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IN THIS ISSUE

In Memoriam
2

Conference on Intuition
Held in Italy
3

Reflections on Intuition
and Reverie in Poda's
Posto delle Fragole
4

*Actualités en Analyse
Transactionnelle*
Celebrates Spring
6

News on TA and Social
Responsibility
8

Contact, Attunement, and
Our Vagal Tone
10

Osaka Conference Update
12

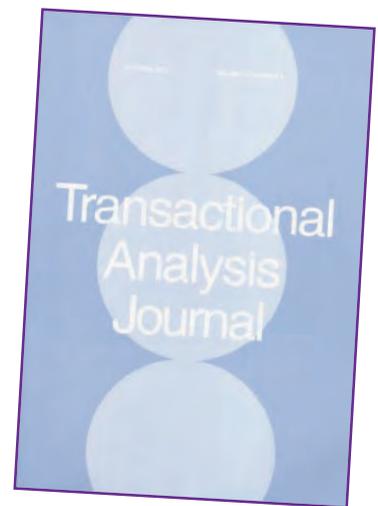
JOURNAL ENTRY

TAJ on Social Responsibility to Honor ITAA's 50th Anniversary

In 2014 the ITAA will celebrate the 50th anniversary of its founding, and to honor this milestone, the January issue of the *Transactional Analysis Journal* will focus on articles about transactional analysis and social responsibility. In choosing this theme, we are interested in addressing what Eric Berne wrote in *What Do You Say After You Say Hello?*: "Its answer is the answer to the questions posed by the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: war or peace, famine or plenty, pestilence or health, death or life."

We are especially interested in hearing how you have used transactional analysis to address issues such as racism, homelessness, poverty, conflict resolution, cross-cultural dynamics, gender and sexuality, and community mental health. Perhaps you are doing pro bono work for an agency or non-governmental organization, perhaps you have been involved in local political efforts to improve your community, perhaps you have ideas about how transactional analysis could be used in specific ways to improve life on the planet: We encourage you to write up your experiences and ideas as a way to honor the social ideals and values on which the ITAA was founded and that continue to motivate members in their efforts to make a positive impact on the world.

The timing on this issue is short, so please send your manuscripts by 1



September to TAJ Managing Editor Robin Fryer at robinfryer@aol.com. Before submitting, please make sure to follow carefully the TAJ Submission and Review Requirements [here](#) so that your article can be processed quickly. Articles that do not meet the requirements will be returned to their authors, thus creating delays that mean they may not make it into the January issue.

If you have questions, please contact one of us or Robin. We look forward to hearing from many of you and to receiving your articles on TA and social responsibility.

*The TAJ Coeditors:
Bill Cornell,
Birgitta Heiller, and
Jo Stuthridge*

Michiko Fukazawa, MSW, the first Teaching and Supervising Transactional Analyst (psychotherapy) in Japan and the 2001 Muriel James Living Principles Award honoree, passed away on 12 May 2013. She was 78 years old and had been ill for a while. Michiko was an honorary professor at Waseda University, a former president of the Transactional Analysis Association of Japan, and a director of the Japanese Society of Transactional Analysis.

Michiko learned transactional analysis during her stay as a graduate student at the University of Illinois and as a psychologist at the Illinois Institute of Mental Health and the School of Medicine at Northwestern University. She studied mainly with Bob and Mary Goulding and Muriel James.

On her return to Japan, Michiko introduced and spread transactional analysis energetically there beginning in the 1970s. Her contribution to the development of the Japanese TA community is immeasurable. She practiced and taught it as a psychotherapist and a professor. Over 2000 people participated in her TA 101 courses, and she sponsored many CTAs, PTSTAs, and a TTA for certification.

Holding the ITAA international conference in Japan was one of Michiko's greatest dreams, and it was through her efforts and those of her colleagues that over 500 people will join us for the 2013 ITAA International Conference in Osaka this August.

Michiko translated more than 10 transactional analysis books into Japanese, including *Born to Win* by James and Jongeward, *Changing Lives Through Redecision Therapy* by Goulding and Goulding, and *Time to Say Good-Bye* by Mary Goulding. She also supervised the translation of *TA Today* by Stewart and Joines and *Transactional Analysis: A Relational Perspective* by Hargaden and Sills. She herself wrote many books and monographs about transactional analysis and psychotherapy. *The Dictionary of Transactional Analysis* by Tilney, which will be published this month, will be the last book translated into Japanese under her supervision.

