

National Register of Hypnotherapists and Psychotherapists

Winter Newsletter - 2011/2012

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From the office

Newsletter

To all those who have contributed to this Newsletter, many thanks! As usual, if you want to respond to anything in this issue, please send in (last submission date is 16th March 2012).

NRHP 2012 Renewal

Many thanks to those of you who have already renewed your NRHP membership. If you haven't received your renewal documentation yet, it must have gone astray - please let us know and we'll send again.

Supervision grandparenting

Following mailings from the Hyp-Psych College, we have had a few queries on the supervision grandparenting requirements.

The Hyp-Psych College has pre-empted the creation of the UKCP's Supervision Register (which is scheduled for launch in Summer 2012, which is when their grandparenting period opens) with its own Register of Approved Clinical Supervisors.

Only if you are supervising someone working towards UKCP registration (and for three years' post their registration) do you need to be on the Hyp-Psych College's Register of Approved Clinical Supervisors.

If you wish to apply to the Hyp-Psych College's register, the next meeting of the grandparenting panel is meeting on 30th January 2012. The deadline for submissions is 14th January 2012.

NRHP Election

If you are interested in joining the Board of the NRHP, please contact the office before 21st March 2012 for a nomination form. The AGM will be held in Crewe on 21st April 2012.

Happy New Year!

Julie Young

Susan Dixon

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Letters to the Editor

On the principle at issue, I disagree with the idea that it is unethical for psychotherapists to use testimonials in advertising. The argument put forward in support of this claim seems to be that displaying testimonials has some effect on the relationship with the client. However, advertising is intended to bring prospective clients' attention to services offered. It therefore follows that prior to the client contacting us, this mystical relationship does not exist. I therefore take the view that this argument is pure sophistry. And a client giving a testimonial after a course of therapy does so willingly or not at all.

The argument that we should consider what is ethically correct as primary appears to be a powerful one, but what does it mean? Especially when the issue is connected to a hypothetical future client, as discussed above. It appears that practitioners are supposed to treat the issue of increasing their business as entirely secondary. But I work full time as a therapist, and therefore the issue of making a living is important. I agree that there are ethical lines to be drawn around the way we conduct our business, but restricting our means of advertising (and potentially allowing less qualified practitioners to lead the field) is not one of them.

I should mention that I don't use testimonials myself currently, and therefore I argue on the principle that this so-called ethical rule is a restrictive practice, and therefore inappropriate for a professional body to impose.

I am self employed. I do not work for UKCP, HypPsych College, NRHP, or any other body, and I do not accept their right to interfere with the day to day running of my business, particularly when said interference is based on an ethical principle so nebulous as to be invisible. As to the activities of training institutions, I am old enough, and Northern enough, to regard with cynicism any body of people who impose rules upon other people that they themselves have no intention of observing.

Finally, may I express what is the emotional basis for my views on this matter. It is my view that professional bodies should act in support of their fee-paying members (unless they are judged unfit to practise) not make their working lives more difficult. I would urge UKCP to have a mind to this point, in this time of rapid change.

John Hoyle-Wood

BSc(Hons) MSc DHP DipNLP UKCP

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Tony Cawley's reply to Robin's reply to Tony's reply.....enough!

Hello again Robin

It's a year since I contributed my points for debating to the newsletter, under the heading of "Beyond the Rational Mind: Speculations on the possible nature of a right brained science". I did specifically say that they were "offered in a light hearted vein" and that "we don't have to have a duel at dawn, they're just points for debating". Although they were intended to stimulate debate, I didn't want anyone to be taking it too personally. It seems however, that you and I are getting far too tangled; no matter what I say you always come back with another challenge. You seem to want to push it and push it, as if you just like arguing for the sake of it. We could be going on like this for years, but what's the point, we will still disagree! It's been clearly established that you have your perspective and I have mine. You will never convince me of your position and I left yours behind long ago. Similarly, if you haven't grasped what I'm doing my best to say by now, I think you never will?

I think it's time to let go now. So this will be my last response to your response to my response etc.

