had just completed his clinical masters and had just received his registration as a psychologist. He proudly handed me his freshly printed business card; a copy of which you see below.

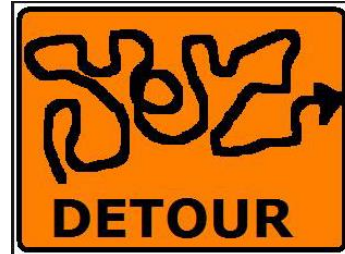


Precisely because of the ease of training I felt apprehensive for her. It felt like a party that she thought she wanted to go to; a party she felt she must or should go to but that somehow I felt she dare not go to lest she confuse the interpretive or hermeneutic meaning of the desire to help with the job of living and enjoying her imperfect perhaps damaged but authentic life.

What was behind this feeling, this sense that I had; this impertinent and unsolicited intrusion?

Put simply I felt intuitively that this was not **her** path, it could be **a** path, she could

take **this** path but it would be a detour from **her** path. Taking **this** path she might learn a whole array of really important lessons; but it would still be a detour a journey not on **her** path.



Yes I know that it is said that sometimes we must take a detour to find our way, but why waste such time, energy and lack of fulfilment by having to do that in the first place. How about a situation where a person does not have to do that?

I can recount many many stories of people spending huge amounts of their **being alive time** travelling on journeys that are often self-punitive, hateful to self or hateful to others...being lost.

I believe that it is important to stay on your own path even though your own path in addition to a sense of being in the right place may get you lost at times, may take you on detours at times, may offer great difficulties and hardships.

What is your own path...how do we know it? **Aye, there's the rub.** Anyway I wanted to tell her; **baby please don't go and** become a counsellor.



"Baby Please Don't Go"

1935 Original song by Big Joe Williams
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2z11hnAnIA>

1973 Budgie

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQw92wKRdbY>

2004 Aerosmith

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dL_JdOCDkQA

Hamlet

http://www.kalahari.com/Books/Hamlet-Prince-of-Denmark_p_26050954;jsessionid=9B3A5A92CD1BC5792C7B8E320B556704

Put simply I felt intuitively that this was not her path, it could be a path, she could take this path but it would be a detour from her path. Taking this path she might learn a whole array of really important lessons; but it would still be a detour a journey not on her path.

Perhaps the lesson that she has to learn is that she must live her life in her skin as imperfect as that might be, ambivalent feelings, somatised anxiety, self-doubt anger, lack of trust and all. This means for her specifically that instead of being a counsellor training for three years and then listening to the complicated and sad stories (genuinely complicated and sad) she should say sorry I'm not interested in this I need to be somewhere else.

When she does that she will be closer to the possible path of healing she seeks so devotedly, and then she will be free to focus on what really turns her on, what really **starts her up**; what gives her life not what drains or depletes her, her fire, working in music.

Alas the healing comes only by living the life she yearns to live not the one she feels she should live or try to bypass by healing others or try to repair herself by trying to repair others.

Rather get counselling for yourself, I might suggest. Therapy after all is always about helping the person to live their lives authentically, fully and with as much freedom as possible to choose that which is right; that which supports and nurtures; know myself, love being myself and don't lose myself.

The Rolling Stones, Start Me Up

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGyOaCXr8Lw>

It may take a lifetime for her to feel safe enough to trust real intimacy, to lose the

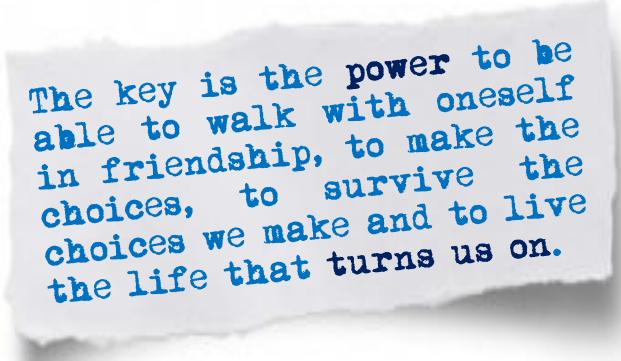
fear of disappointing others, to understand the terror of being controlled, to find the courage to tell people where to get off by establishing boundaries, to feel comfortable and safe with her unexpressed selfish needs and avoid being nice to everybody.

Or she may be content taking the detour unknowingly and have faith that the lessons will come but not too late, that is if she is aware that she is taking a detour in the first place.

Psychologically the challenge we each face is to live a life wherein the outer choices match the inner nature. The problem is that sometimes we do not know our inner natures well enough to be able to do such a thing; for her, work in music rather than counselling.

There are many ways by which we fail to know or sufficiently know our inner nature. The fortuitous thing is that if there is a divergence between inner and outer there are usually many types of communication; bodily manifestations, illness, discontent, loneliness, depression that alert us to the dissonance, if we listen.

What are we aiming for? **THE ANSWER IS POWER.** The power to be able to walk with oneself in friendship, to make the choices, to survive the choices we make and to live the life that turns us on. (Of course there are specifics, idiosyncratic details). Nonetheless these are the **measures, the yardstick of healing** in my estimation.



The key is the power to be able to walk with oneself in friendship, to make the choices, to survive the choices we make and to live the life that turns us on.

Guggenbuhl-Craig

<http://www.abebooks.co.uk/book-search/title/power-in-the-helping-professions/author/guggenbuhl-craig/sortby/3/page-1/>

So why has it become so coveted, so desirable to be a psychologist, counsellor, and life-coach? One of the reasons is that to a large extent religion has lost that role. Suddenly anybody can heal, can know the truth and the way. From animism to religion to science! 😊

There are many reasons but some are often about things like proving someone wrong, demonstrating that you are a good person, caring, helpful and worthy of love. What I mean is that the reasons are sometimes about making reparations which sadly usually means that the work of know yourself, love being yourself and don't lose yourself is not nearly done sufficiently to free the person to live the life that turns them on, that feeds their soul..

We have all heard the phrase, 'the wounded healer', the person who seeks to heal their own wounds by helping others heal theirs, understanding woundedness

because of their own wound. In my experience this is true for some psychologists but is equally not true for some psychologists.

I have known some wounded ones that are good psychologists and some unwounded ones who are also good psychologists and the reverse (boring I know but just true). What to me is telling is that I know many wounded psychologists who have not found their healing or reparation by doing psychology. If they are **supremely blessed**, these people who did not find their healing in healing might discover later what they probably wanted to do all along but didn't know how or didn't know what.

COPING

40 green bottles hanging on the wall...the psychology of individual differences



A friend told me the story of how he and 39 other young men were in their basic training in the new SANDF. They lived in a barracks all 40 of them. Each trainee had a single size steel bed with a thin foam mattress, two thick grey blankets, two sheets, one pillow with pillow case, a steel

trunk at the foot of the bed and a single locker to the left of the head of the bed. That is all.

Each morning at 04h00 (ouch!) they were awakened by the shrill shriek of the regimental corporal hurling less than delicate admonitions and affronts to the forty boys with reference to their fathers and mothers limbs, marital consummation and their biological origins. **If you are sensitive to base vulgar uncouth coarse comments do not read the next line.** "The best part of you is still running down your father's and mother's legs!"

