

Opening to Trust

Emerging paths in Rehabilitation of the Mentally ill

Fr. Hank Nunn S.J.

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Dedicated to

my mother Agnes

&

Maria

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I want to acknowledge the many members of staff at Athma Shakti from the beginning till now who have been with me in my work.

Also, I need to thank the young persons who were here over the years in Athma Shakthi and who reposed faith in me, in their journey towards mental health.

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And I am happy to have the opportunity to thank all those persons who in any way made it possible for me to have the time and the desire to bring forth this contribution.

Fr. Hank Nunn S.J.

Director of Athma Shakti Vidyalaya

A therapeutic community started in 1979 in Bengaluru

Foreword

Dr Rex Haigh MA (Cantab) BM BCh (Oxon)
Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists (London)
Senior Fellow of the Institute of Mental Health(Nottingham)

In about 1980 I remember being sent to a strange place. I was a medical student, and we were often sent to strange places - from theatres where the surgeons wore space suits and do operations by remote control to rural GP surgeries with afternoon tea and linen table cloths; from rooms where babies are born to rooms where corpses are dismembered. This one was even more different, though.

I had been warned by previous students that this acute psychiatric admission ward, the Phoenix Unit in Oxford, was not somewhere to wear the normal jacket and tie. So I kitted myself out in a big red sweater and jeans, and I arrived there on a bicycle a couple of minutes after the suggested 8.30, and I was casually pointed in the direction of a large dilapidated room where I soon had to forget any ideas I had of hospital hygiene. I squeezed into the room to be confronted with a large circle of chairs - perhaps 40 people - where it wasn't possible to tell the consultant from the cleaner. I had to find my own chair and pull it up next to a large restless man who just looked at me and laughed. "What's your diagnosis then, eh? You must be manic like me with a jumper like that." He trumpeted this at what felt like 120 decibels, and I just wanted the ground to swallow me up. There was an excruciating silence (probably all of twenty seconds) before everybody introduced themselves.

After my initial culture shock of joining a therapeutic community, I went on to thoroughly enjoy it. I found something completely different about the way people were with each other - I learnt my psychiatry the same as other students who were on traditional wards, but I also got an inkling of something that is very hard to define or put in words. It was something about being allowed to be yourself, about playfulness, and creativity.

That short experience set me on a quest and an adventure that I am still following, thirty-two years later. What is it that makes somewhere 'feel' safe? How do you set up places where staff enjoy

working, and give their best? How do you run mental health services for love rather than for money?

I have tried to capture this essence in different ways since 1980 – not least by training as a psychiatrist, and soon realising that the elusive secret was not to be found in that territory. I was getting warmer when, training as a group analyst in 1994, I tried using my course dissertation to put the theory I had been taught into a developmental sequence called ‘the Quintessence of a Therapeutic Environment’. And perhaps even warmer when, as chair of the Association of Therapeutic Communities in 2002, I helped to instigate the ‘Community of Communities’ as a quality network to identify and set standards for therapeutic communities.

One of the absolute highlights of that exciting time was a visit I made in November 2003, to a therapeutic community in Bangalore, that was hoping to join the project network. I knew that they used a reparenting (‘cathexis’) model of transactional analysis, for I had met people from their sister project in Birmingham. I knew cathexis had been controversial some years previously, in the United States and international transactional analysis organisation, as well as locally for the Birmingham therapeutic community. But my only intention was to go with an open mind, and see what I could find of this elusive ‘essence’ in a setting so different from all my previous experience of mental health services. As always, I was more interested in the ‘general therapeutic conditions’ than I was in the intricacies of a particular model of treatment.

Three memories stand out for me: I will call them ‘warmth of welcome’, ‘unlabelled living’ and ‘fight for survival and growth’.

The warmth of welcome was deeply moving, and I could tell from the moment I crossed the threshold that the intangible quality, which was so elusive and difficult to define, was present in abundance. I remember telling somebody when I got home that you could tell a therapeutic environment by ‘its smell’ – which didn’t exactly mean the physical aroma so much as the unconscious, primitive, limbic sensations that emanate from the social field your are joining. Within minutes, I remember playing backgammon with a community member and not having any worries about exactly where I was sleeping, what was on my timetable for the visit, or who was who. Several thousand miles from home, in a place where everybody was new to me, I felt I had arrived home.

The ‘unlabelled living’ was fascinating to me as a mainstream, though psychotherapeutically-minded, psychiatrist. The hard lines

I had learned between psychosis and neurosis, between schizophrenia and personality disorder, and between traumatic and biological causes - dissolved into thin air. People were being treated as themselves, for themselves, each according to their own needs. Echoes of Laing, I wistfully remembered. But here, being done with compassionate meticulousness in an economic climate where the alternative was a social exclusion harsher than anything we know back home. To me, the therapeutic intention – and the palpable manifestation of it – was orders of magnitude more significant than any specific therapeutic techniques or methods.

The ‘fight for survival and growth’ was sadly familiar. Those of us who choose to work in these complex and indefinable ways always need to establish an ‘island of containment’ within which the work can continue. In the process of economic globalization and market managerialism, the natural tendency will inevitably be towards instrumental rationality – with easily defined treatment processes and specified outcomes, which is of course antithetical to therapeutic community practice. I remember animated discussions with a parent, and being excited by plans to set up a similar unit elsewhere in India: ‘how could all this excellent work fail to be properly recognized?’, I thought. I was, and always will be, rather naive about these things.

But all these experiences now make me realize the enormous task of the leader of a therapeutic community, and the ever-increasing impossibility of the task of mere survival, never mind the possibility of growing and thriving. In ASV, one man has held this vision alive, through many years of surviving, thriving and carrying a flame through a hurricane, and this book is his account of that Herculean task. It tells Father Hank’s own story, laced with illuminations about the links with his Jesuit faith, his philosophy of compassion and the detailed methods he uses. It is a true and authentic account of what it means to love thy neighbour, profoundly understand another’s distress, and be human in the wilderness.

Introduction

One of my first experiences with serious mental illness, was when a young man with schizophrenia approached me while I was working as a counselor in a Jesuit center in Bangalore. He had been living on the streets, so I allowed him to stay in a small hut that we had. I was determined to help him and I believe that because I regularly spent time with him, he is still with me today, living his life successfully.

Helping him meant learning much more about schizophrenia and rehabilitation. And this work I am still doing today after 35 years, and will be continuing to do.

As I go on doing this work I know deep down within myself, there is that phrase that I learnt when very young – “go with it”. And I guess that is the story of my life – “go with it”, when there is an opportunity, to help somebody less fortunate, I go with it.

So, now I am in the position where I need to tell people what I have studied and learnt concerning mental illness and the difficulties of young people suffering from it. I have been with enough young people, learning to overcome the difficulties they have and I am now committed that families and general public realize that it is possible to live and over come mental illness. And I can refer to two or three hundred young people who have been able to make the necessary changes in their lives.

I have been asked many times by people to write my story. I have various reasons for writing. I guess the main reason for my writing is to let people know that it is possible to make changes in their personality so that they can function and can have a meaningful and happy life. And I today appreciate all the feedback and gratitude that people have given me.

So, I have put together a collection of my writings for over 35 years, in the hope that those people who are struck with mental illness may realize that there is a way of establishing themselves in a healthy and positive way. I want to share what many young people, who had serious problems, have taught me, concerning the ability to function with clarity of mind and with enjoyment.

I also hope that this will interest all those who are working with the mentally ill and that the book may provide guidance and hope that there is a way through.

A note on the structure of the book.

Part I, Story of Athma Shakti was recently written by me, for the purpose of this book, the rest of the articles are those written at various times in the past 35 years. So most of this book is a collection of those articles compiled not necessarily in a chronological order. Except for "Story of Athma Shakti", the rest of the articles can be independently considered.

The articles are meant to help somebody mulling over their past and providing insights on how to express them at present.

All the names of all kids (except Maria who is no more) have been changed to protect their privacy.

I have organized my writing under these headings

Part I – The story of ASV is about the beginnings of ASV and my motivations for working with the mentally ill.

Part-II – Mental Illness an Understanding .Here I have complied various articles written to educate people on the nature of schizophrenia and serious mental illnesses.

Part III – In this process, many of my writings also come from my extensive readings of Eric Berne, Bowlbyetc. I am indebted to these authors whom I have quoted extensively in my workshops. Process has articles on the methodology used at ASV. These also contain my notes under Reflections. I hope these reflections provide the raw material for others to begin reflecting on their own life and the helping process, since reflection is a very integral part of any helping process.

Part IV – Letters to parents – letters that I wrote to parents periodically, leading them into the process of their own mental growth, and my efforts at furthering their understanding of mental illness. These letters have learning and teaching value.

Part V – Kids- is a record of my day to day interaction with seriously disturbed patients and can provide an intimate understanding of the process by which individuals begin to recognize their ability to change and move towards mental health.

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Foreword by Dr Rex Haigh

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Part - I

The story of

Athma Shakti Vidyalaya

The story of Athma Shakti Vidyalaya

Any person who starts to write a story, obviously must be clear on their purpose, or aim. And now I am that person, coming to write, coming to tell a story, a lived story that has developed and grown as I have grown and developed within my life over the years here in Athma Shakti. These years have been consecrated to a special aim, an aim that I have carried with me now for many years. Long back I had come to the realization within myself that this story of young people discovering that they could overcome the psychological problems that they had been suffering in their life, was worth telling and should be told. As time went by I decided to write the story, an amazing story, and a shared story, shared with many people. For some time though, I had been hesitating about writing the story, wondering about the value and real worth of presenting the history of the community as this changing group of individuals had been living together, on and off for years. After reflecting and giving thought to this project, I remembered the many persons who have been requesting me to write this story.

The story was happening, being lived in some degree of awareness, since September 1979. The story needs to be told in the tradition of Athma Shakti Vidyalaya, keeping it simple but telling the story, accepting the meaning, establishing the possible benefits for all. I would like all to understand and discern the results of all that took place – the searching for clear and deeper consciousness, then the setting of goals, the disclosing of an ability to accept self, learning to function for self with care for self and others.

The lived story was certainly real, with its high points and low points being recognized, coming forth, reflected upon, opening out as a recital of continuously establishing the community as a community with the members becoming responsible for each other, each and every member of the community experiencing acceptance, respect, trust – with all the members realizing that each person

contributes to the shared benefits for all and accepts to be responsible for causing the community to be therapeutic for all.

In this therapeutic approach, there is a living together in a community where interactions and relationships are in some manner scrutinized, studied, in order to help each person experience the changes that are necessary for him or her to make if they are to find and carry away a satisfying meaning for themselves. Also they earn a special place with other persons with whom they live their life, living in the community and enhancing their ability to share their relationships with others after leaving the community.

My friends, truly supportive friends, well wishers and guides believe that a recital of the beginnings, the development, the continuing experience of a successful therapeutic community, in which many young persons have found the ability to experience themselves fully, would be of value to many others. They are interested in the very unique process created in this community where young mentally ill persons, teen-agers and adults, have learned to recognize and accept the unsuspected and blocked off possibilities they have now encountered in the living experience of their lives.

In the process of living and sharing in a community, these mentally ill have found that they could decide and change their inner reality. They could discover the willingness to be open in trusting a guide and so in turn to trust their own ability to understand themselves and the experience they had been unsuccessfully living. They could then use their newly realized freedom to choose and decide on the significant beliefs and positive attitudes that empower a new life, an undreamed of meaningful existence for them. They could realize and experience the power to reach out in unprecedented, purposeful relationships and attachments to other persons.

At the beginning, at a meeting of a few interested social workers, therapists, psychologists, one evening in 1978 in Oakland, California, the decision was agreed upon to open a therapeutic community in Bangalore. This therapeutic community would be a place where each and every activity within the community would be directed towards the well being of each member, which I believe is the Athma Shakti of each member. In other words, within the community persons with disability would learn through dependence and guidance to develop the power of their own spirit, and so together with the support and guidance of like minded mentors overcome the vagaries of mental illness.

Basically Athma Shakti has always been essentially a community with all the social and healing benefits that are present in community

living – friendship, responsibility, mutual support, ever-present care and understanding healthy dependency, learning from others, ability to study where possible, facing up to the present problems of living and adjusting to others.

The main focus has always been on forming a relationship with a guide or mentor, and also relationships with others, some quite close, others amiable, familiar and convivial. This has been the most helpful treatment modality – relationships. The community specializes in the holistic psychotherapy treatment of mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, depression and others.

One of the obvious traits a person who has mental problems develops is their inability to be at ease with other persons, their tendency to withdraw and be alone. Many of their difficulties come from their early life in the family and early school years. These may not have been resolved, they may have even worsened as they grew and struggled while trying to find the means to function normally. When referring to the cases of some young men and women, families may be questioned concerning the efforts they may have made or not made in understanding the source of the problems the young person has carried with them in their growing years and could not resolve.

The new comer to Athma Shakti is asked to make a contract with the community, making a formal, open request in a community meeting to be accepted as a member of the community after stating a promise to “work to get well” and to “help others to get well”. Once accepted the person will be given the assistance he or she is seeking through the acceptance by the others. This promised assistance will be in the form of friendly support and acceptance, plus confrontations and feedback that will help the person wishing to join the community to become aware of the necessary changes in personality, behaviour and thinking he or she is invited to make, and the directions given so that he or she can function appropriately in the community and later return to family and society.

As we begin to talk about purposes and aims I must speak about myself, for I have much to relate and remember. I hope that in the course of this narration of my involvement in the establishment of Athma Shakti Vidyalaya I can convey how much this has been a tremendous growing experience for me personally. I believe the development of the whole experience was intriguing and soulful. Rather I can almost call it a best experience as I did what I believe God wanted me to do, as I was supported by my religious

superiors to deviate from the usual religious avocation and routine. I count the permission I was given as a great blessing given to me. Living my life as the director of our therapeutic community has been an opportunity, a blessing, and an endowment.

The number of relationships that have come into my life have exceeded any gift I could ever have expected in my life. All that I have gained and learned over the years, the richness in relationships with the persons who have come for help or have been sent for rehabilitation I will always be grateful for. And the numerous others who have come for assistance have all been part of an experience that has been unique for me, and which I shall always appreciate.

I find myself thinking that soon after I finish writing this history of Athma Shakti Vidyalaya and my involvement with that history, I would like to write a book on spirituality given the many numerous insights into the spiritual life of the human personality that I have gained over the years.

But now I have to be preoccupied with making the therapeutic process that we follow here capable of leading more young adults, men and women, to be fully conscious of the various feelings, memories, attitudes that they may be experiencing within themselves and the manner in which they handle or cope with those reactions.

My purpose through this present writing comes from my own desire to satisfy the persons who have been insisting that I write about how I engaged myself for the past 30 years in instigating and continuing to develop a process of healing, a healing process that has been continuously developing. I realized that I could be of assistance to young men and women who have been sidetracked and have lost the simple, clear acceptance of themselves. Other persons have been pushing me to write, those who seem to believe that I have been in some manner the instrument that has enabled them as persons to overcome their mental problems.

The story of Athma Shakti really grows out of the story of my own life in the 1970s, and I will have to refer to the various developments in my life over the last fifty years as I tell the story of the developments that brought this therapeutic community into existence.

Over the years I have always been hesitating to write, for my experience has told me that there is usually very little interest among the general public concerning the serious and debilitating problems that the mentally ill have to unravel and free themselves of if they are to live a meaningful life. Many young people have had their

families quite shattered because of mental illness, and I believe that a recital of the beginnings, the development, the continuing experience of a successful therapeutic community might be of great benefit for families who would be interested in learning how some other families and some individuals have been able to overcome the disaffection and discontinuity of normal family life by mental illness.

Many young persons have found the ability to experience themselves in a fully reasonable and remarkable life. From its beginnings in 1979, the Athma Shakti community has followed a creative and innovative approach that is holistic with the integration of many mind-body techniques of treatment where emphasis is placed on interactive, experiential group work and individual therapy work.

The daily routine of community living enables the members to form relationships with each other and staff members. Also emphasis is always placed on the mutual bonding process with a therapist, through which the needy patient incorporates new values and beliefs leading to a new acceptance of self and a willingness to take responsibility for self. Through this process of dependency, the patient establishes his or her independence in a healthy manner. The patient experiences his or her need to develop and strengthen, shared relations as he or she learns to appreciate the necessary interactions and dependency that gives them the appreciation of self and the ability to make choices concerning the strength of their personality.

I guess I should go back to the roots of my own wanderlust, for this has been operative throughout my life. I first began to travel in 1951 when at the age of 21 I left my home in Halifax, the main city of Nova Scotia, a province of Canada on the eastern seaboard of Canada. In the old days, when I was a small boy, Halifax with its beautiful protected harbour and fair climate has always been a much sought after recreational spot in the summer months. It has always been considered one of the best harbours in the world. It is the one harbour high up on the Eastern seaboard of America which does not freeze in the winter, a very valuable asset in the days when most commerce and trade still traveled by sea.

During the Second World War (1939-1945) the inner harbour of Halifax could accommodate as many as 300 freight ships or tankers. This was necessary as the ships had to assemble and then cross the ocean to Europe in a closely knit convoy to avoid the German submarines waiting to torpedo them. As a young boy I enjoyed

watching all the boats leave the harbour, then had to later see a few crippled freighters limping back into the harbour after being attacked on the high seas. In those days we were quite involved in the Second World War – one 23 year old brother, left home, joined and became an officer in the Army and fought in North Africa, Italy, and then finally just at the end of war was killed in Europe fighting in Belgium. We were upset and disappointed for we learned of his death two days after the war was over while we were celebrating the end of the war.

My other brother was also in the same war, in the Canadian Air Force. He was always fairly safe as he was engaged almost all the war in flying, really ferrying, large airplanes across the Atlantic Ocean to England. These planes, produced by the United States, then were used for high altitude bombing raids on the cities of Germany and occupied Europe. He did not take part in any of the many bombing raids over Germany as he was busy flying over replacements for the airplanes that had been shot down by the enemy. Fortunately he returned safe when the war ended.

So, from hearing of these experiences and this type of travel activity when young, it is no surprise that I did not have any problem leaving home at twenty-one years of age and never returned to stay for more than a few days in my home city. After some uncertainty about the direction of my life, I realized that I had to settle on my choice of a future, for two years after graduating with a general Arts degree, I still had no firm outlook, no clear thinking one way or the other whether to continue my studies or find a job. I was quite content to be involved in sports activities, having done well in rowing and in Canadian football. I had not decided the direction of my life. From time to time I realized I had to settle my choice of a future, and make it firm. I was fairly happy, had friends but was not working towards a future, and had a father insisting I organize my future and become employed.

After some reflection I made my decision firm by joining the religious society of the men who had been my college professors. I have always been happy with the same firmness in my choice, something I have never regretted. I thank myself each day that I made that decision. It meant leaving home and traveling many miles to the center of Canada, to an area where I had never been. The first four years of serious Jesuit training, years of personal development and study, were spent with my own English Canadian group, but the next two years were spent studying philosophy with the French Canadian Jesuit group. After that my world was broken open, for I

was chosen to join the French Canadian Jesuits teaching high school boys in Ethiopia.

At that time there were only two government high schools in Ethiopia, one manned by the Canadian Jesuits, the other in the southern part of the country manned by a group of Swedish teachers. For the time being with eight other Canadians I was an employee of the Ethiopian Government involved in education with airfare from Canada, salaries and a large bungalow supplied. Among ourselves we spoke French while we taught in English, with myself teaching the students for the O-level school leaving English exam set by Cambridge University. I managed to have some of the village boys pass those O-level exams, for them a first move ahead. The successful boys moved on from me to the other Canadian Jesuit educational institution in the country – the Haile Selassie University – then the only higher education facility in Ethiopia.

Since my contract with the Ethiopian Government was only for three years, I was slated to go back to Canada and be with the Jesuits in their various works there. At first I was to study four years of theology, and in that process become an ordained priest and after another year of special studies be considered a fully fledged Jesuit posted in one of the Jesuit schools in Canada or sent for any further university studies to follow in order to teach in one of the Jesuit schools or colleges in Canada. Yet after the very interesting and almost exotic years in Ethiopia, I felt that being in Canada would probably be too drab and uninteresting. I have always wanted to be engaged in some endeavour that would have colour, openness, be absorbing and relevant in today's world. Canada, I believed, had usually been considered a staid and quiet country, with its cold and icy winters, its citizens serious and self-restrained, and so not all that interesting (except for its amazing ice hockey games). I was to amass some very rewarding memories in Africa – being stranded on the shore of Somalia when our jeep became stuck in the sand, after a huge unexpected tropical rain storm. Luckily, Somalia was still at that time a colony of England so we had the local police officer's bungalow to stay in with a diet of camel's milk and goat meat. After three days we managed to get a spare battery and drive into Djibouti, then still a French colony.

Besides the adventure of bringing these village boys to the level of writing an English essay, the trips and campings with the school boys, encountering the free wild life from close up gave me a whole swarm of memories that have remained with me.

Ethiopia struck me with the travel bug so well that the prospect of returning to Canada and settling down for the duration did not appear so interesting. I had enjoyed Ethiopia, with its varied landscapes, with its different customs and primitive tribes evolving and coping with the intervening modern civilization. As I was breaking into its complicated but beautiful customs and practices, I had really enjoyed teaching those eager village boys. Their enthusiasm to learn had been exciting to experience. I realize that I stumbled or may be just slipped unawares into the captivating and fascinating study of the human personality.

One rewarding experience I had with them I will always remember well. We had taught the senior boys to play softball – an easier form of baseball which is itself the American national game. We had four teams in a softball league we had formed in Addis-Ababa – our school team, the team of the Jesuit college, the Ethiopian Airlines team, (made up mostly of expat Americans), and a team of American soldiers who were training the Ethiopian Army at that time. Our school team was made up of the schoolboys plus myself. When young in Canada I had played a lot of softball as a catcher. The catcher in softball resembles the wicket-keeper in cricket. Our school team managed to defeat the team of American soldiers.

Because of many small happenings I have always appreciated and in some way felt proud of my three year stay of teaching and supervising students in Ethiopia. We were nine of us Canadian Jesuits administrating the residential school, invited employees of the Ethiopian government. For three years I taught the top English classes, preparing students for the Cambridge O-level English language paper. The two proud achievements I took away with me from teaching those boys was that for the first time some of our students managed to pass the O-level English exam and the Saturday afternoon when our school team - consisting of the boys, who had learned to play softball in the school, plus myself, defeated the team made up of American soldiers.

At the end of my contract of three years I was not very interested in returning and settling down to a quiet life in Canada. I had never expected that I would be sent to be a teacher in Ethiopia and had had a wonderful time even though there had been difficulties. I had never experienced how interesting life can be on the other side of world. I now had come in contact with the less fortunate people in this world and decided that the usual protected life in Canada seemed too orderly, not so creative. So I asked that rather than go back to Canada I could join the English Canadian Jesuits who had

been working in India since 1946. My request was accepted but I was called to return to Canada for some time before moving to India. I spent two months in Canada and then was told to accompany an older priest who was returning to India. On arrival in India I was asked to move up to Darjeeling in order to give guidance to the senior students in the Jesuit boys' school there. These boys from Calcutta and other cities had to spend nine months of the year holed up as residents in a boarding school with the most beautiful view of the Himalayas which after a few years they did not quite appreciate as much. For some of them the life in the more interesting cafes in Calcutta seemed definitely more interesting. The school is a recognized and valued school which has been educating an elite group of students for almost a hundred years on a beautiful corner of the hills near Darjeeling. The school was established – it is the type of school that has always been considered "established". Originally it was recognized as worthy for the sons of the English tea planters and the civil servants of the British raj. Established in the 1880s it was also open to the vintage royalties of the Himalayas and also accepted students from the neighbouring English colonies as Burma and Ceylon. Many generations of tea planters had gone through their schooling in North India.

In Ethiopia I had lived at nine thousand feet of altitude, for Addis Ababa is situated on the western plateau, that is, one side of the Rift Valley which runs through what is often called the horn of Africa. I thought that coming to Darjeeling at nine thousand feet would be interesting, especially after seeing the photos of the beautiful Himalayan summits that could be seen from Darjeeling.

In the usual run of the system I would be in Canada studying four years to become an ordained minister of the Roman Catholic church. Again I was outspoken and spoke my mind and made a decisive decision in stating that I did not want to remain in Canada for my life. The wanderlust was becoming stronger in me.

My return trip to India was to be by ship - from New York to Naples and then from Naples to Bombay. All of this answered to my desire for adventure and discovery. I was accompanying an older Canadian Jesuit priest, who was returning to St. Joseph's College School in Darjeeling, where he had been teaching for years already. We left from New York on a luxury liner to cross the ocean for as yet there were no Boeing 707s shifting people all over the world. We went New York to Naples in Italy – visited Rome for a couple of days, then boarded another passenger ship sailing from Naples to Hong Kong. We disembarked at Bombay, and then with our

accompanying boxes of luggage and books took the train to Calcutta, and then to Darjeeling. I was slated to help out as a warden in St.Joseph's College School in Darjeeling until my theology studies and Nepali language studies would begin after a couple of months. After my experiences shepherding village boys in Ethiopia for a short time I was now shepherding more sophisticated boys of northern India in their schooling in Darjeeling.

I spent a year or so attached to the North Point School in Darjeeling, not so much teaching but as caretaking to see to student discipline, engaging the students in athletic and drama activities that were to educate and bring about the roundabout personal development of these young men into becoming worldly wise gentlemen. I believe that that activity had a role in bringing me to move into the psychological field and become involved in the personal development of so many individuals.

A good many of my evenings were spent in counseling students who found the nine month stay in the school frustrating stuck up in the hills away from their regular delights in Calcutta or other cities or places like Burma or Thailand. To maintain a smooth school for the 350 resident students and 100 local boys it was necessary to keep those boys busy and active. The few local boys in the school could look after themselves. And of course you had to have a winner. Your teams had to do better than the teams of the rival schools and, of course, keep the traditions of the past alive and active.

I found that students will appreciate plays and drama very much. I even won the trust of the Reverend Sisters of the girl's school and was able to break the solemn rules and have boys and girls act in dramas together. One of the real pleasures that I had in those years was in the evenings when I was directing the cast of a play, for example, "A Man for All Seasons" or "The Diary of Anne Frank". Young people can learn so very much going through the intensive effort needed to finally bring a well appreciated, absorbing presentation before the audience.

They also can learn a lot about their own personality, about the choices they are able to follow through and develop if they wish, about the satisfaction of knowing that they are being appreciated. All of this gives them the courage to grow, and enables them to appreciate their value. One of the boys I directed went on to have a long lasting career, up till recently, in Hollywood.



North Point
School

with Sports Team



Photo taken while
as Head Master
at North Point



After all I had joined the Jesuit group of religious men in order to finally function as a Catholic priest, so the time came when I had to go through this final training that goes for four or five years. This study I would do in India, in fact, in the very area where I was in the foothills of the Himalayas, in Darjeeling. The Jesuit study house had been established many years before on a hill not far from Darjeeling. Young Jesuits came from all over India to do their final studies at this study house. The studies covered the religious doctrine of the Catholic Church, the history of the Church and the growth of its various beliefs, the study of other religious beliefs, the Christian Scriptures, the life of Christ. The professors, priests themselves, some Belgians and some Indians were learned scholars, men who had dedicated their life to study, teaching and writing. Since they realized that the men they prepared for the priestly work might be so busy in the remote villages and plains of India they might never study again, it was necessary to make sure they absorbed the religious doctrine and knowledge offered to them.

This meant that I would stay attached to that study house from 1963 to 1967 and later spend some time teaching in a school in Kurseong, India and then in a Hindi medium school in the plains area in the terai in North Bengal. Then I was called to take charge of the students at St. Joseph's School, in Darjeeling. I joined in 1968 as the director of all the boarding, discipline and games and all the extra circular activities of the students, later becoming Headmaster in 1972.

I enjoyed my stay in the school during those years. It was fortunate to have the government Himalayan Mountaineering Institute just across the road from the school. I had the Sherpa instructors train the boys in mountain work, rock climbing, trekking, etc. I developed a great respect for the Sherpas who could put the students through very tough five or six days of trekking up to ten – twelve thousand feet, then down to four thousand – always carrying their food and equipment. The boys learned rock climbing from Tenzing Norgay, who told me he had been with three unsuccessful attempts to reach the summit of Everest until he and Edmund Hilary were successful. I stayed with the boys at the Mountaineering Institute for 25 days during the monsoon season. The course had to be in that season since the Sherpa guides were free only then. The course just had to be fitted in for it was as a training course very much worth it. I found that it could give the boys many opportunities to increase their own belief in themselves. Years later when by chance I came in contact with any of the boys, now successful business men, they would always mention the challenge

of the adventure course and how thankful they were for the mountaineering course. What the students went through on the course, the slogging up through the hills in the rainy season, I have always been proud to say, I went through with them a number of times.

In 1977 I was relieved from my position in the school and given an opportunity to return to Canada. I myself needed a change. I had the choice to discuss what further program I would want to set for myself. I decided that I was not too happy to join the faculty of another Jesuit school in India and asked to take a break by going back to Canada. My intention was to spend some time with two Jesuit friends with whom I had started my Jesuit career. These men had spent some years deeply studying our Jesuit spirituality and had been able to establish a special Jesuit study centre just outside Toronto. These men were friends from my beginning days as a Jesuit so I asked to spend some time with them in more study in the foundations of our Jesuit spirituality. And so I spent some months studying with them. I also took up the work of directing other religious men and women in our Jesuit spirituality. My Jesuit friends asked me to remain with them at their centre at Guelph, just north of Toronto.

As I was settling back into Canada, I was missing the sights and the life of India, and was educating myself to remain in Canada. I became accustomed to the Canadian weather I had left many years before. I was busy enough, directing religious priests and sisters who would come for counseling or spiritual direction to the Jesuit centre in Guelph. I was involved in giving courses for priests and sisters who wanted to be spiritual directors and guides for young men and women. Some of these men were involved in taking care of street people and others less fortunate.

This was in 1976-77 when I was in our Guelph center but commuting from time to time to the counseling and retreat center in Toronto where also I had a room. In fact, the story of Athma Shakti really began at this time for I was reading all the psychology books and human personal growth books I could find. It was some time in July or August 1978 that some worried parents talked with me and asked if I could establish a counseling centre in Bangalore for the treatment of young adults who were suffering from personal adjustment problems, drug problems and even serious emotional mental problems such as schizophrenia, etc. These parents had found out that I had been in contact with Jacqui Lee Schiff, an American social worker and guide who had been visiting India at a few years before.

Now I have to move back in my story to relate the story of how Jacqui Lee Schiff and myself became friends and finally launched out as we did in the move to bring help to young schizophrenics and other mentally disordered young adults. The story – and it is quite a story - and is an ongoing story – for it continues on today. When I was Headmaster of St. Joseph's School in Darjeeling I felt that I needed more training for myself in the fundamentals of non-directive counseling. In fact I realized that all the teachers in the school should undergo some sort of training in counseling if we were to prepare the students to be able to accept their present lives in the school and to be ready to face the future that they would all have to face after leaving the school.

Most of the students entered the school in class one. Their school year began in February in the near freezing cold of Darjeeling, ending in the middle of November. Only then would the students return to their homes. Oh, you could have beautiful days in Darjeeling – amazing views of the glorious mountains – but you also have to remember the rain and cold winds. Yes, there were lots of games, dramas, and outings but students would meet parents or family maybe once in the nine months. North Point School, as St. Joseph's was called because of its position on the north point side of the hill looking at the mountain range in the distance, kept its students almost nine months of the year for ten or twelve years.

It is amazing how well the students over the years learned to cope with their situation. Really they did wonderfully well. They managed to become accustomed to the routine. Their young spirits enabled them to make some surprising things happen – terrific football games, entertaining plays, playing jokes on each other. Earlier on the Jesuits had invented the best formula that could be used to manage a group 375 young boys in a situation where they had to live in large dormitories of about a hundred boys each, study together in large study halls, eat in large dining halls, throughout nine months of the year, all supervised so that there would not be any serious discipline problems. There was a remarkable, simple formula that enabled the whole school to go on smoothly. Each boy was allotted to one of four groups, (or “houses” as they are called) and he stayed allotted to that house or group all year long. The engine for this caretaking process was competition for each person could win or lose points for his “house” and there were privileges and outings to be won.

So, as Headmaster of the school, especially of a large boarding school, I had long wanted all the members of the staff to learn the

basic fundamentals of counseling and some basic psychology. Because I had felt I needed training myself, especially in the fundamentals of non-directive counseling I had contacted Carlos and Saroj Welch, who with Dr. Prashantem and his wife had created the Christian Counselling Centre attached to the Christian Medical College in Vellore, Tamilnadu. I invited Carlos and Saroj Welch to spend a month in the school in 1973 and again in 1975. I allowed Carlos and Saroj free movement in and out of classes and they enjoyed being in the school. The students benefited from their presence. And I made the offer to sponsor any of the staff if they wished to go to Vellore and take the full course of training if they wished.

I had found that the training was very good and had been of great help to the teachers. The students also benefited from the counseling for they had the usual problems of teenagers, with a few angry just because they had to be at school away from home.

When at St. Joseph's looking after the students I realized more and more the importance of the attitudes and feelings that influence and affect individuals' lives, and so in a way I was unconsciously moving slowly to Athma Shakti Vidyalaya.

Then some happenings occurred with which I had nothing to do and did not expect. It all happened between two Jesuit friends of mine who happened to have a chance meeting in Bangalore. Fr. Ronnie Prabhu who, at that time was taking over the administration of Ashirvad in the centre of Bangalore, happened to meet another Jesuit, this time an Australian, Fr. Paddy Meagher, who was a professor of Catholic Scripture at the Jesuit centre in Delhi. Together they were discussing the future of the Ashirvad centre in Bangalore. Ronnie told Paddy that he was searching for a Jesuit who would be able to direct and to teach others to be able to direct others in the Jesuit eight-day and 30-day spiritual exercises at Ashirvad and also to train counselors. I do not know whether Paddy thought for some time, or immediately answered. What he did do was to answer Ronnie that there was this Canadian friend whom he had studied with many years before in the Jesuit study house in the Himalayas. He said this man had returned to Canada and was at a Jesuit centre near Toronto at present teaching other Jesuits and religious people the methodology of developing a spiritual life based on the Spiritual Exercises, the book that was aiding many, many religious people to develop and find a meaningful spiritual direction in their lives. So, Paddy finished by telling Ronnie to call Hank and see if he would be able to come to Ashirvad, which Ronnie did and so I found myself making arrangements to settle down in Bangalore, which I have never regretted.

That was in 1978. I was to come to Bangalore to give religious men and women training so they could develop and enrich their own spirituality and in turn bring help and assistance to impart this same knowledge to other interested persons who wished to develop and enrich their spirituality. This training in spirituality was to be based on the tradition of the Jesuit spirituality. Ignatius was a nobleman, a leader in one of the small petty kingdoms in Spain in the 1500's. They were fighting the Mores, the Moslems, who were busy moving to take over Catholic Spain. Ignatius' family controlled one small feudal province or kingdom. One day in battling against great odds one of Ignatius's legs was badly damaged just below the knee. He was taken home to their small castle where he was treated with whatever was possible at that time. So, Ignatius had to remain in bed for many months. He became very upset because the damage to his leg had resulted in a projection on the injured knee bone protruding out quite unseemly through his silk stocking. In those times a knight wore knee length silk stockings. Ignatius was very upset with the condition and so had had the bone broken again so the problem would not be so noticeable. He went through months of agony in order to satisfy his vanity. Such was the vanity of the man who would one day go on pilgrimage in sackcloth and ashes, and leave his sword as a thrown away souvenir decorating the church inner wall.

Before, when the wounded Ignatius was lying in bed helpless, he had his family bring reading material. There were three books in the house – one of romantic short stories, the others being stories of the lives of the saints. He began to spend time reading and reflecting. And he went through an exercise such that could be recorded for a psychology textbook on the study of feelings when making a decision. In the process of his reading, Ignatius used to break off and then remain thinking for some time. This happened over a period of weeks. Ignatius began to keep track of the feelings he was having as he took time quietly reflecting after the readings. He began to become aware that when he rested from reading the book of romantic stories he would often feel restless and ill at ease, but when he lay down the books of the saints he felt at peace and could go on for sometime feeling at ease and comforted. Also as he reflected, he began to day dream and to have the idea of becoming active again and then doing some remarkable adventures with other holy men for Christ.

He realized that he felt quite happy and fulfilled when he dreamed of doing these great adventures for Christ. As he began to reflect quietly for longer periods gradually he came to the idea that,

when well enough, he would set out to do some great exploits for Christ.

He became well enough to leave his bed and move out. So, he decided he would go on a pilgrimage, a holy trip in faith to some of the churches or chapels away from his castle. This he planned out very minutely and one evening did set out from his home. He went on pilgrimage and then stopped at a church that was considered a holy shrine, hung up his sword on the wall behind Our Lady's statue, and spent the whole night praying and offering himself to God forever. And so he made the move of his life. He never returned home, going off as a mendicant beggar in prayer. What was his intention? To break with the past, to free himself as for a new life, quietly declaring that he would follow whatever God, his new Lord and chosen Leader might make known for him to go.

He settled down in a cave close to a very old shrine, quietly meditating, fasting, noticing and tracking very carefully his interior thoughts and feelings – searching clarity and acceptance within himself as he became an expert in considering his inner thoughts and feelings. Really he was searching from the reactions in his mind and feelings, what he should do with himself in order to fulfill God's plan for him in his life. He had long realized that the political problems of his country and in other countries of Europe could not be solved by battles. Peace and prosperity could only come from persons changing their attitudes, their feelings, their hearts and coming to agreements and mutual acceptance.

For Ignatius it meant going back – as a grown man – to primary school, to learn the languages necessary, to learn to study philosophy, law, geography. And as a group of young men began to assemble around him at the University of Paris, he began to imagine a future group of men dedicated to the harmonious welfare, education and health of all, in a world where people would be consciously striving to find within their lives the will of God and to live according to that will as much as possible. People often came to him, listened to him, amazed at his quiet spiritual strength and learning, although he had never studied any scriptures or doctrine. His followers, he planned, would be fully educated in order to bring harmonious welfare to others, especially to the poor. He realized the need of learning and study in order to counteract the various ambiguous and false philosophies being taught in the universities and colleges of his time. That handful of men, most of whom he met when he joined the universities, became his friends and close followers. That group became the Society of Jesus, the group of Jesuits today, through out the whole world involved in the betterment of all.

Now we have to go back to my good friends Ronnie and Paddy discussing my coming back to India, and being stationed at Ashirvad, involved in counseling the young persons who come there for counseling and directing the Christian men and women religious persons who would be coming to Ashirvad for spiritual direction and training sessions in Christian mental prayer. The training sessions would be of a week or two weeks with special inputs on guidance in this field of spiritual development. Also, Ashirvad, being quite close to Brigade Road and other popular areas of Bangalore that were being caught in the menace of recreational drugs made us all realize that we had to do something. At least the parents and families were asking us to do whatever could be done to support the disturbed young men who had fallen into the hands of the drug dealers of Brigade road, just around the corner from Ashirvad. In the situation, many parents were quite lost and searching for guidance and support. After eight years of guiding residential students from Class One to Senior Cambridge level, I had lots of experience handling upsets and the difficult, unresponsive tendencies.

Since, I was moving into more counseling for people at Ashirvad in Bangalore, I decided to take a year's course in psychological counseling in Vellore with Carlos and Saroj Welch at the Christian Counselling Centre attached to the hospital there. There were four of us who signed up for this course, one was one of the teachers who had been working with me in Darjeeling, another was an older religious sister who had spent her life as a medical doctor, and a young man who was a social worker. So, during 1978 I commuted quite regularly between Bangalore and Vellore to follow the course. The lectures during the course were very helpful and with only four of us on the course we had many patients to speak with in the large hospital. It was a very good learning experience.

While I was at Vellore at that time Jacqui Lee Schiff came to spend a few weeks with the Welches. The Welches had been under training with Jacqui in California and were still receiving supervision from Jacqui at the time when I visited. They were starting a therapy session with a young man who was having serious mental problems. He was placed in the hostel where I was staying and I was asked to supervise his behavior and personal activities. Also since a fourth bridge player was needed in the house I ended up being Jacqui's partner in all the bridge games.

Little did I realize at that time that those bridge games would bring about a change that would break open or redirect the course of my future. There were small developments that I seemed to have

no control over but which persuaded me to put a new direction in my life.

A year later I was busy in Bangalore giving lectures and spiritual guidance to our groups in Ashirvad. This quiet time was not to last very long for me. The Welches, from whom I had learned so much years ago in Vellore, were now settled in Delhi, and one evening Saroj Welch made a more or less frantic phone call to me. I was occupied in Ashirvad giving lectures to a group. It was because of these commitments in Bangalore that I had given no thought of attending the annual Transactional Analysis Conference being held at that week in Delhi, although I had been asked to attend. Saroj told me that the conference was finishing that evening and Saroj was requesting me insistently and urgently to fly immediately to Delhi in order to meet with Jacqui Schiff who had come to Delhi for the conference. Since, I knew Jacqui from the days in Vellore, it was not always possible to verify just what Jacqui might really want I agreed to fly up to Delhi and be present that evening at the reception at the end of their conference.

When I arrived at the post conference party Saroj led me to a quiet corner where Jacqui and I could talk undisturbed. Jacqui immediately launched out with her proposal, or rather her problem, which I was supposed to solve, something I ended up doing quite often in Bangalore. It turned out that Jacqui was having some serious problems at her center in California and would have to give up her work there. The alternative she was presenting was to bring a group of young men and women from the center in California and establish a treatment center for young adults with serious mental problems in India. It appeared that theorists in the United States disagreed with some of Jacqui's procedures in her treatment of the young men and women who had joined her community for treatment. There had also been an accident in her community that was being investigated and it was quite doubtful that Jacqui could continue practicing psychotherapy in her style as she was doing at that time.

And so the question was whether I was willing to help Jacqui out by inviting her to come and continue her work in India. I have always been on the positive side, ready and willing if I believe there is merit in the request and that many persons may benefit as a result of my decision. So, we discussed the questions, the pros and cons. This turned out to be not Jacqui's request alone, but a request from some people who knew of Jacqui and had attended her talks. Others had heard of her and wanted her to settle in India so that young people with severe mental problems could benefit from her presence.

As I listened I realized that this was really worth taking up, for many people could have the benefit of her experience. I realized that it would demand much from me, knowing myself as someone usually taking up what is new or animating, I decided that this was really the way to go. Still, as it was really happening, this agreement, this willingness to go ahead, would add a whole new dimension to my life, moving into something that would take time and mean a serious commitment on my part. I had already met young people with Jacqui, who had been through Jacqui's treatment center, especially two young men who had had their share of serious problems and were now excellent psychotherapists, very aware, thoughtful and cautious in their advice. So, I agreed to help Jacqui continue her work, but here in India. I would in some manner god-father her project so she could get started, little realizing that I would be still involved until today.

I agreed to tentatively go ahead, came back to Bangalore and thought of all the possibilities and requirements and problems that were sprouting in front of me, as happened from that time on. This turned out not to be Jacqui's request alone, but a request from many people who knew Jacqui and had attended her talks and wanted her to settle in India so young people could have the benefit of her experience. I knew that it would demand much from me. My intuition remained that this was really the way to go ahead, that it would add a whole new addition to my life, in something that would take time and mean a serious commitment on my part.

I had made my commitment to serve God in my life by joining the Society of Jesus in Guelph, Canada in August 1951, a lifelong commitment to God by joining with a Catholic religious group of men who took solemn promises which meant a following of Jesus Christ by dedicating one's life to the cause of bettering the lives of others who were less fortunate in life. So, I was agreeing to take responsibility for a deeper, further aspect of that "bettering the lives of those less fortunate". I realized that my life would become much more demanding, much more interesting. I knew and was aware that I was committed to learn very much more concerning all the intricacies of mental illness. In my life I had met former students who had to leave their studies because of mental problems. I could be of assistance to many wonderful companions who were willing to dedicate their lives for the health of others.

It might be interesting here to mention one of the values of my personal philosophy has always been a sort of "go with it" attitude – "take the chance", "take the opportunity", "situations work out",

“trust in the future”, “give it a try”. So, I believed that there was a strong “go with it” flavour as I agreed to help set up something in India, in Bangalore.

I had gone with it when I left my home city on the eastern seacoast of Canada and went to join the Jesuits in the central Provinces of Canada far away from home, and stayed there for four years. I was then sent down for two years to Montreal, in those days the strong French part of Canada where my studies in philosophy were a mix from Latin, Greek, French and finally English. Then I had a much more surprising move. At the end the study year when I studied the notice board for my assignment for the coming three years it was difficult to find my name. I discovered my name on the far side of the notice board for those leaving Canada and going abroad. I learned that I was being sent to be a teacher in Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia.

Often people ask me how did the wanderlust creep into my personality? It is not that I like to run away, rather it is my desire to experience the new, the different. Since that first assignment abroad I have always enjoyed being wherever I finally find myself, especially in the heights or hilly areas. The school in Addis-Ababa, at 9000 feet was just fine for me. It was just along the road from the Emperor's huge palace and the eight or so big lions he had caged in the traffic roundabout in front of his palace. Every so often one of the Emperor's personal bodyguards would show up on our football field with a lion on a leash – but he did have a pistol in his back pocket. Next to the school were the barracks, garages and workshops of the Imperial Bodyguard. In those days Emperor Haile Selassie was engaged in bringing the various tribal groups in the whole country of Ethiopia to recognize his supremacy.

The American pilot who landed us in Addis Ababa in the old DC3 (one side of the passenger cabin had a row of seats against the wall – the other side was all stacked up with cargo) proved to us in his flying that he was still a cowboy. All of us Jesuits who were chosen to go to Addis for the high school or college were hired by the Ethiopian Government office in Montreal, Canada, with the stipulation we were never to show or manifest any external sign of our Roman Catholic religious affiliation, or speak about our religious views or beliefs while we were in any part of Ethiopia. This was in force even though the Ethiopian government at that time was strictly affiliated to the Coptic Christian beliefs. In the country itself every other religion was present, with the Moslems strong in the southern coastal part of country. At meal times my duty was to have all the

boys settled for the meal and then the Coptic priest from the small church we had on the school compound would give the blessing. These were poor boys, selected by the Ethiopian government from the villages.

The morning that I returned to Bangalore after the evening meeting when I had agreed to assist Jacqui Schiff I began to realize that I had accepted and to what I had committed myself. I remembered that I had committed to help Jacqui Schiff establish some sort of base for herself in India. So, I spent some time mulling the situation over in my mind, trying to make it all clear. It was all very good to volunteer, but then I had to make all the circumstances clear.

Some young men who were having trouble sorting out their lives and using drugs were coming to me to talk and it was obvious that they seemed to have serious mental problems. I didn't believe that I had adequate knowledge or training to work with them.

Yet some weeks before one young man had come to me and said that he could not go home as his father had refused to allow him to enter into their home anymore. As a boy this man had been given a very good education. He began to take street drugs, had not gone to college and so was really living on the street, or in one of the building sites where new buildings were coming up. He had come to our front door and the brother who looked after the garden often gave him some work to do and at times gave him a meal in return. He had been in and out of the mental hospital for short periods, and because of his illness had been chased out of his home because on a few occasions he had been violent and disruptive. He was very open to me and would often sit on the steps outside my room and talk with me. He said to me one day – "You can take care of me. You can be like a father to me. My family rejects me and does not want me so you can help me."

Across the small road next to our property, there was a building being built. So, I said to him, "Velu, if you want me to take care of you, first you must let me see you behave properly. I want you to go over and get a job working as an unskilled helper working on that building. You will go nowhere loafing on the streets and begging. You have to learn to believe in yourself and take care of yourself". He went immediately, was hired, and worked till they finished that building. There was a small out building in our compound so I told him he could live there while he worked and we would regularly spend time together. And this he did. He related well with me and stayed with me for many months. He behaved appropriately and

when we started our therapeutic community, Athma Shakti Vidyalaya, he became a member of the community. But after some time he left and ended up on the streets again.

He would arrange to meet with his father at one of the traffic circles close by. I found his sister who was a teacher in one of the posh schools in the city and discussed with her. The family did not wish to have him living with them. After some time he went back to the street drugs. From time to time I would meet him on one of the streets. Passersby were a bit stymied when this fairly well dressed gentleman received a hearty greeting and hugs from this scruffily unshaven young man seemingly on drugs. Finally he did come around again to join the community. His sister has been giving him financial support for years now. And he lives his own life, settled and content looking after himself close to the community. Recognition and support offered to individuals is often enough to enable people to find themselves and make the necessary moves to take care of themselves.

This may be a good time to speak about the decisive decisions we may often make after a short few moments of consideration that end up becoming the turning point in our life. Such a decision may become a definitive commencing point in a person's life, causing unplanned new growth or new interest or pursuit for the person. After all, our life grows in meaning as we take a decision, especially if it is a decision that will involve us in causing a benefit to be present in another person's life. Without really counting how much this new opening may cost us, without evaluating or estimating fully what it will mean by way of adjustment in our own life, we go ahead with confidence, trusting simply in our present willingness which relies on our own present positive experience.

I can remember how one short discussion in a chance meeting on the sidewalk of my home city was the starting point of a complete change in my own life. That change has enabled me to be open and to let go of my limitations and transcend them myself, in a manner that is still causing my life to be more meaningful and expressive for others. This happened to me in my college days. After my third year of college, a year of skipping classes, neglecting studies, involved in sports, I had decided to drop college and stay with a temporary job in an office which kept me with enough money for my regular tavern visits. Then the temporary job fell through so I had nothing, hardly any future unless I could hopefully talk to my father into advancing me some funds.

Then one day I met one of my old professors on the street. He stopped to talk and said I was acting like a no good, no better than a street bum. I had no choice but to stop and listen. I had no way of defending myself. So, I listened. Through his dressing down remarks, I stood and listened. I had no proper defense. I tried to push away his suggestion that I go back to classes by using the fact I didn't have the necessary money. He kept at me. Finally he challenged me, and my inborn nature has always been to fall into the challenge. His challenge was his offer to take up a job of teaching a small yet regular class of weak students. He said the college needed a Latin tutor and I had done three years of Cicero's Latin. So, the challenge was there. And there was still some sense in me. I accepted and went back to college and later graduated. And my life developed anew from there, just a chance meeting on a fairly busy city sidewalk. There was a letting go on my part, and in the letting go, I decided at that moment to prove the "I'll show you" as part of my personality. Yes, I transcended myself in those few minutes, something we need to keep doing in our lives.

You might say this man rescued me in some manner. It was good of him. And in a way I realized it is something I have been doing all my life after the incident, and I became more conscious of myself. I realize that I had recognized the value of putting myself together through the feelings that I had experienced. The feelings I had at the time were movements caused in me by the experience, the actuality of going beyond myself in some way. Feelings are movements that a subject experiences on the existential level of intentional consciousness, for example, when one is in the dynamic state of being in love. This means that, in addition to the practical knowledge there is another kind of knowledge, factual knowledge. Factual knowledge is the knowledge you reach when you experience, understand and verify. This other practical knowledge you attain when you discern and judge the value of something, as for example when you are totally set, as when you are in love or some course of action when you are in love. This I think is the question I proposed to myself at that moment when the old professor proposed the teaching proposal to me. I would have phrased it as, "Is this worthwhile? Is it worthwhile for me to accept his offer? Is this going to help me, to mean something good to me?"