When I outline how my perspective already contains your own, but goes on to extend it in a more balanced form, you seem to miss the subtlety of my argument as well as its content. You come back with a question based on one side or the other being true; your side or my side; thought and rationality versus imagination and consciousness, but I've just affirmed a balance between the two and an overarching perspective that contains them both in harmony! There is no conflict between them from my perspective. So I can't answer your question, because to me it's not a question at all, it's a misunderstanding based on seeing only half the picture. If you don't get this there's absolutely nothing I can do, you simply don't get it and that's that, there's nowhere left to go but agree to differ, let go and move on.

I know I've been guilty of goading you a bit Robin, and if I've taken that a little too far I do apologise. I did make it quite clear in the original article however that both sides were respected and important in my view: I do value your perspective, just not exclusively. For example:

Point 10:

What if the proper focus of left brain science is the rational, material world, and the proper focus of a possible right brain "science", is the life of the soul, and, **ultimately they are not separate but two sides of the same reality?**

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Point 11:

What if.....imagination is to the right brain what logic is to the left, and just as valid?

So if I undermine your perspective too much, I invalidate everything I've been saying. I'm not really disagreeing with you Robin, just trying to extend the rational perspective beyond the tiny box it inhabits with no windows out into the wide, beautiful, and sometimes terrifying mystery of life itself, which can never be, and never needs to be "explained".

I must confess that I do like to take a good pot shot at the superiority and arrogance of science and rationality, but that's because I've suffered, particularly as a young man, from the humiliation of having that arrogance turned on me, and maybe I've still not let that go completely. I also see the terrible damage which excessive rationality has done to our society, as well as the benefits, and I'm still angry about that. Sorry, but that's simply where I'm coming from. I'm not so stuck in that perspective however that I can't see and value both sides of the bigger picture, which in the long run is what counts most I think.

You said you thought it would be more helpful if I specifically outlined the approach I'm proposing, (I presume you mean the more practical "how to" aspect) which is a very good point. But do you realise what you're asking; your philosophical perspective is well known, and its practical applications, mine is currently only slowly emerging into western consciousness. Though I use this approach every day in my practice very effectively, it's still evolving and unfolding; revealing itself, as it were. Many individuals and various schools of thought are doing the same. So although I'm well acquainted with the subject and quite capable of doing so, you're in effect asking me to write a book, or at least a very substantial piece of work. Why would I undertake such a massive task for one who is, for whatever reason, either unwilling or unable to understand my perspective? My overwhelming impression Robin is that you have no real interest in what I'm saying, you just want to pull it down.

Putting something in the newsletter doesn't oblige me, or anyone else, to constantly justify themselves month after month ad infinitum, does it? I put forward some points for debating, they have been debated; others have made their responses, and it's been left for our readers to make up their own minds, let's not be going round and round in this rather futile dance any more.

If you're really interested in what I'm saying I suggest you go and do some homework, rather than expecting me to do it for you. You could start by reading "The Sacred Mirror; nondual wisdom and psychotherapy" edited by Prendergast, Fenner and Krystal. It's bang up to date and very readable for a subject as subtle and difficult to write about as this. You might even do

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a review of it for the newsletter! If you really must have it from me, then why not come to one of my workshops? I occasionally run a series of four workshops entitled “The language of the soul”, that would be a real challenge for you!

The essence of this approach is that there is a vast field of consciousness beyond the rational mind, far more profound than we ordinarily imply using the term unconscious mind. The rational mind sees the world as a machine that goes wrong and needs fixing.....hard work and merely ‘one’ way of seeing things. Beyond the rational (please remember I’m not anti rational, it has its own valuable place) things can be seen for the perfection they already are. The rational mind can never get this, but beyond its bounds what may have seemed to be broken can begin to evolve and transcend its previous form, this may be a challenging experience but it tends to occur much more as an effortless flow. All in all it’s more about Being than Doing. It doesn’t make sense, but is nevertheless very practical, and has to be experienced to be understood. And that’s all I’m going to say. I hope this is helpful, though I imagine you will see it as nonsense.

No gloating now Robin, my resignation is in no way a defeat. I haven’t conceded a single point and stand by everything I have said to date.

My very best wishes to you, Tony.

