

An extended answer to John Rowan's message about the AHP/AHPP from Courtenay Young

Dear John

Thanks for your words of wisdom about the origins of AHPP. Whilst I whole-heartedly agree that nothing should be lost of the connection with Humanistic Psychology as a world-wide movement, that does not necessarily mean that AHPP has to stay as a 'daughter' organisation to AHP(B), subservient to its constitution.

I do not see these issues as mutually exclusive. These are more historical necessities; AHPP grew up out of AHP(B) and, as a fledgling organisation with few reserves, needed at that time the strength and support of AHP(B). The situation is very very different now since then and even in the 14 or 15 years since I joined AHPP. AHPP is a strong, financially independent, thriving, high-caliber accrediting practitioners group making clear and effective professional relationships with other bodies. There is a historic and nostalgic reason to stay connected (perhaps) but if there are significant pragmatic reasons to split, why not? Furthermore, it now it seems as if AHP(B) might need AHPP for financial reasons and for reasons of credibility more than the other way round.

Having had very little personal contact with either organisations (other than being a member still of both) for about seven years now, I am not clear as to the exact pros and cons of this present initiative. I certainly receive significant information about AHPP and

relish that some of the procedures and processes that I helped set up are still working. However I receive very little information from AHP(B) - other than Self & Society, which I am happy to pay for. Indeed, this is the only reason that I am currently content with the AHP(B) subscription.

When I was Chairperson, Treasurer, etc. etc. of AHPP a while ago, I was part of the previous initiative to separate from AHP(B) and remember that, at that time, AHP(B) was in quite a messy condition as an organisation and also that we needed clarity ourselves in our relationships with other bodies, UKCP especially. Being constitutionally a 'daughter' organisation had a distinct functional disadvantage, as did having 'other practitioners' as we entered into that particular arena fully then. I hear an echo of these dysfunctional relationships again (in Chris Coulson's letter of Oct 24th 1999 to AHPP members). These balance John Rowan's nostalgic reversion to the former, more symbiotic, relationship. However the disadvantages of 'other relationships' with the UKCP has now been turned to an advantage with the acceptance of AHPP into the UKRC. We straddle both streams, and are stronger for it.

Many of the constitutional disadvantages still remain, but have been largely overlooked so that the urgency to split

was ameliorated by the unclarity of the membership. There could therefore be (again) distinct pragmatic or functional advantages in a split, or a separation, rather than in staying in an old and valued relationship which is now (possibly) increasingly dysfunctional. The analogy of a 'daughter' leaving the family home comes to mind: - maybe she should go to college or whatever and form new, more adult, relationships, and maybe that doesn't mean she will dispise and reject her maternal relationship, for it might even mean that the relationship matures and improves.

Constitutionally, John is correct and a change in the AHPP By-Laws would probably need a formal ratification by AHP(B) at their General Meeting. However if AHPP - at it's AGM this November- chose the path of separation or succession, this may never ever be ratified by AHP(B), so that there is nothing to stop a necessary two-thirds majority of AHPP chosing to change it's constitution (effectively dissolve the present constitutional relationship) and reform it to become a separate organisation, and (of course) allowing members to retain their AHP membership at will. I vote 'Yes' to this. Enough is enough and time moves us on. Namaste !

It would be hoped that in any ammendment to the AHPP Constitution there could be a suitable paragraph drafted which tied AHPP clearly into its historical past with AHP(B) and with the Humanistic Psychology movement. A debatable and technical point then comes as to whether the AHPP logo and title is officially 'registered' and thus owned by AHP(B), or whether that

could be retained by AHPP in its new guise. I am sure these points could be worked out.

There are aslo slightly disturbing references to a compensation or payment to AHP(B) which I would want you all, the members and the new Board, to resist more fully and clearly. Let us not get caught into guilt or the past.

AHP(B) have done very well out of us over the years. If AHP(B) can't survive without us nowadays, that is really more of it's problem, rather than ours. A separation is a separation. Should our college student also be compensating her parents for their loss of family allowance at the same time as she is paying fees and rent to her college ? No, really ! AHPP has possibly better use of its resources and, if it wishes to freely donate something towards AHP(B), that is also a clear debatable choice.

So now I come to my main point of interest. What is happening with Humanistic Psychology in Europe ? I happen to be on the Board of the EAP (European Association for Psychotherapy) and am representing the European Association of Body Psychotherapy (EABP) there - very successfully, I might add. But there are great discussions and debates going on about 'Mainstreams' in Psychotherapy and modalities within these mainstreams and there is no hint of a presence of Humanistic Psychology anywhere. Gestalt Psychology is present. Transactional Analysis is present. Some of the more esoteric and transpersonal psychotherapies are present (Psychosynthesis et al.) Some of the more existential psychotherapies

are present. Humanistic Psychology in Europe doesn't seem to exist. What is happening? Does anyone know?

Yet everyone acknowledges that Humanistic Psychology is a significant mainstream. Is there still a European Association? Who is involved with it? How does anyone contact them? Are they active in training or accrediting Humanistic Psychotherapists? Are they putting on any events or activities?

A great opportunity is being missed here, I believe, as the boundaries for psychotherapy as an independent profession in Europe are being drawn up and shaped. Humanistic Psychology in Europe is somehow being left out as a credible entity, which to my mind is a great pity.

So I now add a rider to my former statements. I think that AHPP should become separate and I even go so far as to say that I think that AHPP should re-invent itself as a European-wide accrediting body in Humanistic Psychology. We already have several European (non-British based) members. Perhaps we should even become the European Association of Humanistic Psychology Practitioners. The EAHP. AHP(B) is constitutionally tied to Britain; it can't do it. All our present members would be equally valid as European Members. We could also start to accredit some more European members, as and when we identify them, or (more significantly) they identify us. The present British based members could then eventually become the British section of EAHP and other countries could organise themselves appropriately, in due course. But there is a current vacuum now and maybe, just maybe, AHPP

could step out of the rut of its present situation into another, much more fruitful one.

So, when new constitutions are considered; please consider this - include the possibility of a European component. If a name-change really is required, change it to a European Association and become an active force in Humanistic Psychotherapy in Europe as well as in Britain. You - we - do fantastic work already. Many of the most active people in these political institutions, many of the more alive structures and processes that are created, emerge from contributions of AHPP members. Give yourselves, ourselves, credit. We are more intelligent, active and participatory than most other similar organisations. This is an actuality. Trade on it.

I will add a further inducement, perhaps. If you like, and if you feel it is needed, I would be happy to act as the European liaison for AHPP as of now and (free of charge & for the next year, as I attend the EAP meetings anyway) report back to the Board on any and all European developments. I don't think there would be a serious conflict of interest with what I am doing at present.

I could also even go so far as to create a small website page that could (perhaps) attract people to EAHP and its UK component AHPP, as a way of sampling the water. For those connected to the Internet, please explore the EABP website (all my own work) as a sample of what can be done. www.eabp.org

Courtenay Young

(Sent originally by e-mail to John Rowan)