It did mean a lot to me. Being offered the teaching work meant I could earn some money, I could go back to college which I did. This enabled me to finally graduate. I could reestablish my life. That sort of consolation such as I had as I walked away from my

former professor was a sort of spiritual consolation. It is as some writers have put it “like a flashlight in the dark, always just enough for finding our way.” It is this we are trying to discover in most of our psychotherapy as we endeavour to bring a person to choose to drop some feelings, or change some attitude, or let go of some negative experience or feeling. We choose because we believe that leaving the negative experience and having some sense of comfort that the new experience invites us to experience, we will be reaching for the relief or fulfillment which we have been searching...

All the foregoing has been a sort of introduction, but with a bias to my life and how Athma Shakti had a real beginning, a beginning that involved many excellent people. As with each and every person who has been mentally ill, there has been a beginning, a beginning of the “problem” as people usually refer to the condition we refer to as “mental illness”. In this presentation we will not go into the different types and forms of mental illness, but on presenting the struggles to assist young persons to move out of what is usually referred to as the many shadows and disruptions that cause the person to be lost and upset.

From its beginning, many years ago Athma Shakti has found it necessary to have a creative and innovated approach to the treatment of mental illness. In the very first years medication was not used and it is questionable whether there has been any better progress coming from the administrating of various types of medication. The main approach in the methodology for holistic psychotherapy treatment of schizophrenia, depression and other mental illness at Athma Shakti Vidyalaya is to put a strong emphasis on reparenting.

Basically, Athma Shakti has always been essentially a community with all the social and healing benefits that are present in community living – attachment, responsibility, mutual support, ever-present healthy dependency, learning from others and facing up to present problems of living and adjusting to others. The main focus has always been on forming a relationship, and for some people, a few relationships. This has been the most helpful treatment modality – relationship.

One of the obvious problems with a person who has serious mental problems is their usual inability to be at ease with other persons: their tendency to withdraw and be alone, especially in their early years in school and often their difficulty in the area of marriage.

The new comer to Athma Shakti is asked to make a contract with the community, making a formal open request in the community to be accepted as a member of the community with a promise to dedicate all his or her efforts to overcoming the mental and

behavioural problems they may have and also to assist all others in the community in their efforts to overcome any problems that they may have.

The persons who are sent to Athma Shakti Vidyalaya usually are feeling quite low, they have difficulty in establishing contact with other people. Many have never had meaningful, open contact with other people. Most of them brought here by parents and relatives, have come from some years of treatment, or many years of treatment with psychiatrists and hospitals. They usually find their living difficult because they have great difficulty being open with other people, or cannot express themselves correctly or behave appropriately with others. They often ignore other people, or deny their feelings concerning themselves and others. In many ways they do not understand themselves clearly, nor can they on the spot immediately explain the reasons why they are thinking and behaving in the way they are thinking and behaving. Often it is difficult for them to reflect upon themselves and decide how they want to react.

My first knowledge of reparenting came to me in the 1970s when I was Headmaster of a large residential boarding school for boys in Darjeeling. One winter vacation to find some warmth out of the Himalayan cold I decided to follow a counseling training course at a center in the south of India. And then I met Jacqui Schiff who was on a short visit demonstrating some aspects of her reparenting theory.

In 1979 with some interested parents and therapists, we set up for Jacqui the residential therapeutic community, Athma Shakti Vidyalaya. "Athma" means spirit or soul, or mind as it is used in much eastern religious thought. "Shakti" means power, strength of ability. "Vidyalaya" means school. Since I was a long term resident in India I agreed with the help of Carlos and Saroj Welch to make the necessary arrangements for the community – renting a building, seeing to the legal necessities, visas, etc. Jacqui lived in the community off and on for five years. She spent six months of each year traveling abroad for workshops and seminars. Following her departure the community has continually evolved following its own direction with the reparenting model as an integral aspect of the treatment process.

Perhaps the easiest manner to present the reparenting model is to choose certain words, which make explicit some elements essential in this treatment process. The treatment takes place in a therapeutic community, where there are connections at many different levels, rich communication, openness, sharing, closeness, demands, responsibilities – all directed to therapy, to bringing the individual to be aware, pay attention, reflect, think. I must mention here a most significant aspect of our ASV community. We believe that

persons who are classified as mentally ill, having serious problems, as we say, are able to reach a condition in which they can be aware and in charge of their feelings, know the conscious or unconscious reasons for those feelings, examine the attitudes or beliefs that are often at the base of those feelings, and then act to change whatever is necessary to change in order that he or she can function as any person considered normal in their surroundings. We believe that any person can be brought to think responsibly, feel accepted and able to form attachments with significant other persons and be responsible, no matter how disturbed they might be.

When a newcomer comes into the community he or she will be struck by the interconnected dynamics within the community. They will notice that some individuals seem to spend a good deal of time around certain members of staff. They will pick up an awareness of that special interaction going on and although they cannot describe it they are having their first experience of bonding. I believe it is correct to call it bonding. Remember, we all need to have an experience of bonding in our lives. One of the greatest problems of our world today is depression, the sense of loneliness, the lack of bonding. Bonding is at the root of re-parenting.

It is almost impossible to sort out or to explain the how and why a personal connection or attachment is formed. The most efficient step out of a mental illness is taken when a real bonding takes place in a therapeutic community. And there is no progress, no hope for the seriously disturbed person unless there is some small opening, no matter how minuscule, to another person. The disturbed person is usually isolated within himself or herself, very needy yet not knowing how to ask for any positive and meaningful attention. Usually the person has set up a complete system of defenses for protection from a world that has caused great pain and rejection. This barrier of defenses, this wall of denial that is expressed by saying, "There is nothing wrong with me." must be dissipated, abandoned.

This wall has to melt before any of us can be of any help to the lonely, stricken person. And often there is a history of excessive medication with the result the newcomer doesn't experience the ability to make a free choice concerning just what is occupying his thinking.

I cannot insist too much on the need of the quiet acceptance of a community to a disturbed newcomer who, as often as he can, may unconsciously be showing his wares, that is, the heights of his pathology to scare us off, to establish his protective wall or shell. The quiet acceptance must come from all members of the community and it is important to know that for some that quiet acceptance is itself considered a fearful situation. I remember a very paranoid young

man Raghu, who remained for many months so full of fear of the others in the community, a fear that he showed in his frequent outbursts of anger which I believe took place when he felt he was becoming just a bit too dependent on someone. It is necessary to respect the fear the person may have, for it has held them and served them in the past. Slowly he could relax with others and avoid the anger. He began to appreciate other members of the community and even picked out a staff member whom he finally asked to be a new parent for him. Then a type of formal contract was concluded between him and the staff member. I have quite a few people spread in various parts of the world who still refer to me as "Dad".

We cannot place any demands on a person becoming at ease in the community. Remember that on entry he has to be present and become familiar with another 25 or 30 persons, accept a demanding routine that keeps him present with others, meet expectations both of time and degree to become at ease enough in the community to open to a connection with the community as a safe and acceptant group or with any one individual be it staff or another kid. (I will use the word 'kid' for that is the word we have always used in the community. The word, as common and meaningful is considered very positively by all community members.) It would be unfair and not therapeutic for any staff to make any moves to influence any kid to form a connection or bonding with him. The connection will come in its own time. It may begin at any time. It may happen immediately on the person entering the community. I have had a kid tell me the she made up immediately when she first saw me in the community that she could receive whatever she wanted by way of care and direction from me. She only told me these two years after choosing me as a father for reparenting. It is sad that some of our kids who have come for treatment have not benefited from the treatment as they could have. They may have learned some elements of self care, some responsibility in handling feelings, but are not able to function on their own in the outside world. They have not opened to any sort of personal relationship to anyone in the community. There are kids who have not bonded with a staff member, who have not had the courage to recognize their need of a person to give his or her emotional support and direction. For me this is the true tragedy of mental illness. It is the inner life spent completely isolated from any meaningful relationship to another person.

As Carl Jung writes – "We have our gift of consciousness as the place where we realize that we are not alone. Our consciousness enables us to have the experience that others exist who offer us caring, enjoyment, pleasure, and yes, ultimately, love. Through these others they learn their own abilities to extend themselves out to others, to

feel richer in forming a connection, to experience the wonder of appreciating oneself forming a relationship, to experience the wonder of appreciating another giving to another person, in growing to love."

Again, I want to emphasize this need of some sort of bonding of the disturbed person within the community, and preferably to a favorite member of staff with whom they have been able to build up some sort of trust. This can often take place in the common routine of the community. Since most newcomers to the community have the usual problem with self care, that is a situation the majority of seriously disturbed persons go through. They will be spending frequent sessions of time with staff being cared for in their daily bath, washing clothes, looking after their bed and other such necessary matters. This is what we call supervision, and is an essential, often unrewarding daily ritual that may go on for months and months. It is often difficult for a seriously disturbed person to learn a steadily repeated routine. The supervision process is often the means by which the individual learns to take responsibility for self, for example just by remembering what is needed to take a proper shower. Then the learning of various chores that are the basis of community living are occasions for interaction between members of staff and kids. Then there are the different treatment groups which are in some way the most important groups and the special time of day. There are four groups consisting of seven or eight kids each with two or three staff in each group. The groups are all talk therapy groups. There is some formal stress in the group as the members are expected to consider, seriously, just where he or she has reached in their goal therapy, and what individual issue he or she is working on at present. The kid will have formulated just what issue or issues he or she is clarifying and engaged with in their treatment process. These groups are considered most valuable in the process of overcoming the traumas, recognizing the contaminated thinking, digging out the roots in the past that is causing the irresponsible functioning today, searching their way through to wellness.

Usually the first task given a newcomer is to keep a daily journal of feelings, to write down his feelings in a notebook or diary and learn to speak about these with a staff member in his small group. Often the disturbed person has no awareness of the different feelings that they have been experiencing and have usually never had the opportunity to speak about. The only usual method of handling feelings they know about is to act them out in some way by sitting in a catatonic state, or experiencing a violent outburst, or pacing up and down incessantly. Whenever a family brings a sibling to referral one of the first queries I put to the person is concerning what the

person does with their feelings. All treatment must begin with the feelings that are in the person's awareness. The person may have never been in a situation where anyone has ever asked them simply in a positive and helping manner about their feelings and respected their feelings, no matter what they are. I often consider the treatment of seriously disturbed persons as beginning in a very simple manner. The therapist has to have a high degree of skill to enable the person to comfortably begin to recognize their feelings and then actually talk about them. I stress the word "comfortably" for often it has been very discomforting for a person who has not searched out their past feelings to recognize their feelings from the past. In all this work we want the person to make the necessary attempt to find comfort in a world that he or she finds distressing. By becoming more aware of their thought and feelings they will be able to find some comfort. Being forced to actualize the past can be very distressing. So, there is always a need of a simple, clear approach that is respectful and supportive.

Through this process the person will begin to experience a difference in the therapists. He will feel more comfortable with one staff member rather than another, beginning to select the one he prefers to speak with or have supervising him, who agrees to take him for shopping or to the dentist. The newcomers will see how the older kids behave with different members of staff. How some seem to be always asking special ones, or seem to be around a certain staff person much of the time. They will notice who asks which staff for physical strokes. They will notice how some wait expectantly for that person to come in the morning. And some will speak of missing one who is having a day off. They notice that some are attached to a member of staff in a special manner, and seem happy to be attached. This attachment is again often the basis of getting well, the first step in the reparenting process.

Last year one of the kids in the community, one who could function and hold down a job but with great stress on himself described for me the trauma he went through as he tried to establish a state of bonding with me. He felt relief as he grew accustomed to the contact which he would make with me. He wished to develop a contact with me and appreciated his growing attachment with me. I use the word "trauma" deliberately for that is what it was for him. He had never experienced a close attachment before. There were innumerable questions that came up to him, questions he was afraid to ask, being afraid of rejection. There were the moments he wanted to stop and ask me something, yet didn't have the courage, being at

the same time envious of the ease with which other kids could be with me. He could sense their security as they were spending time with me and picking up ease and comfort by being with me. The security he experienced gave him the openness and relationship he needed to gain confidence within himself. This confidence gave him the strength to be open and feel at ease. With this confidence he began to realize that the forming of an attachment was an opening to an ease with other people and sharing being around and yet hesitant because of the demands I made on them.

Because of the manner in which so many have shared with me I remain open and ready for any statement from any kid.

Someone may ask me the reason for the bonding in the first place. I fall back on my belief that we will not make any changes in our life just for ourselves. We change because some one wants us to change, we change because of our relationship to someone else be it God, a parent, a friend, a loved one, an enemy, or it may be the memory of that relationship. We may not experience within ourselves the power to make the necessary change. To break out of the isolation of mental illness the person has to break out of the limitations she places around herself, and to bond with another.

Always, for any altercation, differences must be discussed, recognized, accepted, responsibility taken, renewed and proper behaviour promised. Unhelpful behaviours and contaminated thinking must be confronted. Contaminated thinking usually happens when a person's thinking is obviously based on some disordered feeling or belief with the result that the misbehaviours or nasty interactions taking place, there are supervised "time outs", explanations demanded, responsibility taken.

Essential in the beginning of any person's stay at ASV is the history taking, or a recital of the bio data, especially the experience of the early years of family living and the beliefs and attitudes that are carried from that time in a person's life. There may be painful and disturbing memories and incorrect beliefs and attitudes that may have caused the person mental health problems in the present time.

And there are birthdays, farewell parties, fun times, and outings to break the routine.

Since Transactional Analysis gives a simple living diagram of the feelings, thinking, and values – Child, Adult, Parent, community members can easily understand and communicate using the terms and structures from T.A. Each member of the staff has attended at

some time a workshop in TA. The original idea for ASV came through contact with Jacqui Schiff who was a close friend of Eric Berne, the psychiatrist who originated TA in the original Tuesday night workshops of psychiatrists in San Francisco. TA enables the members of the community to plainly discuss all the aspects of personality structures and communications between persons. When a person is acting, feeling, thinking as you observed parents to be doing, you are in your Parent ego state. When you are dealing with current reality, gathering facts, and computing objectively, you are in your Adult ego state. When you are feeling and acting as you did when you were a child, you are in your Child ego state.

The Parent ego state contains the attitudes and behavior incorporated from external sources, primarily parents. Outwardly, it often is expressed toward others in prejudicial, critical, and nurturing behavior. Inwardly, it is experienced as old Parental messages which continue to influence the inner Child.

The Adult ego state is not related to a person's age, it is oriented to current reality, and the objective gathering of information. It is organized, adaptable, intelligent, and functions by testing reality, estimating probabilities, and computing dispassionately.

The Child ego state contains all the impulses that come naturally to an infant. It also contains the recordings of the child's early experiences, responses, and the "positions" taken about self and others. It is expressed as old behavior from childhood.

In the past few years ASV has become a member of the Community of Communities, a quality improvement and accreditation program of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, U.K. for Therapeutic Communities. Because of financial constraints ASV is not a registered member now but keeps regular contact with Dr. Rex Haigh, the initiator of the Community of Communities. The association with the C of C has been a great help and welcome challenge to ASV.

Since, ASV believes that the mentally disturbed person can be supported to learn acceptance and use their feelings appropriately in order to live a meaningful life, and follow their attitudes and beliefs to guide their growth and their awareness, reasoning and understanding to coordinate their decisions in life and their vital interactions with other people, a particular emphasis is always placed on confronting the individual who is not using those three capabilities in an appropriate manner. Along with being confronted the person's who are not appropriate in expressing themselves or not communicating adequately with others will be expected to clarify the source of their problem and rectify their communication.

Part - II

Mental Illness – an understanding

The Shadowy World of Mental Illness

I live in Bangalore. The new Bangalore, the city that has become synonymous with the new growing economy, a place of employment, a city bursting at the seams, a city full of many shopping malls, a symbol of bright glittering world of today. It exists for young people, for anyone willing to take their place in the developing India. Bangalore city is this crowded metropolis, a workshop for developing instant communication, energy, creativity, enjoyment. This world is a bright, clear world, but although almost everybody appreciates this brash newness, other people are less happy, for hidden within this world there is a shadow world. My creative interaction is within this other world hidden in this city. I have been involved for the last 30 years in a shadow world . I have seen the quiet garden city of Bangalore become the bright glittering world of information technology. But for me I have become more and more aware of the shadow world that is also present to a few of us in any city, as it is in any countryside, in any rural area. And this shadow world is that of mental illness.

A world of uncertainty, a world of isolation, a world of negativity, such is the everyday world of the mentally ill. In this shadow world the hazy and often irrational communication of the mentally ill is far from the clear, bright, fast-developing creativity and galloping social growth that is resulting from the inventive digital means of communication. Yes, in this shadow world, the shadows or miscommunications, slow and block communications in families, communications with friends and associates. These hindrances to clear, understanding communication, block the moves of the young adult mentally ill men and women of today to be assimilated into the emerging new culture that pervades in many ways the city of Bangalore. Irrational, dark, threatening images often may arise from the shadows we all carry within us. It was the great Carl Jung, the psychologist, who referred to the unconscious realm of our personality

as the shadow. We all carry within us that shadow. As we walk towards the sun along the street on a sunny day we don't notice the lurking shadow we throw on the ground behind us. But it is there. As our shadow, our unconscious is ever with us, so unknown and unrecognized but very active in our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Only when that shadow world begins to trip us up, causing some of us to have what we may experience as uncontrollable negative feelings, or thoughts and beliefs that may cause us to unduly hesitate or withdraw in anger and depression. When we begin to experience any unease or distress, any discomfort the reasons for which we may not be aware, then we are probably living and reacting from our unconscious shadow. As we reflect on the difficulties we may have in relating with other people or dissatisfied with ourselves and our behaviours we may recognize that we do have a shadow. All of us have a shadow, all of us in varying degrees. We need to admit that we are not fully conscious of the tendencies dictated by our shadow.

I would like to reflect on this aspect of our personalities that is generally ignored by the society. The shadow world, which ordinary people may be reluctant to admit, would like to say is not there, we cannot deny. It is there and many young people suffer horribly in the shadow world. I am speaking of mental illness, something most of us seem ready to ignore and not acknowledge. Although this reality is something that we do not like to recognize, loath to give any attention to, does exist. It is something we cover with a stigma, black out of our interest, a reality not in my reality, not to be given attention. Any interest or concern for the mentally ill is for other people, not for me. Compare your reaction if a person came up to you and told you that he has a cancer, then another person immediately comes up to you muttering non-sense or loudly chanting to nobody but himself, to whom do you give attention ?

When a person is drawn into that shadow world there is tragedy for themselves, their family and all society, for if you take one person out of the healthy, reasonable functioning human society there is loss. It is not a material loss, it is a spiritual loss for, that person can no longer share his or her love, cannot experience the true, meaningful, emotional experience of human life. Yes, with the internet, we contact so many in so many places for many silly reasons and say that world is becoming more one. But really are we becoming more one in depth when many are placed out of circulation by families, by society, by community? Today the WHO reiterates again and again that the healing of the mentally ill must be community based.

Most of us wish to belong to the modern, fascinating new knowledge community, brought to us by TV and the other media. But some of us have no awareness of what is happening in the human community. I was asked to meet a young girl, a young girl not fitting into the community, as she had some psychological problems. I was told she was not coping in her life, and had problems with the stresses and strains of living with her family. She was fully in the shadow world. She had to withdraw, she had to meet the psychiatrist, take psychotropic medication because of her inability to handle her feelings and thus handle her thought process. She had to be evaluated by the psychologist and then, if there was one available, speak with a psychotherapist to attempt to discover the unconscious roots of her odd behaviors and unstable existence. She spent a year, then another, and another, three years in all struggling to find solid ground for her disturbed living practices and to understand her inconsistent thought processes. She went through the whole process of learning the ability to relate to other people quietly and with purpose. She did well for she is intelligent, and basically wants to reach out to others and have friends. She did better than most people with her problem and has been able to return to a normal, functional life.

The next step was to step out of the shadow world into the bright, promising world of Bangalore. She applied for a job, for employment in the fast, exciting world of information technology. She went to a call centre that advertised a special program for engaging and hiring persons with any disability. She went through the interview. The interviewer experienced her as competent and told her that she had done very well, infact better than many others whom he had interviewed. He asked for her degrees. She had no college degrees. The interviewer then quietly but firmly explained to her that she could not be hired, for he said, they hired only degree holders. Remember the fast new internet world must maintain the speed of the future. She could not tell him that she had had to spend the usual college years in treatment for her psychological problems. She had not been able to spend the time that a normal person without the stigma of mental illness spent in education. She had spent that time in treatment. As a citizen of the shadow world, she was familiar with the taboo learned by experience not to talk of her shadowy past. When a person by means of medication and years of therapy is able to emerge out of the shadowy world of mental illness, they do not have a piece of paper to prove that they can be just as competent as the next person. How was she to dissipate the unspoken questioning and the hesitations in the mind of the

interviewer and prove to him that her present clear thinking and awareness of feelings and ease in handling those feelings may be more mentally healthy and reality based than his. Remember that mentally ill persons who have come through their ordeal must always examine perseveringly their thoughts and feelings and be able to acknowledge and explain to themselves and if necessary to others, their internal reactions and feelings. And given some trust this young girl could probably have shown that her reactions were as reality based as that of a person who has not been forced to go through the long and painful sessions of therapy.

People can emerge from mental illness and function as well as any ordinary person in front of a computer or become engaged in any other gainful employment. I could here relate the story of the Head of the Postgraduate Department of a large central government medical college, happily married and the mother of two growing girls. People classified with mental illness should never accept the condemnation so often made that they must accept that their destiny to live on the obscure, hidden sidelines of life. There is a route out from mental illness; it is possible to come out of the darkness into the light, out of the disordered, unreal beliefs into the solid, certainty of clear thought.

Consider what happens when a person becomes mentally ill. Mental illness begins in young people in their early teens say 15 to 18. The beginnings are not obvious; they are often shadowy, and not clear. Let us take for example, a young man who's been a fine member of the family through his life, although may be a little shy and sensitive in his early years. He may have been a younger member who did not match up to the ambitions of his father or matched the activities of his older brothers and sisters. He may have done well in school, although he may have had some difficulty making friends. He may have been successful and done well until Class Ten but, in that year began to be more withdrawn, began having trouble with his studies, along with a tendency to withdraw into his room, not wanting to get up in the morning, not reacting to the parents who keep insisting for him to be active. He may have long unexplained periods in the bathroom. And sometimes he may be talking strangely and expressing odd imaginings. With all this going on, the parents will not fully understand what is happening with the young man. They may put it down to teenage problems, simple growing pains, teenage troubles; There must be an explanation somewhere. But in vain they seek for an explanation, and really it is near impossible to give a firm explanation for the symptoms of mental illness or the

process of mental illness, although a psychiatrist may venture to give a name to his illness, prescribe medication accordingly.

But, there may be some more meaningful explanation if we spent enough time going over the highs and lows of the person's life, spending enough time questioning them about their many feelings and beliefs about themselves at different stages of life. The person could be asked to relate as much as possible the important feelings, thoughts and memories of his life. Out of these long and painstaking discussions will come to a fairly good idea of what could be the hidden unconscious causes of his negative behaving and inability to relate in any meaningful manner with other people, be they family or otherwise. The search is to uncover the incidents in the distant past that have been quietly shunted into the shadow, into the unconscious, yet even now have the power to bring confusion into his present functioning. As this strange behavior begins in this family, may be one of the friends of the family or a relative will make the suggestion that perhaps there is something more serious happening and perhaps might be good if he were taken to a hospital or even to a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist will verify the seriousness of the plight of the young person. Meanwhile with the person who may now be called a patient, there may even be bursts of anger happening, some throwing of plates or other objects. The family becomes worried and although there is hesitancy they are beginning to realize that something must be done. They realize deep within that something very wrong is happening yet still loath to admit it, for as with the majority of the population knowledge of the intricacies of mental illness is almost nil. So the family's world is expanding more quickly than they ever expected. Their learning is being forcibly enlarged, being opened to uncertainties, to behaviors never before experienced. There is much that is new, strange, peculiar. Often bizarre quirks develop within what was a quiet happy home atmosphere a year ago. Many aspects of the familiar, quiet times of the home world are becoming unfamiliar, estranged from the usual understandable family life. They now have concrete experience of a serious problem disrupting family life. This problem is centered in this one member with whom it is practically impossible to communicate. The situation is serious. And it is basically an unhappy and tense situation, one that has happened unexpectedly and without any seeming cause.

The psychiatrist will spend time he has talking with the patient. The time will be limited because of the large number of people with serious psychological problems. He will prescribe some medication which will usually give some relief to the family. However, quite

often parents will complain that very little is explained to them or to the patient. Often it is very difficult to give any full explanation of what is taking place within the patient. The parents want to know more, want something they can understand and gives them a clear control of the home situation. They have to accept whatever is told to them. They have to manage to convince the patient, this young man now afflicted with this unfortunate condition, their disturbed son, to accept this new medication prescribed by the psychiatrist. With the medication the young man may hopefully be more quiet, more withdrawn. Usually or very often he may want to refuse the medication. And this is one important characteristic of the mentally ill. It is quite impossible to come up with a valid reason why almost all the mentally ill want to refuse the medication or desire to be free of it as soon as possible. Often the effects of the medication are not explained, nor the reasons why this medication and not another.

Often it seems some sort of secret must be kept, there is no naming, no diagnosis, nothing specific so that the family now can understand what is happening, what they can expect, what the future course of action will be, how the healing will come about.

With the usual medical problem there will be a definite prognosis, some hope given, while any consultant for the mentally ill at this early stage is reluctant to make any promises for he or she is aware that no definite secure plan of recovery is readily possible. In the shadow world "of mental illness" nothing is clear and definite. The psychiatrist will do his best to match the medication to the problems which the young man is presenting.

With the medication the young man may show more activity, may be able to return to some study, be more amenable in his behavior, but all family members will experience some odd mannerisms they see as quite disruptive in this life and distressing in the family life. The young man may withdraw from reality, be afraid to walk down the street. He may be lost, speaking of some weird ideas and hopes, often very angry, acting out, showing defiance, all of which gives worry to the family. They will be wondering what is going to happen, what will be the outcome of this continuing crisis. Paramount in this whole happening are the feelings that arise. Feelings are so very important in our lives. This young man cannot control his feelings, especially the level of his feelings, of feelings that he cannot understand, or ever experienced before. Uppermost in all of this will be his fears, his angers and his depressive sadness.

The recognition of feelings is most important. I believe the road through mental illness is through the feeling the person is

exhibiting. The negative and uncontrolled feelings are a sign that the basic sense of self is disturbed, a non-acceptance of the contents of life, so there is no quiet, calm, assured, ease, peace within the deep awareness of the self. In mental illness someone might say that the ego is dominant and has taken over the captaincy of the ship and it cannot be unseated from its dominant, demanding, unreasonable power. The medicating may quiet this dominating, ever changing unreasoning tyrant somewhat. But it is only when the individual is clearly aware of his feelings and their roots, and with insight controls his feelings and thoughts, memories and beliefs, there will be space and openness for feedback. The acceptance of the feedback is essential, for it facilitates his inner reasoning and will lead him to trust his own deeper self. Slowly peace and true beneficial control and happiness may be gradually experienced. Perhaps all this may sound quite simplistic, however, it is probably the best road leading out of mental illness. Schizophrenia is a regressive illness so questioning and reflection needs to be kept simple when you consider how mental illness can garble a regressed personality.

The world of mental illness is a shadow world. My intention over the past 30 years has been to bring some simple light to the treatment of mental illness. I use the word simple but in treating the mentally ill we have to keep the interactions with the person quite simple, keep it clear, in understandable words and phrases. The therapist however, must be very perceptive and creative in his thinking, very much aware of his feelings and reactions, continuously questioning various options in his proceeding, aware of his choice, always trying to bridge any gap between himself and the ill person, attempting to establish better connection with his client, speaking to the whole person he is speaking with, inviting him or her to be open in tentatively discovering another person, a person who wishes to understand the pains and anxieties with which he feels afflicted. Finally he may perhaps begin to experience a small new idea that perhaps he may be able to trust this person who seems so interested in him. He may allow himself to remember that once upon a time he was familiar with an engaging, shared world of loved family members and friends.

Misery Opens to Joy

*T*hey wanted him to go to college
after all he had
done so well in school
such good marks
so well behaved
so quiet and unobtrusive
and now
see him now
not getting up in the morning
not talking
rather muttering to himself
seeing what is not there
afraid to go out
not washing
even not eating
why why why?
What happened
what went wrong ?
he had everything he could have wanted
or so it seemed
the parents were loving
in their way
at least that is what they believe
and yet
perhaps
it could have been different
How to find out

for he will not talk about
what it was like
way back when he was so small
and vulnerable
when his thoughts about himself
were being formed
way back then he was making choices
choices he was not even aware of
but choices which somehow or other
relate to the now
and now withdrawal
the now tendency to anger and violence
the now inability to meet and talk with others
How to break through
how to get him to trust
for what is trust ?
or is it trust that he needs
who needs to trust
those who trust that he can come out
those who trust that he needs to be shaken up
and told to behave
those who trust that just being with him will work
yes he needs to trust
that frightened little boy needs to find
someone who accepts
who trusts
trusts that he is needing
tries to help find what he is needing
opens to that special needing
waits, suggests, pauses, listens
wonders, guesses, states, talks clarifies
all the while trusting that the presence will work
realizing that it takes time, time, time
days and days and days

*weeks and weeks and weeks
knowing that there are no miracles
no easy solutions
no simple explanations
knowing there are fall backs
hesitations
doubts
fears
runaways into the inner realm
yet stays with him
accepts to be there now and always
accepts to be demanding warmly
accepts to be consoling firmly
and hopefully there is a change
a sense of openness to communication
and then real communication coming back
a recognition of caring
a realization that acceptance is there
and acceptance of acceptance happens
happens with a slow deep awareness of need
and a change of attitude
yes there is goodness in the universe
and he admits he can share in that goodness
so to start thinking for self
being responsible for self
responsible to another
to others
and the truly graceful belief that life
can be lived with a taste of joy.*

Schizophrenia – a Social Illness in which we all share

7 AM. The alarm clocks wakes Joe. It continues to ring, louder and louder and seems to never stop. Joe gets up. The ringing is now almost deafening. He covers his ears, but he still hears it. He does not know what to make of this. He opens the window, and the loud noise of the alarm clock spreads through the air, presumably heard by everybody. At first it sounds like the siren of a police car, then of a fire engine; finally it seems so powerful as to transmit a warning signal to the whole city. The streets, too, are unusual this morning. The buildings have assumed funny shapes. Everything is brightly hued, like Technicolor. In the 24 years of his young life Joe has never experienced a similar sense of foreboding and ominous mystery.

It is dusk , and Pari is walking home. But the dusk is darker than at other evenings, and the road lights seem dimmer than usual. The noises of the city are different, continuous, with an incessant sound of dismay, sometimes fading away and then coming back, like waves. There is a whispering in the air, diffused, unintelligible. Gradually, words become distinguishable. They are about her. She looks backward. There they are, peculiar men with grotesque faces who follow her. What do they want from a poor, innocent, 22 year old girl? They are spying on her. They may want to catch her and kidnap her. She runs home in panic. Her trembling hands try to find the keyhole; she opens door, bursts into tears, and screams, Mother, Mother, they are following me, they are after me.

Joe and Pari are having acute attacks of schizophrenia.

If Joe or Pari is a member of your family, their pain becomes your suffering, your crucial problem. If you are fortunate never to have the disease touch your family, you may have a friend or a neighbour who has suffered from it. You may have met patients who have been discharged and are now in the community. You may be motivated to help because of your concern for those fellow human beings who are afflicted. You may have heard something about

schizophrenia and gathered information to conclude that to know about schizophrenia means to know a great deal about the human condition and predicament.

Schizophrenia cannot be ignored. In recent years, however much more attention has been paid to other diseases. Coronary disease, cancer, diabetes have captured the public interest. Schizophrenia has not stimulated equal concern. Yet, no other condition creates such heavy economic burdens for the state or the family. If we assess the gravity of an illness solely by the number of people who are affected by it, then alcoholism deserves the greatest attention. But if we evaluate importance in terms of the severity of mental disturbance, or of the degree of interference with the functions of the mental health, then no other problem is of greater magnitude than schizophrenia. When we consider the impact of schizophrenia on the present generation (there are about 40 million schizophrenics in the world), we conclude that no war in history has produced so many victims, wounded so many people. No earthquake has exacted so high a toll; no other condition that we know of has deprived so many young people of the promise of life.

Why, then, has schizophrenia received relatively little attention in the press and other media directed at the general public? There is no single answer. Many people, discouraged by the numerous problems that schizophrenia presents, assume an attitude of denial; they act as if schizophrenia does not exist, or as if they feel the best way to deal with it is to ignore it. We recognize that this denial is founded on a common and ancient prejudice toward mental illnesses – so called madness, craziness or insanity – of which schizophrenia is the most typical representative. The fear of mental illness, or the concept of mental illness as something to be ashamed of or horrified by, leads to its denial. They believe that we too, if we are eccentric or if we assume an extremist, controversial, or unpopular position, may be wrongly labeled as schizophrenics, leads to its denial. The apprehension that we may be secretly suffering from this disorder leads to its denial. The fear that we may be the direct and only cause of schizophrenia in others, especially our children, and that we may have to face the resultant guilt, leads to its denial. The absolutely unfounded belief that nothing can be done about it also leads to its denial. The truth is that approximately one of three patients recovers completely, and more than one-third improve sufficiently to live adequate lives.

Schizophrenia is not something that we need to feel ashamed of or guilty about, just as we are not ashamed of or guilty for

earthquakes that may occur where we live. And unlike earthquakes, schizophrenia is a phenomenon that we can do a great deal about. In the realization that schizophrenia is still with us we must find an additional incentive to improve the ways in which we organize our environment and our social institutions, live within our families and affect one another.

It is important to have compassion for the mentally ill, to understand their suffering and to overcome prejudices towards them, but it is even more important for us to develop a sense of kinship for the patient, because it implies compassion and abolition of prejudice. If we do, the likelihood of our being able to help will also increase. In many we may even admire the patient.

The schizophrenic is not the only fugitive from the reality. The creative person too feels a prisoner in the midst of things as they really are and wants to change them by adding something that will make the world more beautiful, more understandable or more controllable. Scientists, poets, artists, playwrights, and other creative people use some mental processes similar to those used by the schizophrenic – and by the normal person when he dreams. Creative people are able to fuse these strange mental processes with the usual logical mechanisms of the mind, and the result is creative work and creative products. The schizophrenic cannot make this laborious synthesis. He uses imaginative processes in destructive ways. Nevertheless, the study of these mechanisms clarifies to a considerable extent the complexity of a creative person. Schizophrenia thus does not remain just a medical and humane concern. It is true that our consideration, commitment, and involvement derive from our great concern for people who suffer from this condition. But in addition, the study of this disorder will give us the possibility of seeing from unusual perspectives the labyrinth of the human mind – that ever – unfolding and never – finished entity that has no equal for complexity in the world known to science. By studying schizophrenia we examine in a unique way the great enigma of the human being, his eternal wavering between truth and illusion; his constant uncertainty between love and hate his conflict between his desire to embrace his fellow men and his fear of them; and his circuitous journey between increasing suspiciousness and absolute faith, between his insatiable hunger for other people and his deep, interminable isolation and loneliness. These extremes encompass the vast panorama of human existence.

From a letter to a young lady wanting to understand schizophrenia

Dear Rebecca,

Thanks for your letter and the request to know more about schizophrenia. I appreciate your having this interest as there are very few people who would want to know more about this disturbing condition, a frightening condition for many people and families, and a very severe condemnation when a young teenager is told that he or she is a schizophrenic.

For in the minds of many psychiatrists and doctors and in the minds of the general public, the illness cannot be fully explained, there is no known simple way of coming out of the condition, and for many there is just no way out – it is a condition that you will have all your life. It is the unknown that upsets people when referring to schizophrenia, as any unknown often disturbs people. But with schizophrenia, the unknowns are what is usually uppermost. It is often unpredictable how the individual diagnosed as schizophrenic is going to react, what strange and odd behavior they may show at any time, what uncontrollable feelings they will display, what spontaneous, unrelated reactions or speech they may show, what violence they may show, or what level of withdrawal he or she may show. A schizophrenic may not understand what you are trying to make him or her understand, may talk in seeming riddles that has no relationship to what is happening at present. The person seems to be in a world of their own.

One way of looking at the seriously affected schizophrenic is to see or refer to the person as a very young child acting and relating as a 2 or 3 years old, but living in a 17 or 18 or 25 or 30 year old's body, for schizophrenia is a regressive disease where the person regresses to an age where the problems coping with the world around him or her will go away. In many cases the person is very afraid, greatly afraid and cannot cope with demands of relating to others, cannot understand what they are afraid of and cannot resolve the

fear so they withdraw or attempt to get along in whatever manner the deluded thinking leads them to act or say. And because of being afraid, they feel someone is causing them to be afraid and someone causes me to be afraid, I will become angry at the person. This can happen even if the person is not conscious that they are afraid. Many schizophrenics are not conscious of their fear, the deep fear they have and feel threatened at an existence level. At times those who work and meet and look after the schizophrenics have to be very careful for the very angry schizophrenic can become angry at what we may call the third degree level, that is, attack to cause grievous harm if not worse. And at the same time fear or anger at life which they cannot express or find a solution for, causes them to be suicidal.

The illness does not relate to a person's intelligence quotient, or IQ. Often, the schizophrenic is a very intelligent person and this itself may cause them to be more questioning of themselves and their present reality than the other person who can let the world go by them without taking the "whips and scorns of nature" too seriously. The schizophrenic is under pressure all the time even when he or she is withdrawn into their own mind. So basically I believe the first experience of the person is to make us aware of the person's feelings and the level of those feelings, and how they are expressing those feelings. For, remember they may have no sufficient control of those feelings. It is not very often that they will be violent, yet the caretaker has to be wary and careful that there is no occasion or reason presented on which the ill person can act out. Whenever the caretaker is handling the person who is actively a schizophrenic, there is an important factor that must be taken into consideration, something that can have a tremendous effect on the life of the ill person. This is especially important when the ill person is tending to violence or to serious depression or withdrawal or seemingly lost and estranged. One of the foremost behaviors of the schizophrenic, especially when young, in the beginning stages, is the withdrawal and tendency to isolation. This tendency is often because of anger with parents. Many times when parents have brought a young schizophrenic to me and I ask them if he or she has been violent, the answer will usually be "oh, don't worry, he has only been violent with us, his parents". So there seems to be some break in relationship, a lack of appreciation for the parents he or she should feel close to. And this can be very depressing and hurtful for the parents, putting them in a seemingly hopeless position.

So, when dealing with a withdrawn or quiet schizophrenic the essential thing is to, if possible, quietly break into the isolation. As I

said before the ill person is like a child searching and not knowing what is wrong, what they want or what they are essentially missing. My belief is that the person is missing contact, they sense that they are all alone, lost with no base or solidity. We may experience feelings and realize that we have contact with ourselves, but we hesitate, consider and realize that we have contact only with our self, our base. We know what we are feeling and thinking, We are sure that it is I myself in my own awareness of consciousness so I need not be drastically afraid or protective or needlessly afraid. I still have my feet on the ground and can reach out for verification and support. I have others I can relate to, who will help me to understand my experience as I share with them. I am firm in my base.

So, there is a process that I find most helpful in my endeavors to bring an upset ill person to settle and listen, to be present to be here and now. My intention will be to be quietly present, totally and deeply connected to the person. I say totally, I mean that within myself I am reading all the clues I can pick up from the upset person, so he will in some degree experience that he is safe, he is not alone, he is being listened to by someone who wishes to connect with him, to convince him that I am open to his being with me now for unconsciously there is a self in him that wants and needs to feel attached to someone and that someone now happens to be me interested wholeheartedly in him. But all this must delicately, slowly and gradually be brought forward. Through this process I have had persons who have been ill for a few years or were upset, who begin to realize that they have a "self" that is wanted and is accepted, that they can trust that self that may be a little bit allowing itself to function unconsciously with him, that self which will come to monitor the bizarre thinking and find appropriate level of feelings and hopefully give them the greatest experience we can all have – that is to accept the happy responsibility to our own self and to all those whom we live with and love.

Questions Looking for Answers

If anyone becomes at all familiar with the various aspects of what we term as schizophrenia he or she will begin to realize what a labyrinth of opinions, theories, conditions, treatments, hopes, disappointments, angers, fears they have fallen into. Just as in the inner environment of the suffering patient, clarity for most of us does not exist. It is all a confused jumble, especially for the schizophrenic and his family. With about eight million schizophrenics in India, there are many stumbling around in this confused jumble, this confused environment. There are various leads which seem to show the way somewhat, some which lead to a certain success, others which end up as dead ends, or hold out hopes as illusory as the voices and sights that many of the schizophrenics make up.

The subject of schizophrenia is full of questions looking for answers. And those answers are distressingly slow in coming. Each person who is schizophrenic is a living question – how did it all begin, why me, how is it I have these feelings, where do my hallucinations come from, why do I have such terrifying fears; of many small matters, where does my destructive anger come from, can I get any relief, do others feel as I do, how can I trust anyone, why am I cast off, alone, imprisoned, not understood, not accepted, not loved? So, many questions are there. I intend in this article to consider some of the questions looking for answers. They are questions not often asked but it might be useful to ask them and reflect to see what answer may be forthcoming.

One of the first questions to be asked is why is it that it is so easily accepted that the schizophrenic will remain so throughout his or her life? Here you have a person trying to figure out what is happening within him, feeling impulses and pressures that he cannot explain and he is told that he will have to remain like that throughout his life. Perhaps he is promised some alleviation but is also told that he will never be considered fully responsible for himself or reliable as normal people are, nor will he be fully aware of how to control the various ups and downs he experiences within. That is quite a life sentence to be lowered on him. That is quite a life sentence to be

lowered on anyone. People have come out of the schizophrenic condition – they have come to realize the causes of the feelings and impulses which seem to be driving them and have learned to control those feelings and impulses. They have learned that there are moves and changes they can make, moves in their belief system, and in their thinking, moves which will make some joy a reality for them. It is possible.

So, how and why do we stop ourselves from emphasizing the schizophrenic's ability to recover and get well, to establish true communication with significant others in a functional, meaningful life? There is always hope, but do we give substance to that hope? If we give trust to that hope then we will notice changes and perhaps be surprised by outstanding changes. I believe that we are in a positive and important area of human life here. We can refer to the beliefs around schizophrenics in history, how those who acted strangely were thought to possess special powers, to have some abnormal depth to their personalities which would be of help to those who were not so blessed. After all, what is this depth?

We refer to it seemingly as the unconscious. And what is that? It seems to be an openness to what we cannot understand, what we can only believe is there. There seems to be some power there- a power of compassion, of love, of sharing, of being united and helping one another. Our belief in this power within us can enable another individual to be strengthened and to be willing to accept the experience of being the person he or she is.

Why is it that we do not give credence to this power of our openness and belief to lead others out of the confusion that seems to exist in the unconscious. We can lead them out to clarity and love.

I know that I am speaking of an area of the human personality that is not fully definite and clear. We have our experience of this area. And even if we do not want to admit its importance it plays an important role in our lives. Often we are afraid to admit that we are being influenced from this hidden area in our personality, for if we were to admit to it we would have to seriously see how we are being influenced – and would perhaps have to stop running, stop trying to escape. What is it we try to avoid but the need of change, change rooted down deep within and shown in our behavior with others. Are we open to consider our need of change in our attitudes, our beliefs, our thinking towards other persons, our closed thought patterns. Are we ready to give up memories, let go of hurts, allow ourselves to be compassionate and loving.

We acknowledge that the world around us is changing each day – so many new ideas, so many new cultural patterns, so much

new technology. We are part of the changing environment. But are we willing to work to change or are we shut down? We believe that schizophrenics must change to be happy. How much pressure are we willing to put on ourselves to change? We might be afraid that the schizophrenic now functioning normally will challenge us to change? How quickly we cross the street to avoid passing by the raving person on this side. I believe that the schizophrenic is always challenging us to change, asking us to realize that we all need to keep growing and searching for ways to bring more compassion and love into our world. Why do we not see that aspect of their life and conduct? In centuries past they have always been challenging the healthy individuals to see the new and special possibilities in our human growth together. It is the same today, so why do we keep seeing them as trouble-makers and failures? The schizophrenic has the same possibilities as we have. Our belief that he or she can and will use those possibilities will enable them to use the possibilities.

Let us consider another question which comes up when we talk about schizophrenics. In our therapeutic community we talk often about "getting well". Families come to seek admission for a disturbed member of the family in order for them to "get well". How much some families really believe in the person's ability to get well after all that they have been through can be questioned. Let us consider a bit what perhaps "getting well" means. It will definitely mean different things for different people. Most of us would say that a human person needs to be able to relate in a meaningful manner with other persons, especially one or two significant others whom he or she trusts and accepts care and affection from. Also in return the person will be expected to be able to return that care and affection and in fact does that.

We find ourselves in this universe and experience the need to find understanding and support from others and find our happiness in giving that understanding and support to others. So, the schizophrenic needs, like all of us, to be able to form meaningful attachments to others, to a significant other. It is that attachment , that bonding that makes it possible for the schizophrenic to trust in himself and then open in trust to another. Why is it so hard for us to extend patience and love for the mentally ill, for the schizophrenic? It is true, they don't seem to want our love, our care. They seem to push us away. And that is not true. On the surface it might seem so. But if we stop and stay open at a level deeper than the noise and agitation and withdrawal we may sense some activity at some level, may be at the deepest level where the schizophrenic is not fully aware of what is happening. It could be that bonding is taking place. Bonding may take place with anyone who is sincerely open and

accepting. At the heart of the bonding is the affectional attraction of one individual for another individual. Often it cannot be explained in a practical manner because it is created on the inner, deep level of the personality.

Whatever has happened in early life, usually the schizophrenic has difficulties in bonding, and may not have a satisfactory experience of bonding and has not been able to form meaningful attachments with others. Yet all persons need to have attachments. John Bowlby has studied and written extensively on the concept of bonding. The following quote is from his book, "The making and Breaking of affectional Bonds".

"Thus attachment behavior is conceived as a class of behavior distinct from feeding and sexual behavior and of at least an equal significance in human life. There is nothing intrinsically childish or pathological about it.

It will be noted that the concept of attachment differs from that of dependence. For example, dependence is not specifically related to maintenance of proximity, it is not directed towards a specific individual, it does not imply an enduring bond, nor is it associated with strong feeling. No biological function is attributed to it. Furthermore, in the concept of dependence there are value implications the exact opposite of those that the concept of attachment conveys. Whereas to refer to a person as dependent tends to be disparaging, to describe him as attached to someone can well be an expression of approval. Conversely, for a person to be detached in his personal relations is usually regarded as less than admirable. The disparaging element in the concept of dependence, which reflects a failure to recognize the value that attachment behavior has for survival, is held to be a fatal weakness to its clinical use".

It seems to be quite clear that schizophrenics need some sort of attachment to someone whom they believe they can trust to take care of them. If this is true then why is it that society does not make a greater effort to set up situations or places in which schizophrenics can meet with people with whom they could form attachments. In some ways I believe that most people are afraid of the idea of dependency. They are reluctant to have someone depend on them, while some others are only too happy to have one dependent on them – they will use the dependency of others as a means to their own aggrandizement and satisfaction.

The ability to form attachments and to be able to use them as a means of emotional fulfillment and health is a sign of what is referred to as the mature functioning of the human personality. I believe it is mark of "being well" or "getting well". Dr. Dean Ornish

in his book on reversing heart disease states that the most important factor in enabling persons to alleviate their physical heart problems is the ability to be able to open our hearts to others –to be able to communicate and recognize and appreciate attachments with significant others. He writes :

“ I realized that if someone else can have that kind of compassion for my inner darkness, then maybe I can for myself too. I can begin opening the window allowing the light to shine in, and realize that it is not dark anymore.

And to the degree I can do that, to the extent that I can have the same compassion for my own ignorance and my own darkness and my own demons, then I can begin to have that same compassion and love for other people whenever they display their darkness to me. When I can do that, it helps to free both of us...

The ongoing process of learning compassion – for my own darkness and that of others – is what helps to free me from my sense of isolation. That is what frees us, that's what heals us. And eventually it may even open our arteries as well as our hearts...

The real issue for me is how we can feel more free and more joyful. How to open our hearts on psychological levels – to build intimacy – and spiritual levels – to develop compassion. More precisely we are free already; by remaining compassionate, we can stop binding ourselves and limiting our freedom. We may live longer because of this, but that's not the primary goal. We can live better.”

So, the endeavors which we make to bring schizophrenics to form attachments are really part of the most essential process that we all need to work through in order to make this universe a joyful place. The environment is the word bandied about very much today. And it must be given due importance – the word and the reality. But what is the value if we have a tremendously beautiful garden populated by a group of people sitting off by themselves not communicating and being unhappy and disgruntled. Why is it that we do not give the necessary importance to the inner environment, the environment of the heart? Perhaps it is not so important to find an answer to that question and perhaps we never will. But let us strive with all the effort available to improve the inner environment – especially the inner environment hidden behind the schizophrenic mask – the disturbed and confused environment of the person suffering from serious emotional problems.

Our efforts begin with communication and end with communication, for in the communication we give and receive the care and love we exist for. And so we come to share a joy which silences all our questioning and gives us the answer which will always be satisfying.

Mental Health - a concern

- creative transformation - the person has to be creative, do something they have never done before.
- new insight – new decision or letting - go
- coming through the fear
- leaving the anger
- willingness to accept the uncertainties of life
- accepting my limitations
- all persons created to love – to be together – acceptant of all
- realizing my need of the other
- trust – with the unknown that must be accepted – and respected
- belief – our highest activity – our need to believe
- the mystery of human life – to accept the mystery – we live a mystery
- finding the joy and warmth of human life
- the subjective and the objective
- Rumi – This being human is a guest house
Every morning a new arrival
A joy, a depression, meanness
Some momentary awareness comes
As an unexpected visitor
Welcome and entertain them all !
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows
Who violently sweep your house
Empty of its furniture,
Still, treat each guest honorably
He may be clearing you out

For some new delight

The dark thought, the shame, the malice

Meet them at the door laughing

And invite them in

Be grateful for whoever comes

Because each has been sent

As a guide from beyond

- to accept that other persons have much the same experience as I am having
- it is alright to have a problem or difficulty in trying to understand my inner experience at the present moment, and believing that I can do something within myself to be more comfortable being the person I am although I must admit at the same time that I, require the acceptance, support and assistance of some person who has a better understanding of myself than I have of myself.
- I will admit that I can follow the advice of the other person and will remain open to this advice.

If I give more value to my thinking then I can choose whatever I decide to do with my being. If I am unhappy enough then I do not have a right to be rid of my existence, something I have not given myself, so I cannot decide to simply throw it away. If you differ from me in your thinking it is not right for me to torture you into a submission to my way of thinking. My right to life and happiness is founded on my existence, my being, not on your thinking or idea of me. First I exist, then I think.

My honesty is based on my deeper self. I need to be honest with you because of your existence as a person, not just on my attitude towards you. I become aware of my existence, my spiritual self, a consciousness of my deeper self, what some call my conscience. My right to life; to be treated well, to be respected with love and care, are based on this spiritual self that I am. People are often proud because they base themselves on their thinking, their attitudes, the appearance of their body. I can be humble because I am sure of my base, that is, my being, what I refer to as my deepest self. My humility is based on my deeper self, based on my quiet deep self, my existence, knowing that I am acceptable even though others have more abilities than I may have. So, the reality is that even though I cannot think correctly, cannot handle my feelings, am considered mentally unwell, I am always acceptable and of worth. My life still has an absolute meaning for myself and others, especially those who love me.

