

with Stephen ... Kest

Writen in English Schrift

(P) P.S. J. Lohr

Two Voices 1989 (1987)

his therapeutic Path and personal Tasks at home.
901 Edgemere Court, Evanston, Illinois 60202.

[Note from Dave Barstow: The story of this issue started with Vin sharing with me a dream in which he was having a wonderful time editing a journal. Without thinking I immediately said, "Vin, why don't you edit a future issue of *Pilgrimage*?" When Vin took up my suggestion with amazing alacrity I suddenly panicked, "What have I done! How can I possibly allow someone else to put on my Captain's Cap and take the helm of this ship which I have so much enjoyed steering myself!" Life had again conspired to address one of my crucial struggles; a stubborn refusal to let go in spite of mounting evidence that when I do so, Good Things Happen. So it is with this issue; I am delighted to step aside and let Vin and his crew take over...however, at the end of the voyage I am taking my Captain's Cap back!]

The following articles were accepted for publication in this issue. Only limitations of space regretfully preclude our printing them. Copies are available on request from the authors.

Do you Do and See What I Do and See?/ An Invitation to Psychotherapy Colleagues. Al Mahrer, born Nov. 26, 1927. School of Psychology, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada K1N 6N5.

Be There With Me.. Vincent F. O'Connell, born Aug. 2, 1916 in Ireland during the "Great Troubles." RR #4, Box 464, Hawthorne, FL 32640.

The Challenge of the New Metaphysics in My Journey as a Psychotherapist. Maurice Rapkin, born June 5, 1916. 16800 Severo Place, Encino, CA 91436.

Bridging the Gap Between Psychotherapy and Academe.. Hobart F. Thomas, born Feb. 22, 1924. 2256 Cummings Drive, Santa Rosa, CA 95404.

So I Tell You What I Need to Take on My Journey as a Psychotherapist

by Ruth C. Cohn

The Theme "What do I need now on my journey as a psychotherapist?" contains the word "I," which is good because not every therapist needs the same thing; and then I do need very different things at age 76 than I did when I was 25 and started to practice. There are different people and different phases of life.

I need to accept myself as I am at any present stage. My stage now is to be spiritually quite wise and otherwise on the decline. The experiences I have had in my life I have somehow integrated in a way which seems to be leading me on the right path when I do therapy. I have to accept that I don't remember what the patient tells me today, one week later; or, at least not all of it. I also do need to understand that sometimes these memories come back when they are needed.

I also need to accept that while my memory fails me, my well-trained intuition and awareness of the present and the kind of empathic and thinking abilities I still have, mostly suffice to understand and react skillfully to the patient. But the ability to connect quickly that which I hear to all the events that have happened before has diminished.

50... →

In: Voices

The Art and Science of
Psychotherapy. Journal
of the American Academy
of Psychotherapists

Editorial

Vol 23, 1988

Ruth -
Thank you
again for your
crucial
perspective!
Vin

Songs of a Wayfarer*

by Vin Rosenthal (Guest Editor of this Issue)

XX What do I most need on my journey as a psychotherapist?

What began as an offhand remark in a telephone conversation between David Barstow and me has ended up as this issue of *Pilgrimage*. Reader, beware! The word sometimes does become print.

Soon after Dave's very affirming invitation to serve as Guest Editor of his journal, I spoke long distance to my friend and mentor Ruth C. Cohn of Goldern, Switzerland. Her swift, first draft reply to my solicitation of a manuscript so startled and energized me that I knew at once what I must do. Immediately I wrote to some fifty colleagues whose writings I had enjoyed in the past, most of whom were sixty years of age or older, inviting them to share with me their responses to the theme: What do I most need now on my journey as a psychotherapist? (They had no idea that my search for the perspective of the "older" therapist was a factor in the invitation.)

XX

This is a theme I have been exploring repeatedly over the last ten years; in fact the focus on one's Path is central to my work as a psychotherapist. I am grateful to Dave for the opportunity to pursue this in print. As a prospective author of a paper for this issue, I submitted an article which consisted of an

annotated list of personally meaningful song titles (ranging from "If I Only Had a Brain" and "My Time is Your Time" to "Someone to Watch Over Me" and "As Time Goes By"), each rather cleverly illuminating one of my current felt needs. Reader, be relieved. As editor, I recognized that what *Pilgrimage* did not need most now on its journey was a paper featuring 7 or 8 cleverly annotated song titles.

Authors, I thank you, one and all; including several whose valuable papers we simply lacked the space to print. I admire your frank and personal engagement with the theme, making it your own. I especially appreciate your permitting me, as editor, to participate in the creative process. I have enjoyed the pleasure of your company as we traveled this part of the Way together.

And I commend you on the fine job you have accomplished in helping to whitewash Dave Barstow's fence.

**Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, a bittersweet song cycle by Gustav Mahler.

Vin Rosenthal is Editor Emeritus of *Voices: The Art and Science of Psychotherapy*. He was born on February 17, 1928, making him just barely eligible for inclusion in this issue. He keeps re-discovering

Often I think of Fritz Perls, who was between 70 and 75 when I worked with him in workshops. I always thought that he was stressing the here-and-now because he wasn't able to remember what went on before; I guess that is exactly the same way with me now.

Yet I don't do as much Gestalt therapy as I used to. Somehow my feeling is that not only have I changed, but also the relationships of patients to me have changed. They expect that I am a wise old woman, which I am, and that, therefore, the passionate closeness of Gestalt is now only rarely my tool. Yet when I do use it I like it as well as I did, and I have not lost my skills.

On the whole, I work experientially and this helps me because, whoever I am with now, I can be appropriately and selectively authentic; the better the relationship and the better I work, the less do I have to leave out what spontaneously goes through my mind. The more I can reveal of my encountering feelings, the better the work goes. This has nothing to do with revealing my history or my outside activities. It has to do with my being empathic and encountering the patient with whoever I am in the present moment.

I am happy to say I now have fewer failures as a therapist than I did in younger years. This is quite amazing to me. I usually don't see people now for longer than one year, usually only once a week, often for no more than thirty sessions; yet when I see them again for an occasional visit long after therapy has terminated, I find out they really have made their lives better—in their families, in work, and in self feelings. The same is true for people I have seen in one or two blocks of therapy, for a few hours a day, for several days. I would take this work structure along on my journey. Such days are very intense and this intensity helps most pa-

tients to continue on their therapeutic track by themselves.

What I cherish as one of my most important tools are guidelines which I formulated for my work as an educator and societal therapist in educational, organizational, and other living-learning working groups. In this work I have learned the importance of emphasizing the global connections that each of us has with the environment. No man is an island, no woman, no patient; no student, no group, no therapist. We are influenced by innumerable sources, including nature, political, economic, religious, and astronomical patterns and events.

I believe that psychotherapy cannot succeed sufficiently unless it evolves to incorporate that global emphasis. Such an evolution could lead to widening of the horizons of awareness of our autonomous and interdependent, existential partnership with all people and with the universe as a whole; co-determining our responsibility to that partnership.

We are individual organisms within that larger organism of humankind and the universe. This entails responsibility for me and for more than myself. Self-awareness is not autistic but is part-autonomous within the autonomy of the universe. It is autonomous in its interdependence with inanimate and all living things. If I endeavor to realize myself and be as I am, become more of myself, I must grow as a cell of the organism humankind; as part of the universe. The more I am aware of my interdependencies, the more I can enlarge the scope of my autonomous effectiveness. The more I become aware of my autonomy, the more open I may become to discovering the enormous network of interdependencies, with their joyful and dangerous possibilities.

As psychotherapists we have learned that the repression of important reality factors promotes distortions and illnesses. As I acknowledge that I am part and partner of humankind and the planet we inhabit, I become aware that I am co-responsible for its existence and well-being. To repress awareness of the dangers that our unethical and necrophilic behaviors in this world have created would endanger whatever therapeutic possibilities may exist for rectifying our mistakes.

What as an old person do I need to take along on my shortened trip as a psychotherapist? I was who I was and I am who I am, with as much awareness as I have available to myself and my patient. I would wish to grow, continuously, yet this is not my experience in being old.

All living is developing and growing, wilting and dying. There is a time for growing and a time for wilting. I carry these facts in my knapsack on my journey. I take them along in my therapy sessions and allow myself the awareness of declining senses and energy and the holes in my recollections. I allow myself to mourn these losses, yet I also take along with me feelings of joy and gratitude for living fully, and being able to give and take. I take along the conviction that there are many people who are aware and involved in co-determining the social, political, ecological and economic future.

On my journey as a good psychotherapist I take along the task of conveying what I know to the next generation of psychotherapists, on the road with their own knapsacks.

Ruth C. Cohn was born August 27, 1912. "History: Berlin—World War I...Hitler—reality gone terror.

Switzerland 1933....Psychoanalysis as a passionate hope...USA 1941." Re-visiting Europe late 1960's, returning to live in Switzerland and founding WILL (Workshop Institute for Living-Learning) in Europe. CH- 6085, Hasliberg-Goldern, Switzerland.

Comment

by Vin Rosenthal

I regard Ruth's statement as a marvel of personal process in the theme-centered interactional model. She has revealed her own experiences at age 76 on her path as a psychotherapist; she has related that theme to us, her colleagues, and to those who come after us; she has challenged us with a powerful conceptual issue—an evolving model of psychotherapy emphasizing a universal perspective, and her insights into how to balance the complex components of that model give us a toe-hold on implementing the model in our own work as therapists and in our lives as persons.

*Peace for the heart:
Life in the mountains.*

—Santoka