the
# TRANSACTIONAL ANALYST

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**UNITED KINGDOM ASSOCIATION FOR TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS' QUARTERLY MAGAZINE**

**Focus on Ecotherapy:**
Rooted – a woodland based early intervention therapeutic space for teenage girls. See page 34

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# NEWS & VIEWS

HELLO AND WELCOME to this quarter's bumper magazine. This issue is the first of a two-parter focused on ecotherapy and working outdoors. It is our privilege to have Giles Barrow and Hayley Marshall – leading thinkers in this area – as guest editors for this issue. They introduce the wealth of articles they have commissioned for this magazine on page 4. We will not double up on their introduction, except to say we are delighted with this wonderful collation of pieces introducing – to many of us – the rich potential of working outdoors, expanding our understanding of the connection of the outdoors with our internal worlds, and considering transactional analysis from an ecological perspective. A brilliant guest editorial follows from Giles and Hayley, who suggest that, after we say 'Hello' to each other as TA practitioners – in any of the fields – the next question might be 'and do you work indoors or outdoors?' It is more than timely to be considering the acute relevance of the natural world to our professional as well as personal lives. Thank you Hayley and Giles.

Our columnists pick up the ecological theme: Dee Longhurst using nature as a metaphorical springboard for unveiling through writing our true feelings; and Salma Siddique considering the connection between ecosystems loss and workplace stress. Film script columnist, Anoushka Beazley, meanwhile, focuses her TA perspective on another landscape of screentime viewing.

In the rest of the magazine we have Marion Unmey's book reviews, in this quarter Bill Cornell's two latest publications are reviewed. *Self-examination in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy* reviewed by Karen Minikin, looks at the essence of 'calling ourselves into question'; while, *At the Interface of Transactional Analysis, Psychoanalysis, and Body Psychotherapy* is reviewed, appropriately, by two reviewers outside the TA world, Shahid Majid and Katherine Thomas. Brilliant books and excellent reviews.

Karen Minikin also talks with Janine Piccirella, under the DSR banner, about Janine's project to improve access to news and information from UKATA for members with visual impairment or dyslexia through the medium of audio files. This is an ongoing project so watch this, or, hopefully in the near future, listen to this space.

Continuing our student writing section Paul Betney writes about the importance of somatic awareness in clinical practice and shares how it has influenced his own approach to clinical practice.

The next issue of *the Transactional Analyst* continues the focus on ecotherapy and working outdoors such is the abundance of material Hayley and Giles have brought together. These two issues as we mentioned in the last magazine will mark the beginning of our 10th anniversary year as *the Transactional Analyst* magazine. Thank you once again to all our contributors to this quarter's issue, and especially to Giles and Hayley. Enjoy reading this magazine in your preferred environment whether indoors or out.

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### AWARDS CONGRATULATIONS

**CTA**
**Linda wall**
**DIPLOMAS**
**Hulya Hooker**
**Anne Barber**
**Dymphna Lonergan**

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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### Renewals 2019-2020

Don't forget to renew membership
for the next year here is the link:
**www.uktransactionalanalysis.co.uk/home-members**

## TASC COMMITTEE UPDATE

ONE OF THE roles of Training and Accreditation Standards Committee (TASC) is to monitor Registered Training Establishments (RTEs) every five years and to assess an institute's application to become an RTE.

Carrying out this role this summer we have been busy. We would like first of all, to congratulate Victoria Baskerville on her successful application for TA East to be an RTE. TA East serves a diverse community in London and Victoria seeks to reach out and grow transactional analysis in this area.

This summer we were engaged in the monitoring of two RTEs both of whom have had the RTE status confirmed. Feedback received from the directors of the RTEs will enable us to enhance our practice and provide feedback to Council later in the year.

We are also responsible for review and updating policies ensuring that the requirements of both EATA and UKCP are met. For the last two years we have been considering the trainees' therapy policy. Over the last few months TASC has consulted with the RTEs regarding this policy, and accounted for the feedback. It is currently with HIPC's TSC. This is to make sure that those who achieve their CTA after the new therapy policy has become effective can still get automatic accreditation with UKCP/HIPC if they so wish. After ratification by Council, it will be made available to you on the website.

Ales Zivkovic left the committee in July. We wish him well in his new ventures and in October Karen Minikin will also be stepping down from the committee. She will however continue to support us in our work and has offered to take on projects and to assist with the assessing/monitoring of RTEs.

If you would like to join this vibrant committee, or would like more information about the work we do, the level of commitment etc. then contact the chair of TASC by email on tasc@uktransactionalanalysis.co.uk.

**We are also interested in creating a bank of assessors to assist in the assessing/monitoring of RTEs. If you would like to know more about this and have experience of assessing, then contact the chair of TASC.**

**Sue Brady, Chair,**
**tasc@uktransactionalanalysis.co.uk.**

## FIRST EVER SOUTH WEST TA CONFERENCE

HOW DOES TA respond to and provide a way of thinking about our current social and political context? This was the question posed by the theme – 'TA in an age of uncertainty' – of the first ever TA Conference in the South West, held this October. How might we use TA to navigate the current national and international difficulties, to thrive rather than survive?

The day drew participants and speakers from the South West and beyond. It was stimulating, eclectic and provided opportunities to hear and work with internationally recognised speakers and presenters, meet other practitioners in all four fields of TA, and to join with the lively and growing TA community in the South West. We wanted to bring people together, make connections, and create something collectively, so there were many opportunities throughout the day to meet colleagues and make new contacts (including socialising after the event).

The conference was opened by Eric Berne Memorial Award winner, Dr Susannah Temple (PTTA E retired). Susannah held an inspirational large-group experiential event entitled 'Fight, Flee, Freeze – or – FLOW' and the power of choice. Our other keynote speaker, EATA Gold Medal Winner (2019), Sue Eusden TSTA(P), spoke on 'Hide and seek in troubled times' and gave a fascinating description of some of her PhD research into supervision and the process of asking for help. We were extremely privileged to have had two such interesting and thought-provoking speakers, and would like to offer our thanks to

Susannah and Sue for their contributions to making this first conference so successful.

A huge thanks also our workshop presenters. In the morning, the workshops were run by experienced colleagues: Susannah Temple, Karen Minikin, Tess Elliot, Graeme Summers, Ros Sharples and Nathan Gould. In the afternoon we offered workshop slots for trainees, who had the option to present shorter sessions. Five TA trainees, including from the Iron Mill and the West Wales Institute presented workshops on a wide range of subjects, and we're particularly grateful to those brave people: Lisa Woodin, Antoinette Davey, Jayne Wynne, Liz Jackson and Caroline Holden. Finally, thank you to all the participants for making the day such a triumph and to the staff and volunteers at the Iron Mill College for their support and hard work on the day.

We will be offering the **next South West event in October 2020** so watch out for the date!

**Liza Heatley PTSTA (P) and Briony Nicholls TSTA(P)**

# From the guest editors

**GILES BARROW** and **HAYLEY MARSHALL,** guest editors for our two special focus issues on working outdoors, introduce the writers, themes and some of the theoretical bases involved in working ecologically.

WE ARE DELIGHTED to be guest editors for these two special issues on the theme of working outdoors.

For some time now we have both been keenly aware of a number of colleagues who have an interest in working outdoors and who also wonder how this kind of practice connects with their work with transactional analysis (TA). It's a good question on which to ponder, and there is plenty of material in this issue to help fuel the thinking. Within the TA literature very little has been published that either features working outdoors or explores the relationship between nature and TA concepts. It is, in our view, a considerable blind spot. It is also understandable to some degree; Berne and the first and second generation of TA practitioners had other pressing matters to consider when developing their ideas, and climate chaos was barely on the public radar. Fast forward sixty years and the human relationship with the natural world is a primary concern for many of us, within regions, and across the world. Yet, while significant attention has been given to issues such as diversity, power and authority, the relational dynamic and body work, theoretical and practice innovations in TA have remained steadfastly rooted in the socio-psychological domain. We are especially pleased at the opportunity to be leading the way in considering TA from an ecological perspective.

The theme of these issues is working outdoors and in many respects that reflects precisely what this practice is about. We are then, suggesting a new opener for conversations between TA practitioners. After saying 'Hello', the next question might be: 'And do you work indoors, or outdoors?' It is an assumption that working indoors is default thinking about where practice takes place, and we suggest that this might be as subject to question as the assumption that our clients are predominantly female, middle class and English speaking.

Working indoors is a very particular, and arguably peculiar way of doing our work, even though it's commonplace and that, furthermore, it may be seriously limiting how our professional community makes sense of its task, the nature of our clients and the notion of personal growth, individual healing and community education. However, the title 'working outdoors' is a little deceptive in that it refers only to the literal sense of what this issue is really about. In reading the articles other features begin to emerge which, we argue, indicate that working ecologically involves more than simply taking the same practice from an indoor space to an outdoor place. The more-than-human world provides something additional to an attractive backdrop for learning or healing, and those of us used to working in nature recognise that has its own agency. Several contributors refer to the active partnering with the outdoor environment in which suddenly both practitioner and client(s) are subject to our 'being human', in a much wider sense of the phrase, than when sat in a room.

The articles here illustrate how practicing in outdoor settings can facilitate an opening of new fluid 'forms of knowing' within and between us, as well as promoting the development of ethics of (re)connection and belonging. So, it is interesting to us that in preparing these issues we are aware that this new field of innovative TA practice is also proving to be the perfect meeting place for a rich and fertile cross field TA conversation! Hence, we are excited to be offering a diverse range of articles from both the outdoor educational and psychotherapeutic fields, that offer intriguing links with each other.

All of this suggests (and our experience shows) that outdoor work is a substantially different form of TA practice calling for further development of our theories and methodology. So, while there is a specificity in the term working outdoors, we are also using these issues to test out the arrival of a new way of conceptualising TA more generally. To be outside is to be subject to the immediacy of a kind of agency that simply does not

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feature with indoor work and which has implications for what happens next in terms of the relational aspects of healing and education. We are preparing the ground for Eco-Transactional Analysis (Eco-TA) and hope very much that this engages readers, whetting the appetite for more to come on this theme.

Framing each of these two issues we reprint Hayley Marshall's seasonal column ‘The View from Here’ first published in *the Transactional Analyst* in 2013/14. This was one of Hayley's first wanderings into the realm of outdoor TA in printed form, and the ideas, wrapped up in walking meditations, still form useful pointers on some of the TA theoretical possibilities in outdoor work. In this issue we open with Winter and close with Spring.

With our articles we begin with Giles' overview of pedagogy which sets out the range of ways for thinking about education outdoors. It provides the basis for a deeper exploration of pedagogy relevant to those who want to extend an understanding of three dimensions of being outside with clients; working holistically, embodied education and promoting environmental activism through pedagogy of place.

Sarah Devine's introductory overview to the outdoor psychological ‘territory’, explores ecopsychology's emphasis on the theme of the disconnection of man and environment. She elegantly links this with some of our TA theory along with some insights about her personal journey into the ecotherapy world.

We are delighted to have a contribution from Richard Youell who provides a wonderful account in which he integrates a distinctive skill and expertise in recording nature and the task of coaching clients. Sean Henn offers a very different paper drawn out of his work with young people in special education. The story of Billy and his engagement with the outdoors, skillfully supported through the practice of educational transactional analysis, is a moving demonstration of the impact of environmental agency.

Although outdoor therapeutic practice is developing fast as a modality it is still the case that the recorded perspective of the outdoor client is still thin on the ground. Sarah Pritchard's beautifully poetic contribution offers us an important and inspiring illumination, sharing her experience of personal outdoor therapy.

Mary Dees follows on with her account of time spent in Shining Cliff Woods with an outdoor CPD group. In the process of sharing she draws our attention to some key elements in outdoor practice, namely the role of nature in a personal history – particularly in the somatic relational world of script protocol – as well as its important role in current self-care. She then provides us with further theoretical commentary using TA theory by way of an epilogue.

Finally, Jenny Biglands has a timely contribution, again featuring work with adolescents. This time the focus is on working in woodland with vulnerable young women. Integrating educational and counselling interventions combined with the tasks of building fires, shelters and other outdoor activities, a collective strength is created, providing a sense of renewal and hope.

‘We are preparing the ground for Eco-Transactional Analysis (Eco-TA) and hope very much that this engages readers, whetting the appetite for more to come on this theme.’

**Giles Barrow** is a TSTA (Ed) based in East Anglia. He tutors on various training programmes at the farm, and he is the tutor for the MSc in Educational TA at The Berne Institute. He also writes on a range of themes to do with education, TA theory and practice.

**Hayley Marshall** MSc (TA Psych) PTSTA is an indoor and outdoor psychotherapist, supervisor and trainer based in the Peak District and Stockport. She is director, Centre for Natural Reflection in Derbyshire and a member of the training staff at Red Kite Training in Liverpool & the South Manchester Centre for Psychotherapy.

# Greening the Adult ego state

**HAYLEY MARSHALL** begins her seasonal column at the winter solstice

**AS MY OUTDOOR psychotherapy work developed since its beginnings in 2007, I crafted a regular practice of 'minding my landscape.' This involves going out and walking my local topography into my body/mind/psyche while also reflecting on the process in terms of its potential for psychotherapy. I originally wrote these seasonal columns for** *the Transactional Analyst* **back in 2013/14 to share some of these wanderings/wonderings.**

IT'S THE WINTER solstice, early afternoon. I'm feeling tired at the end of a long working stretch, and my mind is full of what I call 'therapy buzz'. So, I'm off out for a walk.

As I set off along the bottom of the valley the sun is sitting apologetically low in the sky, and I shiver with the impact of the year having 'drained to this pinching day with its paltry hours of watery sun' (Dee, 2010). Heading swiftly past the skeletal woodland I begin my climb up the steep pull towards the moor. There is no one else around; in that sense I am alone.

Throughout the previous six years or so, I have developed a profound attachment to this landscape and the elements within it. I feel rooted and supported here, although not always comfortable. Feeling held by this place, I experience a sense of a powerful enduring presence. For me this is an ongoing relational therapeutic process; to paraphrase the words of John Muir, I have found that in going out, I have also been going in.

Of course, this is a different kind of therapeutic relationship from the one we usually discuss as psychotherapists. It is a relationship that taps into our evolutionary heritage (Wilson, 1984) concerning our connection with the non-human animate world surrounding us; but current research (Pretty et al, 2005; Bird, 2007; MIND, 2007), shows that this natural relating does indeed have rich possibilities for mental health. One very important aspect of this is the innate ability of human beings to be both soothed and cognitively restored by natural settings.

Out on my walk, this process is very much in evidence as I settle down to observing a buzzard slowly circling above me. The noise of rushing water seems to be everywhere after the melting of the recent snowfall. There is always much to attend to here, bringing my senses into sharp focus; as this landscape while constant, is never the same. As I arrive at the top of the hill on Combs Moss, I feel a stilling in my body; and as the 'therapy buzz' quietens down, I become more reflective. I am beginning to adjust to the rhythm of the place as my mind is being wiped clean.

Research emanating from the field of environmental psychology demonstrates that contact with natural environments promotes a psychophysiological stress reduction response (Ulrich, 1983) within our limbic system, as well as an activation of an attentional recovery system (Kaplan, 1995; Hartig, 2004) in the frontal cortex of our brain. These are ancient innate survival responses, with the former important in affecting a swift recovery from fight or flight response; and the latter significant in clearing the mind, providing space for reflection and then regaining cognitive focus.

I understand this green relational process to nestle at the heart of our dynamic Adult ego states (Summers, 2011), in that it involves nonconscious (nonverbal, implicit) regulating interactions with the environment. In promoting the shift to a more reflective state it also helps us to develop our more conscious (verbal explicit) 'Integrating Adult' process (Tudor, 2003). In outdoor psychotherapy these restorative and regulatory responses form a significant aspect of the work. The Adult ego states of both client and therapist are infused with this green potency assisting them in tolerating and making sense of their experience within the therapeutic process (Marshall, 2016). This 'green medication' can also be suggested as a way of helping some clients, to support and manage their experience between sessions.

Returning to the notion of attachment I am mindful of Allen's (2011) work on the neuroscientific underpinnings for relational TA where he highlights attachment as a stress reducing behaviour in those who are older. Therefore, it makes sense to me to talk in attachment terms when discussing this regulatory implicit fit between us and the natural environment.

As I stand and look out over the extended horizon of the Peak District with the sun still just present, I am basking in the gradual shift in my internal state that I

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have come to expect when spending time out here. I am reminded of Schroeder's (2008) phrase 'inwardly opening out' as he reaches for a description of what's going on for us in green spaces. Just in this moment, this rather neatly captures the experience of my green dynamic Adult ego states!

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**Hayley Marshall** MSc (TA Psych) PTSTA is an indoor and outdoor psychotherapist, supervisor and trainer based in the Peak District and Stockport. She is director, Centre for Natural Reflection in Derbyshire and a member of the training staff at Red Kite Training in Liverpool & the South Manchester Centre for Psychotherapy.

# **Walking the land:** framing education with nature in mind

**GILES BARROW** scopes out the lay of the land of educational theory and practice involved in working outdoors, introducing the TA traveller to potentially unexplored terrain.

IN THIS ARTICLE I set out a map for navigating the territory of educational theory and practice concerned with working outdoors. I have wanted to do this for some time but have held some caution about doing so; why on earth does it need doing? To what end does it serve? The categorisation of types of theory seems a practice based in the past when listing and naming things was an extension of claiming and controlling, and especially when it concerned science and its interest in the natural world. Would dissembling various pedagogies, neatly separating out their parts, be like the era of pinning butterflies to boards and dissecting amphibians, I wondered. Why does it feel necessary for me to set out to do so?

These reservations have kept my writing in check and it has been several months since I first had the idea. As I sat down this morning to begin to write, the phrase 'walking the land' comes to my mind. This is what I do each day, often as the sun is rising, or at least, while it is still fresh in the sky. Having brewed the first mug of tea of the day, I get my boots on and step out to walk the land. There's a purpose to it and especially for those who keep livestock. This is the time to discover what the night left behind and what the morning brings, new births perhaps, or an escapee. Maybe that lame ewe has recovered, or the struggling piglet has died. Did the storm take the roof off the barn, again, and has the rain brought a flush of green to the tired field? So there's a practicality to walking the land which has necessity to it and, to an extent, is literally about taking stock. There's something else though – walking the land has a ritual quality to it. There is a familiarity that comes from coursing around the field boundaries, and the feeding of stock, and it takes on what some might call an act of worship, and what others might find an experience in mindfulness. There's honoring to be had in walking the land, a recognition of what has come before, and will endure long after I have gone. There's a wondering in how, through the elegant simplicity of soil, water and sunlight, such abundance is possible, despite the entropy of autumn and the challenges of winter. Perhaps, psychologically, walking the land also provides a reassurance about belonging, not so much to people – *kin* – but about belonging to place – *kith*. Perhaps it's not sufficient to regard belonging as being exclusively to do with social relationship, and that 'walking the land' completes the act of what it means to belong, and that here, on this planet, we can find our place. Taking account, and witnessing the gift of the morning, walking the land has potential for both 'reckoning up' progress and deepening understanding and connection with the soil, out of which lives are fashioned.

In returning to my opening purpose for this paper, there is certainly a degree of taking stock of the range of pedagogical ideas about working outdoors. This has a functional benefit in that it may assist readers in identifying the range and context of outdoor educational theories, which in turn might inform decisions about how to practice, increase confidence and competence, and to broaden the understanding of the options for developing work outdoors. Given that this is a relatively new development in the context of transactional analysis, across all fields of application, such a map might be helpful. In the spirit of 'walking the land', I also intend to establish an appreciation of the rich theoretical territory that already exists for TA practitioners to enjoy and benefit by serving their practice.

**Scoping the landscape**

I will set out a broad framework, or meta-perspective on educational ideas concerned with the theme of working outdoors. The reference to 'outdoors' has a convenience and is suitably generalised without encroaching into

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more distinctive or particular language. So what follows is a typology of educational theory and practice orientated to working outdoors in the natural environment. It is also important to acknowledge that while there are advantages to separating out such different 'schools' of theory, it can be unhelpful if they are regarded as exclusive of one another. As will become clear, there are overlaps between the regions of theory, some models and ideas travel more easily than others across the notional boundaries which I suggest.

One of the practical reasons for setting out the range of theory is that by doing so it might enable outdoor work to be taught and understood more effectively by teachers and students. In other words, there is an educational advantage in having this educational theory made more explicit. Given the innovation of bringing outdoor work to TA practitioners, this might be strategically important in terms of raising awareness and encouraging increased engagement among trainers and practitioners for working outdoors. My starting point in this paper is to present a range of philosophy, theory and practice about working outdoors which can be organised across three 'schools'. I am mindful that the reference to 'schools' may intimate a formality that is premature given the embryonic nature of the exercise, and I use the term lightly, preferring it over 'domain', 'discipline' or 'type'. For my purposes, 'school' refers to a gathering of work which is interconnected either directly or loosely by themes or similar purpose. The writings also cross-reference with each other indicating a relationship between practitioners and practices.

**Holistic education**

Perhaps the more familiar of the three schools, holistic education is arguably the most efficient way of describing the kind of education associated with working outdoors. With an emphasis on personal growth in its widest sense, holistic education might be how some TA trainees experience their own journey of professional training. Often in the literature, holistic education is sharply contrasted with liberal, or classical education models typically found in western schooling systems. In these contexts education might be caricatured as being concerned with the student from the 'neck-up', with an emphasis on building cognitive capacity, increasing knowledge and understanding and academic performance. Holistic education, with the implicit commitment to holism, broadens its concern with the emotional, social and spiritual aspects of the individual, in addition to the cognitive and intellectual.

In some respects the origins of holistic education share similar influences of classical education. The objective of bringing about eduamonia – individual flourishing – was a consideration of Aristotle and one which is reflected in early religious communities that established some of the earliest models of education and, latterly schooling. The splitting off of the purely cognitive or academic, tendencies is a relatively recent shift in educational philosophy and practice, brought about for the most part by the advent of scientific rationalism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In eastern regions a similar holistic perspective had also been understood in the dominant Hindu and Buddhist religious traditions.

Before advancing to the detail of holistic education it might be useful to distinguish it within the wider domain of humanistic education. Broadly speaking, a great deal of TA training lies in the humanistic approach. Many readers will be acquainted with the experience of humanistic education even if the term itself is unfamiliar. Rooted in the notion that education is about human growth and flourishing, many TA courses reflect the themes and principles of this approach, with an emphasis on nurturing emotional literacy, deepening self-reflection, experimentation through group relationship and exploring new ways of being in the world. These interventions comprise the central components of a humanistic educational perspective that is essentially sociological. In other words, that education is primarily an activity that takes place between persons and is socially concerned, by which is meant improvement in the quality of social relations and betterment of society at large. Herein lie the limits of a general humanistic approach in comparison to holistic education.

For advocates of holistic education there are two features that distinguish it from a broader, humanistic approach. First, the inclusion of a spiritual sensibility, and second, the extension of the social into the ecological domain. To ignore – or discount – the spiritual experience, in the framework of holistic education, is to fail to understand the disconnection brought about in the individual by the academic emphasis in conventional schooling. A starting premise is that human beings have capacity for spiritual experience and that this might be nurtured and understood more fully as part of the educative process. Holistic education literature frequently refers to the 'soul' of the educator, the student and indeed of education itself. The spiritual self is a focus in educational practice alongside, or integrated with social,

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‘A related principle of holistic education is that it assumes . . . people are part of an interconnected web of relationship which extends beyond the human-only world. The “more-than-human world” is a phrase that is intended as more precise than referring to the ‘natural world’, for are not we, as humans, natural too?’

emotional, physical and intellectual development. For those educators embedded in contemporary schooling, or indeed trainees engaged in TA training, this explicit reference to the spiritual domain might have a jarring affect, or appear as inappropriate, perhaps belonging outside the professional boundary. However, in terms of holistic education, attending to the metaphysical experience is crucial and interventions are designed to encourage, reconnect or awaken a sense of awe and wonder in the student.

