

Where I have arrived is at an affirmation of my belief that evil destructiveness, (which is different to me from de-structuring) is the result of a kind of unbalanced learning. I feel secure again of what I am saying. But I carry a clear awareness of having written of my resistance to change, a few paragraphs back. So I do notice old Thanatos poking his nose over the top of the garden wall to see if I'll recognise him.

So what I want to end with, it turns out, is a short fanfare for Eros and the love of life. He's the fellow who has the coffin lid dropped on him on Bad Days. And Thanatos is the one who is dancing like a skeleton on the grave.

At such times, the charm, the spell, the specific, the medicament, the courses of treatment - whatever synonymous phrase suits you - that I prescribe, is the immediate performance of some Eros-strengthening action. That will bring Eros straight up through the coffin lid like a geyser, (I am glad that Freud is helping me so assiduously with the imagery), and it will have Thanatos back in the dust where he belongs. And yes, all right, one day I shall belong there too. But that day is not yet. Eros rules. OK?

There's the dust. There's the grave dug and waiting and as far as I can see inevitable. So in that case I don't need to divert any energy into courting my own demise, being half in love with easeful Death, or whatever. Yet I let the old skeleton get his bony hand round my ankle and yank away at it. Down sir! I have some living to get on with. Get off! It's Eros's turn.

Hazel Guest

Sequential Analysis

Sequential Analysis is a therapeutic method created about ten years ago by a psychiatrist, whose name I may not mention here because of the BMA's rules about advertising. At that time he had persuaded a small group of friends including myself, to act as his guinea-pigs, testing his procedures on ourselves. This necessitated our learning how to give sessions to others so that we could wear two hats at once - or rather alternate them in rapid succession - and give sessions to ourselves.

The sessions are monitored by using a skin resistance meter, the electrodes of which are held against the palm of one hand. This device is used for a number of purposes. Firstly it enables the therapist to choose for discussion that topic which is most likely to be beneficial to the client. Secondly it enables the therapist to know whether or not he is on the right track, whether his questions are relevant, and whether or not a topic has been exhausted of all its restimulative content. Thirdly it enables the therapist to help the client identify something in his mind that he is trying to remember - the sort of thing that is 'just on the tip of my tongue but it won't quite come'. With the help of the information provided by the meter, the therapist can often help the client to grasp the elusive thought by its tail so that he can take a look at it.

So much for the technology; now for the method. We try as far as possible to deal with one area of experience at a time. For example it might be aspects of behaviour such as aggression, or guilt, or fixed ways of dealing with certain situations (*as in Berne's 'Games People Play'*), or it might have to do with attitudes or purposes; or it might be something more philosophical, like aspects of meaning and understanding. It is not possible to keep topics completely separate, but we concentrate on one at a time trying to 'clean it up', handling any other area that happens to crop up with a simple first aid, and then saving it until such time as we happen to be dealing with that particular area, when it will then get the full treatment.

The procedure involves question and answer techniques which cause the client to search more and more deeply into an experience or into his own thoughts, and aim at his having a flash of insight which will illuminate the area for him, increasing his own self awareness and thereby alleviating his problems in the particular area that was under scrutiny. The thinking which underlies this method is the same as that underlying the koan method of Zen. The techniques differ but the end product is the same in both cases: a peak experience, a moment of enlightenment, and an increased self-awareness from that moment onwards -albeit only a small increase, for Rome was not built in a day. We aim at having at least one peak experience in each of the areas which are relevant to a client. As a subjective experience, clients usually feel some of these as being stronger than others; some are just very pleasant experiences or insight, whereas others are world-shattering flashes of illumination.

The procedures that we use have been designed from a Transpersonal point of view, that is to say there is an underlying assumption of the existence of a true Self in each person, and that the purpose of therapy is gradually to remove all the rubbish, getting closer and closer to the real *being*. The techniques will work successfully with most people, provided they can communicate and are motivated towards growth. But it is also implicit in the transpersonal outlook that human beings consist of body, mind and emotions as well as spirit, and that growth must take place in all these areas. Sequential Analysis techniques concentrate mostly on the analytical approach to growth, so it is usually recommended to clients at some stage that they participate in some other growth process (*encounter, Tai Chi, bio-energetics, or whatever seems to be right for them at that stage*).

By profession I am a mathematician, so giving people sessions has been a spare time activity for me for the past nine or ten years. This means that I can take only a small number of clients. I continue working on myself but no longer use the meter for this purpose. Sooner or later one becomes so familiar with mental processes that one is open to having a flash of insight at any time. Imagine having a peak experience when walking down Oxford Street, or in the middle of a conversation, or when dancing or taking a bath! This may be considered rather anti-social by some, since in a peak experience one has temporarily transcended the level on which interpersonal communication is important. One returns to normal, but each of these experiences has its effect and makes normal life that much richer.
