

Letters to the editor

Dear Vivian,

I have just spent a day with nine senior teachers of a very large comprehensive school. Three of them, one third, did not want to know what their own personal attitude, their own private life had to do with their attitude to teaching, their relationships with their students. They admitted readily enough that if one of their pupils had trouble at home this could well be reflected in his or her learning ability. But their own emotional stability they did not feel was in any way reflected in their teaching ability.

The other six were just the other way round. They were keen to find out how they related to their kids. How their students saw them, how they felt about each other. They were willing to explore their own feelings towards each other as people and look at the factors that make for learning, and those that block it. These are the

teachers to whom I would give jobs if I had them. The trouble has been so far that anyone with a certificate was able to descend on the unsuspecting kids, and I am glad this is no longer so.

What can be done? I would like to see unemployed teachers - or employed for that matter - acquire some of the skills and insights that others seem to have. I would like to see self-help groups develop so that teachers can become more aware of their own attitudes and relationship problems. I would like to know if such groups already exist, and what schools, if any, pay any attention to this.

Yours sincerely,

Hans Lobstein
London W.13

Dear Vivian,

Adam Jukes has effectively put me off ITA. If a presumably responsible practitioner of the art can use it to shut his ears to someone else and to put her down by clever intellectualisation, then I can't see that it serves the object of human growth.

Other persuasions can do it too. I've heard more than one co-counsellor simply refuse to acknowledge the present-time meaning of someone's anger, when it is directed fair and square at them. Instead, they asked them to 'discharge' it, as if it were irrelevant.

Anger needs to be heard, particularly when it comes from people who have only just learnt to be straight forwardly angry, which is the case with most women. I am bored with men shutting themselves away from women's anger, assuming that it is as routine as their own. I've struggled through 39 years with mine at half-cock, and I mean to have full use of it now! It is new, aggressive, not particularly defensive, and it means to achieve something.

That is how liberation works. We stop accepting oppression as inevitable and something we have

to cope with. We take to angrily refusing to put up with it. And the anger is quite strong enough to handle the objectifying analysers who try to push us back into our inner conflicts.

As far as women and homosexuals are concerned, society needs changing if we are to live with reasonable happiness, so we shall work to change it. The Growth Movement has helped me get this far, but if anyone is in the Growth Movement for profits instead of liberation, or to find ways to keep other people down instead of to set them free, then I shall fight them.

I am fighting the capitalism that requires men to be producers who will docilely accept rotten conditions because they feel obliged to earn their families bread, and that makes women mere servicers of men, keeping them happy at home whilst their own creativity is neglected. I am fighting the profits game, the empire-building game, everything that smells of collusion with the system that takes away (if we don't make huge efforts) the power and creativity of my sisters.

And what are some people in the Growth Movement doing, running courses to teach managers how to keep their work-force quiet?

That is where the critics are right- mere psychologising to help people collude with their oppression - like pills for housewives, who really need to stop being housewives, or go out to work (only they can't because the capitalists can't raise enough capital to create jobs, and *naturally* men get first consideration, and women can go back where they *really* belong).

Go to an ITA group, sister, and learn how to play the games the money-makers need you to play. After all, that's realistic, isn't it? You

can't really *expect* people to listen to your needs.

No you can't. So you learn to fight.

And then it's about power, not about being understanding anymore. Good God, we actually aren't *obliged* to understand and therefore accept their oppressive attitudes! In struggle,

Jean Roberts

Rochdale

Hans Lobstein

Unemployment - Who gets the jobs ?

I have become very interested in this problem of who gets the job, and why. When unemployment is high and competition fierce amongst trained people, how is it that some people can put themselves across and others can't? I have started to use group interviews as well as individual interviews for job vacancies, and it is a real lesson to see people on the one hand scoring off each other in a group, or putting themselves down in their own potential for the job saying quite directly that another member of the group would be better for the job than they themselves, assuming rejection. I like the person who is lively, has good, constructive ideas, a fairly strong personality even if that may spell trouble in future, is friendly and encourages others to talk, become involved and is fairly forthright. All this comes out in a group interview.

So what skills are there that can be learned for this purpose? If I were to be an interviewee and take part in such a group, can I learn to become more aware of the factors that may influence my selection for the job, how I come across, what expectations my future employer may have, if I can meet them, or how I can learn to meet them? I talked to careers officers and one of them, Liz Wilson, has kindly agreed to put her views on paper. As I expected from our discussion, she puts personality traits high on her list of requirements that help with job interviews. What are these hidden traits that either trip or propel the interviewee? Can anything be done to change them, enhance the good ones, increase the choice an interviewee may have in his relationship? How do I find out how other people see me and can I do anything about it, that is, do I want to do anything about it?

Obviously, an awareness of group dynamics, how people in groups relate, may be helpful. I can then sit back and wait to let the group unfold in the way I am aware may well happen, and I can anticipate and take advantage of any situation. I have a choice in my intervention. I can also become more aware of what the interviewer may want from me, I may learn to listen and elicit useful information. Can I become aware of the problems my new boss may have and how I can help him solve them?