Michiko loved birds and flowers, especially white lilies. She loved literature, music, arts, and humor. She loved and lived transactional analysis. Above all, she was a TA therapist. She was exceptionally deserv-



ing of the James Award given that she was always thoughtful and her insight was deep and warm. Through her supervision, she emphasized the importance of protecting clients.

Among the wise comments Michiko was known for were "Nobody can be perfect" and "There is no problem that time cannot resolve." These words help many of her students, trainees, colleagues, and friends to overcome hard times in their lives. They comfort those of us who knew and loved her and will miss her so much. However, we like to think that she has met Bob and Mary in a better place and that she will watch over the international conference in Osaka and the development of transactional analysis in Japan forever more.

Our thanks to Ryoko Shimada for the piece on Michiko. Ryoko is a PISTA (psychotherapy), director of the Osaka conference host committee, chair of the 38th Annual Congress of the Japanese Society of Transactional Analysis (JSTA), and a director of Transactional Analysis Association Japan (TAAJ). 5

the SCRIPT

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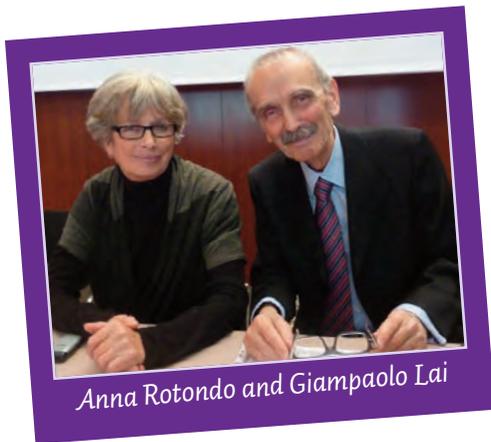
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Conference on Intuition Held in Italy

by Anna Rotondo

On 30 November 2012, a conference entitled “The Words of Intuition” took place in Milan at the Swiss Cultural Center on Via Palestro. The event, organized by the Centro di Psicologia e Analisi Transazionale (the Transactional Analysis and Psychology Center or CPAT) of Milan and the publishing house La Vita Felice, was held on the occasion of the publication of *Posto delle Fragole* [The Place of Strawberries]. This book, developed by Cinzia Chiesa, is an illustrated collection of the writings of Dolores Munari Poda. It describes her long experiences doing psychotherapy with children and adolescents, for which she was given the 2009 Eric Berne Memorial Award.

The conference garnered a good deal of interest, including from many professionals, with around



Anna Rotondo and Giampaolo Lai

200 people attending. In a stimulating environment that was rich in both content and feeling, we heard



Conference panel (from left): Maria Assunta Giusti, Cinzia Chiesa, Dolores Munari Poda, and Silvia Attanasio Romanini (not shown: Stefano Morena)

reports and testimonies from important representatives of psychoanalysis, phenomenological psychiatry, and transactional analysis. Their comments underscored how experiencing relationships through words is a human experience involving knowledge of and attention to the other person. “Caring for” words that on different levels bind us to the other, understanding the transformative potential of words in an analytic context, learning how to use them, and being attentive to the words we use all have the meaning of taking care of the quality of the ongoing relational process and helping it to develop.

During the morning we heard four presentations focused on the relationship between intuition and words. Anna Rotondo (TSTA-P) introduced the session with a presentation entitled “Speaking Like Dreaming” about Thomas Ogden’s work.

This was followed by “The Invisible Speech of Intuition” by psychoanalyst Giampaolo Lai. Dolores Munari Poda (TSTA-P) presented “The Girl

Reader: Notes from a Short Story of Living Words,” and Giorgio Cavallero (TSTA-P) concluded the morning with “Intuition and Strategies of Persuasion in the Child.”

In the afternoon, coordinated by Cinzia Chiesa (PTSTA-P), we had the extraordinary opportunity to meet Eugenio Borgna, a well-known Italian psychiatrist and phenomenologist. We became involved with his words as if they were living creatures in his presentation “A Conversation on Phenomenology.” He talked about the possibility that this philosophical-existential vision offers to psychiatry the chance to “comprehend the patient rather than explain the illness.” The transactional analysts who were present found more than one point of convergence among the vision of relationships as a rapport between subjects, the attention to OKness advocated by Eric Berne, and the care for the intuitive process in the analytic relationship.