I believe that the persons who are having mental problems have a great, an almost insurmountable difficulty in being conscious and aware of their deepest self, although they can be aware of the thoughts and feelings guiding them. Often in the same way they feel alone, finding it very difficult to relate at any deep level with other people because they do not appreciate their deeper self. So also they will not be open to accept serious feedback until they are open in some sort of relation with the person giving the feedback. At times they also have difficulty in accepting the other person needing to be respected and loved.

I believe the basic aim of each of the persons in therapy must be to recognize the existence of others. I mean recognizing the deeper self of the other as an individual with whom he or she can honestly and humbly share the deeper self through talking about thoughts, attitudes and feelings. The main purpose in therapy should be to recognize and attach to another individual and to question self honestly about what is keeping them away from relating in a purposeful manner with another person.

What I have written above is an attempt to express in a simple way my understanding of any therapeutic process. If you wish to question me you are most welcome. We need to dialogue on our process in order to build up a better understanding of what will be most helpful in improving the process of therapy.

I thank you for sustaining your relationship with all of us here in this therapeutic community – of which I desire you to be an active member. May all of us enjoy the life that is ours and that we share with others.

April 20, 2005

Part - III

Process

a. On Concepts in Therapy

Treatment process at ASV

paper presented at the 20th year celebrations.

The Athma Shakti Vidyalaya community was established on 20th August 1979, in the suburbs of Bangalore, a city in South India. The community functioned in different rented facilities for nineteen years. On 20th June 1998, the community moved into their own building located in the suburbs of Bangalore. This sprawling building which can comfortably accommodate 25 patients at any given time has a ground, first & second floors. Each room is occupied by six patients. All the rooms have attached bath and toilet facilities. There is a large area designated for the garden.

Who gets referred to ASV? Patients who have been diagnosed at some time or times having any kind of mental illness are referred to ASV. Most patients will have undergone crisis management programmes in hospitals. When discharged they still continue to have positive and negative symptoms of the illness, i.e. hallucinations, delusions, odd behaviors like getting up late, excessive eating, being lethargic, drinking excessive amounts of tea, smoking etc. When these behaviors are confronted by family members, the conflict starts and the patients may become violent and abusive or suicidal. Most often they will be back into hospital stay. As the medication alone will not deal with the multifarious problems caused by the patients, the need for therapeutic communities arose. ASV is one of the pioneers in establishing the therapeutic communities in India when it opened in 1979. There are a number of such organizations now in Bangalore.

The ASV therapeutic community offers structure and discipline to the patients till they are able to cope with their own inner experience and meaningful with expectations of family and society. The staff also teaches living skills and vocational skills to the patients. They are also taught personal hygiene and good values. Patients

diagnosed with manic - depression are difficult to treat, as they tend to escalate beyond the resources of the community during psychotic phases. For e.g. some patients get into violent episodes and become destructive and vengeful. They often persist in keeping up this escalated phase till the staff and patients are physically and psychologically exhausted. In a couple of cases, patients had to be shifted to hospitals because of their unmanageable behaviour.

Decisions for intake :

After a preliminary interview with the patient and the family, a psychological assessment of the patient is made.

A detailed history of the patient includes, genetics, socioeconomic background, any birth trauma, neurological problems, premorbid personality, psychosexual history, any substance abuse, drug or alcohol abuse, education, occupation, marital status etc.

A psychological assessment includes tests for perception, subjective and objective tests of personality, intelligence tests and tests for organicity.

A mental status examination is also conducted to assess his orientation, cognitive skills, awareness, level of reactivity, etc.

The case is then presented in the staff meeting. The staff as a whole decides whether to admit the patient or not depending on the following reasons.

- Motivation of the patient to get well
- His or her awareness of the illness
- Age- younger patients are preferred (as their maladaptive behaviours are easier to change than that of older patients)
- Chronicity of the illness
- Is the person going to be a management problem?
- Is the person going to be resource to the community?
(Can he or she motivate the other patients to get well)
- Availability of accommodation

We have fifteen staff members working in ASV. As we work twenty-four hours and 365 days a year, the staff is rotarized to work in different shifts. The staff consists of psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors and young adults who are motivated and committed to this work.

Jacqui Schiff, who started this community, was a student of Eric Berne, who introduced Transactional Analysis to the world, we relate on the principle of “I AM OK – YOU ARE OK”. The staff are addressed by their first names and there are very little hierarchical differences between staff and patients.

Once the decision is made to take the patient in, he or she is asked to come to the community as a day patient for a week. During this period, the patient participates in all the activities of the community. Then the patient can decide to join as an inpatient and makes a contract.

- To abide by the rules of the community and
- To use the resources of the community to get well and help others get well.

When the patient decides to join the community, he or she is given a traditional welcome with aarthi and garland. He or she is assigned to a room. His personal belongings are scrutinized for sharp objects, or bottles that could be used as a weapon to hurt oneself or others. These are then kept in the custody of the staff. He or she is assigned a buddy who will help the new patient become oriented to the rules of the community and to other members.

The staff will then assess the level of functioning and his or her therapeutic issues. Patients are classified into three groups according to the level of their functioning.

- **Dysfunctional** : The patient suffers from poor awareness of self and the environment, active hallucinations, poor personal hygiene, inability to care for self, irrational behavior, irrelevant talk and psychotic behavior.
- **Reasonable** : He or she is aware of self and the environment, can care for self, accessible to psychotherapy. He or she is able to think and reason, take minimal responsibility towards self and others in the community.
- **Responsible** : He or she is aware of self and the environment, able to care for self and others, go out on their own, aware of their problems, feelings and their needs. He or she has drawn an ability to hold a job outside of the community, ability to manage money etc.

Depending on their level of functioning, their individual structures are defined.

Structures for Dysfunctional people :

The dysfunctional patient is on full supervision and is given suitable parenting for learning basic living skills.

They are taught to bathe properly, keep their clothes clean, brush their teeth, eat appropriately etc.

Structures for Reasonable people :

A reasonable patient can work on his own responsibly but he / she cannot be trusted or is capable of handling relations with others. For example being untrustworthy, unable to quietly discuss and settle disputes, or not acting according to the values of the community.

Some patients have problems in specific areas for e.g. in the bathroom, they use excessive amounts of soap or they have issues associated with food. Depending on this they have a free structure.

Structures for Responsible People

- They can go out on their own
- They can supervise the less functional patients
- They can function as mentors for other patients
- They can opt to work outside the community.

Treatment process:

Athma Shakti Vidyalaya is a community, with a very special aim. This aim flows from its character, its nature. The common aim of ASV is to do whatever is possible for the promotion of the mental health of all the persons who have come to be connected in any manner with the community.

Each member of the community grows through their own personal struggle to bring about the aim of the community. The objective to be obtained is that each individual has a gratifying and fulfilling shared experience with other members of the community.

In the following paragraphs I will refer to some of the daily structures which the members of the community need to follow in order for the community to be a success. As already explained, "Structure" is a rule, a demand, a necessity, a need to be followed, an expectation made on each member, in some ways a contract, a routine, a trust that each member of the community is required to accept, follow, pay close attention to help others follow, and also

challenge another member of the community if the structure is neglected.

The first structure of the day is the wakeup call at 6.30 am for the hour long yoga session at 7.00 am. After breakfast comes the distribution of psychotropic medication – daily shower bath, doing one's own laundry, getting organized and if time, catching up on writing in one's daybook or chronicle – relating the various ups and downs of the previous days – all of which will be presented and discussed with a favorite staff guide.

At 11.00 am the community comes together at the Daily Meeting – the formal opening of the day with a couple of common questions at the beginning to spark an attempt to get the little grey cells of the brain moving. Then any special business to be discussed is presented.

The special business may include some “lo and behold breakage of structure” – Some culprit may have played loosely with one of the community's usual behaviors, practices or customs – so as in a village assembly the culprit must give the proper explanation – and may be (according to the mood of the day or discernment of the community) made to stand in the corner (much like he had to when in kindergarten) until he can explain what feelings and thoughts he was having when he “acted out” (broke structure). To break structure is to act in any manner that goes against the rules of the community, the spirit of the community, and commitments that he or she may have made earlier to the community. If he or she can convince the gathered community members of his or her determination to come back to the original commitment made on joining the community, that he or she explains how he or she will creditably manage to follow all the different structures, as he convinces the community that he is committed to adaptation and change – clearer or different thinking – he or she can be easily again classified as a functioning member of the community.

It sounds very formal when presented there on paper but really it often is a verbal bickering for correctness back and forth until a decision is reached and in the process much growth in discernment and responsibility often is the result.

Over the years this demand that the structure be strictly followed has been very helpful for people. And it is often very difficult to have visitors accept the value of the effort that is put into this “following structure”. It has been very beneficial and has been very helpful for many people. It has started many off on a new rational,

responsible life. I can refer to quite a few individuals who opened themselves to make the necessary drastic changes in the feeling and thought patterns of their personality when they were standing “in the corner” – and those needed changes enabled them to move on to live a responsible healthy normal life outside the community.

So, after the Daily Meeting and a coffee break the community divides itself up into three or four “therapy groups”. These morning sessions of one and a half hours are considered as important for the ongoing aspect of the therapy in the same group day by day. It is usually in these groups where the serious insights may come forward. The groups are divided on the patient’s level of competence in self-knowledge and grasp of difficulties as explained earlier in this paper.

A young man may be a computer expert, but can he handle the little and the big – upsets that grow from within?

Within the first three months of the patient’s arrival in the community, his therapeutic issues come into focus.

For e.g. Patient ‘M’ was admitted because of his violent behavior, irrelevant talk, attention seeking behavior, psychosomatic problems etc.

He was defined as reasonable person as he was also showing good functioning in many other areas. He was assigned some jobs like being on laundry committee, pumping up water etc.

He had problems in the following area: he would try to get attention by talking incessantly, being intrusive, wetting bed, refusing to sleep at night etc.

His maladaptive behaviour was confronted and appropriate behaviors for getting attention were suggested and reinforced. He was put on a program to be quiet for 15 minutes twice a day and that stopped his non-stop chattering behavior.

He calmed down considerably and could sleep at night. He also stopped wetting his bed. He was taught to connect his feelings, needs and thoughts and to use them productively rather than destructively. He was also taught to think of options for problem solving and to choose the best option for getting his needs met.

After the initial orientation process of each patient, they will be assigned in specific programs to deal with specific issues. For example if a patient is showing thinking disorder, he will be put on a program to talk or write an essay which shows the level of his thinking disorder and then the therapist can find out what exactly is the internal process of that person’s thinking and it can be corrected.

The whole process of analyzing each thought, belief or attitude will take an hour or two and slowly the person generalizes and incorporates new ways of thinking.

If a patient is talking non-stop to get the attention, he is put on a program to ask for attention in a straight way for a specific amount of time. He will also be put on a quiet program where he is expected to be quiet three times a day for fifteen minutes.

Another patient shows perceptual problems and redefines reality. She misperceives any eligible bachelor to be proposing to her. She will then be made to talk to that bachelor and clear up her thinking.

The strength of the community lies in its group work. Over the past twenty years, several innovative groups have evolved to cater to different needs of the patients.

Briefly they are as follows:

As we believe in holistic healing, many body-mind techniques are incorporated into our programs. Yoga, psychophysical exercises, neurological exercises, sports, swimming, aerobics, patterning are included in their daily programs.

Some patients have shown blocks in thinking because their neural pathways are not developed. We use evolutionary exercises, Doman –Delacato techniques to stimulate and develop the neural pathways. At times, patients who have been very rigid in thinking have been patterned to loosen up and be more flexible in dealing with problems (like patient lies in a prone position and people move his limbs and head in a specific way).

Marathon:

The community gets together for three hours on a particular day of the week. Several patients work on their personal issues in this big group and get support from each other. This will also enable the patients to be aware of each other's problem and be confrontive and supportive to it.

Mentor groups :

The patients set short term goals and both staff and other patients help in the process of achieving these goals.

For e.g. patients and staff help an overweight person to reduce her weight, to follow the diet and exercise regularly.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming

These exercises help reprogrammed the brain for specific behaviour changes. For e.g. 'A' patient who was rocking on the bed as he was going over certain events that he was upset with during the day. We brought this process forward by using fantasy work and we decided to deal with his upsets before going to bed. He stopped rocking.

Values and Script :

This group is for patients who have achieved the last stage of treatment and need their values clarified and to change their script so that they do not get into problems again. Values around money, sex, job, relationships are discussed and they will incorporate and feel strong with their values.

Art, Music, Dance groups :

These groups help the patients express their selves spontaneously. This is of benefit specially for people who do not express verbally.

Medication :

Patients who are in psychotic state cannot be accessed by psychotherapy. These people get psychotropic medication prescribed by a consultant psychiatrist. At times medication is used to reduce anxiety, stop hallucinations and delusions. After the patient progresses in treatment, medication is slowly weaned off.

Treatment groups :

In this group patients work on their long term goals. For example dealing with anger in an appropriate way rather than getting violent. The patient is asked to keep track of his anger and note it down in a book every day. He is also asked to note the level of anger on a 0 to 10 scale. He is asked to assess the appropriateness of his anger, options he has and choosing the best option keeping in mind, his needs, others needs and the situation.

Boys – girls groups

Issues specific to either gender is brought up and discussed openly. Especially beliefs around sex. Outings are planned so that it brings cohesiveness in the group.

Individual time :

Apart from groups the patients work on specific issues with therapists to whom they are attached to.

Conflict Resolution

Conflicts come up almost every day as the members of the community have to coexist. These are brought up in to the open and resolved keeping the goal in focus.

Communication skills :

In order to build better understanding between members of the community, people need to learn the art of communicating with clarity. Apart from that, the therapist will have to understand the patient's frame of reference. So the therapist will have to develop the skill of listening and relating to patient's frame of reference.

Statistics :

Once a year, the patients are assessed on an objective personality questionnaire to get an overall picture of the functioning of the community, differences between groups etc.

Subjective Assessment

Apart from objective assessment, the patients are assessed every month on the following scales:

- Mental status
- Cognitive skills
- Motivation
- Medication changes
- Sleep patterns
- Mood fluctuations
- Living skills
- Short term goals
- Insight

After the person has been functioning responsibly for a consistent period of time, he is encouraged either to continue studies or find a job outside the community.

The patients continue to stay in the community seeking support from its members and work or study outside during the day.

After they have learnt to cope with the stress of the outside world and are confident enough, they are encouraged to move out of the community.

Farewell :

Farewell is a big affair in the community as each person's getting well is celebrated by everybody.

Follow up :

The patients keep in touch with the community through telephone, e-mail, letters, visits etc. They will always be the members of the big family.

Language of TA -Transactional Analysis

Over many years from the time of Eric Berne, the language of TA has been written and re-written depending on the context this very versatile tool has been used in. I have come across an article with the first couple of pages missing, may be a part of a student's research paper in the UK. The author has written about the language and methodology used in Connect Therapeutic Community which was established in 1987. What is special about Connect is that it's philosophy and methodology has roots in Athma Shakti Vidyalaya and therefore I am reproducing this article as it represents the original ideas and methodology very clearly and crisply.

Three distinct ways of presenting myself – what is the experience of myself that I am having-

What are my feelings ?

What am I thinking about ?

What are my present attitudes, my standards, plans?

Do I recognize the difference in the three? It is important to make the distinction between the three. How a person can get the three mixed up-

Always need to know where you are coming from.

To be aware of the experience of being me.

Be aware – is to know and in control of myself.

To know what result you want to feel within yourself and how you will bring this about?

To be always willing to think about, consider my attitudes,
My feelings, what I want for myself.

How do I know I am right in the way I am thinking?

What is most important when I am not sure of myself?

What is the reason we always need to be open to feedback from others?

When do I admit that I may be wrong ?

How do I know that I am wrong?

Why do I have to listen to others, to know what they think?
 How do I come to be in charge of myself ? What keeps happening over and over again for me, or to me?
 What always seems to be a difficulty for me?

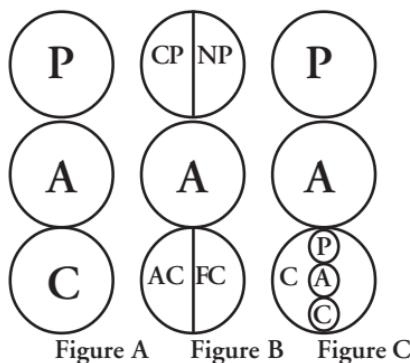
If I could change one special behaviour in myself, what will it be? How would I want to change it?

Transactional Analysis provides a general theory of personality with a therapeutic methodology. It also provides the community with a direct and concise vocabulary with which to communicate to each other about psychological and emotional experiences in day to day living. In its intention to remain accessible for everyday use (and to stay clear of the style of intellectualising which could be anti-therapeutic in terms of “real” relating), it can sometimes, appear itself as jargonistic and excluding to “outsiders”. We have found however, that people joining the community very quickly become attuned to the language and are able to use it productively for themselves.

The Theoretical Framework of the Community

Eric Berne (I have quoted from Eric Berne and added my comments) states that the basic interest of TA is the study of ego states which are coherent systems of thought and feeling manifested by corresponding patterns of behaviour. Three types of ego state can be observed.

1. Those derived from parental figures, colloquially called the Parent. In this state a person feels, thinks, acts, talks and responds just as one of his parents did when he was little. This ego state is active, for example, in raising his own children. Even when he is not actually exhibiting this ego state, it influences his behaviour as the “parental influence”, performing (ideally) the functions of a conscience.
2. The ego state in which he appraises his environment objectively, and calculates its possibilities and probabilities on the basis of past experience, is called the Adult.



3. Each person carries within a little boy or a little girl who feels, thinks, acts, talks, and responds just the way he did when he was a child of a certain age. This ego state is called the child. The child is not regarded as "childish" or "immature" which are parental words, but as childlike, meaning like a child of a certain age. It is important for the individual to understand his Child, not only because it is going to be with him all his life, but also because it is the most valuable part of his personality.

Figure A purports to be a complete personality diagram of any human being encompassing everything he may feel, think, say or do. A more detailed analysis does not yield new ego states, but only subdivisions within the primary ones. Thus for example (Fig B) two Parental components can be described and two child components. It can also be seen (Fig C) that within the child ego state the Parent, Adult and Child components that were present when the child was fixated are still present. These are particularly relevant in understanding primitive disturbances. Separation of feeling and behaviour pattern from one another is called structural analysis. Ego states are denoted P-A-C(capitals).

From the above, it is evident that when two people confront each other, there are six ego states involved, three in each person. What happens can be represented by arrows drawn between the two "people" in the diagram (Fig D).

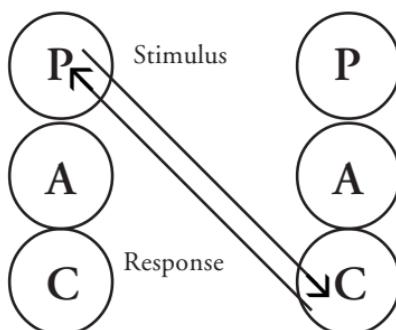


Figure D

In the simplest transactions, the arrows are parallel, and these are called complementary transactions. Fig D as an example, represents a PC transaction between two spouses in which the stimulus is from the wife's Parent ego state to the husband's Child ego state, and the response is from his Child to her Parent. This might represent a motherly wife taking care of a grateful husband. As long as the transactions are complementary with parallel arrows, the communication proceeds indefinitely.

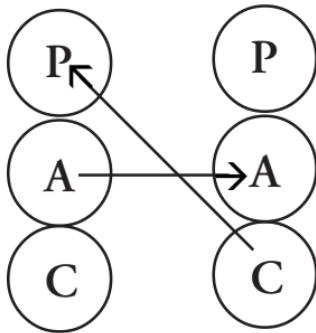


Figure E

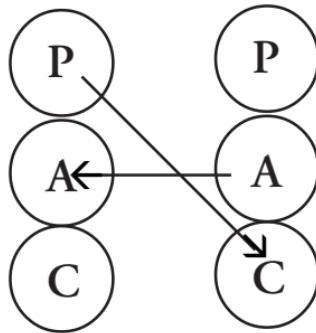


Figure F

In Fig E an Adult to Adult stimulus such as a request for information receives a Child to Parent response, so that the stimulus and response arrows instead of being parallel, are crossed. This is known as a crossed transaction, and in such a situation communication breaks down. For example, the husband asks “Where are my socks? And the wife replies “why do you always blame me for everything?”. This represents the common form of transference reaction as it occurs in psychotherapy. Fig. F represents a crossed transaction in which an Adult to Adult stimulus, such as a question, received a patronizing or pompous Parent – Child response, which is perhaps the commonest type of counter transference reaction.

Theory of Reparenting in a community

This basic introduction to TA as a theory of personality perhaps offers some clues about the operational framework used in the community. The following describes a “reparenting” community using TA as an organizing principle.

In some severe cases of disturbance it can be observed that instead of a coherent, internally and externally supportive Parent ego state there is instead a hostile and destructive influence at work. Further, this destructiveness and hostility can, under certain circumstances, be exchanged for a Parent ego state which is more supportive of the whole personality. Essentially this involves letting go of old values and definitions and taking in new.

In the community this involves a process of developing Adult ego state coherence and clarity at a thinking and behavioural level, to a point at which an individual has the capacity and personal responsibility for contracting away enough “Parental” definition of reality, to the community’s consensual reality. (see section on “confrontation” and fig. G for discussion about conflict resolution between different definitions of reality.) Thereby in the process and with the support of a key parental figure, the patient makes an

exchange of parent ego state. (changes such as these are always different in timing and intensity between individuals. Occasionally a dramatic shift can be observed but a gradual and incremental change is the most common experience). This is experienced as a reduction of internal conflict and makes a more conventional style of psychotherapy possible from then on. In TA terms this involves a process of “redeciding” early beliefs held in a child ego state and subsequent “deconfusion” of the whole personality. Perhaps this makes explicit the essential nature of what happens more covertly in most helping relationships.

The potential for either conscious or unconscious abuse in all such uneven power relationships is obvious and there is good reason for only attempting reparenting in a therapeutic community setting with all established patterns of external supervision. Active encouragement of visitors and guests is also a valuable way of externally monitoring power relationships within the community.

Method and process of study

Given the task of articulating a coherent theoretical and practical model of reparenting we were mindful of a “parental” value which, given the nature of the way we work, should influence the process by which an account of our community is developed, which is inclusiveness. Specifically, a healthy community seeks to include all its members and authentic leadership involves holding this as a priority.

With this in mind we undertook a series of meetings involving residents, staff and an external consultant Rex Haigh under the general heading of “what would we as individuals see as important in communicating to others what it is that we do?” This generated a list of ideas which addressed questions of the “community philosophy” at various degrees of abstraction.

The ideas put forward included the distribution and exercise of power and authority in terms of continuity and long term security, how the need and expectation for that long term security can be met through open ended contracts, the importance of many issues surrounding food as a metaphor for the nurturant qualities of the community, the role of a communal myth in building cohesiveness – including the power of “moving on” and growing up” celebrations with their attendant rites of passage, and the sense of belonging which underpins the difference between being “in” and being “part of”.

The distillation, focusing and development of these discussions forms the material which is presented in the following sections.

Key characteristics of the community

1. Expectations

High expectations are made of all residents for appropriate behavior, taking responsibility for their own actions and working to get “well”. Many residents act in weird or crazy ways when they first come to the community. Very soon they are told that they are expected to act appropriately. Residents are also given the reassurance that the staff still know about the depth of problem that they are dealing with, and that they will be responded to accordingly.

In their past, residents report having learned to act more and more bizarrely in order to be noticed and to be taken care of. This is often specifically reported by conventional psychiatric institutions; in this setting, as soon as patients behave more appropriately they are seen as doing well and are discharged. Seldom did this take account of somebody’s still feeling confused and vulnerable “inside” and continuing to want the protection of the hospital. The only way for this person to maintain a place on the ward is by acting out again. In this community, residents change their behavior significantly when they hear and trust that they will not be sent away when they act in a normal way.

A fundamental principle of this community is that all adults are, or can be, responsible for their own reactions. The fact of having severe problems is not accepted as an excuse for acting out. It is necessary to take this position in order to make the demand on somebody to take responsibility for his actions and expedite resolution of the problems which lie beneath all instances of acting out. The attitude of excusing irresponsible or inappropriate behaviour of people with severe emotional problems is seen as inappropriate in treating them as fragile, hopeless and irreversibly handicapped – perhaps unlike many institutions, who respond to escalating disorder with apparent understanding and the attitude that they “couldn’t help it”.

Within the community the expectation for every resident is to go through the whole therapy process and to have a fulfilling and satisfying life afterwards, in contrast to previously having been told that the most they could have hoped for would have been to manage life with almost inevitable relapses and the necessity for medication. A self-fulfilling prophecy of low expectations might be of special relevance to disturbed people and this community aims to offer an expectation of living life instead of managing it, and a new perspective for the future. Residents often internalize the encouragement that it is possible to solve their problems and use it as motivation to make robust and comprehensive changes.

There is a paradoxical quality to discussions about “acting out” and the important linkage with “expectations”. What the community aims to achieve is a culture of high expectations about standards of social behaviour balanced against a realistic understanding of the complexities of “acting out” behaviors. The next section about “structure” describes how a structured environment provides a “background” against which people can and do (but “shouldn’t”) act out in “low level” ways for instance, by breaking minor rules without putting themselves or others at risk. For a discussion of the consequences of repeated “high level” acting out. See the section on “non contracts”.

2. Structure

The discussions frequently return to the concept of community “structure”, how it is enforced, and the values that underpin it.

The structure includes a clear daily routine, organizing and running the household (residents do the shopping, cleaning and cooking) and a large number of rules which are expected to be kept by everybody, including staff. This tight net of structure is used instead of drugs, and it provides a safe and predictable environment. People use it as a background against which they can display their problems.

One of the primary values in this community is to ensure safety and security. This is important in order to provide a setting in which residents feel sufficiently secure to face and work through their problems. The use of structure and rules is a useful tool to put this value into practice.

As already highlighted, in their past many residents needed to act out at increasingly extreme levels in order to be noticed. This was often true within their families as well as within psychiatric institutions. In this community, we believe that residents will give a number of signals before they act out in a destructive or threatening way. The following example illustrates the different approach in the community.

One of the most important rules is about sharp objects. A number of residents have had problems about cutting themselves or have strong impulses to hurt others. To address this problem a “sharp knife drawer” is set aside in which all sharp objects are kept. The rule is that everybody has to clean and put a knife back into the drawer directly after its use. This means that at no time should any sharp object be lying around unused. However, if a knife is found left out, a “structure meeting” is called immediately. That means that every member of the community has to come together

immediately. This meeting will investigate who left the knife out and why. Sometimes it is a genuine oversight. However, there are also many occasions when somebody is giving a sign that he wants to hurt himself or somebody else. That person might not be consciously aware that he is upset, or he might be scared to talk about it. In this meeting he or she gets support – to find out what the upset is about and how to deal with it. If the problem is more complex and cannot be solved immediately, plans are made to protect the person as well as others until it is resolved.

This example shows that an escalation is prevented by “the structure” preempting any hazard, and picking up the very first signal of an upset – and by responding to it at the level required for communal safety.

The community has developed a variety of structured responses which are most often in evidence where there is a perceived threat to individual or group security. These are designed to provide a safe space and containment of a resident’s destructive impulses, and constitute an additional boundary within the community’s “holding” environment. It also gives residents an opportunity to examine and resolve primitive problems which get acted out rather than spoken about. Colloquially, “living room” and “be with” structured responses are the most used, and make high demands on the resources of the community, both residents and staff. The former involves the resident contracting to stay within the confines of the living room under supervision until such time as he is feeling calmer and is convincingly safe. The community value of inclusiveness demands that an individual not be sent away from the main focus of community life (i.e. the living room) but he is somehow included even though his behavior might be particularly obnoxious. The latter involves a resident taking responsibility for using community resources and contracting to “be with” someone all the time. This structure is particularly useful when residents are considered to be at suicide risks. It also demands a degree of personal responsibility in negotiating transitions from one “be with” partner to another, which often results in a healthy peer pressure as motivation for change.

A different aspect of structure is teaching people how to organize their lives. Doing daily jobs such as cleaning, shopping and cooking helps residents to learn how to run a household successfully, and gives a good foundation for an independent life after finishing the therapy. A predictable, time-structured day engenders feelings of safety and security in people who are internally fragmented. Structure provides an external framework to rely on in the absence of internal coherence.

Structure in the community is both rigid and flexible. It is rigid in the sense that some of it is a reflection of non-negotiable, core values such as those about violence and stealing, and flexible in the sense that some of it changes and develops out of experience in the community, and is negotiable.

For example, a part of the structure is to hold a “feelings check” when anyone notices an escalating situation, and this is done in a pre-structured way, so that everyone is sure to be heard. There is an accepted protocol in community life that any request or demand for a “feelings check” or a “structure meeting” will be met with respect and given priority over anything else that may be going on at the time. Discussions involving competition and scarcity can lead to quite escalated situations, and it is readily observed that malignant dynamics here can be circumvented by any member calling for a “feelings check”. This element of structure has a calming effect and allows rational (“Adult”) discussion to supervene?

3. Rules

This is hierarchy of rules in the community:

“A rules” are strictly adhered to,

“B rules” are carefully adhered to, and

“C rules” are considerably adhered to.

Reflects a continuum of rules from rigid to flexible and also seems to bear a direct correspondence to “primary process” development in infants, and the need for some nonnegotiable boundaries in that development. In later developmental stages, a more flexible structure can be tolerated on account of growing emotional maturity and the capacity to contain ambivalence.

Example		Rules Structure and Underlying Value		
		A) Strictly adhered	B) Carefully adhered	C) Considerately adhered
Core Values	Non-violence	Sharp knife rule		
	Intimacy		eating together at regular meals	
	Inclusiveness			not speaking “over” somebody else

Continuum : rigid.....Flexible

4. Contracts

The way contracts are used in this community is an important therapeutic tool. Four are commonly used: the therapy contract, the membership contract, the “non contract” and the “parenting contract”.

Every resident makes a therapy contract at the beginning of his involvement with the community. It includes a confrontation contract (see below) and an agreement to work through problems and to support others in working through theirs. It also covers a commitment to keep to the rules.

All members of the community, including staff and long term trainees, make a membership contract. It includes a commitment to confront others when necessary, to do so from a caring position, and to respond to confrontations from others appropriately. The principles behind this and its operation are discussed in the next section. Membership contracts also incorporate a commitment to keep the rules and to keep confidentiality.

The “non contract” is a specific contract developed to deal with the occasions on which residents are unable to adhere to their therapy contracts, it is an important tool for understanding and working with resistance, and tries to prevent a sudden fracture of the therapeutic alliance, by pre-empting acting out.

The reparenting contract is a unique feature of this therapeutic community. It sets up a specific form of intense individual therapeutic relationship which is contained, nurtured and governed by the community which surrounds it.

5. Confrontation

As mentioned above, every member of the community has a confrontation contract, and it is important that staff are included in this. It is based on a principle that everyone sometimes behaves in a way that is uncomfortable for others and that everybody can do something about it. Confrontations provide one part of a reactive environment which supports people in understanding their behaviour and their effect on others and helps them to make changes where necessary.

In their pasts, most residents behaved bizarrely and inappropriately, and as a result other people would step back. Residents were aware of the fact that they would end up lonely but did not understand that their behaviour was the reason for it. In the community people are confronted immediately if they act in a way

that leaves others feeling uncomfortable or angry. They are told what it is they do that invites others to step back, and what they could do instead. It is a principle that nobody will be rejected for inappropriate behaviour, even though the whole group might be angry with the person. This is important so that residents feel safe in looking at a behaviour or problem, and then work to change or solve it.

Confrontations occur in formal groups or in adhoc “daily life” situations. There is an expectation that people in the immediate vicinity will give priority to confrontational situations and offer peer support. If a situation starts to become increasingly escalative an option would be to call a more formal “structure meeting” at which the whole community is expected to attend. This is a way to counteract a general tendency to withdraw and minimize the significance of acting out or disruptive behaviour.

Confrontations are difficult and uncomfortable. Even though everybody contracts to respond appropriately, there are situations where the confronted person does not agree with the point under discussion. In this situation extra residents and staff are asked to join in and provide a “consensual reality”. Sometimes it is agreed the confronter himself has acted out a problem. However more often it is the confronted person who wants to defend against the point under discussion and reacts angrily or competitively. This person would be expected to ask every member of the group for their perception of the situation and then to accept the group definition.

Confrontations also help to prevent escalations, for even if a resident displays a problem on a low level it will usually be picked up. The emotional charge of the confrontation is usually higher than the acting out was, and that gives the resident the necessary reassurance that he or she was noticed and therefore does not need to act out on a higher level in order to let people know that he needs help.

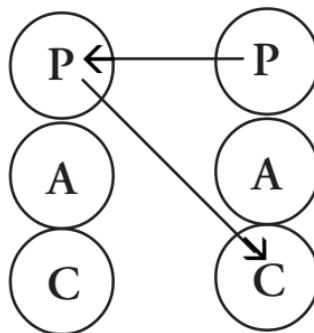


Figure G

In practice we find a clear link between Parent values and definitions of reality, for example;

“What you said was nasty”

“But I was just expressing an opinion”

This is illustrated in Fig G as a crossed transaction (non-communication) arising in a confrontation from Parent to child, with the confronted person declining the invitation to respond from child, and instead competing for a definition of reality from his own Parent. This always leads to a conflict between two different sets of values and is resolved either by recourse to the consensual reality or within a contract in which an individual has already agreed to give way to a new set of Parent values and definitions. Justification for this on a common sense level is that one set of definitions work and the other doesn't.

Where residents have a parenting contract with a specific member of staff it seems to be therapeutically valuable for that resident to be “claimed” by the parent. Many staff dynamics meetings focus on issues about what might be called “parental sovereignty rights”, and the extent to which parental authority has to be surrendered to the community consensus.

It is interesting that this seems to be a mirror image of society more generally, where we recognize a constant tension between the demands of the state and the rights of parents in relation to children. This supports an explanation for some serious disturbance in the isolation and secrecy of closed family systems, where absolute sovereignty is assumed by parents, with no mediation from alternative sets of values from outside.

1. Resistance and the “non-contract”

It is a common feature in psychotherapy that clients reach an impasse during the process. At different times most residents of this community respond to such an impasse by breaking their therapy contract. For example, they might run off or act out in order to avoid the problem they have come up against and this is recognized by the community as a pattern of avoidance or resistance which is an integral part of the general healing process.

In its development, the community sought a way to hold somebody within its safe boundaries even when this person himself stepped outside the community by breaking the contract, and to address this issue a “non-contract” was developed. This is a contract

specifically about what to do when the general communal contract is broken.

All residents experience periods of severe confusion when they are out of touch with reality. However, these periods are not acute all the time, and it is during a time when they are calm and clear thinking that they are expected to design their own “non-contract”, which has to be accepted by the whole community. It includes a clear structured procedure of what to do in a situation when the individual starts to break the therapy contract and does not respond to others. While the person is “clear” he makes the commitment to follow the agreed procedure strictly and rigidly. The aim of this contract is to help the person to calm down, to start thinking clearly again and to make a plan about how to solve the underlying problem. The procedure is generally very effective and most residents use it constructively. The residents who design their own contracts tend to ensure that they are individually suitable. Simplicity and ease of recall are the keys to a successful “non-contract”. For example, residents might agree, on being challenged about the seriousness of their behaviour and that they are currently breaking their contract, to sit down, count breaths and ask for, say, fifteen minutes “time out” to think and resume rational discussion. The agreement would be that the resident must take full responsibility for implementing the steps of the procedure on being confronted. Incapacitation is avoided by having some legitimate recourse in moments of panic and high drama.

2. Reparenting

Most residents report experiences of feeling “little” and “needy” and searching for a parent to look after them. They do not have a set of values and skills to make the world work for them so they are also looking for somebody to orient with and to rely on. One of the underlying beliefs of the community is that this level of regressiveness is a direct result of unmet needs from childhood and it was through a failure to have these needs satisfied that emotional development was disturbed. The communal belief is that a person will grow emotionally once these dependency needs are met. The community recognizes these as “little needs” and members of staff or volunteers, may take on the role of a parent by contract.

Members of the community display varying degrees of disturbance in their attachment patterns, and it is the job of a parent to facilitate a secure attachment within a protective relationship.

When people are dealing with high levels of personal distress, a parenting contract helps to “hold” a person long enough for genuine resolution.

Some people see a particular member of staff as a parent and ask this person to be their “Mum” or “Dad”. This will be openly discussed and if the staff member sees this resident as their child, they might decide to make a parenting contract. The clear expectation from the parent to the son or daughter is to use this relationship to grow and to get “well”. The ultimate goal is to have an independent and healthy life as a grown-up. As in a healthy family (where the children grow up and move on) the residents in this community grow to their full potential, move out and keep in touch if they choose to.

By making the parenting contract the son or daughter asks the parent to be in charge. The parent gives a new set of values and definitions of how to relate to others and how to deal with situations healthily. For most residents it is important to have one main person with whom they clearly belong and where they experience having a solid home base. Even though the parent looks after the “little needs” of their son or daughter, they still expect them to take adult responsibilities in every day life.

Spontaneous regression is discouraged in favour of Adult to Adult agreements. This recognizes the existence of regressive needs and tendencies, and makes possible a healthy exploration of what the regressiveness might mean. It seems to be possible for residents to hold together coherent adult functioning within the boundaries of the community even though outside they might be more obviously and visibly disturbed.

Parenting contracts are not role plays or “for pretend”. A parent only agrees to such a contract if he or she really sees the other person as their child. In their past most residents have experienced being looked after from a guilty position, and experienced that they were resented and unwanted by their natural parents. If a member of staff were to make a parenting contract because it might be therapeutically important, but without really wanting it, the negative experience from the past could be reinforced and compounded. There is no commitment by residents or staff in the Community that makes parenting contracts obligatory. It does seem to be crucial, however, for residents to make at least one firm, healthy attachment to either a staff member or volunteer as a solid basis for change. This would perhaps, in other forms of therapy, be known more simply as a

“therapeutic alliance” but in this environment takes on an extra dimension in terms of time and intensity, and the needs of residents.

Discussion

Although it has developed with very little contact with the mainstream therapeutic community movement, the work done at Trident with transactional analysis has “reinvented the wheel” in many of the concepts that are fundamental to constructing a milieu that facilitates personal change and emotional growth. Concepts which were described by Tom Main and Maxwell Jones reappear in a different language, and many of the principles are recognizably similar to individual psycho dynamic or group analytic ones. Here there is only scope to highlight a few areas where this confluence of ideas is most apparent.

In Main’s “Knowledge, Learning and Freedom of Thought”, he clearly warns against a system in which rules become hierarchically promoted to superego functions, and handed on from generation to generation without being considered or evaluated. They become fossilized, fetishized and distorted – and have persecutor rather than therapeutic power. His antidote to such destructive procedures is to maintain a culture of enquiry, in which rules and structures are always open to scrutiny and change. This has clear parallels with the way in which rules and structures in the community described here are variably flexible (depending on the vigour with which the underlying value is held) and tend to evolve over time in response to a continual and dynamic evaluation by the whole community. Suitable levels of supervision training and external relatedness are also crucial in keeping a culture of enquiry alive and flourishing.

A fundamental principle of Jones is that of the “living-learning experience” and this can also be clearly demonstrated in this community. Every resident has significant problems in building up trusting and close relationships or in holding them. The main emphasis within the community is put on a healthy way of living together and most of the therapy is about the daily interactions between people. Residents demonstrate their problems often in the way they relate to others. Problems will be worked on as they come up. An important goal is to learn the skill to be open, honest and defined with others. To this end material from all the fragments of daily activity can be used, and the structures described (for example, feelings checks or confrontations) can facilitate the use of any of the day to day business of getting on with life in the service of emotional growth.

In group analysis, Foulkes clearly underlines the importance of a shared web of communication in the formation of a “matrix” in which symptoms dissolve once clearly articulated and deeply understood. An essential part of this process is the concept that, collectively, the group constitutes the very norm from which the individuals deviate – and the tendency is for the group to assimilate each other’s positive attributes as well as diminishing the negative ones. This is part of the theoretical underpinning of “democratization” in therapeutic communities, and the community described here incorporates these principles in its structure. Specific examples include the facilitated way in which the feelings behind resistance and acting out are openly communicated and not punished, and how staff and residents alike are bound together in their commitment to the confrontation contract.

Winnicott and Kohut are the two psychoanalysts whose work seems most relevant to this community: Winnicott for his concept of a facilitating environment in which regression is encouraged, and the developing ego receives nurturance in a transitional space: Kohut for his technique of meeting the emotional needs for stable core self development through mirroring, idealization and twin-ship activities in the transference.

Up to this point, much is in common with psychotherapeutic orthodoxy; it is in the detail of the reparenting relationship that something quite novel is attempted. For here, the “as if” nature of the transference is deliberately abolished, and the attempt is made to transplant a whole new set of object relations into willing and contracted recipients. This is not done suddenly, by coercion or in a way that could be construed as abusive, but through the development of an intense individual therapeutic relationship in which primary experience, transference and everyday life sit alongside each other without authoritative interpretation.

What makes this community so interesting is that the individual work could not be done safely without the surrounding framework and matrix of the community, and the community by itself would probably be unable to contain the level of disturbance, distress and neediness of these residents without the intensive individual secure attachments.

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Paper on Somatopsychic Approaches for the Rehabilitation of Schizophrenics

I would like first of all to comment on the term "somatopsychic" used in the title of this paper. In order to make a distinction away from the word "psychosomatic" which has become so much used today in a seeming pejorative sense I have reversed the word in order to bring attention on a different aspect of the mind body process. The word psychosomatic has the connotation of a condition that is negative, of a process taking place within the person that the switch in the word I wish to here refer to a process which is positive. The process is based on body awareness and attention with a resultant change in the psyche of the person. Through the process which is stimulated in the body there is a corresponding opening and healing activity within the psyche or mind.

We are all aware of how the emotions and thinking processes accompanying the emotions have an effect on the mind. Also our attitudes have an effect on our emotions. And the emotions may have a serious effect on the body causing health problems – what we refer to as psychosomatic illness. Some would say today that all physical illness has a psychosomatic component.

In considering these Somatopsychic approaches we are viewing the energy flow in the opposite direction. The person goes through some bodily process or stimulation which in turn causes an emotional reaction which can then be traced to an attitude or belief system which causes the negative feelings or distress the person is experiencing. He may not be conscious of the negative feelings or conscious of the attitudes or beliefs causing them to be experienced. A change in the attitudes or belief system can then be attained for an alleviation of the distress and a move made to build up a positive and more meaningful system, a system that brings about a healing in the personality.

In this paper I will be referring to many different Somatopsychic processes which we have found beneficial to patients. There are the different forms of yoga exercises – the breathing exercises the yoga cyclic meditation exercises, the asanas – then what we call evolutionary exercises, delacato exercises, psycho-physical exercises, dance therapy, swimming, rage reduction procedures, theatre sessions, multi-tracking sessions.

I will briefly go through each of the above exercises explaining what is included in each of them and our experience in using them with patients.

Yoga :

There is really no need to describe what the yoga exercises are. However, it is important to bring out the difficulties that there are in having persons with serious mental problems doing these exercises. It has become evident that any degree of pathology may hinder a person in doing these physical yoga exercises. We began the yoga sessions under the direction of Dr. Shirley Tellis of the Vivekananda Yoga Centre. The centre will be presenting their research findings on this project in another paper at this conference.

I have been engaged with our patients for over a year and a half in the morning sessions four or five days a week and have personal experience of how the patients do the exercises and the benefits they have gained and also their problems. We have an hour and a quarter sessions in the morning which is spent on breathing exercises and then simple asanas. In the late afternoon there is another forty-five minute session called cyclic meditation which consists in doing some concentrated slow movements and asanas. We use a tape of Dr. Shirley directing the sessions however myself or one of the staff must be present as a leader to see that the exercises are done properly.

Some patients enjoy doing the exercises and would continue on their own even if it were not compulsory. Some others would stop if they were not required to do them. I believe that the two main problems which are there for those who have difficulty is the inability to concentrate on their body and the lack of a quick, easy good sense of their body. To just move the body without any awareness of what you are doing, without paying attention to the sensations that are in the arm or leg as it is moved or stretched is of no benefit to the person. The mind and body have to be both active at the same time. Some find it almost impossible to remain with their hands by their sides while going through a prolonged relaxation exercise. They will move their hands to their chest or scratch their

face or put them behind their head. It took a very long time to have them stay adequately quiet without moving during the simple relaxation exercises and yet there is great benefit in the relaxation. Some who have the tendency to constantly talk to themselves have been helped by the attention they have been required to give the relaxation.

One important aspect of the yoga exercises is the breathing. Again many of the more seriously disturbed have great difficulty with deep breathing and often have reverse breathing, that is, their abdomen will be sucked in when they are inhaling and pushed out when they are exhaling. It is difficult to have them change this pattern. Many will be breathing into their upper chest only and raising their shoulders as they try to inhale. This is indication of the degree of discrepancy which exists within their body mind patterns. Hence there is a discovery of the unconscious confusion existing that has been a block to their functioning easily and in a healthy manner.

The cyclic meditation when done well will at times bring up disturbing thoughts and memories. The person will sense bodily sensations that are disturbing and often may result in strong feelings such as anger or fear.

When there is difficulty in moving the body in an easy manner for example, when a person is unable to raise his leg in a straight manner after months and months of practice it gives us an indication of the problem that person has not been paying attention to the reality situation of his or her life. If they do not have control over their body they do not have control over their thinking process nor can they clearly understand themselves.

Dance Therapy :

The dance therapy also deals with the ability to move one's body in the manner in which you plan to move it. This is linked with the sense of freedom, the willingness to be open and to let go of the tight control of one's thinking and attitudes. The free body movement involved in the dance requires that the person have an acceptance of self. In the therapy session the various exercises can be used to bring out a sense of boundaries and space both of which can help the person to consider these concepts in their relationships with other persons. Through constant practice and outside pressure the person can be brought to look at the rigidity which may be in their thinking and feeling. The fear that is the basis of the rigidity can be brought into consciousness and talked about and worked. Most important

in this therapy is that feedback sessions after the practice used to bring about self awareness and hopefully inner change. This inner change can be tried out in the body movements deliberately so the internal changes can be reinforced.

Swimming :

We have found swimming an excellent form of having patients come into awareness of their body movement. Some of them have been swimming twice a week. Those that go swimming enjoy it very much. Some have learned to swim after joining the community. Again there is the sense of risk and freedom in the willingness to float, to be aware of body movements, to trust in oneself, plus the sense of touch with water that gives the person openness to a present reality in which they are immersed.

Delacato Exercises :

Moshe Feldenkrais has observed and analysed the developmental stages of movements in infants. From this, he has proposed that the development and integration of older with newer parts of the brain might be dependent upon the child's being able to recapitulate within the first three years of life, the critical movements of phylogenetic development. If the developing human fails to go through these critical movements this results in damage to body and behaviour and normal functioning.

Doman-Delacato (The Institute for the Achievement of Human Potential) while working with children who had reading disabilities, learning disabilities, brain damage and difficulties in psychomotor co-ordination, made interesting observations. They hypothesized, based on their experience, that brain development was the result of psychomotor functions and performance rather than the reverse.

Temple Fay, a famous neuro surgeon, saw the stages which man's brain went through (fish, amphibian, reptile to mammal) as guide posts to developmental task, he could be repatterned, i.e., physically manipulated to go through the movement that was missed. If a child was patterned for a month, perhaps his brain could learn how it feels to go through that particular movement. When he learns this movement, this learning would have to go through existing but unused channels of the brain, or it might create new channels. Doman-Delacato proved through their experience that this theory was true. The brain can be stimulated to develop through psychomotor activities.

Severely emotionally disturbed individuals demonstrate similar neurological and learning difficulties. Remedial measures used with children have been helpful with emotionally disturbed adults. We have experienced some of our patients benefiting from the patterning and also from the creeping and crawling exercises. Evaluation of individuals for neurological problems can be done through detailed history taking and analyzing eyedness, handedness, sleeping postures, sidedness, leggedness etc.

The remedial measures we have used are the neurological exercises. The diagnosis of the problem indicates the stage or stages of development that the person needs to return to and go through. The following are some of the exercises prescribed at different stages:

- 0-6 months..... rocking on the stomach, startling, crawling, eye exercises and ear exercises;
- 6-9 months..... creeping, crawling, eye and ear exercises, soft and hard stimulation, imitating the movements of the monkey, the ape Neanderthal man;
- 9-16 months..... cross-lateral walk, throwing and catching a ball for eye-hand coordination, kicking a football, running, hopping, skipping and other exercises which involve higher cortical functioning.

It has been our observation that while doing these exercises patients experience a wide range of emotions which can be addressed in therapy. This is an important help in the process of a healthy handling of emotions and a healthy integration of body and mind.

Psycho-Physical Exercises :

Each one of us speaks, moves, thinks and feels in a different manner, each according to the image of himself that he or she has built up over the years. This we refer to as the self-image. This self-image includes and is partly built from the body-image.

Interrelatedness of movement, sensing, thinking, feeling functions are how body and mind interact and determine what we are and what we can do. Problems arise when the experience of the body is more or less distorted so that when you act according to this distorted experience of your body, there will be a disconcerting discrepancy. This discrepancy will be evident between what you intend to do and think you are doing on the one hand and what you are actually doing on the other hand.

For any lasting change to occur there necessarily needs to be a change in the self-image. For this to happen there has to be a new

awareness. With severely disturbed individuals there is a gross lack of conscious awareness of both the body image as well as the self-image. Furthermore, the perceptions of bodily sensations are often distorted and the perception of reality may also be coloured.

The psycho-physical re-education exercises work with body and mind together to improve specific and overall functioning and bring the person closer to his or her potential. A great many diverse, gentle movements are evoked with attention always being drawn to the movements and the accompanying sensations. As the person learns, with a minimum effort, to pay attention to his body, he will find that his body will become more accessible to his mind, and as this happens, it will function better. He will learn that the body can function optimally when indeed there is an awareness, and he will discover the extent to which the awareness was lacking.

Not only are awareness and the ability to move and sense are enhanced, but also the cognitive and feeling functions improve also, for the extensive changes in the brain's motor cortex which must precede changes in the muscular system affect adjacent brain areas as well. Feldenkrais states – “owing to the close proximity of the motor cortex of the brain structures dealing with thought and feeling, and the tendency of the processes in the brain tissue to diffuse and spread to neighbouring tissues, a drastic change in the motor cortex will have parallel effects on thinking and feeling”.

The body image acquires its gaps, its areas of vagueness, and its distortions in various ways. Parts of the body and the interconnections between them fade from the image when they are not used. A schizophrenic may lose his bodily sensations just as completely as if nerves were deadened. Psychophysical exercises bring into awareness those parts of the body which are not sensed or which are sensed only dimly. They also eliminate distortions from the body image. It helps in making use of formerly unused or little used neural pathways. Psychophysical re-education is a neural re-education which makes the nervous system more responsive and amenable to change. Psychophysical exercises (P.E.) cause effective communication to the brain, specifying bodily changes which the brain can and will effect in response to the appropriate stimulus.

The primary objective of PE is freedom. It consists of many methods and techniques to inform the person of certain facts about herself and the ways in which she can change if she wishes F.M. Alexander, founder of the Alexander Technique, said misuse of the body often begins in that region where the neck joins the body and he regarded this area as the “use area”. When the condition of

this part of the body is improved, it becomes easier to bring about improvement in other areas. The first two PE work in this area. Muscular tensions in the back and neck will be eliminated in the first exercise, as well as some tension in the eye muscle.

