



of

SOCIAL INTEREST

Newsletter of the Adlerian Network of Ireland Ltd.

Resource Centre, Kickham Street, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.

AUTUMN 2009

Greetings!

Here we are re-grouped again after the summer break. It was a very dreary season and let's hope everyone's spirit will be lifted by this Indian summer.

We were very heartened that we had a good attendance at our annual Summer School in spite of the economic downturn and feedback we received was very positive and we really appreciate the contributions you have made to this Newsletter.

We are now finalising next year's programme and details will be in our next issue.

We wish Janet O'Brien well in her sojourn in Canada. She was a founder member of this organisation and her contributions over the years are incalculable. Her energy and enthusiasm are legendary and we miss her good self. Eileen is in regular contact with her and she is really enjoying life there and the wide range of activities she has got involved in. She is starting to work with clients and with her great abilities will no doubt be successful.

We welcome any comments or contributions you have for us.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Details of the Autumn Workshop
- Feedback from the Summer School
- Feedback from I.C.A.S.I.
- Book review

.....and lots more.....

Changing the narratives of our lives.

*Presented by
James Robert Bitter.*

The 2009 Summer school in Clonmel had some great opportunities for learning. Once again we had the privilege of having Jim Bitter present a course at the Summer school.

Jim sought to integrate Narrative Therapy into his rich understanding of Adler and Satir, into this workshop. He presented this workshop through personal stories of the participants and a theoretical analysis of Narrative therapy.

What is Narrative Therapy?

Narrative Therapy is a respectful, and non judgmental approach to helping people, which places them as the experts of their own lives. It separates the person and the problem, and holds the view that a person has many skills, abilities and values. It seeks to broaden the perspective of the whole person and thereby reduce the influence of problems in a person's life.

How does it work?

As a participant in the workshop I was invited to listen as one participant after another told their story. As the story telling advanced, I began to reflect and identify with aspects of what people related.

For me these reflections brought me back to how stuck I had been in my relationship with my mother. As the week went on I went through a 'will I won't I' go into the middle of the room with Jim.

Anyway I didn't go in to the chair.

However something important happened for me. It was as if the penny finally dropped with me in relation to a bone that I had been holding on to. I became willing to add a new aspect to a grudging belief that I had been holding on to for years. I was quite taken by the freedom that this release brought about in my mind and in my body.

The story had another side to it.

Narrative therapy fills out and completes the story. The participant is the guide and storyteller. Each aspect and theme opens up the possibility of new intersections, new crossroads. I loved the way that Jim dwelled with a person at one of their crossroads until they considered it safe to go in one particular direction or another. Considering a particular direction meant that one had to challenge ones long held beliefs. I was privileged to be allowed to share these delicate moments as the person in the chair visibly struggled with the prospect of letting go, and opening up to new possibilities.

There was one story in particular which brought out a strong reaction in me when I heard it first. Later in the week my attitude changed when I had to realize that in it's first telling the whole story did not come out. I had formed a judgment when I had only part of the picture. This has given me much food for thought.

Thank you Jim for guiding such important insights.

Thanks too to the brave people who were willing to share their private and at times painful stories with the rest of us.

John Murphy

ICASSI 2009 Maryville, a Reflective & Nostalgic Look Back.

I attended ICASSI in Maryville, Tennessee a very picturesque little town on the foot hills of the Smoky Mountains in the midst of Dolly Parton country and a short drive from Memphis and from the Cherokee reservation in the Smokies. As always ICASSI was a rewarding and enriching experience. I attended Gerhard Baumer's week long session on dreams, Mel Markowski's magnificent horizon expanding sessions on Spontaneity and Creativity and Helmut Heuschen's sessions on fairytales.

