

An Open Love-ing Letter from Dina Glouberman to John Rowan on his 90th Birthday

Dr Dina Glouberman

Dear John,

You've been in my life since the late sixties/early seventies, and our relationship seems made up of a series of meetings – some chance, some planned, some personal and some professional – as well of this deep awareness that we share a world.

I don't quite know how to name that world, except that it has something to do with Humanistic Psychology and the transpersonal, and something to do with London and Londoners. Its roots are in those years of passionate living as lecturers and students, therapists and seekers, when the material life was hard, what with lack of money, fridges and central heating, but when our creative lives were so powerful, and the world seemed to be welcoming the possibility of deep authentic change.

So this letter is a very personal one about this strange tapestry of our relationship and our shared world, rather than about your many great accomplishments. I hope it conveys a sense of the way I hold you in my mind and heart.

We must have met in a workshop though I don't know which. I do remember the first time I came by to see you in your flat in North London, and you were working on what I believe was your very first book. You based it on your lectures, and quickly, systematically and effectively wrote chapter after chapter until it was done. It was so unlike my own sprawling intuitive and often inefficient way of writing that I never forgot it.

And then over the years, we met in various mainly professional, and sometimes personal, places. You invited

me to give talks/workshops in the early days; I invited you to Skyros; we worked together, as at the Institute of Psychotherapy and Social Studies; we dialogued/ disagreed about self-actualization on the stage of Alternatives; once or twice we met at your home or mine, your parties or mine.

I dreamt of you once and phoned you, thinking we needed to meet very soon because you were obviously important to me and there was something we needed to say to each other. I still don't quite know what that was. Perhaps it is this letter.

And there is also this memory from many years ago in which you figured, which is both highly personal and yet also somehow transpersonal: in the early 1970s, when for the first and only time in my life I was briefly psychotic, I took a mysterious walk up Finchley Road in North London. I was desperately trying to figure out which century I was in, which was especially difficult because some women were wearing mini skirts and others long flowing dresses. I stopped in a bakery, and didn't know if I had the right money but they took it, and gave me a bun in exchange.

I sat down on a bench not knowing what to do, and then it started to rain and I went home. But as I sat on that bench, you walked by. At that moment you were part of both my real and my fantastic world, and although we didn't speak, it makes me feel deeply connected to you. Later, you confirmed that you had seen me but you were rushing and couldn't stop – so I know I didn't make you up!

Years later, I had a more transpersonal experience of knowing I'd lived in many centuries, and all were available



in the present moment. The time confusion of that earlier experience was replaced now by a great sense of knowing and peace.

Have we been friends? Maybe not quite that level of intimacy. But we certainly have been loyal colleagues and good companions in the strange and wonderful life project we have both been involved with, though in very different ways.

Some of what I know and admire about you that I gleaned from our meetings:

Whenever you were fascinated by someone's work, even when you were very young, and they were very famous, you would write to them, and strike up a correspondence.

Whatever you were interested in, you pursued with a passion, and then wrote a book about it and inspired others. You worked your way through every cycle of the humanistic and the transpersonal world, and made it your own.

You never seem to get flustered, fidgety or fussed, and yet you feel things deeply.

You live a life that can be highly structured – you once described to me a typical morning minute by minute – and this must be one of the secrets of your high level of commitment and creative achievement. Yet you also leave your room for spontaneity and play.

And, of course, you never seem to age. How can that be?
And the thing I know that illuminates all the rest is

that your relationship with your wonderful wife Sue is so mutually loving and devoted that it gives me an insight into what a loving man you are. You don't tend to wear your warmth and tenderness on your sleeve, but there it is, in this beautiful relationship, and in your love of life and of the human psyche and of poetry and of communication and of philosophy.

And when I think of you and Sue, I remember a sunny day in Regent's Park when we all laughed with such joy that the world seemed born anew.

This snapshot picture of my memories of being with you is my loving 'thank you' letter for being in all of our lives, and giving us all so much in the myriad ways in which you shine.

Love, Dina



Dr Dina Glouberman is the visionary co-founder of Skyros Holistic Holidays, the author of the classic best-selling books *Life Choices*, *Life Changes*, *The Joy of Burnout* and *You Are What You Imagine: Three Steps to a New Beginning Using Imagework*, and an international trainer, coach, keynote speaker, and psychotherapist. For over 30 years she has been a pioneer in creating, teaching and practising the use of Imagework, the therapeutic process of harnessing the imagination to create profound life change. (www.dinaglouberman.com)