In fact, psychoanalysis, phenomenology, and transactional analysis find profound connection in Eric

Berne's thinking and proposals. Transactional analysis contains both conceptual and treatment principles from psychoanalysis as well as a need to bring these principles back to the existential context from which they perhaps risked being detached. The back cover of *Posto delle Fragole* refers to "the roots of knowledge" in Dolores Munari Poda's work with children and adolescents "with particular attention to psychoanalysis, to interpersonal relationships, to Daseinsanalyse [an existentialist approach to psychoanalysis], and to transactional analysis."

The second part of the afternoon was dedicated to *Posto delle Fragole*. Publisher Gerardo Mastrullo of La Vita Felice invited us, by means of several illuminating examples, to keep the intuitive process in mind as the basis of the graphic and editorial construction of a text and how this can be the meaningful element of communication between writer and reader. A roundtable involving Dolores Munari Poda, Silvia Attanasio Romanini, Maria Assunta Giusti (TSTA-P), and Stefano Morena (PTSTA-P) and led by Cinzia Chiesa offered reflections on the experiences of the people present more than on the text at hand, so it seemed that the experiential vision took precedence after all.

Evita Cassoni (TSTA-P) concluded the day's work by underscoring the richness and nourishment contained in the day's proceedings and the generous participation and feedback of participants. 🍓

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Reflections on Intuition and Reverie in Munari Poda's *Posto delle Fragole*

By Cinzia Chiesa

I am a psychotherapist who works with children, and during my transactional analysis training I was a student of Dolores Munari Poda. Our relationship of esteem and affection, which began many years ago, is something that still closely binds us today. It was, therefore, a special honor for me to edit some of her writings into a book entitled *Posto delle Fragole* [The Place of Strawberries] (reminiscent of Berne's idea of "secret gardens"). The two-volume work was published in 2012 by La Vita Felice in Milan, Italy, and it is richly illustrated with pictures and drawings arising from Dolores's work with her young patients. The book title is evocative of Berne's (1972) comment that "all men and all women have their secret gardens, whose gates they guard against the profane invasion of the vulgar crowd. These are the visual pictures of what they would do if they could do as they pleased" (p. 130). *Posto delle Fragole* reveals the ways this is true of children as well.

The book offers a selection of Dolores's writings from 1997-2011 and was partly stimulated by the desire to allow a larger audience in the transactional analysis community know more about her work because it has broad relevance and application for transactional analysts working not only with children but with other individuals and in other



Cinzia Chiesa

fields as well. The chapters reveal how she links psychoanalysis, phenomenology, and transactional analysis, all of which are also important in Berne's way of thinking.

The book is organized into four parts. The first, "The Children's Room," presents several articles about being a therapist and her work with her young patients. The second part is "Little People, Little Scripts," which is dedicated to children, and the third part is "The Temporary Shell," which is dedicated to adolescents. The fourth part, "Backwards," makes reference to significant encounters that Dolores has written about in the last 10 years with individuals such as Fanita English, Pio Scilligo, Maria Teresa Romanini, and Mary Goulding.

Preceding the sections are introductions by transactional analysts Anna Rotondo, Susanna Ligabue, Cinzia Chiesa, and Silvia Attanasio Romanini (who also wrote the preface), all of whom have, in different ways, witnessed the development of Dolores's thinking and working.

For me, reading the book is like visiting an art exhibit, and while editing it, I thought of Russian composer Modest Mussorgsky's musical piece "Pictures at an Exhibition." Like Mussorgsky, Dolores composes "pictures" for her "exhibition" in the intimacy of her authentic relationship with the other person. She listens and welcomes the emotional resonances of children, adolescents, and adults and transforms them into skillful narrations and representations in which others can rediscover and elaborate parts of themselves.

I also think of the idea of *reverie*, which in the common use of the French word expresses a dreamer's attitude, a slight daydreaming that in clinical work indicates the "capacity of the analyst to recognize preverbal or verbal communication in the patient, the capacity of recognition that is accompanied by a concurrent activity of elaboration" (Di Chiara, 1992, p. 50). The many reveries that accompany Dolores's writings help us to glimpse the path of research that, starting from these images, she has put into action in order to comprehend her young patients.

