

Call for Presenters: Summer Workshop 2010

Theme: "The Power of the I-Thou Dance"

Date: June 9-13, 2010

Location: Stonewall Lodge, West Virginia

Program Chairs: Jane Baxter and Nick Kirsch

Dear AAP Members,

We are excited to invite you to become a part of the program at our summer workshop next June in West Virginia. We hope you will consider bringing your talents and skills, your "I" to our "Thou," by leading or co-leading a workshop.

There are many different ways to "dance" in psychotherapy. Some we choose and some choose us. The I-Thou dance, drawing on the interconnectedness and shared reality of therapist and client, is a delicate yet powerful way to engage clients and facilitate growth and change.

AAP members have traditionally been at the vanguard of those working from an I-Thou perspective. In the I-Thou mode we endeavor to be aware of the full "Otherness" of the other person and the full "Self" of ourselves. We speak and respond from our "I," or true self, directly to the "Thou," or true self of the other. This interaction engenders an I-Thou process, a dance where two individuals merge into an inseparable partnership-where any action is jointly felt and influential. When used effectively, this dance enriches the depth, quality, and impact of the experience.

When the therapist speaks/acts inauthentically or fails to acknowledge the client's here-and-now reality, it is not an I-Thou

union. If the therapist's needs, longings, biases, or feelings are *unconsciously* imposed on this interpersonal field, the dance breaks down and therapist and client start bumping into each other, stepping on each other's toes, dancing by themselves, or looking for other partners.

This model calls us to explore our Self, and how to use our Self as the medium for knowing, explicating, and modifying the client's total being. Taking the lead – as it were, we utilize our awareness of this profound dance to enrich and empower our partner's own dancing.

As you formulate ideas for creating a workshop, consider these experiences in therapy and what, when and how you might recognize and respond to them:

- Being taken out of the “I-Thou” unit and positioned in a “me and you” duality
- Falling out of step with one's partner and trying to get back in step
- Staying present and authentic in the dance
- Recognizing one's countertransference and speaking about it
- Sharing (or at times, containing) the harder truths of our experience of the patient
- Being “real” and unscripted in the therapeutic work, but also mindful and responsible
- Exceptions to the rule: choosing to sidestep the “I-Thou” dance and do something else

Our Objectives:

1. Increase participants' knowledge of their own "I" in the presence of the other group members, or the "Thou."
2. Increase participants' skill level by offering a variety of workshops that model different ways of getting at the "I-Thou" material.
3. Increase therapists' sensitivities to ways that missing "I-Thou" opportunities can cause therapeutic impasses and premature terminations.

We have attached the "Workshop Proposal for Presenters Form." Please complete the form and return it to us. Your proposals must be sent by e-mail to Jane Baxter if you have a Mac at JaneBaxterPhD@gmail.com, or Nick Kirsch at Nicholas.Kirsch@verizon.net if you have a PC.

When completing the forms, it is important to list all of your degrees, not just the highest one. Please construct a brief paragraph (three or four sentences) describing what your presentation is about.

Educational Objectives:

List your objectives and keep in mind that they must be stated from the perspective of what the participant will be able to do after attending the presentation, and not from the perspective of what you, as the presenter, will do during the presentation. For example, be sure to begin each objective with a verb that denotes an observable action, such as "list, explain, summarize, discuss, compare," etc. and avoid words that indicate emotions, feelings or other things that occur in the head, such as "know, learn, appreciate, understand, recognize," etc. In other words, Participants will be able to 1...2...3... We recognize that some of

the questions are difficult and even annoying. However, they are required in order that material be accredited, and we ask you to answer questions and stay close to the format. This will save us sending material back to you to be resubmitted. We know that this is a laborious process and appreciate your taking the time to do them.

We would like the proposals completed and sent to us by September 15, 2009. Please let us know if there is any way we can be of help to you.

Thank you,

Jane Baxter and Nick Kirsch