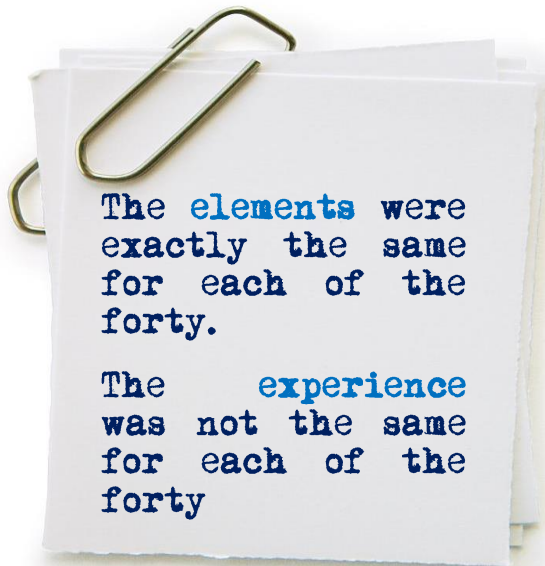
At 04h15 inspection took place conducted by the officer commanding, Captain Bliksem.

Each recruit would stand at the foot of the bed, at attention, eyes front in absolute silence, quivering in his boots, (which were shined to perfection gloss and all) waiting for the captain to make his way to his nose.

Two inches from the recruit's nose, the captain demanded an explanation as to why the corners of the blankets and sheets were not standing at perfect right angles, why he could not see his face in the polished boots and why he had to listen to the recruit spluttering his answers to his questions.

Inspection complete, if you didn't need to change your underpants, was followed by a 5 kilometre run with full battle pack and weapons and this was all before 05h30.

Each day was exactly the same; emotional abuse, physical exertion, unrelenting demands of body and mind. The *elements* were exactly the same for each of the forty. The experience was not the same for each of the forty.



Do we need to change the way we experience something, can it be experienced differently....in a better way? Is changing how I experience something possible? Is it in fact changeable?

For the psychologist a central question to be asked of the individual is this. In terms of the body and the mind and perhaps the soul, what have the **experiences** that this person has already experienced become?

Have they become knowledge, beliefs, resilience, helplessness, hopes, anxiety, physical pain, illness, depression, burnout, soothing reveries or traumatic recollections?



Over time, my friend told me, the number of recruits still in the basic training diminished, from 40 to 38, from 38 to 31...

Each recruit went through a medical examination and was found to be in good health, met all the physical requirements demanded of basic training, each had an intake interview to assess the suitability of their mental state. Each was required to do exactly the same activities as all the rest, eat the same food, survive the same abuse.

So why did some drop out along the way?

The question that arises is why do some people of relatively equal capacity cope better than others even when they are in similar circumstances with equal demands being made of them?

The question that arises is why do some people of relatively equal capacity cope better than others even when they are all in similar circumstances with equal demands being made of them?

If we want to raise, educate or help people in any useful way we need to be able to focus upon and answer this question. We need to understand what each individual brings to the attempt to meet the demands made upon him or her and how these resources differ from the resources that other people have or bring to the demands made upon them.

In short we need to know how the person copes.

Why is it critical to understand how the person copes? Because Dr Jan my Religious Studies teacher at university said so. In our many discussions about psychology as an academic endeavour and as an applied discipline Dr Jan always insisted that the basis of any applied psychology that sincerely intended to be therapeutic had to recognise as a starting point that all **people are simply trying to cope with the world and its demands with the psychological resources they have** at their disposal. I agree.

Commitment-led Marketing

<http://www.akademika.no/commitment-led-marketing/butch-rice/hofmeyr-jan/rice-butch/9780471495741>

This raises two pertinent issues when trying to understand an individual. Firstly in any given life circumstance specific or general, parochial or broad what are the unique **demands** that the person has to face and deal with in their lives and in conjunction with that what psychological **resources** and coping capacities and subjective mediators of experience does

the person bring to bear on those demands?

If we answer these questions (of each person) we would have gone some way to explaining why of the 40 who started basic training only 31 completed the course....



Artist unknown

Why do some people never get depressed?

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-16749565>

Robert Sapolsky discusses physiological effects of stress

<http://news.stanford.edu/news/2007/march7/sapolskysr-030707.html>

LIVING DAY BY DAY

96, 97, 98, 99, 100...READY OR NOT, I'M COMING.....OUT!

Diana Ross

Live Version

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QoRBFNOgeHw>

Studio Version

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-mjl63eoms>



I have two friends (one is no longer; my friend, that is; what a terrible waste!) who chose to tell me (separately) that they were gay; in fact it sounded more like a question than a statement. It was the first time each of them had disclosed this hitherto unrevealed fact to anyone other than themselves.

From the look on their faces I sensed that there was apprehension as to what my reaction would be. They each waited worriedly for my response; beads of sweat growing larger on their furrowed brows, lips pursed together, breath held silently.

"Congratulations", I said.

Last night I met a long-time friend for half-price sushi. We were chatting over salmon sashimi with particularly fiery wasabi when I sensed that he was summoning the courage to tell me something. He looked to his left, then to his right, and then he uttered the words. From the look on his face I sensed that there was anxiety as to what my reaction

would be. He waited worriedly for my response; beads of sweat growing larger on his furrowed brow (anxiety or wasabi?), lips pursed together, breath held silently. "I love singing opera", he told me. "Congratulations", I said, actually I said, "how wonderful, like music to my ears!"

Operabase

<http://operabase.com/index.cgi?lang=en>

Some would argue that I am being flippant by daring to suggest that these two *comings out* are equivalent. Yes, there are real and dangerous external constraints; being lesbian in South African black townships has cost women their lives and still does.

The Brutality of 'Corrective Rape' NY Times

http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/07/26/opinion/26corrective-rape.html?_r=0

On the other hand I have seen people for whom coming out as homosexual was actually quite straightforward, easy, painless and happened at a relatively young age. I have also known some people to contemplate suicide in part because they could not tolerate or allow parts of themselves to emerge or be seen in the light of day, and in these particular instances it had nothing to do with being gay. Having said this I accept that some coming out are riskier and carry with them much higher stakes than other *comings out*.

I see coming out as the recognition that there are attributes, any attributes, within us that want to be seen, want to live, but for a variety of reasons are unable or are not allowed to emerge into the light of day or to be integrated as a regular part of a person's life.

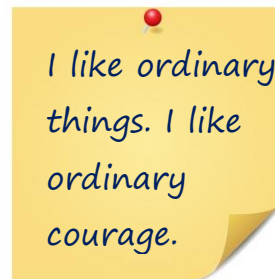
Like anything else it is possible to exist without these things emerging but one might come to sense that the quality or richness of one's life is perhaps not quite what it could be without this particular attribute or set of attributes.

The thing is that these attributes if not allowed to emerge will not really go away. They may change character or shift their energy in another direction but will not really disappear. I suppose we can shape ourselves into a desired package to some extent, but to imagine that we can reject parts of ourselves invites trouble. When I think of this I see an image of a heavy water filled balloon and somebody trying to hold it still or shape it in some desired way; futile unless you put it into a box; but then the joy and mischief of being a water-filled balloon is gone.