Nothing is more reassuring and gratifying than feeling the rousing of emotions and perhaps even shared reactions in the person we speak to. It is a marvelous and unforgettable

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"human exercise," rich support for future relationships, and a basic tool for the construction of a healthy "interpersonal security network." The exercise is therapeutic, moreover, if by therapy we mean every act of attention and care that is transformative in and of itself. . . . It foresees a taste for listening and interest in narration, in influences and digressions, in sudden tiredness, but above all, it calls for a great desire to share images and drawings with poetic, or rather constructive, attention. (Munari Poda, 2003, p. 94)

In Dolores's words we can recognize the fundamental elements of the intuitive process as articulated by Eric Berne. In a 1962 article entitled "The Psychodynamics of Intuition," he described intuition as a collection and elaboration of data operated by the Child ego state that can be organized in a logical way under the guidance of the Adult. Intuition is considered to be the base of creative thinking and a founding quality of psychotherapeutic work as well as the diagnostic process. Guided by

intuition, the therapist can use the primordial images that emerge in the mind inside the relational field with the patient as a guide to reading transference and countertransference phenomena. Berne described this connection in writing about his young patient Emily:

Emily was no longer a set of verbal concepts but a clearly pictured personality. She was an infant with a dripping diaper, shrinking from her mother's disgust and tyrannical castigation, and looking for an uncle to hold her as she was. . . . The therapist could now ask himself: "How does she expect this uncle to behave?" in order to know what to do and what not to do; and, "What does she want from this uncle?" in order to understand what the patient was doing in the treatment. (Berne, 1957, p. 618)

In Dolores's writing we can pick up on the connection suggested by Ogden (1997) between intuition and reverie. It is intuition that supports the capacity of the mind to create images when encountering the other person, a function that facilitates the transformation of the experience of self into a relationship with the other person, in an object that can be "seen" and translated into a shared narration.

It is also through numerous narrations halfway between the poetry of reverie, described by Bachelard (1960), and clinical reverie that Dolores reveals her ethical vision of encounters with the other person:

Accepting a child is about creating harmony. . . . The child is not a "case"—he or she is a presence. He or she is the other person in front of me. The child

continued on page 7

Actualités en Analyse Transactionnelle Celebrates Spring with Its Readers

by France Brécard

Spring was long in coming to France, this 2013, but finally on 1 June it did arrive, as if to celebrate an important day with us. We surely needed it after months of gray skies and cold rain, so things were looking up. That mattered a good deal to us, because *Actualités en Analyse Transactionnelle*, our French-language transactional analysis journal, had chosen that date to have our biannual “day with our readers.” It is always a good opportunity for the public to meet with authors and the editorial committee and to get a feeling for the joys and difficulties experienced by everyone who had put energy into keeping our journal alive. This year the day was all the more important because *Actualités*

France Brécard is a member of the editorial committee of *Actualités en Analyse Transactionnelle*. She can be reached at brecard.france@wanadoo.fr.



Laurie Hawkes (right) enjoys receiving her Raymond Hostie Award from AAT Editorial Committee Chair Catherine Frugier

has been going through stormy weather, the consequences of which are not yet resolved, including bankruptcy and the end of the small publishing company (Les Editions d'analyse transactionnelle) that published the journal.

We are hoping to find some way to put out the journal again in some form, digital or paper, but in the meantime, *Actualités* has posted several articles on the Institut Français d'Analyse Transactionnelle (the French Transactional Analysis Association) website as a way of keeping in touch with our readers. So it was gratifying to see 70 people respond to the editorial committee's invita-

tion, making for an interesting and emotional day.

To begin, Bill Cornell generously shared his ideas about play and psychological games. Translated by Laurie Hawkes, he took us on a journey through transactional theory, from Eric Berne to Harry Boyd via Christopher Bollas and his own practice of psychotherapy.

Fascinating as always, he managed to convey his vision of a dynamic, respectful, and effective therapeutic relationship.

After lunch, participants convened again for a creativity exercise about the future of *Actualités*. In small groups and the group as a whole, we let our ideas emerge, with a profusion that showed how much readers care about their journal.

