

for trust between other members. This state does not come about by accident and groups are quick to sense trainers are

half-hearted, or lacking in warmth or caring.

Hans Lobstein

Why I didn't Yell

I hate people, I really do. I hate their posturing. Their silly belief in themselves. I, I, I . . . Their selfimportance, wanting my attention, insisting that I pay attention to them, trying to make me listen, being polite to me, making small talk, smiling weakly, assuming that I want to know the inane things they want to say to me . . . Look here, leave me alone! Don't you hear my no? How often do I have to say no before you hear me? I hate your guts, your silly imposition, wanting, wanting, wanting . . . never enough.

To start with I was pushed out of your warm cushy and comfortable nest, out into the cold hostile world. You cut my umbilical cord against my will. Slapped my bottom, grinned at me, cooed at me, treated me as an object for your pleasure or your hate, particularly the latter when I didn't turn out as you expected of me. Never me, never just me, always you, for your delight, your pride, your vicious, cruel satisfaction. Me. That is what I am to you, to show you up. Stop yelling, you scream at me. Stop yelling or I will hit you. I'll give you something to yell about! If there is any yelling to be done, we'll do it, they screamed at me. I was in their power, helpless except for my yelling, and they hit me and hit me and shut me up. I hate them, I hate you all. The teachers said, sit up and take notice. Take note of what I am saying to you, learn something, you ungrateful wretch. By then I had learned obediently to sit up and take notice. I imitated what they put before me, those stupid teachers,

malevolent in their intent, frustrated in their growth, waiting for their meager pensions. The battle lines are clearly drawn between us, you hate me and I hate you. I stopped yelling, I had learned more subtle ways of warfare. Even when I hurt I didn't yell any more, I buried my hatred under layers of pink goo.

Thirty years later I wrote on a piece of paper: 'I want to yell when I hurt'. I meant hurt physically but I did not write that down. The problem had become quite real because I have had some massage and just could not yell when the pain was too much for me. I knew that it was perfectly all right for an adult to yell or make any other noise. But the more I hurt the more tightly closed I kept my mouth.

In the clay therapy session I was asked: what stands in the way of solving your problem? I thought for a long time and then I made the model of a hand in plasticine. It was my mother's hand and it sprang to mind when I was confronted with that piece of paper. It was a large strong wellformed hand, outstretched, all ready to slap. I labelled it 'memories'. What else stands in the way of your being able to yell? I made as small child, all hunched up and I labelled this 'isolation'. The next model was ragged, holey and looked ugly to me. I called this misery. These three models all represented situations in the past which I was thinking about as I rubbed the plasticine between my fingers. My mother didn't

like us children ever making a noise. My sister is ten years older and my brother six years older. We were not allowed to talk at mealtimes and we played games under the table trying to spell out words with our feet. This usually led to me, the youngest, getting the giggles, so it was I who was slapped. I soon learned not to make any noise and was a quiet child outwardly. I was the hunched up model of the child because I had memories of hurting myself as a child, e.g. falling over on my way to school, I must have been about six, and scraping both my knees, and I turned round and went back home to clean myself up but my mother wasn't there because she worked and I can't remember ever anybody being about when I hurt myself. The third model represented all the feelings I had about the other two models. When I had made these three models I sat back and looked at them. I don't feel isolated or in misery any more so these three models seemed to be almost symbolic of something I was clinging on to in order to explain my inability to yell.

I then thought about actually yelling when in pain and a little bit of me - only a little bit - thought it was weak. Human but weak. I thought of something strong and immediately had in my mind tall slender Scots pines, so I made a tall tree but in such a way that it wouldn't stand up. It was a broken, drooping tree. I then made a cross and labelled it 'wedding day'. Why I did this I don't know but I had the sort of idea that Christ yelled and groaned in the final hour of his agony. I decided I was hiding behind something, religion, which said: don't show you are hurt. But Christ had never said anything like that, and had expressed his emotions vehemently and freely. So I scrapped the cross and for about an hour I sat there thinking of what to do next. During this time I started to think about how I

reacted to other people's pain. Two memories stood out. So my next model was the badge of the hospital where I had received my nursing training. I labelled this 'imposition'. I then found some brown and white plasticine and made a strip of each and put them side by side and labelled them 'culture'. During my nursing I had received the message (reinforcing what I already knew) that I must not react in any way to other people's pain. I remember as I looked at this badge - representing the achievement of four years work - that I had been severely reprimanded by a night sister and given a bad ward report because she had found me in tears by a dying man. Actually I am not sure why this memory came to me because I wasn't in pain, but it was the first time I had let my feelings take over. This man had been admitted about three days previously and not a single clue to his identity could be found. No one knew his name or where he lived, and in three days no one came to see him. As I was alone with him about 5 a.m. this particular morning he was already unconscious and I realised he was dying. (This was before the days of instant resuscitation). So I put down the wash cloth and towel and held his hands because I felt so badly that in his last few days and moments of his life he had been left alone. He suddenly took my hand, opened his eyes, smiled and waved to someone he thought he saw at the end of his bed. Then he died. I was so overcome I burst into tears and although I was not crying when the night sister came, she could see what had happened and told me off. I wanted to share with her these final moments of this man's life but I did not