In many cases the term coming out is not relevant and would not be the most useful way to describe what is happening. Lots of people are lucky enough in that the things that they are/ have within them naturally emerge and manifest in the world, in the light of day, as part of the process of growing and maturing.

Perhaps external circumstances in the lives of such people were intimate, supportive, and welcoming, as opposed to threatening, judgemental and distant. The internal resources we each possess to cope with challenges, such as seeing, accepting and manifesting parts of ourselves in the world, vary widely. For some people recognising accepting and manifesting parts of ourselves is very difficult, sometimes seemingly impossible.



I like ordinary things. I like ordinary courage.

I like ordinary things. I like ordinary courage. I sometimes feel concerned when I see the emphasis and value placed on unusual courage; the man who has no body from his waist down who scaled Kilimanjaro using his hands, and the young guy with no arms who wrestles for his school team. I wish in no way to diminish or trivialise the real courage and fortitude of spirit involved in such endeavours. I also realise that the world offers us few genuine heroes to serve as

role models, to inspire; people who do courageous and valuable things whether they are being seen or not, people with principles that stand for human dignity and human rights without hatred and violence. Mandela, Aung San Suu Kyi; can you name any other living person of this heroic magnitude? I certainly hope so.

Kyle Maynard training to climb Mount Kilimanjaro WITHOUT using prosthetic limbs

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2048116/Kyle-Maynard-training-climb-Mount-Kilimanjaro-WITHOUT-using-prosthetic-limbs.html>

The thing is, I believe that just to live in this world takes courage, whoever you are. Does it not take courage, every day to be a person, a parent, a single parent, a child, a teenager, an old person, a provider? Does it not take courage to face each day, to try ones best, to engage with life's demands, to be honest, to take responsibility despite the obstacles in one's life? This courage is seldom recognised let alone acknowledged and valued.

It takes courage not simply to live each day as best we can but simultaneously to bravely risk allowing one's true being and nature to emerge in the world.

Can we distinguish the process of coming out from what happens in psychotherapy? We must, simply because the huge, vast majority of people do not use or have access to psychotherapy in their lives. It is true that by definition psychotherapy

aims to make parts of our being manifest in the world as part of the process of change and integration, but in the main people either do this themselves, emerge, with difficulty or with ease, directly or indirectly or they do not do it at all.

If we try to break down the notion of coming out we might discern a number of elements.

Knowledge of the things

There are things within us that are not out there living in the world; small things and/or huge things.

We either are aware of these things or we are not. Sometimes the awareness of these things manifests itself opaquely, in anxiety, depression, illness, dissatisfaction, disconnection, underachievement, acting out. Sometimes other people either know what the thing is that is not out there or tell us that they see us troubled, unhappy, unfulfilled etc.

Reasons for non-emergence of the things

People know and accept who they are in varying degrees. People receive positive mirroring and reflections of themselves and validating support in varying degrees, sometimes none. People possess different degrees of resilience and emotional strength. People may be aware of the things but refuse to accept them or allow them to emerge and choose to live with that.

Possible effects of non-emergence

I came to believe that my life was over, nothing further for me.

I stopped being creative, turned my back on my art.

I felt dead inside and thought that was normal.

I felt resentment and jealousy.

Effects of emergence

Less energy wasted on keeping things at bay.

More energy to live life.

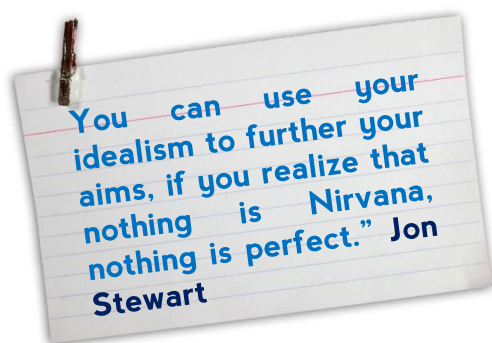
More freedom to make choices.

Hopefully less hidden seepage or harmful acting out.

More connected to oneself.

I do not equate coming out with transcendence or self-actualization. Such fantastic notions do not do justice to or describe in any useful way the ordinariness and difficulty of coming out.

I am idealistic; ask those who have crossed swords with me; but idealism based on real life and real living and real people.



The Daily Show Comedy Central
<http://www.thedailyshow.com/>

Let me briefly illustrate some comings out from my experience with people.

"I had to realise accept and manifest the fact that I am an (the) alpha male. I was in business with another male friend. I became depressed and didn't understand why; I don't get depressed. I needed psychotherapy to help get to it. I have to be in charge for better or for worse. I started my own business; I am the alpha male; if you're male don't mess with me...I'm out big boy! Some will like this and some won't...tough".

"I have the power to be aggressive; this was no secret to me. I didn't let it be seen as I was terrified of this threatening force inside of me. I thought that if I ever allowed it to emerge someone would get hurt; someone other than me. Life, exacting master that it is, pried it out of me like an oyster refusing to yield its coveted pearl. I discovered that I can harness its immense power; this is as far as you can go with me my friend. It was hardest for those who knew me as accommodating and forgiving, the one always swallowing their endless dumping of shit; "you've changed...you used to be caring." What they really meant was I can no longer feel good at your expense...you are no longer someone I can push around or emotionally manipulate...how could you deprive me of that?"



Being assertive

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/assertive/SR00042>

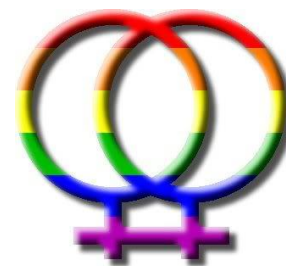
Learning to be Assertive

http://www.fgcu.edu/caps/files/what_is_being_assertive.pdf

"I love working as a clay potter; I am closest to myself when clay splashes through my fingers. Oh yes I dabbled; a bowl here a mug there, but I was just a tourist. I was told and I came to believe that being an academic was what was real, important and of worth. So I spent years being a scientist concerned about one single species of bird, a universally acclaimed authority cut off from my squelchy messy joy, slowly shrivelling up and losing heart; but they called me doctor! We emigrated and I found myself centred on my clay work by dint of circumstance and they say emigration is hard! I have recently won acclaim from my peers in a potter's exhibition, it's not a PhD, but it goes to the heart of my soul not just a bird in my brain. To think that bliss could be so simple, messy, and squidgy".



"I am a woman and I have found myself loving other women; it feels so much more genuine than the endless contrived chore of pretending to love men. My father's home was brutally female loathing. Endless guffaws of laughter at the ridiculous notion that respect might be due to a woman. There is no such thing as a lesbian in my father's culture, only in other people's morally depraved cultures. It came to me late in my life, a loved one saw what I was feeling, rather, doing with other woman; flirting, seeking connection, being emotionally available without unspoken passive aggression. If I had allowed myself to feel it before I would have had to face the rage I feel towards my father and then take responsibility for my own life choices without resorting to blaming others. Without realising it I buried my sexual (and life) passion deeply and started to believe that I had no sexual desire, no libido. Lately I am open, new and filled with passion".