A second, related principle of holistic education is that it assumes that people are part of an interconnected web of relationship which extends beyond the human-only world. The ‘more-than-human world’ is a phrase that is intended as more precise than referring to the ‘natural world’, for are not we, as humans, natural too? This engagement with the wider environment is intrinsic to holistic education in part to open up the possibility for the spiritual development, but also for the physical and emotional flourishing that is so important to holistic formation. It is this connection to the more-than-human-world that aligns holistic education to a longstanding, non-western education tradition, namely indigenous education practices. To be born out of the land, or to live closely to the land is a feature of what it is to be indigenous, and educational philosophy has a distinctive character when derived from the land. The pedagogy of place is a concept considered a little later in this paper, but for now indigenous education draws attention to the context in which it is taking place. Importantly, by context, the emphasis is on the spatial environment, not solely the social or political context of the work.

Miller et al (2019), presents arguably the most recent and comprehensive account of holistic education available. The compilation of contributions covers the history and practice of holistic education since its early formation in the eighteenth century in Europe and even earlier in terms of indigenous practices. It’s the work of John Miller particularly that tracks various themes in holistic education, principally the metaphysical, for example his work on spirituality (Miller et al, 2005) and soul (Miller, 2000). While David Orr (2004), has published a similar range of work that tends toward the environmental dimension of holistic education. In addition to these more explicit reference points, much of the humanistic education literature supports the holistic focus, and the work of Rogers (1969), and Noddings (1984), are examples of work sympathetic to holistic educational aims.

I imagine that many readers will be familiar with some of the themes already discussed here. In TA training groups I frequently hear of how trainees – and clients – have a keen interest in holism, combining TA psychotherapy and counselling with so-called ‘alternative’ approaches, including hypnotherapy and aromatherapy, in addition to working with spirituality. I want to turn next to educational approaches which might be less familiar and which deepen the focus integrating education with the more than human world.

**Phenomenological approach**

Alongside the emergence of holistic education in its more recent iteration, thinkers in the field of natural sciences have developed ideas about the inter-connectedness between humans and the natural world. Shepard (1969), was an early advocate for recognising how close the human form is integrated with its ecological context. The primary way of understanding this ‘closeness’ is by paying attention to the body itself. Describing the skin as a thin membrane which barely separates the person from its environment, Shepard draws the reader into considering the somatic implications of being alive in the world. It is a theme taken up more recently by Abram in *Becoming Animal* (2010), in which the author explores experiencing through the lens of bodily experience. The work of both Shepard and Abram connect with what can be described as a phenomenological approach. Accounting for the bodily experience, its symbolic or representative function has a rich history originating, in western philosophy, in the work of Merleau-Ponty (1962).

In educational practice the phenomenological dimension is explored by Manen in *Pedagogical Tact* (2015), where the use of gesture, the ‘teachable moment’ and the quality of time are incorporated into an

‘Describing the skin as a thin membrane which barely separates the person from its environment, Shepard draws the reader into considering the somatic implications of being alive in the world.’

understanding of the physical impact of the teacher on the student. Similarly the topic of teacher presence is picked up by Todd (2003), in which she considers the lasting memory of the energetic influence of the teacher. In TA literature the somatic dimension of teaching and learning is featured in *A Body of Knowledge* (Barrow, 2018), where the notion of education encounter is essentially formed at the sensory and physical levels and only secondarily cognitively or intellectually.

The rationale for including phenomenological approaches to working outdoors in this typology is on the one hand straightforward while also being complex. It is simple enough to see how attending to the bodily experience of education becomes arguably increased when working in the open air, and even more so in areas rich in natural habitat. The sense of a breeze on the skin, warmth of the sun or the chill of drizzle, the sound of birdsong or traffic, and the additional visual stimulus all combine to heighten the physicality of the education process. In addition to the sensory impact, increased physical movement also contributes to the phenomenological experience of the learner.

One of the tensions, though, in bringing the phenomenological approach to education is that it risks being understood only through the lens of clinical practice. It can be as if matters of the body are attended to only as and when there is a difficulty to be understood. For my purposes here, I am referring to the bodily experience as it surfaces in the here and now. As in the work of Shepard and Abram, focusing on being alive through the body is not equated with some kind of re-enactment of an earlier somatic experience rooted in childhood. By turning attention to the sensate experience of here and now teaching and learning there is a keen sense of aliveness, and when this is combined with ecological concern it gives rise to a third educational movement: eco-pedagogy.

**Eco-pedagogy**

The idea that education and ecology are combined is most keenly represented in what I am referring to as eco-pedagogy. This originates from the activism of nature writers such as Wendell Berry (1977), Thomas Berry (1988), and earlier still, Waldo Emerson's work. These thinkers recognised the integrative quality of life as well as the need to protect it. This is an arena of campaigners, activists and, to coin a phrase, 'eco warriors'. As with the early writers, eco-pedagogy appears most associated with those prepared to be marginalised, disregarded as cranks, 'New Agers' or in some other way beyond the boundaries of convention.

The interesting aspect of this kind of writing and practice is that it shines a light on the edges of the mainstream and in doing so reminds us that consciousness is ever subject to change and expansion.

'The prevailing theme in what I am describing as eco-pedagogy is activism . . . it is not sufficient to admire nature, or engage with it. The task is to hear it, both external and internally. To understand that what is "out there" is the same as "in here" and that, furthermore it/I is under threat in terms of survivability.'

Arguably eco-pedagogy is most aligned with an indigenous education tradition. George Cajete's *Look to the Mountain* (1994), is the outstanding seminal text covering an indigenous understanding of pedagogy. Within this work, as with other perspectives directly addressed out of the indigenous educational experience, significant caution is expressed about a Western preoccupation with intellectualism. At its most dramatic, intellectualism is regarded as a poison at the heart of the disconnection suffered in the West. Descartes' motif – 'I think, therefore I am' – has had a powerful grip on determining and validating reality in Western culture that it has contaminated the legitimacy of other ways of experiencing the world. Holism is quite contrary to an intellectualised frame of reference and education is subsequently understood from a totally different perspective. The pedagogy of place, letting the land speak, engaging in sensing journeys all reflect the roots out of which learning emerges and that eco-pedagogy exists.

More recently eco-pedagogy has benefited from a range of new thinkers including Jennifer Gidley's work on postformal education (2018), by which she refers to a need for a new visioning of education beyond the legacy of an industrial model of education. Calling for a shift in consciousness, Gidley argues that nothing less than a revolution in social systems will position education as part of the solution to the planet's challenges. The Crex Crex Collective's innovative account of journeying in nature, *Wild Pedagogies* (2018), provides an example of education as if the planet mattered. Jeff Buckles' work connecting sustainability, the ecological social imaginary with the educational task demonstrates the kind of damage to the environment and the human species through disconnective models of schooling and higher education.

The prevailing theme in what I am describing as eco-pedagogy is activism. In this arena it is not sufficient to admire nature, or engage with it. The task is to hear it, both external and internally. To understand that what is

'out there' is the same as 'in here' and that, furthermore it/I is under threat in terms of survivability.
Here we find a rejection of a kind of education that is deeply entrenched in constructing the very features which create the threat, and an activism for establishing a practice of education which is about being well in, and with, the world.

My purpose in this paper has been to scope out the 'lay of the land', to take a first look across the landscape and see how the topics, theories and practices gather so it might be possible to navigate, at least initially, into what for the TA traveller might be new territory. The intention is not to encourage a colonialising eye, full of intent to organise, categorise and control. Any appetite to do so might be founded in a familiar convention, born out of a technically clever, well-schooled mind. Instead it has been my intention to promote an appreciation of what is emerging; a respect for what is already rooted and flowering. To do so may lead us to let this into our lives, our practice, with an admiring eye and, perhaps even, a love for what might lie ahead.

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# Finding still spaces
## ecotherapy, ecopsychology and TA

**SARAH DEVINE** introduces key elements of ecotherapy and ecopsychology, exploring how transactional analysis can help us hold nature in mind.

MY AIM IN this article is to describe my frame of reference (Schiff, 1975), I will introduce the fields of ecotherapy and ecopsychology and explore some transactional analysis (TA) concepts which can help us to hold nature in mind. I am attempting to connect several broad subjects in a short space so this will be an introductory overview. I hope to show some of the ideas that have shaped my thinking and practice, give the reader some ideas and maybe some permissions, (Crossman, 1966), to move their practice outside.

Dad was in the Air Force and we moved many times when I was a child. Mum loved to garden and she would create a garden, grow flowers and vegetables each time we moved house. She spent much of her time outside making the garden beautiful, even though we would only be there for a couple of years and then she would leave it behind, and do it all over again, somewhere new. We had a dog and cats and I remember going for long walks, playing in the garden and making dens around the Air Force camps with other children. Looking back, I think that nature gave me a valuable sense of connection and consistency that I needed while we moved house and changed schools every few years.

As an adult I continued to move house often and gardening and walking my dogs gave me safe, outside spaces to escape into and a sense of creativity and connection that I was lacking in my marriage and my career at that point. My marriage ended and I began a process of evaluating who I was and what I wanted in my life. I discovered TA and qualified as a counsellor, and several years later I began to study TA at The Berne Institute. I started to pay attention to the shift in seasons and began to consider my relationship to, and connection with, nature, which largely seems to have been lost in western culture. I began to think that we might be missing something as a result.

I was camping with my partner and our dog, and I remember sitting in the sun reading and coming across an advert in *the Transactional Analyst* magazine for something called a 'Natural Reflections Group' where therapists could explore their connection with nature and talk about outdoor practice in an woodland setting, I remember feeling really excited, thinking this is a thing, there are people in the TA community who might share my interests and think similarly to me, I was excited by this discovery and by my subsequent discovery that ecotherapy and ecopsychology were well established fields.

**So what are ecotherapy and ecopsychology?**

'Ecopsychology is about the psyche and the greening of psychology, ecotherapy focuses on the total mind-body-spirit relationship.' (Clinebell, 1996)

Ecotherapy and ecopsychology are diverse fields that explore the human relationship with nature and the non-human world, they consider the link between an increase in human mental and physical ill health and our disconnection from nature, along with the impact of the declining health of our planet.

Ecopsychology explores how we have got to the point where: 'People living in the 1990s are on average four and a half times richer than their grandparents were at the turn of the century, but they aren't four and a half times happier' (Durning, 1995, p69).

Different practitioners propose different theories about our disconnection from the natural world and the possible consequent impact on us. For example, Paul Shepard (1995) says: 'We may now be the possessors of the world's flimsiest identity structure, by Palaeolithic standards, childish adults. Because of this arrested development, modern society continues to work, for it requires dependence. But the private cost is massive therapy, escapism, intoxicants, narcotics . . . and, perhaps worst of all, a readiness to strike back at a natural world that we dimly perceive as having failed us.' (Shepard, 1995, p35)

He argues that we have moved away from lives where

'Ecopsychology is about the psyche and the greening of psychology, ecotherapy focuses on the total mind-body-spirit relationship.' Clinebell, 1996

children were raised in small hunter-gatherer communities, where they had a direct connection to the land and other animals, to our current situation where many of us live in societies where children have a distant relationship to the natural world, with no ritual to celebrate the transition from childhood to adolescence, he believes we have become stuck in a permanent state of adolescence.

There is also an argument within ecopsychology that we have developed a 'dissociative split in Western human's identity' (Jordan, 2016), which, in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, we can trace back to the Old Testament description of human 'dominion over the earth' (Genesis 1:26-28). This attitude of separateness (and possibly superiority) was further expanded by Descartes, 'The Cartesian self (w)as an invention of the enlightenment which drove modernism down the very path which separated things out in order to get a better view of them.' (Jordan, 2016, p61)

This is a process which Martin Jordan describes as 'binary dualism'. Here we can also see the Freudian idea of 'conflict . . . between the human ego consciousness, which has to struggle against the unconscious body-based animal id, in order to attain consciousness and truly human culture' (Metzer, 2009). This 'binary dualism' can be seen in our distinction between body/mind, humans/nature, spirituality/science. In addition to separating and drawing a distinction between terms, I believe we have also acquired a sense that one is somehow superior to the other, where the mind and humans are more important than body and nature. This attitude is reflected in conventional medical practice which treats a patient's individual conditions separately, we medicate for depression without considering physical health, relationships, or living conditions. It is also evident in our attitude to our planet, where humans largely see Earth's resources as available for exploitation, without consideration of the environmental consequences.

In contemporary Western culture:

'High rates of economic growth are regarded as signs of economic success, but overconsumption is depleting the planet's resources, creating massive waste, and often making people miserable. Consumption is almost universally seen as good — indeed increasing it is the primary goal of US economic policy (and) manifests the full flowering of a new form of human society: the consumer society.' (Durning, 1995, p68)

So, we have come to accept the view that our mind is separate from our bodies, that we humans are separate from the planet and other creatures, and many of us believe that we do not need spirituality, we have replaced this need with consumption. We have a situation where population growth and the consumer society are impacting on our planet, human and more-than-human life . . . and you might be thinking, fair enough, we live in a post modern, consumer society but what has this got to do with therapy and mental health?

'Findings on the benefits of greenery and natural settings for psychological health and wellbeing through stress reduction, improved cognitive and emotional functioning, and the development of identity, efficacy and meaning, are some of the strongest in social sciences.' Kaplan & Kaplan,1989

I think the answer to this is: everything! In Western culture many of us have become increasingly disconnected from our feelings, our bodies, our communities and the planet we live in. There is a growing body of evidence that suggests connection with nature and exercise in green spaces improves our physical and mental health: 'Findings on the benefits of greenery and natural settings for psychological health and wellbeing through stress reduction, improved cognitive and emotional functioning, and the development of identity, efficacy and meaning, are some of the strongest in social sciences.' (Kaplan & Kaplan 1989)

Reports from Mind (2007 & 2013a), the World Health Organisation (2016) and New Economics Foundation (2011) draw similar conclusions.

**TA and nature connection**

What does TA say about nature and wellbeing? There is little explicit in the traditional TA writings and, although we view script as consisting of our thoughts, feelings and beliefs about ourselves, others and the world (Berne, 1972), we have chosen not to explore 'the world' in much detail. Ecopsychology regards this individualistic approach as being unhelpful for people and the Earth, as TA practitioners we have tended to think about one person situated in their family of origin and culture, rather than thinking about a wider place in our ecosystem and 'a greater interconnected whole' (Jordan, 2016). We may be missing opportunities for health, connection and community as a result.

'One could accuse therapeutic psychology's exaggeration of the personal interior, and aggrandising of its importance, of being a systematic denial of the world out there, a kind of compensation for the true grandness its theory has refused to include and defended against.' (Hillman, 1995)

Our emphasis on individual autonomy, rather than collective homonomy, may have led us to a place where

‘A relationship with the natural world can meet some of the . . . psychological hungers and maybe even an epigenetic, human hunger for nature itself.’

we miss valuable information about our client's lives and relationships, we do not see the potentially transformative connections and relationships available, not only with other people, but with the more-than-human and natural world.

However, we do have some theories that we can apply. Berne (1970), talked about the six psychological hungers: contact, recognition, incident, stimulus, structure and sex or passion. Jody Mardula (2013), expands on these ideas and explores how people can seek to meet these needs in unhealthy ways. I believe that this model works for many of the clients who seek therapy, people who struggle with their identity and sense of self, people who feel depressed, anxious or disconnected, as well as the people in addiction that Mardula discussed.

I think that a relationship with the natural world can meet some of the above psychological hungers and maybe even an epigenetic, human hunger for nature itself. Edward Wilson (1984), uses the term Biophilia for the ‘innate tendency to focus on life . . . to seek kinship with the more-than-human world’ (Jordan, 2015) and this is an urge I recognise. I experience contact and recognition in my relationship with my dog, Zero, he is happy to see me, he seems to understand much of what I say to him and comes to me for affection, he gets strokes from me and he gives them back! He meets my need for stimulus when we play or go for a walk, my need for structure is also met by taking him for a daily walk and observing the changing seasons in the park we walk in every day helps to meet my hunger for incidents. Gardening and many other outdoor activities (including outdoor therapy) help me to meet my need for nature connection and can also help us to meet some of our psychological hungers in healthy ways, ways that promote connection with ourselves, human and more-than-human others and the world around us.

Muriel and John James (1991) talk about ‘expression of the urges’ rather than psychological hungers and state: ‘Each urge is inherently good and seeks to be expressed in positive ways. At the inner core of our being, we all want to live and be free, we all want to understand and create, to enjoy and connect. We want to transcend routine and rise to new heights that enhance life. Although the basic direction of an urge is for positive goals, each urge can also be expressed in non-productive or destructive ways.’ (James, 1991, p48)

In other words, we can express our urges in positive, creative ways or in non-productive or negative ways and sometimes we become stuck with scripty, unhealthy means of expressing and meeting our universal need for creativity and connection. We can develop a relationship with nature that helps us to reconnect, not only with ourselves but with other humans, with more-than-human life and the Earth, we can move towards healthier, more authentic ways of meeting these innate, essential urges.

Hayley Marshall (2016), draws on Berne's (1972), writing about ‘primal protocols’ the non verbal, unconscious sensations of our very earliest childhood which come before, and shape, our scripts. As these protocols are non verbal they can be very difficult to identify and work with in therapy. Marshall (2016), has written about the protocol which she, ‘understand(s) . . . as an unconscious aspect of non-conscious experience reflecting traces and shadows of problematic past encounters with self, others (human and non-human) and the physical environment. . . . They profoundly influence our everyday functioning, as well as offering invaluable information about the relational atmosphere of our earliest times.’ (Marshall, 2016, p154)

Marshall (2016), states that: ‘In my work outdoors, I have noticed that access to protocol experiences generally occur more readily and spontaneously as a result of the impact of a dynamic natural environment on the human body-mind. Through entering the natural world with an increased sense of immediacy, the therapeutic dyad has a potential new pathway into the world of the client's protocol.’ (Marshall, 2016, p154)

So, moving outside allows us to see things we would not ordinarily see in a therapy room, we can access parts of ourselves and our clients that might be pre-verbal, information that is held within our bodies and outside of our awareness, triggered by the act of moving and the impact of being outside in nature.

There is also evidence from a non-TA perspective that outdoor therapy democratises the experience for the client, they are working in partnership with the therapist and nature, rather than seeing the therapist as the expert in a clinical setting that belongs to the therapist which the client enters into (Jordan, 2015). An outdoor setting can provide metaphors (the changing seasons and new growth from previously fading or dying materials) for internal change, as evidenced in an ecotherapy project

‘Through entering the natural world with an increased sense of immediacy, the therapeutic dyad has a potential new pathway into the world of the client's protocol.’ Marshall, 2016

with acute mental health service users in Woolwich Common in London: 'One participant commented that her illness had become unshakeably fixed, and she could not consider that change was possible; yet looking outside herself at the Common from week to week she could no longer deny change. Seeing it outside, she began to tolerate the idea that change might also be possible inside.' (Jones, Thompson and Watson, 2016, p166)

I hope I have shown that there are sound therapeutic reasons for moving outside, and encouraging connection with nature, I hope I have also demonstrated that there are TA theories and theories from other modalities that support these actions. I am now practicing outdoor therapy, I see individual clients in a forestry centre near my home, I have run a small group working with anxiety in the forest and I am in the process of setting up an allotment therapy space where I intend to work with individuals and groups. The work feels very different outside, it is less intense and I tend to experience less counter transference, I feel more grounded and my sense is the clients get a different, more real experience of me and the therapeutic relationship in an outdoor setting (Marshall, 2016).

When we work outside clients are able to pace themselves in a more immediate and embodied way than in the therapy room (ibid), they can alter their walking and talking speeds, they can make as much eye contact as they are comfortable with (Jordan, 2015), and they can use the metaphors the woods provide to illustrate what they are talking about and experiencing (Jones, Thompson and Watson, 2016). I will end with a final quote that sums up my relationship with the Earth, this time from Faithless (1998): 'This is my church, this is where I heal my hurts . . .'

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# **Forest Bathing:** Shinrin-yoku

**RICHARD YOUELL** explores Forest Bathing as a means of developing listening and awareness skills for coaches, counsellors, therapists and supervisors.

FOR MOST OF my life I have enjoyed just being in the outdoors – particularly in wild, rural environments like forests, mountains and near lakes or the sea. When I was younger, I developed 'an eye' for wildlife and landscape photography – which was really a good excuse for spending more time outside, in nature. Over the last few years, I have developed an interest in field sound recording – listening to and recording natural soundscapes and wildlife sounds. I have recently reflected on how developing 'an ear' for natural soundscapes has informed my professional practice as an individual and team coach, facilitator and mediator – work which I often describe as being a professional listener.

I also have a fascination with difficult to teach and difficult to learn skills. By which I mean, abilities which are often 'unconscious competences' (Broadwell, 1969) which, whenever people who possess the ability are asked how they do something, usually reply 'Oh, I don't know – I just do it'. I have previously used Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) modelling techniques to 'extract' such abilities from people who excel at specific 'difficult' skills such as leadership, selling and *gravitas* in order to help those who wish to acquire such skills. I have done this by developing a generic model for the ability from multiple idiosyncratic models extracted from a number of people who do possess the ability. In a similar fashion, I have previously developed a generic model for the ability of some beekeepers to quickly find a Queen bee in a colony of several tens of thousands of honeybees; and, subsequently, supported a group of novice beekeepers to acquire the skill without having to spend years of beekeeping to develop their Queen finding ability.

Listening, really listening, without simultaneously applying any of one's own judgment or evaluation and with an openness to multiple perspectives is, I believe, one such difficult skill. It is also an essential and critical skill for coaches, counsellors, therapists and supervisors. Although some people are probably born with a genetic predisposition to listen well, others may have developed that skill after years of practice. While some, even those in the listening professions, appear to be a long way off demonstrating high levels of competence in the skill, even after many years of practice. Listening as a skill or ability is rarely given much teaching input on training courses for the listening professions – probably because it is believed to be one of those 'difficult' skills which students can only learn 'on the job', over a long period of time.

In this paper I will share my personal experiences of field sound recording and how those experiences have uniquely informed my practice as a professional listener and educator. I will do so mostly in a transactional analysis frame of reference, as well as refering to other models and theories which I consider to be relevant.

**Forest Bathing**

When I first heard about Forest Bathing it resonated strongly with some of my deeply held values, beliefs and experience. The term *Shinrin-yoku* was coined by the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries in 1982, and can be defined as 'making contact with and taking in the atmosphere of the forest'. Several peer-reviewed, randomised control trial (RCT) studies evaluating the effectiveness of Forest Bathing have shown clear positive benefits – not just the physiological benefits but psychological benefits too.

The results of these studies (Ulrich et al, 1991) indicated that time spent in forest environments lowered concentrations of cortisol, lowered pulse rate, blood pressure, increased parasympathetic nerve activity while lowering sympathetic nerve activity, compared with urban settings.

Frumkin (2001), Ulrich et al (1991) and Bum Jin Park et al (2009), all used the Profile of Mood States (POMS) indices in the following six effective dimensions: T–A

'[Research results] indicated . . . that time spent in forest environments lowered concentrations of cortisol, lowered pulse rate, blood pressure, increased parasympathetic nerve activity while lowering sympathetic nerve activity, compared with urban settings.'