The Future of Hypnotherapy - It Could Be Great

In the last (Autumn 2011) Newsletter, Neil Hall contributed a piece about the risk of hypnotherapy being sidelined by the current fashion for CBT in preference to all else and by hypnotherapy's 'terrible' image. He also noted the surprisingly low usage of hypnotherapy by even Register members. Neil expressed his opinion that, 'hypnotherapy ---- should be – an autonomous self-sufficient therapy'. I agree entirely. What Neil didn't do was to propose what I believe is the most cogent reason why hypnotherapy can and should stand separately as a powerful therapy for many presenting problems. Appropriately used hypnotherapy has the unique ability to efficiently and beneficially retrieve and resolve buried traumatic memories which demonstrably are a root cause of a large variety of presenting problems. The Psychological Establishment call it a 'Recovered Memory Therapy'. We normally call it **Hypno-Regression Therapy** and it was taught by the National College as a part of its eclectic syllabus.

Hypno-Regression Therapy has suffered from an undeservedly bad reputation since the scandal of some therapists who implanted false memories of supposed childhood sexual abuse (CSA) into the minds of female clients. The psychological establishments, around the world, were absolutely justified in coming down, like a ton of bricks, on this heinous practice; but they got a few responses wrong.

An existing prejudice against 'lay' practitioners and hypnosis led to such therapists and hypnosis being accused as the sources of the scandal. In fact, of the documented cases, only one-third had involved hypnosis – and some psychologists and psychiatrists, even, were also equally guilty.

The other prejudice of modern psychology against the notion of unconscious memories led to a firm denial that they do or can exist at-all. We professional hypnotherapists do, or should, know better. Psychologists' obsession with implanted, false memories of CSA has seemingly blinded them to the possibility of genuine, traumatic, repressed memories of other real-life events.

The almost certain truth of repressed memory is very different and I sense a need to detail it if so few Register members seem to use this most powerful tool of hypnotherapy.

I had become intrigued to answer to my own satisfaction the question, "Do unconscious memories exist or not?" Thus I embarked on a separate career in hypno-psychotherapy to try and find a definitive answer. I was aware of the controversy over 'recovered memory therapy' and I took care not to be trapped by the 'current wisdom'. I hoped that as a hard-headed engineering scientist I might approach the subject with a totally open mind.

My research occupied the next fifteen years with 400 subjects. I used hypno-regression therapy as taught by the College and added various techniques as they proved helpful.

The Results

Strong evidence emerged that repressed memories of prior traumatic events do exist. They are entirely unconnected with CSA except that when that has in fact occurred, it mostly leaves repressed traumatic memory traces in addition to the available memories. Otherwise the memories were universally related to **perceptions of rejection by mother**. The vast majority of the retrieved perceptions were irrational and not justified and therein lies their threat. They remain throughout our lives (intentional or accidental intervention apart) to be a contributory cause to later problems.

Human memory is a complex facility. Our recalls, whether of conscious or repressed memories, can be entirely false or fantasies, or a fragmented mixture of several past events. But they can also be essentially correct and realistic. The list below explains why I believe the recovered memories I accepted, to be genuine.

1. Subject' recalls were checked independently with their mothers where possible or with other close relevant relative. Apparently confirmed memories had to meet prescribed standards of certainty in order to be accepted, e.g. the possibility of forgotten family conversations having produced false repressed memory responses, being reliably excluded. Ultimately 35% of subjects had their recalls confirmed to the required standard.
2. Every subject's recalls, though, related to that same theme of perceptions of maternal rejection. This would have been a most unlikely coincidence if the recalls had not been genuine, even when the confirmations did not meet my standard of certainty.
3. It emerged quite fortuitously that the subjects born in hospital had **four** times more likelihood of perinatal trauma than subjects born at home. The difference was due to hospital birthing practices having caused the perceptions of rejection by mother. Further, 1.6 times as many of my subjects had been born in hospital as the National home v. hospital birth statistics would suggest. There was an inference here that those born in a hospital were more likely to suffer perinatal trauma, with its after-effects, and so be more likely to seek therapy. These differences, resulting from places of birth, would not have occurred if unconscious memories did not exist and cause later problems. (The subjects had, unsurprisingly, no conscious memory of the detail of their birth circumstances.) My research did not aim to test a psychotherapeutic method. However, when subjects' repressed traumatic memories had

been brought into conscious awareness, the unwanted results were almost automatically resolved with no other therapy.

