

tions, particularly if your reactions are familiar to you.

You question whether you have sufficient grounds to move to another

Ruth is a therapist in private practice in London.

Letters

Dear S&S,

I was very moved by June Hall's article 'Body Impact' (May 1999) and the way she has put herself in the front line — well, an illness that makes your body shake uncontrollably does not give you a lot of choices, unless you hide for the rest of your days.

Here are some thoughts the article triggered in me: Do we need to move on from our 'client-centred' work to a more 'therapist-centred' approach? In a time of profound changes as we all are experiencing at present, a firm holding and containment is needed, so that a careful opening to the new paradigm, to a new vision of reality can occur. A client who is allowed to treat his/her therapist in the way June has experienced it, is not opening up anything new, only stabilising the old paradigm. To get in contact with our individual and different feelings ('you are you and I am I') was an important stepping stone for the development of humanistic psychotherapy and our human race — but we have experienced them long enough. Let's move on — if we stay with them for much longer we will drown — and pull the whole world with us.

I do not agree at all with June's 'what may be good for the client may not be good for the therapist' — not as a therapist nor

supervisor. I think you need to examine your motives. Could it be that you're looking for an excuse to leave? Could you be angry with Rose and stay?

as a parent. This assumption will always lead to dissonance, pain, suffering — and always creates victims. We do not need more 'diversity', we need more awareness of 'oneness': 'what I do to you I actually do to myself'.

I do not allow any client to treat me badly — if I don't owe this to myself, I at least owe it to my client. There is no separation, therefore there are no victims in the realm beyond our self-centred world. There are only partners within a greater whole. An 'illness' like June's can be a gateway to this realm and 'shake' any client out of the narrow world of naval-gazing.

Jochen Encke

Dear S&S,

Though they say there is no such thing as bad publicity, I am glad this journal has a built-in procedure for correcting misleading statements or perceptions, such as could be read in the review section of your last issue. I have the permission of the Bridge Trust to quote from Richard Bryant-Jefferies' review of *Wisdom Stranded*, this first volume of my *Wisdom Trilogy: A Comedy more Divine*.

'*Wisdom Stranded* is written in a poetic style that is extremely readable. Although I personally have not always found poetry accessible, once I had begun reading this book I felt compelled to finish it. It offers the

reader opportunity to engage with ideas concerning creation, in such a manner that deep truths are conveyed in the language of human relationships and attitudes within a modern context.

'The setting for the story is Godwonland and the drama unfolds within the first half of this century. It takes the form of a family history, with each character conveying specific traits and representing energies, woven together to create the tensions we see in our world today, in particular racial tension rooted within the sense of separateness and racial identity that pervades much of our world history: the urge to take power over those who are different. Division and difference take precedence. Can the peoples in the story learn to celebrate human and creative diversity and be enriched?

'I find myself touched by the powerful message of the book, and the expectation of what is to follow. I look forward eagerly to Book Two, entitled *Strands of Wisdom*.'

The first draft of *Strands of Wisdom* is now complete and I expect to publish it in the opening days of January 2000. Book Three, *Risking Wisdom*, on which I am now at work, is scheduled for 2002.

Since its rejuvenation this decade, I read every issue of *S&S* from cover to cover, always refreshed by its risking openness about itself and its 'differences', whether of philosophy or procedure.

Thank you for this additional exposure.

April Ryedale Taylor

Dear *S&S*,

I have been a counsellor in private practice for fourteen years. I have had the privilege, the professional satisfaction and the joy of watching my clients put into practice and

integrate what they learn and experience in the counselling room: I have watched them change their lives. Throughout my own life's process, and facilitated by counselling, I too have changed and developed. I use what I have learned about me, about people, about what it is to be human. I have learned how to live more as myself.

Two months ago my father died, suddenly — a hale and hearty man only six days from his 79th birthday. Since the shock has worn off, I've been grieving hard and loud. I'm doing it so well, apparently, that others around me — friends, family and clients — have felt their old griefs come to life again, but this time they are allowing themselves to feel as they did not the first time around.