(tension and anxiety), D (depression and dejection), A–H (anger and hostility), F (fatigue), C (confusion), and V (vigour) to gauge the psychological responses to *Shinrin-yoku*. The results of these psychological measurements suggest that *Shinrin-yoku* can 'relieve human psychological tension, depression, anger, fatigue, and confusion, and moreover, can enhance human psychological vigour.' (Bum Jin Park et al 2009).

**My experiences of field sound recording**

I have always loved being in the great outdoors and throughout my life a keen interest in landscape and wildlife photography has provided ample excuses to visit new places, climb new mountains, explore coastlines and to be in the very best places to watch the sun rise and set. That is until an 'epiphany moment' I had several years ago. While waiting for the sun to rise over a stunning landscape, I was suddenly struck by the amazing accompanying soundscape of a springtime dawn chorus – it was like someone had just switched on my sense of hearing.

This experience led to a number of things: I bought a digital sound recorder and microphone; I joined the membership organisation – The Wildlife Sound Recording Society; and finally, I attended numerous 'field-trips' with fellow wildlife and environmental sound enthusiasts to amazing places with rich and vivid natural environments. After some months practicing being in nature, I started to develop a deep attention to sounds which, to me, had previously gone unnoticed. By far my most valuable experiences were those 'in the field' with other enthusiastic and more skilful field sound recordists. I became an apprentice to their craft.

At first, I listened to what they said and saw what they did – and then started to ask them questions about how they did that? I quickly realised that for most, their ability to interact with nature, their 'fieldcraft' and their amazing listening skills were an 'unconscious competence' (Broadwell, 1969); they had little immediate conscious awareness of how and even what was important about what they did – for most it was 'simply' an innate ability that you either had or not. Over time I too developed an ear and eye for the natural world. Things that I would not have previously noticed became much more apparent and vivid.

Many field sound recordists are expert ornithologists, 'birders' or wildlife enthusiasts. Others are sound designers, drawn to collecting environmental and ambient soundscapes for use in music, films or as background sound for video games. A common theme among all field sound recordists, whatever the intended use of their recordings, seems to be a connection with and fascination for the systemic connection between the multiple factors and objects at play in nature – from the weather, the habitat and other 'macro' inputs such as presence of other species and potential threats as well as the detailed 'micro' details of plant and animal behaviours and how they all interact with and influence each other.

I soon learnt a new, and useful way of 'being' in nature which I modelled from those experts and enthusiasts that I spent time with on field trips. The 'mode' involves finding a place to stand or sit with a view and just becoming relatively still and really looking and listening. A slight disassociation with self – or 'turning down the volume' of any internal dialogue, processes or distractions and an opposite 'turning up the volume' on my senses – listening and looking intently – not just at one thing but developing a wider awareness of everything around me and how they are interacting. This is rather like a 'deep dive' into external awareness and an engagement with the incoming sensory information that would otherwise get filtered out or 'discounted'. After a period of time, usually a few minutes, I will start to become much more aware of and fascinated by what my senses are picking up. Remarkably, this usually corresponds with a time in which any wildlife which had been disturbed by my arrival becomes more comfortable with me being there and starts to vocalise and become active. At first, it would usually take several minutes for my awareness to really get 'tuned-in' to the outside environment and for my own internal distractions to quieten down. With practice, I can now usually achieve this mode within a minute or so.

One example of how a deliberate practice of forest bathing has helped me develop my listening and awareness skills is my quest to see, photograph and sound record Kingfishers. I live near the River Cam in Cambridgeshire, which is an ideal habitat for Kingfishers. This stunning bird, with iridescent turquoise and vivid orange plumage is surprisingly difficult to see. It is skilled in keeping itself well hidden by finding places to perch where it blends into the background. It swoops quickly and very low – just inches above the water level to hunt for the small fish which it dives to catch. I had been walking my dogs along a certain stretch of the river on a daily basis for many years, but despite this, never saw a single Kingfisher. The Kingfisher is one of the most

'A "turning down the volume" of any internal dialogue . . . or distractions, and a "turning up the volume" on . . . senses – listening and looking intently – not just at one thing but developing a wider awareness of everything around and how they are interacting.'

difficult bird species to successfully capture in a photographic image, it is both very shy and cautious of humans and skilful at hiding. Sadly, many people live their lives without ever seeing a Kingfisher.

In order to see a Kingfisher, you first need to develop an awareness of the sort of territory and habitat in which Kingfishers live. Second, developing an awareness of their typical behaviours and reactions to changes in the external environment is helpful. They are very shy and cautious birds and will spend long periods of time sitting 'hidden' and very still in a shady area in a tree or bush. I learnt to first sit or stand very still, in a 'safe' location where the Kingfishers are not threatened by my presence and enter a 'mode' of heightened listening and awareness. Finally, I learnt that concentrating on both watching and listening rather than simply looking is the best indication that a Kingfisher is nearby. Kingfishers emit a high pitched 'peep peep' sound, usually just before they swoop off a branch and fly low over the water to the next perching point. Alternatively, you might hear a small and relatively quiet splash as it dives into the water to catch a fish. It is in the moments after hearing the 'peep peep' that you need to turn awareness up to the maximum and look out for that distinctive fast and low over the water flight. Over time I developed the necessary awareness and listening skills to regularly see Kingfishers on my daily dog walk route and now have several recordings and photographs of Kingfishers hunting along my 'usual' stretch of river.

**Using nature in my work as a coach**

Much of my work as a coach, both to individuals as well as to teams, is more akin to supervision than a simple one to one relationship. Many of my coachees present with outcomes relating to their relationships with others; usually 'difficult' others, such as difficult bosses, staff or clients. These difficult relationships take place in a specific culture or organisational environment which have particular features and quirks which are usually a very different culture from the prevailing 'real world' norms. It is usually most effective for me to remain in a mode of heightened awareness and openness, while maintaining multiple simultaneous fascinations in what the client is describing and, every so often, asking inquisitive questions that help me (and the client) better understand their own thoughts, feeling and our collective awareness of the prevailing environment and impact of other people – including myself. To help me do this I use a framework for this type of supervisory-coaching – a model by Hawkins and Shohet (1989), known as 'the seven-eyed supervision model'. It recognises that multiple (up to seven) systemically-linked levels of awareness are required to perform this task effectively.

Whenever possible and if I can influence or choose the location to work with clients, I try to find a place, which includes some nature. Furthermore, I will usually suggest a walking coaching session whenever I feel that there is a 'stuckness' in the coaching relationship. It might be me that feels 'stuck' (going around the same old circles), the client unable to move on or step into a new way of being or doing, or the relationship between us which is feeling stale. A walking session will usually help unblock or unlock these unhelpful states.

There seems to be something very special about a 'shoulder to shoulder' rather than a 'face to face' interaction, which in my experience, is helpful to both the coach and coachee. Being side by side and having both parties facing forward, sharing a common view of the world, seems to engender a more collaborative relationship than when sat down opposite each other. The additional benefits of walking, providing both the physical exercise, which increases blood and oxygen flow to the brain and other sensing and processing organs, together with a geographical movement and forward progression seems to foster a willingness to allow an emotional or psychological shift, in both parties.

A walk outdoors also provides a fabulous opportunity to allow those 'soft fascinations' provided by nature to act as helpful distractions, which, while supporting an overall state of curiosity in both parties, offers a permission for an easy and relaxed processing of internal thoughts and feelings. Sometimes, during lengthy silences, while we both watch or listen to something happening 'out there', unhurried internal processing can comfortably take place inside.

Additionally, I have found that a coaching session in nature provides ample opportunities for in-the-moment source material for reflective consideration of parallel processes and other metaphors which arise as nature provides a continuous stream of fascinating and unplanned events. I will often utilise any natural cues and interruptions and integrate them into the coaching session. For example, 'and how is that (thing we just saw) like the problem you describe?' or 'what is the relationship between what we just observed and the possible ways forward?'

**Some relevant models, frameworks, concepts and theories**

**– Transactional Analysis (TA)**

Practicing listening in the outdoors clearly helps develop a sense of awareness; a deep and connected attention to the here and now while holding an internal and external stillness. In transactional analysis the concept of awareness is one of three components of the fundamental objective of autonomy. In *Games People Play* (1964), Berne wrote that 'the attainment of autonomy is manifested by the release or recovery of three capacities: awareness, spontaneity and intimacy' and that awareness

was the 'capacity to see a coffeepot and hear the birds sing in one's own way, and not the way one was taught... and requires living in the here and now, and not in the elsewhere, the past or the future.' In *What do you say after you say hello?* (1972), he referred to the uncontaminated part of Adult in a diagram of contaminations as the 'true autonomous area... [which] is actually free to make Adult judgments based on carefully gathered knowledge and observation.' In *Scripts people live*, Steiner (1974), stated that awareness is defeated through discounts – a mechanism by which our script diminishes our own awareness of the possibilities, significance and even existence of what we might perceive of the here and now – the reality of any situation. Awareness in this context includes not only what is present in the moment but also an openness to what realistically 'might be' or 'could be'. This openness to possibility can also be discounted by exactly the same (script) mechanism as occurs in the 'here and now' listening (and seeing) resulting in a very unhelpful and limited perspective of potential future possibilities. This discounting process is unhelpful when attempting or supporting learning or change; for psychotherapy or coaching clients, students, therapists and supervisors.

Temple (1999), reflects on the statement by Stewart and Joines (1998) that 'educators need to promote their own awareness, spontaneity, and capacity for intimacy to decrease the likelihood of symbiotic transactions and increase their ability to respond flexibly and effectively using a range of ego state manifestations' and proposes her model of Functional Fluency in which a functionally fluent teacher will 'tune in' to both internal and external stimuli, in 'accounting mode', assessing inner and outer current reality. Temple proposes a framework for teaching the integrating Adult ego state process, which I have found very useful, both personally and in my work as a coach and educator. She uses the words 'react' and 'respond' to distinguish the difference between choosing to respond or behave in a particular way, with full awareness of, and accounting for, both inner and outer reality, versus reacting in an automatic way while discounting or being unaware of internal and external reality. The ability to increase my internal and external awareness is a skill that I believe I have enhanced through my practice of listening in nature. In Functional Fluency terms Forest Bathing activities seem to enhance both the Natural Child's 'spontaneous mode' of curious and enthusiastic wonder of what is, and might be, and the Parent's 'nurturing mode' of accepting, appreciative and empathetic attunement with nature, while at the same time, enhancing the Adult's 'accounting mode' of being alert, aware and grounded, assessing and fully accounting for inner and outer current reality. There can be few other activities which engage and flex the Fully Integrated Adult muscle in such an effective (and enjoyable) way as practicing some Forest Bathing out in the natural world.

In *Levels of attention in clinical supervision,* Mothersole (1998), identifies the usefulness of supervisors being able to focus their attention on five different levels of the therapeutic process. He states that: 'The clinical supervisor's task is complex, stimulating, onerous and challenging. Within it are a myriad of decisions: what to attend to, how to attend to it, what to ignore with awareness and so on. It is important that as supervisors we allow our attention to wander in a positive, purposeful, and bounded way and yet not become channelled into habitual modes that limit our value to both our supervisees and their clients' (p299). He goes on to outline a 'map' for helping supervisors to scan such interactions and make informed, flexible choices as to what to attend to and why; a skill which he refers to as 'appropriate supervisory peripheral vision'.

**– Attention Restoration Theory (ART) and Nature Deficit Disorder (NDD)**

Attention Restoration Theory (ART) follows on from the early work of Kaplan & Kaplan (1989). It asserts that people can concentrate better after spending time in nature or even simply looking at scenes or pictures of nature rather than urban settings. Natural environments abound with 'soft fascinations' which a person can reflect upon in 'effortless attention'. The theory was developed by Rachel and Stephen Kaplan in the 1980s in their book, *The experience of nature: A psychological perspective*, and further developed in the more recent publication, Kaplan (1995). Later still, Berman et al (2008), discuss the foundation of the Attention Restoration Theory (ART). 'ART is based on past research showing the separation of attention into two components: involuntary attention, where attention is captured by inherently intriguing or important stimuli, and voluntary or directed attention, where attention is directed by cognitive-control processes.' The ability to hold both these types of attention simultaneously, while not allowing either to

'Attention Restoration Theory (ART) is based on research showing the separation of attention into two components: involuntary attention, where attention is captured by inherently intriguing or important stimuli, and voluntary or directed attention, where attention is directed by cognitive-control processes.'

dominate or suppress the other is, I believe, one of the key skills in the listening professions. Furthermore, it is an ability which can effectively and enjoyably be developed and practised by spending time in nature.

Conversely, Nature-Deficit Disorder (NDD) is the idea that human beings, especially children, are spending less time outdoors, and the belief that this has resulted in a wide range of behavioural problems. Richard Louv, author of *Last child in the woods* and *Vitamin N*: *The essential guide to a nature-rich life*, believes that the removal of children from unstructured play in natural environments has serious consequences on the mental, social and physical health of our children, including lasting impacts on the developing brain. While NDD is currently not explicitly recognised by the medical and research communities and is not specifically included in either of the well-known manuals for mental disorders (ICD and DSM), there is a growing body of evidence which supports a view that deprivation of human contact with natural environments can have a negative psychological as well as physiological impact.

**– Time to Think**

I first met Nancy Kline over 14 years ago while I was first training to be a coach. Nancy developed the Time to Think model which is now one of the foundations of my coaching practice. The Time to Think model (Kline, 1999) identifies ten components of a 'thinking environment' which inform the coach how to best provide an environment which supports and enables the client to do their best thinking. Since studying transactional analysis, I can see that there are clear parallels between a thinking environment and providing a space where the client is best supported to be Functionally Fluent in an integrated Adult ego state (Temple, 1999). The Time to Think model provides a set of enabling beliefs for the coach to hold which initiate the setup and holding of such an environment. It is a cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) approach to adopting an integrated Adult mode. Readers familiar with CBT (or NLP) techniques will be aware of the powerful impact holding beliefs can have on the actions, abilities and behaviours of those holding them. One of the key beliefs in Time to Think is that 'The quality of your attention determines the quality of other people's thinking' (Kline, 1999). I struggled with the model a little at first because it seemed to lack any instructions on what to 'do' only how to 'be'. I was also a little unsure how to adjust or to optimise the 'quality of my attention' until I started to practice this out in nature where the quality of my attention was more easily recognised (and rewarded) with an increased awareness; noticing and identifying new species, sounds and behaviours.

'Being in a natural environment provides a rich and vivid source of multiple, simultaneous and connected soft fascinations that a more traditional or basic mindfulness practice usually do not include.'

**– Neuroscience**

Unlike our eyes, which we can close, our ears and ability to hear is always 'on', even when we are asleep and even while in a coma (Steiner et al, 2015). To prevent our conscious awareness being continually overloaded with the 'noise' of sounds, our ear-brain continually filters what the ear hears – to fit with our internal frame of reference or 'map of the world', so that we can better make sense of what we are hearing. Developing a deeper awareness through listening in nature can help to overcome some of the unhelpful features of this continual filtering process and help us instead to fully account for the sensory information available to us in the here and now; both what is and what might be.

Our autonomic nervous system (ANS) controls the ingredients of the hormonal soup that flows in our veins. This system is made up of two divisions – the sympathetic nervous system which relates to our 'flight or fight' response to threats and danger and the parasympathetic nervous system which is sometimes called the 'rest and digest' system. The two divisions operate in parallel but use pathways which are distinct in structure and neurotransmitter systems.

The results of the physiological experiments conducted by Ulrich et al (1991), yield convincing answers explaining the relationship between the natural environment and the relaxation effects in a human being, specifically: a decrease in blood pressure and pulse rate; inhibition of sympathetic nervous activity; enhancement of parasympathetic nervous activity; and a decrease in cortisol concentration levels in human beings. Practicing being in such a mode, mindset or 'resourceful state' while Forest Bathing makes it easier to consciously switch into that state by choice – with the corresponding effects to both the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems and associated improvements in awareness.

**Conclusions**

Much of my work as a coach involves giving others 'a good listening to'. For me, being in the outdoors is an important (and enjoyable) way of developing the skills of listening and holding the multiple simultaneous attentions necessary to do such work. The resulting fatigue that can result from such outwardly inactive work can be surprising. Directed attention, over a period of

time, seems to require considerable energy, concentration and skill which I sometimes find exhausting. In turn, the restorative benefits of spending time outdoors seem to provide a rapid and effective way of recovering – with benefits both to my physical and mental wellbeing. As Kaplan (1995) summarised in his work on the restorative benefits of nature and his subsequent work on Attention Restoration Therapy – natural environments turn out to be particularly rich in the characteristics necessary for restorative experiences. For me, Forest Bathing type activities, go beyond the benefits of physical exercise alone (such a jog, run or bicycle ride), which although undoubtedly provide some useful physiological and psychological benefits, lack the opportunities to stop and pay attention to fascinating objects, processes and scenery together with the time, space and permission to fully sense and attend to them, which I find so engrossing. It is these 'soft fascinations' such as wildlife, plants, clouds, sunsets and the motion of leaves in the breeze which Kaplan notes hold the attention in an undramatic fashion. Furthermore, being in a natural environment provides a rich and vivid source of multiple, simultaneous and connected soft fascinations that a more traditional or basic mindfulness practice usually do not include.

Learning in nature seems to have considerable benefits – not just for young children and those learning specific skills to become effective in a 'listening profession' but anyone seeking to make changes to how they think feel and behave. Many of my coaching clients have reported significant moments or encounters in our work outdoors which have resulted in significant shifts in their own thinking, feelings and behaviours. Shifts in thinking and feeling which might not have occurred so easily, if at all, in a more conventional, face to face and indoor setting.

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# Reparenting and reconnecting with nature in education

**SEAN HENN** works in a Special Educational Needs and Disability school, here he shares his experience of working with a fourteen-year-old outside the normal school environment.

THIS ARTICLE AIMS to provide insight to some of the more unfamiliar aspects of learning going on within our schools, with a focus on the education happening outside of the classroom and specifically in the emotional development of our young people at present. I want to introduce a particular piece of work I have been undertaking with a student,* to give an idea of some of the crucial interventions taking place in some of our schools today through their pastoral teams.

Billy is a fourteen-year-old boy currently attending a Special Educational Needs and Disability(SEND) school. The school is a secondary provision for students with social, emotional, mental health difficulties (SEMH) and other complex needs. My role within the school is Student Support Worker, one part of the school's Emotional Support Team (EST). Another key player within the EST team and central to Billy's story, is my co-worker Clive, a five-year-old Whippet and the school's Student Support dog.

Billy came to our school with a diagnosis of MLD and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), which he has been medicated for since the point of diagnosis approximately around the age of five. In addition, there was a history of significant domestic violence and emotional abuse which he both witnessed and experienced from an early age. Billy's paperwork described him as having behaviours associated with complex post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and gave a graphic example of one of his parents' ex-partners purposefully burning his favourite teddy in front of him. He is the youngest child of many children, several of whom have been taken into care. Billy's parents are separated and he spends his time alternating on a weekly basis with each of them. Both parents struggle with managing Billy's behaviour out of school and have had significant support from myself and external agencies including social services, supporting them with parenting to keep Billy safe at home and in the wider community. Although there were ongoing concerns outside of school, supporting the family with a complex array of difficulties, Billy seemed stable and generally happy in school.

Things changed for Billy soon after the summer holidays following year 9 and his transition into year 10. This is often a difficult time for our students due to the change in focus towards accredited courses and related coursework, exams and preparation for further education. The pressure begins to mount and the anxiety steadily increases. Billy's behaviour began to deteriorate, regularly out of class 'storming' around the school, often heard shouting out loud 'I hate this school', 'I don't want to be here anymore' or 'I hate my life'. He was almost unapproachable in the moment, constantly circling the outside areas of the school, refusing help offered by staff he had built trusting relationships with and distracting his peers from outside the classroom. This escalated to low level self-harming such as punching walls and scratching, marking himself with various implements he found on his travels around the school site while in distress. The messages were clear, 'I need some help!'

**Assessment of need**

The early development of Billy's difficulties coincided with my introduction to Educational TA training. I had recently been introduced to the Cycles of Development model (CoD), Barrow & Newton (2004), and found the concept of 'stages before ages' a useful and stimulating way of thinking, particularly with the cohort of students I support. I decided to use Barrow's CoD assessment tools, Barrow, G. (2019), as a foundation for my planning around Billy. I identified his behaviours as communicating wants and needs primarily associated with the 'Doing' stage. Keeping those key tasks of the child in mind, 'to explore the environment and all his senses, to build trust and secure attachments', I needed a suitable environment to work with Billy and allow for this exploration to happen. It seemed obvious to take what he was verbally expressing literally and offer to 'get him out of school'. I sat Billy down one morning and explained that I and many others in school were concerned about

'It seemed obvious to take what Billy was verbally expressing literally and offer to "get him out of school".'

*Appropriate permission has been given for this article to be published.*

him and suggested a weekly session taking Clive for a walk offsite might be useful to reflect on how he was currently feeling in school? Billy without hesitation eagerly accepted!

As I previously mentioned, Clive is our student support dog and often my co-worker during direct work with students in school. Clive arrived some five years ago primarily as a family pet, however I had already agreed with our Headteacher to trial bringing him into school occasionally to support our students' emotional development. Clive was an instant hit and as the positive impact he was having with regard to students' behavior and engagement with our team began to show, he quickly became a full-time member of the school. Clive has grown up in the school environment which has helped him develop a patient manner, sensitive to our students' wants and needs, which balances well with his playful and affectionate nature. Over the years I have found him a valuable asset in building relationships with our students and more recently I am becoming acutely aware of how much he brings to our professional partnership.

**First phase intervention**

Our sessions began at first at a local park consisting of a large green open space surrounded by hedgerow with a few trees at one end. I was already aware Billy spent a great deal of his time away from school 'out and about' as he would say. The lack of boundaries he receives at home supported this and although in the past this has led to some safeguarding concerns, it has given Billy the freedom to explore his local urban environment. The impact on Billy was immediate, his positive energy and vigour was apparent and his pleasure at being offsite and outside was encouraging. I had envisaged our sessions, like many others I had undertaken, would be me gently leading the conversation toward home or school, eventually followed by open dialogue on the real issues at hand. Ideally, we would then create a plan or decide on some strategies to move in the direction of some form of resolution. However, my attempts fell on muted ground. Each time I guided our discussion in this direction, Billy would verbally shut down, or deflect my enquiries, and redirect us to the important business of walking Clive.

After some reflection on this I decided to cease my investigation, step back and allow Billy to take the lead. After the initial free play consisting of throwing the ball for Clive to fetch and the ensuing game of chasing Clive to retrieve the ball, Billy quickly decided Clive needed more 'training' and he was the man to do it! First stage of training was 'stay'. Immediately I noticed Billy's posture change, he was physically overbearing with a wide stance and chest puffed out making himself as tall as possible. He altered his tone, becoming deep and aggressive, repeatedly shouting his commands, wanting Clive to sit and wait for him to throw the ball.

Unfortunately for Billy, Clive was unresponsive to his commands and was still very much in his playful mode, bouncing around, occasionally jumping up and trying to snatch the ball from Billy's hand. Billy's frustration was obvious, realising this task was more complicated than he first expected he switched to teasing Clive by pretending to throw the ball and sending him sprinting away. Billy took great pleasure in Clive's confusion, laughing out loud and making comments such as, 'Look at him, he's stupid!' and 'What's wrong with him? Can't he see I've still got it?' While internally fighting the urge to step in and take control, it dawned on me that Billy was giving me a glimpse into his own parental experiences and communicating from his Parent ego state. Using Temple's, Functional Fluency Model (1999) in my thinking I took the opportunity to covertly share some of her theory with him. I suggested Clive may have a bit too much energy for learning right now and that maybe he should let him have some free time just exploring the park. Billy agreed and while we followed I described what I had noticed when he was training Clive, focusing on his tone and use of language (dominating mode). I explained that in my experience, Clive responds better to a gentle, kind voice (nurturing mode) and that saying words over and over again just confuses him. When I noticed Clive had begun to tire and with the knowledge that he was able to sit when requested, I modelled what we had discussed. I talked him through each stage, calling him over using my 'kind' voice and giving lots of praise, 'Come here Clive, that's a good boy'. Keeping calm and patient with him until I had his full attention, then changing my tone slightly, being clear and firm (structuring mode) but not aggressive, asking him to 'sit' just the once, followed by a big display of praise when eventually Clive obliged.