The Rationale

I have preferred for some time to call these repressed memories '**instinctual**' rather than 'unconscious'. Instinctual, describes their nature, causes and outcomes more appropriately. Until some three years after birth our 'human type' cognitive and narrative memory has not commenced functioning. Until that age a more primitive part of our brain is in control. Human babies are born entirely unable to fend for themselves and Mother, of whose body they have physically been a part for some nine months, represents life. We also have a supreme instinct for self-preservation (so that we are preserved to act on our second instinct – to procreate). So if, for instance, mother has a minor accident, illness or anxiety during pregnancy, an anxiety related hormone can reach the foetus, cause it to instinctually fear that mother is rejecting it to die, and this leaves a traumatic imprint. There is no intellectual aspect to such memories but they do contain remarkable detail, as in a video/audio recording. It seems the memories, with their detail, are imprinted permanently as a reference in case of any repeat of the threat. As we reach three years or so of age, these traumatic memories sink into the background. Nature has provided an ideal situation; we are not troubled daily by these old traumas but they are immediately accessible for reference in the event of any apparent repeat of the original threat. However, as we grow in knowledge, experience and capability, the old fears become increasingly irrelevant and lead to irrational responses to a variety of life's events.

The Power of Hypno-Regression Therapy

The earliest (Primary) traumas lead to a psychological tension which causes later, somewhat similar events to seem more threatening than they really are. A Secondary, reinforcing, trauma is then imprinted. As just one example, a perinatal, traumatic perception of being rejected by mother can be reinforced by the birth of a sibling; any absence of mother during early years; first day at school; being sent to boarding school; leaving home as a young adult. If any such event is overwhelmingly traumatic (Trigger Trauma) it leads to overt symptoms.

A remarkably wide range of adults' problems, including physical, have one root in repressed instinctual memories. Resolving them with Hypno-Regression Therapy is often a more rapid and certain process than with any 'present tense' therapy. If all traumas are resolved (often achievable) the effect for the client is substantial, with the loss of the original problem, other odd symptoms resolved and great improvements in calmness and confidence. A more focussed approach can, by example, lead to a brief and certain success for compulsive smokers – and without any transfer to alternative symptoms.

The Future for Hypno-Regression Therapy

The Brandon Committee, in Britain, inevitably warned against any form of 'recovered memory' therapy. But you will note, if only from the College training and my experience, how far removed the probable facts are compared with the obsession with false memories of CSA. There are just a few caveats.

1. The only one who knows the causes of a client's problems is that client although, at the start of therapy, they will not know that they know! No therapist should ever suggest, to a client, a possible cause of that client's problems.
2. Psychotherapy is intended to free clients from past illogical restraints and so permit them to move on. It is not intended to cause or enable clients to sue anyone for alleged past misdemeanours. If clients should wish to do that they must independently gain any available evidence without involvement of the therapist. In fact I have never known the issue to arise.
3. Never suggest to clients what they might recall either in principle or detail. Ask only entirely 'open' questions.
4. Don't conduct 'past-life' regressions if you want to retain respectability. Six of my subjects declared past-life traumatic events during the trauma-scans. They all came back into this life during therapy; the trauma had been exiled to a past-life scenario as it was too traumatic to be contained, even unconsciously, in this life. There may be other causes of past-life scenarios but I've never come across them.

I finally suggest that The National Register could be effectively pro-active for its members by publicly trumpeting the truth of repressed memory and the merits of professionally conducted Hypno-Regression therapy, and by supporting members in its use. If hypnotherapy should fade into disuse, psychotherapy will have lost a uniquely valuable tool.

Graham Gorman

About not knowing

During one of my previous professional incarnations I was a ghost writer. I would be asked by families to sit with an elder member of the family, listen to their life's story and put it down in writing. It was fascinating, entering the long life of another person, and listening with the sole objective of narrating it back, in a comprehensible, consistent way.