"I love to sing opera in front of an audience; blow me over, who would have imagined it! I have spent so long probing why I was such a mess as a person that eventually I forgot to recognise that there is a person here, let alone a person of worth and interest. I agonised for years; hell bent on scrutinising what was wrong

with me, why was I not normal? What chance was there for anything of value and beauty in me to feel safe enough to steal a glance over the lip of the self-loathing cesspool? On my travels I found myself in the land of Verdi and Parmigiano. I'm not saying fate brought me to this point, but there I was whatever the cosmic route. I stood up walked in front of the group of opera lovers, gave a small bow, and freed my breath to sing, I felt what I had never felt before....one with myself".

"I wanted to write. It's just rubbish I would say. Who would want to read this drivel? Whatever I write I see as rubbish. Saying that I am astonished when I read my work years later; with the passage of time somehow the devil of self-contempt is caught off guard. My coming out was slow, arduous and profoundly burdensome. I had to fight for every word on every line on the screen as if my very life and the life of my children depended on it".

Teen Ink | A teen literary magazine and website

<http://teenink.com/>

The New Yorker

<http://www.newyorker.com/>

So let me be plain, coming out is just life, **this is your life**, if we choose and are able for that life to emerge. There is no way to successfully bypass the living of life with all its demands no matter what is in you or has come out of you.

This Is Your Life Official Web Site

http://www.thisisyourlife.com/tiyl.html?id_tiyl=0916TL525776

If you have allowed your attributes to come out you will still have to live your life day to day.

Having said that, after my friend yielded to his love of singing opera I observed that he was feeling differently. I immediately saw him differently and I felt that he saw himself differently. This is what I mean by a miracle, it was a miracle, where the thing that occurred ran contrary to the firm expected conviction of what was and what was not possible in one's life.

Jefferson Starship - "Miracles"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tCrBF71JCU>

So we decide and are able to come out because we no longer feel any worth in pretending... we believe that we will survive the emergence and manifestation and in no small measure because we are **connected to people** who love us; social support.

We say to the world....here it is, but who are we talking to? More often than not we are talking to ourselves; those ourselves that have become internalised voices from people, rules, admonitions, reprimands, tellings-off, dire threats, criticisms, emotional blackmail, absences of love and support, trauma... that we have experienced in our lives.

Is that all? Sounds so easy. Not always.

SUPPORTIVE EDUCATION

So what is supportive education and why would I walk a mile for it?

If you read **JoBH V1 N1** you will know that I want to believe that school can be about more than the tally, the body count of winners and losers.

I worked as a school counsellor for nearly twenty years in a community school. As a child I hated being at school, school was a disaster for me; so why was I back at school for my career?

Despite my own school experience, **the horror**, in fact probably because of it I know that schools are blessed with opportunities to help children develop. I am not just talking about filling kids with questionably relevant information and knowledge, nor am I talking about getting kids to pass exams so that they may be trained to produce the skills that the economy needs.

Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad - Free EBook

<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/526>

Free eBooks - Project Gutenberg

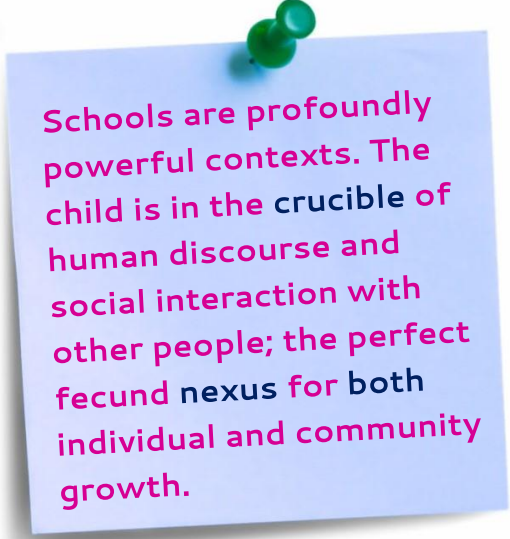
http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page

For me the issue is as follows; if we are to **know ourselves, love ourselves and not lose ourselves** the obvious place and time for this endeavour to happen (in addition to whilst being parented) is at school; twelve years of development to build a

foundation of self-knowledge that will last a lifetime.

Schools are profoundly powerful contexts. The child is away from the comfort and security of home. The child is in a crucible of human discourse and social interaction with other people. The child is there to learn.

Teachers who build real relationships with kids are powerful agents of learning, receptiveness and personal development.



Schools are profoundly powerful contexts. The child is in the crucible of human discourse and social interaction with other people; the perfect fecund nexus for both individual and community growth.

So I'm looking back on the Inclusive Education programme at the school.

When we first started we called it **Special Needs** then we called it **Inclusive** although some called it **Integration**, those who said we were not really doing Inclusion, then we called it **Inclusive & Supportive** then we called it **Developmental** and now we call it **Supportive education**, well at least I do.

An Entrepreneur's Most Important Tool: Self-Delusion | LinkedIn

<http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20130716151039-4061630-the-most-important-tool-for-entrepreneurs-self-delusion>

So why is the choice of words important?

The words we use reveal the way that we construct reality through human discourse.

What is Critical Discourse Analysis? - University of Strathclyde

<http://www.strath.ac.uk/aer/materials/6furtherqualitativeresearchdesignandanalysis/unit3/whatiscriticaldiscourseanalysis/>

Language and the use of language are related to power and constructs of socio-political reality. Language can obscure positions of power influence and control; can obscure the freedom of choice.

The question then is what reality, what values do we want, and what values do we choose?

If we want **all** kids to be valued and respected irrespective of their differences then we shouldn't speak of special needs. If we know that **everybody** needs support in one form or another we should not speak of either special needs or inclusive education. If **every** child is entitled to normal belonging then we should not speak of either integration or inclusion.

I know of no person who does not need support in their lives. That to me is a good descriptive reality and a truth. It is a truth that does not discriminate against some

people or sections of a population. It does not isolate or segregate one group over another by words such as normal, winners, special, disabled, exceptional etc. It does not create a psycho-social dialectic of us and not us.

So at the risk of repeating myself!!



Supportive education then is non-discriminatory term in that all people need support. And further phenomenological descriptions are the fairest and most accurate ways to describe people and the individual reasons they need support.

So, one, the child has the right to belong, and two, the child is blind. School requires reading, the school has no Braille machines, the child needs support to have an equal chance to succeed based on the way the school is structured, she needs a Braille machine and she needs all required readings tests and exams to be

transcribed into Braille because she is a natural member of the school and she is blind. "Finished and klaar" -- an Afrikaans term meaning "that's the end of it."

The supportive education model starts with **belonging**. The freedom to belong without hindrance is a basic human right.

Social support and social connectedness are amongst the most important predictors of mental wellness. Not just because of the actual connectedness but because of the ability and the desire to connect.

Thus one of the principal goals of psychotherapy is to help people build an intentionality wherein they live their lives in the world instrumentally engaged with and connected to other people....loving and working.

Social Wellness, University of Cincinnati
http://nursing.uc.edu/centers/aging_with_dignity/exploring_aging/gero_gems/social_wellness.html

In fact **J. H. van den Berg** defined psychopathology as the science of loneliness. He stated that, "loneliness is the central core of his illness, no matter what his illness may be. Thus loneliness is the nucleus of psychiatry", in...