The second PE also improves the primary areas of misuse. By markedly reducing the excess tensions in muscles of the back, it will enable the shoulder joints to move with more freedom and allow the head and neck to move better.

The third PE helps in the reduction of tension in the back muscles and helps in aligning the spine. The exercise also helps to free the lower back.

The fourth PE helps in relaxing the hip and pelvis areas. These exercises help in the awareness and acceptance of a one's sexuality and the problems connected with sexuality.

Bodily movements are taught in a manner that increases and enables the person to be more aware of her complete self. In the PE sessions patients have become aware of deep strong feelings and spoken about memories of the past that need to be resolved for them to establish a healthy strong self-image that can cope with the pressures they experience within their personalities at present.

Rage Reduction :

When a patient becomes aware that he has deep strong feelings of anger that have been generated from past happenings in life they can be given an opportunity to express those feelings in a safe supportive situation and thus be rid of them. It is essential that they make a decision to be free of them in the process. They can be held down or restrained in such a manner that they can forcibly move their body in any way they feel inclined to without hurting themselves or another person.

The severely disturbed are unable to go through such a procedure because they are usually not aware of the anger they hold within their bodies or not willing to take responsibility for that feeling. So they act it out in other ways. When they see other patients going through such procedures they learn that there are proper ways of expressing anger and making changes.

Multi-Tracking :

The seriously disturbed patients often seem to be locked into single idea, obsession, attitude or belief, or feeling and are unable to

entertain freely a variety of thoughts, perceptions or feelings. They seem to be set on one track, as we say a onetrack- mind, not shifting easily from one thought or perception to another and not able to keep a number of thoughts and options open at the same time.

The multi-tracking consists in keeping many different parts of a process in mind while undergoing varied stimulation coming through distinctively different motor functions, with thoughts, sounds, rhythms all coming to the individual at once. Hopefully, what the individual is learning in the process is flexibility and an openness to make changes in attitudes and thinking. In this way the person can develop a level of freedom within the self.

Theatre Exercises :

These exercises consist in having the patients perform as players in an acting situation. They are called to articulate their body and speak in the role, depicting behaviour or the personality of another person. They will at times need to work out with others how they are going to interpret a real life situation or an imaginary skit. Mimicking, silently or verbally interpreting a short poem, through action describing a situation are all profitable theatrical activities.

How they handle the process of acting and interpreting gives valuable information on issues that will need to be dealt with in other therapy sessions.

Again the goal is to bring the patient to an awareness of bodily movement, of expression of feelings and attitudes, and an ability to choose different ways of expressing emotions. This enables the patient to more easily recognize and accept whatever emotions they are experiencing within themselves. They can learn that they can have inner freedom even though they have certain emotions which seem to dominate them.

Conclusion :

The many different exercises that have been outlined here have been beneficial to our patients in many varied way. Much is spoken about talk therapy which can become a sort of trap to both the patient and therapist as for example, eliciting memories of the past to obtain some form of resolution to healthy functioning. By working with the bodily expressions which lead to a stimulation of new thinking and appropriate feelings in the here and now we find that patients experience themselves differently and begin to realize that they can live rewarding and happy lives.

Shifting...Differentiation.... Awareness... Consciousness....

A Few Important Words

Living in a therapeutic community with twenty-five young adults who can be at times seriously disturbed has given me many opportunities to experience the shifts that people make within their personalities. These are not the usual simple shifts between ego states, say from Parent to Child. Nor am I referring to the phenomenon of unconsciously "shifting feelings". I am referring to what may be considered shifts of the seat of consciousness or of the self. May be they could be fitted into an ego state theory. Maybe they could give us indications about how we can enlarge or further ego state theory.

I will be talking from my experience with schizophrenics and persons who have come to me for consultation in therapy and counseling sessions. I believe that the same internal process in various degrees takes place in all of us since all of us have feelings and rational thinking patterns. Although often what happens is not so much a process as an instantaneous happening we do not seem to recognize or control at the time.

Let me start with a couple of stories I have read about lately. There was an older woman in Canada who was talking with her estranged husband one morning in her kitchen. There was no one else in the house. He told her he was finally deciding on a divorce. At the end of the conversation she told him to leave through the kitchen door leading into the closed garage. As he went into the garage she shot him six times. He was severely wounded and as he lay on the garage floor negotiated with her to call an ambulance or the police. Finally she agreed. He recovered and she was charged with attempted murder. The court under psychiatric advice freed her of responsibility. The shock of his asking for a divorce caused her to shift her consciousness into a panic state of fear and anger. Her rational awareness evaporated. Her rational awareness was no longer differentiated from the overpowering feelings she experienced.

Daniel Goleman in his book Emotional Intelligence recounts the story of a very ambitious high school boy who believed he wasn't given high enough grades in his papers, with the result that he would not be accepted by the prestigious medical college of his choice. The boy subsequently attacked and wounded the teacher with a knife. He also was not charged with any misdemeanor on the testimony of four psychologists. His normal reasoned behaviour was lost in the fear and anger of future disappointment.

In both cases there was a shift of awareness or consciousness from reasoning and knowing what is appropriate to being overwhelmed by the strong feelings which arose at the moment.

One of our patients, a strongly built young man of 25, was with us in our therapeutic community for about four years. He was a fairly quiet person stubborn and unwilling to adapt, agreeable to discuss his problems only with myself and another staff member. We advised and pushed him to be open yet he remained always very guarded, with a bit of bull-headedness backed by a firm self-will. He usually managed to do nothing outwardly wrong, yet tested limits many times. His belief was that he was perfectly healthy and normal – yet the psychological testing showed him to be one of the most seriously disturbed in the community. He refused to believe that any psychotropic medication would help him.

On one evening he shifted and lost his guarded control. Another patient was upset and threatened a staff member. This first fellow immediately sprang on the other in such a manner that he could have seriously hurt him. In discussions afterward he claimed amnesia of what he had done. Yet with further questioning he could recall and admitted that he believed he had to protect himself from this fellow and intended to do the worst. In the process of his attack he had lost all contact with others. That is what I mean by a shift. There was no differentiation of thinking from feeling, no differentiation of self from others. He couldn't hear others because in his conscious awareness they were no longer there. He was lost in his feelings of fear and anger. There was also no differentiation of the self from the feelings which were being experienced and expressed, no differentiation between the feeling that was driving him and his normally controlling and reasoning self.

In such a process the person seems to lose all freedom. He or she gives themselves up to the feeling drive that comes up to take control of them so they lose awareness of their thinking and caring for self or others. Another patient has said that in her process – not a violent process but a psychotic one – it was as if she was being

controlled by an outside force. She experienced her conscious self as being powerless and ineffectual to break out of the process and use her reasoning power. Fortunately she has been very consciously attached to me in the past so she would acknowledge my voice when I spoke firmly and decisively with her – not attempting to reason with her. I could imagine her to be going through a marshy swamp slipping and sliding yet finding some solid footing from time to time through my definitions. Her own definitions were not available for her. The internal differentiation must be there if the person is to be aware and use their appropriate definitions of reality which they normally use to guide their relations and behaviour.

What takes place within the personality when such happenings occur? By studying some theories on the development of human consciousness and the beginnings of schizophrenia in the human personality I have been able to gain some understanding of this problem of shifting which we make in our consciousness when we are disturbed by high levels of feelings or emotions. Giving attention to theories on the development of consciousness in the young infant can provide some insight into this shifting. I believe it is easiest if I just quote from some of my readings.

First there is the theory proposed by Margaret Mahler. For her the infant from 1-5 months is in the symbiotic phase which is “a state of undifferentiation, of fusion with the mother, in which the ‘I’ is not yet differentiated from the ‘not-I’ and in which inside and outside are only gradually coming to be sensed as different.” In the next stage, from 5-9 months the infant’s sensorophysical body self “hatches”. “There are definite signs that the infant begins to differentiate his own body from the mother’s body”, a sentence of Margaret Mahler quoted by Ken Wilber in his book Transformations of Consciousness, p.86.

“Notice that this particular differentiation is basically of the sensorophysical body self from its surroundings, because the infant’s mind (the newly emerging phatasmic or image level) and its feelings (the emotional-sexual level) are not yet differentiated from their surroundings. The infant exists as a distinct sensorophysical body self but not as a distinct phantasmic-emotional self, because it’s emotional-self images and emotional object-images are still fused or merged.”

In the next stage from 9-15 months Mahler says “libidinal Cathexis shifts substantially into the service of the rapidly growing autonomous ego and its functions, and the child seems intoxicated

with his own faculties and with the greatness of the world. Narcissism is at its peak."

Ken Wilber would say that self and object representations are still a fused unit. Object representation might be loosely defined as an image of the person, here the infant, has of the outside.

Mahler says that the stage from 15-24 months is crucial to development. With the differentiation of self and object representations a separate and distinct phantasmic emotional self has emerged. I would put it that now the infant in some way realizes it has feelings, becomes conscious or aware that it has feelings. It can also have an image of a thing outside of itself. As Piaget says, it can remember that the ball is put behind the door. That is the important aspect to be noticed; the infant is conscious it has feelings and images. And these feelings cause it to realize that it is no longer master of the world, it "must gradually and painfully give up the delusion of its own grandeur." Think of how the two year old has to learn to adapt. In the next year the infant usually comes to "clear and relatively enduring differentiation of self and object representations".

In the first year of life the infant learns to differentiate its physical self from the physical environment and so a sense of being a distinct physical self emerges. If this does not happen, the infant remains "stuck" in a state where inside and outside are fused, hallucinatory thought processes recur and severe anxiety and depression result the person is open to psychosis. Somewhere between 18-24 months the infant learns to differentiate its emotional-psychological life from that of others and a stable individual emotional self emerges. With this individuation-separation there is a separate self. If this does not happen then it is as if there is not skin separating the self from the world with the result that anxiety, depression and severe thought disturbances occur – the person could be considered borderline being open to problems that tend at times to psychosis and neurosis. In the years from three to six the child learns to have a mental self – learns to think besides just feel. It also learns that some feelings are acceptable and some not, some may need to be repressed at the time, and the appropriateness of expression of feelings has to be considered. If the repression is too strong and enduring or the expression of feelings is done through inappropriate behaviours there can arise the different neurotic behaviours.

And now to come back to the idea of shifting of awareness or consciousness. I believe that simply put we may say that because of the level or intensity of the feelings whatever differentiation and

separation that is within us to help us function as reasonable feeling creatures seems to fall away. The feelings being the more primitive within our evolutionary history and stronger ,they may become predominant and the reasoning and thinking power gives way. It is very difficult to get a person in a major escalation of feelings to listen to reason or pay attention to another's voice as they would be open to in other circumstances. How difficult it is to get a person being carried away by feelings to listen to the arguments you may put forth to him or her. Their consciousness has shifted from the thinking to the very strong feelings they experience.

As far as ego state theory goes I believe we are talking about the development of the very primitive child ego state referred to in TA language usually as Co – the very beginning of conscious awareness.. Schizophrenia being a regressive disease the person shifts right back to Co or Cl, letting go of any A2 or P2. And we all do it in some degree when we weaken our conscious awareness away from what we think best or have decided or believe proper and beneficial for us. Or we may play games when we give into and allow inappropriate feelings lead us – not being consciously aware that the feelings we are acting out on now may not be appropriate to this situation or helpful to us.

Of interest in this question of shifting feelings in what Daniel Goleman writes in his book 'Emotional Intelligence'. He mentions the latest studies on the evolution of the human brain – how the early brain is the base of the emotions and responds most quickly and strongly and often without reference to the neocortex where our thinking and problem solving occurs. I quote from Goleman – "Anatomically the emotional system can act independently of the neocortex. Some emotional reactions and emotional memories can be formed without any conscious, cognitive participation at all. The amygdala can house memories and response repertoires that we enact without quite realizing why we do so because the shortcut from thalamus to amygdala completely bypasses the neocortex. This bypass seems to allow the amygdala to be a repository for emotional impressions and memories we have never known about in full awareness."

So, the goal in our lives if we are to control this tendency or the possibility of this shifting within our personalities, it would seem we need to be in awareness or full consciousness of our feelings and emotions and thinking.

Blocks to Thinking

We, all of us, use certain actions that are external, that is, can be seen and noticed and also internal to ourselves, that is thoughts, decisions in order to avoid an autonomous response to stimuli, problems, options that we are aware of, that come in our way.

Being autonomous I respond freely and consciously in the present situation to reach whatever I am needing at the time. I am able to use myself to the best of my ability, and clearly act.

Why is it that so many people really do nothing about getting what they want in their lives, or in certain situations?

We believe in our work in a process that people use – use unconsciously – that stops them from acknowledging or minimizing or fully ignoring something. What they ignore or minimize is some aspect of themselves, something about themselves, some aspect of other people or the real situation which they are involved in.

The technical word we use is discounting. For example, I wish to do very well in an examination for my degree and yet am convinced I must keep spending a great deal of time working on a story that I believe will be accepted by a publisher. I am not aware that my efforts are being divided. I am in fact doing nothing about my desire to do well in the examination. I can be very busy at any task, and yet that may not be the task that is needed to achieve what I want to achieve.

My thinking must be clearly and autonomously directed to the goal I really want for myself. I may say I want this, but really in fact do nothing worthwhile to reach it.

I have to become aware of this discounting. Most of us discount in some way or other. This is especially true where people do not accept or see the options, which are open to them. To be creative means to have the whole field open to me. I am going to bring forth that wasn't there before. I may be discounting the stimulus, the breakthrough that will lead to the solution of a problem.

So, if I am to be creative I must be aware of the existence of what stimuli I am experiencing, what problems I have to face, what options I have before me, for I always have options before me.

What problem is facing me or before me, what am I trying to solve?

Then I have to be aware of the importance of this problem. How important is it in my life, what is the significance? I may minimize how important it is for me to solve this problem. How relevant is this problem to my present situation?

I am fully aware of the importance I will put my strongest effort into it. If I do not realize that I am going to lose my job if I do not make a greater effort to make sales, I may not put my best effort into increasing my sales. Some people float along in a way taking it for granted that this is not a serious problem.

Notice the fellow on the motorbike darting in and out of traffic without a helmet. He is discounting the value of his own life. He may be a computer whiz but his thinking is not very creative. You would have to ask him why he is discounting at such a level.

Then we have to aware, have to admit that in any situation there are possibilities for change. Will the fellow admit that his opinion that you cannot get through traffic without whizzing through is open to question? That there is a creative solution if he would take time to be open to options, believing there are options if he would look for them. That there are viable options always.

Or he might say that the others could make a change, could solve the problem, but we could never expect him to change; it is just not him, the person who he is, to react differently in the traffic situation. Nor can we expect him to work on solving the problem, he is just not the type to do that sort of a thing. Nor could we expect him to accept the options that could be discovered in the situation.

We would have to manage to get him believe that he does have the personal ability to react differently, to solve problems, and act on his options.

Then we could go further with him and have him admit, that yes, usually problems can be solved if we take seriously the importance of the options, the choices before us and consider what they are. Then he might accept that it would be worth acting on those options.

But all the discounting which he is doing is outside of his awareness. And so, it will impair his effective thinking.

In all of this there will be involved some sort of exaggeration. It could be "you can't expect me to change, that is impossible for me? My friends would make a fool of me if I slowed down".

We started talking about doing nothing about the problem, that is nothing effective is done to solve the real problem that is there.

But, there are other behaviors which people might engage in when they are not ready to consciously face up to what is blocking their thinking, blocking their feeling well about themselves.

The person may indulge in agitation, which is a repetitive behavior, that has nothing related to solving the problem that may be bothering them, and they would like to solve. The bother may be in the form of uncomfortable sensations and so the agitation is used to build up energy to avoid the problem. The thinking is often quite confused with a sense that something should be done, yet unwilling to really stop, think, understand, judge, reason and come to a solution.

The agitation is often to limit a stronger reaction that may be brewing deep down. This stronger reaction, for example, may be a great fear of taking a stand on a problem and so working and thinking to create a solution out of the problem. This is a type of reaction that can lead to harming oneself or another. Taking one's life does not solve the problem that was there. The same avoidance result can be displayed by fainting, getting sick, and having a heart attack.

The person is not using creative thinking to bring himself or herself out of a distressing situation. The person does not realize, is not aware that he or she still has all the capability to solve the problem only if he or she becomes aware of the confusion, begins to understand the situation, understand all that is happening within, make judgments about himself or herself, and find a reasonable solution to the problem which will be of value and bring them to a comfort and peace.

Ego Consciousness

Psychology therefore culminates of necessity in a developmental process which is peculiar to the psyche and consists in integrating the unconscious contents into consciousness.

This means that the psychic human being becomes a whole, and becoming whole has remarkable effects on egoconsciousness which are extremely difficult to describe.

I doubt my ability to give a proper account of the change that comes over the subject under the influence of the individuation process; it is a relatively rare occurrence which is experienced only by those who have gone through the wearisome but, if the unconscious is to be integrated, indispensable is the business of coming to terms with the unconscious components of the personality.

Once these unconscious components are made conscious, it results not only in their assimilation to the already existing ego-personality, but in a transformation of the latter.

The main difficulty is to describe the manner of this transformation.

Generally speaking the ego is a hard-and-fast complex which, because tied to consciousness and its continuity, cannot easily be altered, and should not be altered unless one wants to bring on pathological disturbances.

The closest analogies to an alteration of the ego are to be found in the field of psychopathology, where we meet not only with neurotic dissociations but with the schizophrenic fragmentation, or even dissolution, of the ego.

In this field, too, we can observe pathological attempts at integration, if such an expression be permitted.

These consist in more or less violent eruptions of unconscious contents into consciousness, the ego proving itself incapable of assimilating the intruders.

But if the structure of the ego-complex is strong enough to withstand their assault without having its framework fatally dislocated, then assimilation can take place.

In that event there is an alteration of the ego as well as of the unconscious contents.

Although it is able to preserve its structure, the ego is ousted from its central and dominating position and thus finds itself in the role of a passive observer who lacks the power to assert his will under all circumstances, not so much because it has been weakened in any way, as because certain considerations give it pause.

That is, the ego cannot help discovering that the afflux of unconscious contents has vitalized the personality, enriched it and created a figure that somehow dwarfs the ego in scope and intensity.

This experience paralyzes an over-egocentric will and convinces the ego that in spite of all the difficulties it is better to be taken down a peg than to get involved in a hopeless struggle in which one is invariably handed the dirty end of the stick.

In this way the will, as disposable energy, gradually subordinates itself to the stronger factor, namely to the new totality-figure I call the self.

Naturally, in these circumstances there is the greatest temptation simply to follow the power-instinct and to identify the ego with the self outright, in order to keep up the illusion of the ego's mastery.

In other cases the ego proves too weak to offer the necessary resistance to the influx of unconscious contents and is thereupon assimilated by the unconscious, which produces a blurring or darkening of ego-consciousness and its identification with a preconscious wholeness.

But these developments make the realization of the self impossible, and at the same time are fatal to the maintenance of ego-consciousness.

They amount, therefore, to pathological effects.

It is abundantly clear that such an abasement du niveau mental i.e. the overpowering of the ego by unconscious contents and the consequent identification with a preconscious wholeness, possesses a prodigious psychic virulence, or power of contagion and is capable of the most disastrous results.

Developments of this kind should therefore, be watched very carefully; they require the closest control.

b. Communities

Healing Communities

The World Health Organisation has been stressing that in the efforts being made to help individuals suffering from mental illness, emphasis must be placed on "community". Although it is said that mental illness is a family problem many of those in the helping professions believe that it is necessary , because of the scope of the problem today, that the larger community become involved. By the larger community they are referring to the local civic community, all the various institutions in the local civic community to become in some manner involved with the task of providing treatment, care and rehabilitation to young people who may be having serious mental health problems.

Also, the WHO calls for new initiatives to be fostered in the field of helping individuals to overcome the mental health problems that young people in the larger community may be experiencing. These initiatives suggest that those involved in the mental health field perhaps should move away from the traditionally defined roles, to experiment in multi-faceted roles, often with boundaries that are not clearly defined, to show a willingness to share their knowledge and skills, to move away from the often paternalistic nature displayed in their professional role, to forge partnerships with all those willing to dedicate time to working with the mentally ill and to being trained in newly evolving methodologies of treatment that could be of help in bringing the mentally ill back into the main stream of the larger civic community.

All of these ventures could be continually evaluated as to their outcomes and adaptations so that it can be seen which are the most effective.

In this article I would like to talk about the move in some areas to establish half-way homes, that is to bring the mentally ill together in small live-in communities, where they learn to function more

effectively in their daily personal lives, where they find the skills to relate competently and efficaciously with people having similar problems and with trained therapists who lead them to stabilize their often chaotic thinking and behavior. These communities are of a very special kind with a very special aim. There are many kinds of communities. A community exists when all the members classified as belonging to the group have a common purpose.

The common aim flows from its character, its purpose. The common aim of a therapeutic community is to do whatever is possible for the promotion of effective therapy for the mental health of all the persons who are connected with the community. The therapeutic community is a body of people sharing common activities and bound by multiple relations. The members of the community start from the belief that the aims of any individual can only be achieved with the active participation of the others in the community. The therapeutic community is different from the usual treatment facility, most notably on the demands that are made on the patient and the overall support that is offered to the patient. Irrespective of help offered by others, the patient must learn to appropriately use his or her own inner consciousness and strength to handle whatever feelings that may arise, to distinguish and separate his feelings from his thinking, and incorporate and operate from a new and more appropriate set of beliefs and values than the negative beliefs and values he or she has been using to guide their interactions with other people. This entire project is based on the belief that each member of the community has the innate power to become mentally well through his or her responsible interactions with others.

All aspects of the life, the vitality, the subsistence of the community are dedicated to foster and assist each and every member of the community to experience a full personal life. This means a life within which relationships of trust, meaningful reciprocal interactions, and responsible independence of thoughts, feelings and values is appreciated and developed. Within the community there are clear and definite healthy structures that have been agreed upon by the members through discussions and reflection on the needs of the individual members. Each member of the community shares the responsibility for the aims of the community and develops his or her mental health through his or her own personal striving to further the shared aims of the community. Therapists teach patients to recognize, develop and use their own strengths and skills instead of simply relying heavily on medication to calm their feelings of anger and fear, or to settle distressing fantasies and thoughts.

The movement of a mentally ill person through the treatment process of the therapeutic community can in a general manner be clearly followed. There are usually stages that the individual will pass through as he or she becomes more functional and aware of the changes within their own consciousness through their sensitive interactions with others in the community.

A new patient entering into the community often is ill at ease in the new surroundings, finding it difficult to fit into the openness and closeness that exists within this new group ambience, an ambience such that he or she has never before experienced. Their life has often been one of withdrawal and silence, misunderstanding and doubt. And yet the mentally ill person, although he or she does not want to own it, needs and wants the security and support that is being offered by this understanding group of people who seem to know each other so well. Slowly he or she will experience, as they watch the members of the community mix and share, that there is something here they would like to move into, even to open into the acceptance that seems to pervade the group. He or she may experience or sense an acceptance by one or other of the therapists. He or she may be surprised as one of the therapists takes the initiative in offering assistance and guidance.

Once the patient has made a connection to a therapist within the community and begins to feel somewhat at ease, he or she will, through their interactions, begin to experience the difference in their thinking and their behavior from that of others in the community. They begin to grow in awareness. With the help of others they start to distinguish the original learning process that took place in their lives and caused the developments in their personality. Reflection and discussion will lead them to become aware of those basic attitudes that have caused them to be so negative and unhappy in their lives. They will begin to evaluate themselves, and decide on changes needed in order to abandon the old negative memories and beliefs. And then they may discover the positive affirmations and beliefs they can form about themselves, about other people and about life in general. All of this leads them to realize that life can have a much fuller meaning than they ever realized.

Once these new values have been adopted they need to be practiced and lived as guiding principles in life with others. The ideal way of integrating these new attitudes and values is by living them within the community, this being what we might call the third stage of treatment in the community. And of course it is not all that simple. Life long attitudes and values are not changed

overnight so there will be times when the individual will be confronted for behavior or statements that are indicative of the old past unhealthy lifestyle. The defenses do not fall away easily. Confrontation does play an important role in the therapeutic community, seen as necessary for all members. Usually there is an agreed contract according to which all disagreements and problems are to be solved through discussions. These may last for hours but from these discussions comes a deep sense of responsibility and an empowerment. The empowerment gives the patient an ability to fully state his or her thoughts and opinions, have them challenged or accepted, always with the result that there is agreement and the satisfaction everyone has been recognized and appreciated. The therapeutic community has a strong democratic base that is recognized by all.

As the patient learns to discuss equally with others, he or she acquires the ability to act. The better word for this new living skill is "agency". All people wish to have the satisfaction of being able to make things happen, to make a difference, at least in their own small way. So if the patient can now direct five or six of other members of the community in cleaning up the pots and pans and dishes after the evening meal, he or she gains a sense of accomplishment. This is the fourth stage of the move through the therapeutic community. The patient's continual transactions with the staff and other members of the community help to develop the responsibility he or she will need when they move out of the community.

The moving out from the community is the last stage in the community healing process. Now the person becomes no longer the patient but the member of the community who is leaving the community each day to go to his or her workplace. This is an adventurous move, moving into a work place that does not function with all the support and care and interaction that exists within the community. The person may come back home to the community each night, or may experiment with having a place to stay outside the community. If the person is going to return to the family, then sessions will be held with the family so that the family community is functioning in a manner that is helpful to the well-being of all the family members. This, a very important stage, for all the feelings and attitudes of the past years, the unhappy years, will need to be brought on the carpet and be dealt with. All this must be handled with clarity and acceptance. The fears must be solved so that the former patient will find regain a new trust and acceptance. The angers must be resolved so that there is a mutual understanding, a

willingness to forgive, and gratitude that each of the family members has found his or her way to peace and strength.

There are many efforts being made to bring those who suffer from mental illness back to well being and happiness. Bringing patients together in small communities of twenty or so can be very effective. Twenty-four people are a sufficient number of people with different personalities, while at the same time relationships will be close so it is totally different from a large, cold, ordered institution. I believe that we change because someone wants us to change, we change because of our relationship to someone else be it God, a parent, a friend, a therapist, a loved one, an enemy, or it may be the memory of a relationship. The mentally ill person often does not experience within the power to make the necessary changes that would bring about a more enhanced and meaningful better life. To break out of the isolation of mental illness the person has to break out of the limitations he or she places around himself or herself. And then it is possible to be open, to interact, to bond with another, to find a healthy meaningful life.

By way of summary, I would mention all the many words that come to mind when we speak of helping people move out of their mental illness through community care, the care that is constituted in being together in small highly specialized live-in communities. There are many words we need to keep in mind – interaction, relating, having a purpose, belonging, containment, safety, acceptance, permissiveness, communication, openness, group ethos, involvement, living- learning, reality confrontation, agency, empowerment, democratization, decisions, sincerity. Wonderful words – each of them necessary for mental health.

Personal Attachments in Communities

What for convenience I am terming attachment theory is a way of conceptualizing the propensity of human beings to make strong affectional bonds to particular others and of explaining the many forms of emotional distress and personality disturbance, including anxiety, anger, depression, and emotional detachment, to which unwilling separation and loss give rise.

Briefly put, attachment behaviour is conceived as any form of behaviour that results in a person attaining or retaining proximity to some other differentiated and preferred individual, who is usually conceived as stronger and / or wiser. Whilst especially evident during early childhood, attachment behaviour is held to characterize human beings from the cradle to the grave – John Bowlby, 1976.

In a therapeutic community attachments leading to healthy relationships form the basis that leads to recovery. A school, a college is often just a collectivity for the ill person. The hospital he or she would experience as a collectivity. In some instances given the problems caused by the disabled person within the family, the relations within the family unit come to be more of a collectivity than a close family community. In the collectivity there is often a distrust of relationships and the accompanying intense emotional and behavioural problems. In a real community following the principles of the therapeutic community approach, members strive to develop close dependant relationships, within a group living milieu.

The human relationships between people are of therapeutic value as they provide acceptance, affirmation of a person's individuality and an experience of involvement, trust and separation. Also in close relationships, a person can become aware of his or her impact on others and can experience and perhaps resolve tensions that arise. As patterns of behaving towards others emerge or emotional turmoil is expressed in relationships, this becomes material that can be presented to help someone see themselves more clearly.

Rex Haigh lists the five ingredients of a therapeutic community and presents them as a developmental sequence, from the earliest experience of attachment, to maternal and paternal aspects of containment, and the task to make contact with others in a way which allows intimate and mutative communication to happen, then on to the adolescent struggle of involvement and finding one's mutual responsibilities amongst others, and finally to an adult empowered position of agency – finding the self which is the seat of action and from which true personal power and effectiveness must come.

“...The first task of treatment is to reconstruct a secure attachment, and then use that to bring about changes in deeply ingrained expectations of relationships and patterns of behaviour. The culture in which this attachment needs to happen is one where the community members can clearly feel a sense of belonging – where membership is valued and where members themselves are valued”.

Learning to live an appreciable and appreciated life in this Therapeutic Community

The persons coming into the community today must begin by a realization and acceptance of the problems and difficulties that they experience in communicating and opening their life through meaningful contact and sharing with other persons.

As a beginning they need to develop an openness to discover from where within their conscious life the cause or causes of their mental and emotional discomfort arises.

As they experience a growth in awareness and comfort they will experience the difficulty and frustration that rises as they experience their inability to function freely and smoothly in their interactions with others.

And so they begin to notice and pay attention to the manner in which others seem to react and behave smoothly and efficiently in contrast to the hesitations and inability to cope with the demands of living with others which they experience as a losing struggle.

Going through these problems will appear to be a continuing defeat. The manner in which they should handle themselves in the face of others is often a mystery. They struggle and yet are unable to make the necessary simple adaptations and on the spot choices which normal people easily make.

The inability to adapt easily to situations usually arises from their negative outlook or difficulty in relating to other people, whether strangers or persons of their own family with whom they should be able to relate positively and freely as they wish.

If they come to some realization that their experience is seriously different from the others who appear to have no difficulties in interacting with others, then they hopefully will begin to question themselves and speak about their personal difficulties to persons who are able to understand the original cause of their problems.

As they move with others and cause concern to others because of their hysterical unstable reactions, they are medicated down to help them cope with the life experience they are attempting to live.

The lucky ones may be placed in a community such as ours where they will be supported in accepting the experience of being themselves even as they live through their disturbing and depressing inner experience.

And hopefully they will hit upon or experience the deep inner assurance developing from within their personalities as they come to realize that they have the possibility open to them of forming a meaningful relationship with another person.

This relationship will develop even without their realizing the effort and trust they may have made to trigger the relationship.

Just simple openness to experience the new found ease of living in some simple form of relationship or interior freedom and openness may trigger a decision to strive to be responsible for self.

From incomplete sensations and moments of awareness they find that they can settle within themselves and develop full consciousness in their thinking, feeling and attitudes and beliefs.

All of this will help to bring about within them some sort of peace with their mind and body plus a willingness to be constructive in their attitudes and beliefs with others, and more open to make the changes within themselves and to discover what it means to be important, significant and related to others.

They begin to learn where and when the difficulties were when they were very young. They can always explain their present behaviour and are open to dialogue so as to bring and cause for themselves the necessary adjustments if any are needed in their reflection and planning.

They will discover a new and enhanced interest in persons plus give a growing value to their own life and that of others.

This individual ability to choose – it is really an individual power within the individual – allows the person to develop other abilities that are helpful in dealing with the surroundings. The ability to choose my reaction timings, to control the force of my reaction, leads to self-control. This self-control enables the person to delay his or her reaction and to resist the quick impulses which often cause a breakdown of communication with another person.

Most people would wish to have solid self-control so that they can avoid the many negative situations that sometimes arise. An

example could be the experience arising when an immediate, spontaneous, angry reply breaks up or destroys a family relation or friendship. Also they can keep their hope and interest alive when someone says that a certain accomplishment cannot come about, cannot be resolved. For many people, when they are told such a proposal cannot possibly be successful, they will be stimulated even more to work for a successful solution.

This ability to keep these two beliefs alive allows a person to be creative in holding a problem or difficulty in their attention for some time so that then they can consider the problem from many different angles and see it anew and open to a solution.

c. Reflections

Starting from various words

Begin with “consciousness”, the role of consciousness.

Look upon the many memories that have gone before – often there may be no explanation why some memories return and others leave no trace –

- think of the reason that the person acts or thinks in a certain manner
- yet there is a reason why anything comes up
- consciousness – the ability to be aware and reflect upon the present and past experience
- together with that goes the feeling experience felt now or in the past
- together also there is the possibility to reflect on the attitudes and beliefs – most of which are in some manner causing the feelings coming into awareness
- another word coming up is experience
- the experience of the inner self – of thoughts, values, decisions
- these bringing a person to be more present to self and other
- can lead to the satisfaction of a relationship
- can lead to learning to trust other individuals
- can lead to a trust in my life as directed and in some manner satisfying
- recognizing experience helps to centre the meaning I am discovering

- the above can bring the person to a sense of responsibility as I am directing my self to inner growth and meaning
- to a sense of freedom
- to the value of discussion
- discussion bringing openness and knowledge and questioning
- discussion leads to new ideas – pooling knowledge
- leading to relationship – making the adaptation and with a conscious change
- may be a shift or growth within
- growing in self-experience
- the willingness to be with others, to live, share with the others.

Thoughts on Training

- We need a clear agenda for all the kids
- What do we mean by getting well
- What are the thoughts over actions, responsibilities that the persons should be able to do
- Often a kid gets mixed up on what to prioritize
- The person needs to evaluate their own attitudes
- The staff need a clear agenda for all the kids
- Too many kids are staying on and on and are not willing to make necessary changes
- And we need to be clear on family expectations, because we become accountable
- We need to know clearly the demands of the parents
- There should be some therapy for parents with the kids
- Can we bring about a situation where the parents spend some time with us
- We need to know that the parents know what is happening
- Can we bring about a change in six months?
- What do we mean by acceptance of self
- Acceptance of self is the most important experience of the person
- The experience of self helps a person to think clearly
- Then a person can work on his thinking's, his attitudes, his beliefs
- How do we get a person to attempt and see and understand the problem?
- We need to work on an assessment to reach kids self status
- Find out what is going on in each kid
- The person talks to the kids to get some idea of the kid

Questions to keep me looking at possibilities or for possibilities

What would move me to be more present to myself in my counseling or therapy?

What does that really mean ? “Being more aware of myself?

How much am I aware of my values, my thoughts enter into my therapy or counseling ?

What inner decisions or work with myself will bring me more present to others as I work or speak to them.

Is there any truth or benefit in the advice “in this work with others I must be renewing ceaselessly?

How do I really believe I can enable others ? What do I mean by “enabling others”?

How much do I believe that joy or well being will be experienced only from some experience of relationship?

Or what within myself do I base my belief?

The big mortal sin of what Jacqui got into was working with people who were severely ill using the attachment theory quite successfully.

“The key point of my thesis is that there is a strong causal relationship between an individual’s experiences with his parents and his later capacity to make affectional bonds, and that certain common variations in that capacity manifest in themselves in marital problems, trouble with children as well as in neurotic symptoms and personality disorders can be attributed to certain common variations in the ways that parents performed their roles”.

- John Bowlby “The Making and breaking of Affectional Bonds”.

“From birth to death, love is not just the focus of human experience but also the life force of the mind, determining our moods, stabilizing our body rhythms, and changing the structure of our brains. The body’s physiology ensures that relationships determine and fix our identities. Love makes us who we are, and who we can become”.

- Thomas Lewis, Fari Amini, Richard Lannon “A General Theory of Love”.

Points that need to be considered

- To accept that other people have much the same experience I am having
- It is all right to have a problem or difficulty in trying to understand what is happening within me.
- Other people also have problems and solve them, so can I
- So I can accept that it is alright to have a problem
- So I can believe I can come out of this problem I am having
- I believe that I can get help if I ask for it
- I need to be trusting and believe I can be helped
- So I will be open and accept the help from others
- I need to be very self-aware of my thoughts, feelings, attitudes and beliefs
- Take responsibility for the feelings I am experiencing
- Realize the importance of feelings in my experience of myself
- Believe that there is a reason causing me to experience
- The feelings I am experiencing
- Be aware of the thoughts I am concentrating on or just passing through my mind
- Be aware of my attitudes and my beliefs
- Accepting that my attitudes and beliefs influence my thinking and feelings
- Be open to the questions I am asked and always answer as well as I can
- Never say, “I cannot answer” – always stop and think
- Apply myself to understand the reason someone is asking me this question now
- Never say “ I will try to ” ... be more intense and decide to do whatever it is I am asked – or give a good, solid reason why I cannot .

- Work within myself to understand what the other person addressing me is thinking or feeling
- Be aware of the volume or tone of my voice
- Believe that I have a place” and that I am accepted by others – at least one other
- Always make efforts to believe and experience that I am accepted by another person- especially the person talking to me now.
- Or at least believe that I have a right to express myself to him or her whatever he or she is saying to me
- When I am in doubt or not sure I realize that I have a right to ask and receive clarification
- Always I have a right to protect myself – however it should be always fitting and not harmful to the other wherever possible.
- I have the right to have the choice of believing or thinking differently within myself –and this can be different from the way others believe and think.
- I may need to justify my differences from others at times but that does not need to cause any problems.
- I should know the reasons I become involved in any activity – and set myself clear and reasonable goals.
- I affirm to myself that I need to be with people
- It is good to have good reasons when I wish to withdraw and be alone

A set of Questions

What is the purpose of asking myself questions?
What questions should I ask myself?

Who am I?

Am I the same as I was?

Now is there anything different?

What caused me to think differently?

What would help me to be aware of my feelings?

What is the process that brings new thoughts into my mind?

At what age do I remember deciding?

What is necessary to make a decision?

What do I want to decide today?

What will give me certainty?

What do I do when I can't decide?

What have I been certain of?

What influenced me then?

Was I sure of myself then?

When did I decide that an attitude was just an attitude?

Am I clear when an attitude is an attitude, a decision a decision?

When did I know that I believed something?

How do I change a belief? How does a belief affect me?

How can I be rid of a negative feeling I am having ?

How to be more confident?

How do I avoid a negative feeling?

What clarifications do I need for myself?

What is the process of getting clarifications?

How much can I differ from others?

How do I come to understand another person?

- How do I know if I am accepted by others?
- What is the purpose of having relationships with others?
- What do I need to make relationships with others?
- What is a perception?
- Are perceptions necessary, and how do they happen?
- What is the value of my perceptions?
- Why is it necessary to asking for clarifications?
- When did I become aware of my feelings?
- Which feelings were they?
- Am I my feelings?
- What is it in me that causes me to be conscious?
- Can you doubt the objects of consciousness ?
- What do you mean by the word “discounting”?
- How does a discount happen?
- What does a person do, when they are being “passive”
- What does a person have to do to avoid having an “emotional outburst”?
- What do you mean by “Over adaptation”
- Why be aware of my feelings – how can that help me?
- What feelings do I allow myself to have – what feelings do I block?
- Do I have a special interest in knowing the reasons for my feelings?
- What role do the feelings have in my decisions?
- Do I accept having feelings?

Complexities in the Human Personality

The goal of all that we do here in the community is to enable young people to function as best they can. To be reliable in the human process, functioning as an independent person we need to be aware of all that contributes to our functioning. Each person desires to understand their life and their various experiences. The experiences that some have can enable them to live a meaningful and happy life. A person has to realize the complexity of their personality, for the human personality is really very complex. Prominent in the personality are the feelings, thinking, beliefs and attitudes. You need to consider that the feelings, thinking, beliefs and attitudes are initiated because of the various levels of the human personality. There is a great complexity when you consider the biological, cultural, psychological and societal tensions keep the human persona alive. Without this complexity we would not have an active human life.

If the human person is to enjoy and find meaning in this complexity they need a tremendous degree of awareness. The individual has to find some sort of self reliance which will enable him or her to relate to others and in this relationship develop their ability to trust others. Accepting others on this secure base enables the person to function as one whole person. Then the person is able to function and grow and appreciate their own self and share the self with others. From this secure base the person will have the full free energy to think and choose, trust and form an attachment with other people.

The person will have the ability to freely decide what fits best for him or her now. If a person is not clear and aware in their decision making process, they will not have the necessary freedom to function and communicate with others. Without clarity in the thinking and feeling there will be some condemnation of their thinking as they cannot let go of their feelings and be reactive in their environment.

Other persons who can be aware of their free energy will be able to function and cooperate in building up friendships and society.

This free energy is necessary for the proper functioning in communications with others.

When a person is not free he or she will not be aware of the feelings that are causing them to be confused. Now we need to look at what happens when a person loses his awareness that they should have of the difficulties that they are causing themselves. Often a person may dislike the manner in which he is being corrected and treated, and will because of this distress become very angry. This anger may be expressed and when spoken about may enable the person to reflect and let go of the anger. It is possible that the person does not recognize the feelings of anger and so cannot express their discomfort. With the anger they will often become afraid so they will remain quite disturbed and afraid, whereas the true feeling of anger will not be recognized. This will limit the person's interaction with other people.

Notes – 28.09.08

The community – the functioning of the community
Order – regularity
The beginning of mental illness
Keeping a routine
Following a schedule
Keeping thought in order
Learning
Insight
First to be able to be logical
Follow rules
Respect rules – meaning of rules
Right from toilet training
Situation can arise –
Problems come up
What is a problem?
How to define it?
School rules
Understanding needed
Without understanding behave like a robot
Humans not robots
Why we stop and have a structure meeting
Each has to speak
Explain my role
Explain what was going on in my feelings
My intent – my purpose
Come to agreement – situation is settled
What has been learned – about self

Learn about the general picture – how am I to fit in?
Then go deeper – traits or practices of my personality
When did I learn ?
What do I need to change?
On level of my personality ?
My frame of reference
Am I aware of what has gone into my frame of reference?
The necessity to care for others
My sense of self acceptance
Acceptance of the other – essential
My happiness is to be with others
My need of others
At home alone you cannot help the son or daughter
Where do you place what we do here at ASV?
All the members of the community are responsible for
the community.

What I see as special in ASV

On this sheet you will find various ideas expressed last Tuesday in response to the question on what I see as special to ASV – the ideas were briefly jotted as people spoke.

I would ask you to go through the list noting the various ideas under three headings:

- 1) Basic values of the community
- 2) Aspects of relationship within the community
- 3) The various methods of therapy used in the community

We will then put these together in our meeting on Friday morning.

Our discussion is to lead to some kind of agreed statement on what is the essential core of ASV which we would preserve at all costs.

Slow kids having a holiday?

- are we too protective?
- is the bonding too tight?
- let people be dependent but need to give a chance for independence
- review restrictive structures
- experiment and be flexible
- how to bring about changes in kids e.g. kids caught in two years situation
- peer monitoring on staff level of the process of the kids becoming dependent on a staff-parenting?
- A lot more professional monitoring of each other.
- changing the theory of the ‘bad mother’ being responsible for the schizophrenic child.
- review this process – review how we pass this theory on to the kids.

- develop the talents of the kids—music—spend lot of time
- change our attitude towards the family
- spread our compassion to the families
- providing each an opportunity to develop some talent on occupation
- population too large and too dependent – no time to give specialized time
- keep kids on different levels doing different stages
- see division on ‘older’ and ‘younger’ rather than responsible and irresponsible
- change our own internal frame of reference
- seeing the positive that can be used with kids
- sexuality too much behind closed doors.
- need to have some agreement on some basic theories e.g. ‘all right to act out to work through’

Some process of spreading Responsibility

- trying to network with other groups
- staff meetings are too day-to-day
- look at process
- brainstorm more – especially about all the above
- need to integrate professional standards
- staff group have to be able to do things differently at times- allow the diverse and then keep it in balance
- must have outer boundaries
- the people have a deeper realization and training – ‘a bigger tool box’ to be available
- pulling in different people for different considerations
- again brain storming
- tap what is available at the moment
- we have lots of creativity
- what are we doing with resources available
- is the ‘re parenting’ fully fitting in the India context?
- see the treatment goals
- involve families in the goals.
- not so right – not so afraid – trusting in our competence
- mutual trust
- relationships
- values
- comfort
- permission
- giving full time and energy
- caring - unconditional love

- Getting at the root of Schizophrenia
- The intimacy among us – very special
- Practicality of problem solving
- Teaching others to solve problems
- Our practical approach – how can we solve this?
- Acceptance
- Manages to be a home rather than an institution
- Staff both professional yet intimate and relaxed
- Can take in any person no matter how trained
- A kind of freedom for each of us to work through problems
- Flexibility and support
- Not locked into any special framework
- Acceptance to be trusted in what I do
- Lots of role models
- Found not just bodily or psychological – other experiences, spiritual
- Atmosphere
- Therapy- part of normal life
- Choice of the contractual
- Get deep down in the spiritual process
- No hard line between staff and kids meeting closely
- Staying with the process – not behind white coats
- Personal involvement
- Everybody's opinion is listened to – respect and recognition
- Bonding – between staff – between staff and kids - between kids
- Recognition of kid's insight
- Importance giving to feelings
- The physical contact and involvement
- Staff and kids can be equally questioned
- Expect staff and kids to function at a high level
- Personal responsibility
- Community – yet individual attachments allowed
- dedicated lot -have guts – courage to work with feelings
- Expectations put on the kids
- Fairness, honesty

Reflecting on self and others

Various ideas coming into my awareness – accept them all – keep it positive – for the future will be positive – make it positive – what does positive mean? Open, leading, could be enthralling, could contain everything always searched for, open self to all – to whatever is now present – pick up the lead – go with it- stay aware- stay positive – knowing the future is always open – future is always needy-wanting newness – has to rely on newness – must be kept alive and active – keep all questioning – the experience of being self – finding self – establishing the meaning for self – now - so self believes – self is enticed to imagine – to feel the goodness, the enticement, drawn ahead, going with it – it is there to be advanced – to be discovered – to be brought into the centre – there to be shared, discovered, emphasized, emphasized as others are there - persons depend, need to be shown the way, handed along to their dreams, yet still with me, with us, enriching us, by the spiritual support, spiritual strength continually growing from within, enabling, enticing to the new, to the unthought, to the new pushing its way through the usual – could it be possible? growing capabilities, undiscovered, unthought capabilities – in the now - not in the years to come – but now – it can only be sensed now – at this time – for it fits now – is needed now – not the years from now – now in this situation - with all the forces in the now –precious forces – present now – breaking forth in the now – in gratitude accept these – grab the moment – cause them to happen – happen now – for now just when they fit and lead ahead - let them take you ahead.

The community – first and foremost – source of strength for all prodding each and every one to intricacies - so to aid in growing together, establishing the creative – the beauty of positive excitement carrying each and all along - discovering, learning, believing, solving, widening, deepening – all possible – believe- go for it – its there – discover with joy – be enthused – be open – catch up to the

movement – there is more ahead – be thankful – thankful for self, thankful to self – thankful to others – they lead - they accompany – they give direction – they point – they question – they give new life, new strength, new questions – new consolations – stay open, ready and expectant – there is always more – more delight – more surprise – more time – more company – more discovery – more depth – more value – yes, it all has meaning and more meaning – to surprise the loyal seeker seeking the infinite.

The Spiritual Dimensions of Rehabilitation

Be clear by what we mean by spiritual – what do we mean by spirit – the positive definition of spirit.

It is known by what we can do – by our awareness – to know that we can know – to be aware that we are aware – to decide and decide to decide – to give myself to another and to know that that is what fulfils me.

As spirits we transcend ourselves – we go beyond ourselves – our existence is a call at all times to transcend ourselves – to go out beyond ourselves – simply put it is to go out to the other – to be the other.

This transcendence takes place at all the different levels of the human person.

- at the level of experience - we are aware that we are always reacting in this life we lead – there are persons and things that impinge on us from outside – we transcend ourselves in the simple level of awareness that we have as we live and move with people - we learn to be attentive.

-at the level of understanding – this sense data is absorbed within us and we react in knowing that this sense data comes from this person or thing- we transcend ourselves in that we put two and two together and say that this is – we are called to be intelligent.

-at the level of reflection – what we have understood we reflect on - we reason about the person or the situation.

- we want to see what it really is – we are moved to have some ground for what we are concerned with – we convince ourselves with reasons – so we are called to be reasonable.

- then when we have found the reasons for this person or situation we are called further - to find out the importance for the person or situation for us – we move into values.

And so from seeing the person as important or the situation as important we are called to be committed.

- then we are called beyond to share with the other – to be for the other person - we are called to be loving.

The universe then is build on this call to love each other – to share with each other – to go out to the other – the oneness, the unity that is at the heart of all the great religions.

We as individuals are called to transcend our limited selves there is the inner dynamism with the human personality which is searching for unity.

Take many of the new ideas – in medicine – in teaching – in psychology – that are prevalent in our modern world. These few ideas express the hidden dynamism in human nature today. And we must be aware of these ideas and realize how the trends which they describe are present within us. These same trends are present in people whom we are working with and we can in some way or other appeal to those trends.

Need of community- of openness – of vulnerability – of risk-taking when being with others – my openness to change – the person I am helping to rehabilitate must have some influences or effect on me.

Authenticity

Decisions you make as an actor in the drama of human living
It is necessary always to take some time for reflection on what is passing through your consciousness – what are you consciously sensing at the present time – just at the present time, the present moment – not the past now – not the future, now reflect – pay attention – reflect – come to be aware – realize what you are aware of within your awareness , what you are conscious of right now.

Concentrate – be aware – be conscious - ok , what is in your mind now...

Discover yourself – reflect on yourself – conscious of yourself – discover what you are aware of now in your self – focus on your self – examine your self – intense awareness of your self – focus your energy on your consciousness – being conscious of self.

Your psychic energy – not a bodily feeling – a conscious feeling – concentrate on this energy within your awareness – that is your athma shakti – centre your self on this awareness – on this reflection.

What are you consciously aware of ? Stop – control your awareness – let yourself know what you are discovering in yourself now – what are you thinking/ What are you discovering?

What are you experiencing within yourself?

What are you sensing? What are you experiencing? What are you undergoing now? What are you feeling?

No thinking – just feeling – feeling – being aware

Stop! Be conscious – be aware

Now be in charge – what are you experiencing?

For Lonergan, a very learned Jesuit scholar and writer, then our deepest need and most prized achievement is authenticity.

Our “deepest need and most prized achievement is authenticity”.

Be aware, he urges us, of the operations within our consciousness. Notice the basic desire of our spirit for meaning, truth,

goodness, and love – orientations that are open to God. He asked us, in effect:

- What in your consciousness reveals your desire for understanding for meaning?

- What are the operations you perform to test whether your understanding is accurate?

- What operations do you perform when you are faced with making a decision? What process do you go through to make sure your decision is good, worthwhile, responsible? What questions arise, what factors do you take into account, what feelings influence your decisions?

Pay attention to these operations in your consciousness, Lonergan directs us, and we will discover in them the norms for authentic living. We are to be

- attentive to the experience of the data of sense and of consciousness

- intelligent about inquiring into the meaning of our experience

- critical in our judgment

- responsible in our decisions and all of this becomes possible as the fruit of God's love inundating the human heart.

Yield to the inbuilt intentionality of your own consciousness, he advises us, and you will eventually discover “a region for the divine, the shrine of ultimate holiness,... the spark in our clod, our native orientation to the divine.”