Now it was time for Billy's turn. After some gentle reminders he quickly achieved the desired result, Clive was alert, responsive and eager for more interaction. Billy was delighted. In the following sessions Billy continued his 'training' of Clive or as I surmised, re-parenting himself through these interactions and developing his ego states throughout the process. On reflection it seemed that, at times during our sessions, the three of us all held one of his ego states, Clive his Child, Billy his Parent and I his Adult, accounting for what was happening in the present and reflecting this back to Billy.

'On reflection it seemed that, at times during our sessions, the three of us all held one of his ego states, Clive [the dog] his Child, Billy his Parent and I his Adult.'

As the sessions progressed his behaviour in school began to change, his outbursts had decreased and rather than the 'storming' of before, he was now directing himself to the EST team and beginning to express his wants and needs verbally.

**Second phase intervention**

Our sessions began to take another direction and we ventured further afield, exploring our local surroundings. I introduced Billy to local stables and public footpaths taking us through rural settings that were right on Billy's doorstep but of which, until now, he had been unaware. Billy was in his element while immersed in these green spaces, focused, energetic but engaged at all times while on our excursions, showing an innate respect and appreciation for the natural environment. I have recently been introduced to Richard Louv's theory of 'Nature Deficit Disorder' (Louv, 2008) a 'diagnosis' I would suggest is much more appropriate in Billy's case than his ADHD label. Louv speaks of our societies developing disconnection with nature through our growing dependency on technology, the internet and engagement with the virtual world. How our society and education systems are unconsciously teaching our young people to fear the outdoors through well-intentioned lessons such as 'stranger danger'. He draws attention to the importance of meaningful, direct contact with nature and its influence on the healthy development and emotional wellbeing of children, also suggesting the rise in ADHD diagnoses in children and lack of outdoor experiences may be related. Louv's comments on research into the therapeutic influences of exposure to the natural environment were particularly heartening in relation to my work with Billy.

On one such excursion, Billy had taken it upon himself to come equipped with a large plastic bag in order to pick up any rubbish he passed while out on our walk with Clive. We came across a small natural pond on top of a hill and Billy was immediately animated. He produced a lump of knotted fishing line from his pocket and using the ring pull from the top of a drinks can from his collection of litter, devised a makeshift hook and set to work fishing! The rest of our session was spent with Billy introducing me to his new found passion for course fishing – unfortunately, despite his ingenuity, he was unsuccessful and only managed to pull in pond weed on this occasion. He explained that some weeks back he had been out exploring on his bike and discovered a local fishing lake and had convinced his father, who had some fishing experience, to take him out and show him the basics. He now had his own kit and was independently going down to the lake at any opportunity he had. I gave Billy strokes for pro-actively seeking out his new hobby and drew attention to the emotional impact of learning this new skill seemed to have on him. Billy was insightful in his reflection, discussing his emotional states while fishing with a level of maturity which surprised and heartened me. It was clear to me on our return walk to school listening to Billy's passionate descriptions of his time spent at the lake, that this was opportunity to further support Billy's personal and emotional development.

After consultation with our Headteacher, we met with Billy and contracted an end of term fishing trip as reward for some easily achievable targets. Our focus was on his own personal care and self-regulation, in that he should be physically clean every day for school with correct uniform and to continue to seek support from myself and the EST team when he had difficulties in school. Billy was enthusiastic and again eagerly accepted the offer.

Our first excursion to the lake was highly anticipated by Billy and was the focus of most of our sessions building up to the event. Billy had taken his personal care tasks seriously and took great pleasure in showing off his efforts. Billy had decided it was his turn to 'teach me something' and planned his lesson and the logistics of when to pick up his kit and which of it we would need with precision, allowing me to give out numerous strokes for his problem solving skills and attention to detail. I was able to guide the conversation back towards school and to how he might transfer these abilities to the classroom environment without him getting agitated and avoidant as before. Logistically our trip went exactly as Billy had planned, however the structure of the lesson was not as I had envisaged. His demeanor was nervous and agitated, unusually he seemed disconnected from me and the environment we found ourselves in.

The fishing lake is surrounded by beautiful woods on common land and is fed by a substantial reservoir with managed wetlands attracting lots of wildlife. Billy was always on the move, rushing around adjusting and recasting his many rods, telling me what he was doing at a frenetic pace. His method of 'teaching' was very much 'I show you and then do it for you' and as the learner I felt distracted, unsettled and at times extremely frustrated – common themes for Billy in his role as student in school. He was clearly desperate to catch a fish to show me his level of competence and pushed the boundaries of our contracted time so that were back late to school. As it happens he did finally catch a 4lb Perch in the final minutes and it was a joy to see his pleasure and gentle approach when handling the fish and setting it free.

Our second visit to the lake was very different. It had been a few months since our previous outing and his skill and understanding of his sport had grown and he was well on his way to expert levels. His manner was confident and calm, the anxiety and hyperactivity of our first encounter at the lake had gone and he seemed to parallel the tranquility and calm of the natural setting. Billy had brought along noticeably less kit than before and I soon realised the focus for this session was on me

and developing my fishing skills.

He had chosen two similar-sized rods for each of us and took me through the various stages of set up by demonstrating on his rod then asking me to copy each step on mine. He was patient and relaxed in his approach giving me guidance throughout and positive feedback when I had completed each task. Billy followed this with a practise casting session which he continued with a similar teaching style until he decided I had reached the desired competence. The experience was markedly different from my perspective as I found myself fully engaged with the task and feeling very much included. With our lines out and baited we picked a spot and sat down to watch for any movement as Billy casually shared his memorable moments from his time at the lake. Catching his first Carp and Pike, seeing a deer burst out of the woods and a snake swimming past his line were some of his highlights. He spoke about the people he had befriended and how they had helped him with words of advice and guidance while he was 'just starting out'. Although we didn't get a bite that day, the experience felt richer and more productive than our first attempt and it was clear Billy had found his place in the community that uses the lake and a real connection to the environment that supports it.

**Outcomes**

Billy is coming to the end of year 10 and approaching his final year in school. The impact on his emotional development has been positive with Billy able to seek out support in the moment and when calm he has the ability to name and then reflect on the situation, allowing his Adult awareness to account for his Child's impulses and seek out more appropriate solutions. Billy's self-harming behaviours have now significantly reduced and he is developing self-regulation strategies to manage situations and interactions he finds difficult. He has reintegrated well with his peer group and his social circle is ever growing, to the extent he has been seen on a number of occasions attempting to support younger students when they have been in emotional distress. Billy has really taken to the role of mentor and recently suggested he could invite a particular student along on our next fishing trip to 'help him out'. The student in question has experienced similar traumatic events in his early life and at times his behaviour in school displays in a very similar way to that of Billy's at the beginning of the year. His insight and empathy towards this student was a delightful demonstration of his emotional growth.

**Conclusion**

I have found working outdoors enhances my professional practice in many ways. The natural environment brings another dynamic to the work, it provides an energy that stimulates the senses and gives both student and educator the permission to explore and promotes spontaneity throughout the process of the intervention. The result being, in my experience, a more valuable and effectual relationship with the students I work with. There is something exciting about the constant change and regeneration you experience outdoors in a natural setting, it guides the work and encourages openness in the individual. As previously mentioned, due to the cultural shift within our society towards a dependency on technology and a growing disconnection with our natural environment, I feel consciously connecting with nature is of particular importance when working with young people at present. The necessity of working in a natural setting for Billy to undertake his re-parenting work is clear to me. This intervention would not have been possible working indoors, the environmental aspect being the influencing factor in how the work developed and nature the added component in our educational relationship. Billy's story is a fine example of the need for a better awareness, as human beings, of our innate relationship with nature and the powerful impact it can have on our mental health and wellbeing.

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# The downhill sigh of another story exhaled

**SARAH PRITCHARD,** now a practicing outdoor therapist, reflects on her experiences, over a number of years, of being an outdoor client.

I only went out for a walk
and finally concluded to stay out till sundown,
for going out, I found,
was really going in.

John Muir

WITH A DENTED heart I returned to therapy eight years ago wanting to grieve and make reparation. By chance I was recommended a therapist who happened only to have space on her 'outdoor' day – which happened to be my day off teaching. Serendipity upon serendipity, I practically raced her to the chosen outdoor location: some fields and woods below Poole's Cavern in Buxton. Thus began my nearly five-year journey outside in.

You are the up hill breathy slog
the sun kissed sky views
the natural highs, the opening gate,
the stile to another somewhere
the downhill sigh of another story exhaled[1]

I grew up a child of domestic violence, shifting from school to US military base across Trans-Atlantic continents. Indoors never felt very comforting. Outdoors provided a freedom I could never get enough of – my happy place is always a recollection of wandering through woods, creeks and hills with my sheep dog and pony until called back in to meals or chores and what felt to me like unchild-friendly rules. Give me my little blue plastic boat floating along mud banks with the frogs, snakes and crayfish, or a bolting bare back pony any day. Walking outdoors gave me back the space to stretch again limbs, memories, dreams and neural pathways.

As a dog walker throughout my thirty-year teaching career I had always enjoyed the phenomenon of taking my problems for a walk. I remember describing to my therapist how I experienced a fast-paced knotty walk which morphed into a more measured stroll and at a certain corner on my regular trail, I often felt an 'ah-ha moment' where suddenly the knot in my mind fell away and I could see more clearly the way forward. This would often be accompanied by an altered awareness of surroundings; first head down, furrowed brow, stomping feet, followed by head up, shoulders down and an awareness of hedgerows, birds, the weather. I'm not sure why I was surprised. As a drama teacher I had always chorused at the students that 'moving moves you on'. Teacher teach thyself!

With an outdoor therapist as a guide, this process condensed and multiplied, for now I had a mentor to reflect and question me as I walked on the wild side. And I had nature to join in. I quickly felt safe to return to a kind of Free Child exploration of my history, present challenges and future aspirations. I remember often almost skipping when it was bright out and hugging the sun rays, delighting in sightings of caterpillars, a flying heron, horses knee deep in snow. In this way, I felt a sense of renewal and accompanied by a Nurturing Parent (both my therapist and nature) in my commentary of this rejoicing in the outdoors, fresh revelations on how the contrast of heavy challenges in my professional indoor walks of life, were unsatisfactory. I began a walk through of my decision making (and re-decision making) and how I could bring back this outdoor expanded sense of aliveness indoors to work and personal relationships from a potent integrated Adult position. I remember often passing a tree with a love heart carved into it, patting it and thinking I want that sense of love back in my life.

Nor am I unaware of the harsh realities of being drawn outside. Nature is a different place by day and by night.

Nature deserves due respect. I have friends who grew up in the city who have been quite scared of the countryside and looked to me as a guide on walks. But for me, going out into the wild, after years of being a free range child (as opposed to the cooped up state of tension of so many battery children I have taught!) released my natural, child-like, creative side and most importantly as an adult, soothed my over-burnt brain.

Take my head away
bring me back my
bark, my feathers
my hoof, paw
claw & fin.[3]

**Ravine deep, crag high**

I am often asked 'do you go out in all weathers?' Yes, we did. I have strong memories of its impact too: huddling under trees when it poured, which mirrors my memory of huddling similarly to cry over the five deaths of friends and family I experienced during that therapy; walking to higher ground when it was sunny, gaining better views and perspectives on my knotted issues; engaging with frogs, caterpillars, wild flowers and birds as they intervened or were on our paths, carrying on oblivious of my problems.

And there are other people to contend with. I recall acknowledging them and keeping on stomping on as purposefully as possible. I remember the first time we changed location to a wilder, quieter place in the hills and I felt like my school had followed me on my day off as a whole cross-country run of children ran past!

Also dogs will be dogs and run up to greet, wag tails and run on. And yes, I did contract to bring my old well behaved dog Louis occasionally. He would get very bored if we stopped to talk for too long and bark at us to move on!

There was human detritus to encounter. The outside, as written about so powerfully in many books I have taught, can be lawless, a place for outsiders: runaway teens, disgruntled lovers, crazy middle aged women – all good stuff to contemplate alongside random encounters, as in life, and our impact on nature.

There were dark places to explore as well. I came carrying grief, and it linked back, as so often, to many another past grief and trauma. Being a drama teacher I was demanding. I wanted to work and walk through some scenarios that stuck to me like bindweed. A tree, or a stone was useful to explore different standpoints in a psychodrama/ or No Chairs exercise! My favourite memory is talking to what I called The Motherfucker Tree – an old, wizened oak tree hanging over a ravine. I was able to talk back to her, appreciate her and leave her behind or some of the contaminated thoughts I had internalised from her. How did I leave her behind for

future sessions? I used the drama convention of de-roling her of her role, a powerful drama convention, that leaves the drama on stage. My love of the kinaesthetic, experiential learning, was a useful driver in contracting for this work. Sometimes my therapist would have a look of horror on her face when I proposed things, but after some thorough co-collaborating, I would boldly go, while she directed with pertinent questions.

What happened if we fell? We did. Even that became powerful fodder for my work. We had from the get go, contracted to help each other in the event. As it happened, my therapist fell long before I did and I was able to catch her wrist, catching her fall. I remember feeling tearful. It reminded me of my child-like fear of my mother falling over (which she did a lot) and my continual fear of losing her as my carer. This unearthed further rich relics to reflect on.

I have laid down my burdens At Lightwood
my fossiled child
my falling down mother
my leave taking of lovers
my salary slave
here with this family of trees
this unworried stream
what is broken, lost and ashen
re roots.[2]

**Out of the woods**

One day while driving over the peaks to a session and looking across a wide open sky filled horizon, I was gripped by a fear of the unknown. I was approaching retirement from teaching. I took this into the therapy. By the end of the session I had walked through my hopes and fears and embraced a new vision of re-training and felt the release of knowing I could work/walk through the shedding of the old skin and metamorphose happily into a new shaped me.

But before that, the ending of therapy. I came with the grief of a sudden end of a relationship. This ending was very important. We negotiated three or four sessions to

wind down and planned some rituals to mark the moment. It is often said that therapy takes place as much between the sessions. I often caught the process in poems shortly after, or as doing a solo exercise. After fifteen years of writing 'morning after' pages (Cameron, 1992), I had become quick at decluttering mentally and envisioning a new, creative poetic picture. This can be seen as a self-help process to decontamination. Reciting my review of our time together in a poem was therefore crucial for me. I read from the craggy look out. I also brought a collection of natural relics from other favourite outdoor places important to me: a swan feather; a Kentucky Ohio river fossil; a piece of Norfolk flint and so on. I brought a handful of soil from my home county, Norfolk, to sprinkle. I had some solo time to say goodbye to the place as a client. I paddled under a bridge, climbed upstream and wrote a poem of good bye. I released the swan feather that flew upstream. Eventually I crossed a bridge agreed as a threshold. We exchanged gifts and hugs. It was over. I felt sad but complete. As I walked away down the lane a butterfly man caught me and whisked me along in his monologue about the butterflies of the area he was studying.

Four years on I am one of the rare birds who have trained in outdoor therapy AND had years of outdoor therapy in all weathers. One of the regular joys I see is that of a dog running up the hills, or up to us, as complete strangers, bounding with joyful energy. I never tire of this sight. It reflects one of my totems and is a celebration of released indoor to outdoor energies. I feel the call and comfort of working outdoors as much as indoors, creating a space to be natural inside out.

Let the laughing stream,
let the communing birds,
let the stoic trees
in their tall stillness

bear witness
to this burying of skin
this panting into the earth
this unfolding, enfolding
Welcoming me back.[3]

**Ripples**

These reflections were originally written in January 2017 after an outdoor interview, going back to my 'therapy-scape' with Stephanie Revell, who, following on her work with outdoor therapists (2016), used me as a case study on an outdoor client. Her learned, academic analysis will be published in 2020, in which she eloquently summarises my themes, the lack of other studies on outdoor clients and the many other opportunities for research in this area remaining. Meanwhile, I offer these ruminations.

**Aqua Arnemetia (Buxton)[1]**

You are the white hills of jacketed snow horses
the frosted shrubs
the calf hugging snow
the crystalline bark
the reaching naked hands of trees
held open.

You are the giggling stream
that glides through the forest
past the monumental quarried walls
to the bridge that crosses us
between past & future
to here & now.

You are the muddy, slippery hills
that half hold and toss us along the way
the moss bobbled stone walls
the fallen trunks that straddle
the arched bows of saplings
we duck, you part, I gather.

You are a thousand leafy green umbrellas
catching rainy tears
the technicolour turnings of seasons' fallings
a lifetime of good byes to Summer's warming lover
the rotting, the rooting, the spring back
of spiralling green armed spears
reaching for brighter futures.

You are the up hill breathy slog
the sun kissed sky views
the natural highs, the opening gate,
the stile to another somewhere.
the downhill sigh of another story exhaled.

You are my guide, my mentor,
holding, holding, holding all-
this untamed, tangled find, this raging cage
this rush of human animal
still straining at the leash
dancing my spirit back to the wild
you free me.

*(Written after my first year of outdoor therapy)*
*A version of this is published in Cotton Grass Appreciation Society (a celebration of The Pennines in Poetry) May Tree 2019*

**Lightwood[2]**

I have laid down my burdens At Lightwood
my fossiled child
my falling down mother
my leave taking of lovers
my salary slave
here with this family of trees
this unworried stream
what is broken, lost and ashen
re roots.

Middle aged women have come
down from the attic
and made secret ceremonies
in time to rain and wind
walked quietly among trees
side stepping frogs & moth caterpillars
and happy dogs presenting moles.
As the hawk or the heron flew
and other birds sang
not just for mating
sometimes still together
listening loudly
to the language of rocks
plants, water and sky.

Outdoors,
the doors to outsides
with witches, wise women
rebellious youth and wilders

As a path one way is different on the way back so
each foot fall a new beginning
each trail a new way of moving
each hill a new challenge
each look out a new view.

I am this holey, rusty, flinty, odd shaped heart stone
I am this petrified shell being re discovered
I am this feather from a wing that fell on the water after take off
I am this worn piece of sea glass and river shard
from broken pieces
falling back together
I am all of this you
have lightly held & rocked.

Each return a resolve
each step back a little good bye
each hug a small death
each reach for the road a stretch away
each drive back a denouement
each door shut back inside a final curtain.

As the outsiders neatly
put their insides back away
and walk in measured steps within walls which
have no seasons and the air no wind or rain
I look wistfully out of my attic window
And see the ghosts of just now
still slopping, stretching and swishing untidily
round the cauldron of the hills.

*(Written & read as part of a ritual ending of four and a half years of outdoor therapy)*

**Shining Cliff** [3]

Take my head away
bring me back my
bark, my feathers
my hoof, paw
claw & fin.
Find me my shell, my sack, my burrow
my beginning
crawl me roll me flatten me into this earth
let her be
my head, my belly, my womb
as I lay lightly alongside her
feeling my unpregnancies
I am fecund with her
my arms embrace her crucifixion.
learn me how again to move
and be animal
or a bronze shelled insect
from the Autumned soil
moving on whether I do or not.
Let the laughing stream,
let the communing birds,
let the stoic trees
in their tall stillness
bear witness
to this burying of skin
this panting into the earth
this unfolding, enfolding
Welcoming me back.

*(Written @ Shining Cliff, Derbyshire, June 2014 during an exercise wisely watched over by Hayley Marshall & Martin Jordan – training in Taking Therapy Outside)*

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# Brimful of Ash at the Waterside

**MARY DEES** shares her personal reflections on nature as self-care for psychotherapists

When I am among the trees,
especially the willows and the honey locust,
equally the beech, the oaks and the pines,
they give off such hints of gladness.
I would almost say that they save me, and daily.

Mary Oliver, 'When I am Among the Trees'

THERE IS ONE tree in Shining Cliff Woods that stands out in my affections, on one particular autumn morning it is covered in green spiky seed cases and the ground around is scattered with an abundance of gleaming sweet chestnuts. It was probably planted 200 years ago and then coppiced for long straight poles or charcoal until the demand for such things diminished and its five trunks were left to grow tall and fat; feasting through its leaves off the sunlight and carbon dioxide and through its roots sucking water from the land. Held, nurtured and protected by the ancient soil with its network of organisms linking it together with the neighbouring trees into an ecosystem almost too complex to comprehend. And now mature and strong, it grows slowly and uses its solar magic trick to create this almost obscene amount of chestnuts – throwing out its biomass and DNA, feeding the forest and its visitors.

I joined the Natural Reflections Supervision Group run by Hayley Marshall in 2016 to increase my knowledge of outdoor therapy and allow me to take time out of my busy life. Spending a whole weekend every season in Shining Cliff Ancient Woods, with a group of counsellors and psychotherapists, has become a vital part of my self-care and self-connection. I learnt very quickly when I started out as a psychotherapist that self-care and self-connection isn't a nice to have, it is the most important tool in my kitbag. Without it I can't do my job. Without self-care and self-connection, I am like a fireman without a hose, a farrier without a fire. It is essential that we find ways of staying empathic and attuned to our clients, while keeping a strong connection with ourselves and our own experience. Sitting in the middle of that sweet chestnut tree, hidden from view and surrounded on all sides by large trunks, listening to the sounds of the forest, soaking up the green light and with my face resting on the gnarly, rough trunk – I breathe in its earthy scent. In that moment I connect fully to myself – Adult and present. And I can cut through the fog, the haze, the worry, the background physical tension and relax into myself. This wonderful tree facilitates that connection; it seems to hold me physically and emotionally, allowing me to think clearly. It operates in a different timeframe, seeming to be still and patient yet so alive and magical and cyclical. Spring's bright green hope, summer's abundance of life, autumn's colourful slowdown and winter with its fresh stillness. The seasons all offer themselves to me as I search for myself and my place in the order of things.

As a child, I lived in a large house with nine people: Mum, Dad, Gran, Auntie, two brothers and two sisters. It was loud, hectic, messy, often fun, sometimes confusing, occasionally scary. There was a strong sense of being part of something and of belonging, but it was hard to have a clear identity that was my own rather than the one thrust upon me – twin, tomboy, strong, brave, happy, lazy, clumsy and mischievous. Being outside was when I could be myself. I used to hide – I would sit in a bush with a hollow centre – bathing in the solitude and delighting in a fantasy world. We had a large sycamore tree in our garden right next to the garage. I would climb the tree and sit on the roof. Hidden from sight by the branches, I would watch my family – with a sense of happiness and peace.

It is easy for me to think of myself alone in nature, but my happiest times were shared with others. I birdwatched with my auntie (who was a botanist), spotting the flash of kingfishers and once a tiny, shy firecrest perched in a pine tree. I also walked in the woods with my Dad, stick in hand, filled with joy, freedom and sense of being ok. The awkwardness I often felt as a child of not being quite right, not knowing my place, saying the wrong things and uncomfortable in my skin disappeared when striding out

'On returning home . . . I realised that my previous physical and cognitive anxiety had gone and that some very deep healing had taken place – healing that used my senses of touch and hearing and that involved my returning to the embrace of nature.'

into the forest with my Dad and siblings. This felt like my domain – the trees and birds knew and accepted me and I them.