Finally, at 4 pm came the suspenseful moment: time to reveal the 2013 Raymond Hostie Award recipient. Named after the founder of our journal, this award is given every other year for the best article published

continued on page 7



Bill Cornell
with Laurie
Hawkes
translating
at the AAT
spring
readers'
day in
Paris

Script Hard-Copy Option Eliminated

The ITAA Board of Trustees approved the following motion: “The policy of offering the optional provision of a printed copy of *The Script* by post [will] be rescinded. For those members who previously enjoyed this privilege, it will be terminated at the time of the next membership renewal. Any member who has no other means of getting *The Script* may apply individually to the ITAA for a printed copy and pay the relevant costs.”

Actualités en Analyse Transactionnelle

continued from page 6

originally in French in *Actualités*. From all of the articles—this time there were 21—first the French-language Teaching and Supervising Transactional Analysts select five articles as nominees. Then a second round is organized so that all subscribers may vote on the winner from among the nominated articles.

This year Laurie Hawkes was chosen for her article “Une pensée qui convient: AT et mentalisation” (an English version of which was published subsequently in the July 2011 *Transactional Analysis Journal* as “With You and Me in Mind: Mentalization and Transactional Analysis”). Laurie was visibly moved as she received her certificate from Catherine Frugier, the chair of the editorial committee. After a lovely speech recounting how she had become interested in the idea of mentalization and how she sees it now, she had the pleasure of being congratulated by Bill Cornell.

So, we had a good and beautiful day, with sun in the sky as well as in our hearts. ⑤

Reflections on Intuition

continued from page 5

is also the one who has been entrusted to me, a creature left face-to-face with another creature, a special Daseinpartner who awaits a real encounter and the hope of identifying him or herself as an individual who can feel, understand, think, and compose him or herself without distortions. (Munari Poda, 2000, p. 66)

As a way to conceptualize therapy relationships that allow us to see transactional analysis philosophical principles in action, I want to highlight OKness as well as the idea that every person has growth potential and is capable both of self-determination and choice. In her work, Dolores shows a profound sense of respect for the children she encounters and an authentic and passionate interest in thought forms and creative formulations of survival strategies that support the script in construction.

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Update on TA and Social Responsibility

By Leonard P. Campos

In the past, I have solicited brief reports from participants in the Transactional Analysts for Social Responsibility (TAFSR) email list and then summarized them in a *Script* article. Now, thanks to the introduction by *Script* editors Laurie Hawkes and Robin Fryer of an occasional section in *The Script* on the topic, TAFSR members are being encouraged to send reports about their work directly to the editors for possible publication. In addition, we now have the exciting news that a special theme issue of the *Transactional Analysis Journal* on “Transactional Analysis and Social Responsibility” is being planned for January 2014 to honor the 50th anniversary of the founding of the ITAA (see page 1 for details). We hope many of you will respond by writing for one or the other publication.

Transactional analysts who are interested in identifying themselves with the TAFSR mission statement and who are applying transactional analysis principles and tools to the

solution of social problems can join TAFSR as a way of demonstrating their commitment to that mission by contacting me by email at lcampos@ulink.net. Meanwhile, I have requested that the ITAA Board of Trustees approve the formation of an ITAA ad hoc committee on social responsibility during their meeting just before the conference in Osaka this August. I am glad to have raised awareness of our social responsibility by helping to found TAFSR in 2010 and encourage transactional analysts who are interested in applying transactional analysis outside of our four traditional fields (clinical, counseling, educational, and organizational) to join the TAFSR.

An example of my own interest is the applicability of transactional analysis in helping global leaders resolve international conflict. Many of us are already actively involved in helping to resolve conflicts within marriages, relationships, businesses, schools, houses of worship, and other organizations. Going outside our usual fields, I did an extensive review of peacemaking efforts by the United Nations system and its agencies and found a pervasive lack of awareness of unresolved psychological issues in attempts to resolve conflicts (e.g., the Palestinian-Israeli conflict). After reviewing the failure of military, political, economic, and diplomatic efforts, I proposed at a recent meeting of the United States branch of the United Nations Association on 16 March 2013 in Sacramento, California, that accounting

for underlying psychological issues in peace talks might help to break the impasse (in my view, a third-degree impasse). I introduced some basic TA principles and proposed an intervention model based on leaders using role play to deal with conflict. Naturally, this could only be considered a bold social experiment that might not work. Using a role-play structure, the process could be initiated by securing a firm, secure contract for change from the conflicting parties, that is, to achieve the mutual goal of peaceful coexistence. The global leaders would meet in a safe environment as our transactional analysis intervention team set the ground rules, closed off escape hatches, and kept the parties in the present. Perhaps this is just my dream, but I believe there are transactional analysts in our global community who can make this a reality.