In brief, Lonergan invites the reader to an exercise in intentionality analysis. Intentionality analysis is an examination of consciousness. But he warns us, it takes “an exceptional amount of exertion and activity” to succeed in paying attention to the operations in your consciousness. The reader, he admits, faces a stiff challenge: “He will have to familiarize himself with our terminology. He will have to evoke the relevant operations in his own consciousness. He will have to discover in his own experience the dynamic relationships leading from one operation to the next.”

So, first of all, he instructs us, notice that the operations within your consciousness have objects. Examine our consciousness and discover that it is dynamic, always on the move. Consciousness is intentional: it intends towards, reaches out of itself towards an object. To intend is not just a transitive verb; in the psychological sense, to say that the operations of consciousness intend means that they have objects, tend toward objects, reach out toward objects to note them,

understand them, make judgments and decisions about them, and, if they are persons, love them. Further, it is by the operations of consciousness , Lonergan continues, that one becomes aware of the object and become present to the object. “ By seeing there becomes present what is seen, by hearing that becomes present what is heard, by imagining there become present what is imagined, and so on, where in each case the presence in question is a psychological event”. It is in this psychological sense, then, Lonergan uses the verb intend, and adjective intentional, and the noun intentionality.

Second, writes Lonergan, be aware that intentionally operations are operations of an operator. Examine your consciousness and discover that you are the conscious operator in charge of the operations. This operator Lonergan calls the subject. The operator is not merely the subject of the verbs “attend to, see, hear, touch” and so forth. The operator is the subject in the psychological sense; he operates consciously. The operator is “aware of himself operating, present to himself operating, experiencing himself operating.” In so far as operations are intentional, then, they “make the operating subject present to himself”. Self appropriation -being present to oneself and grasping what goes on in consciousness – is a heightening of consciousness. In addition, the exercise of selfappropriation generates horizons, because the exercise utilizes the inbuilt structure that generates horizons. Indeed it is the intent of his book to point out in considerable appropriation and self-definition, utilize the structure within human consciousness that creates horizons.

What Lonergan is concerned with is the “realization of human potentiality”. But the realization of human potentiality can be authentic or unauthentic. But it is obvious that one can never achieve human authenticity once and for all by a single deliberate act. The most important deliberate act, for Lonergan, is love.

True, Lonergan admits, with God’s grace you freely make yourself what you are, but he immediately adds a word of caution:

“Never in this life is the making finished; always it is still in progress, always it is in precarious achievement that can slip and fall and shatter. Concern with subjectivity, then is concern with the ultimate reality of man... with the perpetual novelty of self – construction, of free choices making the chooser what he is.”

It is for this reason that those who are intrigued by “the perpetual novelty of self-construction” and who in response to God’s love come up with the “free choices” that make the “chooser what he is” can with profit repeat the Spiritual Exercises year after year and make the Examen of Consciousness each day of their lives.

In short, what does Lonergan's intentionality analysis tell us about the dynamic of the Spiritual exercises? The retreatant who attempts to avoid disorderly love and give himself totally to God will during the Exercises is (upon examination of his consciousness) acting in accord with the dynamic structure of his intentionality and following the inbuilt laws by which human beings can, with God's grace transcend self-centered desire and reach out toward human authenticity and genuine Christian holiness. Dynamic structure and inbuilt laws are you yourself, in your spiritual reality, your potentiality, what you are open to: being fully in love with God; but that full achievement of your potential is all God's doing and the operative text for Lonergan is Ezekiel: "God plucking out the heart of stone which has no desire whatever to be a heart of flesh and putting in the heart of flesh, totally beyond the deserts, ambitions even, of the heart of stone."

Lonergan – From "Dynamism of Desire", Page 75

Be attentive. Be intelligent. Be reasonable. Be responsible.

Being attentive includes attention to human affairs (community functioning).

Being intelligent includes a grasp of hitherto unnoticed or unrelated possibilities.

Being reasonable includes the rejection of what probably would not work but also the acknowledgement of what probably would.

Being responsible includes basing one's decisions and choices on an unbiased evaluation of short-term and long-term costs and benefits to oneself, to one's group, to other groups.

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Human authenticity is a matter of following the built-in law of the human spirit. Because we can experience, we should attend. Because we can understand, we should inquire. Because we can reach the truth, we should reflect and check. Because we can realize values in ourselves and promote them in others, we should deliberate. In the measure that we follow these percepts, in the measure we fulfill these conditions of being human persons we also achieve self-transcendence both in the field of knowledge and in the field of action.

Lonergan thus spells out how one's activity at the fourth level of consciousness is both practical and existential.

On the topmost level of human consciousness the subject deliberates, evaluates, decides, controls, acts. At once he is practical and existential : practical in as much as he is concerned with concrete courses of action; existential in as much as control includes self-control, and the possibility of self-control involves responsibility for the effects of his actions on others and more basically on himself. The top most level of human consciousness is conscience.

- Self control : keeping disruptive emotions and impulses in check.

- Trustworthiness : Maintaining standards of honesty and integrity

- Conscientiousness : taking responsibility for personal performance

- Adaptability : Flexibility in handling change

- Innovation : Being comfortable with novel ideas, approaches, and new information

Motivation

Emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals

- Achievement drive : Striving to improve or meet a standard of excellence.

- Commitment : Aligning with the goals of the group or organization

- Initiative: readiness to act on opportunities

- Optimism : persistence in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setbacks.

Social competence

These competencies determine how we handle relationships.

Empathy

Awareness of others' feelings, needs and concerns

- Understanding others: Sensing others' feelings and perspectives and taking an active interest in their concerns

- Developing others : Sensing others' development needs and bolstering their abilities.

- Service orientation : Anticipating, recognizing, and meeting other's needs

- Leveraging diversity: cultivating opportunities through different kinds of people
- Political awareness: Reading a group's emotional currents and power relationships.

Social skills

Adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others

- Influence: Wielding effective tactics for persuasion
- Communication : Listening openly and sending convincing messages
- Conflict management: Negotiating and resolving disagreements
- Leadership: Inspiring and guiding individuals and groups
- Change catalyst : initiating or managing change
- Building bonds: nurturing instrumental relationships
- Collaboration and cooperation: working with others toward shared goals.
- Team capabilities : Creating group synergy in pursuing collective goals.

d. Talks from Training Programs

Frame of Reference

The following may serve as some introduction to today's paper for discussion – "The mind never rests." Modern life presents information at an extraordinary rate. Many capsules of unfinished business would be ready to burst open for rethinking if a moment's respite were to occur. Repressive brooding, anxious worry, embarrassed rehearsals of anticipated performances are common.

Yet the topic, mode and manners of ongoing conscious thought can be affected by will and intention. Suggestions can be made to "free associate", "focus on breathing", "report dreams", "switch to visual images", "tune up the background mood", or "listen to far-off sounds", as well as to select or let go of certain topics. One can learn from such exercises and can in a given mental state accomplish some aspects of self stepping in and schematizing or making more simple what cannot be accomplished in other states of mind. One word we need to consider in our study is the word "redefining", a practice which people can use to be more clear in their thinking or to remain more unclear.

All of us carry with us a "frame of reference"— that is a collection of ideas and beliefs and definitions that enable us to know who we are and what we are and how we fit into the world and also the fundamental definition of what the world is. We need some definitions, some orienting to give each of us in our own style or practice ideas of what is important. Each of us must have all this information for ourselves. In doing this we set up what words are important for our vocabulary.

An Eskimo will have some 200 words for snow. He needs them for his frame of reference, for his conversations with other Eskimos, for each one has their own frame of reference but my personal frame of reference must also in some manner fit and be appropriate with the frame of reference of others with whom I live and interact.

Otherwise I may experience serious difficulties and differences with persons with whom I am coming into contact. What they say and how they react may not fit in with my frame of reference, that is what I am used to, what I feel comfortable with.

We all want to experience comfort in our living, we do not want to be met with what we can't understand or don't expect. And yet we cannot expect the persons whom we meet to think exactly as we think, to be interested in what we are interested in, or to immediately understand what we are feeling and thinking. We must be aware, of what our frame of reference is. Have I ever taken the time to reflect and decide just what are my attitudes, my beliefs about myself, about who I am, about how I live my life, or how I handle my feelings, my inner life, my principles, who I really am and what I consider important for myself, and important for other people.

Philosophers speak about passing through the various seas of illusion and coming to the shore or pure awareness. Can I make a clear assessment of myself and responsibly assess my self? "Understand the principle that all psychological growth comes about by being able to renounce outworn, infantile, ties to objects and to give up or modify self-representations that have become restrictive, maladaptive or outgrown". So, writes a noted philosopher.

It is my duty to be aware of the various differences I may experience with others around me, and realize my need to resolve any problems that may arise because of this situation. If I do not agree with the person or the situation in which I find myself, I need to acknowledge the differences. I may find myself experiencing feelings of being upset, or afraid, feelings that arise from some difficulty in a situation structured differently for me. Or I may experience that at present what I experience doesn't seem to fit, this is so new to me, it doesn't seem to fit my present frame of reference so I have difficulty in freely and meaningfully fitting in, and quietly feeling composed.

That has been the daily experience of many of our kids as they have grown up. Also caretakers and parents may have had the same experience when they were sons or daughters in an early life where they felt distant and lost. Those who are parents today may have encountered many very stressful, unintelligible encounters, incidents, and happenings during the teenage years. And so many young persons have ended up in a life they could not predict, because all was upset, fears were present, angers pushed down into the unconscious as was done habitually in the past.

What to do in this threatening situation? Take the seemingly only possible solution – sit down and use what sense I have and redefine the situation in some manner. The person can redefine the incoming stimuli, redefine what is happening with them so that they can handle the stimuli coming at them from the present surroundings. So, the young person who is suffering because of his father's uncontrollable anger tries to believe that his father is only protecting him. Then he can cope as people have learned to cope in the past. Some people redefine the reality because they are afraid to deal with the reality as it is, or experience being incapable or inadequate to deal with it, or feel the need to ignore what is happening so they can comfortably deal with it.

In building a path through the self to the far shore of awareness, we have to carefully pick our way through our own wilderness. We need to have some beneficial trust in our ability to handle our thoughts and attitudes, our feelings, and other happenings in our mind, quietly becoming clearer in our thinking, letting all our awareness take in the various obstacles we sense within our self or that are coming from others outside us, staying aware that whatever is coming at me by way of questions and statements can be handled. Then I can if possible, give time to reflection and judge, weigh the input coming to me from these people, thinking and weighing the meaning and importance of all this as I organize to fit the experience adequately into my understanding. Once I have the needed insight into the happenings I can enable myself to define where this all fits with my present and future need, always taking into consideration my future desires and aspirations.

Discounting

The different things we will look at in discounting: the definition, the internal mechanism, what discounting is used for, what its purpose is. Then we will look at the areas of discounting, the type of discounting, and the mode – all these are technical terms which I will explain as we go. And what is the treatment for discounting. The way to put it really, to start it off – when there is a ‘game’, when there is dysfunctional behavior, there is some kind of symbiotic relationship that has not been resolved. I can be running out a ‘number’ with an older male figure because there is a relationship with my father that has not been resolved or I may be looking for attention because of the symbiotic relationship with my mother that has not been resolved. There should be a healthy symbiotic relationship for every child and then, the child moves out of the symbiotic relationship and establishes his independence. Now, when there is a symbiotic relationship, in some way internally, I have to justify it to myself. Within my personality there is a normal move to health, to independence and to good relationships. And what blocks that is some sort of a symbiotic relationship and then, I justify what I do by discounting. The further step in there is the type of the justification really, is the grandiosity. And the discount is the minimizing or maximizing of some aspect of myself, of the other person or the reality of the situation. That’s really what the discount is. I maximize and say you are so scary that I can’t talk to you. I am maximizing my fear within myself.

I have got a question. Can this justification come from these two positions. “I am ok, You are not ok or you are ok, I am not ok”?

Yes. The not okayness is involved in the symbiotic relationship. In an unhealthy symbiotic relationship one of us is not okay or both of us are not okay so that the discount is the maximizing or the minimizing of some aspect of myself, of the other person or the reality of the situation.

The minimizing: ‘I can’t do that. That’s too hard for me. I could never put up with that’. What we would call the minimizing

of my ability to put up with something; the minimizing of self, something in myself, in the other or the reality of the situation.

It is an internal mechanism. What do you mean by internal? Something deep or something within myself that I am not aware of doing. (If I am aware of it, that's deliberate and that's not a discount). It is internal. There is an external manifestation that I can see in the behavior. Yes, I don't know whether it is a discount until I find out what is the internal process the person is going through.

A young man hassles with people. Where is the discount? The discount is of his fear of handling the situation, fear of talking with other people, fear of being rejected by other people. And there is the internal mechanism. We see him hassling. But the discount is in his minimizing his ability to form relationships. Whatever it is, the fear is in the symbiotic relationship that he has to be afraid. To himself he is saying that he has to be afraid. So he comes from that fear and discounts his ability to form relationships with people and uses the anger to stay with that. The anger is the external manifestation that we see. And then, we react to something that makes us uncomfortable. We say there is something going on here. We have to question him and find out where the discount is in him, what he is doing to discount. We can see it in somebody in a very dangerous situation, may be doing something that is very dangerous and we can say we don't really know whether he is discounting his own safety. He may not be. He may not be aware of what he is doing. We can see the external manifestation but we don't see what is going on internally in the person that he is discounting. He has to tell us. With this reality situation one thing we come from is that there is a discount what we do with the kids here very often, we get a group and say what you did was very stupid. And we agree that this is stupid. There it is understood that below all this theory is the fact that we agree: 'You are out of step'. You are discounting something in the real situation. There is something you need to think about. Just to point that outthat the reality of the situation is what was agreed by the group and you are doing something that is not fitting in with the group. There is something in yourself or in the other person or in us or in the reality of the situation that you are ignoring, not paying attention to or you are making too big or you are making too small so that you can carry on the aspect of yourself that is dysfunctional.

"May I ask a question? If you have a group of people which is distorting reality and then, comes a person ..."

"Hopefully, you will agree that not everybody will be wrong all the time. And you can have a situation where a group of people are seeing things wrong."

"You all agree on discounting something in order to keep to the group?"

"That's right. But in the wider circle there is going to be somebody who is going to confront."

"The problem for me is whether reality is objective or subjective because..."

I would say it is objective, in that not everybody can deny this is the situation. Some people might deny from their subjective positions but there are bound to be some people who are going to say that the car hit the tree – that's objective. And not everybody will deny it. A few people might deny it (like the car did not hit the tree), that's possible.

Discounting means some degree of denial.

There is a type of denial.

.... take Arvind – I tell Arvind that his mother died and there is no real reaction. And what would be the healthy reaction? A healthy reaction is that the person would be in touch with what a loving mother meant to him and he's lost her and there would be some sadness. But when there is no sadness, no awareness – that's denial. A person who is really denying is not aware that he is denying.

A hebephrenic we say, who uses the highest levels of denial – 'I can be great friends with you and I can kill you too'. I am denying the anger that I have as if I am not even in touch with the anger. Yes, denial is a form of discounting but it's a very extreme form of discounting.

A term that comes in here – you will find it in the Reader – what we call a frame of reference. This is a fancy way of saying 'the way I see things'. It covers all, Parent, Adult and Child completely. What comes in, I take in according to my frame of reference, "Perception".

Okay, perception, and I use the discount – like Anand who doesn't take it in that people care for him. Yet, he continues to obsess, so that in his perception, there is no perception of somebody really caring.

Like Pat also, in a way. Pat doesn't perceive that the other kids like him. He doesn't perceive at the level that they accept him, enjoy him being around. That's according to his frame of reference and he

will interpret what people say, what people do to fit into his frame of reference. So, he can discount what people do for him, what people say to him in order to keep his frame of reference going.

"So, you mean to say that if you confront him he will convert it. He will not look at it from a positive frame of reference. He will use it in a negative way to say that 'people don't care about me' and I am not okay' and so on."

Well, not quite. He will fit it into his frame of reference as we call it. It will end up being positive or it will end up being negative. He interprets it. We pretty well interpret everything. The reality that comes to us, most of it we are interpreting it. We have the fancy terms 'the optimist' and 'the pessimist'. Well, that's really what we are talking about but in a more specific way.

A person discounts to keep his frame of reference going. You see, all of us have difficulty in changing, changing our feelings, changing our ideas, changing our learning. Great difficulty. Now, if it is at a limit that these kids here who are really dysfunctional – it is very scary to change. So he needs to discount what is said to him or what is done to him, the behaviors that come to him. They need to discount in order to carry on the old frame of reference that has been simply put that I am okay and I have to see everything through that. Shalini does that quite often. In her frame of reference she is not okay so she takes things in, turns them around and makes herself not okay.

Another thing that we have when we see the discounting – the discounting helps to carry on a passive behavior. Like the person who is not aware that he is agitating. He is discounting what he is doing. We see the manifestation. They are not aware that they are doing it. Very often, you will see it in a group here, an example of discounting. Let's see – a person is being confronted for taking too much food on his plate and he is being told 'you should not be taking that much of food on your plate? He will say 'there is only that plate left'.

What I have said has nothing to do with the confrontation you have made of me. I have discounted what you said and I have what we say 'redefined'. I have given you an answer that suits me. I don't fit in what you have said to me. I have not paid attention to that. I have discounted that and I answer with my own "yes, but":

Yes, but...well, that's the game. That's leading into a game. You have in T.A. theory, a game transaction. But the redefining is very, very righteous. If you notice kids redefining, it's very important

to pick that up. They will pick it up themselves. But they won't pick it up on themselves. They will pick it up on others. If you notice that in treatment groups that is a good thing to see. You will see some kids showing some behavior that is discounting, that is redefining and yet, when they finish their work and another kid begins to work they will be confronting another patient on the very thing that they were doing. They can see it in others but they can't see it in themselves. Well all of us – we can see in other people what we don't see in ourselves. We discount in ourselves but we can see what others are doing. Why is that?

Well, we don't know ourselves completely. We are not aware fully of ourselves and we spend some time putting it in terms. It is either because we want to carry on the feelings that we are having and keep the feelings. And this is the contamination of feelings, contaminated thinking. So, I am not thinking clearly to see it in you. I am contaminated.

Now, there is a good part in the Reader- we divide first of all the area – what we call the area of discount which is the self, the others, the reality of the situation. Then you have the type of discount. Now, I can discount the stimuli. For instance, there is a very bad, cold wind coming through the window there where I am sitting in a thin T-shirt and I say 'I am not feeling cold'. I am denying the stimuli; the person burns himself and doesn't notice it. That's a discount of stimuli.

But does he discount the effect too?

No, not necessarily. I can be – there is the agitation there but I am denying or I am not paying attention to the physical reaction in my body. I have a physical reaction in my body. The stimulus is there, but I am not paying attention to it.

I can see you crying and I just walk out of the door. I discount the stimuli of seeing you suffering and in pain. I just don't bother with it. That's the stimuli.

Isn't that a discount also of the other person?

Yes, that's what I say; the self is my physical reaction. Now, when I perceive somebody else going through something physically or what they say...see, that "I said that I like what you did" and then you say, "Well you know I always had trouble doing this in school". My positive stroke.... you redefine it. You don't take in my positive stroke. You discount the positive stimuli and the positive stroke. You redefine it and say, 'well, I was never good at this in school which has no reference at all to the positive stroke that I gave'.

“Would the discount occur in isolation as when

No, I can discount something's. I can discount a very bad tooth ache.

“That will be the stimuli as well as myself ?”

Well, it is myself. See, for self I can have the stimuli and then, the problem and the options. For the other I can have the stimuli, the problem and the options. See, I myself, I have pain in the stomach. But everybody has a pain in the stomach so often. No problem and then the options “Why do doctors always give me medicines?” I can never do anything about the pain in my stomach. I have tried everything. No options.

See in each area I can take the type of stimuli. Reality of the situation : what is the stimuli in the situation, what is the problem and what are the options.

Then, another word they use is the ‘mode’. A mode is – I can discount the existence of the problem.

That's the denial, isn't it?

Yes. You come in here, shouting like mad and angry at me, tell me I am a stupid fool. And I say “fine” I just sit down. You shouted at me and I don't register at all and this we do often, at smaller levels too. When somebody is talking in an agitated way I don't pay attention to that stimuli, the existence of that stimuli. Now, that you are talking in an agitated way, I should, how important is that? What is the significance of your speaking in such a quick way? Is there any significance? I don't pay any attention to that.

“If you don't pay any attention to the fact that he is speaking fast, in an agitated manner, you don't ask him the reason behind it. That's the second discount.”

It is not the second discount, it all works - the deeper the discount. First of all, there is the stimuli, the problem and the options. Now, I can deny the existence of the stimuli. I cannot deny the existence of the problem that it is a problem. And I can deny the existence of any options. I had it all worked out in a group. I did it on the bus driver with bad brakes. I had twelve discounts, all worked out. “There is nothing the matter with the brakes” Then the significance “oh, it's not important – You can always stopYou can still carry on.”

Then, there is the solvability, the changepeople are always going to be like that. You are discounting the possibilities of change. And then, you have the last one: the personal discount.

"You don't expect him to do that? Him?" Discounting his ability to change.

Then I can discount that it's a problem..... You have got a pain in your stomach, "that will pass".... the significance of that. "Once you get problems in your stomach you can't get them fixed up anyway. I can'twith diets and taking medicines. It's too much of a bother for me".

And then the options. It is impossible to get rid of it. You have got a pain in the stomach. "There is nothing you can do about it." Or.....There is too much to do.... I have got no time. Viability of the options - "I don't know which doctor I can choose."

"I heard about that specialist. He is not so good".

So, the important thing is that on a wider chart, will it help me if am discounting the stimuli. I am going to be discounting the importance. I am going to be discounting the change, possibilities. I am going to be discounting my ability to change. So, if a person is not in touch with his feelings he is not going to realize the importance of his feelings, he is not going to realize that he can change those feelings or that he himself can change those feelings. So, that's why we stress so much getting in touch with the feelings as soon as we can.

If I am discounting that my pain in the stomach is important – well it's not a problem, I don't see it as a problem. If I am discounting that it is an important problem then, I am not going to bother looking for any options.

Now, in treatment what do we do? When we look at the discount there is usually contamination of thinking. Adult is usually contaminated or the person is excluding Adult. "I always feel miserable" is a contamination of the Adult. "Always"- it is a fact that I must always feel miserable. Your Child feeling of being miserable, sad ("I must always feel sad")contamination of Adult by Child. And "I was so angry I couldn't think", which is a discount of my ability to think and which is an exclusion of Adult.

Now treatment : what we look for are the external manifestations of the discounts – the transactions, the behaviors, the games that come from the discounting. From the transactions come confronting transactions, confronting behaviors. That's why I said from one little transaction the other day – confronting a small transaction where we feel there is a discount then, we can find out really, where the discount is, is it in the person himself and can open up doors very much. So, we want to identify the manifestations. We see the

manifestations in the transactions, the behaviors, and in the games. And then we focus- once you have the discount – where is it? Is the person discounting his ability to change? Is he discounting that anybody can change this? Is he discounting that it is important? Or is he discounting that the problem is really there.

So, technically where would we place it on the chart? What is the type of discount? Because then, if it's simple – his ability to act on options that's not so- you know Pat whether he is going to get up in the morning, he doesn't think: can he ask somebody to wake him up? Can he get an alarm clock? Can he decide himself before he goes to sleep that this is the time he is going to get up? Is he discounting his various options? Or is he discounting that the depression makes him stay in bed every morning – there is a difference. If we can see that it is depression, it is a fear of getting up, a fear of meeting people that is causing him not to get up in the morning.

Now, then how much is a person invested in keeping the discount? Why is he so invested in keeping it? Why is Anand so passive? What is the discount underneath his obsessing? What is his investment in keeping that going? When he sees the discounting then, you can work out what he can do differently and hopefully he will follow that. He may not. That's his investment in keeping it or not, that you have to see.

“But don't you think that will be rather hard because if he has used that frame of reference for a long time then...”

Okay, sure. Shalini this morning – what did she do? What did she need to do to change the attitude ‘I am not ok’? And there you are working with her — what therapy is going to work out for her which she needs to get? She needs to change her frame of reference but how are you going to do that ? Giving her strokes? Getting her to think? Or making her take-in the messages?

Then, you are working out some positive movement when the person has seen the discounting and is trying to work without it. And finally, what you get or what you are wanting to get is that the frame of reference. The person ...thinks about the internal goes with the internal. I accept Shalini as okay and herself accepts herself as okay. There is integration. In other words, what we would say —the person is able to form relationships that are meaningful and that are straight and true, no longer ...needy ...symbiotic type of relationship.

Questions, clarifications or anything that you want to add.

“Sadness or something behind the discounting”

Could be anything: fear or anger or sadness. Yes, normally there would be some negative feeling behind it. And the symbiotic relationship is based on the dysfunctional. The inappropriate symbiotic relationship is founded on a negative feeling. There are negative feelings involved.

“Discounting is out of awareness. What happens if I am aware I am doing something and don’t say anything about it? How would you define that?”

Well, I would have to ask you why you do not confront me. You know you are doing it. Then, we might get into : you might be discounting something.....

“You have not discounted the stimulus but you have discounted the significance and personal responsibility in confronting yourself.”

“What is the difference between discounting and passivity? What is the connection?”

Passive behavior is non-problem solving. So, in the discounting I am either not paying attention to the problem or ways of solving it.

“Is discounting also, a passive behavior?”

No, it is a mechanism.

See, the passive behaviors, the doing nothing, the agitation, the over adaptation and the violence or incapacitation – there must be a discount somewhere. I am discounting my ability to solve the problem.

“What about passive aggressive behavior?”

That’s a term different from our Cathexis term.

“Well, I mean someone sits there passively and radiates hostility to people.”

Yes, well it is anger which is different from what we would refer.

Training Program – Voice recording 001

date : Nov 8, 2003

Fr.Hank : Ok, now

- 1) How do I reach out to another person ?
- 2) Where do I get stuck in myself? You can try and figure out for yourself what you mean by stuck.

From the training room that we have, we came out of it to face this real question, we all need to ask ourselves further and make a study sort of reflection, of how the community functions, what is the progress within ourselves as a community, as individuals, because for all individuals living our lives and living together in the community, we all need to keep growing. I know for myself I have to keep growing. In my group, my identity basically is as a priest, joined with a group of men, who are all over the world. When I was 21, I joined a group of men living for spiritual growth and dedication to religion with the aim of helping people. That desire has brought me here to Bangalore. Here in Bangalore a centre for guiding peoples' spirituality was opening up and I was asked to come and join them in this. So, I helped people with therapy. This was some years ago, One time I doubted whether this community could ever exist. But it became as solid as the building housing the therapeutic community now is. That was 20 years ago when the community seemed to me it would be just a question of our venture, to bring patients from all over the world to Bangalore and to propose to help them resolve their serious emotional and mental problems. How did it all start? When it was proposed to me by Jacqui Schiff, one evening as we talked together and I hesitated to enter into a field that I knew very little about. And one of my problems is that I usually agree to a challenge that comes to me. When I agreed with Jacqui, I had no idea I would play such an important role in establishing and continuing the proposed community. I am sure that the group of patients who had to come with Jacqui from the efficient United States to a disorganized haphazard India in August 1979 never realized how they would end up. I agreed to do a few months training

in connection with this in the United States. The time I spent in the program watching, and wondering, and learning, it was my first introduction to the group of bright active young men and women who had serious mental problems, who were certainly ill. I was surprised for they spoke so well about their problems. They described themselves well, they spoke rebelliously of their wants and desires, especially their desires to experience physical contact, support, guidance. At the same time, in the community they were questioned, confronted, for allowing their thinking to wander around with no proper direction. They were given consequences for each mistake, encouraged to build an impressive faith in this new system, the system which they believed would give them the meaning to resolve whatever problems they were carrying within themselves. But Jacqui, their "parent", the therapist they were depending upon was leaving and coming with me to India, taking with her a few who are willing to face the uncertainties of the unknown and unfamiliar situations of India. Those coming with Jacqui asked me questions, so I became a sort of bridge, a bridge between California and India. Some were eager and others were very frightened. After all Jacqui had the reputation of bringing young people out of their mental disability. One of the newcomers in the open community seemed to be more eager than the others, more committed to her struggle, hoping that India would be her solution. I wondered, as she seemed to me, to have some serious difficulty, as she was on a program to write down meticulously everything she was eating. If she was not eating enough, she did not want to bother about it. Often she was not responsible for herself, or to herself and would not care for herself. One thing she was aware of was her desire to join Jacqui's safari to India. She was developing the ray of hope that India seemed to offer her. As with many people, India with its old exhaustive culture, became a fascination. For her I was a firm bond to India and that proved to her that India exists. So she was asking many different questions.

The group came to Bangalore. They came to learn psychotherapy and learn to function and live a healthy and happy life. A doctor friend of mine led them to the empty house. I only arrived the next day, and had found it hard to find metal cots and mattresses. I was not all that welcome, having come late, not a very auspicious beginning to our community. I tried to find some fruits and vegetables and easily discovered that fruits and vegetables were available and appreciated. Jacqui agreed to accept a crate of them after they were chemically treated to remove any contamination. In a few days the routine community living began in earnest. The structures and all important therapy sessions that are the backbone of community functioning, were in place. Agreed decisions covered the details of

daily routine living. For example, structures were established about who could go outside the house alone, who was to be always restricted in the living room, had to convince this group that the huge dangerous outside world is basically friendly. And so managed to have the group living together happily.

As the human persons that we are, all of us in some way or other search for meaning and happiness. This comes to us from relations that we have with ourselves and with others. Speaking of relationship, it takes me back to the solid stone building, the home as a community in Hulimavu village about 4 kms from the original Athma Shakti which started 20 years ago. In the community the tradition still continues. Over the years there have been numerous workshops and training sessions given by therapists and trainers from other countries, India is not unknown as it was 20 years ago. The prime therapy, is still given main importance, the attachment therapy. This enables those lacking security to emerge from their hurt and crippled personalities. This enables a person to reach out to trust, and become responsible for self and become an independent person. In this treatment process strong relationships are formed. The community has become a living source of relationship as all members, those in the Hulimavu community and the extended community, enjoyed sustaining and rewarding relationships that they have formed within the community. Last evening I had a call from Ghorakpur from Mohan, who is one of the kids here at the beginning. There are many people who still remember those first days we had. So, why, I wonder, give an idea of myself, what am I about, what is my motivation, what am I doing with myself? We have to reflect, view ourselves, and get back to the desires that make us happy. So, each of us with renewed vigor and zeal to work, we get people moving, seeing and loving the world. We need to have people see the world, see it and love it and renew their contact. So they enjoy being in a really worldwide community and simultaneously a local network of friends. Always a local community seeking to serve others across the world. All of us we share, we interact and we talk. They had this meeting with 400 Jesuits from all over the world. They spent 3 months talking and discussing, and this is what they came up with. They emphasized the startling reality of God's love, that we all are made for love, however we express that acceptance and love to each other. I would question how much trouble you have in believing that you have been loved, or that you are being loved today.

When I speak of spirit, what is this spirit? It is deeper than your thoughts and deeper than your feelings. This is the spirit, that's deep within you. The mind and the heart within are the essentials of life. What gives that life to mind and the heart is the spirit. The

spirit will make us open to love. Situation is so simple, no excuse needed, no complications but we have to keep open and trusting. The contract requires us to act as a group with a universal mission, realizing at the same time the diversity of our situations, it is a world wide community, and simultaneously with a network of local communities. We seek to serve the communities across the world. Our mission is a safe endeavor in a chosen place open to follow the gift of justice for all. We must see it as a unified home in which we depend upon each other, globalization technology and environmental concerns, that challenge our traditional boundaries and have made us look, work, we share our boundaries. Our hands have increased our awareness and we bear a common responsibility to the welfare of the entire world and its development in a sustainable living and giving way.

To live this mission, we have to do this work , in our broken world, we need to turn on our brotherly spirit. I have a room in Mount St.Joseph's across the road that's where I go and enjoy a familiar folk community, in which we nourish and express with great intensity, so much passion, that will unify our differences and bring to life our creativity. I can go anywhere in the world and I can see my community welcome me and share with me. In our training program, this is the way I put it. But here in Athma Shakti we have to lead the kids to be able to lead a normal life, that which fits for them although they may have to struggle to feel at ease.

We have to lead the kids to join in the social network, so to be with others, with some sort of ease and comfort, to know their needs in a social setting. Our community has already a social setting, and members have the ability to ask, understand, discuss, accept, see the benefit, realize where they are coming from, and whether the difficulties can be rightfully and beneficially expressed, in their thinking, can they realize how difficulties can be resolved. The person intelligently realizes, that I will always have social needs, and I am grateful for having my social needs including the need to talk to others, the need to help others. We have to be grateful because these needs lead us to come into sharing contact with others, to be with others and grow with others. These social needs that I have cause me to observe, be aware and realize so that these needs can be fulfilled. God presents us with the needs, the way we grow and experience ourselves in a certain way. Human beings have ease as they share with others We can not exist by ourselves. Because it is in the mutual observation we become aware and realize that our needs can be fulfilled, that we need to be with others, learn from others, enjoy being with others. Once you appreciate your needs, and experience having them fulfilled and satisfied, you appreciate the goal of a

meeting. Why am I talking to you ? We have to rejuvenate, energize the present. We need to leave the past community and move along with the community that beckons us. Remember we are never alone, we may be sitting doing nothing, not talking to anybody but we are not alone ever. You have a duty to be with others, to react and enjoy with each of the member of the community, all of us, each one of us being a moving effective person. I need not use any fancy words. We are created to be effective persons in getting our needs met, effective in forming and enjoying our relationships with others, learning to love and to have a beautiful living experience of being loved by others, so that each of us can grow, become independent, enjoy being the persons we are, able to make attachments, being supported in our attachments, through our attachments growing in insights, understanding attachment, understanding our need for being attached, our need for being able to love others and by being able to love ourselves we recognize the feelings we are experiencing, and the love, the purpose and meaning of each and every feeling that I have. All that comes into my conscious life, realizing the reason for any feeling coming into my consciousness and how that particular feeling is enabling me to reflect on my present attitude towards myself and towards other persons and in this manner directing me to think necessary thoughts so that I can guide myself in my own awareness of myself. I may guide others by the directions that are open and accepted by me to take the steps which would bring me to a sense of my work for myself, and my work for other people, good activity for all of us, all that takes place in our world, each one for ourselves and for other people, whether it is father, mother, brother sister, family, relationships friends, you know that's how human life goes. Firstly awareness of the feelings of a little one month old child enabled to find a satisfying, pleasant feeling, realizing he can make moves to bring him back those feelings, the cause and effect, this causes this, this causes that, the cause is not outside, the cause is within me seemingly within my body mind, not from outside. I can change the awareness and avoid those feelings that seem to bring me discomfort. Some remain with me causing me discomfort and I do not feel I have the need to equip to escape from those negative experiences and they remain with me and I do not realize they are negative experiences and are going to remain within myself and may cause so many hesitations and dissatisfying moments in my life. It is only later or hopefully or fortunately, at some favored moments in my life, another person seems to accept me and understands in some manner that I can not explain. That this person accepts me even though I am coming from my negative experiences and may even struggle to avoid the person but as I speak with the person and draw

a comfort from the person I find a trust in myself, and a growing belief that I can find meaning and happiness in my life. That a person may provide that transforming process is what we may go through here, in this building, in these rooms, the living room and dining room, badminton court, that's what we are doing, be aware of our negative feelings, and be willing to talk about any negative thoughts and feelings. Everybody needs to talk about and free oneself. That has to be, because to observe and to realize that their needs can be fulfilled, our kids need to learn the skills of communication, of interacting with others, of understanding others, helping others as they learn the skills of communication, as they become aware that it is impossible to find ease and comfort in being a person who is not sharing with others. The person needs to control themselves so that they can easily and actively think and express themselves clearly and intelligently with other people. We have a strategy for producing anything in life, feelings of love, attraction, deeper relations, decisions, whatever. If we discover our strategy for loving, we can trigger that state as well. If we are thinking and trying to decide whether to speak to another person or trying to decide whether to ask them something or not, then we become decisive in a matter of minutes but we have to keep active, rely on our habits, the learning and habits from the past. In some manner express ourselves as we wish and share with others clearly and intelligently. In Athma Shakti we have the methodology that will give any person the ability to communicate to his or her own satisfaction at the satisfactory hours, a methodology that enables the living relationships to be established and enhanced, that is what living life is all about. It is becoming free, within myself, free to use myself, to understand others, to share with others, and to hear from others. All of us need to imagine how we can create our future, well that is what we want our kids to do, and help other people create their future. This is what we want our kids to do, create, freely fit into, develop, open, that there is a future for me. That each of us has to create a future for ourselves. I mentioned the beginnings of my life. I would like to begin reflecting, what is the interior self within me, aware of, my desire, how is it guiding me for peace and meaning in all that I do. Do I have peace? peace meaning I am happy. What is my vision, what is the purpose of ASV, what is our mission. How do we rate ourselves and say that we are set for ourselves, moving for ourselves. How do we belong? How do we know we are learning? We have to be open to discussion, get any feedback, we have to get ourselves moving.

Training Program - Voice recording 007

Now let us go back to beginning. We have to begin from the beginning, for each and every person who has been mentally ill, there has been a beginning, of the illness. Very much that we will be talking about in this book will be the beginning of the history of each and every person that has been connected to Athma Shakti. We will need to talk about the individual who has been with us in the community in the past; in the present the people have come to Athma Shakti looking for something that could enable them to live their lives with other people. When a patient first comes to Athma Shakti, he/she will be experiencing loneliness, difficulty in their contact with other people or any type of relationship with other people.

Most people who have come and spent time in Athma Shakti have been brought here by parents and relatives and most have come after being spent some years of treatment with a psychiatrist or psychiatrists or being in hospitals. They come to us really with great difficulty because they cannot be with other people, they cannot function with other people. In a way they cannot understand themselves. Why do they behave like this? It is difficult for them to reflect upon themselves and decide how they want to react, what they want or even ask themselves what can I do? In the circumstances in which they find themselves, they don't experience they have feelings, often those feelings are very negative feelings. I feel happy and I feel good are the feelings so very important to us. In a way they guide us, in a way they give us, enable us that there is some meaning in our lives because of the feelings.

What is the role of those feelings in our lives? If we would not have those feelings, how would we guide ourselves? How would we choose what would we like to have? The awareness enables us to be conscious of those feelings we are experiencing within ourselves at anytime. So, they are necessary to be with us or our life from the moment we are born even before we are thinking we have feelings. Slowly as a very young infant we begin to realize we have feelings.

We begin to look at the reasons why we have those feelings that we have. That brings us to be obedient to thinking and to look at the reason the thinking has to do with the reasons for our feelings. But as we think over these feelings, we begin to decide certain ways of behaving we do which gives us the good feeling and try to avoid what gives us the negative feelings and then we begin to take charge of ourselves and our personalities and we decide what will help us to avoid the sadness.

Yes, we find some reasons why we are afraid. What we must do to avoid being afraid? **Must do** word seems to be some sort of command. So, we find within ourselves there is this command structure. Something that tells us, something that commands us what to do. So, now we will be coming to these feelings and then thinking about those feelings, then the command structure tells us what to do. So, those really basic visions take place within ourselves. So, as we live each day, live the day with these feelings, attitudes and the beliefs. Attitudes and beliefs are those things, sort of through which we guide ourselves. We form these sorts of guide notes.

We are told in certain ways in the beginning of our lives by our parents, to feel positive within ourselves and through that they guide us so that we are able to control our feelings and avoid negative feelings, but we are free to make changes within ourselves. This is what Athma Shakti is all about, the ability to be able to change myself, so that I change my thinking, or I change my feelings or attitude or belief and extract freedom that is necessary for us if we are to live a happy and meaningful life. We want to have that and we want to experience that happiness. And that is the goal of our lives as a human person, justifying towards that happiness. So we have parents, the parents who have given us the life we have and who wish us to have a good and a happy life, the life that is fulfilling for us, the life that is meaningful for us. We in the beginning may feel very uneasy to accept the guidelines that my parents give me and yet over the years it gives me the sense and happiness that I experience in my life.

So, I need to learn what causes me to have various feelings that I have. Finding out what feeling I have, I have to then look at them and study so that I can discover what causes me to have those feelings that I have. Especially the negative feelings so often that most of life I have to be questioning and find out what causes me to have those unpleasant feelings. I need to admit to myself that I have negative feelings and question myself as to why I am having these negative feelings and anger. Sometimes when I want something and I am not

getting it I will be angry. I have to make a big effort to study why I am having this anger. What is the reason? Why does it bother me? It is causing me trouble and what can I do to be rid of it? Many times young people come here and they are quite angry and they are afraid of their difficulty in meeting and talking with people. They feel often they are helpless that they cannot do anything to break out of the anger or fear. No one seems to be there to esolve this and that is where we at Athma Shakti work to bring the individual to realize the negative feelings that they are having and through our efforts bring them to discover the reasons why they are having these negative feelings. And when they recognize these negative feelings, we can help them to change.

Part - IV

Letters to Parents

Date : June 24, 1998

I address this letter to all friends and members of our extended community of Athma Shakti Vidyalaya.

We had the house-warming and dedication of our new home on June 21, 1998. Everything went well on that day. We had lunch for 300 people. I thought people might be interested in the words which I said as we made the dedication of this, our new home.

I will always be grateful as will many others for all your care and support over the years. Thanks.

.....And so we come to our dedication of this building –

We dedicate ourselves with this building

*as it becomes the home of a community being built
with living stones –*

we are united with others around the world

*as we do whatever we can to make this world one living
community of acceptance and love.*

Date : January 10, 2005

I begin this letter at the beginning of 2005 with various thoughts and feelings coming up in my mind, together with many worries, some encouragements, legitimate doubts and creative ideas. There is always much to be considered and ofcourse, our starting point is always the past and the possible future. As we reflect we become aware of the accompanying feelings, positive and negative, that give us the insights and direction that enable us to build up our lives. I hope that we, all of us in any way attached to Athma Shakti, will be aware and supportive of those decisions we need to take, to enhance our own individual lives and the lives of all those who share our world.

In our present review we register the thoughts of thanksgiving and gratitude for the year 2004, a year that gave us the opportunity to celebrate the 25 years we have dedicated to the rewarding task of

enabling meaningful mental health and productive living for all of us. In 2004 we had some kids move out to work and support themselves. One or two did training courses. And then we had others join the community. The present kids in the community are much involved in developing their strengths and capabilities.

There are two goals of 2005 I would like to see fulfilled. One is to have the second floor of our building completed so that we have more space and the kids are more comfortable in their rooms. The second is to set up a definite training program based on our methodology that we can offer to interested persons who have some interest in the field of mental health and psychotherapy. Hopefully these two goals can be fulfilled this year.

Along with these, I would personally like to concentrate on one specific area of rehabilitation, that I consider the necessary first step in gaining or regaining mental health. We need many different words to help us describe this simple goal, or rather intervention, leading to the goal of being able to function independently and always responsibly in life. If I would put it simply, I believe that all people in the mental health field and that is all of us, realize the essential step needed to be taken by the disturbed person. That small but often frightening step is to be open, to trust, or relate, or deeply connect with another person. We are talking here about a simple, inner decision made on the basis of a trustful experience that in fact cannot be fully explained, but also cannot be fully denied.

I refer to a very definite, real action that takes place within a person that leads to a realization that this small act of trust is worthwhile, as in meaning, opens up something, lifts something, makes existence lighter – we could go through many words but still not give an apt description or understanding of this experience – for it is often an experience that will not be understood, it just is there and it feels good.

Many young people with mental health problems can carry on many pursuits. They might study, learn to be efficient on a computer, go shopping, can sing, can dance, but cannot appreciate their interaction with another person. They cannot or will not set aside their own feelings and attitudes and beliefs or intentions in order to understand in a meaningful manner the feelings and attitudes that are being expressed by the other person, even though the other person is doing their best to support them and be of assistance to them. They never experience or seriously acknowledge a compassion, a kindness. They find quite impossible a willingness to adjust to the

other because they unconsciously at some period in the distant past have decided that they are alone and must stay alone for their own well being or safety. For them in their protective outlook the world is not kind and the persons they have to deal with in the world are not kind.

The person with serious mental problems has a serious difficulty, almost an impossibility of making the different interactions in life fit significantly together for him or her. So, it is up to those who can make sense out of life to reach out to the mentally ill with compassion, gentleness, understanding, patience and quiet firmness. Yes, it is almost as if you are attempting to have a small child understand. Usually the child will understand you because he or she might unknowingly trust you in some way. So, our task is to find some natural and reliable intervention that will bring the mentally ill to a point where they will decide to trust, to trust at least one person so fully that they can be lead out of the labyrinth they seem to be lost in.

We are a charitable registered society operating a therapeutic community, often referred to as a rehabilitation centre. We have a license granted by the local district commissioner. This license comes under the Mental Health Act of 1985 .There are many centers for the mentally ill which have been functioning for over 20 years and whose custodial care and treatment is highly appreciated by the resident's family.

Besides all this I would ask you to keep me informed of your thinking about Athma Shakti concerning any helpful ideas you may have and what you may wish or require from us.

Fr. Hank Nunn S.J.

26th September '05

I have not written a letter to parents and friends of Athma Shakti Vidyalaya for many months. Time slips by, we let it go, and miss out on the contacts that we could have had with each other. I have been slow in keeping up the contacts and relationships that are so necessary for each and every one of us. I am renewing, seems I am always renewing. Of course if there always is a real renewal I will be gaining, and any gain will be a boon for me.

When visitors enquire about the latest events of my life and the special breakthroughs. I tell them I have become personally

committed. Then I point to the reason for the commitment, a real living reason they will have already encountered at the door in the form of big black frisky Alsatian. Imagine friends giving a huge animal to a 75 year old man on his birthday. However they can be excused because when they handed me this gift, he fit snugly in the palm of one of my hands. So, I have had a very happy companion with me, a transformed companion who had to be quietly lead through the eight month transformation into a quiet pet. Having my big bounding fourlegged friend around was not to everybody's liking in the community so he had to learn to restrict his playfully taking a person's arm between his teeth, realize how long his tail is so he doesn't brush faces as he walks by people sitting on mattresses in the living room and that there are only a select few willing and allowed to give him strokes. Now, I have an obedient companion with me during my morning's long walk, one who will sit and reluctantly lay down on command, even roll over and play dead for the trainer. Because of him I had dropped my habit of taking two nights off each week. Now, I know he will be no trouble if I take time off. He will give me permission to have time off.

Enough of my dog story. He sits with me in my office and when I am in groups, as last evening when I sat with the kids for my regular Sunday evening chat. I suppose I can call it a chat although sometimes it is more of a lecture or quiet exhortation. I like to have a topic suggested by the group. Usually it is a topic that relates to therapy. Last evening we ended up looking at "reluctance" an important word in therapy.

I used the word reluctance, an acceptable word, that fits easily with the condition or place that some of the group audience find themselves in at present although they most often have reluctance to admit that they have a reluctance to accept that their problem seems to centre around a reluctance. Could we not say that much of the psychological problems that individuals have is simply that – a reluctance to admit a reluctance? Nice words to describe a miserable, wretched, firm condition. For that is what it is. The condition is firm, it is closed off, lacks any movement to be free, a fear of movement, an understandable fear but still a fear that blocks movement to wellness. The perceived misery causes anger, yet denies the deeper real causes of the anger. So, it remains. And it is wretched because the sad, melancholy person suffers in this condition of reluctance. At some level he or she wishes the troubles would just disappear.

From my experience I would say this experience is very common with people with psychological problems whether they have slight

problems or full-blown mental illness. The first question I ask of parents or someone making enquiries about placing someone in ASV, concerns the ill person's realization and understanding of their problem and their motivation. All of us have personal problems some less, some more than others. If we are to have a happy and meaningful life of relationships with other people it is necessary that we be conscious and aware of the bumps and humps of our inner life, of our personality. By being conscious of the difficulties we experience within ourselves, and as we make the required efforts to resolve those difficulties, we actively and continuously further our inner peace. Our inner peace leads to relationships. A healthy inner life enables us to initiate and continue relationships with persons. We are persons born with the wherewithal to live a life of relationships with other persons. But that wherewithal is delicate. Made up of so many factors, it is the gift that makes our life more beautiful, causes us to write poetry, to make marvelous paintings, to wonder, to perceive, to understand, to choose, to value, to love.

Our peace, our happiness in relationships with others depends first and foremost on our acceptance that any negative experiences that disturb us can be examined, understood, judged and resolved. All this depends on our inner freedom, our greatest gift, our willingness to question our own experience of self. This freedom is always with us, but perhaps the personal gift most easy to deny. It seems very odd but people with serious mental problems often deny this gift of freedom in the name of freedom. They can deny this most essential gift by claiming some sort of inner freedom that is not free; it is some sort of closed determination, some sort of obsession, causing the person to claim a pernicious isolation. Some people may lightly call that reluctance. A nice word, but the reality may keep many people ill. We need to realize that we must maintain the true reality of our freedom whatever the cost, because this freedom keeps me questioning, keeps me healthy. This freedom empowers me to reflect, to perceive what is real, to understand what is real, to listen to others, reflect on advice given to me, to choose what is the best choice to make at the present moment in my search for supportive relationships, for love.

Many things can go wrong if we lose or reject that freedom, lose that freedom to listen, to understand, to weigh all the factors in the situation. One of the kids in the discussion last evening said, "Yes, we must keep wanting what we want, so that we can want what we want". She is referring to the two year old's stance, "Give me what I want, no questions asked". Yes, she in her life has wanted

just what she wanted and did what she wanted, all of which has resulted in humiliation, great pain and unhappiness.

Or we are afraid to use that freedom, we are reluctant to decide to make a change or move within the orbit of our thinking, our feelings, attitudes or beliefs. In my experience this reluctance that keeps many individuals blocked in what they say, others say, is their problem. The unwillingness to let go or to shift their attitude keeps many trapped. Often I have had the experience that visitors who come to ASV find that we are over demanding, too demanding, on the persons here for treatment. We must make the demands, for most often these persons are quite reluctant to make the necessary healthy demands on themselves. They have no idea that they can use (athma shakti) their freedom, activate their freedom, give up their reluctance, and in the process come to a new view and realization of the negative experience they are having. This is a very simplistic way of describing this immense struggle that the person with mental ill health goes through. Yet I believe that this is the route they must be open to take. There is no other road except being aware of thinking, and facilitative deciding.

Here at ASV they are never asked to do this alone, no therapist would ever ask a person to choose without bringing them first to some knowledge and insight of just where the limitation is, for example, where their feelings may be contaminating their thinking, keeping them locked up in anger or fear. They are given the acceptance and understanding needed to support them. In many cases this personal acceptance and mutual understanding continues lifelong.

I have sketchily described one process of getting well, and the reason for the existence of ASV. This process has given me happiness over the years, as I have been with people going through it. The reluctance is understandable, but the reluctance can be a barrier on the road to wellness. We can use many other words to describe the basic difficulty individuals have, and refer to other behaviors, not so acceptable as the word reluctance, but the process and outcome is the same. Each individual must find and act on with their freedom, no matter how much reluctance they may experience within their personality.

The community goes on as usual. At sometimes the atmosphere is bright and active, at other times a bit heavy like the dark monsoon clouds hovering above us. Often, the situation is the result of the dynamics I was referring to in the sentences above. Some of the kids

are busy using their inner freedom so they are not stuck in the negative feelings that have bugged them for a long time, others are reluctant to trust that if they let go of their old burdensome negative beliefs, they will find a new experience in their living with themselves. Then comes the question how to convince them to let go. I believe that many of you probably have experienced how difficult or even impossible the convincing can be. Still the impossible can be made possible, especially through relationships, the reason we have a therapeutic community.

