

Self & SOCIETY

Editorial



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My life is full, and so I rush. Due to what I have learned from and through my illness, I rush far less than once I did - yet still, habitually, I rush. Balancing job, partner, clients, son: I am not always attentive, not always fully present. Of course, the irony is that by trying to fit everything and everyone in, what's important is always missed. Well, today, I am not rushing. I am wrapped in my duvet. My body - with its usual (sometimes irritating!) wisdom - has stopped me in my tracks, and is requiring a pause. I'm reminded of the American poet, Amy Clampitt, who suggested that the poet's job is to notice when the time is right, and then to drop absolutely everything else in order to 'attend to the coming of the poem'.

The theme of stopping, of consciously creating a personal space and time to allow for the coming of wisdom, runs right through this month's edition of *Self and Society*.

Last July, we enjoyed such a space at the second of the 'revived' AHPB Festivals. A wonderful time to step out, step back, recharge. To celebrate (it is a Festival, after all!) ourselves and each other. It was a real occasion to have - and let's not under-estimate the importance of this - a good time! Festival goers enjoyed dancing, music, good food and company, and a wide variety of stimulating, nurturing workshops. We were also very fortunate to enjoy two excellent keynote sessions, delivered by Andrew Samuels and Dina Glouberman. I have received a great videotape of Andrew's participative session, and promise to write a full account of it for the next edition. (I regret that my health and energy-levels stopped me doing so for this edition.)

One of the particular joys of editing *Self and Society* is that I am obliged to read every article several times. To be honest, this makes me read them more slowly and carefully than I ever did as a regular subscriber! And what a richness and a joy it has been to read the articles this month with slow attention. I have felt extraordinarily well fed by them.

Dina's article on *Soul Esteem, Radical Healing and the Creative Imagination* formed the basis of her keynote lecture at the Festival. She really speaks to my own experience of burning out. Her definition of *radical healing* as *the kind of healing when you're not just trying to get the old show back on the road, but rather you've understood that the old show is over, and you need to create or discover that which is your next show* is as thrilling as it is challenging. Reading Dina reminds

me of reading Pema Chodron's *The Wisdom of No Escape*. Dina speaks to the wisdom and growth of being stopped in our tracks - if only we are able to face up to it.

Joy Pitt's joyous article - *A Storyteller's Story* - dances in exuberant counterpoint to Dina's. She writes of the wisdom and delight of following your path as it unfolds unpredictably; of allowing yourself to discern honestly and bravely what your 'next show' might be, and then allowing that 'show' to manifest through you.

In his article on going *Into the Wild*, Huw Wyn writes - among other things - of the deep wisdom of the wild land and of the pressing need for us all to re-enter a right relationship with our landscapes and land. He lives right now in the Sussex Weald - itself originally named for being 'The Wild (Place)' - and talking to him at his home made me see that ancient, beautiful landscape in a completely new, enriched way. Drawing from Tibetan Buddhist and indigenous Mayan wisdom teachings, Huw also writes about the theme of the wild wisdom of the attentive pause.

Hugh Ransley's article on *Zazen and Person-centered Psychotherapy: Deepening the Relationship to Self* highlights another of the themes running through this month's magazine: that of allowing the cribbed, ego-clutching self to expand and relax into the wonder of encountering the Self. I found myself nodding agreement time and again as I read his piece, for he has managed to put into words the often unspoken experiences of deep meditation, and I found the parallels he draws between the experiences of meditation and therapy to be both convincing and illuminating.

This month also sees the second installment of Sue Jones' timely investigation into the shadow sides of our therapeutic training organizations. Her conclusions are sobering, and set the debates about regulation in what I think to be their most genuinely important context: how properly we offer service and support to our clients, trainees and peers.

A number of shorter articles, book reviews and regular columns round out an edition of *Self and Society* that I have found truly nurturing to edit. I hope it is equally as good to read!

I need to sign off with a plea! We are presently rather short on writers and contributors for *Self and Society*. Have you ever thought of writing for us? Have you thought you might fancy it, but weren't sure you could? Please do be in touch if you would like to write, or if you would like to discuss the possibility of writing! For what this is worth, my own relationship to writing was changed the day an experienced colleague, for whom I had the greatest respect, said to me, 'You know, Neill, I never really know what I think until I make myself write it down.' Revelation! Suddenly I saw that writing is as much a process as it is a final product. And that process of writing - frustrating, difficult and scary as it can sometimes be - is also one of liberation, growth and discovery. Writing, too, is a kind of pause, a space through which oft-times unexpected wisdom emerges. I invite you to embrace it!

With love and best wishes for the winter months,

Neill.