

really, she wasn't much good, there was no purpose for her life. Always, too, she hoped that somehow, somewhere, she would meet someone who could help her to become as she would like to be, someone who could help her to become real, interesting. Someone who could help her to be warm, outgoing, a true friend to others.

And then one day, someone she knew slightly happened to leave something behind - perhaps intentionally, she never knew, but in any case there was no way she could return it to them. It was a portrait. . . was it a portrait? A painting? A photograph. . . . And it seemed, somehow, to be a portrait of the person who could have helped her, the person who could have shown her how to become what she would like to be, and at the same time, perhaps inevitably, that person WAS all the things that she would have liked to be: calm, confident, strong, able to cope with the demands of life, able to enjoy life, able to help others.

For a long time, Elizabeth treasured that portrait. She would look at it often, and think: 'If only I could meet that person! If only I could be like that person!' And then one day someone - was it one of her children? a friend? I don't know - someone happened to notice the portrait. They picked it up, admired the frame, and said: 'What a fascinating mirror! Where did you find it?'....

...'A mirror? Then what I thought was a portrait is. . .my reflection? Then that person is. . . .me? Me? Me!'

.....And that's as far as the story goes. I can't end it. . . . I don't know, yet, what the ending will be. Only Elizabeth knows how, for her, the story ends.

---

Roy Persons

## Reflections on Community

What is a community? What am I doing away from my own country over the Christmas season? What am I doing in England conducting more gestalt groups? Am I just a psychological troubadour? Yes, I did enjoy and felt touched by the work I did last summer with Quaesitor and Community, and the co-therapy with Ursula Fausset. Well then, is community just my hometown, my country, my family? Or is community all the memories, fantasies, and feelings about special people that I carry with me? I have often dreamed of all the people that I love gathering together to live in one geographical location. I suppose that my community is all of the people that I am linked with by heart, no matter where they live. I am really drawn to London this holiday season to embrace and to be embraced with a loving community member.

It has only been recently that I have decided to spend most of my time with only those people with whom I feel in communion. I no longer choose to make my community other psychologists, or gestalt leaders, or through professional societies or any other identity groups. I want a contactful community where the members are

emotionally and intellectually available to each other. I do not want a confluent community in which all think alike, and there is an appearance of loving harmony. Give me differentiation among us and let me have laughter, fighting, joy, anger, sadness, playing, and grief, with the loving. And I do not want to spend much time with people with whom I'm not touching hearts.

As I was walking down the London Streets today, I was thinking that anytime I and another commune, make contact, authentically encounter each other, we establish a monetary community. We have an emotional shared basis for existence. It is the community of the fleeting moment. Relationships do not have to be long to be contactful. Many more of our interactions can be more human and familiar. Even if a relationship only lasts a minute we can pass each other some energy, and in this respect we are potential community members.

The London streets are cold and brown, no eye contact, not even the energy to avert eye contact - just masks, no facial movement. Is England having a human energy crisis? It doesn't look like people are vital, make as much contact here, or touch each other as much as we do in the States. Is England's fund low on humanizing energy, or am I just an American stereotype seeing England stereotypes? Kilburn Tube Station: Black and White and Indian boys and girls singing and playing Christmas Carols. Stranger's eyes smiling and touching mine, M.K.'s hand squeezes mine.

There are fourteen of us, nine men and five women, in this two day gestalt course at Quaesitor. As I open the group, I am wondering if anything meaningful or of lasting significance will transpire. Will we seek to know and allow ourselves to be known? Are these people coming here just to learn about gestalt and learn new techniques to use with their clients?

The group is over and I am now with Becky and Duncan at a Snowdonia cottage. I've had several days here to reflect on the group, and I am amazed at the depths of our sharing. And yes we played, laughed, and kidded each other, and in not taking ourselves so bloody seriously we were developing ways of being that will keep that demon of perfectionism at bay. We really developed a community in those two days, one in which there was real acceptance of our differences. We laughed our laughter, had our tender and loving moments, cried our tears, and fought our fights. I'm remembering B., whose mother was killed by a bomb while riding a bike during the war when B. was four years old. B. expressed his resentment toward his Aunt and father for not telling him of his mother's death. He had a very moving fantasy conversation with his mother, and the next day, for the first time, he remembered his last encounter with his mother. Although H. is now 50 he looked like a lonely little boy as he cried about not being loved by his parents, but he really wept and wept as he confessed treating his own children in an insensitive manner. H.'s legs are still wobbly and he is going to use his new found courage to confront his wife. A seed was planted, as self-critical and self-demanding J. shyly stood before us and told what she really likes, admires, and loves about herself. S., I will never forget holding you while you wept, and in how much your singing the lullabye to your daughter moved all of us. I

have so many warm memories of our group.

We shared our emotional lives and vital aspects of our existence. Yes, people learned some about gestalt; more importantly, we learned to give ourselves permission to disclose our humanity and share our energy. At the beginning of the group fourteen of us were not as affectionless as the people that I had seen in the London public, and there was distance, reserve, and anxiety with us. I think that we became a community because people are hungry for contact and because we created a structure where it was permissible and acceptable to be authentically revealing. Our ground rules of not interpreting and analysing each other helped establish a more trusting environment. No expectancies, no demands, just come and be; and share your process, if you like. Group confidence developed early, I think, because we laughed a lot. Also when one member expressed some anger and resentment about the absence of the co-leader, he was acknowledged, affirmed and accepted in a non-defensive manner. We grew closer because he was honest enough to express his anger, have it accepted, resolve it, and then be open to the group. Right then, the group learned that they could probably give expression to any of their feelings and that the group process would be enriched. We shared our differences in an atmosphere of understanding compassion. What more can be asked in human interaction? It is this kind of meaningful communion that keeps me doing groups. Being part of the growth movement gives me an opportunity to participate in a community of meaningful interaction all over the world. I am now remembering the mantra that my teacher gave me, 'With love touch the heart of thy brother. With love touch the heart of thy sister.'

---

Brian Wright

## Smoking and Personal Growth

After studying psychologies, pioneering counselling and encounter with young 'addicts', 'criminals' and the 'mentally ill', being involved in the growth movement, and spending much of my life in spiritual disciplines, notably Arica, in the past few years, I was very struck by a comment from an ex-addict friend. He said it was all very well, but how come I still smoked? My immediate reaction was that I had to have some vice, and really I knew I could give it up any time. It was only after I stopped being a smoker that I could see the point of his comment.

It is a sensitive point with psychological and spiritual work that the gap between the practice of the discipline and the expectations of 'ordinary life' may be large enough for it to appear that different languages are spoken. The gap may represent the work one needs to do on oneself, and indeed it has been appropriate for those on a path of self-development to separate themselves from ordinary life. But now is a time when, for the earth to survive, the whole of humanity has to wake up, and in as much as humanity is within us need it to develop our individual potential. If any discipline 'works' it must connect to ordinary life, ordinary problems. We have developed a method for witnessing oneself as a smoker and going beyond; and this is a permanent solution to smoking.