

After this course the subject has continued to be taught at the College in nearly the same way and every time the students and I have learnt something new that enable us to 'grow' a bit.

Klaus Lumma, M.A., Ph.D. was born in 1944. He mainly studied Philosophy, Psychology and Education. He developed a close relationship to Humanistic Psychology and now works in Aachen as youth-worker and psychotherapist. He is President of the German Association for Humanistic Psychology.

References

(1) *Educreation means: Education for Creation, Growth and Change. The word has been created by my friend Paul Ritter, author of 'Free Family and Feedback', Journal of Orgonomie Funktionalism and others.* (2) Ruth C. Cohn, 'The Theme-centred interactional method', in: *The Journal of Group Psychoanalysis and Process. Vol. 2, Nr.2 69/70.* (3) see also: Thomas Gordon, *How to be an effective Parent and Bridge The Generation Gap, London (William Collins Sons) 1970.* (4) Thomas Gordon, p. 64-70. (5) Thomas Gordon.

Prema

Will Grossman Talks to the Editor

The root of Prema was my interest in co-counselling. I was involved in co-counselling when Harvey Jackins first came over, but found first there wasn't room within the co-counselling thing for any kind of new ideas or experimentation and many of us felt it didn't get far enough. There was the sense that for developing a network of people, co-counselling was a very valuable thing, not using therapists but doing something the people could do by themselves. They could do it in conjunction with therapy or they could do it independently. And there was another thing that influenced me a lot at that time and that was the Enlightenment Intensive with people asking themselves reciprocal questions. The person who introduced Enlightenment Intensive here was Jeff Love. When his wife Wendy came over, when she was doing work with people, she would use different kinds of structures and different kinds of words. Basically they were getting at things that in co-counselling they weren't getting at. For example, one of the things she had me work on was self importance, she thought I was self important and she wanted me to get an understanding of what that was all about. So while working on this question of self importance for seven days, I came to quite a bit of understanding.

When I was in India a lot of my mind was on this, namely what can people do to break through into new spaces, particularly in a network situation and I found myself developing more and more ideas in terms of what people could do. And one of the ideas that really crystallized when I came over here was the feedback circuit which was one of the most important methods in Prema; feedback circuit is basically giving

people all the space they want: people listen to you, they've agreed they won't interrupt and you can talk for as long as you want without interruption. Now you know when you finish talking, when you say clearly that you've finished talking, then they can give you feedback which means they can express all feelings and all thoughts and projections that they've had, but during that time that the space is yours in terms of no interruptions, they can't interrupt you for any reason whatsoever. Consequently what that really allows you to do is just to breathe because there is no hurry, nobody is pushing you, nobody is pressing you and it allows you really to explore your inner space. Now if you see people are up-tight about what you're saying, or if they are getting fidgety, you can use that towards the inner exploration - to work on whatever that is doing inside you. It's a tremendous method for exploring your inner space and for getting at the core of yourself. I found for example a very interesting thing when I came back from India, I was invited to an encounter group for encounter group leaders over here - which incidentally led to those articles that I wrote for *Self and Society* about anger. (*Self and Society* III 4) What I found was that, although people were expressing a lot of feeling, they didn't seem to be any quality in the feeling. They just seemed to be outbursts of feeling and they didn't seem to be getting anywhere at all, I thought. At one particular time I was the target of it and I found that the more people were attacking me the more I was protecting myself. I knew that I could protect myself regardless of how much pressure they were putting on me - like I just get more and more defended. I could see this working in other people too and it was clear to me - having done some work with feedback circuits before - that that wasn't the real way at all. And that has been the experience of Prema - that people open up more in a situation of safety where they know they're not being interrupted than they do when they're being pressured to open up.

When I wrote those articles in *Self & Society* I got lots of letters from people who really understood what I was saying. One of the people who wrote to me - and I was amazed when I got that - was Marian Milner who I always had a very high regard for, who'd written 'On not being able to paint' and 'In the hands of the living God' and was very closely connected with Winnicott. When I got a letter from her expressing appreciation for what I was saying, I just felt very good. I felt a tremendous humility and appreciation - that I was being appreciated. So the response to appreciation, and the opening up of appreciation is so much more vital than anything that comes up of pressure and pushing.