This is real enough, but there is a new reality creeping into my life. On the same day last week I did three extraordinary things. On my way to work, taking my usual route, I found myself in an international newsagent's. Why? I don't buy a daily newspaper. What was I looking for? I left the shop with a poetry magazine. Then, on my way home, I did not go to my usual bus stop. I found myself in the music library, surrounded by manuscripts, records and tapes. I came out with two CDs — a Glen Miller and a Bessie Smith. And that evening, instead of doing the usual household tasks, I sat in my room working on a poem that I'd written after my father died. For three hours I crafted the piece in total absorption.

You want to hear how the therapeutic process affects real life? This is how it works. My life's journey has taught me to listen. And I do. I listen so well that my listening is in demand from others. My father's death — or, rather, his life — is an

invitation to me to listen to myself, to parts of myself that I haven't heard in a long time. What happened last week was, that in the awful chaos and pain that sometimes threatens to overwhelm me, my own voice came through, slipped the net of the usual, the routine, the disciplined. I heard the voice and followed.

It led to a 'me' that in years of single-parenting and dedication to service I had put aside and ignored; a self who used to write poetry, who had it published and broadcast; who loves music and wants to know and hear more, but who doesn't even own a CD player.

As a counsellor I know what it means when a client says, 'I walked up the street today wearing the kind of hat I've always fancied,' or, 'I walked right into his office and said, "That's your problem, not mine"', or, 'I've done it. I went to the divorce lawyer and started the business'. I celebrate these details of ordinary life changes because I know that they betoken release, spontaneity, self-assurance, trust, entitlement, acceptance of self — all of them regularly hoped-for outcomes of therapy.

I have long wanted to contribute to *Self & Society*. I find it a thoughtful, intelligent, provocative and human publication. That I do so now, on a Monday morning during a break at work, is for me full testament to 'life beyond the counselling room'.

Christine Meek

Dear *S&S*,

I'm interested in your May editorial, about which I've many observations to make. The first thing that struck me was what seems to be a discrepancy between the last bit, beginning 'As the weeks go on'... and

what went before. What dissenting voices? Dissenting from whom? Who's doing the silencing or vilification? This seems to be a very personal (paranoid?!) statement. Certainly it's not my experience. If we go with the idea that we are *all* helpless, failing, then there's no dissent. *Your* voice isn't being silenced, and I see and hear dissenters from official policies constantly. And encouraging admissions of powerlessness, which then enable new kinds of action.

Once we give up omnipotence fantasies we can stop being impotent according to our definitions, which paralyse us. And I don't think we'll ever crack this one until the world undoes the terrible legacy of four millennia of patriarchal monotheism. We *are* helpless at present to do other than observe the world we love blow itself to pieces. All we can do is weep — and carry on being as humane as we can, and assert life.

To make a connection with Andrew (Samuel)'s ideas, I wonder whether in your role as one who writes 'leaders' — 'leading articles' — you are in an erotic relationship with the *S&S* readership. Many writers speak of how they relate to their readers in such a way. Are we expecting you to tell us what to think, even though you ask us for feedback/playback?

I want to tell Andrew he's left out the dimension of the erotic playback with the leader who's supposedly 'past it', and can accept that youth and its fantasies and failures and beauties are no longer present — i.e. elder statespersons, retired, like Healey, Castle, Callaghan, crones who are wise enough to know, if nothing else, that even Roget got it wrong, and ugliness and impotence are in the eye of the beholder.

Alix Pirani.

Maxine Linnell replies: I've very much enjoyed the responses to that editorial. It was one of the hardest piece of writing I have ever finished, did indeed evoke feelings of pain and powerlessness, and it has also provoked some most interesting responses.

As *S&S* is a bi-monthly, deadlines mean material is always some weeks out of date. I may well be paranoid, but two weeks into the war when I wrote it, people who dissented from NATO's action were being hissed and shouted down on Radio 4. On the antiwar e-mail group hosted by the National Peace Council, there has been news I saw in few other places, news of the ecological devastation being caused in Yugoslavia, of the children who were killed and injured in the bombings, and just now of the protest march to the Pentagon which was at first banned by Washington police, then was attended by 5,000 people without publicity and unmentioned in the media.