From being a young baby I was out in nature riding on my Dad's back in a baby carrier/rucksack, while my twin brother rode with my Mum. And I think nature was a crucial part of my early script protocol, an implicit part of both my stimulation and soothing (Berne,1972; Marshall, 2016). During the symbolic/verbal stages of childhood it became part of my Parent egostate – nurturing, holding and accepting. Nature provided me with something dynamic, potent and alive – the colours, the sounds, the textures, the smells – such a richness of landscape and creatures. Something that provided an unconditional and undemanding remedy to my unmet relational needs.

A few weeks ago I had a big decision to make, one that shook the core of my earliest protocols and life script. I was experiencing physical stress and cognitive rumination and it was starting to impact on my ability to be present and attuned with my clients. I went to the woods for the Natural Reflections summer group and our facilitator Hayley Marshall gave us a solo exercise: to go out into the woods and find our 'niche' and spend some time experiencing it and ourselves. We were out on our own for about an hour. I found an idyllic spot surrounded by holly and hazel trees. A fast running stream gushed through it with a large ash tree on the opposite bank and dead ash trunk dissecting the space and forming a bridge over the river. Here in my niche, I sat on the bank and whittled a stick while listening to the sound of the stream, the wind in the leaves and birds in the canopy. My mind was at peace and my body through my senses was focused on touch and hearing. I then used the stick to mix some mud and water together into a nice soggy mush. I spent the next 20 minutes spreading it on to the dead ash trunk with my hands. The odd thought of 'what am I doing' or 'should I make this more artistic' fleeted into my mind but on the whole I was content to be in a very somatically focused non-verbal state. I could happily have stayed in my womb-like niche for hours.

On returning home from the group I realised that my previous physical and cognitive anxiety had gone and that some very deep healing had taken place – healing that used my senses of touch and hearing and that involved my returning to the embrace of nature. I was re-connected with myself and available for my clients. It was interesting how bland and lifeless indoors felt in the week following the group and how I longed to take my indoors clients out and delighted in my outdoor client sessions.

There has been a lot of research from across the world into the positive impacts of experiencing nature from the Forest Bathing of the Japanese to ecological psychology movement. In their *biophilia* hypothesis, Wilson and Kellert (1993) claim that we – as human beings – have an innate love for the natural world, universally felt by all, and resulting at least in part from our genetic make-up and evolutionary history.

Research has shown that spending time in nature provides restorative benefits to physical and mental health, including: boosted immune system and increased anti-cancer cells, cognitive abilities including attention (Kaplan, 1993), memory, impulse inhibition, reduction in negative rumination (Bratman, et al, 2015) and improvement in emotional states/mood and stress reduction (Ulrich, 1991).

Being in nature isn't all about calm and tranquility. It is also challenging and reminds us that we are part of something bigger. Recently I saw a field vole run across my path and in a flash a magpie swooped down and snatched it away. I felt a mix of horror, exhilaration, sadness and fascination. Provoking feelings of being alive in the face of life's fragility and being part of something bigger.

Human beings are animals – intrinsically connected to and part of the natural world. Over time as we have developed 'civilised' and increasingly urbanised societies, we have become separate and alienated from our ecological roots. I am sure that part of human psychological distress is a disconnection from the natural world and our forgetting that we are part of it. Our need to feel connected to the natural environment is similar to our need to belong.

A lot has been written and researched about burnout and the need for self-care to ensure an effective and long-term career as a psychotherapist – and I think that we are actually very good at looking after ourselves. For example I have: 5 hours of supervision a month, 15 years (so far) of psychotherapy, 2 peer groups, my wonderful Natural Reflections Outdoor Supervision Group and I spend at least an hour everyday outdoors in nature. And like Mary Oliver, in her poem, the trees save me – and daily.

In conclusion, walking out to be among the trees in the sunshine, rain or snow is as vital a part of my everyday life as a psychotherapist as any CPD, supervision or personal therapy. It is my way of making sure that I have put my oxygen mask on first before I help others to put theirs on.

I wonder what it would be like for you to spend an hour outdoors experiencing your own version of a brimful of ash at the waterside? Maybe even alongside an outdoor psychotherapist…

‘For me, in my niche, the partnership was not with a therapist but with nature.’

**Theoretical epilogue**

I initially intended this article to be an exploration of using nature as self-care with practical examples and in the context of TA. But as I started to write I realised a much more personal voice was coming out and some might say that at a structural level my somatic Child (C0) and/or Core Self (C1) (Hargaden, 2010) was communicating. When I was in my niche in the woods my thinking was side-lined as my body, in a non-verbal dance with nature, took over. This was echoed when writing this article – I found I couldn’t think through the TA theory, I could only express my experience. It is only by separating out an epilogue that I feel freer to explore some theoretical underpinning.

Cornell (2008), talks about ‘two distinct, concurrent and lifelong modes of experience: the symbolic and subsymbolic, the cognitive and somatic’. He talks about how the subsymbolic is both archaic and here and now, and non verbal. ‘The verbal is not repressed but it exists in a form that can’t be captured by words.’ And when talking about the therapeutic dyad he says: ‘In these subsymbolic realms, the therapeutic process becomes a kind of exploratory psychosomatic partnership that can be often wordless but rich in meaning none the less.’ For me in my niche the partnership was not with a therapist but with nature – providing a here and now visceral experience – both soothing and enlivening. Nature as an active agent providing a bridge for me to reconnect with my body, with my senses, with my here and now.

Before going into the woods my earliest protocols had been shaken by a decision I felt I had to make and I had run hard into a 3rd degree impasse (Marshall, 2016, describes our protocol as ‘an unconscious aspect of non-conscious experience reflecting traces and shadows of problematic past encounters with self, others and physical environment’). In my niche the impasse started to resolve. A shift at the subsymbolic level through the senses of touch and hearing – with some deep wisdom that these senses were the root to impasse resolution. Trauma in my childhood involved these senses and in my niche I was drawn to experience touch and sound in partnership with nature to sooth myself, connect to my body and strengthening my sense of self (integration at subsymbolic level).

In the second of Cornell’s modes of experience – the symbolic and cognitive – I found that being immersed in nature strengthened my Adult ego state; deepening my ability to think clearly, to self-reflect and rationalise my fears and to remind myself that I have a choice in any actions I take.

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# **Rooted:** creating therapeutic space in the heart of the woods

Rooted UK is a woodland based early intervention course created to support teenage girls. **JENNY BIGLANDS,** Rooted co-founder, tells us how it began and how it works

WE'RE MID GAME and I find myself crouching behind a large oak tree, Beth (co-founder of Rooted) shouts from the clearing, 'Eagle's eyes are opening', and there's a mad flurry of movement as eight teenage girls run for cover behind ancient trees and rocks. I'm struck again by the giggling and enthusiasm for essentially, a game of hide and seek – our work has begun.

**What is Rooted?**

Rooted started with a shared dream. I had been counselling teenagers for over ten years, and Beth Webber had recently come out of secondary teaching, retraining as a Forest School practitioner. A mutual friend put us in contact and, over much tea drinking and walking, the creation of a programme began to emerge.

Rooted is a woodland-based, early intervention course, created to support teenage girls who are experiencing challenges around issues such as anxiety, low self-confidence and difficult relationships. The course seeks to integrate therapeutic and educational practices to create a framework that helps the girls to recognise their individual worth and their connection with the world around them.

**The importance of nurture**

We're sat around the campfire making what the girls have named, 'twisters' out of wool and sticks. There's not much chatting going on, but there's an ease to the quiet. Out of the blue the girl next to me suddenly comes out with, 'I've never felt this still'.

Seeds need certain conditions to germinate and grow to their full potential and Rooted has the same philosophy with regards to the girls we work with. We seek to provide a micro-climate which stimulates and supports growth through providing a safe and nurturing space. With regards to the physical environment we use the same space each week, with logs covered in blankets for seating and a campfire with shelter and bunting draped across the trees. We provide them with food, including homemade chocolate brownies and fresh fruit. When it rains, we meet them armed with umbrellas and, at the end of each session, there is space to rest and reflect while swinging in a hammock or sitting with a hot chocolate by the fire.

Our aim is to provide the girls with an experience that they will deeply enjoy. That by being on the course they would have fun, or have a moment of forgetting some of the difficult issues that they are facing in their lives. This focus is not purely for the positive strokes we receive from running the course, but because it has two incredible side effects. First, it nurtures hope – which translates into the possibility of change. It gives them a tangible experience that can be used as evidence that their emotions are not permanently stuck in the negative but can be altered even within a short period of time. Second, this environment creates capacity – there is now room to think more deeply and engage with new learning and discoveries.

While creating a nurturing environment has been identified as important for all human growth (Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs', 1943) it has particular significance in the context of adolescent development. This key stage of life is believed to require a person to revisit earlier stages of childhood in order to move into adulthood (Levin, 2015). In reality, this often manifests in a display of childish behaviours, including a greater dependency on adult care-givers to provide some of the more basic, physical needs (Biddulph, 2013). The Rooted environment allows for this apparent regression to be experienced, with the knowledge that this will allow a person to move through the stage. We seek to serve the girls wherever we can and recognise that, if one of the group members ends up napping in their hammock, then this could be as key to their development as engaging with the psycho-educational content of the course.

'We seek to provide a micro-climate which stimulates and supports growth through providing a safe and nurturing space.'

**The value of nature**

'Are there wolves here?' We've just arrived at the woodland space for our first session.

'What's that noise?' someone else asks, while looking over their shoulder.

The woodland provides the framework for Rooted. It is the context in which all our work is done. While this can be understood as a reference to the physical space, it more accurately refers to a much deeper experience as we connect to what the woods provoke in us. The unique environment is rich in variables and differing perspectives, which provides opportunities for seeing things differently. One week we can find ourselves bathed in sunshine and warmth and the following week we are seeking protection from torrential rain and wind. As the girls explore key themes around understanding themselves, they get to experience who they are in relationship with an ever-changing and yet secure space.

Adolescence is fraught with seeming contradictions (Lines, 2006), with a need for safety and dependency, alongside a desire to push boundaries and to feel invincible. The woods can hold both drives as it represents within itself these apparent opposites, offering both protection alongside the invitation to take risks. You can shelter in the shade of a tree's branches while, simultaneously, climbing its trunk and fearing the fall. Based on her own observations and research Thomashow (2002), has a similar perspective with regards to the impact of the natural world on teenagers. She writes: 'Through nature, adolescents are privy to models of living other than the cosmetically driven social world . . . and to rhythms and cycles that are different from those imposed by the constructs of the school day. Through nature they gain access to the wild and untethered, the naked realities of life and death . . . and come face to face with their biological origins and the underpinning of human purpose and meaning.' (p264).

**The power of education**

I hold out a cup filled with pieces of folded paper; 'Today we are thinking about things that can happen to us in life and the impact this can have on who we are. In this cup I have different possible situations that we can chat about together. Who would like to pick out a piece of paper and read it to the group?'

One of the girls volunteers and unfolds the note. She reads out loud: 'You are just about to go into school when a bird poops on your head.'

After a few initial giggles and 'Urgh' responses I ask the girls, 'How would you feel if this happened to you?'

'Embarrassed,' says one of the group, 'disgusting,' says someone else.

I then ask, 'What would you do?'

One of the girls responds with, 'I would run home as fast as I could and wash my hair.'

I then ask, 'What would happen then? Would you go back into school late?' We begin to talk about the potential consequences that could unravel from this one event before moving on to the next piece of paper.

Another member of the group reads out, 'You receive £1,000,000 inheritance from a relative you have never met.' The girls share how they would feel and what they would do with all the money before moving on to the next potential life event. As the girls begin to open up and share more, we begin to talk about addictive behaviours and self-harm; how these responses are often ways to cope with life events but how this can lead on to other consequences that cause more issues to work through.

We then reflect on some of the activities we have used in previous sessions that can be helpful tools for when events cause us distress. We hand each of the girls weaving circles and coloured wool, showing them that we can use cyclical patterns to create beautiful things such as the braids that they are learning to make. As they sit and cross over their strands of wool, we make them hot drinks and hand around the chocolate brownie tin. We give out their journals and some of the girls go over to the hammocks. A couple of them stay close, putting more sticks on to the fire and chatting to us about their weeks.

Through engaging with educational activities, we hope that the truth they discover will give them the courage to believe that change is possible and that this will deeply impact their whole life. This translates into our practice through the implementation of three key learning tools: physical play, relational learning and reflective practices.

**Physical play**

After eating together at the start, every session involves playing games together as a group. This involves a significant amount of time running around, screaming,

laughing and interacting with each other. Scarfe (1962), stated that 'play is the highest form of research' (p120). It enables the girls to experiment with how they relate to each other. They try out new ways of being and are affirmed through a sense of belonging or being good at something. For example, on one occasion, a quieter member of the group was declared winner of the life-cycle game, which resulted in the girls giving her a spontaneous round of applause. The look of surprise and pleasure on the winner's face was incredible. I wonder what impact this feedback will have on her sense of self and, further still, how this will outwork within other settings of her life.

**Relational learning**

Another important consequence of play is the physical exercise that it involves. This is not only good for the body but has been found to increase aspects of cognitive functioning (Lambourne, Tomporowski, 2010). So, as the girls are getting their breath back, we sit together as a group and focus on one new learning concept every week. In the first five weeks we explore topics around personal understanding, and in the last five weeks we focus more on how we are in relationships. We look for ways to communicate this using the natural environment, that feel safe as well as meaningful. All of this is done within the context of the group. Each member has space to offer their thoughts or questions and this in itself is a great learning opportunity as they risk opening up or bringing something to the space. Seigal (2014), highlights the importance of relational learning stating that: 'When we reflect on the inner life of others, when we participate in reflective conversations and attune to another person's mind beneath behaviours, we join with others and our sense of self is expanded. Life feels full.' (p202)

Relational learning also recognises the importance of peer relationships in adolescent development (Kirkbride, 2018). As a result, what the group shares has immense power for influencing the girls we are working with. The more we facilitate discussion rather than teach, the more likely it is that girls will engage with the concepts we are learning.

'What the group shares has immense power for influencing the girls we are working with. . . the more we facilitate discussion rather than teach, the more likely it is that girls will engage with the concepts we are learning.'

'The aim [of a reflective space] is that this will lead to an evaluation of where the [participants] are currently at, with a focus on the future and the change that needs to occur to get there.'

**Reflective practices**

Following this time, we create opportunities for personal reflection. Having this space creates an opportunity for deeper processing; for the girls to be able to go over what they have done, seen, felt or heard. Reflection creates a frame for focusing on a specific belief, behaviour or experience. The aim is that this will lead to an evaluation of where they are currently at, with a focus on the future and the change that needs to occur to get there (Ramsey, 2006).

**Why do we do this?**

In a society where mental health issues in young people are rising at an alarming rate, Rooted aims to provide a response that recognises the importance of an integrated approach in the pursuit of wellbeing. We aim to provide an intervention where the line between the therapeutic and the educational is transparent in recognition of their interconnectedness for creating growth. We provide an environment where the work is as much attributed to play and laughter as it is to taking risks and seeking change. We provide a space that will lead each of the girls into a relationship with nature that we believe will be deeply restorative, create moments of joy and, perhaps, rekindle hope in the times when it is most needed.

Each of the girls are given a pot, they tentatively stick their hand in the compost bag and fill their container with soil. Beth hands around the packets of seeds and they sprinkle them onto the surface. 'Just sprinkle them with a little water each day and put them on the windowsill in your bedroom – soon you should see some little green shoots appear.

'We look after the things we care about, that's why it's so important that we value who we are. Today we are giving you something for you to look after. In order for them to grow you will need to give them what they need. It is the same for us. We all need to look after ourselves in order to thrive.'

At the celebration session, a few weeks later, one of the girls approaches with her phone. 'Have you seen my flowers?' Her pot is overflowing with a brightly coloured ecosystem. She hands us a card signed by all the girls and gives us both a hug. 'Thank you,' she says before heading off with her Mum.

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# Spring – a vital protocol

**HAYLEY MARSHALL** senses that something in the air has altered as she walks out into a very early spring.

FOR MY SECOND set of reflections I am walking in very early spring through the woods up to Solomon's Temple, a local landmark on a hill on the south side of town.

Something in the air has definitely changed.

My animal body is responding to the appearance of the sun in an intensely blue sky, and the concomitant rise in temperature. The warming of the air brings new smells, small birds click and chuck high above, and beneath my feet the sodden earth is sticky as it begins to dry out. I feel a quickening inside as I gradually absorb the increased vitality around me.

Yet, as I ascend the hill, I also catch some sense of wariness in the landscape. The trees themselves still seem to be asleep, as if on a slower sweep of time in relation to the animal life within. An exuberant dash into the beckoning year is not their style; and naturally, caution carries a cloak of protection against any late snap of winter. I begin to feel some hesitancy creeping into my step as I move through the woods.

Engaged with this measured debate, I am reminded of Daniel Stern's (2010) writing about 'forms of vitality', where he elegantly portrays how we relate to and make meaning of the world surrounding us through the cross-modal (multi-sensory) languages of movement. Here in the woods right now there is much to resonate with in that respect, and I ponder our connection with the other-than-human forms of life, and their layering into our minds and bodies.

Embodied reflective dialogue with the diverse relational web of the natural world is a potent dimension of nature-based psychotherapy. The physical container for the therapy is now a vibrant, dynamic, and living process, brimming with vitality. Enter therapist and client attuning to the animate world in which they move, and a rich intelligence can be brought to the work. It seems that a sharpening of the senses and a subsequent enlivening of the body, promotes a stirring of the nonconscious aspects of our process – a vital connection to our implicit nonverbal ways of being in the world. While this relates to the dynamic Adult ego state process I mentioned in my first column, I think that there is also potential for a meeting here with some of the more dissociated (unconscious) aspects of our psyche. A green vitalising of the body/mind offers a very direct access to these traumatised elements as they reveal themselves in an intensified form. Effectively, here we have a portal into the subsymbolic world of our protocol (Marshall, 2016).

Back in the woods I catch a small shape in my peripheral vision. Pausing, I spy a wren perched on a nearby fallen tree. This drop of magic invokes a spontaneous, silent, rounded gasp, as I am entranced. Suddenly, from the undergrowth a large dog pounces. I jump; the tiny bird flits away, and the spell is snuffed out. I feel robbed. In an instant I am transported to times when as small child I was captivated by an object, an animal or a daydream, only to have that moment snatched away by an abrupt intrusion from the adults in my life – my pace stolen from me in an unattuned grab.

Berne described 'primal protocols' evocatively as 'echoes of the original situation' (1972), and outlined them as forming 'the pattern for the plan' (1963). I understand protocol as unconscious experience reflecting traces and shadows of past encounters with self, others (human and non-human), and the physical environment. Providing the essence for the later formed script, these experiences are deeply held within the body/mind and offer valuable information about the relational atmosphere of our earliest times. Returning to Stern's ideas: attunement, and resonance through the dynamics of vitality offers us an immediate connection with the protected landscapes of our protocol. While evident in the therapy room in the relationship between therapist and client, both the client's and the therapist's 'somatic infrastructure' (Cornell, 2003), can be unveiled with an increased sense of immediacy when also relating with a living 'third' (Jordan & Marshall 2010).

Essentially then, in nature-based therapy there is an activation, and an opportunity to work with, what Bucci calls the 'affective core' (2008), of a client's internal relational world, through a sensory, body process.

As I reach the Victorian folly (Solomon's Temple) on the top of the hill, I am still musing on the earlier incident and my lingering experience of 'feeling robbed'. Although somewhat perturbed, I feel that an important

'A green vitalising of the body/mind offers . . . direct access to these traumatised elements. . . . Effectively, here we have a portal into the subsymbolic world of our protocol.'

vital 'knowing' has been revealed, through my encounter in the woods. This aspect of me now feels alive and available for more symbolic reflection. For me, and in my work outdoors, this enriched exploration of protocol process forms a significant part of deeper, personal transformation.

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# Poem

## By Alison Chippindale

**Bird Tree Woman**

The early morning sun
lights up the slate roof opposite,
dark little birds darting
through the pale azur air.

I'm a birdbeing too,
a bird tree woman.

My roots sink low into
the healing earth,
grounding, nourishing me,
while my strong body reaches
upwards to the sky
to catch the golden sun.

My long arms stretch
to spread my growing leaves,
winging me ever upwards
into deep endless blue.

**Alison Chippindale** BA(Hons) Oxon MA Soc.Admin. Co-counselling & therapy led to a career as a work-winner in construction. Now retired, her poetry, on bereavement, ageing etc, including her new collection, *Mug without a handle* is at https://www.alisonchippindalepoet.co.uk

# REVIEWS

*Introduced by* MARION UMNEY

FOR THIS ISSUE I am catching up with one of our most prolific TA authors, Bill Cornell. Bill has been busy; two books published in 2018 and reviewed here, and another book, written with Helena Hargaden, launched in November, which will be reviewed here shortly.

My personal experience of Bill's work is that I find his style accessible and enjoyable to read and he makes me think. I'm glad to say our reviewers seem to agree with me in relation to both these new books.

Karen Minikin, who is well known in UKATA and other TA organisations has reviewed *Self-examination in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy*. In her email to me with the review she wrote 'as you can see, I loved it'. Her review, as usual, is even handed and objective, in spite of her obvious enthusiasm. Karen identifies the essence of the book as 'Calling ourselves into question'. I'm sure most of us, no matter which field we work in, have had moments of calling ourselves in question. I certainly have and could readily identify with the invitation to 'reflect and examine our own processes with our clients – particularly those we find provoking, challenging, defensive, boring and generally resistant.' Will I buy this book? I already have. I like Bill's work generally and confess that I endorse everything Karen has said in her review.

The second of Bill's books reviewed here is *At the Interface of Transactional Analysis, Psychoanalysis, and Body Psychotherapy*. The reviewers for this book are outside of the TA world and, as they say in their review became interested because of some cross fertilisation with members of the ITAA, including myself. This book describes the interface of TA with other modalities and so it seemed absolutely appropriate to also use some of the interface we have as a community with other modalities to get a somewhat different perspective. The reviewers liked it. They appreciated the even-handed critique of TA as well as of other disciplines and Bill's very personal narrative style. Needless to say, I have this book too, and found their perspective more in line with my own than I might have imagined.

So, a thumbs up for Bill, it would seem. I hope you find the reviews useful and if you do not already have these books will consider adding them to your own bookshelves.

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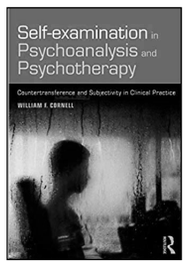


**Self Examination in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy**

***by William F. Cornell***

***Published by Routledge, 2018***

**Reviewed by KAREN MINIKIN**

*'In presenting another person's life, there is always the risk of misrepresenting it as well.'* p5

THIS IS A very personal book, one that reviews many case illustrations over a long career in psychotherapy. Reflecting back on these experiences, the author pays close attention to the internal worlds of himself and his clients. Through these, he reveals how to call ourselves into question over and over in order to reach, touch and show what is happening in the intimate conversations that are psychotherapy.

In becoming transactional analysts, we hope to become more sensitive, empathic, aware and effective in our work. Yet, however 'honorable' our intention, we will miss our clients and miss ourselves – possibly much more often than we realise. This book is an account of how to strive to become more deeply honest in the work. That means demanding we closely examine ourselves in our encounters – our motivations, our frailties, our egos, our self interest. Through sharing these processes with us, Bill models what it requires to work relationally with our countertransference and our subjectivity. The necessity of honesty with self also models a personal and relational ethics that will promote anti-oppressive practice.