So far this seems very clear and I think I am completely with you. But can you tell me how far you take it? For example do you get into regression? Is giving yourself a space to talk out enough in your system, or do you go on to work on emotional blocks?

Every other approach is based on the word 'I' and Prema is based on the word 'You'. It is of course an over-simplification but there is a lot of truth in that. For example, in getting feedback the focus is the other person.

People are always focussing on the word 'I'. People are going into regression, going into self-development programmes, abreactions and freak-outs and whatever, it's

always the word 'I'. To me there are limits to that. You focus on the word 'You'. And the focussing of attention on something outside yourself - which we consider a larger 'I' - that becomes much more creative and much more productive, but it gets away from traditional concepts of regression and abreaction and so on.

I like the sound of that. Let me make sure I got it right. That the object of the first uninterrupted revelation of self is not so that I should put me over but to enable you, the other, to be able to understand me. The importance is on the understanding of the other, not on development of the 'I'.

Not so much understanding of the other as of focussing attention - because it's slightly different. There is an alchemical process here and it's difficult for me to explain what I mean by an alchemical process, but there are things happening in this work in terms of subtle energy changes which you can't describe in any other way. I was reading a book recently, the old alchemist's description of what meditation really is - I think it was Jung who discovered this in one of the old alchemy books - the way they defined meditation was that it was visualizing another person and talking to that person. That, curiously enough, is exactly what happens in Prema, that focussing of attention on the other person without any objective, without any particular point. I don't want to improve you, I just want to focus attention on you, and we found in Prema that this is so creative that it just dissolves a lot of the other things that existed. It seems to dissolve a lot of the complexes, and tensions, that usually require regression and abreaction.

You are reversing the polarity of co-counselling. In co-counselling it is the client who is the one who is talking about himself. That is if I am client I am saying 'This is me, I want to get me out in the open' and what I hear you saying is that is the other way round. That it's the therapist who is in fact the important one in any particular dialogue and that the client is putting out as much of himself as he can so that the therapist will be able to visualize get in touch with, contact the inner self of the other. I am revealing my 'I' to you but it is you at that moment in time who is working.

You are revealing your 'I' to me and as you reveal your 'I' to me you become a meditational object for me, there is nothing I can do. Like for example you say something, you are revealing your 'I' and I will have very strong reaction to what you're saying but since I've accepted the no-interruptions rule I don't react to it. If the energy of sympathy, anger, rage starts in me, then I just let the energy start and see how it moves through me but you become a meditational object for me, because I can't interrupt you, you become more important to me and I think people suddenly realize that the other person is really important. For example, in Arica, they say that love is a recognition of the same consciousness in another.

It seems to me that love is seeing another person as equally important. Not as more important, which is getting off balance and by getting off balance you set up a programme for future rage because you've depreciated yourself. So the answer is that co-counselling is 100 per cent the 'I' and here there is a balance, a balance between 'I'

and 'You'. Certainly the focus is much more on 'You' than in any other discipline. The whole purpose of the self-development programme is self-development. What happens here is that though people get into this for the same reasons originally, they realize that there is something else here. I and you leads to 'We'. Focussing on the 'You and making the 'I' less important than it usually it leads to a state of 'We'. At first it's only a glimpse but then it becomes richer and richer. That's clearly one of the exciting things; this is not just a question of verbal communication. A lot of it is showing people how they can communicate just from the body, via the body. We do a lot of body work. We show people how they can feel their body more. For example if there is a specific muscular contraction, the object is not to dissolve that contraction but let people really feel. But people always have the idea of the medical model, they have to do something about this, for example I had a patient who was really deep into Reichian therapy, his whole idea was he had to arrive at perfect orgasm. That's the fallacy of Reichian therapy, which says that if he didn't arrive at perfect orgasm, then he wasn't getting anywhere. For me is the idea that every time a person wants to arrive at this or wants to arrive at that, he creates a situation of no flow and he really can't get anywhere.