This article will focus on Helmut's sessions as I feel his approach is ideally suited to Irish people particularly those who are shy about revealing anything personal about themselves in a group setting. We all have started off from this point at some stage on our emotional journey and I am convinced that Helmut's gentle, playful and writing approach is ideally suited to our culture. Helmut reads a fairytale from the collection that the Brother's Grimm wrote. He reads extracts each day and the group perform an aspect of the tale by donning imaginary masks of the characters involved. After this little performing piece, so magnificently encouraged by Helmut's playful eyes participants write their reflections in a personal journal. In the tale we read in Maryville, a king had 3 sons one of whom was considered stupid or a simpleton. Helmut emphasises how much we can learn from such characters as the 'foolish' son who as so often in fairytales turns out to be the wisest of all. Each day we wrote down our reflections without having to share our thoughts so much with the group. Now here is the unique piece of Helmut's approach. He gets people to write a dilemma and then a fairy or a witch or what ever appears in the tale. You share the story with a buddy in the group who takes on the role of the fairy or witch etc. They recommend some choices to you which you then explore in writing the rest of your fairytale. Eventually when it is written you discover insights into your dilemma and at the end you enact it with your buddy and your buddy enacts their tale with you and it brings out a deeper understanding and perspective on your dilemma. This is a very hurried summation of the entire approach to writing the fairytale for the purpose of this article. At the end the group reflect on the process of writing together and summarise the tale which has been read on 6 sheets of A4 paper. It is amazing the insight and growth that occurs from a shared summary and again I emphasise that nobody is required to disclose anything personal but the paradox as always as the group grows in comfort people share more and more. Helmut also demonstrates how this all ties into Adlerian theory emphasising how superiority, social interest and chance are all at work in the tale and the dangers lurking in the minds of those with notions of self aggrandisement.

Our group had participants from Germany, Uruguay, Japan and me from Ireland. I am so enthused that I can see many applications of this approach particularly with people new to the whole idea of experiential sharing and with children. It is great fun and suits our disposition here in Ireland for telling stories and yarns.

I feel it is also another way of working metaphorically with people and adds to the work of Rachel Shifron and Richard Kopp in this regard.

Next year the ICASSI band wagon moves onto Romania, for anyone interested check out www.icassi.net and book your Ryanair flight now, I promise Michael O'Leary didn't make me say that. Now wouldn't that be an interesting fairytale to compose where Michael O'Leary of Ryanair turns out to be the good fairy godmother and offers us a choice of much more than the Ryanair chicken sandwich or roll!!!

Dave Kearns

‘A review of the Adlerian Approach to Addiction Course’

By Ellen Quinlivan

I attended the 19th Adlerian Annual Summer School on Mon 6th July – Thurs 9th July 2009. Our venue was the Loreto Secondary School here in Clonmel. Like many others I chose this workshop on addiction on a personal learning and development basis

Sadly nowadays the world can be a very complex and lonely place for some and the sense of not ‘fitting-in’ or ‘measuring-up’ can only too often lead to escaping into the abyss of addiction.

Addictions (and there are so many!) alcohol, drugs, gambling, anorexia, bulimia. The obsessive compulsive disorders i.e self harming, the perfectionist, the controlling.... The list goes on. The spin offs of violence, rage, and depression lead only too often to fatality and suicide. Since Adam was a boy we have always been aware of the more common place addictions and in our Irish culture alcohol played a leading role. Nowadays however we need to be aware of the broader spectrum of substance abuses that are out there for our children. We need the whys and how's that lead our family members and friends into this life of destruction!

Our course Presenter was Wes Wingett from Nebraska USA. A very impressionable and eminent counsellor in the field of Adlerian Psychology. I found him to be a great course teacher; he had a stately presence being over 6ft tall with a pleasant and kindly expression. I forgot to mention that this was my first Adlerian workshop on the topic!

Our class comprised of approx 20 people in age ranging from twenty something to fifty something. We were from all walks of life, all with our own individual interests for being there. We were a jolly, lively lot once we got going! We seemed to have that knack of getting the most he could out of us while at the same time imparting his knowledge.

During our coffee and lunch breaks we mixed and chatted together and with other course groups. It is important to be aware that ‘addiction’ is a family disease. All individual family members and friends become affected by the addict. The impact that ripples outwards can be devastating. Therefore those affected also need to understand and recognise their own healing and coping

requirements. There is hope and there is help out there! There need not be isolation and loneliness, guilt and shame. The shock/horror story of today is someone else's tomorrow. There can be a movement from dis-ease to ease, dys-function to function, dis-ability to ability and so on....

Perhaps if we could teach the basic principles of Adlerian Psychology to the young parent and also in schools and work place, society in general would benefit greatly. Maybe then our children would not grow up with the hang ups and feelings of inferiority and worthlessness and lacking in self confidence, self esteem etc.. These feelings of inadequacy can often lead to escaping into addiction. It is important to remember that our children are affected by how we behave inside and outside the home, in what we say and do. Feelings of inferiority can be over whelming and can give rise to neuroses and problems in daily living which we can choose to hide rather than face. Encouragement and nurturing in the home, school community and workplace creates a sense of belonging and fulfilment.