A Different Existence: Principles of Phenomenological Psychopathology, J. H. van den Berg.
<http://www.amazon.com/Different-Existence-Principles-Phenomenological-Psychopathology/dp/0820702447>

Some argued that kids who were placed in Special Schools had other kids to belong and connect with.

Yes it is true but the issue is the segregation of types of kids based on judgements about definitions of what is normal and abnormal, who can or cannot be educated in particular ways, who is in and who is out and most importantly who makes these determinations.

In & Out Groups: Who's in & who's out.
Jane Elliott's Blue Eyes Brown Eyes
<http://www.janeelliott.com/>



Just You - Sonny & Cher YouTube
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gdfu9pgnfCo>

Centre for Disability Studies

<http://disability-studies.leeds.ac.uk/>

The Social Construction of the Disability Problem

<http://disability-studies.leeds.ac.uk/files/library/Oliver-p-of-d-Oliver6.pdf>

The Social Construction of a Disability

<http://sped.wikidot.com/the-social-construction-of-a-disability>

These **liquorice allsorts** belong here and these belong here; equal but separate!

When the first batch of kids joined us from the Special School their distrust (sense of safety) of the other kids was evident. They felt as if they were uninvited strangers, different from the rest not part of the family which is ironic as some of them had siblings in the school. They felt as if they had been excommunicated for being **retards** when our school had sent them to the Special School in the first place.

Thus when people asked us why we had taken special needs kids into the school we answered by asking them if they would not want their kids to be with, mix with and socialise with the other kids in a normal way.

Does this mean that I believe there is no place for Special Schools? No, it does not. In order to do justice to their needs and due to a scarcity of resources some kids need Special Schools. The ideal would be to have what are called full-service schools where the previously separated

Special School resources are integrated into a natural school community, where children grow and play together irrespective of their allsorts but get the supportive interventions that they need.

Guidelines for Full-service / Inclusive Schools 2010

<http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=JwWOM/auPAY=>

Our work started with a plan to accommodate children with special needs in a normal regular school. Our commitment to the "included kids" was complete. Because of this dedication our perspective on what we were actually doing changed quickly and comprehensively, we were dead keen to learn to understand this new territory.

Soon we realised that all learners; those who had always been there, so called special needs kids, kids with behavioural or emotional problems, kids gifted in aptitude and application, all benefited by being identified and allocated relevant support in a structured and policy informed manner from the start of school to the end of school...and perhaps even life after school?! Outrageous!

This observation that the special needs kids were by no means the only ones who needed or who would benefit from support began to shape my thinking and I began to realise that:

- School classes have always been mixed ability even when they were supposedly homogenous classes in so-

called mainstream non-special schools; even then they were mixed ability.

- We desperately need to re-examine the destructive power of the winners and losers model; all children are important and have equivalent value irrespective of abilities.
- If we are going to be an open school we must ensure that all the required resources of support are available; having the kids but not providing resources is playing with lives. Integration is important but not as important as support and competence building with relevant resources.
- As regards ability, strengths and weaknesses life is a genetic lottery; should we base our societal values on a lottery? I think not.

So our job as educators was to manage and value mixed ability classes. A fact that had always been true and was true now, this time it was seen clearly and honestly.

Mainstream schools believed that the laws of natural distribution did not apply to them; this assumption was simply untrue. Even in so-called normal (non-inclusive) schools the law of distribution will prevail; the difference being that the issues that present themselves will fall within a narrower parameter due obviously, to their built-in exclusion (screening out or gateway) practices; such as a 60% aggregate "to get into our school".

My work thus ended with a model that recognised the real meaning and whole school value of inclusive education; inclusive communities, the building blocks of a supportive, humane democracy where value and success for all is understood and defended in language, concept, policy and structure.

This is what we came to know as the truth. This truth informed our actions

1. Children need belonging that is naturally achieved through normal socialisation with each other rather than to be separated (in myriad ways) from each other.
2. All human beings possess weaknesses, strengths diverse abilities, life contexts and conditions; none of these should be hidden from the light of day. The hegemony of normal over abnormal, winners over losers is a psycho-sociological power construct.
3. Thus, in any group or community of any nature there will be *a variety of variations* of weaknesses, strengths, abilities, life contexts. A natural "epidemiology of possible conditions".
4. Schools are by nature specifically goal oriented and possess little capacity to take or offer alternative paths and often fail to understand the specific demands of their fixed context and how this impacts on each person's capacity to meet the demands of the context according to their *unique human* variation.

5. The natural conclusion is thus that in any given school population (community, family) where there is no separation a percentage of children (people) will require some form of support in order to navigate the demands of school (life) in respect of normative exit goals or to have a relevant, meaningful and flexible alternative educational experience suited to their unique developmental needs that provides for capacity, autonomy and independence in society in some cases with post-school support.
6. In order to avoid the failure of intended policies inclusive schools must be set up to identify, provide and manage the cases requiring learner support and to support the teachers teaching mixed ability classes.
7. Teachers will naturally realise that they are teaching to mixed ability classes, communities, will gather and will also be provided with information about learners, conditions, which will facilitate the creation of more symmetrical power relationships and will with support structure their teaching accordingly valuing the needs and development of all learners, seeing ...what he or she can become.
8. The rest is practical and technical detail in on-going partnerships with school, parents and community resources; the how of each separate case.
9. This model should by nature be fairly invisible, simply a natural and

accepted part of the life of the school and community.

ISEC2010

Inclusive and Supportive Education Congress
<http://www.isec2010.org/Default.aspx>

This project, inclusion, made me understand so many things that had not been perfectly clear to me before. As long as you have eyes willing to see it, are committed to and value the success of all children, I mean all, irrespective of their ability or disability, then...it is just common sense, as Lara would say.

I hope it is clear why I would walk a mile for **supportive education**. Don't smoke!

PARENTING

The mom who remembered

I had known Lisa for nearly three years. There were two counsellors at the school but as luck would have it she had been in my Xgroup (the thing formerly known as Guidance classes) every year so far.

She was a quiet child who it seemed chose not to always express herself in the

group. But things are often not what they seem to be.

Expressing yourself is a funny thing. There is more than one way to do it. In fact there are many ways to do it. Of course you can do it with words. You can do it without words; silence speaks very loudly (go up a lift and stand silently next to the only other person in the lift). You can do it with your body, your face your hands, your tapping foot that you are not aware of. You can do it by drawing, painting and playing music. And all of the above can work together to create a felt experience of you in the listeners mind and body; when I listen to or watch him I feel a desire to laugh, be happy, don't know why! There are good reasons why people sometimes don't express themselves with words, to protect themselves perhaps? But we are always expressing ourselves to others.

So although she hardly expressed herself with words, over the years I had listened to and watched her "expressions" closely. I learned that she was a very caring person, she loved and protected animals. She was a loyal friend who always kept a secret. I learned that sometimes she felt sad and a bit lonely. Funny that you can still feel lonely when you have lots of friends. Her school results were good and clearly she worked quite hard. She had never *been in trouble* for anything at school.

When I facilitate Xgroups I try to involve the children who are quiet. Being quiet doesn't mean that they are not listening,

often the quiet kids are listening the hardest. This was definitely true for Lisa.