In philosophical terms you seem to be overlapping quite a bit with what Ann Parkes is saying in her intuitive massage. Are you aware of this? She said for example that the masseur is not there to 'give a massage' but to try to enter into the physical frame of reference of the other and as much as possible follow the needs of the one being massaged. The masseur is trying to contact the individual in the massee, not just using a technique on them.

Sometimes for example people say to me 'I have this pain in my shoulder' and coming from the orientation that I was a therapist, that I was leading that group in the role of therapist, my thinking was 'aha, I must do something about that tense shoulder' and I came to the conclusion that that was not what I wanted to do, because I wanted to develop something so that people could do this for themselves and I didn't want to be the therapist for twenty people. I wanted them to be therapists for one another and I want to be very clear on this. I have now stopped doing individual therapy. I'm no longer a therapist and I say to people very clearly when I run a group - 'I'm not a therapist. I'm here to teach you certain methods that you can then use by yourself on your own. And that goes for other people who are teaching Prema - they may be therapists in their own right - but in Prema they're just teaching techniques; if someone has a contraction or a pain, I get away from the medical model and tell them just to feel it, to feel as much as they can. I am not rejecting the medical model, I am not saying they shouldn't go next day to somebody who does massage to take it away. I am just saying at the moment become aware of where the pain or contraction is, what that pain is doing to you and the correspondences in your body.

What we teach in various exercises, most are known as micro movements, based on the work of Feldenkrais where people make these very small movements and they feel what that does to the rest of their body. Most people are very unaware. For example, just moving my foot a little like that might have all sorts of ramifications in my breathing for example. People become more and more conscious of this inner work.

The other person isn't a therapist: he isn't doing thing to them. He's just teaching them and giving them feedback.

Going back to the question of inter-action, is this only verbal - do you also include nods and winks and grimaces. For example, I don't interrupt, but I made an awful lot of faces.

No, that's O.K. Nobody is forced to sit there and listen in beatific passivity.

The rule is no actual vocalisation?

The rule is 'don't interrupt'. I was in the States not long ago and I did the EST training, the whole spirit of the EST Training seemed to be exactly the same but the methods were totally different. There really is something worthwhile in this Prema thing. For example, I taught just this one technique of feedback circles to ten people at a time because I didn't want to go on working with them individually. I wanted to phase out as a therapist because I thought that identification was limiting my development as a person. But I knew these people needed something. And I was amazed because they used that one single technique under the worst circumstances imaginable for about eight months and the changes really were enormous. You have to work with it yourself. And if you only do, say, two evenings a week, it suddenly opens up to a new dimension of experience. There is no way in which words can really describe it.

Do you use clock time in deciding whose turn it is? Do you have, say, half an hour each?

At the beginning there are no time limitations whatsoever. For example, some of these sessions have lasted for about six hours. They can really last a long time. Then gradually we bring in a system of self limitation. For example, we say why not try to limit yourself to about twenty minutes. But still nobody can interrupt you if you go on longer than twenty minutes. It's a self limitation. It's just an agreement that you try to stick to that if it doesn't interfere with any vital process that's going on. Now the thing here that's really important - and I think I am treading on really thin ice here - is that in my experience of therapists and group leaders, I have not met one whom I would call really 'clear' whatever 'clear' is. To me every group leader and therapist that I have met is not clear; they have hang-ups and they avoid getting together with other people in order to work them out.

Like on the basis that most psychiatrists are more nutty than their patients?

I would say this, that working as a therapist very often becomes a defence against working out one's own whatever it is. The identification with the profession, with the role, is a tremendous defence and I see that operating pretty well universally which is one reason why I have stopped doing individual therapy. I don't want my involvement with that role to hamper my development. And I can easily see that my teaching

Prema is interfering with my development. For example, perhaps I ought to be just selling bread in a store - something simple. I'm working towards something very simple. For me it is important to have other people who can teach this.