**Countertransference and subjectivity**

This book can be considered to be relational and psychodynamic. However, I think the modality needs to be taken lightly as all fields and all modes of working in TA benefit from reflective practice – and primarily, this is a book showing the value of deeply reflective practice. The first chapter of the book is dedicated to one of his long-term clients who, on her first visit asked the question: What am I getting into? It is a touching story, one that shows how clumsy we are in trying to answer such a question. We can never really know what we are getting into until we have got into it. However, over the course of the book, we see how the author searches for the words to explain, that we will be getting into

something that will confront our defenses in order to open us up to more of who we are.

While this is a searching book, with themes of analysis, the narrative is personal, engaging and journalistic, so it makes for a comfortable read, while also inviting the reader to reflect and examine our own processes with our clients – particularly those we have found provoking, challenging, defensive, boring and generally resistant. This helps us get more of a handle on the sorts of ways in which we may be limited, defensive, aggressive or fragile in our handling of some of these processes. Calling ourselves into question (chapter two) is the essence of the book's message to the reader.

The book is full of rich client examples, from the disillusioned, to the aggressive, the depressed, the dissociated, the deadened – Bill shows us the stripped back experience of working with these presentations as they appear in the room before us. There is a light touch with theory – something I think that is necessary in a book like this. By sticking to a subjective tone, the writing avoids sanitising process by explaining, clarifying and justifying experience with theory. It also avoids the one up position of making it clear to the reader that the author at the end of the day is the expert. Far from this, Bill shows us that so much goes on that we don't know, that needs to emerge often through dissatisfaction – our seeming failures to understand, grasp or relate to clients that evoke reactions and responses we had not anticipated.

Why is this relevant?

One of the strengths of transactional analysis is the wonderful clarity our models and ideas offer. We have a stunning variety of language, diagrams and formulas that throw light on interactions that initially may seem mystifying. Alongside this, I think it is crucial we are not seduced by such neatness. To become so, reduces us to having superficial cognitive insight about what happens between people. When we use our theories in this way, we risk offering a soulless analysis, which is discounting of our long legacy of grappling with the unconscious and learning about our ongoing challenges and struggles with genuine intimacy. The efficiency of our theories also leaves us vulnerable to rushing to interpretation before we have had enough encounter with experience to allow our learning to deepen. By unfolding the stories and experiences slowly, this book allows us to engage with narrative where new meanings may open up and reveal rather than closing process down by premature analysis. This opening of the mind that is illustrated in the book prepares the scene for a more egalitarian adventure into the minds of the two people in the room.

**Concluding thoughts**

This is book that draws on over thirty years of experience working at depth in psychotherapy. It is deeply personal and moving. Despite drawing on a long history, with an enormously broad range of clients, it is not a long book and it is an engaging read. It would be of great value to anyone wanting to learn more about what it means to engage in long term, in depth psychotherapy; it will be helpful for anyone who is baffled by what it means to work relationally; it will be helpful to anyone who has struggled with a supervisor, a trainer or a therapist and it will be helpful for anyone who wants to understand more about working with unconscious processes and the relevance of a relational ethic in their work. As the writer states, (p150):

'These encounters require dedication, courage, and a willingness to engage in a kind of ruthless honesty between self and others.'

'Bill shows us that so much goes on that we don't know, that needs to emerge often through dissatisfaction – our seeming failures to understand, grasp or relate to clients that evoke reactions and responses we had not anticipated.'

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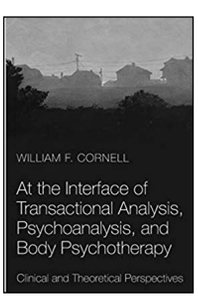


**At the Interface of Transactional Analysis, Psychoanalysis and Body Psychotherapy**

***By William F. Cornell***

***Published by Routledge, 2018***

**Reviewed by SHAHID MAJID and KATHERINE THOMAS**

AT THE *INTERFACE of Transactional Analysis* is a collection of essays by William Cornell, a leading proponent of transactional analysis as well as a great contributor to the theory and practice of therapeutic integration. The essays in this book showcase his broad ranging understanding of TA and relational

psychodynamic theory, his understanding of the art of finding commonalities between therapies, as well as ways in which the integration of their differences can enhance therapeutic practice.

This review came about as a result of interface across professional disciplines; two clinicians from outside the world of TA and the co-editors of the TAJ. In the spirit of TA, relational dialogue and creative 'play' the question was raised about how TA had developed since Berne established his fundamental model. A reflection was made about the TA community seeming to be inward-looking and in response: a request to review Cornell's book, one which offers a modern interpretation of the potentialities and possibilities of this modality. Neither of the authors have a background in TA but both have an interest in psychoanalysis and relational therapies. One reviewer has some knowledge of TA gleaned from reading some of Berne's original writings as well as publications by Vann Joines. For the other, who was a relative newcomer to the approach, reviewing the book provided an opportunity to explore TA through the more familiar lens of relational psychodynamic theory.

Published in 2018, this publication therefore held the prospect of a deeper and more modern interpretation and understanding. The book is a compilation of 16 essays which are set out as chapters, and flow together seamlessly, until the final few where there is some repetition. The publication is split into two parts, the first entitled: 'Deepening our capacities for therapeutic work' and the second: 'When life grows dark'. The latter focuses on experiences of loss and mourning and has a broader scope also, in a sense providing a personal account of Berne 'the socially awkward outsider', his struggle with loss and then loss in a wider sense including the process of ageing. Broader societal issues such as racial stereotypes and interrelationships are considered as well as the political climate in which TA was born and, the difficulties or working with distrust, violence and hatred, warning as he comes to the modern day of 'the Little Fascist in each of us'.

In the initial chapter Cornell very honestly charts a shift from what he describes as a 'relentlessly useful' (p7) style of psychotherapy in which he was motivated by the 'needs of my self-image more than the needs of my clients' to one in which he gives the client the 'space and freedom of self-discovery and self-definition' (p7). This mirrored a personal process, within his own psychoanalytic therapy, of confronting the idea that his need for action is a psychological defence. He explores his growing appreciation of the workings of the unconscious mind both in terms of his own process and in his work with clients. Although a leading proponent of TA, Cornell enthusiastically embraces psychodynamic ideas and incorporates Jung, Klein, Winnicott and Bollas. All of these are artfully woven together in the setting of his own journey, illustrated by stories of his work with clients.

'What I have wished to outline here is a perspective that facilitates learning and change through training and supervision within the realms of unconscious, imaginative and somatic learning which I see as necessary for growth at the second and the third degree levels of psychological organisation.'

Although many of the ideas that Cornell incorporates into his essays are not entirely new, he does so in a way which is refreshing, creative, playful and in so doing, illuminates his own very personal process of exploration. By the end of chapter three he sets out his core message:

'What I have wished to outline here is a perspective that facilitates learning and change through training and supervision within the realms of unconscious, imaginative and somatic learning which I see as necessary for growth at the second and the third degree levels of psychological organisation.' (p38)

He then moves on to more overt self-disclosure in what feels like a journey through his psychotherapeutic development. In the process he gives interesting accounts of events in his own life and his therapy sessions. This culminates in him concluding that personal disclosure and the sharing of vulnerability can enhance the client's ability to connect with the therapeutic process, if done carefully and with the patient held in mind. Cornell's own personal disclosure within the text engages the reader in his journey and adds weight to his argument. He then moves into further revelation about his personal history and the road he travelled towards the therapeutic endeavour. He also describes what he considers to be his most significant failure in his career as a therapist; yet another layer of vulnerability laid bare.

As Cornell develops his views on the centrality of the concept of the unconscious he does become acute in his criticism of TA and the cognitive approach, to the extent that one of the reviewers wondered if he would renounce TA completely by the time the final page was turned. The other reviewer, who was relatively new to the approach, found herself contemplating why the TA concepts were needed at all, as she recognised a great deal of her own core approach, relational psychodynamic, within each chapter. Such a level of critique, considering Cornell is so aligned to TA, is certainly bold. He questions the determinist aspects of 'script' and the need for the therapist to be an external observer rather than an inherent part of a relational therapeutic process. He also

deals the blow that TA research is 'parochial' as he believes that it is 'predominantly self-referential'.

A great deal of the book is spent carefully considering how theory and practice from other modalities might translate into TA language or how they could be incorporated by broadening its scope. Insights from body psychotherapy: the importance of the non-verbal and pre-conscious are explored. Of course, these ideas feature in the wider psychotherapeutic literature, for example, Schore (2012) who emphasises the importance of working with affect as well as unconscious states and Stern, Bruschweiler-Stern, Harrison, Lyons-Ruth, Morgan & Nahum (1998) who argue that the key to lasting therapeutic change is working with 'implicit relational knowledge' stored in this non-verbal domain. Cornell considers these themes in relation to the TA concept of the Child ego state and he describes 'states of mind or neural organisation that precede ego development and are the unconscious and preconscious forms of knowing that enrich daily life and relatedness'. This is developed further in references to script protocol.

Drive theories are not ignored and his own interpretations of Berne's work leads to a discussion of how drives are framed within TA: sensation hunger, recognition hunger and structure hunger. Concepts from self-psychology are also incorporated via aspects of TA theory such as growth and aspiration. The more conventional terms of transference, and projective identification are also considered and explored within a TA framework. Having combined elements of all of the above he concludes:

'We believe that some of these contemporary psychoanalytic ideas can contribute significantly to an expansion of traditional transactional analysis. But we also think that traditional TA concepts can in turn clarify those psychoanalytic ideas by translating them into more ordinary language and emphasising their practical use in people's lives...' (p162)

Therefore TA as a distinct modality, is not abandoned as we had feared might be the case. Certainly psychodynamic theory has been criticised for being inaccessible and TA could provide a way of bringing these important ideas to a wider audience.

Towards the end of the book Cornell explores how the principles of object relations and the relational psychodynamic concept of 'intersubjectivity' can be incorporated or translated into TA practice. In the spirit of relationality he opens up about his own experiences including the process of mourning a loss and his struggle to come to terms with bereavement. The scope of his vision for TA also extends to the wider relational or societal context and he considers the impact of relational trauma on the psyche and also reflects on group processes in more general terms.

In essence this is a book arguing for what we consider to be a 'three dimensional' relational transactional analysis which opens itself to other psychotherapy concepts and is informed by research evidence. The core of the three dimensions is linked to the three levels of game that Berne originally described. Level one being issues that can be considered through cognitive means, level two: unconscious processes and level three relating to bodily intervention or being. This to our minds is a comprehensive approach that could be applied to therapeutic branded models of therapy in general and the branding of therapy is something he argues cogently against. If this is modern TA then we think it is a far more comprehensive and integrative approach that has a wider place in the spectrum of mental health difficulties we experience and treat and the relational experiences we all come across. It seems that Cornell found his own pathway through the history of psychotherapy to create his own multi-dimensional relational adaptation of transactional analysis and in so doing he discovered the integral role of his own relationality, both for himself and for the 'other'.

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**SHAHID MAJID** *is a Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist and Clinical Lead at The Trevor Gibbens which is the medium secure unit which serves the Kent region. He has worked within the NHS since 1996 and has had an interest in transactional analysis for a number of years with one of his earliest memories being finding a copy of* Games People Play *on his father's bookshelf!*

**KATHERINE THOMAS** *is a counselling psychologist who worked as an 'advanced psychological therapist' in an inpatient setting. She soon to start work as an applied psychologist in a forensic mental health setting. She studied social anthropology at Cambridge University and has a longstanding interest in the complex relationship between the individual and society and the role of relational therapies in promoting wellbeing and social justice.*

# Support for dyslexia and visually impaired members

**KAREN MINIKIN** asks **JANINE PICCIRELLA** about the project she initiated to disseminate information from UKATA via audio files, and about her own experience of dyslexia.

JANINE PICCIRELLA HAS initiated a project of getting news items onto audio files. This is part of some wider hopes to help provide more support for access to information in our community. Karen and Janine met to talk about Janine's personal story and motivation with this and other potential projects. This is a shorter version of their meeting (the full audio interview will become available).

**KM**: *Do you want to start by giving some background to the project?*

**JP:** I am dyslexic and thought it important to allow communications from UKATA to be on audio – for people like myself or others who may be visually impaired. But also to allow information to be accessible. So, for example, I commute each day to Nott and I can now play that in my car.

**KM**: *So, this is very inclusive not only for those who may be dyslexic or visually impaired, but this is also a pragmatic way of keeping up to date.*

**JP:** Sure. We need information to keep up to date and stay professional. There are changes to policies and this way of communicating allows us to keep up to date.

**KM**: *You are someone who has clearly been successful in our community. You are qualified, you are a trainer and supervisor. As someone with dyslexia, how have you found this?*

**JP:** Not very well, especially with the written exam – 24,000 words felt like a million. There were times when I sobbed. It was difficult having to read and reference effectively. But also as both my parents were dyslexic, there was some programming from childhood. So with help, I had to develop academic writing as a skill. Once I got that, I was able to do it – but clunky and painful to begin with.
I was deferred twice on my written work. That was not just about my dyslexia and I received a lot of learning from that process.

**KM**: *I think you are describing a complex process. . . one where there is a different way in which you process information. Then the added complexity of script and how painful it is to work through those processes.*

**JP:** The beliefs around self and self-judgment. Once I had accepted my needs, that was a massive step for me. I experienced a lot of shame. . . but there are ways around it. There are some pros to being dyslexic – I can be creative and I feel proud that I can support myself.

**KM**: *Like you are role modelling a success story. It is disheartening to be deferred on anything from a driving test to a CTA exam and for it to happen twice, means a lot of determination to overcome that. And what I am hearing, Janine, is it wasn't about conforming to the requirements. It was as you put it – finding how you could get what was inside of you, out.*

**JP:** What was important was my principal supervisor and their commitment. I feel really grateful to those who supported me. So, I am really grateful to the community and the people who have been in contact – my trainers and supervisors.

**KM**: *So when people find themselves in this position, as well as their own internal determination, they also need to find themselves amongst people who believe in them.*

**JP:** Yes, I feel really moved when you say that. It is really important because it can look like a 'try hard' driver – but it was within me, I just could not articulate it. So the patience, determination and belief of those around you to support you is important. I think of support networks as doors – like whose doors do we knock at? So once I acknowledged my need I needed to find supervisors who knew about dyslexia. It was not about a TSTA. It was about who can help me with this way of writing.

**KM**: *Like you needed someone who was 'dyslexic empathic'. I think a lot of folks from any kind of minority group can relate to that. You are touching on how discrimination works explicitly and implicitly. Clearly for*

‘Clearly for someone who is dyslexic, writing 24,000 words is not going to be easy – it is going to be more difficult than for others. . . but also you [Janine] are describing the implicit discrimination – the way in which you have to find resources over and above . . . whether time, money, energy. . . you have to search for it over and over.’

*someone who is dyslexic, writing 24,000 words is not going to be easy – it is going to be more difficult than for others. But also you are describing the implicit discrimination – the way in which you have to find resources over and above . . . whether time, money, energy. You have to search for it over and over.*

**JP:** Yeah. You've got to really want it, Karen. Got to really know your reason why you are doing this. I really questioned that along the way.

**KM**: *I feel really sad because I am thinking about who we have lost along the way. Thinking about colleagues and friends, who are also dyslexic. I know it took them a long time to qualify. So I expect we have lost many along the way who could have been talented transactional analysts.*

**JP:** Yeah. No doubt. I am passionate about people getting support with assessment for dyslexia. This is just one area. It costs about £500 to be assessed. It costs a lot along with everything else. So, are there psychotherapists in our community who are willing to provide assessments for maybe a reduced fee?

**KM**: *Are there any grants to get that assessment done?*

**JP:** I'm not aware. I'm wondering if there are any funds that UKATA hold or EATA in terms of supporting students.

**KM**: *Maybe this is something to think about – as a way forward. Pragmatics – what we can do, and what might be possible? Perhaps before we come to that, you could say a little more about what you are actually doing and how the audio version actually works.*

**JP:** There have been three versions of the newsletter that are audio. David Gibbons and Jan Baker have kindly offered their time to read the news to us. When people get the email from UKATA, they just click on the line and it opens up the audio file.

**KM**: *So, really easy. You also have a vision for how* the Transactional Analyst *magazine could look if it had audio and/or visual links.*

**JP:** It would be great if people writing an article, could also read what they write and provide a link. They could communicate their passion – it would come alive.

**KM**: *So let's promote that and encourage that way forward. Any other thoughts?*

**JP:** I've got a big vision, but it will take a lot of work. The EATA/UKATA handbook – I would love to see that in audio. It would need sectioning off, as there are often changes.

**KM**: *Perhaps, if we had a generic form, it might make the written word easier to absorb?*

**JP:** Yes. Lots of ways in which we can make things more accessible.

**KM**: *So,* the Transactional Analyst *and our handbook. I am also reflecting on your struggle with the written exam. Do you have any thoughts about how trainees going for CTA could have a less difficult time than you?*

**JP:** I think that it is about recognising you need support. That is a big part. Finding out who in our community is dyslexia savvy and use that as a resource. Also, I went to the Dyslexia Institution and got a 1-2-1 about how I could support myself in writing. Such as using spider diagrams and visuals. This means I am more accessible to writing. It's a bit like doors to writing really. Let's also access the educational TA people – have clinical supervisors and also one to help with the academic writing.

**KM**: *So, targeting support to the areas that are most relevant. I liked your parallel about the open door, target and trap door. Can we gather a list of those able to help people communicate in writing what is inside them through supervision, tuition or some sort of support learning group? Is there anything to say before we finish?*

‘Whether you are dyslexic or not, script happens when you start writing your CTA – your oral exam too. When you already have an impairment in some way, the temptation can be to give up. I am really passionate about saying, “do not give up”.’

**JP:** I wanted to say something about believing in yourself and knowing why you want to be a Certified Transactional Analyst. Whether you are dyslexic or not, script happens when you start writing your CTA – your oral exam too. When you already have an impairment in some way, the temptation can be to give up. I am really passionate about saying, 'do not give up'. I want to support people. I am a resource in this pool we have talked about. If people have any questions, I am happy to talk with them.

**KM**: *Thank you, Janine.*

**Conclusion**
Karen, as part of the Diversity and Social Responsibility Committee and Janine have committed to pooling together some resources for members in the community with dyslexia and visual impairments. Part of that will be to resource a list of trainers and supervisors who are 'dyslexic informed and empathic'.

**For more information, please contact**
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**or Karen on: Karen@insights-sw.co.uk**

**Karen Minikin** MSc, TSTA(P), has a clinical and supervision practice in Somerset and Devon. She teaches psychotherapy at a number of training institutes, presents at national/ international conferences and is interested in the dynamics of power, politics and relational co-creating across all fields of TA.

**Janine Piccirella,** PTSTA(P), Psychotherapist, supervisor and trainer with UKCP registration and MBACP accreditation and is a qualified EMDR therapist.

# Somatic resonances

**PAUL BETNEY** discusses the importance of somatic awareness in therapeutic practice and shows how it influences his own approach to clinical practice.

IN THIS ESSAY I will offer some background to my discussion by briefly outlining the difference between implicit and explicit experience and memory. I will relate this to my own experiences with Parkinson's Disease and explain how the insight this has given me has proven useful both in my early experience of therapeutic practice and in my approach to my own personal wellbeing. I will also explain my belief that the body has a role to play in processing and helping to resolve trauma. In the process I do not intend in any way to diminish the value of self-reflection and the importance of the therapeutic process on a symbolic and verbal level. My intention is simply to give appropriate value to the role of somatic awareness in a healthy therapeutic process.

Our somatic radar is a highly developed tool both for understanding the world and, potentially, for being understood by it. Shapiro describes 'the range of bodily experiences that are present in the therapists office (whether they are attended to or not) as "a complex experience which includes the whole range of somatosensory phenomena: our breath, pulse, posture, muscle strength, fatigue, clarity and speed of thought, sense of boundedness, our skin, mucous membranes, bodily tension, facial expression, taste, smell, pulse, vitality" that have the potential to enliven the therapeutic process and its participants. ' (quoted by Cornell, 2003, p42).

Reading through this impressive list it is hard to imagine how any therapist could consider these factors as anything other than a vital source of information. Indeed, Berne stated that, 'the therapist should be aware of the probable physiological state of every one of his patients during every moment of the session.' (quoted by Widdowson, 2010, p111).

During the very earliest stages of life our somatic experience of the world is our entire experience and is implicit in nature. Siegel explains: 'For the first year of life, the infant has available an "implicit" form of memory that includes emotional, behavioural, perceptual, and perhaps bodily (somatosensory) forms of memory.' (quoted by Cornell, 2003, p34). It is during this period, arguably the first 18 months of life, that the foundations of Script are laid. Although TA theory has evolved to include the concept of P0, A0, C0, to account for this period, Cornell (2003, p34) argues that these experiences cannot be accurately described in terms of ego and this argument makes sense to me in the absence of explicit memory, which Siegel explains 'takes two major forms: factual (sematic) and autobiographical (episodic). For both types of explicit memory, recollection is associated with an internal sensation of 'I am recalling something' (quoted by Cornell, 2003, p34). However, Cornell (2003, p34) does agree that although these implicit realms of organisation developmentally precede the capacities of the ego, they do 'underlie/accompany/inform/shape/colour the nature of the Child, Adult and Parent ego states throughout the course of life.'

Cornell et al, (2016, p144) explain that, 'we can deduce that the beginning of the formation of script takes place without words, and especially physically. Berne called this basis of script the protocol: the original experiences that form the basic pattern of the script.'

Protocol has an immediacy which can be very powerful. Cornell et al, (2016, p144) explain that 'This process (protocol) is preverbal and not conscious and usually only becomes visible during intense moments in adult life, in intimate relationships. Suddenly a wordless memory from a very early relationship is re-enacted in the here and now, often with corresponding bodily experiences.'

I believe I have experienced this in my own life. One example took place when I was attending one of my regular appointments to see my consultant about my Parkinson's Disease. I felt calm and was exhibiting no sign of the tremor related to the disease. Feeling confident, I bought myself a cup of coffee in the cafe and carried it through to the waiting area. As I walked down the corridor, I passed an elderly lady and her middle-aged daughter. The mother was complaining about something in a way that immediately and directly reignited a sense of trauma I had frequently felt when my own mother used to behave in a similar way. This brought on immediate feelings of distress and equally immediately my hand began to shake and I spilt the coffee.

I do not wish to redefine Parkinson's as a psychological condition, but I do believe there are emotional triggers which can aggravate the symptoms and I personally believe these triggers are based in protocol and script. Understanding this relationship has given me a very heightened sense of the connection between my somatic

experiences and my emotional state.

Over time uncomfortable experiences such as the one in the hospital have helped me to understand when my script is active and to redecide early script decisions. Cornell (2003, p35) explains, 'Healthy functioning requires both implicit and explicit knowing, subsymbolic/nonverbal and symbolic levels of organisation.' My awareness of this relationship is something which I believe will serve me very well in my future career as a therapist.

My appreciation of just how useful this understanding will be became clear when I recently saw my very first client. From early in the session I could see that my client was relating from a very Adult perspective, but appeared frightened of following their thoughts through to any kind of conclusion for fear of where the process might lead. They needed to talk and to know they were being listened to and supported as they felt their way through the issues. I became very aware of the importance of maintaining a strong and supportive presence without interrupting their train of thought. As the session progressed, I felt a profound sense of connection with my client and at the end they expressed their thanks and said they felt 'like a knot has unravelled in my stomach.' This indicated to me that although I had said very little, by simply being actively present I had facilitated a very real therapeutic experience.

I believe that this experience matched a concept Cornell et al, (2016, p144) describe as 'somatic resonance', 'Feelings that a client cannot handle, and of which the client is often himself not aware, are nonetheless present in the room and can be absorbed by the therapist and returned to the client in a form that is manageable for him.'