I am sure all of us want to live in a world of peace. We transactional analysts are certainly needed in this particular area of application to help break through the perpetual cycles of violence and retaliation that continue in many parts of our world.

So, let us know about your ideas and action about using transactional analysis toward social responsibility by writing an article for either *The Script* or the *TAJ*. We look forward to hearing from you! 

Leonard P. Campos, PhD, can be reached at lcampos@ulink.net. Since writing this article, his proposal for a workshop on “The Power of Social TA: Going Beyond the Professional and Personal” has been accepted for presentation at the USA TA Association Conference in October in Long Beach, California. He also wrote to US Secretary of State John Kerry urging him to add a psychological approach, such as transactional analysis, to his resources for resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Welcome to New Members

NEW MEMBERS	SPONSOR	NEW MEMBERS	SPONSOR
DECEMBER 2012		Ethelle Lord, USA	—
Chris Altmikus, Switzerland	—	Bergamaschi Maddalena, Italy	—
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Josephine Murray-Smith, UK	—	Fionna McCarthy, New Zealand	—
Lesley Nikora, UK	—	Abhinandana Papisetty, India	—
JANUARY 2013		Ruben Parra Tarin, Mexico	—
Danielle Brooks, UK	—	Abdul Razak, India	—
Nicholas Calcaterra, USA	—	Natsuki Segawa, Japan	—
Prachi Dixit, India	—	Mrinalini Sharma, India	—
Ioana Duma, Romania	—	Carole Stillwell, UK	—
Rosee Elliott, UK	—	Amera Taylor, Canada	—
Amalia Gabor, Romania	—	Nicola Trower, UK	—
Anne Gaijmans, Netherlands	—	Annick Vanhove, Belgium	—
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Kirsten King, Canada	—	Mayke Wagner, Germany	—
Suzanne Lines, UK	—	APRIL 2013	
Gabriela Angelica, Romania	—	Ruth Allen, UK	—
Emma Louise Taylor, UK	—	Me-Chui Chen, Taiwan	—
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Karina Piclisan, Romania	—	Cinzia Chiesa, Italy	—
Mirjana Radovanovic, Slovenia	—	Rob Conley, UK	—
Marina Vasile, Romania	—	Celso Costa, Brazil	—
FEBRUARY 2013		Valerie Cunningham, UK	—
Mandy Atkinson, UK	—	Sonja Geessler, Germany	—
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Elsa Colella, Italy	—	Pradip Mandal, India	—
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Yuhei Manabe, Japan	—	David Tidsall, UK	—
Ruth McLauchlan, New Zealand	—	Anne Timpson, UK	—
Preeta Naveen, India	—	Raul Velasco, Mexico	—
Leanne Proveau, Canada	—	MAY 2013	
Clarissa Ruggieri, Mexico	Gloria Noriega	Farhana Ahmed, Bangladesh	Saru PK
Ericilia Silva, Brazil	—	Nasima Akter, Bangladesh	Saru PK
Ksenija Tabakovic, Slovenia	—	Sumaiya Anwar, Bangladesh	Saru PK
Anita Webster, UK	—	Fatima Khan Basu, Bangladesh	Saru PK
Matteo Zanovello, Italy	—	Zinnatul Borak, Bangladesh	Saru PK
MARCH 2013		Amy Chen, China	—
Fiona Brewin, UK	—	Kali Prasanna Das, Bangladesh	Saru PK
Jo Brewster, UK	—	Sorin Duma, Romania	—
Francoise Chevalier, UK	—	Safina Binte Enayet, Bangladesh	Saru PK
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Tse Nan Lim, Singapore	—	Shami Suhrid, Bangladesh	Saru PK
		Yayoi Ubukata, Japan	—
		Marijke Wusten, Netherlands	—

Contact, Attunement, and Our Vagal Tone

by Richard G. Erskine

While flying home recently after doing a series of workshops in Asia, I had the opportunity to read about current research that verifies what we practice as transactional analysts. In Asia I was teaching about life scripts. One part of the definition I teach emphasizes that “life scripts are complex patterns of unconscious relational patterns . . . that inhibit spontaneity and limit flexibility in problem-solving, health maintenance, and in relationship with people” (Erskine, 2010, p. 1).