The two strips of plasticine also represented a memory of someone dying. I remembered an ugly scene I had seen in the African Bush. After the government police had tried to capture the very

powerful tribal chief all the people gathered outside the hospital because this was a natural meeting place when anything unusual happened. Four of us, three American girls and myself, were in our house with some other white people when we heard shooting. Someone ran to get us to come to the hospital to care for the wounded. Just as we reached the road a policeman pointed a gun at a very old man, about four feet in front of me. He then pulled the trigger and shot him. He fell groaning in a pool of blood but did not die immediately. The soldier walked back to the truck carrying other soldiers and at the same time a gigantic wail of anguish went up from the crowd of people and the man's little old wife wailed with her arms about him trying to comfort him. We stood cold and silent - mainly at first from shock but I wanted to wail, too, I was so upset. I felt a great barrier between these people and us, a barrier that was very apparent to me anyway but at that moment it distressed me greatly. I had a terrible pain inside of wanting to let out the hurt I felt for them.

I looked at those two models for about half an hour wondering just why I had associated them so distinctly with the problem written on the strip of paper. I then decided that all the models I had made so far had given me feelings of bitterness, and I seemed to feel them all over again. So I made a lemon and labelled it 'bitterness'. After about five minutes I wondered if this bitterness was still with me and decided that it was not. I thought about the way in which I was able to remove feelings of bitterness and I decided that the bitterness had gone because I was loved and cared for and I had been helped to find so many of my emotions which I had never been able to show but had felt all the same. The knowledge of this felt like warm sunshine

so my last model was of the sun and I labelled it 'love and knowledge'.

I went to bed feeling I had worked through something but I had not solved my problem. The next morning I was drinking coffee and vaguely listening to conversations when I found the solution. I remembered Hans *telling* me to yell and I realised I didn't want to be given orders or even suggestions. The hand of my mother came back into my mind because she had made my life such that it was a series of orders. If I didn't do them and made a noise about them I was slapped - I got hurt. If I didn't do them but kept quiet or hid she very often didn't hurt me. All my life I had refused her domination by not expressing myself, so I am not going to start now! I realised that in other areas of my life I had the same problem of not being able, not wanting to, accept orders or demands. I always liked to make my own decisions and not be told what to do. When I thought about all my job situations, the ones I felt most happy about and which worked out most effectively were the ones where I was left to my own devices and where I had the ultimate responsibility. Conversely, in my present job, I nearly lost it recently because I had this hidden resistance against taking any suggestions.

I had clashed violently with the ideas and methods of my superior. I wanted to tell her that she was never available when I needed her for consultation, and then when she did turn up she almost always disagreed with the way I had handled things. I didn't see this as a right or a wrong situation because both ways of working were valid. I was just mad at her for not being there when I wanted her advice and then treating me like a child again. On some days I wouldn't be able to visit anyone in my angry mood so I'd go home or shop until it wore off. This was

at the same time as I was being asked to yell when the massage hurt me. This job situation was causing me a lot of pain and I wanted to yell about it, too, but

couldn't. Well, a few days later at the next massage session I yelled and yelled. Or at least made a noise. More than I had ever done before.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

LEEDS ENCOUNTER WEEKENDS May 10-12, £4 plus food. Massage training days in Leeds and Sheffield. Details from: Bill Walton, 7, The Crescent, Hyde Park Corner, Leeds LS6 2NW. Tel. (0532) 787 506.

ENJOY PRACTICE AND PHILOSOPHY OF YOGA with Dr. K. Werner and Michaela Baron. Six day residential yoga course in Cumberland Lodge, Windsor Park, from 30.6 to 6.7.74, £30 inclusive. Write to Self and Society for details and booking.

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DEREK RUSSELL and MADELEINE FRANCIS would like to make it known that from the end of March their relationship is officially and cordially dissolved by mutual agreement. Flowers, condolences and interesting pieces of repeated gossip gratefully received. And good luck to those still trying.

T.A. WORKSHOP April 16-20. Introductory Course (101) in Transactional Analysis Shulamit Peck. Also 3-day practice therapy for professionals - April 18-20. All enquiries to: FRANKLIN SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY, 43 Adelaide Road, NW3, or Tel: 01-722 0562.

TRAINING WEEKEND FOR GROUP LEADERS AND PROSPECTIVE LEADERS to help us improve abilities in perceptiveness June 7-9 in London £6 plus food. Encounter holidays and communal living weekends at Easter and May Bank Holidays in the country (Matlock, Derbyshire) £12 and £10 respectively. Lobstein, 2 Chatsfield Place, Park View Road, Ealing, W.5.

DRAMA THERAPY & ROLE PLAYING. On-going professional training course, Wednesday evenings 2-10. All enquiries (s.a.e.) Sue Jennings, Drama Therapy Centre, 1 Limes Avenue, N.W.7.

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