In a similar vein Mellor (2017, p7) talks about the power of presence. He describes the significant healing and enlightening energy of spiritual teachers he has met and relates stories of powerful encounters: 'The wonder-filled value of these teachers was the impact of their powerfully realised life energy. It flowed into and through everything and everyone around them. They saturated us with their uniqueness, leaving us enlivened physically, awash in stimulating, tingling vitality, and expanded with awakening. Like profoundly vibrating tuning forks, any contact with them awakened our "lethargic" vibrations.'

The significance of Mellor's descriptions made a great deal more sense to me after my experience with my client. I also had a much stronger sense of the concept of somatic resonance as outlined by Cornell. While I do not claim to be a spiritual teacher, I do believe that my energy in the room created a feeling of intimacy and safety in my client which in turn gave them the confidence to verbally explore some difficult ideas. In TA this is called potency (Steiner, 1968). Widdowson (2010, p307) explains: 'The potency of the therapist lies in the capacity to contain despair, uncertainty, doubt, meaninglessness, hatred, rage, shame and anxiety, both within the therapist and their clients.' When I consider this experience, I cannot think of any other way that I could have established this sense of safety and security other than on a felt, somatic level.

'Somatic awareness establishes our very first contact with, and understanding of, the world in which we live and remains a very powerful tool for relating to the world throughout our lives.

In terms of my own personal wellbeing, I have found having a strong connection between my emotions and my somatic experiences to be very powerful and this has led me to develop a theory that our somatic level of experience may play a role in processing trauma.

Summarising the work of Pally, Cornell (2003, p35, italics in original text) explains that, 'implicit memory is understood as memory for aspects of experience, historical and current that are not processed consciously, that is patterns of learning and experience that influence functioning, but are not experienced as conscious remembering.' I believe that this ongoing process of unconscious remembering is highly significant.

I would argue that protocol and all subsequent subsymbolic experience is not translated into a narrative with the arrival of verbal reasoning and the capacity to self-reflect, but remains in its original, felt format and is not archaic or fixated, but remains vibrant and alive in our bodies.

Cornell (2003, p 35) asserts that, 'It is important to note that implicit, nonverbal, subsymbolic experiences are not limited to the first year of life. They are constant elements in the psychic organisation of experience in the here-and-now.' In order for our body's capacity to experience our world on this level to serve a purpose, I believe that it is reasonable to theorise that our body also has the capacity to store that knowledge in the form of implicit, unconscious, physical memory in order to be able to draw on past experience and to react in a certain way as it did, for example, when I passed the old lady in the hospital. If we are willing to follow this train of thought, then I think it is reasonable to extrapolate that our bodies must also play a role in processing that experience and the associated feelings, otherwise physically we would simply become a dumping ground for our sensate experiences.

So, how does the body help to process our physically felt emotions? When I feel frustrated, angry, confused, or depressed I often spend time reflecting, writing in my

journal and talking with my therapist and this helps me to understand what is happening on a symbolic, verbal and cognitive level. However, it is equally true that I can find emotional relief and clarity by going for a long run or spending time in the boxing gym. When my mother was dying of cancer there were many difficult and painful emotions involved and a great deal of childhood trauma was revisited. I have no doubt that my personal therapy was incredibly useful, but equally the physical act of running long distances during this very difficult period was not merely a distraction, but, I believe, actually allowed me to physically process my emotions on a somatic level. Although I ran with headphones on, I would tune the music out and become attuned to the rhythmic, physical motion of my body and on my return home I felt a sense of release and progress.

Of course, not everyone is physically capable of vigorous exercise, but exercise is not the only avenue for processing on a somatic level. When I run or go to the boxing gym, it is the sense of physical connection, not the nature of the activity, that is important and I believe activities such as meditation, Mindfulness and Grounding serve the same purpose. I do not have space here to go into the differences between these three forms of practice, but Mellor (2017, p8) expands on Jon Kabat-Zinn's explanation of Mindfulness to underline the significance that attention to the body plays: 'Mindfulness is "The awareness that arises through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment." The subjects of this attention are usually the sensations in the body." While there are clear variations to each technique, this attention to the body is a theme which runs strongly through all three forms of practice and again, I have found all of these techniques incredibly useful in managing stress, anxiety and the symptoms of Parkinson's Disease.

While I do not believe that it is possible to exercise or meditate away emotional trauma, I do believe that the somatic level of emotional functioning has to be addressed with similar attention to the psychological, ego functioning element; whether that be through exercise or the use of techniques such a meditation, Mindfulness and Grounding. I agree with Cornell (2003, p35) that, 'While it is certainly a primary therapeutic task to foster the development of the capacity for symbolic and verbal representation, it is not necessarily true that the subsymbolic experience is in some way regressed and pathological or will be improved by the achievement of symbolic or language knowing.' It is my belief that the two go hand in hand and that one cannot be fully complete without the other.

In conclusion, somatic awareness establishes our very first contact with, and understanding of, the world in which we live and remains a very powerful tool for relating to the world throughout our lives. It lays the foundations for script and continues to develop and inform our emotional responses in a subsymbolic, non-verbal, felt way even after the development of our capacity for verbal, symbolic relating. I have found somatic awareness to be extremely useful, even in my very earliest experience of therapeutic practice. I have also found connecting with my body through exercise and techniques such as meditation, Mindfulness and Grounding has helped me to manage the symptoms and psychological pressures of Parkinson's Disease. This in turn has led me to theorise that the body not only has direct experiences on a somatic level, but stores these experiences and in turn, working alongside the therapeutic process has a role to play in the resolution of emotional trauma.

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# Asperger's in the therapy room – 12

In the twelfth of his series of articles about working with clients who have been, or may be, diagnosed with Asperger syndrome, **PETER FLOWERDEW** continues to consider social and intimate relationships. Here he uses time structuring to understand the development of relationships.

THIS ARTICLE IS a direct continuation of the previous one in the series (*the Transactional Analyst*, 9[3] p29-33). As discussed in that article, when people are in pairs or in groups, they will engage in one of the six ways of structuring time that are listed in Figure 1.

**Making friends – managing relational risk in the NT world**

When forming a new social relationship, that is outside of employment, people tend to begin with greeting rituals, move to pastimes and continue down the list, as indicated by the arrow, and hopefully achieve an open, honest, respectful, caring affectionate relationship, which I identify with intimacy.

Each step down the list of categories is associated with more risk, and therefore, increased anxiety, but also offers the potential for more rewarding strokes, and the associated pleasure. When people carry relational trauma, they will experience higher anxiety, even aversion, at some step, and hold themselves back from potentially more rewarding contact.

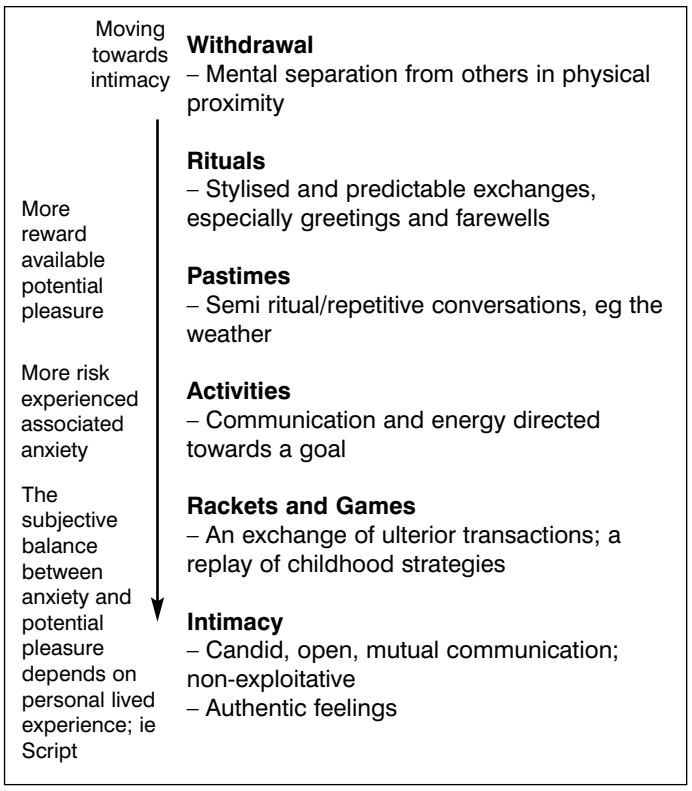



**Figure 1: Risk and reward** in increasing closeness in relationship

**Using time structuring as a tool to identify rigid, inflexible styles of relating**

**– Stopping at withdrawal or ritual**

Social interaction will be avoided, as indicated in Figure 2, when there is no expectation of social reward – specifically an absence of positive strokes, especially unconditional positive strokes. This behaviour is designed to avoid both the pain of negative strokes and the pain of the awareness of the absence of unconditional positive strokes.

I am most saddened when I observe someone who cares about another person and who is actually giving the desired strokes, but they are invisible to the person they are directed at. I have seen this situation occur with both NTs and Aspies, when they are in an 'I'm not OK, You're not OK' place of despair. The experience is likely to be distressing for the one reaching out too. In one person's reality, these strokes exist, in the other person's reality, they don't.

The power of subjective reality is accounted for in TA in the concept of script and when I cover this topic in training I focus on the challenge of 'making sense of the pain caused by what did not happen' – for example, many clients will confirm that they have no memory of ever receiving a warm affectionate hug from a parent. No memory of social reward leads to no expectation of social reward, for NT and Aspie alike. This is the reason why I enquire into and attend to 'relational needs not met.' (Erskine 1997:28-31).

| | |
|---|---|
| **High risk experienced: anxiety and aversion** | **Stopping at Withdrawal**<br>• May avoid social situations.<br>• The perpetual bystander: observes from the bar or a seat in the corner.<br>• Change the activity: may take on a helping role; collect or sell tickets, help in the kitchen, collect up glasses, etc. |
| **No expectation of reward. Usually because of a history of repeated social failure**<br><br>*This defensive adaptation can be exhibited by traumatised NTs or by Aspies. In both cases therapy can facilitate change.* | **Stopping at Rituals**<br>• Fills time with participation in cultural or religious rituals.<br>• Highly structured activities with little social interaction; chess, yoga, or similar; may also have the social function of predictable roles that is characteristic of rituals |

**Figure 2. Social aversion**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pastiming becomes an activity**<br><br>**Activities are made an opportunity for pastiming** | **Stopping at Pastimes**<br>• Berne (1961:99) makes specific mention of this one: 'Pastimes belong properly to the initial phase [of a relationship] but … may never get beyond this stage'.<br>• This is where the person who either does not recognise or does not know how to create an experience of 'being safe' stops.<br>• An example is the bonhomie of the regular pub or club group or sports team, where conversation does not go below the relationally superficial.<br><br>**Stopping at Activities**<br>• This may be dedication to work, the 'workaholic; or a 'passion' for a hobby or sport.<br>• Activities do also provide the opportunity for other forms of time structure, so social organisations focused on particular activities can provide opportunities to develop friendships and a social network. |

**Figure 3. Risk management**

**– Stopping at pastimes or activities**

People who stop at pastimes or activities, have found a way to be around people, 'belonging' in a group, while revealing little about themselves, see Figure. 3. There is a sense of risk management and anxiety is close to the surface. The person may identify with 'social phobia'. Conditional strokes tend to be 'polished up' into unconditional ones.

People who stop at these stages may refer to those they engage with as 'friends': 'I am meeting my friends as the pub tonight'; the person I play golf with or go fishing with, that's 'my friend'.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Within a relationship based on rackets, there will be times of intimacy**<br><br>**Within a warm affectionate relationship there will be times when one or both people return to script and there is the potential for rackets to begin, and the risk of a game.** | **Stopping at Rackets and Games**<br>• The racket is the stable state of false intimacy. It is a relationship based on mutual need rather than mutual delight. It is therefore containing the possibility of abandonment, which prohibits the deep trust needed for stable intimacy. It is, in essence, mutually exploitative.<br>• The racket can tip into a series of second-degree games, and then reset, or self-destruct with betrayals, bitter divorce or other third-degree payoffs.<br>• Later, I offer an alternative outcome to a racket that has become untenable.<br>**Arriving at, and sustaining, Intimacy**<br>• Open, sincere, straightforward, caring, communication. No pretence or subterfuge.<br>• Inherently healing, as defences are not needed.<br>• No exploitation or manipulation.<br>• Mutual respect, consideration, gratitude and delight.<br>• To achieve a stable intimacy the people involved require the courage and commitment to remove all the obstacles to respect, consideration, trust, generosity, warmth, tenderness, affection and gratitude. |

**Figure 4. Two ways of being in a close relationship**

**False intimacy and true intimacy**

Up to this point in the list, the people involved in these forms of structuring time would be unlikely to refer to each other as 'partner' or to plan marriage. In the remaining two ways of structuring time, these designations of relationship are common. (See Figure 4 above.)

**Patterns in time structure**

If people do not get stuck in the patterns that I have just described, their flexibility and responsiveness in their patterns of relating will be reflected in their patterns of time structuring.

Figure 1. already includes an indicator of 'depth', with each 'step' down the list providing greater relational reward, in terms of more valued and/or more intense, strokes. So, I think of these representing six 'levels' at which interaction may be occurring. The participants will move from one level to another during their time together, and this can be plotted on a time axis, as indicated in Figure 5 below.

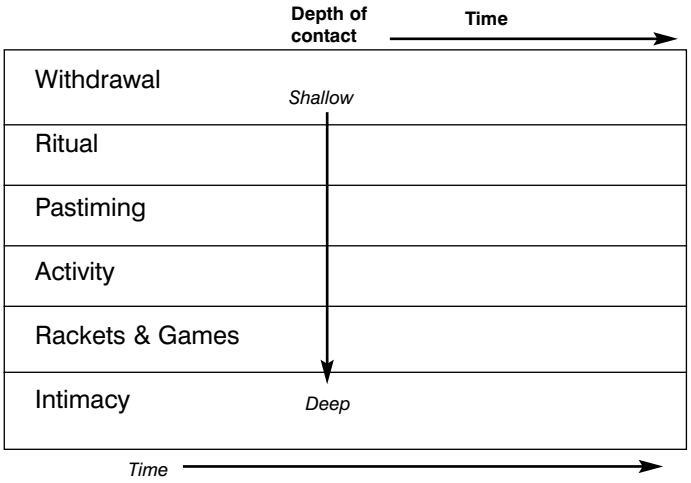



**Figure 5. Indicating levels of contact changing with time**

From experience I note that people at the start of a relationship spend more times at the 'shallower', less risky, levels, while older, deeper relationships involve more time in intimacy, whether real intimacy or the false intimacy found in rackets and games.

The sequence illustrated in Figure 6 represents someone walking alone (withdrawal), who meets a friend and says 'hello' (ritual), chats about some shared social interest (pastiming), says goodbye (ritual) and walks on

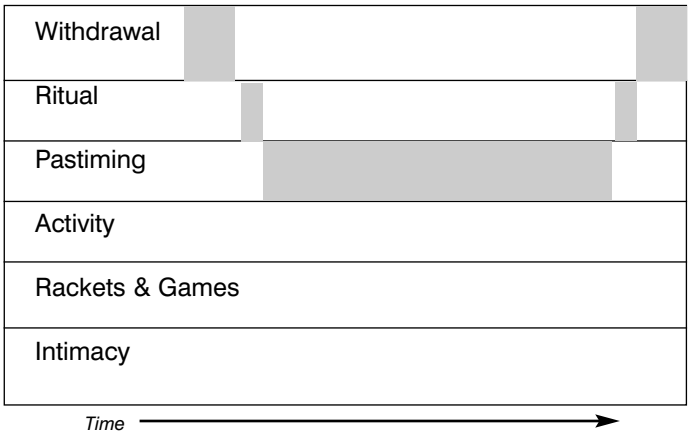



**Figure 6. Having a chat**

(withdrawal). The timescale could be ten minutes.

This type of chart could be used to record an encounter between two people, where each is tracking the other. Alternatively, it could represent the contribution of an individual to a group process, and the others in the group may or may not follow the same pattern.

The sequence – Withdrawal; Ritual; Pastiming, back to Ritual, then Withdrawal – could extend to hours if the encounter is at a pub or club, for example. That is, the timescale of any element in Figure 6 could be extended without altering the basic form of the encounter. If this represented a 'single' person going to a nightclub for an evening, the first element might be the journey to the

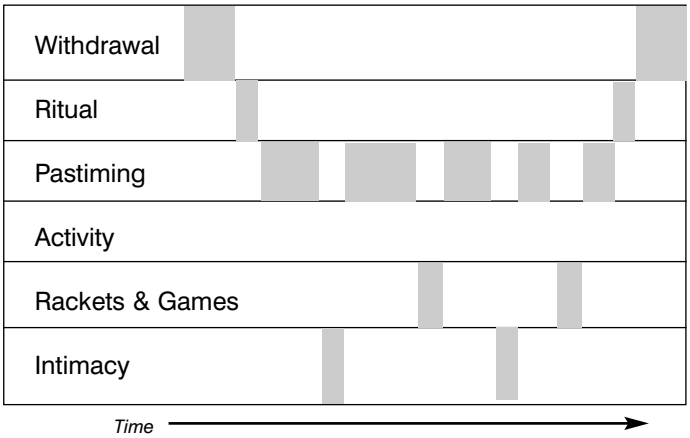



**Figure 7. Getting to know you**

nightclub, the second one could be meeting someone and engaging in a bit of a 'chat up, and then the evening is spent 'partying'. Any particular activity; talking, dancing; is still about 'what sort of person are you?' And 'would I like to know you better?' The specific activity is as irrelevant to the social meaning as the topic of conversation would be when talking. Then there is a flirty ending, and they go home alone.

In the course of an extended meeting like this, to manage the risk of moving deeper, each person will 'dip into' some topic, issue or disclosure that has more emotional significance for them. It is like: 'I will trust you with this bit, and if that is OK I will trust you with a bit more'. Some of what is offered will be 'intimacy'; some will be 'false intimacy'. This is represented on the chart above, Figure 7.

To indicate something of how many things that are 'obvious' and 'simple' as far as NTs are concerned are completely 'non-obvious' and far from 'simple' for Aspies, I will sprinkle some extracts from *The Asperkid's Secret book of Social Rules* by Jenifer Cook O'Toole (2013) as I go along.

*Asperkids:*

- *Everyone wants to feel heard and know that they matter.*
- *Show what you know bit-by-bit so that everyone gets a chance to be heard.*
- *To be interesting to other people, you first have to be interested in them.*

*– Cook O'Toole 2013: 29 and 84*

- *Being right isn't the most important thing, even when it feels that way.*
- *Unless there's danger, never correct an adult or authority figure*

*– Cook O'Toole 2013: 28*

Particularly if you are looking for a life partner, this stage in a developing relationship is an exploration of 'how well do we fit together'. As I will show when I cover

relational needs, the best indicator that a relationship is worth investing in is an experience of mutuality: being with you is easy and simple, we have similar values and interests, and often similar elements in our stories – I know my way around your inner world – your world is like my world, and I also find something I am missing and looking for. There is an experience of an immediate 'connection' – 'we had been talking for ten minutes, and I felt like we had known each other for years; it was so easy, so comfortable.' This experience of a deep non-verbal connection, an extreme mutual mindsight, provides an immediate experience of trust, because I 'see you' and like what I see; I know you 'see me', and like what you see; so I know that you would not knowingly hurt me. Shared intimacies quickly come into the relationship, to the delight of both. There is a shift directly from pastiming to intimacy.

If Figure 7 is taken to represent an initial social meeting, then the next likely step is to arrange a meeting that can be understood as a shared activity: a walk, a meal, a visit to a cinema, a museum, a concert or a bowling-alley. The shared activity is the principal mode, the social level agenda, but it also provides opportunities for further pastiming and for intimacy. Creating those opportunities may be the main motivation, the psychological level agenda. Such a meeting might have a profile similar to that in Figure 8, below.

Notice that pastiming and intimacy, in particular, can occur during activity, such as at a meal or during a walk.

*Asperkids:*

*48. Have a plan when a friend comes over to hang out. An activity (anything from baking cookies to building Lego) gives you something to talk about.*
*Cook O'Toole 2013: 251*
*No guy or girl is worth crying over. And the one who is won't make you cry.*
*Cook O'Toole 2013: 34*
*57. Give your best effort in all that you do. No matter what you are capable of others will think the work they see you do is best you can do.*
*Cook O'Toole 2013: 252*

*81. Spacing off and thinking look alike. Say, 'I'm thinking about what I want to say' if you need time, otherwise other people think you're not paying attention.*
*Cook O'Toole 2013: 255*

It is for this reason that I encourage clients looking to make friends to join activity-based groups. If the activity, for example, a sport, is one they enjoy anyway, then they can anticipate a pleasant experience, can manage their social exposure by dipping in and out of the actual activity.

Also, different activity groups tend to attract different personalities; the watercolour class and the BMX+ club are unlikely to have many members in common. So, engaging in an activity that you enjoy is going to increase the likelihood of meeting someone that you would enjoy being with; someone 'like you'.

Old friends meeting up for a drink, sharing a barbeque, playing a round of golf, are likely to create intimacy. I think that the psychological level messages are defining the meaning of the interaction. The point is, an outside observer will not necessarily know what the category is if the social level is activity; and, very commonly, people may think that they are in intimacy when they are in a racket.

The pattern in Figure 9 below represents a therapy session. The focus is on open, honest communication, even if some art therapy or other creative work is going on it is the quality of the relationship experienced by the client that defines the process, that creates the therapeutic space. What happens within that space is important, possibly life changing, but first there has to be 'space' to define and contain it.

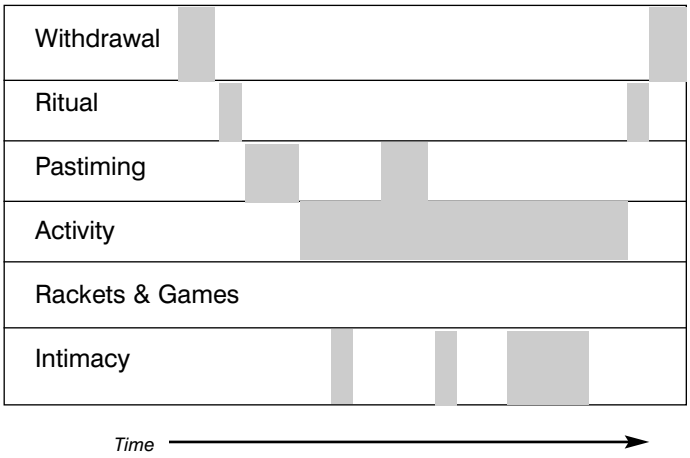



**Figure 8. Spending time with you**

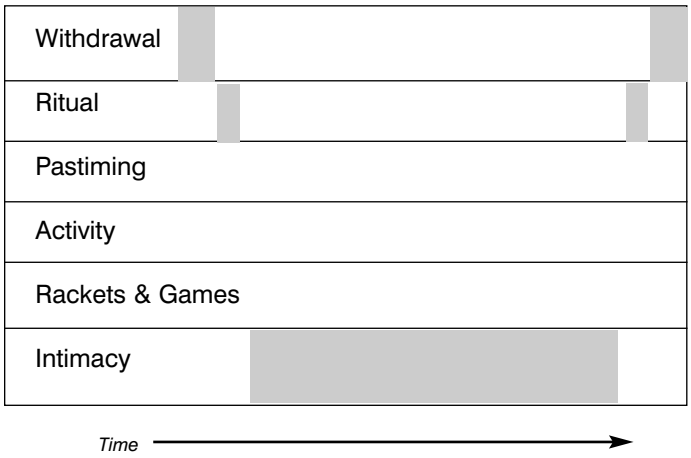
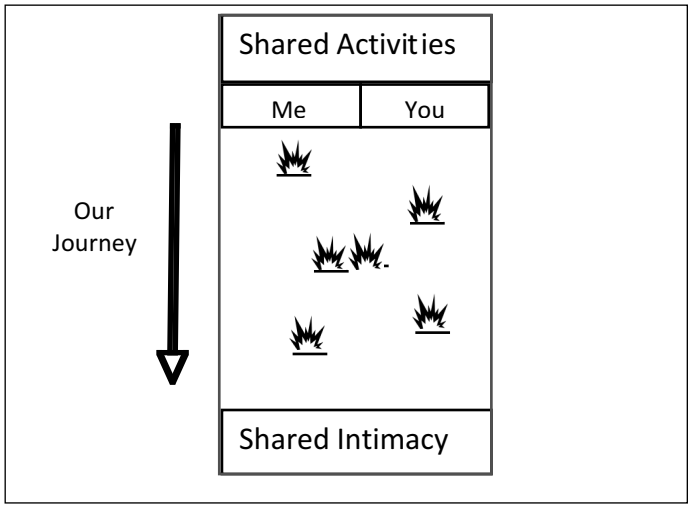



**Figure 9. Beyond saying 'Hello'**




**Crossing the Minefield**

In developing a relationship there is a journey to be made from the stage where the time structure is mostly in activity, Figure 8, to the stage where there is a bond and closeness, openness, and spontaneity that defines the quality of contact as intimacy, Figure 9.