I do hope we can face these challenging issues, dare to speak whatever truth we have, and know that Earwig is on hand to be the fool and keep fantasies of power, erotic or otherwise, well in check!

Dear *S&S*,

Please forgive me for troubling you and for my request. I wonder if you could help. In Russia meanwhile (especially outside Moscow) we have almost no profound literature and information in many aspects of modern psychology, human science, psychotherapy (especially humanistic psychology) and all related subjects, and of course foreign resources aren't available here. And unfortunately it is impossible for us to pay for books, periodicals, subscrip-

tions abroad. Would you do us a great favour and send us some books and journals, related texts, papers, materials — they can be old, damaged, returned, spare, not needed any more? We should be so grateful.

Yaroslav Koryakov

Donations can be sent to Yaroslav at the Department of Psychology, Ural State University, Gottwald St. 11-33, Ekaterinburg 620034, Russia. The AHP Administrator is arranging for a parcel of magazines and other material to be sent from the Association.

Dear *S&S*,

Earlier this year you published a review of my book, *Do You Feel Loved By Me?*, which contains a chapter entitled 'The Positive Expression of Anger'. Your reviewer dismissed it because I recommend hitting cushions as an anger exercise, which, she says, 'leaves me in doubt about how up to date the author is in his understanding of emotional development'. She doesn't explain what this new, modern understanding is. She also expresses fear that this exercise may lead to escalation. Again she doesn't explain, but I assume she means it may lead to violence of some kind. I would like to know where this idea comes from and whether it has any real basis or is just some kind of fear-mongering.

In my experience over about thirty years and many thousands of hours of group and individual work as a participant and later working as a psychotherapist, this has never happened. People are less likely to be violent if they hit cushions instead of other people. They are more likely to be violent if they repress their anger. I see physical expressions of anger

as important in helping us in the process of integrating anger, whether it is hitting, stamping, throwing or shouting or all of them together! They are natural expressions which are positive when done appropriately. When we learn to validate anger in ourselves we are more likely to stand up for ourselves in appropriate ways. It is fear that represses anger and your reviewer, at best, adds nothing to an important issue in our lives and our world. I would like to point out that the escalation she fears is already surrounding us in so many forms that it is distressingly clear that most people have no idea whatsoever what a positive expression of anger is, and we need to do something about it. This seems particularly poignant when British warplanes have so recently been bombing people in the Balkans.

We have all received very negative conditioning about anger which, as a psychotherapist, I believe I have a professional responsibility to try to change. I also believe I have a personal responsibility as a citizen to help our society towards a better understanding of such difficult issues. What I wrote in my book is part of these responsibilities.

Philip Rogers

Dear S&S,

Your review in the March edition of Philip Roger's book *Do you Feel Loved by Me?* seemed unnecessarily harsh and unconstructive. In attacking several of the exercises and approaches proposed by Philip Rogers the critic Jen Popkin several times used the argument that they might conceivably be open to abuse. If this is true

then it is surely true of most if not all exercises, approaches and communication techniques. By just focussing on the worst that might happen Jen Popkin fails to make any useful analysis of the potential benefits of the many suggestions in this book when used wisely. Personally I greatly enjoyed the book which I found original and refreshingly from the heart.

Wyon Stansfeld

Editors' apologies for the May issue

The editors' apologies go to Madeline Lees, who with Martin Wilks co-wrote the article which appeared in May's issue on camps. Her name, and the following piece, should have appeared with the article.

Madeline Lees is a practising occupational therapist working in Norwich in the mental health sector. She was in private practice for ten years; her counselling training incorporated gestalt and hypnotherapy; she is currently influenced by the brief solution focused approach. She was active within the East Anglian Albion Fairs network in the 1970s whilst living in a large community in Suffolk. She initiated the 'Dance Camp East' in 1991. This is a ten-day music and dance camp for over 500 people which is currently in its eighth year.

A correction is also due: readers who want a copy of the *Camps Directory* mentioned in the article should send a large SAE to Bethlehem Taylor. He was flooded with phone calls: we are glad to know you were interested, but apologise to him for the influx.