One such client was an old man, in his early nineties, whose life-story was spread over continents and world wars, idealistic courage and humble humanity. And, in our last meeting, having rechecked some details I was unsure of, finishing some storylines and saying goodbye, he suddenly opened up in a way he hadn't before.

I want to tell you something, he said, which I haven't told a single soul until now. And I want to ask you never to tell it to anybody who might have known me either. To honour his request, I avoided telling his story. Almost ten years have passed since he died, and since his family live in Israel, and don't have any involvement with NLP, well, I took the freedom to tell his story, which – for some odd reason that I (sincerely) don't understand, has made a real impact on clients whom I told it to.

When I came to Israel, many years ago, my wife and I joined a kibbutz, as you know. Can you imagine a European young man, educated and wealthy, being given a shovel and, for the ideals and ideas of community and sharing – digging? There were moments where I questioned myself, wondering if this is the best way of putting my university degree into action, but I continued digging. The earth was hard, but I dug. At first, with great zest and enthusiasm, until slowly I noticed the cramps in my arms and hands, and the blisters started hurting. I wasn't even sure what I was digging for – nobody explained. You watch the earth opening up before you, sometimes easily, at others reluctantly, and she opens and unravels and her colours deepen as you dig, and your thoughts drift while your body digs deeper and deeper, not looking for meaning, not looking to get anywhere but totally immersed in an activity that might have no purpose whatsoever.

And then, on one of the early days of digging, I found something. There, deep in the ground, was a box. It was a small box, not bigger than a pack of cigarettes, and it looked so old and so – well, so peculiar. And I picked the box up and wondered what to do with it. Should I tell my supervisor? Joining the kibbutz, I agreed that I shall have no personal possessions, and keeping the box would amount to betraying such ideas. But I was curious and tempted, and until I made up my mind, I put the box in my pocket and continued to dig.

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The thoughts were moving frantically. I was curious, what was in it? I felt guilty; perhaps the mere reason for digging was looking for this very box. But throughout the day, I was so preoccupied with thinking, speculating and wondering about the box that I dug all day, and the evening has come. My wife joined me to the commune room to eat, and I wanted to share with her my finding but couldn't, and by the time we got to our room I was so tired that I dropped into a deep sleep without even taking a shower. And the dreams you have when you have discovered something exciting, on the spot between curiosity and guilt, between hope and fear, these dreams are of a special quality. And when I woke up the day has not yet come, but knowing the day that was ahead of me, I hid the box under a tile in the kitchenette, and went to work.

That working day passed in a daze, and I was unable to think straight or focus on anything really. I was afraid that the digging we were all doing was in vain, now that the box was found, but was reassured when we started putting poles and cement into the earth, which received these with surprise and slight rebellion. If you have never laid foundations for a house, you wouldn't know that it fills your heart with such pride and humbleness at the same time, and I was so relieved to realise the purpose of our digging, and so moved by these overwhelming sensations of seeing a house being welcomed into the world, and the ground negotiating its needs as the house is built, that I forgot to feel guilty about the box.

I came home that evening, tired and resolved to tell my wife about the box, and ever so curious about its content. And after the shower, finding that although I wanted to tell her, I was also reluctant to do so. It has become my secret, my private finding – and I fell asleep perplexed, and had a dream.

And in my dream I laid next to a woman, who was not my wife. She was beautiful and very deeply relaxed, or perhaps she was dreaming too. She looked so full of suffering and joy, so full of fear and anger, of grief and love, of life and death. And I looked at her and wanted to tell her something, to thank her perhaps or acknowledge this shared moment, but I couldn't utter a word. Nevertheless, I knew exactly what I needed to do, and I went to the kitchenette and from under the tile brought out the box, placing it gently on this woman's chest. And then I drifted into a deeper sleep, into which dreams couldn't penetrate, or perhaps a state which did not welcome remembering the dreams that it did hold.

And in the morning, having decided to show the box to my wife, and to finally find out its content before going to work, I found that there was nothing there in the space under the tile; the box was gone. And with its disappearance, my decision to share this strange incident with anybody other than myself had vanished too.