So that they can interfere with their self development while you are getting on with yours?

It's a question of identification with the role. Like if you become identified with your role as the editor of the AHP journal, to that extent you are not 'you' you are just the role. If you can step outside of it at the same time, you can do it. For example, many people quote 'money is the source of all evil' but that's not the real quotation - it really should be 'the love of money is the root of all evil' and that makes the world of difference.

So much of the work that's done in therapeutic circles and even in a lot of the Growth Movement is the idea that something has to be done to somebody. Here the concept is so different; It's quite a simple thing. If you stop trying to chauffeur somebody around, they really will learn to drive that car if you give them space to do it. I think psychoanalysis recognizes the value of giving people space much more than the growth movement. I have a great deal of respect for the old style psychoanalyst who sometimes would not say a word for the whole session. When I first started in the Growth Movement, that seemed the most absurd thing I could possibly think of. I was full of derision for psychoanalysts like that. But now I see things very differently. I have tremendous respect for giving people that kind of space. And after I've talked for a long time and opened myself up and then somebody say gives me very negative feedback and goes into a lot of his or her projections, that's all right too. There is no reason why people shouldn't go into their projections. We have to show people that it's O.K. to go into their projections, because when they go into projections they are telling us more about themselves than about the other person. One of the important things in the teaching is that people really understand the difference between a feeling and a thought and a projection. They are all perfectly O.K. but just so that they know that this is a thought, this is a feeling, this is a projection. And they see the boundaries very clearly. And at times they can say 'I don't want to communicate with you' and that's O.K. and at other times they'll say they do want to communicate and at a certain point they can terminate that process.

And take breathing - people are told so many things about the way they should breathe - you should breathe from your belly, you shouldn't only breathe from the top of your chest and all kinds of stuff like that, which is true in a sense but at the same time it's a tremendous trip, people are laying tremendous trips and to me the really vital thing is that people not try to change their breathing at all but simply become aware of the way in which they are breathing, then their breathing automatically begins to change. The moment they become aware of this the change has already occurred. There is no further therapy needed.

Talking of breathing in the right way, I've just read Durckheim on harar, and he quotes

three different Japanese masters all saying three different things. One says the out breath should flow naturally into the in-breath, the next one says that you should pause on the out-breath and that the in-breath should breathe itself, and the last one says that after working on the system you can hold your inhalation for a long period. So my own unconscious has got to pick which one of those it's going to do.

As a result you get confused and you are wondering what is the right thing to do. You are always wondering about what is the right thing and it's totally different from saying what you are doing now and what you are experiencing now is O.K.

What I am doing is developing machinery, the hardware, the methods for a network situation and that what's exciting about it. It no longer has anything to do with me as an individual. I am just there to give people those methods and to encourage them. The spirit of this is epitomized in the feedback circle which means that anybody can say anything, they can express what they want to say. Everybody goes through it: everybody expresses what they have to say and there is something about this work that changes the way people are together permanently. As long as people do the feedback circuit, then they cannot work in an authoritarian hierarchy.

CORRECTION

In last month's issue on Primal Therapy we wrongly gave the address of Glyn Seaborn Jones as 10 Garden Mews this should have read 10, STEELES MEWS SOUTH, LONDON, NW3 4SJ. We apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused.

SELF HELP AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

A weekend for counsellors is planned for October 28-30 Friday 7pm to Sunday 3pm and subject areas to be covered include marriage guidance, student counselling, family casework etc.

They will be trying some alternatives to talking 'about it', analysing, dissecting, looking at it, explaining, interpreting? The alternatives will include gestalt, role play, psychodrama, creative listening, sociograms, family sculpting, acting it out....

They will be thinking of preventative work - Community self-help groups, neighbourhood groups, family groups, growth groups, personal and community development - how to start them, how to organise them, how to lead them (and how not to) where to get local resources, publicity, support. Further details from Hans Lobstein, 7 Chesham Terrace, Ealing, London W.13.