One day I was walking from the staffroom when I saw Lisa's mom sitting on the bench outside my office, she was looking quite tense. She gave a small smile when I greeted her and invited her into my office. She sat down in the chair closest to me. She started to speak straight away. She spoke in great earnest about the frustration she felt with regard to her daughter, her poor attitude to school and brazen disrespect for her mother. I was listening closely and what I heard was a strong sense of disappointment that the mother felt towards her daughter.

After listening for a while I moved slightly forward in my chair and spoke to Lisa's mom. The things you are saying to me are important but I am concerned that Lisa is not hearing them as they obviously affect both of you. The thing is that you are talking about your relationship with Lisa. I think she should be here. Can I fetch her from class? Lisa's mom nodded feebly...reluctance?

I walked to the science lab where Lisa's class was and stood at the open door hoping to catch the teacher's attention. She saw me and came to the door. I asked her if she would quietly and discreetly ask Lisa to come and speak to me outside the classroom. As the teacher spoke to her, Lisa looked up at me and walked to the door. Outside the class I told Lisa that her mom was in my office. I asked her if she would kindly join us as I felt she needed to hear what her mom was saying. She fetched her bag from the class and

walked just behind me to my office. I stood at the door and beckoned her to come in and sit down. She chose the chair furthest away from her mom and sat without a word.

Before I could invite them to talk and listen to each other. Mom started talking in a high pitched agitated voice looking at me not at her daughter. I was taken aback by the abrupt manner with which she had started talking. Soon in a breathless tirade mom was screaming endless criticisms about Lisa. She's such a disappointment, she could be so much more, I have high hopes for her, she doesn't do any work at home and she is cheeky and disrespectful to me... and she was just getting warmed up.

I looked over at Lisa very concerned how she was handling this emotional onslaught, especially in front of me. She hadn't moved but was biting her lower lip which soon disappeared into her mouth.

Remember I said that people's expression can create a felt experience in the listener. Well I was feeling overwhelmed and scared as if a big wave had just broken over me pushing me underwater and holding me down leaving me gasping for breath. I also felt quite confused; the words Lisa's mom was hurling, (that's the only way I can describe it) didn't feel like they matched or described the person sitting in my office that I had known for three years, who was she talking about?

Spontaneously, impulsively, recklessly, I stopped playing counsellor and just said the words that were burning inside of me.

"Why are you being so aggressive to your daughter?" I said looking at mom.

I was holding my breath realising what I had just said out loud. Lisa strangely didn't seem to be concerned about the outbursts from her mom or from me. She was no longer biting her lower lip and had an almost smile on her face. Time felt like it had stopped or at least had slowed down to a kind of one-frame-at-a-time-motion. Complete silence. I felt like I was no longer in my body.

Lisa's mom looked at me with an expression on her face of distraught anguish, the likes of which I had not seen often. Her face was contorted as she brought both her open hands to shield her eyes from my eyes. Her face was now resting in her hands and as soon as it could no longer be seen, she broke into a wail of tears that enveloped her whole shuddering body. She cried uncontrollably with every fibre of her being.

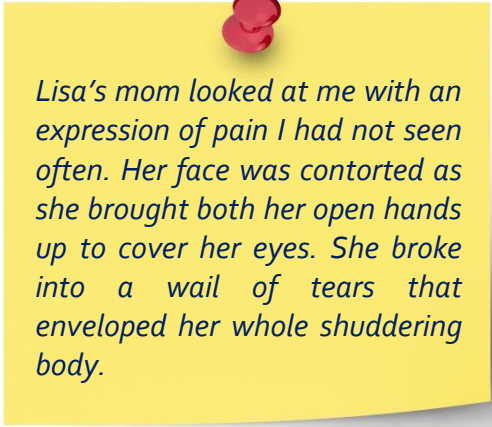
When people cry, let them cry and when they have finished crying place a box of tissues within their reach.



So in silence we, Lisa and I waited.

As her wailing and shaking slowly subsided Lisa's mom said, "I am doing exactly what my mother did to me!"

That's it, that's all, no explanation, no details. She got up moved to Lisa pulled her up from her chair, hugged her closely and softly, as if she was a treasure to protect, and gently said, "I am sorry my angel".



Lisa's mom looked at me with an expression of pain I had not seen often. Her face was contorted as she brought both her open hands up to cover her eyes. She broke into a wail of tears that enveloped her whole shuddering body.

Lisa's mom turned to me holding Lisa, walked with her towards the door and said thank you, we're finished.

I locked the door of my office, sat in the chair, my body shaking as it always does after a deep emotional connection experience and I allowed my tears to flow quietly; some for Lisa's mom, some for Lisa and some for me.

Now whilst I firmly believe in miracles I do not believe in magic. Lisa's mom could and probably would forget to remember again and would repeat those terrible things to her daughter, especially when

her own pain borne of her relationship with her mother arose again.

Nonetheless she had remembered at least once if not more; maybe that was why Lisa sat quietly as she did in my office listening to her mom, seemingly not too upset by mom's unleashing. Also Mom had said it in front of Lisa and a witness and I could testify to that when she forgot again.

I believed that it was important to be very flexible in the Xgroup. I tried to capitalise on every opportunity where growth, learning and understanding could take place. So I abandoned the scheduled processes and told the Xers that we were going to look at parenting, our parents and us as parents.

Specifically we spoke about the messages, spoken and unspoken, that parents gave us about ourselves, positive and negative and how that felt. It was Lisa's class I was working with.

The final exercise in their journals was to answer the questions...What are you going to be like as a parent? What have you learned from your parents and how as a parent will you be the same and different from your parents?

At the end of the group session when all the kids had left, Lisa brought me her journal and asked me to look. These were her words.

"The past can hurt very much. You can remember to love those who hurt you. You

can remember to love those that you hurt. Sometimes parents hurt their kids because they are carrying hurt that they forget they have. You can learn from experience. You can break destructive patterns. You can be different from those who hurt you. You can insist on being open to your children, no matter how hard that might feel. You can remember to not forget that you love me”.

PLAYTIME!

Fruit, animal, country

So we are each a type of liquorice allsorts. Because we are who we are, we should be raised, educated, make decisions etc according to our unique natures so as to bring that which is already in us out of us.

All this uniqueness, what is my uniqueness? Who am I? We will spend the rest of our lives answering that complicated, multi-layered question!

Allow yourself to open your imagination, put aside reality, the rules of logic and create a brief fantasy.

If I was a fruit, if I was a country, if I was an animal....



1. Using clay or paints or crayons or anything you can create with, shape or draw a piece of fruit, an animal and

the shape or a symbol of a country that in your mind captures who you are, what kind of a person you are. You can also just write it down! For example I am a dog; I am fiercely loyal and devoted and also very trusting, but if you abuse me I will snap at you. I am a granadilla; it seems I have quite a hard exterior but when you carefully, don't force it, get inside, you find luscious rewarding tropical delicious insides laced with difficult to forget "passion". I am Italy; fiery passionate, devoted, rich in culture and impulsive.