A holistic approach i.e.-

"To see with the eyes of another
To hear with the ears of another
To feel with the heart of another"

Alfred Adler

"Life is a challenge, meet it courageously
Life is a song, sing it
Life is a struggle, accept it
Life is an adventure, dare it
Life is too precious, do not destroy it"

Mother Teresa

As our course drew to a close, I think we were all feeling a little sad; however we were all departing with a far greater knowledge of ourselves and others around us.

"WALT LIVES in ADLERIA"

By Dave Kearns

A REVIEW

"We children know that many adults pretend to like us or pretend to listen to us." This line struck a cord with me. It is taken from a book written by Dave Kearns which aims to explore the four critical Cs to children. The code to the book is Connect, Count, be Capable and have Courage. It deals with all four in an informal story format. The children would certainly have a clearer understanding of the "code" having read the book. The story is enjoyable and has a feel good factor. The large font and wide spacing makes the book easy to read. Also there are some exercises at the back of the book which are relevant, interesting and well laid out.

This book would suit the primary school curriculum where it could be introduced under the S.P.H.E. programme. It could be read aloud and then discussed.

It is suitable for children age seven or eight years.

A SUMMER SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

"No man is an island, entire by itself; every man is a piece of a continent, a part of the main...."

The experience of this 19th Summer School left me in no doubt that the Adlerian principles of connecting and contributing, were truly alive in this little part of Ireland. From the welcome evening on Sunday to the farewell celebration on Thursday each of the 80 or so people played a part in the main event.

It was my first time as a presenter here and it was one of the most superbly orchestrated events I have ever attended. I don't know what went on behind the scenes but the smooth operation run by the volunteer committee enabled me to focus entirely on my own brave group.

I say brave, because they did not really know how much would be expected of them. We began by looking at our roles in groups, creatively exploring personal and professional issues and ending with our personal goals in life in creating a tree of life. How hard they all worked sustained by humour, total cooperation, and immense respect that each member brought to the sessions which allowed everyone to learn, take risks and explore their worlds.

It was wonderful to meet up with old friends from across the seas as well as make so many new ones in Ireland. The evenings were filled with great hospitality and the sharing of much good food and wine as well as stimulating company.

At the celebration event on Thursday the children reminded me of why I have spent my life working with young people. Their infectious joy, courage and potential keeps us, the elders, in touch with all that it is that makes us human. It was a deeply moving closing ceremony.

Well done Clonmel!

Go mbeannaí Dia duit.

Wendy Goddard, Bournemouth.

What life can compare to this?

Sitting quietly by the window,

I watch the leaves fall

And the flowers bloom,

As the seasons come and go.

Hsueh - Tou (982-1052)

Nothing will content those who are not content with a little.

Greek Proverb

*Membership of the Adlerian Network of Ireland Ltd.
(Based on the work of Alfred Adler)*

By simply filling the form at the end of this letter and sending it to the secretary, you can become a member of the Adlerian Network of Ireland Ltd. In becoming a member you will receive notices of all workshops throughout the year. You will receive a discount on workshops and a newsletter sent to you two times yearly.

You will also give much needed support to the work of the Adlerian network.

The Adlerian Network of Ireland was launched in 1994.

AIMS:

- To advance public awareness of and education in the work of Alfred Adler
- To promote professional interest in Adler's work and to develop training programmes which encourage high standards of practice.
- To teach individuals, groups and families effective ways of living cooperatively together.
- To promote a forum for the holding of lectures, seminars, meetings and training courses which will further enhance the aims and objectives of the A.N.I.
- To facilitate communication and the exchange of ideas between the many individuals and groups in Ireland who are interested in Adlerian theory and practice.
- The Adlerian Network runs a weeklong Annual Summer school as well as several one-day workshops throughout the year.
- We would like to encourage this work, which benefits all sections of the community. Your membership subscription will be of value to the work of the A.N.I. All people interested in upholding the aims and objectives are invited to become members.

**Application for Membership of the Adlerian Network of Ireland Ltd.
For the year July 1st 2009 - 30th June 2010
BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Mobile: _____

Email: _____

Enclose subscription of €30 and send to: The Secretary, Adlerian Network of Ireland Ltd., Resource Centre, Kickham St., Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, Phone: 086-3989513

Signature: _____ Date: _____

New

Renewal

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