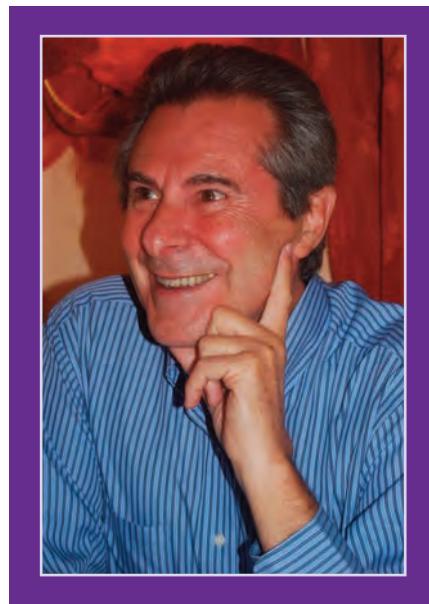
“If we do not regularly exercise our ability to be in relational contact—to be affectively attuned to others—we will eventually lack some of the basic biological capacity to do so.”

In both my practice of psychotherapy and in human relations consulting, I often focus on the significance of caring and vitalizing relationships in maintaining optimal mental and physical well-being. While reading about Barbara Fredrickson’s (2013a) research in her new book entitled *Love 2.0: How Our Supreme Emotion Affects Everything We Feel, Think, Do, and Become*, I was reminded of two of our purposes as relational and integrative transactional analysts: to enhance the

quality of relationships in our clients’ lives and to help them maintain good physical health.

I am always astonished when I observe that many people in public places are bent over a digital screen thumbing their way through an electronic maze. Many are deeply absorbed in video games or Facebook and seem to be out of contact with what and who is in their immediate surroundings. Fredrickson’s writings describe how such nonpersonal electronic button pushing may have a negative toll on our biological capacity to connect with other people. Such habits, devoid of human interaction, eventually shape the very structure of our brains in ways that reinforce our proclivity for those habits. The less we emotionally connect with others, the harder it eventually becomes. Donald Hebb, a neuropsychologist from McGill University, has shown that neurons that fire together wire together. Therefore, repetitive experiences leave imprints on our neural pathways, a phenomenon called *neuroplasticity*. What we do routinely soon becomes an ingrained neurological pattern.

In a recent article, Fredrickson (2013b) described how plasticity—the propensity to be shaped by experience—occurs both in muscles and in the brain. We already know



that when we live a sedentary life our muscles atrophy and our physical strength is diminished. In a similar way, the style in which we transact with others—our habits of interpersonal contact—also leave an imprint on our brain. Fredrickson reported that her research team conducted a longitudinal study on the effects of people cultivating warmer interpersonal connections in daily life. They designed a 6-week program that trained participants to develop more warmth and tenderness toward themselves and others. They discovered that by the end of the program, participants not only felt more lively and socially connected, they also altered a key part of their cardiovascular system, the vagal tone.

Our brain is tied to our heart by the vagus nerve. Recent research has discovered that minute variations in our heart rate reveal the strength of this brain-heart connection and, as such, provide an index of our vagal tone. The vagal tone can be either dorsal or ventral. The dorsal reflects passivity and a shutting down that occurs when there has been cumulative neglect and a lack of relational contact. The ventral reflects pleasurable social engagement that comes from such activities as nursing, eye-to-eye contact, soothing touch, kissing, and pleasant voice tones. The higher our ventral vagal tone, the better we are able to regulate the internal systems that keep us healthy, such as our cardiovascular and immune responses. Neuroscientists used to think that the vagal tone was largely stable, like our height in adulthood. Fredrickson's data show that this part of our brain-to-heart connection is plastic and amenable to change. Our ventral vagal tone can be increased by engaging and caring social habits. This implies that the unconscious relational patterns that form the basis of our life script can change through interpersonal involvement.