2. Playing with a group of good close friends or family who want to play, write their names on a sheet of paper with the fruit animal and country you think they would be. Then going round one person at a time, share and explain the fruit animal and country you have given them.
3. Each person listens to the whole group and then tells the group what their actual fruit, animal and country were, with explanations.
4. You can also make up a fruit, make up an animal and make up your own country as long as you explain the symbolism and meaning well!
5. The group may ask questions of each other. Hot Seat rules apply!

Please note!

The Hot Seat is a context for people to receive feedback on a voluntary basis. In a group that has already established good safety containment. The rules are simple. Anyone may volunteer to sit in the Hot Seat. The person in the Hot Seat may be asked any question on any matter from

the rest of the group, with the proviso that if the person in the Hot Seat chooses to decline to answer the question they simply say "pass", no further discussion will be entered into once a person says pass.

Questions that patently are designed to be gratuitously aggressive humiliating or hurtful towards the person in the Hot Seat may be adjudicated by the facilitator or "group rules" to be ruled out and the questioner may be required to sit in the Hot Seat to explain his/her unacceptable behaviour.

All participants are required to commit themselves sincerely prior to commencement to the rule of confidentiality. No person shall speak about or divulge any information or contents of the Hot Seat.

Each person should in general be willing to play (take questions). But we need to be caring of each other.



The red Hot Seat

STORIES

The counsellor who was human

There was another counsellor at the school. She was good at her work; the kids liked her, could relate to her, felt safe and not judged by her. It was her skill and her nature to create such a space for them. She was seeing a number of kids for counselling. I don't think school and the school counsellor is a workable place to conduct therapy. It is a place to screen, refer, support and counsel which is different and just as important as therapy.

Therapy is intensely personal, it is about power and often the lack of it and the dignity of the person must be protected. School, where the counsellor also teaches, is highly visible, has an office that can be seen openly and needs to work with teachers who teach the same children, cannot always protect dignity or create the space that is needed.

Anyway E, let's call her E often saw parents of the children in order to glean more information, to explore family dynamics and to test the truth or at least versions of the truth to gather a reliable picture of the situation.

She had invited a father to come in for a conversation about his child who was exhibiting signs of withdrawal. Why the father in particular? It was a gut feel that she should start there and see him alone initially.

The father arrived on time was ushered in to her office offered a beverage, accepted and waited for the questions to start slowly sipping his coffee. The conversation went reasonably well with

the father being quite open about sharing information with E.

E slowly began to introduce the issue of the child's current emotional functioning being careful not to attribute or imply blame, just being exploratory.

The parents had been divorced for nearly 7 months and through the conversation it began to emerge that the divorce relationship was just as harmful as the marriage relationship. Oh yes divorce is just as much a relationship as was the marriage; especially so for the children of both; the marriage and the divorce.

Father was extremely strict with his daughter which in itself is not necessarily a problem. The problem that might have been contributing to the child's state was the open admission by father that he loathed the child's mother and made that clear to his daughter without restraint.

Now it was definitely going to be a tough, arduous road ahead but at least E had begun to understand the landscape of the child's world.

Unfortunately E didn't reach this point because she got lost in another landscape. She found herself getting agitated, impatient with the child's father, having to restrain herself considerably. She felt that she had to say something, it was only right, just.

She released her emotions and climbed into the father, no holds barred after all she knew at that point that her efforts

were simply to protect the daughter from this man's damaging collusion.

Father on the receiving end of the lambasting was not the kind of person to retain his equanimity so sadly for everyone, especially daughter (who was not present) it turned into a free-for-all verbal brawl. Soon father stormed out of E's office clearly fuming heading straight to the principal's office, to say what, one can only imagine.

E came running out of her office too and rushed to my office, barged in, sat down and began to reel off how she had dealt with the daughter's father.

E: What a tool that man is putting his daughter in the middle of his vitriol about his ex! I put him in his place, told him straight what I thought of him and how he was damaging his daughter, surprise surprise she is in the state she's in!

J: So what's your next step with the daughter?

E was silent.

J: Did you see that he went to the principal?

E: Well he just made me so bloody angry.

J: He doesn't sound like a particularly pleasant fellow from what you say. Have you come across men like him before?

E: Yes actually, my father. He did the same thing to me when my parents got divorced.

J: So he makes you feel like you did with your father.

E: I couldn't control myself it just came out.

J: Do you still see your father?

E: Hardly ever, I do not have any desire to see that man!

[Pause]

E: I pretty much fucked that one up didn't I?"

J: He evoked perhaps provoked unintentionally a strong emotional reaction. He touched your own real feelings. It was like a repeat of your own experience happening again right in front of you.

E: But it wasn't my experience it was the daughter's experience. I'm a counsellor for God's sake! I can't do that.

E: You can feel it, but you can't do it.

So what happened with E and the case of the daughter's father?

She understood that she had **transferred** her own painfully ingrained experience into this one. The blue print of the old one became conflated and confused with the same feeling she experienced in this one. She invited the father back to try and rebuild the possibility of working together to help the daughter.



It was a counter transference:

The emotional memory blue-print of her own experience became conflated and confused with the felt sense she experienced in this one. The 'dad' became her 'dad'.

Sadly that is not what transpired. The crucible was cracked. The case was referred to an agency that dealt with many such cases and which would provide support especially to the daughter and the parents to help them find a new way to manage the divorce relationship, as they were still parents.

It is not always possible to like your clients. It is not always possible to work with some clients. Our own history is always with us. If we know our own history and have worked to find ways to live our lives without being overwhelmed by the pain of our own experiences it is possible to help others to do the same.



Note to self

Our own history is always with us.

Speaking of clients, a colleague once told me that clinical psychologists have patients, counselling psychologists have clients and the other psychologists have customers!



Not all of us in the team saw the mirth in that joke!

WORD BURSTS

I want to be them!

One day a person was sitting on the stoep on a glorious sunny and windless Cape Town day, agitated and dissatisfied. The person was talking to someone who was very close and dear to them. "I know that I'll be happy if I could be them," the person said pointing to those people over there. "I will be content when I have what they've got. What I've got is no good. They are sooo happier than me. They are more successful than me....they are perfect, I wanna be them...not me!"

The someone who was very close and dear to the person replied; "OK lovey, well actually....they've been arguing, the husband, and wife for months. He says that he is tired of her and doesn't want to be with her anymore. She, unknown to him has been having a meaningless affair,

which she regrets and doesn't understand. They're both unhappy but nonetheless worry about the kids finding out what's going on between them. At least they both love their kids... is that what you are wanting?"

The person felt somewhat confused and said, "Hmmm...well....hmmm...not sure really...ok perhaps I didn't know that stuff about them but what about them, those other ones over there?"



"I know that I'll be happy if I could be them. I will be content when I have what they've got. What I've got is no good. They are happier than me. They are more successful than me....they are perfect, I wanna be them...not me!" said the person again.

"Funny you should say that," the someone said. "Actually....he works incredibly hard in his business, a magical entrepreneur, and provides well for his family but his stress levels are through the roof! In trying to escape his stress, he has become addicted to cocaine and loses buckets of money gambling on the horses. He is about to have triple bypass surgery on his heart.....is that better than what you've got?"

The person moaned meekly, "are you positive that stuff is true....how could I have known that?"