There have been good initiatives in the community in the form of discussions on some planning for the future; some planning being tentative, may be more than tentative; some serious talk on raising funds so we will be more comfortable and we can answer the needs of people coming to us for help. Any expansion in the future will mean funding that begins with at first finding out, sounding out the various possibilities.

So, much to keep us energetically active and moving, as we remain earnestly searching for the effective process that enables persons to establish the renewed foundations of their psychological well being.

Fr. Hank Nunn S.J.

19th December 2005

Yes, a new year, a change of calendars, an exchange of good wishes, a hopeful look ahead. May all these activities lead us, each in his or her own way, on a move ahead. But remember we are not on a road. The road is not out there in front of us, for us to walk on or drive on. No the road ahead is going to be built in our spirit. In some way we lay down that road ahead by means of the experiences within our own spirit.

What those experiences will be, and how we react to them depends on each of us. Mostly they will be of our own making. Sure we will be surrounded by many happenings and trends and so called breakthroughs, but as we go through the year these happenings can be seen as only the root cause of our experiences. We enhance and develop our experiences as we choose to react to all the influences , the pressures, the environments we continually find surrounding us. There is no running away, no escaping our living in this world

given to us now. So, it is best that we stop and direct our minds, our hearts, our personalities in order to grow, to live, as we would prefer to live, to discover for ourselves our individual meaning as we go along day by day.

This morning I was sitting quietly in my room for my usual meditative period after coming back from my morning walk with Kandu, my dog. Then I had a special thought about Kandu, he who teaches me always to expect something good to come along. He wakes me, expecting me to rise and take my walk with him, expecting me to give him a full meal when we get back, expecting me to play ball retrieving with him later in the day. What he expects usually happens. He trusts in his expectations, trusts that life is favorable to him and that he will be all right. Atleast he always seems to be expecting something to happen; may be this is because he is still young.

But ourselves, what do we expect? Are we alive to expectations? I believe we all have expectations according to which we organize our thinking and our lives. We all want to move ahead and have a fulfilling, meaningful life. To have such a life comes about only as a result of our efforts, be they physical efforts or mental efforts or spiritual efforts. We all need to take care of our health so that we will be present to all the wonderful benefits coming into the world in the coming years. Hopefully we will always be desirous to keep learning all there is to learn in the various branches of knowledge concerning history, culture, science, and religion. We are all in some way or other on some sort of spiritual search to feel more secure within ourselves, more knowledgeable about what this whole life adventure is, more at peace with ourselves and others.

We expect and want the world to be better, our experience of life to be more rewarding, happier. And at this time with the new year coming upon us, all of this comes to mind. But what effort do we really make within ourselves to make life better for ourselves? What will bring us greater enthusiasm for living, greater satisfaction with ourselves? All the pundits will tell us it is our own responsibility to bring all this about, to make it happen. And I guess it is.

After being with so many people who are seeking more satisfaction in being the persons they would like to be, I believe that the key word in all of this is “relationship”, relationships of love. Let us skip the “love” word just now and concentrate on the “relationship” word. Many believe the discussion gets a bit “soupy” when you start speaking about “love” So stay with the idea that all of us have

come into this world through relationships, find meaning in relationships, and find happiness in warm, solid relationships.

My experience with the young people here for treatment in ASV is that all have or have had some problems with relationships. Of course I might add that all of us being human find our relationships are often not as smooth as we would wish. One of the first indications of having emotional problems, serious emotional problems, is the withdrawal.

The defenses the persons unconsciously set up for protection, keep them isolated within themselves often behind a wall of fear or anger, distant from caring others who would like to relate to them.

To take a brief review of the news on the TV or in the newspapers, allow yourself to recognize that the news is again and again about broken relationships between states, groups of people, individuals. Notice the often-total lack of freedom to be open and adjust to others, the unwillingness to freely relate to others, freely open in trust and reciprocate the other's concessions, interact and settle in shared understanding. And recognize the terrible human suffering that flows from this refusal to relate openly and with concern.

So, how to cause a new year to happen, a real new year, one that is different? It is possible; this must be our belief, even though it goes against all the odds. All of us can believe that dependable relationships can come to exist. And a relationship has a strong element of faith, of belief. And also an important addition that needs to be added, hope. Each of us has to generate our own hope as we generate our own faith that life can be more fulfilling for us, richer in relationships.

There is a phrase that I read each morning as I reflect on my own life. It gives me an impetus to renew my faith in my call. The phrase is "to make known...the loving-kindness in the heart of my God" I believe that the ability for any person to form relationships is engendered from the loving-kindness in his or her heart. That is in a way the main purpose of "Athma Shakti", to enable all of us to live with greater loving-kindness in our hearts. Let us hope that our relationships may deepen and grow in the year 2006 so that the year may evolve in such a manner that more loving-kindness will be found in the hearts of all of us.

Thanking you

Fr. Hank Nunn S.J.

March 20th, 2007

It has been a long time, many months, weeks gone and days.

I have finally decided that I must communicate with persons outside of our compound walls

Enough of an introduction. And with that I am brushing aside an admission that I have quietly reneged from taking the time to write. I have had lots of questions rising up in my awareness, lots of ideas to be squeezed for brilliant ideas, lots of intentions to be followed through on quietly, seriously. Sure, I know that I function best when I am aware and active with the usual result that unconsciously I begin to "make things happen". From my experience of myself I realize that I am not much of a quiet "status quo" person. I wouldn't have come around all the corners in my life had I been satisfied with letting the ball bounce along. I always wanted to dribble and kick it around – why one of my better ways of passing time not writing letters in the Past few months has been watching the Arsenal and Manchester United boot the ball around on a saturday afternoon.

Be that as it is ,I have been at home in the community busy with the regular therapy sessions and group work and office work. I have done interesting reading from my favorite Ken Wilbur on our psychological, spiritual development from the womb to nirvana, and other various authors on the tremendously interesting interactions among the millions of cells in our brains. So much is known about our brain today. Yet many of us seem to be back with the primitives who did not know they could control their feeling reactions. In one of the books a neurobiologist described how much tremendous knowledge he learned from the brains of little chickens on how they learned to store information. How to handle all the wanted and unwanted, pleasant and unpleasant information stored in our brains, and bodies also, that is my concern, that is the engaging question. We can be happy, responsible, capable individuals or unhappy, depressed, prejudiced individuals. It is our choice.

Let me quote a few sentences from one neurobiologist – "Experience is a term in the behavioural lexicon. Its translation in the language of biology is plasticity. To function effectively – that is to respond appropriately to its environment – all living organisms must show two contradictory properties. They must retain stability – specificity – during development and into adult life, resisting the pressures of the endless buffeting of environmental contingency, both today and over a lifetime. And they show plasticity – that is the ability to adapt and modify the specificity in the face of repeated

experience.....To unravel the dialectic between specificity and plasticity and to understand its mechanisms form some major tasks to modern biology.”

Status quo and change – makes our lives interesting, appealing, amusing and exciting – athma shakti.

Now to some business. We have yet to move into the second floor. There a few adjustments to be done. The boys will move to the second floor. And the girls will have another room on their floor so there will be four in each room rather than six and the night staff rooms are much roomier. I will move back into the main building on the ground floor making a proper office for myself and a bedroom from the two crowded bedrooms the boys will happily vacate.

With all the construction we now have four spacious bright rooms to be used, a room for computers, a new bright library, a room for formal psychophysical exercises, a room for any activities. Plus we have the large room above the present “living room” that could be used for meetings or courses or lectures. Come and see.

Fr. Hank Nunn S.J.

July, 2008

It is Thursday – the 3rd of July and today I have finally found a good opportunity to share with you my reflections of the Parents’ Meeting that we came together for on Friday, the 27th of June. To have the meetings and some discussions is very educative and heartening for staff and kids and hopefully for you also. It is also informative and productive – necessary. For me it is experiential, so this experience must not be allowed to just vanish. Although it cannot really vanish since it has all been recorded in the cells of our bodies and more importantly in the grey cells in our skull (some scientists claim that they are also found throughout our body). Any experience remains with us and considering the amount of conscious or unconscious attention we, each of us, allow ourselves to pay to the experience, it will be a means of deepening our understanding of ourselves and an invitation we may give to our personality, our ego or our self to find a deeper meaning in being the person each of us believes himself or herself to be and in living the life we want to live.

From the feedback some of you have given me this meeting has been rated the most useful, most effective, worthwhile and beneficial, that we have had so far. I felt fairly pleased with the atmosphere we

engendered together concerning this important concern we all have –energetic functioning of all persons connected in any manner with Athma Shakti.

Still I wish my own rating of the meeting could have been higher, more to what I would have preferred. After reflection my rating was somewhere in the range of 35% to 40% on the categories that come to mind now –participation, depth of sharing, creativity, surprise, wonder. These categories just spring up before me now as I write. So, let me attempt to explain to myself what I mean by each of them.

Participation – yes, as a member of the community, at a particular encounter of a special, specific community, where each person with equal rights and duties could open themselves or herself to be ready to acquire important insights concerning self, son or daughter, brother, sister, resident here in the community. With this happening through the evolving meaningful, intellectual engagement we have had together, everyone had an opportunity to advance their facility in expressing their needs and desires, and at the same time establishing an agreeable manner of relating to each other, something that may not have been possible at home in the past. Through the growth of trust that our kids have hopefully assimilated within this community, they will take the opportunity to venture to experience some tentative ability to relate more meaningfully to one other person or to many others. Through this continually growing skill in communication, ease and awareness in developing some sort of self-transcendence with others, he or she will then allow their self to actualize the meaning of their life.

Sharing – In the sharing comes the actualization of self. Our life from the very beginning is a process of becoming more alive. We are born having tremendous potentialities. One philosophy that comes from the Europe of seven or eight hundred years ago, and which I had to study fifty years ago uses different ideas to describe this situation. It is based on two concepts or words – “Act” and “Potency”. These are two simple words but they define life and existence. We might surmise that the divine is purely act without needing any potency. As such the divine enlivens us as spirits but not as pure spirits but spirits living in a body. As humans our life actually exists as an indestructible spiritual life which we live in a physical body with the ability to think, reason, decide, choose and love. When born the human person has life and this life is pure potency to take a decision, to decide, to choose, to act, to love. Our whole life after that is based on or built, composed of or formed or

directed by the choices we make. Even the small infant reacts when it finds itself comfortable or not comfortable, hungry or not. When we make a choice, we bring into energy or act the potency we are energizing. In this way we are responsible for all the life strength we cause to enter and energize our life. Another way of speaking on this is to say that we begin with a “tabla rasa” - a blank sheet with nothing on it. And as we choose we fill it. Actualization is at the core of the treatment in Athma Shakti. Each and every person has the opportunity through their choices to actualize themselves – become as they wish to be, as they need to be. The crux of the problem is in the ability to be aware of one’s potencies and the choice to energize them or not. A person needs to be aware and concerned as to which potencies have special value and meaning for them. These need to be brought into act. A person has the potency to accept what the other says, consider it, and not automatically actualize their anger. I have the potency to accept my fear, examine it, study it, and then only act, to withdraw or go ahead, to express myself, fight with you or agree with you. I have the potency to love or not to accept the love offered to me. Meanwhile all the while I need to keep examining whether the reasons for my choices are sensible and valid or not. If I stay stubborn and refuse to admit that I always have a choice I will have difficulties in relationships with other persons. I can refuse to think, refuse the offered help, or the offered love or the love given in reality. I can always, always act differently, refuse the offered interest or care or love. I could fall into the trap of losing friends and becoming isolated, and further along down the line, perhaps become neurotic, psychotic, or eventually suffer some form of mental illness.

Creativity - When my potencies are all open, I can create a life for myself. I am not tied down by my past choices, my past acts, the decisions I took about myself and other people up to the present day. When creative I will be open to all the many potentialities I have at the present time. Psychotherapy’s main thrust is to help a person to be open, to discover, see, accept, understand, and actualize the potencies he or she has to become the person he or she wants to be and that others want him or her to be, especially those who offer him or her their love.

Surprise - The surprise comes from the new experience when I follow through on my potencies, through my openness to others, through speaking about myself, through sharing with others, I will experience my freedom to be the person I want to be – a well thought out freedom that can bring me happiness. As I stay with this realization of my inner freedom to be this person I want myself to

be, I will realize my self transcendence, my openness and trust in another person, all of which will give meaning to my life. Hopefully all of us at sometime have been surprised as this built-in potency has awakened in us. Many, because of some unhappy happening cannot allow this potency to arise into action. However, this built-in potency will allow me to move or move me or incite me to be open to relate closely to other persons, and hopefully to accept and to deeply trust and love one or two other persons. All of human relating comes as an answer to this built-in potency we are born with. Some people because of some tragic experience, that may have lodged in their unconsciousness, will not put this potency into act. They remain separate, aloof, tied up within their own self, unable to trust, or form a relationship. Truly tragic. They miss the wonderful surprises embedded in living life.

Wonder- because many of us missed the abundant sharing and interaction that we could have had, we miss out on the experience of wonder. Why wonder? "Wonder", a very important word but often difficult to distinctly explain. For me, the word seems to have some relationship to the word "spirit". Wonder will often cause us to reach out, to explore, to take a chance, all actions that move us to renew our trust to find some new meaning in our lives. We should never neglect the wonder that can be spawned as we stay open to new possibilities, to newness. When wonder is present persons who may have had difficulty controlling feelings or have lost the meaning of their life, through the experience of wonder may discover potencies they never realized within themselves. How do we assist a person classified as having serious psychological problems to accept their predicament and take responsibility for their present thinking or their refusing to think concerning their relations with others? For a solution to that question we on our part must fall back on our own gift of wonder. I believe that psychotherapy has a strong base or foundation in wonder. I find in my interviews with prospective clients that the family or friends have often come after years of staying with the same dull thoughts and conclusions about the situation without any explorative wonder concerning what could be a solution. We have to keep wondering and wondering with a purpose. Can we envisage a process of healing? In our search we can always wonder what procedures we might find to activate the rationality and understanding that the person possesses. Could we speculate and conjecture concerning what could be possible, and instill some wonder to fascinate a person to some new thinking? How to incite some positive motivation in the person? Through wonder we can shift our potency into act.

When I began this letter I had no thought of writing so extensively. My one aim was to thank you for coming and for your interacting with us, and taking part in the discussions. Because I could not meet some of you before you left and so could not discuss with you your reactions and your thinking about the day, I would appreciate it if you send me, how you felt about the day. I need to know your reactions. Otherwise I am left a vacuum.

I consider it most important and essential that you keep reflecting on your thinking and feelings if you expect that your son or daughter is to emerge out of the problems that burden them – and have burdened them for many, many long years. I believe that mental illness can be explained and understood. All family members will be in some manner involved in that sorting out. Mental illness is not purely chemical. When I change my beliefs and attitudes, my outlooks and wishes, I make chemical changes in my physical brain. We may never fully understand the full details of any person's psychological or spiritual lack of growth. But we need to stay aware within ourselves as someone close to us becomes more rational, takes more responsibility, becomes more conscious of self and more capable of relating with others, especially important others. Many phone their son or daughter hoping there may be small changes in the person, without realizing that they themselves are coming from the same mindset of many years ago. We all of us must expect more evident changes. We must be living for and with changes – that is being alive and enjoying life. Remember we must try everything possible to enable each of us to live a more meaningful prolific, resonating life. We must have courage, willingness, openness to do what is possible in the moves that we are making for mental health, for the advancement and maturation of meaningful human relationships. We need to expect much of each other and constantly look for breakthroughs and renewals.

I have gone on and on and may have written what may be considered a long, complicated treatise. May be I can take another time to put this in a simpler more understandable direct style. I thank you for your patience, your interest and your determination to stay in this quest with us here. I remain with you always, open to your feedback.

Thanking you

Fr. Hank Nunn S.J.

November 6, 2008

Time goes by and goes by. I realize that I have not written a letter to parents and guardians after the last Parent's Meeting which we had in I believe sometime at the end of August. Time goes by so quickly and I struggle along hoping that something is accomplished.

Now we are in the age of "change". The word that Obama has used to mesmerize the world and caused us to realize that we are alive and given the grace to exist today. And in my opinion he has definitely given us a most challenging word, a word under Obama's inspiration has become for the entire world a challenge to wake up and bring forth the changes each of us discovers that will enable us to build a unified, accomplishable world in which we can share. "Yes, we can".

I view it all as so beautiful, so entralling, so captivating yet freeing, and I believe all of us were so happy to be alive in the present and in the days to come. The experience brought each of us lifted higher, and immensely increased the inviting opportunities for relationships to be established or continued.

We have so much to be thankful for. We live in a world of opportunity.

So, now let us allow ourselves to face the basics. Especially now that we may be more willing to face the basics and find our way through to the role of relationships in our lives. I have written a bit about relationships in previous letters and wish to continue somewhat in this letter.

I begin by a quote by Dr. Raj Persaud who wrote a book, *The Motivated Mind, How to get what you want from life*. In his preface he writes: "My clinical practice as a psychiatrist today is, much more psychological than it is strictly medical. As a result of my student psychology days, I retain a healthy skepticism of the medical model as a frame of mental illness, which often produces conflict between myself and medical colleagues at the Maudsley Hospital and The Institute of Psychiatry."

He spends a few pages of his book talking about relationships "One of the first development tasks that children face is learning to feel related and connected to others, while also recognizing that they have perspectives and emotions distinct from their parents. Unfortunately not all parents support a child's developing autonomy and desire for relatedness".

In a therapeutic community such as ours, the first and main aim of treatment is to establish some kind of secure attachment, since that is basic if a person is to benefit from being present in a therapeutic community. The attachment can then make it possible for changes to happen in the deeply ingrained expectations of relationships and patterns of behaviour.

When a person becomes more social, and this does not happen automatically for the person has to struggle between his very neediness on one side and his fear of being angrily rejected – a struggle he may have had to deal with in the past. So, the need of forming one or a few positive open relationships that will have a therapeutic value. In the community the person may be able to form real relationship contacts and so break through the unfinished business of the past contacts. Without the person even being aware he may be expressing what was lacking in his past through his current conscious emotional struggles. Living and reciprocal relationships provide acceptance, affirmation of a person's individuality. They provide an experience of being linked being together and involved. They provide an opportunity to experience one's effect on another person, as also the occasional moments of tension that come along and that could lead to a break or a problem solved. Yes, I believe forming a strongly affirmative, free yet demanding, rewarding relationship with another person is necessary if a person in the community is to move on and successfully live a happy, meaningful life. May all of our kids come to live such a life,

Fr. Hank Nunn S.J.

October 24, 2009

Dear Friends,

I begin (as I begin so many letters lately) by apologizing for not keeping better contact with you over the months. I have not written any common letters, nor any individual letters to you for some months. In fact I have been something that could be described as the dry well in the wilderness – dry, not supplying the reviving sustenance needed by the travelers on their journey across the parched landscape. We are all travelers, and we all need sustenance, be it in quenching our thirst or in knowing about the store of refreshing news ahead of us.

It is my duty to apologize to you for not offering you at least a few positive thoughts from time to time so that the well of your interest in the psychological aspects of human life does not grow completely dry. You might consider and ascertain what is the “well of your interest”. Let us go a bit deeper, a little further. Lately I have delved deeply into a learned book I have been reading and ruminating – a very special book on spirituality. Really it is a deep theoretical and psychological study of the teachings of another book, a little book which turned my life around almost 60 years ago. That little book of instructions for a thirty day series of practices of reflection, medication and review of life caused me to change my life completely. It affirmed many truths that led me to be more aware of myself, and to understand my meaning discovered by opening out my inner self transcendence. And that opened not a little “well” for me but launched me on a continuous ocean of self discovery and growth. “Self- transcendence”, I know I am springing a new word on you there, it is an important word.

The book I have been reading has this to say – “He (Lonergan) went on to describe the stages one passes through in becoming an authentic human being. “Man’s development,” he wrote is “a matter of getting beyond himself, of transcending himself, of ceasing to be an animal in a habitat and of becoming a genuine person in a community”. Development occurs, he said in successive stages by which an individual attends to the data of his life, makes sense of it through understanding and judgment, and after deliberation reaches decisions and takes action.”

The book I mentioned has caused me to reflect on my inner life of prayer and meditation and it would be interesting to talk about, but now I want to talk about the past few months. My attendance in September at a conference of counselors and psychotherapists who were interested in learning and being trained in the theories and practices of Transactional Analysis brought me back to my organizing the beginnings of Athma Shakti. This conference was a six day conference in Calicut in Kerala that Anando, and I attended. It was a conference on Transactional Analysis, a system of explaining the psychology of the human personality in simple concepts developed by Eric Berne in the United States back in the 1960s. After I came to Bangalore in 1978 I gave many two-day sessions teaching the concepts and practice of Transactional Analysis and it was our primary frame of reference when we began ASV. I am still often invited to make presentations at TA conferences.

This time the organizers had given this title to our full day presentation – “Experiential Regressive Method of Psychotherapy” – what the organizers had made out of the information I had sent to them before the conference – “This workshop will present the methodology and language of Transactional Analysis as used in the rehabilitation of persons with serious mental problems at ASV... In an open and interactive setting we will present the original teachings of the Cathexis Reader on passivity, child development, frames of reference, redefining, reparenting and regression. A practical knowledge of all these ideas are necessary for therapists working with psychotics – and ordinary citizens as well.” May be at some of our parent’s meeting I can explain to you the meaning of all those words.

I did enjoy those past days of presenting the theory and practice that we adopted in ASV. They were strong learning days. And I continue in the same creative process of directing young men and women in using this psychological approach in helping young people learn to function satisfactorily and responsibly in living their everyday lives.

Although way back in 1979 we placed emphasis on adjusting to one another, living together and daily conducted the therapy by being together with the “kids” (as we have always called these young men and women). And even then we stressed that nobody overcomes their problem and gets well by themselves alone. In the past couple of years we have formalized this by stressing the fact that we are a community, really a “therapeutic community” a format that includes a definite process for the individual members.

Because of this being active as a working community, competent in our communitarian approach we were easily accepted in to the Community of communities, a rehabilitation program initiated by the London School of Psychiatry. The founder of that program, Dr. Rex Haigh, had visited us and enjoyed spending time with us. However, although we carry on as an active therapeutic community we have not been able to extend our membership in the community of communities because we have not been able to cover the financial commitments. One of the specifications of the organization is that we pay the regular membership fee plus we have to send two staff of our community for a shared inspection to another community each year and invite two from another community to come to our community for inspection. On one occasion a community in England sent two members to us for mutual inspection and in another year a community from New Zealand sent three members over to inspect us. Those visits gave us great strength and recognition. There are

over 30 community members in the community of communities. Being a member of a larger organization gives us the surety that we are using a methodology that has been validated many times over. Also we have the realization that we were not alone but involved in a world wide endeavor.

I am enclosing with this letter the official statement on what is a therapeutic community and the core values of a therapeutic community.

What is a TC

Therapeutic communities are “psychologically informed planned environments” – they are places where the social relationships, structure of the day and different activities together are all deliberately designed to help people’s health and well being. In some communities, people with various longstanding emotional problems spend time and engage in therapy together in an organized and structured way, without drugs or self-damaging behaviour so that a new life in outside society is made possible. In other words people who cannot live normally in society (for reasons such as severe learning disability or persistent psychosis) engage in an interdependent form of group living which helps them to have a more fulfilling life and achieve their maximum social potential. The workings of the communities themselves are the main method, and through these social and group processes, change and growth are promoted.

Core Values

CV1

Attachment

Healthy attachment is a developmental requirement for all human beings, and should be seen as a basic human right.

CV2

Containment

A safe and supportive environment is required for an individual to develop, grow or to change.

CV3

Respect

People need to feel respected and valued by others to be healthy. Everybody is unique and nobody should be defined or described by their problems alone.

CV4**Communication**

All behaviour has meaning and represents communication which deserves understanding.

CV5**Interdependence**

Personal wellbeing arises from one's ability to develop relationships which recognize mutual need .

CV6**Relationships**

Understanding how you relate to others and how others relate to you leads to better intimate, family, social and working relationships.

CV7**Participation**

Ability to influence one's environment and relationships is necessary for personal well-being. Being involved in decision making is required for shared participation, responsibility and ownership

CV8**Process**

There is not always a right answer and it is often useful for individuals, groups and larger organizations to reflect rather than act immediately.

CV9**Balance**

Positive and negative experiences are necessary for healthy development of individuals, groups and the community.

CV10**Responsibility**

Each individual has responsibility to the group, and the group in turn has collective responsibility to all individuals in it.

I believe that each and every one of these values is essential and it is important for us to stress these values in our therapy work. All of the values mentioned are important. If the young persons in our community are to come out of their mental problems here at ASV

we have to give special attention to two of these specific core values, essential values. These are CV1 – Attachment and CV6 – Relationships. And we have to ascertain that all the other values are recognized and present within the community if our kids are to effectively and reliably develop into persons who understand, share and contribute to their living as responsible and happy individuals.

I believe that it is the experience of most people that the person who is mentally ill has difficulty forming a strong, positive, healthy, meaningful attachment to another person, really finding meaning and solace in another person who accompanies them in their struggles. Or the mentally ill person may be on the opposite limit – show an over zealous dependency on self – not being open to any trust in another person. The person who is unable to be open to having an attachment to another person, often unknowingly and in an unconscious thrust mistakenly abandons or neglects his or her own healthy and appropriate concern for self. In depression or anger or fear, the person will be discounting self to his or her own detriment. Such a person will display in his or her conduct some amount of unconscious anger or resentment.

Relationships with other persons, or a relationship with at least one person, brings a person the ability to share an existence, to share life, that is live by fulfilling the purpose of existence, to be ready and able to love others, and in turn to be open and desirous to receive love.

In our presentation at the conference in Calicut, we presented the role of therapy as one of the essential elements of a therapeutic community. The notes above lists the core values of the therapeutic community. It would be good to pause for a minute on the words “Value” for value has a very technical meaning. Values play an essential role in meaningful human living. A course in basic values for human living must be included in all high school curriculums. The dictionary definition of values is “principle or standards of behavior”. There are various stipulations for a thought or practice or behaviour to be accepted as a “value”. It is something I freely choose knowingly and hold to in my living and practice. It will be evident in my practical living, seen in my behaviour over a period of time, and is something I share with other persons.

The core values of our life and of our living must be present in a therapeutic community. And we need to reflect them in our behaviour. The first of course is attachment, for without some form of openness and relationship to another nothing can be accepted or

changed – the door remains closed. That doesn't seem so bad, but rather realize and correctly realize that the heart of this living person is closed to the outside, closed to family, society, country, the world to be experienced. And the individual will not be aware of what he or she is missing in their life with others. That is the tragedy of mental illness. Let me end with a quote from William Glasser, in his book "Reality Therapy" – p.14.

"We know, therefore, that at the time any person comes for psychiatric help he is lacking the most critical factor for fulfilling his needs, a person whom he genuinely cares about and who he feels genuinely cares about him. Some times it is obvious that the patient has no close relationships... Therefore to obtain help in therapy the patient must gain or regain involvement, first with the therapist and then with others. His problem and accompanying symptoms will disappear once he is able to become involved and fulfill his needs".

Fr. Hank Nunn S.J.

March 31, 2010

This morning – a quiet Saturday morning – as I began to question myself – something I need to be continuously active at if I am to keep my aging mind clicking over I have to ask myself if I have slowed down, sat on the side wondering as I watched the quickening traffic going by, or am I losing the steady impetus I have had for years? There may be some slowing down even though physically I am still as active as ever – and have always had excellent merit cards from the doctors in Wockhard hospital (now taken by Fortis) just down the road. But this is not the time to start slowing, for the saying goes – the best is yet to come.

And really that is what I experience – the best is yet to come. By that "best" I mean that the kids will understand themselves more, be more acceptant of the new openings and developments that face them. In turn they will make the changes needed in their attitudes, their thinking and their enjoyment of feelings for achieving what they want to achieve for themselves. They will relish their moves out of the "bad patches", into the serenity, composure, the tranquility, and happiness that they may have missed. They will be free and experience freedom.

I believe that the following quote, although quite long, speaks well of the role of freedom in our lives –

“Inner freedom is above all freedom from the dictatorship of “me” and “mine”, of the ego that clashes with whatever it dislikes and seeks desperately to appropriate what comes down to breaking the bonds of affliction that dominate and cloud the mind. It means taking life into one’s own hands, instead of abandoning it to tendencies created by habit and mental confusion. In daily life this freedom allows us to be open and patient with others while remaining committed to the direction we have chosen to take in life. Indeed it is essential to have a sense of direction... Understanding that we are neither perfect nor completely happy, is not a weakness. It is a very healthy acknowledgement that has nothing to do with self-pity, pessimism, or a lack of self confidence.”

This quote is from the book Happiness, a guide to developing Life’s Most Important Skill, by Matthieu Ricard, Little, Brown and Company, 2006.

In a paragraph following on this quote Ricard speaks about renunciation. “Renunciation is not about depriving ourselves of that which brings us joy and happiness – that would be absurd; it is about abandoning what causes us inexhaustible and relentless distress.”

Those are powerful words. And the renunciation can for a person be very powerful, giving them a freedom and acceptance of self that allows them to live their life in a happiness they never thought possible. So life goes on. And life in ASV goes on ... Sometimes easy and smooth, but still having the perennial problems we have been having and I guess will have serious financial problems. At present it is very difficult to have new members of staff remain with us and be properly trained. We have seen some four or five staff who had been happy with us for a number of years reluctantly leave because they could not live in anyway comfortably on the salaries we are offering at present. And of course this hits us right down the line for the new staff that we take on and attempt to train up are not effective as old staff have been and they are just waiting to jump off to a higher paying institution. The most serious problem we have at present is financial.

The result of this problem is that we need to increase the fees by one thousand rupees a month – something we have not done for a couple of years. In all of this I believe that the only way this problem is to be solved is by the government giving a pension to young people

who are mentally ill. We have had quite a few people from other countries paying their fees here with their government pensions, for their governments send their pensions to them here.

So now, I have again written a letter to you. As usual I enjoyed writing a letter to you although it may not give you a great deal of news of ASV. I go on as usual promising you more in the future. In fact, in the next letter I will tell you about the project of organizing all the old records of ASV – the histories, the studies, the letters, the success stories, etc. – so composing a book on the history of Athma Shakti.

I end here – but I will be sending you another letter in the near future on some changes on the theory and outlook on treating mental illness – I believe in very much. “For many people with serious mental illness, however, existing treatments and rehabilitation may not be that effective for an extended period of time, if ever. For these people, being in recovery is not a matter of growth and development but of suffering and survival.” A fit training in social skills is what is recommended. I will explain all this in another letter – later.

All the best to you,
Fr. Hank Nunn S.J.

August 1, 2011

So, I am mobile and remain active, very much enjoying being me. I do not know or can't seem to remember whether when I was six years old I enjoyed being myself so much, or believed I could choose being this person I want to be. Really it is a beautiful experience appreciating - just appreciating - the person that each and every one of us is, and how we are allowed to just enjoy being the person we have been given to be and slowly allowed ourselves to become. We have so much to be thankful for. And the more we appreciate our present life the more we will find to appreciate. Remember that appreciation of self will never end for even at the end we hope that we will be able to fully appreciate ourselves, the me we will take along into eternity. Let us, each one of us, appreciate that we are all wonderfully made – and given so much to enjoy and be thankful for.

So I enjoy allowing myself the experience of accepting myself and my history with all the many experiences that life has brought

to me. And there still is the faith of opening to so much more to come, so much more to appreciate.

This letter started out as just a few lines in which I had the impulse to express my warm feelings concerning the appreciative relationships that we all wish to enjoy among the various members of the Athma Shakti community.

Yes, I realize and appreciate the relationships that all of us are sharing and have been sharing at many various levels and strengths we have among all of us who have come to be related in our community.

.....One of my nephews contacted me about two months ago. He lives in Australia and has visited me many years ago, just as I was in the beginning stages of setting up Athma Shakti. He was making a trip to Canada and invited me to go back to Canada with him and his wife and two children and spend some time with his mother who is my sister and my only remaining direct family member. But if I went with him I might not be able to return to India and that would break my heart. For truly my home is here where I am now – here with so many persons who share my life with me. And I can celebrate occasions with them – as in January this year I celebrated my 82nd year of life. On August 14th of 1951 I enjoyed joining the Jesuit group of Catholic priests in order to later become a priest. That meant leaving my home in Halifax, Canada in order to be ready to study, learn, and engage in whatever was asked of me. In fact as I was just beginning as a Jesuit I was sent for three months in the Torai area of West Bengal to care for people and families made refugees in the West Bengal refugee camps because of the unsettled situation in West Bengal.

I have had a very active and interesting life and have many stories I could tell. As I find the time I am attempting from time to time to put many of my stories down on paper.

All of us need to remain thankful for all that we have received, and are receiving.

Fr. Hank Nunn S.J.

December 14, 2011

On this occasion – yet not a new occasion - but a meaningful time of year as we celebrate the original coming of Christ into our world. At the same time we remember that we have the possibility of new openings, new rewarding experiences, new

adventures, new enjoyments, new wonders, to strengthen our happiness and joy of living.

This time for me is usually my time for reflecting on myself – something we all need to be doing as we go along, enjoying going along, struggling going along, enjoying sliding along, sharing my going along, amazed as I am as I ‘go along’.

There are so many people who wish me and others to have all go well - they wish us success – people who wish to have all go well and become well – to take responsibility for themselves and their growing and accepting, trusting, reassuring, strengthening- so all will work out – positive strengthening thoughts now come along – all is positive – all will work out – growing in inner awareness that inspires being open, being happy with the positive life within me.

Life is growing, newly experiencing – there is a restoring gift of acceptance and love –open myself to this now – being accepted and wanted – forgiven, accepted, aided, supported, deeply and openly – allow the strength, the reassurance to grow and develop – to become firm and sure – giving the support, extending the support, causing the ease, the comfort so all is well, all manner of things are well – the other’s hand is there, here for me to grasp and feel the warmth, support, comfort – being free and relaxed – present with the other – trusting and experiencing the love – the care given to me all my life – as so many circumstances turning out well – so I keep believing – all works out as I trust and allow myself to experience the positive coming to me through the other’s love for me.

Various ideas coming into my awareness – accept them all – keep it positive – for the future will be positive – make it positive – what does positive mean? – open, leading, could be enthralling, could contain everything always searched for, open self to all - to whatever is now present – pick up the lead – go with it – stay aware – stay positive – knowing the future is always open – future is always open for growth – wanting newness- to rely on newness – must be kept alive and active – aware of the inner questioning that leads the person to the experience of being one’s self – finding self – establishing the meaning for self now – so self believes – self is enticed to – imagine - to feel the goodness, the enticement, drawn ahead, going with it – it is there to be advanced – to be discovered – to be brought into the centre – there to be shared, discovered, emphasized, emphasized with others, as others open and appreciated are present – persons depend, need to be shown the way, handed along to their dreams, yet still with me, with us, enriching us, by spiritual support,

spiritual strength continually growing from within, enabling, enticing to the new, to the unthought of, to the “new” pushing its way through the usual.

Present now, breaking forth in the now – in gratitude accept these – grab the moment – cause them, to happen – happen now – for now just when they fit and lead ahead – let them take you ahead.

The community – first and foremost – source of strength for all – leading each and every one to the intricacies – so to aid in growing together – establishing the creative- the beauty of positive excitement carrying each and all along – discovering, learning, believing, solving, widening, deepening – all possible – believe – go for it – its there – discover with joy – be enthused – be open – catch up to the movement – there's more ahead – be thankful – thankful for self, thankful to self – thankful to others – they lead – they accompany – they give direction – they point – they question as they give new life, new strength, new questions – new consolations – stay open, ready and expectant – there is always more – more delight - more surprise - more time – more company – more discovery – more depth – more value – yes, it all has meaning – and more meaning – to surprise the loyal seeker seeking the infinite.

Extension to Empowerment

How to take what we have to people?

Can we do it now? – take it to them.

Make it simple enough for people to want it.

And, they can understand it and be ready to ask for it.

Can we do it now? – take it to them.

All the best,

Fr. Hank Nunn S.J.

The therapeutic community that is Athma Shakti Vidyalaya was initially set up to offer a new holistic methodology that would be used in the treatment of all different types of mental illness. Some interested people who have come to appreciate our positive and acceptant approach to rehabilitation have defined us as trend setters in this field. In this line, the Newsweek magazine has published an article on the growing realization of many professionals treating the mentally ill that the great and almost sole emphasis on treatment with medicines is no longer valid.

"Patients really must have therapy in order to improve" says University of Newcastle psychiatrist Dr. Douglas Turkington. "Medication alone will not do it"

Our goal has always been to enroll in the community young people who are showing the first beginnings of mental problems. However, most often we have been the last resort for families, when nothing else has been effective. One young man told me, "I have been through ten psychiatrists." But have those psychiatrists spoken with the boy, gone through his very early history with him, shown him acceptance and a positive interest?

"Indeed, suffering a breakdown – often characterized by disorganized thinking, delusions and hallucinations – in your late teens or early 20s could be seen as an opportunity to intervene with therapy to mitigate the disease. If worked through properly, it could become a breakthrough," says psychiatrist Dr. Shankarnarayan Srinath. "If people are helped at that stage, they will begin to make meaning of their suffering. If they don't have help to work it through, it is likely they will become a chronic, lifelong psychiatric patient."

It is necessary to realize that young people who are beginning to have psychiatric problems can be brought to accept help that is offered by a knowing, open, accepting therapist. As the relationship with the therapist is beginning that disturbed person will gradually, or at times, suddenly experience acceptance. With the acceptance the interactive conversation develops. The person starts to realize that he is not being rejected, that this person is making a serious attempt to understand him. He may be amazed that his moods, his beliefs are being accepted, so also his tendencies to withdraw. Then the talk will come around to the feelings he is experiencing and how they affect his relationship with others, how they cause him to withdraw or to speak or act in a manner unacceptable to others. The experience of being accepted will lead the person to consider changing the attitudes and beliefs that are causing him to behave in the manner that he unconsciously shows in his many unsuccessful attempts to relate meaningfully with others. With the therapists support he will learn the new and rewarding skill of conducting himself properly with others, even with family members. Usually these positive interactions will allow him to develop a new and practical responsibility for living his life.

This process is only possible when the therapist recognizes that the person who is disturbed mentally has always a part of the personality that is intact. The emotional memories might be taking

over the thoughts and feelings, but the abilities and skills that they have not been able to access during the illness are there to be resurrected and used again. It is possible that they may learn new skills, finish studies, and become the personal agents of their own lives. One person who has witnessed this change in some suffering from serious psychological problems refers to the process as authorizing the individual to become an expert in his living, now responsible for his or her new goals and decisions.

In line with the Newsweek article, we must admit that it is not the medication that is going to make the person decide to make the necessary changes in his thoughts and feelings. The pertinent question to be asked at this time is – what is the reason that almost every person with mental illness if allowed would not follow a regime of medication? Deep down they seem to be convinced that they must be led with care to their own decision for change.

At Athma Shakti we have been able to lead many to that decision of welcome change. The therapeutic approach that we employ takes much meticulous and quiet follow through, an approach that is patient and stimulating, always supportive. This approach demands a trained and experienced staff, an ample staff who themselves are actively involved in their own continuous personal growth, constantly aware of their own selflearning.

We have a successful program, that has been proved over the last 25 years. Yes, successful but the program has not been very successful in finding the needed financial resources to carry on its work. No doubt that may be because of the lack of interest in general public in mental illness.

We believe that our work at Athma Shakti Vidyalaya is as important as the technological advances taking place around us but much more valuable. One offers people many new means to immediately communicate information and at the same time Athma Shakti Vidyalaya offers to people who are impaired an enriching life through developing new communication skills.

Fr. Hank Nunn S.J.

Awareness begins with the body...



What are transference and enmeshment? Can love be an integral aspect of treatment?



Traditions always add meaning to life



Deep involvement calls for meaningful goodbyes... a time for appreciation and gratitude



Genuine struggles bring people together



Athma Shakti Community



The Community in 1979



Schedule-Monday to Saturday

Schedule for Sunday

Schedule of Groups

Activity	Time	Activity	Time	Group	Time
* Wake up	6-30 am-mon,Wed,Thu,Fri 7:30 am-Thu 7:00 am-Sat	* Wake up * Bath	9-30 Til 10:15 am	* Reality Group Here and Now group	11:45-1:00 pm Mon,Wed,Thu,Fri
* Yoga	7:00 am-mon,Wed,Thu,Fri	* Brunch	10:30 am	Activity group	
* Bath	anound 8:00 am to 10:00 am	* Brunch Clean Ups free time	11:30 am	ABT group	
* Breakfast	9:00 am-mon,Wed,Thu,Fri 8:30 am-Tue, Sat				
* Meditation	9:15 am-9:45 am				
* Hous clean Ups	10:00 am				
* Daily meeting	11:00 am				
* Community meeting and Revie of week	10:30 am every Thu	* Tea * Letter writing	1:45 am 2:30 pm		
* Tea	11:30 am				
* Group	11:45 am				
* Linch	1:00 pm	* Denner	4:30 pm		
* Peer group/ Stop meeting	1:30 pm	* Denner clean Ups Free time	5:30 pm		
* Inbvidual therapy	2:30 pm				
* Tea	3:30 pm				
* Inbvidual therapy	4:00 pm	* Peer group	6:30 pm	* marathon	11:45-1:00 pm-Tue
* Music/free time	4:50 pm	* High Tea	8:00 pm		
* Cyclic Meditation	6:00 pm-6:40 pm Mon to Fri	* Tea clean up	8:30 pm	* Stop therapy	2:30-3:30 pm
* Denner	7:00 pm Mon to Fri 6:30 pm Sat	* Meditation	8:45 pm	* Peer environment dhék	11:45-1:00 pm Sat 1:45-2:45 pm Sat
* Denner cleen up T.V./ free time	7:45 pm Mon to Fri 7:15 pm Sat	* Fruit	9:15 pm	* Cognitive	Saturday
* Meditation	8:30 pm Mon to Fri 10:30 pm Sat	* Bed time	9:45 pm		
* Fruit	9:15 pm Mon to Fri 10:15 pm Sat				
* Bedtime	9:45 pm Mon to Fri			* Fr. Hank's group	6:30 om-7:30 pm Sunday

Our vision is to create an atmosphere in which healing and change are fostered through care and hope using a scientific methodology



Part - V

Kids

Maria
Sundar
Mangala
Fr.George

Directive therapy sessions I have had with kids

With many of the kids I kept up a directive correspondence even after they had left the community. Some developed interesting stories of how the kids were progressing. I kept many of the letters the kids wrote back to me. To give you an idea of my recorded work with them I have compiled these writings, a few of which I include here.

Maria

I am writing these pages to speak about Maria, one of the most loved and appreciated members of the community. For me, she was special – as any member of the staff would have been able to tell you. She was warmhearted, hesitant, reluctant. I would say that she was just always reluctant to express herself and take on anything new or doubtful. She was beautifully reluctant, shy and a worrier. Her personality was a result of her early life at home on a farm where she grew up with her younger brother, parents and an uncle.



Maria joined the community in July 1998. She was 26 years old when she came here for treatment. She had been having treatment in Germany for many years for the problem which had caused her to leave her employment as a qualified nurse.

She would suffer from attacks of phobic hysteria, which could strike her at any time – while walking along the street, or involved in taking care of a patient in the hospital, or even just being at home. She was very sensitive, very worried that at any time an attack could arise and she would have to stop and remain as if frozen to the spot or lay down on the ground or floor, wherever she happened to be at the time. The attacks were very upsetting and disruptive of her functioning.

She had been born into a farm family, with a younger brother who also himself suffered from some form of paranoia and visited Maria while she was with us and then after her death, came to us with an intention to follow treatment for himself but after a few months found his wanderlust too strong for him, so he left to travel and did not make any contact after leaving.

When a small girl at home Maria had suffered some molestation by an uncle which had affected her strongly and negatively, and so, she had never been open to any thoughts of marriage.

She overcame this fear of men through her stay with us and sometime after her return to Germany she developed a happy relationship with a young man.

While Maria was here I felt it a profitable exercise to express the work that I was doing with Maria, so that later I could share this with other interested therapists. So I am including now some of the records of my therapy done with Maria.



March 11, 2000

This morning I went for my walk- Maria didn't come. When I came back Maria was not as usual waiting for me in my room. I had prepared a bottle of milk ready because I usually would give her a bottle each morning. When I was beginning to read she came in to me. I was going to offer her the bottle but she asked to talk.

She described how she had been up three times during the night – had been up at 5 o' clock and walked up and down in the room afraid to come for the walk. She was afraid of her weakness and fearful that she might have a panic attack, as she has had sometimes before, on the walk. When there was something she wanted but she couldn't do, she blamed herself for her weakness. She usually very much wanted to come for the walk. She then runs a long dialogue in her head and blames herself for being weak and says she should be able to go for the walk. She blames herself and causes herself to feel ashamed for being weak. She makes herself more afraid of her body being weak and her being unable to control her limbs. As usual I quietly accepted what she was saying, trying to reassure her that she would be safe with me, as I promised to accept her.

Each day she continued to say how much she enjoyed the walk and morning air. Then slowly she went into expressing the fear, shaking and crying. After about ten or fifteen minutes all became quiet. She found it very relaxing, she carried on and continued being to be somewhat withdrawn. I quietly gave her messages about being acceptant of herself and how good she is, how she is wanted and accepted. This continued for another thirty minutes at least, and she was very withdrawn. It took some time as she gradually enabled herself to become settled. As she became settled I mentioned we had to have breakfast, which seemed to have some impact. I was able to bring her around to having some fruit which I prepared for her and gave her. She remained quite withdrawn. I told her I was going for my bath and she lay down in my room. I let her be there for sometime after my bath. Then I rolled her over slowly and looked at her closely. She responded by becoming very open and smiling, having come through fully.

We didn't spend any more time together in the morning – already I had been working with her almost four hours. I had another person to see and had to go out after lunch. I met her before I went, she was fine. When I came back in the evening she said that she had had bad migraines during the afternoon and still had an 'ordinary' headache now.

March 12, 2000

A Sunday morning – I stayed in ASV overnight in order to go at five thirty to the airport to meet someone. When I returned a little after nine ‘o’ clock, Maria was in my room beginning her breakfast. As I greeted her she became upset so I held her as she talked about how she had been in the morning. She had woken up early and had gone for a short walk with Rema which was alright, except that she felt very much lost within herself. She went for her breakfast and then was quite afraid and reluctant to ask the kitchen staff, who were preparing breakfast for what she wanted, in this case to be able to use the toaster to toast her bread. She had Rema bring the toaster to the room for her to use. In doing this she is very critical of herself, she thinks she should not be asking for what is special. She has a sense of being lost and in confusion, that she has no where to go to be settled within herself. She knows she has my room and then finally goes there. Yet she is blaming herself for not feeling at ease, for not believing that she can belong and does belong.

I spent some time holding her and reassuring her of her place with me and told her that I would be back with her later in the day. I told her to remain in the room as much as she wanted. When I returned in the afternoon she was settled, in fairly good spirits. She had cleaned and dusted my room and bathroom completely.

I have been thinking on this after reading a book yesterday on healing with Buddhist practice and also a book Delna gave me this morning on the link between Buddhist practice and psychotherapy. Both books take for granted the meditation and practice, the first on being aware of thoughts as passing and seeing the process of not being attached to the thoughts, the second on the meditation enabling the practitioner to move into the emptiness, which the author believes Western psychotherapy is always trying to avoid accepting. The other day when I was trying to explain to a retreatant the process of not being attached to the negative “destructive” thoughts. I realized that this was the process I was attempting to have him accept, that is, to go deeper within himself to the simple acceptance of his existence, of being loved into existence by the Father at this moment. I suppose I might say of allowing oneself to fall into the experience of the Father’s love and acceptance, not trying to build up a self that is able to withstand the temptations, thoughts and inclinations that keep arising in the mind.

Also in our discussion with a patient the other day, it became clear that his identity was in being a Karate expert. He stated that

he was not his father's son, not a patient at ASV, but a Karate expert. Over the years this had been his obsession, although he has never passed an examination or qualified in any way to be a recognized practitioner of Karate. We have always considered this a crazy obsession, yet it is something very essential in his view of himself. I believe we need to recognize that he does not have the security or ability to accept his basic insecurity. His parents have not given him the security to question his security, to admit that it is all right to go into the emptiness.

March 13, 2000

This morning when I came out of my room at 5.30 am Maria was there ready to go for the morning walk with me. Lately she has not been coming for the walk, something that she had been doing daily with me for many months. She enjoys these walks very much especially as the dogs are with us – she takes the little dog that is attached to her. After the walks the usual thing was for me to hold her and give her a child's milk bottle. She would be very little at that time and it gave me an opportunity to give her messages about her being accepted and safe and protected.

She has not been coming for the walks in the past week or so because of her fear of the panic attacks. She has had a couple of these attacks during the walk, interestingly always when we are midway through the walk at a spot where we usually sit and rest. During the walks, there is never any talking, as I want to use the time for my own reflection and mediation. I have done this for years. She is afraid of feeling physically weak. The panic attack usually begins with her feeling a bit dizzy and then her legs become weak, she is afraid of falling down. At times she senses that her limbs are moving away from her and that her body is falling apart. The attacks, which she has had on the walks, usually last about fifteen minutes and we are able to sit on the small wall over a drain. The fear during the attack seems to come in waves, she often feels suffocated. Her arms and legs need to be often controlled Yet she can come through the attack and walk back easily enough, and after ten minutes or so she is normal and fine.

So, this morning she was eager to come for the walk, with a desire to show she could do it. All went well although she said when we sat and rested that she was nervous. We came back, I fed the dogs and came up to hold her and give her a milk bottle She began the bottle but then after a minute or so refused it. I continued to hold

her and she was showing some agitation but not much. she got up and went to rinse her mouth at the sink and came back to be held. When she is agitated in this way she wants to pull her hair and hit her chest. She does not struggle very much and I continue to hold her for about 30 minutes usually. I make sure that all the agitation is passed.

At the end this morning I asked as usual what was upsetting her. She felt that the milk from the bottle had a special taste because it was from a new bottle purchased a few days ago and not used before. She said that the milk with a certain taste gets stuck in her throat and she is afraid of suffocating. She has often mentioned that one of her greatest fears is of suffocating. She asked me if I believed her, and accepted what she was going through. She has a great fear that people do not take her seriously and believe that she does not have to go through all that she is going through.

Then we went for yoga and all was well after that. During breakfast she was as bright and fresh, humorous as usual. I share my breakfast with her – all fruit. I wanted to be sure that she is having enough to eat.

Then there is the treatment group. She sits beside me in the group; she also does not want to attend any group if Dale or myself are not leading it. During the group I held her and she began to be upset, crying and breathing with difficulty. I concentrated on the others in the group and slowly she settled down and was quiet and relaxed at the end of the group. Since it was lunchtime I did not question her about what her feelings were during the group.

I was going up to spend the night at Mt. St. Joseph's, after I spent sometime with Manju in my room. When we came into the room Maria was sitting in the chair looking quite withdrawn. I held Manju for some time and then Maria came over to be held. She was upset, said that she felt tense, insecure and sad. In the past few days, I experienced that she seemed to be often in these feelings. She complained of feeling lost or isolated. She had said in the past that it was difficult for her to carry over the reassurances and security which she has experienced when with me. When she is alone she falls back on feeling isolated and lost, although she says she does make some effort to keep me in mind. She would say my presence is not in some way imprinted in her body, or felt in her body. The reason I gave her so much physical contact was to impress on her my acceptance of her and my wish that she can feel in some manner at ease when she is not with me.