The ventral vagal tone is central to interpersonal contact; it is responsive to facial expressivity, comforting touch, and the frequency of the human voice. As we expand our

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"Fredrickson's writings describe how such nonpersonal electronic button pushing may have a negative toll on our biological capacity to connect with other people. Such habits, devoid of human interaction, eventually shape the very structure of our brains in ways that reinforce our proclivity for those habits."

capacity for person-to-person connection, empathy, and harmony, we increase our ventral vagal tone. In short, the more we are affectively attuned to others, the healthier we become. This mutual influence also explains how a lack of positive social contact diminishes an individual's vitality. Our heart's capacity for friendship, just like our muscles, obeys the biological law of "use it or lose it." If we do not regularly exercise our ability to be in relational contact—to be affectively attuned to others—we will eventually lack some of the basic biological capacity to do so.

The human brain, like the body, is amenable to change and growth, provided we exercise it regularly. As we repeatedly engage in activities that include person-to-person contact, nurturing and caring gestures, and full involvement with others, we develop new neuro pathways that increase our ventral vagal tone. The increase in vagal tone affects both the quality of our relationships and our physical health. Our individual and collective life scripts will change as we develop these new neurological patterns.

When we share a smile, have an empathic exchange, or laugh together face to face, a discernible synchrony emerges between us. Our gestures and biochemistry, even our respective neural firings, begin to

mirror each other. It is in micro moments such as these, in which waves of good feeling reverberate through two brains and bodies at once, that we build our capacity to be attuned to others, to be empathetic, and to improve our physical health. If we do not regularly exercise our capacity to be attuned to others' affect and rhythm, to smile and laugh together, to express our gratitude and love for each other, we lessen the capacity to do so. Our physical health then suffers.

So, let's reach out and make real contact, let's smile and laugh together, let's be sensitive to each other's emotions, and let's stay physically healthy together as we stimulate our brain-to-heart ventral vagal tone.

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Correction

Mohanraj I A was inadvertently left off the list of long-time members published in the June 2013 *Script*. He joined in 1995 and thus has been a member for 18 years. We regret the error and thank Mohan for his long support for the ITAA.



2013 ITAA International Conference in OSAKA

“Recovery, Rebirth, New Beginnings”

15-17 August ♦ Osaka, Japan

Osaka International Convention Center

Preconference Institute (TA 101) 13-14 August

Postconference Institutes 18 August

Conference website: <http://2013itaa.com>



Conference Opening to Be Energized by Taiko Drums

At 9am on 15 August in the Conference Hall, the opening ceremony will be highlighted by an exciting drum team from a small town in Fukushima prefecture. Yamakiya Taiko began performing in 2001 as a unit team of the Yamakiya Kagura or local traditional performance group. Their aim is to offer traditional, creative drum performances of original compositions as well as to encourage young performers from their local community.

The inhabitants of the Yamakiya area have been forced to leave their town because of the radioactive contamination from the Fukushima nuclear accident caused by the Tohoku earthquake. The team members have been scattered to many different areas and other prefectures for the past 3 years.

It has not been easy for them to find a place to practice, so they have traveled from location to location. Three months after the earthquake, they finally managed to find a spot in a residential area, so they had to cover all

the doors and walls with newspapers and old blankets to muffle the sound (which was only minimally successful, as you can imagine). Even in such difficult circumstances, they kept practicing.

Many of the supporters of the Yamakiya taiko drum team who had learned about their difficulties promoted them for more events. They even had the opportunity to perform at the Washington DC Cherry Blossom Festival in April 2013, a trip organized by the English assistant teachers who used to work in the Yamakiya area with help from the US-Japan Society.

The light of hope of the Yamakiya taiko team has been supported by many people around the world, and in August, we will be honored to have them help us light up the beginning of our conference. We hope you will join us!

Adonis Jazz Orchestra Promises Wonderful Gala

At the conference gala on 17 August, we will have as our entertainment music from the Adonis Jazz Orchestra.

This full band, now celebrating its 30th anniversary, will offer live music performed by a group of professional and amateur musicians. In Japan, the characters for music are written as “enjoy sound,” and the orchestra plans to play music from both Japan and around the world. Join us for an unforgettable evening.