A silent pause. Doggedly the person insisted, "But c'mon, look at them there, those other ones! I know that I'll be happy if I could be them. I will be content when I have what they've got. What I've got is no good. They are happier than me. They are more successful than me....they are perfect, I wanna be them...not me!"

"Try to keep up my darling, did you know that her mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's some time ago. She visits her often but on most occasions her mom doesn't recognise her. It's devastating for her, they were so close. She doesn't know what to tell the kids, they just want to be with granny like they used to, they get so sad.....so.... that's what you want is it?!"

Bewildered, the person lamented, "Ag shame man! That's dreadful for them all! How come we didn't know about this?"



Pensive moment. "Just hold on," he said, with hopeful zeal in his voice, "look at that person over there!" "I know that I'll be happy if I could be that person. I will be content when I have what that persons got. What I've got is no good. That person is happier than me. That person is more successful than me....that person is perfect, I wanna be that one...not me!"

"Lovey.... I've listened to that person, often. I spend buckets of time with that person. That person continually bemoans the life they have, always comparing themselves to others they imagine don't have the normal stuff that every person in

the world has. That person is unable to see, let alone value, the beautiful qualities, gifts, and talents they are blessed with. Stubbornly refusing to accept and value their burdens and challenges. Always looking in the wrong place to find the answers that would help; ignoring their life which is rich and full with love and meaning and challenge. So....is that really who you yearn to be?"

Head lowered slightly the person replied..."They've got pretty much what I've got, the person admitted in a bemused tone. I can't really tell them apart from me. If I didn't know better I would have to believe that you were talking about me!"



Silence, on a windless sunny glorious day in Cape Town, sitting on the stoep.

"I am happy that I am that person. I am content with what that person's got. What I've got is good, not easy, but still good. I am happy...with my lot. I am successful. I am not perfect... which person is perfect...which person wants to be perfect? I am trying hard to be me. That's all I can do really."

"Good choice my love!"



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TRANSFORM & REMEMBER

Open and closed

Can you recall an experience that caused you to feel **transformed**, from heaviness to light, from confusion to clarity, from being on a detour to being on your path?

Can you recall an experience that caused you to **remember** the things that are truly important? An experience that helped you to slough off, shed that which was burdensome and useless and return to those things that give meaning and purpose, things possessed of a good heart?

Often transforming and remembering does not happen because we are closed.

Sometimes we are like this:



Often we are like this:



or



Or even like this



I suppose we need to aim for this:



So if experiences that open us up can lead to transforming and remembering moments, surely we must plan to have many such moments that open us up.

Crying opens us up.

I think Emma Thompson is a truly gifted actor. I admire virtually every role she has played because of her thoroughly convincing and emotionally present performances.

One of her greatest performances is in the movie *Wit*. Without going into the story I want to tell you that watching it made me cry, heavily and deeply.

Wit

<http://www.kalahari.com/dvd/Wit/2/33542380.aspx>

Laughing opens us up.

I remember that I laughed violently, physically when I watched the movie *Blazing Saddles* with my friends back at the Royal or was it the Palace?

Blazing Saddles

<http://www.kalahari.com/dvd/Blazing-Saddles/2/47097573.aspx>

Perhaps the most powerful moments of transform and remember happen when the body is included in the experience.

The body is where we somatically lock in our fear, anxiety, anger and other powerful emotions; it is not *all in our heads*, not all psychological. The mind-body split is not good for our health.

What helps you transform & remember?

QUESTIONS THAT POP UP

Is weed a gateway drug?

Q. I have been offered weed by close friends at school, grade 8. Lots of my friends use it, lots of parents don't stop their children and some openly use it too. I guess it must be safe since everybody using weed seems ok. Is it dangerous to start? I heard about gateways not sure what that means.

A clinical social worker responds. So 'it's organic don't panic'? Sadly there is reason to panic as we never know if we're going to be the one who just gets a bit chilled from using weed (and happy and laid back with racing thoughts and very hungry after). That would be the positive scenario and the one that you are referring to when you see lots of people using and talking about how okay it is. I reckon that the parents who let their children use are those people who used weed when they were younger and nothing bad happened to them. They probably feel it's 'cool' parenting for them to allow their children to use; after all - they used and nothing happened so if they allow their children they can get a bit of 'street cred' with not only their children but their children's friends as well. That's all well and good but for a couple of things: The first is that when these parents were your age, weed was weed. Now days, weed can be filled with things that are pretty toxic and people are never told that the weed has something else in it. I know of a girl whose mother tested her after using just weed and cocaine showed up in the test. The girl was shocked and it just went to prove that you never really know what you're getting and so you're not nearly as in control as you might think you are. The second thing is that everybody who starts taking weed (or any other drug for that matter) starts because they are curious or they want to be part of the group, or they heard it was a fun thing to do. But - and this kind of answers your second question in part - nobody knows if they are going to land up being recreational users or, as time goes by, addicts. And by the time

they become addicts, their life has spun quite out of control and they are helpless to manage and control what was in the beginning, a fun venture that brought with it promise of a good time.



Q. I've also been told that some people can be at more risk for addiction and psychological damage than others, I don't understand that. My mom has a friend, a lawyer who smokes weed every day and seems ok and a bit weird but she functions. Someone else had a nervous breakdown while using dope.

A clinical social worker responds. To answer your second question more directly, there are definitely people who are more at risk for addiction and these are firstly those who have parents, siblings, or even an uncle or cousin that are addicts or alcoholics. This is because addiction is what we call a hereditary disease. That means it runs in families and if you have it in your family you are more likely to get it than if you don't have it in your family. The second reason is that addiction is often something that happens to a person who feels something like emptiness inside; a difficulty with facing negative feelings and allowing themselves to feel them. So addiction can take a hold of someone who has that kind of psychological makeup. Having said

that, someone who has a totally well-functioning internal world (i.e. their mind/psyche), as well as a very well-functioning family with no psychological problems and no history of addiction, can take some weed and go psychotic the very first time they use it. Going psychotic means that the person loses touch with reality and has difficulty with getting back into and connecting with reality again. Lastly, something that a lot of parents don't understand is that young people are very susceptible to something going wrong because their brains are not developed fully yet, and no one can predict how any external substance is going to affect them. Weed is seen to be a gateway drug meaning that people start using it and then often inevitably, they want to get a stronger hit or a different kind of hit (different drugs have different kinds of effects) and so they start using something heavier and more addictive. Part of the addiction profile is that it always progresses - i.e. people start wanting more and more of an effect and so the usage follows a pattern of using more (in quantity) and using more (in terms of heavier and more impacting drugs).

(Raella Abel, Clinical Social Worker)

Perhaps the most differentiating and defining capacity we as humans have as compared to non-human species is the power to discriminate, to distinguish amongst information to use our judgement. So use your judgment; some mixed information below.



Weigh up the information for yourself

WHO | Cannabis

http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/facts/cannabis/en/

The dangers of cannabis - Live Well - NHS Choices

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/drugs/Pages/Cannabisdangers.aspx>

10 Facts About Marijuana | Marijuana Policy and Effects | Drug Policy Alliance

<http://www.drugpolicy.org/drug-facts/10-facts-about-marijuana>

BBC News | UK | Cannabis: the facts

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/1757591.stm

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