I believed that in order for this to happen she had to develop some trust, which she believes is quite impossible for her. I have never confronted her on the fact that she is not open at a very deep level so that she would have to open and trust. From what she has said when we discuss trust I understand that she believes that her very early experiences earlier than she could ever remember, have caused her to be so fearful of the world.

I stayed with her until she settled although it made me late for an appointment at Mt. St. Joseph's. I gave her reassurance that I would be down first thing in the morning, this was not special; I usually walk down early in the morning.

March 14, 2000

I spent the night at Mt. St. Joseph's. I came down early in the morning at about 6.30 am to sit in my room. After a few minutes Maria came in and I held her for sometime. She was quiet and undisturbed. There was no yoga this morning. We had the usual breakfast. I was not feeling at all well today and rested for some time before the marathon group began. During the marathon she put her head down for some time.

At lunch she was expressing a very close dependency and acceptance of me, an openness and affection. She did this by hugging me and expressing herself in a low but intense voice. The afternoon was much the same as the morning except that she had some trouble with the noise when Nitesh was being confronted in the group. This was a heavy time with voices getting loud at times. Nitesh was attempting to defend a huge paranoid delusion that he has been building up for two years. I took Maria with me to Mt. St. Joseph's to give her a break; she likes the garden there. She said that today she has been insecure, helpless and somewhat afraid. She was very caring when she knew that I was not feeling well.

She told me later that while at Mt. St. Josephs she felt weak and falling, she described it as a kind of slipping down. Her body feels light as if it were going to fly away. I asked if it was like some sort of trance but she said no, it was the weakness, the insecurity that was within her, especially the fear, an unconscious fear that plays in her body. She cannot describe what the fear is but just knows it is there influencing her. It is something she cannot become free of. Her views about all this are quite strong, and she does not appear open to question her stand.

March 15, 2000

This has been a quiet day, may be the reason being that I was not so well. I didn't go walking first thing in the morning nor did I take the yoga. Maria came to me for a short time before the yoga started just to say good morning and to see how I was. She went for the yoga and then prepared the breakfast. Later I brought her fruit for breakfast and had to make some toast and black tea for my own breakfast. After breakfast we spent time talking; it is a bit difficult for me to remember all that we discussed, but I believe it was again the memories which are deep in the body tissues. How far back can this memory go? While she was talking I thought of Katherine, the Australian girl who had been used in a satanic cult when she was an infant. Again her memories were hardly there, being just some sort of hunch that she had some memory of something happening to her in a negative and strange manner. Katherine came out of this more through the evocation of different personalities.

So, I supported Maria in saying that perhaps there could be real memories that supported her sense of being suffocated at times. She had started the discussion in saying that she felt there was a pest of some kind pricking her inside her throat and hindering her swallowing. She admitted readily enough that there was nothing there but asked if it might be connected to a memory of some sort of piercing or invasion of her throat.

As we walked she could accept that memories in the physical body could be absorbed or integrated and the person could be freed of them. Yet she still holds that there is a deeper level that cannot be reached and hence will remain with the person causing fears, such as the panic fears that come up in her.

Also we talked a bit about her weight. She wanted reassurance that if she put on weight it would not cause her to be more prone to receiving attacks from men. I had said the day before that she was "very feminine" something she wanted me to explain. I told her that she carried herself in a womanly manner, not trying to be enticing as some women make themselves out to be. She has the delicacy of a woman. But has difficulty being around a group of men. She mentioned that in the past – eight years before – she did have times when she had enjoyed being with a man.

She was in a steady and balanced mood throughout the day, very supportive of me, pleasant to be with, relaxed. Often quite thoughtful.

March 18, 2000

I am writing this after two days and so I cannot be as specific as I would have been had I been able to write on the evening of the 16th. The 16th was a much different day. There was no early morning walk: Maria was held by me for some time before the yoga. At breakfast I noticed that she seemed to space out and be too quiet. I asked her what was happening with her. She didn't give me any reply, but reacted by moving and continuing her breakfast. After finishing her breakfast she came to me to sit on my knees and then began quietly to cry. She was becoming quite depressed and sad. And slowly was talking about her thoughts. She was basically saying that she didn't see herself coming out of the problems that she has. She used various phrases about this, such as, "There is no way out", "It will always be the same", "You can't understand". She remained with me quiet, then moved off, she had to do her cleaning work. I went to the office and groups. After tea in the afternoon I took her with me to Mt. St. Joseph's so we would have time to talk. There she was still in the same mood, down, seeing her condition as helpless. I had not experienced her as so withdrawn before. At one time – perhaps in the evening when I held her again – she seemed to be giving herself permission to be down, saying that she had a right to feel down.

She realized she was down and it was as if she needed to spend some time just being quiet and withdrawn. Of course the fear was always there, for the fear causes her to be withdrawn and reluctant to have contact with any person other than myself. During the day she was lying in bed most of the time.

In the evening when I spent time with her she was feeling better. We did not go into a discussion on how she had been feeling in the morning. I had to go in the night to meet Jenny at the airport at 2.30 a.m. Maria was looking forward very much to Jenny's coming.

In the morning she came to me early. I had been up early to take the dogs out and feed them. She was feeling quite positive and I held her some time during the yoga time. She asked me many questions about Jenny. She is quite attached to Jenny because she had spent some time with Jenny in her community before coming here and when she went back to renew her visa.

In the morning she was in the girls group and found it all right. I was a bit surprised, as she had wanted to only be in the groups with Usha or Dale. She does find the other therapists helpful, although she does appreciate Tara. She came with me to Mt. St.

Joseph's in the afternoon. She appreciates the garden very much. We spent some time together in the evenings as usual. Always the last thing I do with kids in the day is to hold them. This is often a difficult time for her because the other kids come down from the living-room and prepare for bed. It is quite a noisy time; especially distressing is the banging of doors both by the girls and the boys. I have mentioned to the peer group many times but our population just don't pay attention when they open and close doors. Maria will jerk when a door is slammed. I am very accustomed now when holding her that when there is a loud noise she will jerk her body. It is a fear response that keeps repeating itself. I reassure her that she is safe, that nothing bad is going to happen.

There is a much stronger fear reaction. If any person comes into my room while I am holding her, that is enough to start a small panic attack which will go on for ten or fifteen minutes.

Saturday morning, March 18th, was quiet and relaxing. I didn't go for my walk, so spent the time with Maria. She was doing well, happy to have the time together, but one of the girls who was going out came in to say good-bye and take my hand. This caused the reaction I have just described above. So it took some time to bring her around to be quietly resting. After that she made coffee for both of us and we sat out on the balcony. She became very interested in the newsweek article on the little boy who shot the little girl in the United States. She was interested, not in any special way. Really her reaction was very mature and reasonable.

I had to go to town to arrange the trip I was to make, so I invited Maria to come with me. She appreciates very much coming with me to town. And she is a good companion. Over tea in town we had a long discussion, really she did most of the talking. Basically it was the fear that she experiences in her body. She said that even when she goes for a short walk of twenty minutes with the dogs she is usually very afraid. She is afraid that her limbs are too weak and cannot support her weight, or that they will fly off. She has some sort of fantasy, she used the word "fantasy" that her body will fall apart or pieces will fly off, almost as if she will disappear. She has to tell herself to be tense and strong in order to carry on as if nothing was happening. In times past she says that after she returned home from being in the city she had to collapse in bed and often cut herself to punish herself for what was happening to her, to make herself feel real again. Throughout the discussion and at the end she did not hold out much hope for a resolution of this problem but that she would have to find some means of living with the problem.

March 25, 2000

I have not written about an incident, which happened on Wednesday evening, March 22nd, while I was away in the jungle. The bread which Leena and Maria keep for themselves in the fridge became wet because of the fridge defrosting. But in the morning, Maria had set aside some bread for herself. When she went to get that in the evening it was gone. She became very upset and went through a long session of panic and stress. When in such a situation she says that she is being punished and that it happens because she is bad. She was hitting herself and rolling about on her bed. Since I was not there no one could touch her. One of the staff went and brought some bread from the store but then Maria would not have it. It seems the emotions she is having these times are a mixture of great fear, and also an anger that she takes out on herself, believing that she is bad and deserves the unjust punishment. She had told me on Thursday morning that she was very upset on Wednesday evening but I did not ask her for the details.

This morning we were to go for an early walk with the dogs, something she likes very much. When I came out of my room she was at the top of the stairs to tell that she was not feeling good and so could not come. I went alone saying I would be with her when I came back. I was back and reading my prayers when she came into the room. She put her head down in my lap and I continued reading. After the reading we remained in the same position. She began to say a few words. At one time she said she felt like an embryo and felt like being surrounded by water and darkness I said that was all right, I would help her. I gave her sentences, like her body will grow strong, the bones will develop and the skin cover them. Meanwhile I was stroking her arms and moving them. She kept her head on my stomach during the time as I stroked her head and arms. I felt I could enable her to grow stronger in her body by quietly being with her and giving her short messages about her body growing and her skin being protective. I let her feel my breathing and heart beat, let her have her head on my chest. She seemed to be taking in the comfort and assurance. She felt at ease and lay quietly. After the session she was lively and well.

April 1, 2000

I have been remiss in that I have not written anything in the past week. I have to begin with an important day, last Sunday, March

26th. I was at Mt. St. Joseph's when I received a phone call at 8.00 a.m. to come down to ASV as Maria was having a serious panic attack. I found out later that she had asked that I be called down. She had had a good morning before that. She was up and took the dogs out and fed them and spent some quiet time with herself. Then she was walking towards my room and felt very weak and disturbed as if her body was going into pieces. She was led to her bed by Leena, but would not allow her to touch her. She went through the usual beating herself, trembling and rolling about.

She had diarrhea during the night; she believes that makes her very weak. As she does not eat very much, so no doubt this is true. They gave her some juice and electrolytes. When I came in she came easily to my arms and I took a little time to settle as I held her. I remained holding her for over 30 minutes, slowly giving her messages about being safe and accepted. She drank large quantities of water. When she felt better I brought her over to my room and we quietly spent time together. I had some breakfast and she also had some fruit and toast.

She spoke about being afraid of the condition of her stomach and the physical problem, which she was having. She feels helpless and worried about how long she is going to be in this condition. She distrusts the Indian medicine and wants to be able to come through the physical problem without medicine. In some way I agree with this as she wants to build up her strength. In our talking she mentioned various aspects of the panic attack as it comes on her. At times it seems to come suddenly and without warning.

Later, in the afternoon, Jenny came and so we had some time together, the three of us. She has great trust in Jenny. Then I went off with Jenny for dinner.

On Monday morning, Maria felt weak so there was no going for a walk, I had decided not to go myself anyway since I was quite tired. So we spent time together. She talked about her weakness and different messages which she had received when young around food although she may not have been given these messages clearly, she had formed them for herself. She still had a stomach problem but refused to take medicine. She hoped that slowly it would go away.

April 2, 2000

I came back to the house at about nine in the morning and found Maria sitting quietly in my chair writing letters. She had been up

early, took the dogs for a good walk, and was in good spirits for she knew I was coming early. We spent time quietly together. It was a strengthening session.

In the evening we had an important discussion. It was at eight 'o' clock, tea time for the community. I had not had dinner and so wanted a couple of cheese sandwiches. I was organizing the bread and cheese when I was called to the phone, spending half an hour on the phone. When I came back she had all the sandwiches ready. As we were sitting after eating them she wanted to communicate something very important. She spoke of her disturbance when she was preparing the food, knowing that I had gone for a long telephone call. She had prepared my food but then was not willing to accept that she could have more food for herself. She puts herself down saying to herself that she has no right to take more food, in some way she must earn the food, which she takes into herself. While she is doing this questioning and moving from different positions within herself she is stirring up much anger that takes her away from her thinking. The anger develops and she shifts into a mood in which she rejects herself strongly.

April 03, 2000

When Maria came to me this morning after my walk, she said that she woke up feeling strong and liked the weather and wanted to walk but it was too late and so she came down on herself for being lazy and not doing what she could have done. We talked then and about it later how she is so very critical of herself, rejecting of herself. She is continually being in judgment on herself. She expects me to be able to sense or realize this action of hers in blaming herself. It is an experience, which she has of herself which is very deep, very much a living part of her personality that has been with her since the beginning. It is not an experience which she believes can be adjusted or changed since it is very much herself. I reassured her that I accept this experience she has of herself. She has difficulty trying to speak about this, most people she has talked with have tried to take it more or less lightly and so she feels it is better not to talk about it. It cannot be simply explained. The experience has caused her much pain over the years, kept her in fear and drained her energy. I say I will be with her in this. She accepts that I can tell her to stop putting herself down. I believe she needs a constant and sure support in whatever situation she is in.

April 9, 2000

These past few days in my holding sessions with Maria in the mornings we have been working on the close contact which she believes she needs. She lies on my chest and I speak to her messages concerning the growth of her body. The way she sometimes reacts when very little, it is as if she is a prebirth. She wants to feel that her body is closed and is one. I speak to her with messages reassuring her of the formation of her body, how her skin can be growing stronger all the time, the protection that her skin gives to her.

On the 7th, I spent over a half an hour on the assimilation of food, from taking in through the mouth to the digestion and then moving throughout the body strengthening her, especially concentrating on the build up of the skin. She wishes me to keep giving her messages, talking with her as she is very little. I find it easy to talk to her about herself and what is happening within her body as she grows.

April 10, 2000

This morning at breakfast time there was an incident which showed how quickly and deeply she can withdraw and be isolated within herself. She sat down in my room with her oranges and plate. I went downstairs to get the fruit for my breakfast which I share with Maria to make sure that she is eating enough breakfast. At first I could not find my fruit in the fridge and became very angry. I did not express my anger but Maria realized that I was quite angry and sat there while I began to read the paper. After a little time I decided to look again for the fruit and found it. I then began my breakfast and began to share the fruit with Maria. She was by then deeply withdrawn, just sitting in her place looking off in the near distance. After finishing my breakfast I went over and tried to get her come out of the withdrawal, but I couldn't draw her out. As I began to hold her she became quite restless and was gripping her hair and arms.

April 23, 2000

There is much I should have written about the past week but I have not been able to find the time. In the past few days Maria has been becoming more troubled, yet from time to time quite settled.

May 2, 2000

The last ten days have been difficult days for Maria. In the last days she has been expressing her fears and wondering whether it would be better to return to Germany earlier. She has made the decision not to come back to Bangalore to engage in a program that would be recognized for her university course. She has been talking about being "not connected" as "being isolated". She has not been eating as well as she should be eating. Her BP is very low – at times 90s over 50s. Because of this low BP she is often weak and dizzy and fainting. She has missed walking in the mornings because of this weakness.

Last Wednesday, we had a profitable day,. She was at the Sunny Farm swimming when I came there on an outing with the Fathers from Mt. St. Joseph's. So I joined her in the swimming. This became an excellent exercise, in that she was quite regressed and I could give her messages on the growth of her body from the beginning. She has always had a sense that her body was not finished , hence the insecurity and the numerous panic attacks she has had in her life. Since that day she has wanted more closeness.

The last ten days had been very difficult days for Maria and she had to follow through on her decision to return to Germany. I was reluctant to see her go , but I felt it was necessary. And when in Germany, because of her health she could not think of returning to India .She still dreamed of returning to India but it was quite impossible for her. She kept up her correspondence with me which I include below and some of my responses then. She always gave Sano as her name when with me and she will always be Sano for me.

Letters received from Maria between 2005 and 2006

February 25, 2005

Dear Pa,

I am very sorry I have to postpone my traveling to you. I am in a very, very deep crisis and do not know how my condition will develop in the next days or weeks. I am on high medication and did not feel like this since probably many years. Sano is suffering so much. My job, my foot on the ground and I think I have to leave Thomas. I love him so much and he loved me and we could have a wonderful life. But he is very sick, needs lot of time for himself. I have no difficulties in giving him time. But I need a home, I want to

make plans for the future, need this telling of being wanted, fully wanted and having a place. I do not have all this with him. He says he probably will never find a woman like me again, did not feel so much love for somebody before It is so sad. I tried to be patient but for me this relationship becomes more and more destructive. He is cold, is refusing me, sends me away and then he wants me being with him and enjoys having me around him. He makes his therapy and that will take a very long time. For me it would be okay, I can understand, I still would want him. I do not need a man who is functioning so well and earns lots of money and so on. I do not need all that. But, I need a home with somebody, a future and I would like to try to become pregnant. I could wait..... but now without having a place, means one apartment sharing with him and not moving from one place to the other not knowing for how long he wants me there. I am very, very sad and paralyzed, feel still, depressed and very much left alone. It is horrible.

But I do not want to complain , I mean I am only sorry. I do not know what I can do. I went to the doctor this morning and he wanted to send me to the hospital. I did deny. I am looking for a therapist here and I think I did find somebody who is good. But everything will take time I do not have, really. I would need you so urgently, so much!! But I am not able to travel and I can not deal with an adventure, being in Bombay at the airport, feeling not safe when you are not with me each minute in India. I am too needy. I am very sorry.

Take care of yourself and I hope you are fine!

Love Maria (Sano)

June 14, 2005

Dear Pa,

Many thanks for your letter, for sharing with me how you are and how you are doing... and please be sure, you do not complain. I mean if you would complain you really have enough reasons for it, but you do not. I thank you for expressing yourself as you did and for giving me the chance to know a little bit more about things which are not always so easy for you, which take away your energy. You must be very tired and you would need a break. And I know how difficult it is for you to set boundaries and to take time for yourself, and there are always people who have demands and always the wish in yourself to be for people. All the demands

you have on yourself to be for people and to help them to live a more fulfilled life and can be more aware and happy. And I always did and do appreciate that but too much is too much. And you know that you have to care more for yourself.... and when you cannot do it for yourself then you have to think that you have to be more by yourself and be more at Mt. St. Joseph's, take time for resting, meditating to refresh your energy and to do everything for having a long, long life... Please! I do not want you to feel criticized but I know I have to worry about you, if you let me know how you are doing or not. I want you to feel good without all the burdens and to feel at ease, at least sometimes. You forget about yourself and that is not good. I am sorry I cannot do anything for you, not really. I only can be with you in spirit.

I am thinking of you so often during the day, have your pictures beside my bed and pictures of us in the kitchen. I miss you so much but yes, right now I cannot come and I am very thankful for being assured you accept my decision. Thank you for being you.

I am here and try to work as a freelancer. I can work now more and more. And I like teaching and preparing the lessons. For a couple of weeks ago a former priest, catholic did ask me if I would like to train social workers, students and nurses in palliative care, how to care for dying people. He is very active and has lots of influence. You know that has been my main topic in my studies in nursing science. I am very happy and hope I will manage. I only have a big problem since last summer when I trained people who wanted to become a nurse in this school where they sent me off. The job has been very tiring and one day I collapsed in front of the class. I am not scared of the people and it is not because of my BP and it is not a panic attack. I get one when I get this dizziness. I really lose my consciousness. That threatened me very much. Right now I cannot teach one or two hours without feeling so weak, dizzy and loosing my feet on the ground. It is very scary, cannot see properly and feel fully weak. I go to the toilet and take medication. But something has to change otherwise I cannot continue doing this job. Then I collapsed by panting, fell almost off my chair, terrible, and so much exhausted. Something is overwhelming me, must be and I do not feel like this because I expect it. There is something very deep within myself I cannot figure out.

It is so frustrating because actually I got more strong, I feel better, more stable compared to three years ago you know. I like working and it gives me a good feeling, but actually I am not ready for it and I try to find out what causes this feeling, in my therapy.

So, it is me who is complaining, I am sorry. I wish I could be with you now! I love you so much and keep you in my heart!

Love Maria

August 25, 2005

Dear Pa,

Many thanks for your warm letter, your compassion, concern and sharing with me your thoughts – thanks for being you and for being with me in spirit. I felt very touched by reading your letter, printed it and take it with me, given me a feeling of having you more close with me. That is a good feeling. And today Melissa sent me some pictures and I did see you on one of them and had tears in my eyes. I miss you so much and I only can repeat saying how much I would give for spending some time with you. Next year I hope we can make it happen.

This time lots of things are happening. May be my job situation will change. This school I work for since a couple of months as freelancer did offer me a real job. I do not know the English word for it. It would not be full time but actually I could more rely on my working situation and it would be a more saving for me. On the one hand it would be great, on the other hand I would be much more under pressure. I will see..

It is raining here, summer is gone now and it is getting cold. You would not feel comfortable here. Do you remember that you did phone me a couple of weeks ago? You did speak to me on my answering machine. I did save it and almost once a day I can listen to your voice. Pa, I am loving you and send my love out to you. Hope everything is well with you!

Love Maria (Sano)

September 07, 2005

Dear Dad,

I am sitting here at my desk, thinking of you, wondering what and how you are doing. So, often I think I have to or I feel like writing to you and then something holds me back from doing it. May be because of my English it is becoming really more and more bad or only because my wish of sharing with you face to face is so strong and writing about my life here is so difficult because I can not put in words what I would like you to know.

But, I feel fine so far. Concerning my job situation I have to be patient. But actually things are working out very well. I only can hope and trust I will manage my work in future and that people who may be could offer jobs will be able to do it, means can pay salary and would keep me. I am very much under pressure but I will see.

Yes, and a couple of weeks ago I met a man. I like him very much, quite sick after Thomas.... but what to do, I mean I am really very interested in him, is intelligent, has lots of humour, makes me laugh, is sensitive and somebody I think I could rely on. He likes me very much and even we do not know ourselves really, not yet, there is a kind of bond. I am very glad meeting him and I will see and wait how a relationship can develop. It is very exciting and I am very happy and can enjoy with him. And then I put myself so much down, think I am not good enough, no good job and all my problems I have with myself, I will see.

Pa, I wish you could be here and I hope everything is well with you. I love you very much !

Love Maria (Sano)

September 23, 2005

Dear Pa,

It is Friday evening and I am sitting here at my desk and I am thinking of you. So often during the day you are with me in spirits and I am thinking of you here with me and Sano..... now I am waiting for Klaus. The man I told you about. Yes, we are a couple now and so many things are new for me. He is so much different from Thomas. I like him very much and enjoy being with him. Sometimes it is as if I know him since a very long time and then I realize that I do not know him at all. I mean it takes lots of time to know each other. I am very happy and then I feel so insecure, question myself and feel so much inferior and he cannot understand. He is very sensitive and aware of people, of me but he is not used to talking about feelings, about himself. And for me it is new only being there without talking so much but to feel he really wants me and wants knowing me. He is quite successful in his job and works a lot and I cannot really understand that for him it is not so important how much money I earn or things like this. Then he says but I do not like you because of your job. I like you because of being you. And he is somebody who wants to marry one day, wants children, very much

so, not now of course but in future. It is great, that is what I would like to have and to live. It is only that I do not trust my body or I feel too scared for being pregnant. And then I think I should not have a relationship with him so he can look for a woman who is not struggling so much. And then I only feel good and hope everything will work out well. We are in the beginning ... It is difficult to trust that things will work out as they are supposed to do.

I hope you feel fine so far and take care of yourself. What is with the second floor of your building? How is your health? I am looking forward to being with you whenever it will be, hopefully soon. Pa, I send my love out to you! Love Maria (Sano)

May, 1 2006

Dear Pa,

I apologize for not writing earlier, very much. I am sorry I did not send you a mail or tried phoning you. I do not know why did I hesitate writing to you... I sent you a postcard and hope somebody will take it to the place where you are resting and try to recover. Melissa told me about your operation and your angina. Pa, how much would I give for being with you now, but I cannot, not now but I still hope I or we can work something out. We will ! I am fairly sure!

Please take care of yourself. I am proud of you that you are resting now. I wish you lots of strength and health! I am doing well so far. Klaus and me are moving together. Now I am sitting here at his desk. I am very happy with him. I try to become pregnant and we are thinking of being married. I hope I will manage, I am very scared of losing the gifts or presents I have in my life. I do not know how to put in words what I mean but I think you understand. I still have to struggle but that is probably my life. Pa, I love you so much! Thank you for being you! That I have more and more a fulfilled life is only because of you. My heart is full of gratitude by thinking of you and our memories! I am being with you in spirit!

Love Maria

August 16, 2006

Dear Pa,

I apologise my delay in writing to you. I do not know what holds me back. I am thinking of you so often during the day, each day

and you are in my mind, but sometimes there is a hesitation of writing. And thank you for being with me in spirit.

The operation went well. I have been so scared, had night mares each night a couple of weeks before. And Klaus has been with me, took two days off and did care for me. And the best thing is, the doctor who has made an examination before has not been right and that was the reason for my trouble. My tubes have not been closed. Everything is fine with my ovaries and I only had a harmless cyst, nothing to worry about. I am fully healthy. So, I am very happy and I or we hope I will become pregnant one day. Now I have trouble with my hormones but that could be because of the stress I had.

And actually I am fine. I am working as a freelancer and my business is going well. I will never become rich but it is okay. I mainly train nurses who specialize for being in charge of dying people.

What I really worry about is my physical condition. I feel strong and healthy. It is only my very weak nervous system. I still have these sensations and feelings of losing my conscious and feeling dizzy. I am very frustrated because it is so exhausting. I am doing therapy but may be there is something deep within myself I can not find a solution or may be something got broken one day and I can not repair it. Even when I feel good and I would not expect something but I can have lots of sensations which make me feeling weak.

But yes, my life is good and I am doing well. My relationship with Klaus is good. What about you? Did you find out something about your visa application? How is your health and your skin on your nose? I hope we can be together soon! Pa, take care of yourself! I send my love out to you!!

Maria (Sano)

September 25, 2006

Dear Pa,

Now I am sitting here at my desk, thinking of you and hope you are fine and wondering what you are doing. Oh Yes, what would I give for being with you now, spending time with you, sharing with you and seeing you... but we work on it and I trust we will meet in person next year. It seems a good chance with this Governor who is interested in the methods of ASV and how they can be used in the government hospital in Chandigarh. I have to look it up where it is. I hope you will be able to use his backing to get your visa extended. I am sorry you have all this trouble with your visa.

I have some problems with my health, my back, have a slipped disc. I hope I used the right word. I looked it up in the dictionary . It is paining but I feel all right with it. It is only tiring, riding on my bicycle two hours a day, that is good, get special gymnastic and take my hot water bottle with me. Being active is better than resting.

And I have great news. Klaus and me will marry this year. I am very, very happy and thank God for giving me this man. The registry office wedding will be on the 23 December, before Christmas, that has been my wish. We both are catholics but the church as an institution does not mean much to us. We believe in God but having a church wedding would not be right or atleast I am not sure because without it I also feel not good. Klaus knows a deacon since he is a child and he wants to be blessed by him. And yes, my deep, deep and very strong wish would be that you would marry me and Klaus and that you would bless us in person. That would mean so much to me and would make me so happy!! But how can we arrange? People in Germany have to be married by the office before the church would accept a church wedding. We would like inviting you, but may be on Christmas and with all the family we both would not have enough time for each other and I really want you and me and you and Klaus and me. So, may be Klaus and me will come to India, I do not know when or if you have a visa you could come next year to Germany. I hope we will work something out... What do you think ? Would that be okay for you?

Pa, I miss you, I miss you very much. take care of yourself! I love you and send my love out to you !

Maria (Sano)

Email sent from Fr. Hank to Maria

August 28, 2005

Dear Maria,

Yes, hoping and determined to make it all happen, a visit with you some time next year. Something to look forward to.

I pray that your work situation works out in some sort of satisfactory manner for you. So, that you may feel settled and more at ease with yourself. Speaking of pictures I will have to send you some pictures of Kandu who is growing very well, very friendly and a good companion. I think you would love him.

Remember I keep you in mind, and within my heart, that is, where I have my deep feelings and warmth and openness. Happy to know that you are present there, with Sano quietly present and wishing and wanting.

Love Pa

December 21, 2006

Dear Maria (Sano),

Yes, Sano, with all that you are going through at the present time you do feel very young, and very small, very helpless. So since I cannot be there I send out my strongest desires and prayers that you will be able to go through all that is necessary to bring you back to reliable health and peace and strength. I thank God that you have Klaus with you. God our caring Father does make some wonderful experiences happen in our lives, even we never seem to be free of all worry and pain.

And really it all began many years ago when Mary had to have her little Child in a cattle shed. That scene was certainly not very noticeable, for the poor are never really noticed, but what a tremendous happening for all of us individually. So much we can never fully appreciate it all. So lets just be thankful and keep trusting. The Father has been so good to me, blessed me throughout my life, kept me healthy and appreciated and loved. And I will pray when I offer my Mass on Christmas eve that the Father gives to you and Klaus the inner strength and love he put into the heart of that little baby born in that small, poor cattle shed. Remember - all our chances and opportunity for happiness began that night so many years ago.

Merry Christmas - and may the New Year burst in wonderful good news to you both.

Love, Pa

Maria felt fairly satisfied in the community – but it was a very difficult move on her part to be fully relaxed and at ease in any place where she was to be with others. Living with many people who were very much concerned with themselves was not easy for her. The few people that she felt at ease with, with whom she could relax and might even begin to enjoy herself with ,were few because of her shyness. She would have liked to be with people but she did not easily find people who appreciated and wanted to make the effort to discover how warm and accepting she could be.

Sometimes when there are discussions concerning former kids and how they fared with their personality's attempt to find a passage through the serious problems tying them down in uncertainty and continuous doubt, we need to consider what they suffer or are suffering within themselves.

Many times I experienced first hand the twists and contorted struggles that Maria went through as she struggled to eliminate from her mind the terrible fear and hesitations that she needed to put herself through in order to be present and in some way take part in the community activities and sharings.

And she has left me with precious memories, memories I can be very thankful for. My life is so much richer because of the times I spent with her – morning walks together, swimming in a small pool at the resort down the road from ASV. The week being together in the small resort on an island on the coast of Germany, when I visited Germany, to check how she was doing after her time with me in India.

It was while planning her marriage with Klaus that the cancer that was to bring about her death, struck her down. She died in 2007. Her husband wrote me a beautiful letter of her last struggle.

Such beautiful memories she has left me with.

“Dear Pa,

My heart is full of gratitude thinking of our memories! I am being with you in spirit!

Love Maria (Sano)”.

I will always keep a special place in my heart for the beautiful memories of Maria, my Sano.

Sundar

When Sundar came to me, not fully grasping the desire or the need to make changes in his personality, he could not fully accept the problems that were quite active in him.

He had been given training in some way in office procedures, but he found it very difficult to fit in with the two or three other young men working in the office. He had great ambitions as a accountant, but his competence was very limited, even though he was very eager to learn. His competitive nature hindered his practice and he was unable to carry out his ambitions, including his desire for marriage.

His uncle, who was his guardian, was unable to fulfill his demands, because his abusive language, unnecessary expenses and violence were very unacceptable.

By being with the group in treatment he realized that he did have fairly good prospects if he worked on the problems that he had. He was able to give up his anger and was receptive although frightened because he really wanted to fit in well and be appreciated.

Gradually his social awareness improved and he began to control his wasteful expenses and became receptive of his uncles directions. Through therapy he learned to fit into a team and to accept his place in the community, although there were disputes. After nearly 4-5 years of close living contact in ASV, he was able to function well and was accepted back for a regular job at his uncle's office.

I have appreciated the changes which he has made over the years, learning to act in a continuously growing mature manner and developing an ability to be aware and knowing himself. I am pleased how he has learnt to think and remain aware so that his thinking is settled and appropriate.

I value the great efforts that he has made to understand me and build the attachment that he continues to have with me. His relationship with me has enabled him to become flexible and adaptable when necessary in any difficult situation.

He continues to maintain our attachment which I now consider as one of close friendship.

I have enjoyed putting together the various letters that I have written to him over the years, after he left ASV, which I believe were quite meaningful to him. Our correspondence ended up being a great source of happiness to me.

Date : 10.08.2007 Time 13.27 pm

Subject : Confidence

Dear Sundar,

I apologize for the delay in sending this to you. I have been very busy this morning sending some letters out to people in Chandigarh - to Ajim's father and others.

Confidence is something a person will not think of very much, especially the confident person, for the confident person will just go along and do his work without reflecting that the work seems to be easy for him and that it seems to be done, quickly, or that he keeps getting new ideas which help him in his work. So notice those things that you can do easily. As you reflect you will realize that you are confident in doing those things.

To increase your confidence be aware while you are doing the activities you need to do or especially enjoy doing. Have the sense that you are confident to do those things. It will give you a feeling of security, a sort of pride.

I will write more if I have an opportunity this afternoon.

All the best. Fr. Hank

Date: 27.08.2007 Time: 08.52 am

Sub: No Discouragement

Dear Sundar,

I can understand how you feel. Everything seems to be going on well, when you feel in charge of yourself and what you need to do and have strength to always take charge and follow what you have decided. Then you find you have made a mistake or been weak and haven't followed through on the decisions you have made. I have often felt that way. I felt down within myself and tend to be depressed.

But, I have learned that I have to be strong with myself, to take

charge of my thinking and feeling. So, I think that I can be strong enough and not to feel down or depressed. So, I behave as when I am controlling my anger. When I may be very angry with someone and feel that I cannot express it as I would want to, I decide to keep my anger and not to speak out or tell the person. So, I keep control and agree to drop the anger for my own good - I would rather feel good than keep the anger. My main aim is that I still feel strong and calm with myself.

Yesterday, we had a good day with parents and guests. There was lots of discussion, with the parents asking us to give them a day or two session on their own personal growth and how to handle their feelings and communicate with others. I feel happy that we had two full day's session. We will have more.

All the best.

Fr. Hank

Date : 16.09.07 Time: 10.52 am

Sub: Hello

Top of Form

Dear Sundar,

I enjoyed speaking with you last evening. I can understand that your uncles will talk to you about getting ahead in certain ways. You can remember or think that relatives that you meet only now and again will say what they believe. They will probably believe that you should be moving ahead in the manner that they believe would be good for you. But that is only their opinion. They do not know what you are working on for your future when they speak. You have your plans and are working to become an auditor, you have chosen your line or profession, and on this you are definitely working. So you can let drop or ignore what the others are saying to you or proposing for you. Trust in yourself and your own planning, especially the plans that you have worked out with your father.

Keep trusting in yourself and all that you can accomplish in your life. By losing so many kilos you know that you can accomplish what you set out to do. So carry on with your plans and do not allow yourself to be diverted by what others may say.

I am going up to Valsad this week - flying up to Mumbai early Thursday morning - then afternoon train to Valsad and back to Mumbai by train early Monday morning and then flying back to

Bangalore late Monday evening. Maybe we could meet on Monday.
You are all right - keep going on well.

Fr.Hank

Date : 29.09.2007 Time 16.40 pm
Sub: Steady Confidence

Dear Sundar,

We all of us have a long way to go before we can be the strong effective persons that we would like to be. Do not think I was always like I am today. It took many years of struggle for me to gain the confidence in myself that I have at the present time. I often felt that I was way behind other persons I was studying with, and especially other persons who were with me in the training to become the teacher I knew I had to become. And also when I was given the post of Headmaster in the school it took some time for me to learn how to organize the teachers and the students so the school could function in a manner that helped everyone attached to the school. But I did not become discouraged or put myself down through a lot of fears. No, I realized that I could learn what was necessary to be learned in order to have everything go smoothly. I never became discouraged but kept regularly telling myself that I could learn more and more, and feel good about my learning. We are all able to learn, and the learning process is not something I should avoid but enter into the learning process with determination and a rewarding feeling. A rewarding feeling comes to me as I gradually, slowly, step by step integrate those practice activities I have to learn. All the best to you.

Love, Fr. Hank

Date : 14.10.2007 Time : 18.23 pm

Sub: Quite Confident
Top of Form

Dear Sundar,

When you phone to me I feel my attachment to you being deepened, so you can phone me anytime, and on any matter or occasion. I realize that you have had a few difficult days and during this time you have been speaking with your uncle and have managed to be actively and positively involved with him, and that both of you now appreciate the way things have worked out together.

You are learning and slowly integrating yourself into the office practices. Any person who is learning some new practices or skills has to accept that much of the knowledge will not be clear to him but will be clearer as he goes along and stays patient in his learning. So, the main word is "patient" which means I wait, while I believe that all the knowledge will come to me or be given to me, taught to me, as the time goes by.

You will be actively learning all the time as your uncle is teaching you. So, you will be learning. Every person who is now in the office has gone through the slow process of learning, learning more and more as the days go by.

I appreciate very much your trust in me. From my last visit, as I talked with you and your uncle as I took my lunch, I saw that you and your uncle can be very understanding together - that is very good and the goal of all therapy. Today we had our meeting with the kids and parents and I told everybody that the goal of all of our therapy is that the kids and parents / gaurdians will be able to stay open to each other, come to agreement because of their acceptance of each other.

All the best to you.

Fr. Hank

Date: 20.10.2007 Time : 16.40 pm

Sub: Confidence

Top of Form

Dear Sundar,

Thanks for your phone call yesterday. I appreciate hearing from you. And I am always ready to write to you - yes, and write about any matter that you may want me to write about. I realize that I should be writing to you more often, just to help you to realize that I am thinking of you and wish that you are feeling good with yourself and finding a meaning in your life. I would want you to grow in the strong belief in your great value as a person.

I guess that is what I especially would want for you to have - a great value in yourself. Each and every person needs to reflect within himself or herself on the value that he places on his being this person now - this existing, living person who is conscious of himself and believes that he is accepted by at least one or two other persons, persons who are happy that he is living and interacting with them,

just as you are realizing that I am accepting you, happy to know you and happy to share myself and my thoughts with you.

I have good happiness and strength knowing that some other persons accept me, come to talk with me, want to know how I am feeling. So, within myself I am conscious of my accepting these other people, accepting you and so many kids that have been here in ASV during the last few years. When one of the kids who has been here writes to me, even though it may only be to ask some little advice or support, or just to say hello, I feel more confident, I feel good with myself and am ready to carry on the work that I am doing each day.

So, confidence comes from that realization, the belief, the knowledge that I am accepted by some person, or some one or two persons, or many persons. And all of us need to have that experience that we are accepted by another person and so then we can believe in our self and be confident within our self. We learn to trust in our self, so that whatever happens to us, or whatever anyone might say to me I still feel good with myself, and do not need to become angry or argue with another person. We just remain confident within ourselves. All the best to you.

Fr.Hank

Date : 28.10.2007 Time : 12.16 pm

Sub : Being with people

Dear Sundar,

I appreciated your talking with me yesterday - your openness and trust is a very positive quality that you have. This quality will be of much help to you.

I believe that I have some idea of the problem which you are facing. It is very difficult to find a way to become part of a group that are speaking together, especially when the people already know that you have some difficulty in your work or in feeling at ease with people. So, when a person is in this situation they have to be very aware of the reactions of the others, quietly trying to understand what their reactions are. You will need to know what the others are talking about, what are their interests and usual subjects of talk. So, I have to go slowly and wait until there is some sort of invitation, some sort of opening that allows me to enter into their conversation easily and smoothly.

That is a skill that all people have to learn in order that they may join in any group for conversation, or begin to mix with others whom they are not close friends with. I guess the word I would need to use in describing this process is that it is a delicate process - I cannot move abruptly into a group. The English word is - I cannot barge into a group. So, unless I am invited into a group talking together I have to go slowly.

Later, I can speak with one or other of the persons who talk together but again I cannot ask them what they were talking about, unless the person begins to tell me what they were talking about.

We can talk more about this. Stay happy with yourself - you are doing well.

All the best - Fr. Hank

Date: 31.10.07 Time : 16.39 pm

Sub: Relating with People

Dear Sundar,

I regret that I am late in sending you this - I have been busy today. How do I break through to other people who do not accept me or who seem that they do not want to talk with me or have any relationship with me?

I have to go slow and watch these persons without being open and looking at them all the time but just being aware of them and trying to get some idea of what sort of person the person is, what the person is like. Is he someone who laughs a lot, is he some one who is silent a lot? So, slowly I get some "feel" for the person. if I believe that he is very stiff or an angry person, then I go slow. If he is someone who laughs a lot and seems friendly then I can consider, "How can I be with this person?"

But, you are an outsider to the fellows in the office, even though you work in the same office. They are not interested in having you as a friend or they may be interested but do not believe that they would like to be friends with you. One thing you can do - is to just feel within yourself, your attitude towards them - each one individually. You get some idea of how the person is when you try judging the way they talk and behave.

And you begin to allow yourself to feel positive towards one of them or each of them. You sense positive feelings towards them slowly. Then you quietly wait - it will take days - until there is some

recognition coming from one of them - he may greet you in the morning or ask you a question about yourself.

Do not believe that they are always critical or negative towards you - just be quiet and watch them.

It is easier with strangers that you meet in the gym or in roadside shops - then it may be possible to wish them well or ask them questions about how they are - or speak about what is the news in the newspaper - or talk about films - or cars - or buses. Just a few sentences back and forth between you and the person will begin to give you some confidence that you can communicate with other people.

Believe that you are equal to any person - the other person may have more education or have some skill you do not have or seems to be more active and knowing. Remember that you are equal to that person, you are equal because he is a person and you are a person so you have a right to be as you are. And slowly you will come to accept that you are as good as anyone and have your rightful place anywhere.

You can give me feedback on the above. Is it helpful and what you want ?

All the best. Fr. Hank

Date: 1.11.2007 Time : 17.38 pm

Sub: Mistakes

Dear Sundar,

Yes, we all make mistakes, sometimes we notice our mistakes, sometimes we do not notice our mistakes, sometimes other person's do not notice our mistakes, sometimes other people do not notice their mistakes, sometimes we do not notice other person's mistakes, sometimes we notice other person's mistakes....

All of this goes on all the time. So, we have to accept if people do not notice our mistakes, we have to accept if they notice our mistakes. And of course, there are times when we make mistakes and think we have not made a mistake, there are times when we have made a mistake and nobody notices it, and we haven't, made a mistake and others think we have made a mistake.

So, there are all sorts of combinations and situations. Is there any solution? There will be mistakes, unexpected and not deliberate. What to do? And what if the results of the mistake has an effect on me?

Then I have to stop and think and make as good a judgment as I can. And I have to do this, no matter how I am feeling - whether I am feeling angry, sad or afraid.

Now, the mistake can be serious, or it can be slight, not serious. When I come away from the coffee seller and I realize when I have walked a good distance down the street that the seller has made a mistake in not giving me the proper amount of change. What can I do? I let it pass. Why get into an argument?

I go to the hospital for an operation and the new doctor who is supposed to remove my left cancerous foot makes a mistake removes my healthy right foot. What can I do? I can do many things, take him to court, demand compensation, etc.

The trainer tells me to do a certain exercise that he hopes will help me lose weight. I gain weight even though I do not eat more food. What to do? I can believe he is doing his best, and he can never be sure. I give my own feedback to him which he accepts and follow my suggestions. Or he doesn't agree with me and tells me to stay on the old exercise. I can walk out and go to another trainer.

So, that is how life is. There are always doubts in every situation. Nothing is 100 percent valid and sure. So, we go along as best we can judge. It is necessary to be flexible, that is, stay open and ready to accept because most matters are not 100% sure. It is better to remain undecided so that we can remain open and friendly even though I would like it to be firm and decided. We always need to remain positive towards the other person.

All the best. Fr. Hank

Date: 10.11.2007 Time : 09.43 am

Sub: Sorry

Dear Sundar,

I am late in sending you this email- I had promised that I would send you an email some days ago - an email on the relations between people and how can we understand people and find the ways to be in contact with them, talking with them and working with them.

Really the contact with people begins within myself. I have to have the confidence and acceptance of myself so that I can feel at ease within myself and ready to reach out to others. The confidence gives me the assurance that I can make contact with others - that I am as good as they are, I have to understand that they have their

strengths and weaknesses, as no one is perfect. We are all the same. Some are more intelligent and seem to work faster and can talk easier. They may have different interests than I have. Still basically they want the same things in their life that I want - friends, success, etc.

I hope you have had a good Diwali - sometime to be free and do things that you like to do. I think of you each day .

All the best to you - Fr. Hank

04.12.2007 Time 13.24 pm

Subject : All the Best

Dear Sundar,

May all be well. I believe that you can enjoy the accomplishments that you made in the past two years - or maybe even more time...You are finding the ways to obtain the smooth and pleasant experiences that you have always wanted to have in your life. And this is the result of your being patient, using your awareness and thinking, paying attention to the feelings and thoughts that come up within you and working out through your feelings and your attitudes the goals that you are organizing for yourself in your experiences with your uncle and other persons. In this way you are gaining in confidence and becoming more sure of yourself.

Continue as you are doing - Love, Hank

05.12.2007 Time 20.23 Hrs.

Sub: Freedom

Dear Sundar,

Thanks for your email. I am very happy to answer your mail. I will try to explain a bit how you move into the Negative Thinking. What happens is that you choose unconsciously to remain in such a stuck position. The problems arise when your uncle does not agree with you on your proposal. Try to think about many times in the past when your uncle has thought differently over some point and you have become upset. Or think of the times with me when you felt that I was disagreeing with you. You would feel angry and because of that your thinking would be blocked or stuck so that you did not have any thought that you had a choice to behave and talk differently.

When a person is setting aside his feelings (realizing that he has strong feelings but does not act on his feelings but remains neutral

or quiet) then he can easily think and so can decide what is the most helpful decision he can take about himself at that time so he can plan for his future and what will help him to be successful and friendly and respected by others.

All the best to you, **Fr. Hank**

Dear Sundar,

Thanks for your telephone conversation twice today - many thanks for making contact. Speaking with you over the phone is in many ways so much more meaningful than the simple emails although I also appreciate the communication that comes with the emails. It is always, in some manner, very enriching for persons to communicate with each other for the contact allows us to appreciate ourselves more simply because of the contact we have. We grow through our contact.

And for that reason we, all of us, are frustrated when some individuals or groups of people stay distant and do not wish to communicate with us even though they may be working in the same office with us. It is the same as being pushed away, or discounted. Yes, this often happens when the people are from a different language group or tribe. What do we need to do then when people seem to stay away from us and do not want to speak with us, yet speak very much among the people of their group? Then, we need to be quite clear and acceptant of ourselves, or an individual must be clear about his own person, having a serious acceptance and trust in himself so that he can remain free within himself, convinced of his value as a person, fully aware of the process in his own thinking so that he reaffirms his confidence in himself and he does not become upset because of the way in which the persons now turn their backs on him or refuse to talk with him as they talk with each other. They show by their rejection that they do not want to share with him. In this situation a person needs to be strong and decide that he will not be disturbed within himself by their conduct. He will think of his own goodness and his worth and value to himself and the others who do accept him and talk openly and discuss openly matters with him.

So, there you are Sundar. I hope this is fairly clear and not too long - All the best to you

Love, **Fr. Hank**

Date: 14.12.07 Time : 11.02 am

Sub: Awareness

Dear Sundar,

Many thanks for your email. I had made up an answer for you and then was distracted when Usha came in and before I could send it the power went off. I was writing to you about awareness, and the necessity of remaining open within ourselves to the reactions which we experience within ourselves at any time. For we are always reacting, that is being alive. We experience our life as we go along - feeling, thinking, remembering, enjoying, being happy, being worried, being angry when someone snubs us or is not willing to allow us to talk - - - all many experiences that we have to go through the day. However, when we slow down our experiences, and notice our feelings and the reasons we are feeling as we are, then we can be in charge and decide how we are going to react, study the various options we have to think about, for options are always there no matter what we are feeling and thinking. Enough for now - may all be well for you.

Love, Fr. Hank

18.12.2007 Time : 18.08 pm

Sub: May all be well

Dear Sundar,

I will try to give you some ideas on the subject we have been talking about. The word consciousness is a word that helps to explain the word of awareness. When I am awake I am conscious and we say that I know what is going on in me. In other words I know that I am feeling, and that I can also be thinking. So I need always to let myself know the feelings that I am feeling. That is being conscious, being awake. I really cannot avoid the feeling that I am having. When I am conscious of the feeling then I can change the feeling to another feeling. And we talk about that next time. Right now I am going to Tara's house for dinner.

All the best to you. Hank

03.01.2008 Time 20.14 pm

Sub: Sorry for the delay

Dear Sundar,

I am sorry for the delay in writing to you - I have been very busy in the last few days. I was just talking with you on the phone,,,. It was an enjoyable conversation for me. You seem to be in good spirits which is something that I like to see - I like to see you being positive and enjoying your life. We need to pay attention so that we can enjoy our lives. Each of us will be aware of being in touch with our deep self, our deep feeling of being the person that we are. That feeling will give me confidence to be the person that I am. And this deep feeling of being strong and well and happy to be me, no one can take away from me because it is my conscious awareness of my self. Sometimes other feelings may come up in me that disturb me but I can always come back to my home base, to my being strong and accepting me within myself.

All the best. Love Fr. Hank

12.02.2008 Time : 15.43 pm

Sub: All the Best

Dear Sundar,

I am sorry that I have taken so long over the past month or so in not keeping in closer touch with you through the email. I have been often thinking of you. On the difficulty that you are having with the other people in the office you will have to just let them be as they are. Unless they are open and talking with you there is probably no way that you can feel at ease communicating with them. They are living their closed circle and not interested in inviting you to join them. That is how people usually behave with people they have difficulty in taking into their closed circle. There is not much you can do at present. But do not allow them to put you down. Believe in yourself and your place in the office. You are all right.

Fr. Hank

20.02.2008 Time : 9.37 am

Sub: Sorry

Dear Sundar,

I apologize for not writing to you over the last many days. The excuse I have to make is that I have had so many matters to take care of here. I have begun training sessions with the new staff and junior staff and this has taken much of my time. I have been thinking of you and sending my thoughts out to you - I remember how you spoke about the other staff in the office ignoring you and cutting you off from their company. I hope that your gym work is continuing and that you have been successful in lowering you weight.

All the best to you - Fr. Hank

27.02.2008 Time : 17.34 pm

Sub : All the Best

Dear Sundar,

Thanks for your phone call last evening. I agree - it is not easy. Life often does not come as a happy package to us, like some sort of Valentine gift that is all sweets and roses. Rarely does life come smoothly and just as we would want it to fit our wishes and needs of the moment. So, we need a wonderful strength inspired by our courage and our persistent belief that our life will be better in the future. In some ways it will be better, because I shall know myself better - I will realize that I can always in some way or other generate some new energy by talking with the people who understand me and support me. And I hope, keep hoping that there will be a positive change that will benefit me and others. Here in ASV when difficulties for me come up such as when there are very little funds, or kids keep acting out and not getting well, or some outsiders negatively criticize all that we do here in the community, the only thing I can do is think and remember the past and the good kids such as you that we have had in the past. Then I say to myself that is all worth it. And I trust that tomorrow, the day following or some time in the next week there will be a change.

So let us both keep hoping for a better future. Fr. Hank

24.03.2008 Time: 21.39 pm

Sub: good Evening

Dear Sundar,

We had a conversation on the phone earlier this evening. I guess I would describe the subject as being about what method to follow within myself when I have a sense that the person who is speaking to me or calling me has some sort of negative intention to agitate me, or provoke me in some manner, or speak about me in a distasteful or disrespectful manner. Against such a behaviour by another person I must be very strong and not allow myself to become disturbed or upset by the other person. He or she may have a negative intention - I may pick up a sense of this negative intention. Hence I have to be on my guard and protect my self, keeping myself composed and steady within my thinking of myself, realizing that I may be or can be quite angry at the person but at the same time controlling myself and not allowing my self to become upset by his or her remarks. I have nothing but a very low opinion of the person who tries to provoke me in this way. Hence I need to protect myself from within myself by not becoming upset by the words or action of the other - I protect myself from within by keeping my strong belief in myself and acceptance of myself and so I do not allow the other person to make me not-OK. Nobody can make me not-OK except myself.