As 'I' try to get close to 'you', 'I' will trigger your defences; as 'you' try to get close to 'me', 'you' will trigger mine. In terms of ego states, one of us is no longer in Adult. Provided one person stays in Adult there is the possibility for reflection and insight and the relationship will be stronger: more open; more trusting. Over time, my mind will learn that the defence is not needed here and it will diminish. In this sense, a loving, open relationship is, in itself, healing. There is a journey to be made, of growing openness, honesty, trust and valuing.

I picture this journey as being across a minefield, and a mine going off represents a defence being triggered. I often draw this diagram, Figure 10, as I talk: When 'you 'trigger my defence, and that response triggers your defence, two mines go off together, and neither of us has our feet on the ground. Neither of us is in Adult and we are not in a space to reflect on or solve that situation. I hope that you will recognise that this is a client-friendly way to talk about

'Con + Gimmick = Response'

**Moving into a Racket**

The idea of 'crossing a minefield, as a journey to intimacy: that is, with a positive intent by the couple to transcend the trauma and defences of their childhoods, to build on something that they already value and want to make better; this is a positive, cooperative and transformational contract.

I have worked with a number of couples who come to me after being together for years. They 'used to be OK' but now they argue and feel unhappy. What I realised is that this was a sign of growth, becoming aware that they were not making each other happy, and they wanted more from the relationship. The problem is, if you were raised in a family where relational needs were not met, there were lots of relational skills that were never modelled in your world. Luckier children 'absorbed' ways of relating, in implicit memory, that they automatically draw on as adults. These clients have the awareness that their current problems are rooted in their families of origin. They understand that an unconscious recognition of mutuality drew them together, and they lack the tools to make changes. They experience a deficit, and we have precisely the tools that they need. Fanita English was a little pessimistic in her predicted outcome when a racket becomes unstable. It does not have to end in a switch and a payoff, there is an alternative, therapeutic change. Applying the tools brings new experiences and further insight, and it was in this work that I saw the recovery of empathy, and the delight that it can bring.

Now, when working with clients who are developing close relationships, I warn them in advance that, in order to get to true intimacy, they will need to cross the minefield, defusing the mines (defences) as they go. That, to my mind, is the proper 'working on a relationship', bringing two subjective worlds together in mutual delight rather than mutual neediness.

I will be applying this way of thinking about time structure to the way Aspies make friends and integrating ideas about relational needs. These two articles may not have seemed directly relevant to working with Aspies, but I have done two things, I have made the theories 'visual' which suits Aspies, people who are dyslexic and other 'visual learners', and I have created a model for looking at how relationships develop – for NTs and for Aspies. The theme, in the next article, will be 'trust'.

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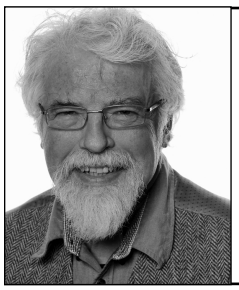

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# Writing from nature

**DEE LONGHURST** says using nature as a springboard can be a wonderful way to explore feelings through writing.

I OFTEN HEAR people say they would like to write creatively but they don't know where to start. A great way of getting started is by using nature as inspiration. Thousands of writers from W H Auden to Benjamin Zephaniah have been inspired by nature and it is something that unites us all. We can all resonate with sights and sounds of being in the sea, for example, or walking through woods in autumn, stepping on crisp brown leaves and feeling the chill of the air on our cheeks.

Many authors use atmosphere to create mood or build suspense in their stories. Consider the dark, stormy night of a horror story or the warm, sandy beach of a romance novel. As therapists, we are all familiar with using metaphors to help clients explore their feelings. Creative writing can aid this self-exploration. It can encourage a sense of depth and self-awareness. Encouraging clients to write creatively using their own metaphors can be very helpful. Writing between sessions for example allows privacy and honesty, and the client can then choose whether or not to share their writing with the therapist.

In *Writing works*, Victoria Field explains: 'Places – real and imaginary, literal and metaphorical – are a useful and open-ended theme for many kinds of therapeutic writing. We often use place as a metaphor for more general feelings about our lives.'

Field suggests various writing activities that can help tap clients into personal insight, inspired by a place or nature. She divides these into four categories: writing about a real, remembered place; writing based on visiting a real place; using place as metaphor; using guided imagery.

I recommend the book as a resource if you are interested in learning more about these.

Some clients may benefit from being given a springboard for writing about themselves. In *Journal to the Self*, Kathleen Adams suggests these can be either questions, which often generate feelings and explorations (right brain) or statements, which more often evoke thoughts and facts (left brain) in writing.

Here are some springboard ideas using nature, which you may like to try yourself or use with your client: if I were a season/type of flower, what would I be…?; silence is not golden, it is…; here in my garden how do I feel?; in these dark woods, I…. You also may like to use nature poems or quotations to get started.

I have often used metaphors and springboards to help me explore my feelings in more depth. Writing alone between therapy sessions gives me a sense of safety and containment, as well as a source of inspiration.

The following is an example of how I have used a springboard to explore my own feelings. I used author Vicki Harrison's quotation as a starting point. Harrison says, 'Grief is like the ocean; it comes in waves ebbing and flowing. Sometimes the water is calm, and sometimes it is overwhelming. All we can do is learn to swim.' While I mostly agreed with Harrison, her words did not seem to capture the depth of grief I experienced after losing my daughter. By using the quotation as a springboard, I allowed myself to take a very different look at my feelings and was able to explore them in personal therapy. This in turn aided my grief process. Here is my response:

**Tsunami**

It is not a wave, it's a bloody tsunami!
It has already drowned my daughter
And stolen her away from me.
Now the enormous waves are back
Crashing towards me relentlessly.
I freeze in horror. A man shouts:
'Climb high! You can survive!'
He grabs my hand and we reach a tree
I climb up, clinging on with my bare hands
'It's OK' he says, and he seems to mean it.
I shut my eyes to block out the horror
But I can still see my lifeless baby.
She is alone and scared and cold.
I despair at the unfairness of life and
The fragility of our human existence.
I hum her a soft lullaby under my breath.
The man places his hand in mine
And whispers me a familiar prayer.
My heart aches; my tears begin to fall.
The only thing I have left is his hope.

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# Thriller to chiller

**ANOUSHKA BEAZLEY** filters our screen viewings through a finely-honed TA lens

**HOMECOMING** – AMAZON PRIME.
Homecoming is not what I expected. One of Erskine's eight relational needs (1999) is validation and I notice that the director, Sam Esmail, and I have the same affection for Hitchcock. Emotionally claustrophobic yet seductive camera angles delight and abound and, having written my BA dissertation on the man, I feel as if I have 'come home.' Homecoming is a facility for veterans to ease the transition back into civilian life. Not government-run but outsourced to a mega corp is our first clue that our counsellor protagonist, Julia Roberts, is more than just a pretty woman – although given the shenanigans in the current American administration this signpost is a tad misleading. Voyeuristic panning around the Homecoming building and staircase echo similar feelings stirred in *Vertigo* and *North by Northwest*, movies in which the sense of paranoia dominates. Why do I feel comforted that Esmail seeks to validate a man that I too admire? Why does remembering my university years, a sense of self and identity have me feeling I have come home? Attachment.

In reality *Homecoming* is a covert study using unapproved medication to eradicate symptoms of PTSD, efforts which will prepare the soldiers for re-enlisting. When side effects show the deletion of core memories Roberts cottons on to her ethical dilemma. From a psychotherapeutic perspective we are alerted more obviously to the lonely and intimate world of the psychotherapist and the other very real ethical dilemma of how to respond post training when our clients give us what we need but which we did not know we needed. Roberts has a connection to her client, and he with her, and when he exposes the part of which she is unaware, her need to be in relationship, she fails in her ability to keep the line between therapist and client. When confronted with the impact of her professional practice Roberts chooses to delete her own memories; an interesting metaphor for the therapist in training who refuses to look at the really painful unmet needs. In the absence of a secure attachment the need to be validated and affirmed significantly increases as does the propensity for transference. Hargarden and Sills (2001) elucidate twinship transference; the need to feel we are like others.

*Homecoming* is a beautifully crafted thriller about the choices we make, in and out of awareness.

**THIS IS US** – NETFLIX
Transactional analysis lives here, epistemologically confirmed in the title. Each episode manages to cathartically release something lodged somewhere and I end up looking like I've done a therapy marathon, sobbing all over the cat having used up all the tissues. Jack and Rebecca have three children and when one dies in childbirth they adopt another right there and then. At this point adoption agency employees are screaming fictional obscenities at the TV like 'that would never happen,' while the rest of us are hanging off the words of Rebecca's fatherly surgeon who tells distraught husband Jack that 'even with the sourest of lemons, you made something resembling lemonade.' The family as protagonist allow us to see ego states at work, injunctions, games, rackets, the flashbacks and flash forwards show Welford's (2019) intergenerational trauma and hot potato firmly in the driver's seat. And, like a family, Netflix expects you to commit – there's to be six seasons.

**TEMPLE** – SKY ONE
By all accounts this Norwegian remake should be wholly unbelievable; a doctor leaves his wife's memorial in a hurry, back to his illegal medical clinic deep in the bowels of the London Underground beneath Temple tube station where his dead wife is attached to various machines while he and her best friend, his ex-mistress, research rats in cages to bring her back from a rare disease from which she died before she herself found a cure. I know. Trust me, I know, I've seen it, however, throw in a tight script, a gothic undertone and Mark Strong as the ultimate charming manipulator (Ware, 1983): impulsive, self-serving, aggressive, manipulative and irresponsible in the most likeable and vicarious way. Strong out-performs his surviving adaptation and the cast play it straight. His choices have him break the law, enter the criminal underworld, lie to practically everyone with blatant abuse of his privilege as a medical professional. So why is Temple surprisingly addictive? Er I'm sorry, have you not been reading this review?

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# GRACE NOTES XXVIII

**DR SALMA SIDDIQUE** considers loss, ecosystems and workplace stress.

DEAR READER, I offer apologies for my lengthy absence from this column. I took time out to reflect on my work and my sense of self in this world in these turbulent times. It wasn't so much anti-depressants but the engaging with nature (and books) that saved my life. Ecotherapy claims the transformative therapeutic power of being out in the natural world experiencing the positive effect of the force of the wind and the changing natural environment; changes which can help map the changes in ourselves and the events around us which can render us feeling hopeless. For me, it is timely to be reflecting on ecotherapy.

I also used my time off to revisit some books, and would like to share some of these with you. Naomi Klein's (2015) writing offers a very accessible narrative about the relationship between consumer choice and material resources impacting on the most vulnerable in society. Oliver James' (2013) book gives an exposé through testimonies of the frequently Kafkaesque (nightmarish) situation of office work. I was able to relate to the depictions of psychopathy, narcissism and Machiavellianism in the workplace. I have noted an increase in the number of therapy clients reporting experiences of humiliation by others, a lack of compassion, criticism of work performance and 'mobbing' through a culture of tormenting, insensitivity, alienation and/or harassment. At times, clients' stories reflect Kübler-Ross' (2005) theory on loss. It was helpful to identify my own loss and that of clients with one or more of the five stages of denial: anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance, which mediate the (unfelt) senses drawing us closer to learning about separation and loss.

One can work through this phenomenon through the definitions of OKness of self in relation with other(ing). For example the 'aristocratic position' (Berne,1963), where groups interact in the world from 'I+ You?' That is, 'They', interpreted as everyone else, 'are no good, but show me what you can do and I will decide if you fit.'

The environmentalist Aldo (1949), reflected on how our own indigenous ways of knowing and self-care 'is to live alone in a world of wounds.' Nearly 70 years later, scientists Cunsolo and Ellis (2018), stated that we (individuals and institutions) should critically explore the impact of climate change on our mental health and relationships: 'To bear witness to ecological losses personally, or to the suffering encountered by others as they bear their own losses, is to be reminded that climate change is not just an abstract scientific concept. Rather, it is the source of much . . . unacknowledged emotional and psychological pain, particularly for people who remain deeply connected to, and observant of, the natural world.'

I am trying to understand the far-reaching implications of collective ecological grief. The grief process also carries with it the anxiety about the future for the UK within Europe. 'Brexit uncertainty affected the mental [wellbeing] of 1 in 3 UK adults,' Alice Hall (2019), *The Independent* . 'Around 33 per cent of people said Britain's departure from the European Union . . . had a negative effect on their wellbeing.' This research was by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

We are facing uncertainty and potential loss from all sides at present. Therefore, it seems important to embed a connection to nature in our therapy work to regain balance and harmony. Nature-Deficit Disorder is a diagnosis which recognises the human costs of alienation from the natural world. By exploring the group forces of process and proclivity, Berne (1963), raised the issue of disconnect to self, other and nature (macro) which is echoed in the stress – through the lack of ecosystems – in the workplace/organisations (micro). An approach that is limited to supporting the ecosystems for individuals experiencing stress is providing a plaster on wounds. We need to challenge the causes of damage to social relationship and its connection to Nature-Deficit Disorder in the built environment. Our responsibilities as therapists and supervisors are to help facilitate the reclaiming of insights of indigenous communities and societies to enable us to flourish in balance with nature.

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**Dr Salma Siddique** CTA(P) PTSTA is a clinical anthropologist, researcher and academic in counselling and psychotherapy at the University of Aberdeen. She works with RTEs on a consultancy basis for research skills and CTA prep. groups.

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**The Affinity Centre**
**Psychotherapy – Supervision – Training**

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**Wilmslow Office**
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ta training organisation

An Exam Group in Leeds supporting members in their preparation for CTA written and oral exams through individually tailored development activities.

## Exam Preparation Group -

Helping you get ready for CTA Exam

**Have you completed your clinical training or Diploma and are ready to prepare for CTA exams?**

The Exam Preparation Group meets for 8 days during 2020/21; 1 weekend in September and a further 6 Saturdays throughout the academic year. You will develop an individual development plan which informs the Exam Group days - agenda days set by the attendees - and can include: planning or writing sections of the case study, Mock exams, Understanding the exam process etc.

Our trainers, Lin Cheung PTSTA(P) and Andy Williams TSTA(P), are experienced senior therapists and supervisors who have successfully supervised candidates through both the written and oral exam process. They have examined at CTA level regularly in the UK and overseas.

**We are now taking applications for 2020/21. If you would like more information, see our website or get in touch using the details below.**

## Understanding and Working with Personality Disorders

30 November 2019

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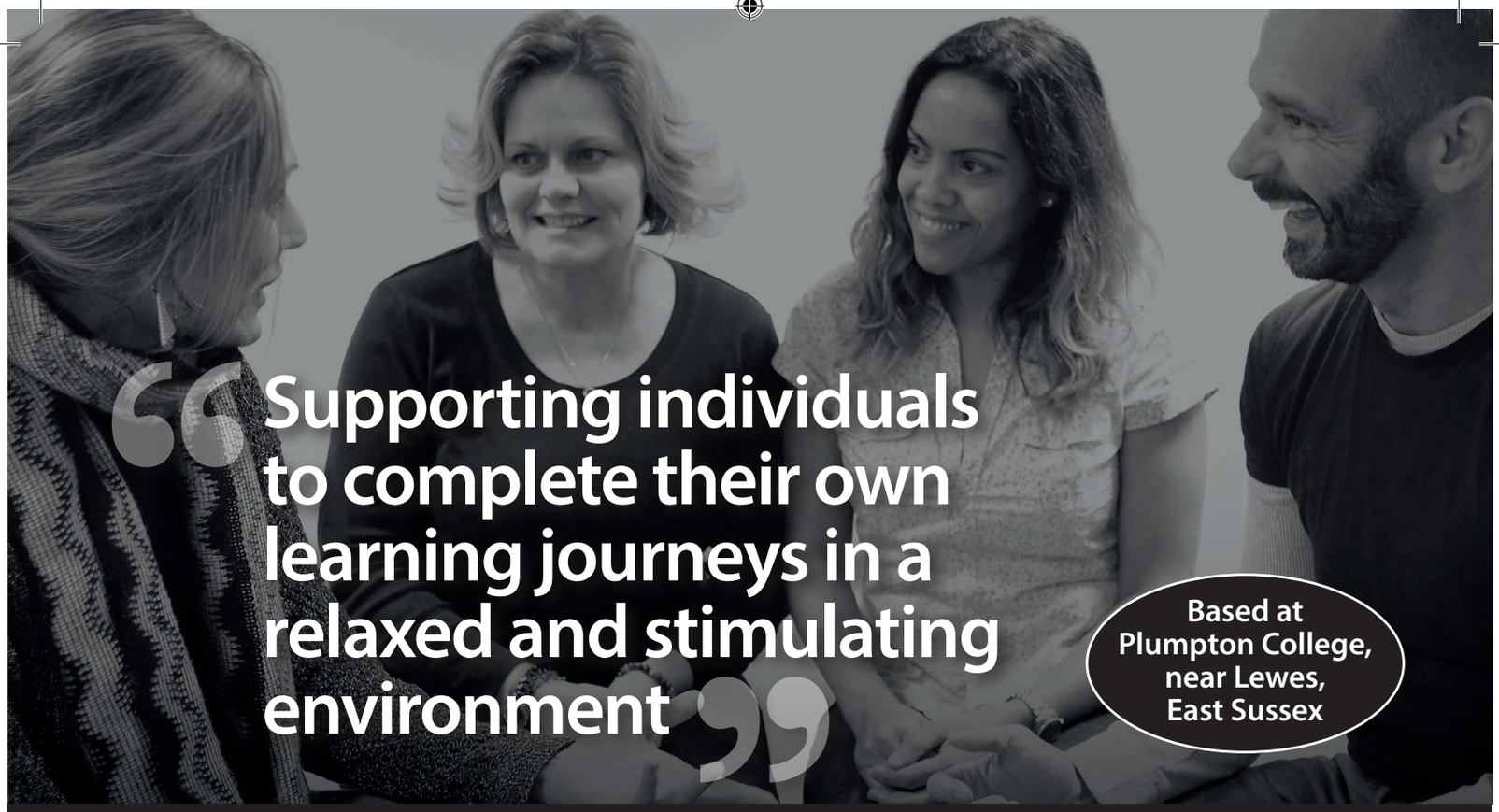
**Tickets cost £115 including lunch and refreshments. To book or for more information, go to our website or contact us using the details below.**

**Beren Aldridge** PTSTA CTA MSc, is the trainer for this course. He is a psychotherapist and supervisor working in private practice in Kendal. He teaches on both Foundation and Advanced Clinical programmes at TA Training Organisation.




## ENGAGING AND THOUGHT PROVOKING WORKSHOPS AND COURSES

### TA101 – Understanding Self and Others
***25th/26th January, 21st/22nd March, 30th/31st May 2020***
Want to understand yourself and others? TA is a great tool for personal awareness and professional development. This weekend course will introduce some of the main concepts of TA including: life script, psychological games, ego states and transactions. It leads to an internationally recognised certificate and is a starting point for those wishing to continue with further counselling / psychotherapy training.

### TA202 – Understanding Self and Others
***15th December 2019***
For those who have completed a TA101workshop and would like to build further on those concepts as well as having an introduction to some other areas of theory such as Strokes, Hungers, Personality adaptations, Drowning person model, Transference.

### Free Wellbeing and Open Evening – 'Grief'
***Weds 6th November 2019: 7pm - 9pm***
This talk will explore some ideas around what it means to grieve. The speaker will draw on her own experiences of the death of family figures to illustrate her thinking on the subject. There is also the opportunity to chat and network, plus find out about our part-time counselling and psychotherapy courses and our CPD programme. Next Wellbeing date: 22nd January – Mental Health in the Workplace.

### Diploma in Supervision
***Starts 26th January 2020***
***(6 weekends between Jan and June 2020)***
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***19th/20th April 2020***
A 2 day course offering you the knowledge and skills base to work with counselling groups. Through a mixture of group discussions, we will explore how to create a counselling group, what can emerge and how to manage the process, group dynamics, awareness of the group process from both a relational and counselling theoretical perspective.

### Organisational TA
***New course - 10 weekends from October 2020 to July 2021***
Organisational Transactional Analysis is a powerful tool for anyone working on improving communication, processes and relations within an organisation. This course is designed to facilitate students in applying TA principles and concepts at a personal level, group level and within whole organisations to allow growth and change. The course includes taught elements, discussion, case presentation, experiential exercises, skills practice, feedback and coaching.

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For more information or to discuss your requirements further please visit
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- TA101 (2 days)
- Introduction to CBT (2 days)
- First Steps to Successful Private Practice 21 March 10am – 5pm

**CPD and Supervision Group**
CPD and Supervision Group days are held monthly and run by Andy Williams TSTA(P)

**Exam Preparation Group**
Our CTA Exam preparation group takes place on 8 days during the academic year (1 weekend plus 6 Saturdays). We are now taking applications for 2020/21.

**Our team**
Our training team includes Training Director Andy Williams TSTA(P) and trainers: Beren Aldridge PTSTA(P), Lin Cheung PTSTA(P), Bev Gibbons PTSTA(P) and Michelle Hyams-Ssekasi PTSTA(P)

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**MSc/CTA Training** You can also join our well-established training courses which lead to CTA/MSc. Students follow our existing TA training course (twenty days part-time training per year), which leads to a diploma and/or the CTA examination. The final written and oral exams for the CTA are also the final exams for the award of the MSc. Formal enrolment on the Masters' course normally takes place at the beginning of the third year of post-Foundation training. If you have already completed some TA training, you may be eligible to enter the course in a more advanced year. Our website will give you full information on admission and other course details.

**For further details** of all training courses, information on our programme of workshops, seminars and other TA events, please contact: The Course Registrar, The Berne Institute, Berne House, 29 Derby Road, Kegworth DE74 2EN, 01509 673649, Website www.theberne.com Email office@theberne.com

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The PEWs - run regularly twice per year since 1992 – have been a springboard from which many participants have gone on to gain success in EATA/ITAA CTA and T/STA examinations. They are also valuable preparation for the EATA/ITAA Training Endorsement Workshop (TEW).
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**Cost** £445. Payment in UK £ only, Eurocheque, I.M.O., or UK bank cheque to The Berne Institute.

**Venue**: PEWs are held at The Berne Institute, Nottingham, UK. Please arrange your own accommodation and/or ask for directions, lists of accommodation/arrangements for staying overnight at Berne House.

**Booking**: The Academic Registrar, The Berne Institute, Berne House, 29 Derby Road, Kegworth DE74 2EN 01509 673649 www.theberne.com

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