I do that when I stop believing in myself and loving myself.

All the best, Fr. Hank

02.04.2008 Time: 15.33 pm

Sub: Message

Dear Sundar,

I apologize for not sending this message before now. Our telephone lines were cut by the men laying the new water pipelines in the village - all the surrounding houses were also cut off.

Now, the main way to avoid being upset by whatever anyone says to me I have to be very aware, very strong and determined within self. I need to be strong, very strong within myself so that when someone says something to me I do not react at all. I stay calm and steady, convinced that I am not going to allow this person to cause me to be moved or upset or bothered by what they say to me. I need to stay cool and not react and try to reply to them immediately.

I stop and give myself time to think. Even if what the person says makes or moves me to feel immediately very angry I remain calm and do not give any angry answer. I keep quietly in charge of myself to show the other person that I am very much in charge and that I am not allowing the other to put me down or to feel bad. My motto is "I have really thick skin and what you say bounces off of me." Meanwhile I am thinking within myself whether I want to answer this person or not. I am not going to give them the advantage of putting me down or upsetting me. I remain in control of myself and then I decide how I want to feel about what they have said. I will not try just yet to try to protect myself and I will within myself renew my belief that I am in charge of me and not the other person. The other person cannot dictate to me how I am supposed to feel. I will stay always in charge of me.

This demands an effort on my part but it is a way of showing my strength quietly and exerting my power to be in charge of myself. Remember the times you may have been angry and shouted at me - still remained quiet and spoke only as I wanted to, choosing my words carefully, still being in charge of me. Let me know what you think of this.

Fr. Hank

10.04.2008 Time: 10.11 am

Sub: The word

Dear Sundar,

It is important not to be upset by the words which people use or say to you. I will give you something from a book which some one gave me.

The word is not just a sound or a written symbol. The word is a force; it is the power you have to express and communicate, to think, and thereby to create the events in your life. You can speak. Which other animal on the planet can speak? Many would say that the word is the most powerful tool you have as a human; it is the tool of magic. But like a sword with two edges your word can create the most beautiful dream, or your word can destroy everything around you. One edge is the misuse of the words which creates a living hell. The other edge is the impeccability of the word, which will only create beauty, love and heaven on earth.

Some times what is said to us can enter our mind and change our whole belief about something - maybe for a good purpose, maybe for a bad purpose. You may believe you are stupid and have believed

this for a long time. This is something you have agreed with me at times. You may do something and think to yourself, "I wish I were smart, but I must be stupid or I wouldn't have done that." But one day someone may be attentive to you and hears you saying you are stupid. But then the person says to you "But you are not stupid". And he gives you some reasons to show you are not stupid. You believe what the persons says and you make a new agreement with yourself. As a result you no longer feel or act stupid.

You change your belief. Beliefs are very strong - they can make or break us.

Love, Fr. Hank

30.04.2008 Time: 9.43 am

Subject : All the Best

Dear Sundar,

I apologize - I said that I would send you an email yesterday, but I didn't - so today I write. May all be well with you and for you. May you be at ease, assured of yourself and realizing all that you can do today. Keep that trust in yourself, the trust that you can handle whatever comes in your path today.

Yes, self-acceptance gives me the base within myself that enables me to find myself secure and alive to be able to form my life, to choose the thoughts and words and actions that will give me the confidence to become the person whom I want to become, to become the person that some way I dream of becoming on my own even though other people may not have the same confidence. But I can become as I want myself to become. I let other people be as they are, I can go along on my own, looking after myself, feeling confident in myself.

I realize that I am in charge of my self so I can choose who I will be. I am glad that you are you and glad to know you.

Fr. Hank

05.05.2008 Time 21.13 pm

Sub: May all be well

Dear Sundar,

May all be well - keep your thinking clear, and your feelings cool, and be ever ready to go with what appears to be the best

solution, the solution that is most likely to give you strength and peace. And we have to go through this same manner of being aware and of keeping alert, open to the other person I am talking with, or the other people around me.

How do I keep my thinking clear? By remaining calm and giving myself time to reflect within myself as I remember what I wanted from the other person at this time - and then I need to make sure the other person is aware of my asking him or her for what I am wanting.

So, keep your self open even though you feel nothing seems to be going right for you. In some time the positive outlook will come back to you.

I am sorry that I have not sent you any email for many days. May all be well for you.

Love, Fr. Hank

07.05.2008 Time: 10.03 am

Sub: Reflecting

Dear Sundar,

Thanks for your email - you are going along well - especially learning accounts. The more you concentrate on learning as much as you can about accounting and business procedures for accounting and auditing, the more confidence you will have within yourself and the more people will recognize you for your knowledge. That is where I would like you to reach - that you will have a knowledge that other people will recognize and will accept you for that knowledge - you will be respected as a talented person.

And stay with your plan, and avoid eating out if possible - or only have little food when you take something outside.

You are doing well - continue.

Love, Fr. Hank

08.05.08 Time : 21.08 pm

Sub: May all be well

Dear Sundar,

All the best to you - I have been thinking about you after you phoned me this morning. I do not know very much about investments as I have not had any investments in my life and never

had any money that I could invest. I do know that people invest their money so that they make the money they do have earn more money for them. That is the reason the very rich people become richer - as they earn money using the money that they already have. The story is often told of the old man who buried in the ground the money that he had hoping it would grow - but when he dug it up he found that the amount was the same as he had previously buried.

In order to invest money a person must have some extra money and then must be aware of what banks or securities or bonds or stocks will earn the most money from his original investment.

I spoke with Melissa this morning on the phone and she asked me to speak to you about her. She is finishing her first college courses and will now join another college for her Masters degree.

All the best, Fr. Hank

09.07.08 Time: 15.09 pm

Sub: Awareness

Dear Sundar,

Thanks for your phone call this morning - I appreciate your telling how you are doing, what are your thoughts. You are doing well and I realize that each day has some different atmosphere often for you. I believe that during the sleep we have each night, many different thoughts or memories may come up in your mind without waking us up or our being aware of them, but they register with us just the same. And if these thoughts contain some negative content then this will influence us, even though we do not wake up or do not remember having the thoughts consciously in our mind. Because of this when we wake up and gradually become aware of ourselves during the morning we may slip into some negative feelings without being fully aware of the reasons we are feeling as we are feeling. And something may cause us to experience some negativity, some negative feeling and this may cause us to become a little depressed or as they say, "a little off colour" , or not my usual bright self.

Then I have to again take charge of my self, take control of my thoughts and feelings - get back my confidence in myself, renew my positive description of myself, remember my positive or good qualities, remember people who accept me and are happy with me. I give myself positive strokes, try and discover what good actions I have to do today, take charge of my thought - be positive towards myself. I look ahead to what good and rewarding experiences I might have

during the new day. Believe in my goodness and strength to be me, the person I want myself to be. Not allowing myself to be in any manner depressed.

Keep building a firm, clear cut, assured, beneficial, convinced, hopeful, progressive, secure personality each day. All is possible for you, I am with you, supporting you always.

Love, Fr. Hank

13.07.08 Time: 12.18 pm

Sub: Awareness

Dear Sundar,

I appreciate very much your awareness. Awareness means that I am conscious of what I am thinking and feeling and also what others may be saying to me, or how they are behaving towards me. I believe that you are constantly aware of how others behave towards you, especially your uncle, since much of your important interactions are with him. It is good that you are realizing that very often he is negative and critical. You have to rely very much on your patience and strength. Someday we will have to sit down together with him and discover a smooth method of communication between him and you so that the discussions can be more easy and with less negative feelings.

All the best. Fr. Hank

20.07.08 Time: 15.29 pm

Sub: All the Best to you

Dear Sundar,

I am sorry I could not send this to you until now - but our electricity has been very on and off in the past few days. I liked talking with you yesterday about how each of us in his own way finds the strength and confidence in himself to develop his own acceptance of self and belief in self.

Each of us is "OK" only because we have the confidence in our belief in ourselves that "I am OK" and no one can take that belief away from us.

When I take the time to think about myself, I know that I accept the experience of being me - my awareness of self and the person who I am. I do not look at or think of or refer to what I can

do or the talents or training or education I may or may not have. All of those things are something I HAVE - those things do not make me BE ME. I am ME and I am OK just because I am alive and aware of my SELF. So, I can be happy just being MYSELF.

Sure, I can study and DO many things but those things do not make me OK. I am OK because I am ME. That is enough. No one can take that OKNESS away from me no matter what they say or do to me.

All the best, **Fr. Hank**

22.07.08 Time: 21.54 pm

Sub: Hello

Dear Sundar,

This is just a few words - it is now almost ten o'clock at night and time that I began to close up my shop here. I realize I have not sent you a message today and now I also realize that I cannot go to bed without sending you a message.

May all be well with you. I hope that you have had a good day and that you have felt strong and proud of yourself. I also hope that the day has been profitable for you - that you have been able to accomplish what you wished to accomplish during the day. And may you be able to accomplish all that you plan to accomplish tomorrow. Keep trusting that you can accomplish what you wish to accomplish.

See what you have done with yourself in the past months and so congratulate yourself. You will do much more in the future.

All the best to you – **Fr. Hank**

08.08.2008 Time : 19.06 pm

Sub: Will speak

Dear Sundar,

I am sorry for the trouble that you had this afternoon - I will speak about it in the staff meeting on Monday and they have to realize their responsibility to receive all calls in a polite manner and carry out the caller's wishes. Yes, I can understand that you spend money to call here and you need to receive the common courtesy that is right every time you phone.

It was good speaking with you on the phone. Yes, there are few people who will take the time to listen and understand what the other person is trying to put across. I believe it is necessary at all times to listen and take the time to understand the other person and not just say anything that may come in their own mind. Without proper understanding nothing can be done towards the progress that must be made in relationships.

May all be well. Love, Fr. Hank

10.08.2008 Time : 15.20 pm

Sub: Hello

Dear Sundar,

I have been thinking of you and what to write to you. I liked that you called me and told me that you had understood what we had talked about before this. Right now you called me and I understand how much you feel as people cut you off and do not befriend you and talk with you as you would want them to. I realize that you do not feel appreciated. but you are OK no matter what others may be thinking about you - you cannot allow them to take away the confidence that you have within yourself. I want to support you as much as I can. Neither of us can control the manner in which people think about us.

What you have done in your life is more than many people could have done. You have been through very much in your life. I appreciate that very much and am happy to have you as someone close to me, someone I can trust and whom I know wants to have free contact with me and will give me feedback about myself. I keep you in my mind and enjoy contact with you.

Love, Hank

17.08.2008 Time: 13.04 pm

Sub: Awareness

Dear Sundar,

I want to send you some lines, a short message, a few words, because of the chat we had on the phone last evening. My message this morning would be - feel good to be the person you are - be aware of yourself as a person - we all have an awareness of ourselves. But if we keep insisting too much on our difference with any other person we

lose the sense of awareness which gives me my awareness of my self and my trust in being the person who I am, myself.

My guru - the man whose book I have read most and think about most - Ken Wilber - writes as follows - "...the separateself sense, is an affective one. That is, it is propped up not just with concepts (with thoughts about myself) but by the emotions (that is, my feelings).

And the primal emotion (first and main feeling) of the ego, according to the teaching is fear followed by resentment. As the Upanishads put it, "Whenever there is other, there is fear."

In other words, when we split seamless awareness into a subject versus and object, me versus someone else, I against the other person, me not agreeing with someone...then that self feels fear, and the reason is simple and can be understood - because there are now so many "others", so many other persons in front of me, some many persons in my way, so many "others" out in front of me, so many I have to deal with who can harm my sense of my self, my acceptance of my self, my belief in what is good for my self.

Out of this fear grows resentment.

We can discuss this more as we go. **Fr. Hank**

26.08.08 Time : 11.54 am

Sub: Hello

Dear Sundar,

All the best to you. I should have written this some days ago but I have been occupied very much with various items here. What you have done is a tremendous move in your way of handling yourself, your inner self, your attitudes and your feelings. You have moved within your very being in a marvelous manner. What have you done? I believe that you have established a meaningful and profitable bond with your uncle. That is what I want all kids to be able to do - to establish bonds with others as they live their lives and become more relaxed and more sure and more awake in living their lives, especially more confident and able to think and reason matters out with the other person when there are difficulties.

I will always congratulate you. Because of how you can think concerning your life and what you want, I appreciate and enjoy our relationship.

Fr. Hank

31.08.08 Time : 16.53 pm

Sub: Questions

Dear Sundar,

In a way what we discussed yesterday and what we discussed today can be considered quite similar. We seem to be talking about how we can take part in a discussion or manage to get into a discussion when we feel that we are being left out - as you felt this afternoon when your uncle seems to have decided to make the changes and did not bring you into the discussion. In order to get into any discussion that is already started - or even already decided - I have to be very soft in suggesting that I have something to say on the subject that is being discussed and decided. If it is too late or seems to be already decided I have to think about what can be done - what are my views, how I want to say - be accepted. That depends and is different in every discussion. That is a problem. Each situation will be different and I have to be careful so that what I want to say or want to add will be accepted. This is long and complicated - and so is getting into a discussion when I want to discuss something that seems already decided.

All the best to you - Fr. Hank

03.09.08 Time: 20.38 pm

Sub: Fear

Dear Sundar,

It is important that you don't become worried whenever there is any fear coming into your feelings. Remember that the fear is only a feeling. Fear is not a decision and decisions are not based on fear - no decisions are made because of fear. First of all I have to come to the middle, to the place where there is no fear, then I can take a decision.

I may come to cross a busy street - then I begin to feel fear about crossing. So, I realize my fear.

I can do any of three things –

I can say "I am afraid, so if I run quickly across it will be best, then I'll be on the other side." But that is a very wrong thing to do as I may be hit by a car as I rush across.

I can say "I will wait till my fear goes, then I will go. But then I may have to remain a long time before my fear goes so I may never be able to get across the street'.

I can say "I will think about my options, may be there may be a way to get to my destination without crossing this busy street." This sounds like a good choice.

We'll talk more about this - it is an important point. We must always give time to thinking.

All the best. Fr. Hank

13.09.08 Time: 10.53 am

Sub: Being with others

Dear Sundar,

I am sorry that I haven't sent this email to you before this - I have been very busy these past few days. I have had to meet with four different families that are wanting to admit their daughters into ASV and also explain to staff all that took place in Chandigarh and Delhi. We released the 20-minute DVD on Athma Shakti. On Monday when the office staff is here I will send you a copy. I will ask you to send me Rs. 500/- some time to cover the costs of making this DVD. It is well made and will be entered in film festivals. The man who made the film has already won an award from WHO for a previous film he made.

About being with others - or talking with others - or understanding the other person, it is best to remain at ease and open as the other person is talking and at the same time be aware of my feelings and reactions but also to stay cool and open to what the other is saying. Then when he or she finishes I will respond calmly and moderately and in an easy tone of voice so that the other will be open to listen to what I am saying. I will not try to push what I want to say but speak about my reasons for saying what I am saying. Then I wait for the reaction of the other person, listening to his explanation.

I need to let this be for now but will add something more tomorrow.

All the best to you, Fr. Hank

29.09.08 Time: 21.21 pm

Sub: May all be well

Dear Sundar,

I offer my apologies that I have been so slow in sending this mail to you. I have been thinking of you each day. I am very happy that you have had such insights in the past week or so - and the good remarks you have made about the film. It has turned out much better than I could have hoped. It says much about ASV and in a very clear and bright way. In my talk to the parents who had come to our meeting yesterday I told them that the film gave a good idea of the spirit of ASV and what we do here. But it also does not do much to portray the other activities taking place in ASV and are also so very important in the treatment given in ASV. We do not mention being in the corner in the film. Nor do we mention how a person has to "deal" with the community when he or she has done something that is not appropriate for the community. Nor do we mention how much time is spent sorting out disagreements. So, many various items that are necessary if the community is to work out successfully.

May all go well for you. I appreciate your openness and sharing.
Love, Fr. Hank

09.10.2008 Time : 21.52 pm

Sub: With you

Dear Sundar,

I thank you very much for your hospitality yesterday - the discussions, your taking me to lunch, dropping me to the airport. I enjoyed the time with you. I am sorry that you became somewhat upset from the manner in which your uncle spoke to you, or what he said to you. When I am speaking with someone, discussing with a person about any matter, I need to remain steady within myself, not becoming upset or being depressed or becoming upset because of the words that he uses, or the tone of his voice, or the subject he is talking about. If I remain cool, then I can give an answer to him in a way that will cause him to reflect - I will remain cool, steady, not showing any change of feeling, remaining quietly in charge of myself.

Maybe you may remember that when you were here and you would become upset with me and were angry at me, I used to stay calm and let you speak as I remain calm and steady within myself. I

realized at that time that it is not helpful if I were to shout back in an angry manner - from that way of proceeding we both would have ended up getting nowhere towards a solution. In order for some solution to be found in a discussion we have to remain cool and steady. Only then can we think, that is, be aware of what is the goal of our discussion. When a person becomes angry at me in a discussion, I realize that it will be impossible for me to have him think and change his way of thinking and come to some agreement with me.

You have seen people arguing on the street and never coming to any solution. Because of their anger they will not listen to each other. One of them has to be fairly quiet and possessed and then the other may pay attention and slowly change his manner of speaking.

I remain without being angry. It is a special skill that all people need to learn, people can do it even when they are under any worry or pressure.

May all be well with you - Fr. Hank

19.10.2008 Time : 13.39 pm

Sub: Handling interactions

Dear Sundar,

I call what I will try to make more clear in this email - handling interactions. By handling I mean being able to keep a conversation, or any communication that I am having with another person going on until both of us are more or less satisfied with the interaction and feel all right in closing off the conversation - and feeling at ease and good enough, even if I am not fully satisfied with the conversation - meaning I feel positive enough about our conversation, quite satisfied that I understand what the other person was telling and his feelings as he spoke - so both of us have expressed what we want to say and have come to some agreement. We can both feel that we have reached a point of mutual understanding.

For this to happen both of us need to be ready to be aware of the feelings that I and he are experiencing while we are having this interaction. We need to both be aware of our feelings and the reasons why we are feeling as we are feeling. This is most important, otherwise we will not be able to discuss openly, for if one is angry and does not realize that he is angry and the level of his feelings then he will speak in a manner that will not be open to consider what I am wishing for

him to understand about me and my viewpoint - the thoughts and feelings that are within my mind at present. If I have a sense and believe that he is not open or is coming from what I believe is a negative standpoint then I must realize the feelings I am experiencing and find some way of expressing myself quietly in order to make him understand that I really do not agree with him, and slowly let him know that I do not agree with him. And then I ask him if we can quietly discuss in order to help both of us, so we keep our understanding or open communication between us.

I will send you more tonight or tomorrow.

All the best, Fr. Hank

21.10.08 Time 21.20 pm

Sub: All the best

Dear Sundar,

It is very late so I may not be long in writing as it is late and I have been busy all day meeting with various people.

What I would like to say to you this evening concerning our interactions with people is that we have to be able to stay quite alert as we stay working with persons who are involved in the same work as we are doing and so we have to interact with them quite often and have to come to some understanding and acceptance of each other in order for the work between us to go through smoothly. I myself must be steady and sure of myself within myself - if I am too nervous or afraid that the other person will be negative and not accepting of me then I will usually have some ill feelings towards the fellow. These feelings I must brush aside and trust in myself that I am all right and a good person, not allowing myself to become upset from the fact that we do not fully agree with each other. If I am quietly working with him, not letting my fear of him, or my interest decline or feel bad towards him, then things may go on fairly well. I will remain open, sure of myself, trusting myself, not being upset by any gestures or remarks he might make. This will take great patience but it will gradually work as he will pick up my smooth feelings and probably be quiet and keep supporting me quietly.

This working together takes patience and a quiet strength of being quietly believing in my okayness

Love, Fr. Hank

31.10.08 Time: 15.21 pm

Sub: Sorry for the delay

Dear Sundar,

I beg pardon that I have not sent this email earlier - so much has been going on with me here. There have been many different matters coming up this week - and many demands being made on me and my time. I hope that all is well with you and that you have been all right during the trip to Nagpur.

We were to talk about being able to carry on when people do not seem open or responsive to the situation that I am trying to explain to them. I realize that they seem to have rejected my position or seem to be putting me down by not answering my requests. Then I have to be very strong within myself and not become upset - I must remain in charge by reflecting on how I can find out more information or discover the reason the person is speaking as they are speaking. Maybe I should just walk away without saying that I am the one suffering by the manner in which they are speaking. I must always remain the boss of me and how I am going to react or feel. No one can take that power to be me away from me, no matter what they might say.

I look forward to your being here with us. Love, **Hank**

29.11.2008 Time: 21.15 pm

Dear Sundar,

Thanks for your phone calls which you made to me today. I was glad to receive them. And I liked the way in which you were talking about having positive thoughts and negative thoughts that lead you to take decisions which have positive or negative relationships with people or which cause you to feel upset and negative or feel good and active and relaxed. I myself usually talk about attitudes. An "attitude" is defined in the dictionary as a way of regarding life, the world around me in which I live or the events or happenings that happen. With the attitudes we have, we make ourself realize and be aware of how we feel in any situation or with any people we have to live with or have anything to do with.

We have attachments to people whom we meet or with whom we have work or business with. We form these attachments because we want them. For they help us not to be insecure. So we have attitudes towards these people - some positive attitudes making us feel good or negative attitudes making us to feel not good. Then the

thoughts spring from these or come forth from these attitudes into our thinking and next we may make our decisions about the person or work or anything else.

I'll need to explain this more so it is easy to understand. The main aim is to have control over the positive and negative thoughts. All the best to you. **Fr. Hank**

01.12.2008 Time: 21.18 pm

Sub: Doing well

Dear Sundar,

Yes, I believe that you are doing well. I admire your resilience in that you can shift your energy when you let yourself take some time and reflect on what you have thought or said or did. And as you do this, you become aware of the attitudes that you are coming from and then you have the courage to shift your thinking and then shift your feelings as you may wish to fit the situation. This is acting in a really mature manner and makes me realize that you are developing very strong cognitive skills. A cognitive skill is a way of being aware and knowing myself and how I am thinking and how I understand that my thinking is settled and appropriate. With this skill you can take your place in social situations, that is, in situations where it is necessary that you have to live and meet and talk and take action with other people. Resilience means that you have the ability to be flexible, adaptable, adjusting when necessary to the present situation.

You are doing well. Love, **Hank**

26.12.08 Time : 14.27 pm

Sub: Understanding

Dear Sundar,

I apologize for not sending this before. I have been occupied here yesterday and this morning. I will try to explain what I was talking about over the phone. The main point I wished to point out is that I can differ with what someone is saying to me and yet stay cool, thinking and aware of the differences between the way we both think. I can keep what I am thinking about the differences in our attitudes and thoughts yet still remain open to the other person. When I want the other person to be aware of the differences between us, I have to keep aware of my feelings and not to allow the feelings cause

us to be set apart from each other. Only then can we come to realize that we are understanding each other but from different points of view, with different feelings and attitudes.

I will continue this evening or tomorrow.

May all be well with you throughout the coming 2009.

Love - Fr. Hank

04.01.09 Time: 14.14 pm

Sub: Greetings

Dear Sundar,

All the best to you for the year which is just beginning - may it be a special, really new year, for you. May you be able to experience a new strength in your ability to understand the many different interactions that you will be having with people throughout this year. The interactions that we have with people are usually different most of the time - we have the connections with others for various reasons. And these interactions are usually different from each other, and with different people with whom we are connecting for various reasons, we need to be ready and open to understand what they are trying to convey to us by talking with us, or trying to give us information us about something, we need to be open and aware of the purpose of the interaction that we are having. If they want information, I give them the information. If they are giving me information I stay open and consider what they are saying to me.

At the same time in all cases I have to be aware or conscious of my reactions to what they are saying to me. I need to consider my reactions and judge whether they are appropriate reactions or not. My reactions need to fit into the conversation in order to keep the back and forth of the conversation flowing as we talk. Only then can I be sure that I am responding in a way that the other person can understand me so he can explain to me or support me or help me or share with me more of what he wishes to say to me and then it will be more easy for me to ask questions and tell the person what I do not understand or what I hear them say to me.

This is all very complicated but is the necessary way that interactions must move back and forth between two people.

Within myself I have to stay open, listen carefully, and not react in any negative manner until I am sure of the reason the person is speaking in the manner in which they are speaking to me.

All the best to you, **Fr. Hank**

17.02.2009 Time: 16.42 pm

Sub: Being Strong and Free

Dear Sundar,

Thanks for your phone call this morning. There is one important reaction that we need to be able and free to use at any time when we are with someone who challenges me or is in any way using words I do not agree with or negative words. I need to "keep my cool". Keeping my cool means I do not answer back or retaliate or show my self angry immediately. I say something that comes from our awareness that I need to quietly and slowly let the person realize that I do not agree with them but not by saying clearly "I do not agree." If I say "I do not agree" immediately or "I do not like what you said" the other may be upset and angry right away. I need to think and get the feel of what level of anger or how this person may be trying to bully me or push me down. So in some manner I keep away from starting some sort of strong argument.

I reflect and try and decide what are the possibilities I have to avoid the bad feelings arising and myself being disturbed by the other person. I remain in some manner in charge of the situation, not just reacting to the other person's nasty words or statements. I do not allow the other person to push me down or make me into the bad person. I keep my confidence and decide within myself how to avoid a bigger difference or fight.

What I am doing by this method is taking care of myself, keeping myself OK.

All the best, Fr. Hank

28.03.2009 Time: 12.00 pm

Sub: All the Best

Dear Sundar,

First I must apologize, as you have requested me to send you an email yesterday. However, there was a problem with my computer here - one plug had come out of the socket. And when I had it fixed this morning there were various mails I had to read and send.

Thanks for speaking with me after you returned home. Your trip was really a great pleasure for me - I enjoyed having you here with me. I guess it was the manner in which you were so clear and attentive as we went through the various papers that had been sent.

You are openly aware of the various thoughts and ideas that need to be examined and spoken about. Your understanding of yourself and the ability to speak in a responsible and meaningful manner shows clearly that you have been able to function in a manner that brings you into the right contact with the people you are mixing with or talking with. Keep growing in that understanding - reflecting (going over within your mind what the other person is saying and how you will respond to that person) - taking care to ask the right questions of the other person in a cool, calm voice so that then problems can be solved.

Yes, I am very happy that you have come this time. My door is always open to you. May all be well with you.

Love, Dad

03.04.09 Time: 21.12 pm

Sub: Problem

Dear Sundar,

When there is a problem - I believe the person must always go first to the reception who is usually responsible for the scheduling of the time for the session. So, if there is a mix-up then I have to keep my cool, not become immediately angry but report to the receptionist who is the one then in charge - I give her the difficulty and expect her to solve it for me. There is no use becoming angry. I can tell the receptionist that I am not happy with the arrangement that has not been made and tell her of my discomfort. If the receptionist does not listen to me then I decide to speak again more strongly explaining my point.

It is the organization that probably made the mistake and you can tell them of your displeasure that they have not scheduled you at a better time or for a course that suits you. Mix ups can always happen but the level of my upset will depend on the seriousness of the course or the amount of discomfort given to me by the mistake.

Good luck to you in the course - I hope that they become more efficient in their organizing.

All the best, Dad

04.04.2009 Time : 18.11 pm

Sub: All the Best

Dear Sundar,

Thanks for your phone call this morning. I hope that I can write something that will be of help to you. I guess one thing all of us need to remember when we are speaking about interactions between us. We interact with one another for many reasons. We may want to exchange information, for example, I want to tell you which team won the cricket match, or that I have taken up a new job. Or on the bus I may want to know if the bus stops at a certain place.

When you came for the course you needed to know about the class and when the teacher would be speaking with you. Because this was not clear you were dissatisfied and your reaction was OK and valid. So, you had to go to the receptionist to find out. You were looking for the correct information.

You did well because you kept your cool even if you felt in some manner upset and disappointed when you found out that something was not right. You experienced discomfort - you comfort was gone, vanished and so you had to worry which no one likes to do.

You needed an explanation and calmly asked for an explanation, something you always have a right to. And you did not show your anger or become upset - you kept your cool and asked for an explanation. You wanted people to understand your difficulty. We always want the other person to understand just what we are wanting, we want them to give us an explanation. We want to be satisfied within our mind that we are being recognized and being shown good service. We want to feel satisfied and this is our right.

Whenever we are paying for a service we want to be satisfied. In your case, in the office in Nagpur you want to be recognized and you want everything to be explained to you - so that you can understand and feel satisfied.

All the best to you – Dad

30.04.2009 Time: 11.49 am

Sub: Sorry for the delay

Dear Sundar,

I first regret that I have not replied to you since you asked me to write. You are doing well and I believe you are thinking about yourself in the correct manner and also you seem to be paying attention to how you want to be in your interactions with others. You seem to pay attention to your interactions with your uncle and keep open as is necessary.

And so you are building your confidence. What is "confidence"? I believe it is a decision that you take about yourself when you decide that you have a proper view of the correctness of your thoughts and attitudes and feelings. By "correctness" I mean that what you are deciding and feeling is appropriate in the present situation, and would be accepted as correct and helpful by most people.

The feeling of confidence is like feeling sure and capable of being able to be with others and understanding others - being sure that you can speak in a manner that others understand you and will agree with you since you understand them also.

When you feel confident you will find the strength to be you.
All the best, **Fr. Hank**

30.04.2010 Time: 16.46 pm

Sub: Reg. I have not understood this paragraph

Dear Sundar,

Confidence - will mean that a person has trust in himself or herself - he believes that he can go along smoothly doing what he has to do. He believes that he can do what has to be done. He believes he can accomplish or finish what he is setting out to do.

He is confident when he is almost certain that he can do it. A batsman believes he can make a good score, and this means he is confident. The confident person feels sure that he can do what he has to do.

You become confident when you do the same action correctly again and again. A confident person will do well in his job because he knows all that has to done.

Fr. Hank

03.06.2009 Time: 21.24 pm

Sub: Staying Calm

Dear Sundar,

I would say that both you and your uncle need to remain calm when you tend to think and not say, a remark or a sentence that is an attempt to overpower the other person quickly and sternly by the words or the expressions that you say or shout.

Once you shout or raise your voice, you have "lost it" as we say - the smooth thread of the speaking together is cut and so there is no longer any openness for quiet listening to the reasons the other person is saying in the talking together.

It is best that you both stop for "time out", and reflect on the purpose of quietly talking together.

Remember you are both worth much to each other and you really desire to deepen your relationship for you depend on each other now to find meaning in your lives.

The greatest built-in gift we have as persons is our "consciousness". Our consciousness has a built-in intentionality for our good and our life. We are made to live together and be friends - always being conscious of the other - we need each other. We must ask ourselves - what is my intention? It is to be together and understand each other and help each other. But it takes an exceptional amount of calm energy and exertion within our selves — staying cool - and actively controlling my thinking and reactions that are present in my consciousness.

I have to stay aware in my consciousness and not blast off or shout, for then I lose my conscious awareness of myself and nothing will be gained if I do not stop and slow down.

This may seem complicated but it is always a question of awareness of what is going on in my consciousness.

All the best to both of you, Fr. Hank

09.06.2009 Time: 10.32 am

Sub: Belief

Dear Sundar,

On many days as I begin to organize my thoughts and feelings for the day, I will experience often different sorts of feelings. and various ideas or thoughts come to my mind.

Some days I feel quite enthusiastic, feeling good to be me and also feeling ready to do whatever I can to discover some way of seeing how I can cover the most necessary letters or requests or phone calls that come to me and require me to pay attention to and do something about.

Some days go well. some do not go so well. Some days, all is smooth. Other days there are questions and difficulties arising.

Some of the difficulties can be resolved in a fairly easy manner and so I feel quite positive and content that all seems to be going well.

Yet on some days there are complications that come up, difficulties come in the way of smoothly getting something organized or some problems solved.

Then I begin some times to wonder - is it all worth it? why doesn't life work smoothly? why do these difficult problems in dealing with some persons come up? why are there difficulties?

I know that I cannot quit - I have to go on - I have to find solutions even though a solution doesn't come easily.

So, I carry on - I keep going - I believe that I can come thorough the difficulties - but I have to be determined - I have to be firm to go on - I have to push myself ahead.

And if I continue usually some sort of solution will come. It comes from my determination to try all the methods possible.

All the best - **Fr. Hank**

15.06.09 Time: 17.03 pm

Sub: Control

Dear Sundar,

I will use the word "control". Many people consider the word "control" as a negative word, that it limits a person, that it causes them to step back and do or say what they were going to say, or as policemen on the street control people and do not allow them to do what they want to do.

I am not using the word control in that negative way here. I mean I must be aware, conscious of what I am thinking and what I am feeling at the present moment because of my interaction with another person as we are discussing something one of us or both of us are interested in. I am responsible to control my feelings when talking, the words I use when talking, the reasons I put forward when talking. And also I must give time for the other to speak, listen carefully, and only after listening to reply. No interrupting.

All during the discussion the two of us are having I need to keep my voice in a steady low speech tone and volume - even if I become upset or angry or if I seem to be upset or angry or afraid at the manner in which the other person may have spoken to me or the matter they may have spoken to me about as they spoke to me.

If I disagree or am upset at what the other person is saying, then I can answer in a quiet easy manner, explaining my discomfort at what the person is saying or how they are saying it. And in the same easy tone I can tell the person of my disagreeing with them and my reasons for disagreeing. And then I wait openly for whatever the other persons is replying to me. If the other speaks sharply or in an aggressive way then I wait quietly till they finish and again I give my reasons for differing with the person, keeping my voice in the middle - not loud or harsh - but clear and steady.

The important aspect in all this is for each of the persons to remain cool. Then they discuss what they both give as reasons and stay open as they do it so that they can come to some conclusion or agreement that will satisfy both of them as much as possible.

There is no question of either person winning or losing - but of both leaving the discussion with each person having a better appreciation of the other person - no matter what they may have been talking about.

All the best to both of you. I wish you to have many good discussion between yourselves.

Fr. Hank – Dad

07.07.2009 Time: 16.28 pm

Sub: You are Ok

Dear Sundar,

I am sorry that you did have the problem that you have spoken to me about - the problem that you had when seeking to speak with the member of the staff you mentioned. That did not have to happen if there was more understanding and acceptance.

You wanted and expected to have a talk alone between the two of you. And that expectation of yours I believe should have been recognized. When you asked for the time to spend together, it should have been only the two of you together. Then it would have been a good talk, something you wanted for yourself. Once there were a couple kids called in then it was all right for you to feel as you did and leave.

Then you could have left it at that, not said anything and not asked to talk later. Then there would have been no problem or bad feeling for you.

But, somewhere within you, you wanted to be proved correct, or to try to make the other person aware of how you felt about the kids being called in the first meeting. Within yourself, you were quite angry but did not realize how angry you were. So, you tried to make the other person aware of your anger, So you tired to call on the phone again and again. But that was causing you to be more and more frustrated.

That is why I said it would have been better for you to drop the whole matter, not trying to call on the phone. Had you dropped it right away you could have felt free and relaxed, not bothering about the other person, as you went on your way without being bothered by the other person.

If ever I am insulted or badly spoken to by another person I can walk away because I am deciding that I will feel as I want to feel - deciding to give up my anger because I will feel free to feel as I wish to feel. I will say to myself - "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me." Let the other person think what he wants about me - I will decide how I want to feel - I will not allow you to spoil how I am feeling today - "Say and do what you like towards me - I will look after myself." "I will protect myself, and stay happy being me."

I hope this is all right - you can ask me any questions you want about this.

Love, Dad

10.07.09 Time: 22.08

Sub: Being Free

Dear Sundar,

I will try to give you some idea on how our minds work, what we often say is our conscious inner life - our awareness - or in some other words - "how our mind works, or how our thinking works". And together with our thinking we have our feelings.

The feelings that we are having, or experiencing, or aware of are usually the first experiences we become aware of - we are feeling fear, or anger, or sadness, or happiness - one of those feelings will be within us at any time. Which feeling arises from within me is caused

by the thought that I am having in my consciousness, or we might say my conscious mind.

Once I am aware of the feeling I am having, then by thinking more about the thoughts that I am having in my awareness, I can - if I am strong and in charge of my mind and my feelings - then I can - if I wish I can stop allowing the feeling to disturb me - that is, not allow the feeling to stay with me but decide to not allow the feeling to cause me to be upset or more angry or more afraid.

When you had such a strong feeling of anger against the person you kept the feeling within your mind because you also kept the memory of how you remembered she had treated you against your wish.

If you were to drop the feeling and come to a quiet, peaceful mind then you had to stop the feeling of anger and be calm and settled and at peace within your mind.

It is possible always if you love and care for yourself to stop and change any feeling you have. You can always decide to feel less angry, or less fear or less sadness, and in the place of any of those feel at peace or happy within yourself.

In this manner you are in charge of yourself and what you are going to feel, although at the beginning you may have felt angry or fear or sadness. You can be free although it may be very difficult some times when you feel very upset over something or at someone.

When your negative feelings are very strong and upsetting you it may be very difficult to give up the feelings. If I keep the feelings I may speak or act in a negative manner towards the other person and this will cause the other person to reject me.

All the best to you, **Fr. Hank**

14.07.09 Time: 17.13 pm

Sub: Awareness

Dear Sundar,

I will give you some of the thoughts that I think will be of help to you. In all of our living we need to be conscious and aware so that we may be fully present in each moment of our present living, especially when we are interacting with another person or other persons.

'Being fully present' is when we watch our mind as though it were a film projected on a screen. We then become more aware of

what is involved at the time or the moment in which we are present. The life that I experience, that I feel, gives me the awareness that is like a continuing TV serial ,an ongoing process within me concerning myself, my beliefs, my attitudes, my thoughts, my feelings, my memories, my skills, my knowledge, my desires, my habits.

So, I am in a continuing process of following my becoming aware, of living my experience of being me.

I can be aware and experience all of it as it passes within me. What passes may move one to speak in a certain manner. I may move to decide to act in a certain manner - or go to a movie, or go for some food in a shop, or to read a newspaper, or talk to a friend, or avoid meeting some one I do not like. Each action follows from my thinking about the decision of what I am going to do, what I am going to say, what will I feel, what will I not do, what will I put off for some time, what will I purchase, who will I call on the phone. each of these actions I can decide to do or not do.

But, in order to decide I need to consider what will be the result, the outcome, the situation that will happen if I decide in a certain way, it depends on my decision that I am free to choose. But before I choose I must be aware of what will be the result of each of my decisions. What will happen because of my decision to see the film, what will happen because of my decision to have some special food, what will be my decision when I realize I have lost a big sum of money?

So, I can keep in my mind at all times - what will be the good result if I do what I plan to do? what will be the result if I don't do what I plan to do? Everything I do - be it not speaking, be it speaking - having a meal, or not having a meal - criticizing my friend or not criticizing my friend - shouting at the man who works with me, or not shouting at the man who works with me - remembering a person who has cheated me many years ago, or not remembering the man who stole from me many years ago.

All of my life I have - and often every minute of my life - I have to be aware of what will be the result of what I do, or say , or speak about, or praise or blame. So, I need to think ahead always and be aware of what will be the result of my speaking, my action, or movements.

So, before I speak to anyone I need to be aware - is it all alright to say what I am thinking of saying? will I be accepted by people if I say what I want to say. or will I be rejected by people if I say what I might say? What will I gain? What a person always wants to gain

from another person is understanding, acceptance, and happiness. There is no life for anyone if there is no acceptance, or understanding or happiness.

What will make me a happy man, liked and appreciated by others, is my awareness that I will always speak well of other persons - and if I do not want to speak well of another person, then I will remain quiet so that I am not disturbed and other persons will accept me and be happy with me.

People will always appreciate me if they are aware that I never speak in any bad manner with other people.

This is very long - I am sorry - and may not be clear as I wanted it to be. But you are always free to question me about it. I will make it more simple the next I write for you.

Love, Dad

08.09.2009 Time: 11.54 am

Sub: Being Aware

Dear Sundar,

Here are some of the attitudes and practices that you need to be aware and using if you are wanting to "be sharp" when you are talking with any other person. First and foremost you need to stay very much aware of your feelings and the thoughts and attitudes. If a person is aware of his feelings then he will be very much in control of his thoughts and reactions to what is said to him by another person.

Remember, I must always be aware of my feelings and thoughts when any person says something to me. I listen to what he says and I pause and reflect or take a moment to think about what the person has said to me. If I do not take the time to listen and understand what the person is saying I will not be able to respond in a manner that will be helpful to me. This is how a person remains smart - they listen to the person, stop and think about what they have said and consider this in their thoughts and then quickly decide how they want to respond to the person.

I do not just quickly answer back without thinking of my answer. When I stop and think, then I can realize that there are different ways in which I can respond to what has been said to me. If I respond by not being excited but quietly respond in a good manner then the person speaking to me will be more satisfied and will speak to me in

a friendly way. I can respond in a cool, quiet manner even though the other has not spoken in a quiet manner. If I keep my quiet manner then I am being smart and the other person will listen to what I have to say.

My relations with other persons depend on my ability to remain settled and peaceful, no matter what is said to me or whatever the other person may say.

I hope that this is helpful to you. It is necessary for a person to be always calm and open to listen to the other person - then the other person will respect me and then be open to listen to me and agree with me.

All the best to you - Dad

29.10.2009 Time : 11.03 am

Sub: How girls react

Dear Sundar,

First I apologize for not sending this to you before now - I remain always very busy here these days. Anyway I will write what I can and then can add more later on.

Young girls are usually quite withdrawn and do not speak out quickly or strongly - they seem to be hesitant - so you have to be quite cautious in how you first speak with them. Keep a sort of quiet tone and be sure you follow what she says and try to understand her feelings from the manner in which she speaks and the sort of firmness or non firmness in the manner in which she speaks. She will want you to be reassuring to her - especially as she does not know you and is not fully at ease with you, someone who she doesn't know too well. If she begins to ask questions about yourself then you may believe that she is interested in you, wants to know more about you and so you can be ready to tell her quietly about yourself and if she continues to ask questions about yourself then you can believe that she is somewhat interested in you and wants to know more about you. Note the strength of her speech - whether it is firm or just light. Notice if she seems relaxed in her face, smiling maybe, bright in the way she looks. How long does she pause between sentences and words? If she keeps asking small questions feel good and answer her with confidence that she really is interested in finding out about you. If you ask her questions, do it quietly with light words, not strong, being very supportive of her, very acceptant - in a way you can repeat to her whatever she says to you by saying it in a quiet

supportive manner. If she asks questions of you she is probably interested in you so answer her in a way that she will keep asking questions about you.

I will send something else later in the day.

All the best – Dad

03.11.2009 Time: 15.32 pm

Sub: Being aware of people

Dear Sundar,

I first apologize that I have not written to you as I said I would. I have been very busy today - I had to spend time with two husband and wife teams who came at different times seeking admission for their son and daughter.

Now, let me tell you about the manner of deciding how you believe the meeting between you and some woman whom you are wanting to perhaps be friends with or even marry. First of all notice whether the girl is showing some sort of interest, like being a little nervous, and maybe a little hesitant to talk with you. You may sense that they are very careful about how they are going to talk with you. "Hesitant" means that they seem to take some time to consider what they are going to say, they may not be speaking quickly or smoothly because they are careful about, how they want you to understand them. If they speak too freely they may be afraid of giving you a wrong impression about themselves.

Both you and the girl will want to make a good impression on each other since you do not know each other fully. So, you need to be cool, slowly being in control of your voice, of your gestures, of the way you speak.

If you can be relaxed in the manner in which you stand and talk, or sit and talk, then she also will tend to be relaxed if she is at ease. So, you can use that as a sign - if she talks easily, always quietly waiting for your answer. You can judge how relaxed she is by her voice and how much she looks at you openly.

All the best – Dad

25.11.2009 Time: 19.26 pm

Sub: Further

Dear Sundar,

This evening I was thinking of the feelings that may come up into my awareness when I am walking along the street.

I may be enjoying walking quietly along the sidewalk. It may be crowded and I am bothered by the number of people going along with me. Since it is so crowded I may realize that I am not feeling at ease as I have to shift around the many people on the sidewalk with me.

And some people are going very fast and bumping into me and this disturbs me. But I cannot do anything about it so I just carry on walking as I can - I step aside as I can so I carry on as I can. I just have to accept my feelings and so go on. The main thing is -I know the feelings I have and know I cannot make a change because of the people going along.

So, there are many times when I have to keep aware of the feelings I have and know that it is all right. I decide not to be upset at the situation. This I do many times in my life when I decide that I cannot bring about any change in the situation I am in so I accept and keep going along as I can.

So, I can be aware at times of the feelings I have and yet cannot bring about a change in the situation - so I do not become upset or bothered.

All the best - Hank

28.11.09 Time: 11.23 am

Sub: Further

Dear Sundar,

This follows from our telephone conversation this morning. Always in life each person has to define himself, that is, each person has an experience of his or her self. This experience we are more or less aware of some people are very aware and remember all that has happened to them earlier in their life. Some of them have had a good experience in being and becoming ourselves and so will feel strong and capable of judging whatever comes to them in their living their lives. Other people have not been so lucky and have had to face very difficult situations and problems, sometimes acceptance, sometimes non-acceptance from others.

If everything was perfect each person would be able to understand all that is taking place in their interactions with other people - and would have had very supportive interactions with others. But life in this world is not perfect. We have to live with negative reactions from other people, we have to realize that sometimes we are facing rejection from other persons. In a way life as it comes to us is very much not in our control. In some manner we have to face living situations which present us with some negativity that we cannot avoid. And then we feel we have no way of avoiding the negativity that is around us.

Then we tend to feel down, we are discouraged, not knowing how to get anything positive in the present situation. We do not know all the causes which affect our lives. We may think we are in control of them when this is not really so. The people we work with may ignore us, may not speak with us in a friendly manner. We are not free to change how people speak and act with us.

So, we have to discover within our self the freedom to think and feel as we want to think and feel. We remain the master of our inner world - of our own thoughts and feelings. So I choose to think as I can, giving positive strokes to my self, not allowing the negativity that is from other people to upset me. I appreciate myself. I have the right to feel good for myself - so to feel good no matter what is on the outside around me. I am in charge of me.

Let me know what you think about this. Dad

07.12.2009 Time: 22.33 pm

Sub: Relationship

Dear Sundar,

Please excuse my delay in sending this to you. As usual, I have been very busy today. I will give you something on relationship, for the benefits in our life mainly come from our relationships with other people, and also many times persons find that their anger comes from their relationships, although it would seem difficult to believe that there can be problems when members of the same family have great difficulties in forming or expressing the relationships that should be the backbone or strength of the family. But there is something important to note here - that if the relationships between members of the same family do not seem to work out it can result in a much more difficult situation (more angry situations and animosities between the members of the family). This can be when

some relatives, aunts or uncles, of cousins - seem to be very distant and accepting of the other members of the family. At times those who we think should be closest and most understanding seem to become the most difficult persons to accept.

First all of us need to have relationships - we cannot live alone and in the situation in which we live together in a family we have an in built tendency and need to be together and be supportive to each other. This support comes from very deep within us and is necessary for us to feel at ease, for the sharing together in the family, even the physical sharing brings into the realization that we are not alone and need the help and support of the others in the family. And when the family relations are smooth and helpful, then we will feel strong to be the persons we are. We feel comfort being who we are with the others in the family, normally we would seek to help each other.

Then there are the relationships we form with persons not within our family - these can often be stronger than our relations in the family.

I'll write more about this in another email.

All the best to you - love, **Fr. Hank**

08.12.09 Time: 20.38 pm

Sub: How do I face negative situations with people ?

Dear Sundar,

Yes, relationships are important for us in our lives. Relationships make life worth living for all of us, for it is when we have a relationship with another person that we feel well - we have feelings of well-being. It is by our realizing that we have a relationship with someone whom we feel happy with and content with, that we get the feeling of wellness. Being open with another person - trusting that the other person feels at ease with me and is content to be with me and talk with me - this enables me to experience that they want to feel close to us, or that they are relaxed and feeling positive with me. Then this gives a quiet, strong sense of our self - that we are wanted and can experience the positive qualities that give us relaxation and meaning. Then I find that I have something that I want to share with the other person - I find I am relaxed and moved from within myself to talk with him or her - I get some sense from them that I am accepted by them. This gives me confidence to continue my relationship with them. Through our conversation I often find that there are feelings that we can easily share in our talk.

The different moods that we go through during the day spring from our relations with the different people. If I feel relaxed and at ease with a person I will want to continue with that person. If I find that person not talkative and withdrawn or talking in a negative manner then I decide to stay away from that person - I will not be happy in their company. We do need to feel at ease - then we will feel strong and able to discuss with the other person. If the discussions goes well I will feel stronger within myself , more ready to enjoy my life. After all - my happiness does come from the relationships that I have with people.

Relationships are like emotional vitamins that give me the strength to go through the difficulties that come up as I live my life and go through the interactions that I have with other persons. Basically it is best for me to live my life by being open and hoping that the other persons will be positive to me - and if they are not open or speak roughly or sharply to me and so seem closed off to me then I will not want to continue to be with them.

Many people go through their interactions with others with no interest in making a connection with the other person - these are the people we call "loners" - they are just not interested in sharing and being with others - they seem happy to live alone, being by themselves practically all the time.

It is very difficult when we realize that the other person is in some way being critical or judging of me, not open - then I just have to move on from that person - being with them will not cause me to feel more at ease and happy to be me. If we do have a person or persons who causes me to feel welcome and at ease then I need to recognize that person and reach out to them in friendship. Friendships are made as I become positive with another person and wish to spend more time with them - I become interested in them. You can make new relationships as you appreciate that the other person seems to be freely accepting you.

Good success in your relationships - Love - Dad

09.12.2009 Time: 20.30 pm

Sub: How do I face negative situation with people ?

Dear Sundar,

Look at the question which you asked me before the last email I sent to you - your question reads like this - how do I face negative situations with people?

If I sense that the situation is negative towards me, then I have to decide what is the cause of this negativity and what can I do to get through to the other person or people in the situation. Is it possible for me to make a change in the cause of the negativity? What can I do to break through the negativity? Which persons - or which one or two people - can I begin to speak to in such a manner that I can speak to them in a smooth and friendly manner?

Remember that anywhere - in an office or in a meeting place with other people - it is up to me to break through in the talk with others - to make contact and speak with others. I cannot expect the other person to come forth and speak with me - I have to begin conversations - I have to want to interact with the other persons. And in order to do that I need to believe that I will always feel happier when I have made positive contact with another person - and all of us do need positive contact with one or two or a few other persons - then we do feel happier and at ease. As I make contact with other people I feel more at ease and more alive. Remember "no man is an island" - he has to be with other persons.

I was talking with the kids in the community the other night about this. The help that they receive and will gain here in ASV is called by the experts "psychosocial rehabilitation". Those are the words used in the four days that I and Anando and Usha attended in NIMHANS last month. The experts - from many countries in the world - placed very much emphasis on the word "social" which means being with people. If social means being with people then it is necessary to have very good skills in talking with people, and mixing with them, feeling at ease with them, able to share, talk with them, feel at ease with them.

When I am able to have a conversation with people - and become friendly with them - then I have a skill which will enable me to be at ease with people, enjoy their company, find it easy to respect them, and feel that I have a place with people - I make myself open to people, have a place with people. But, I have to be open and make the effort - it is I - I'm the one who has to make a place for myself with others - I myself who has to make the effort and speak with others - enjoy being with others. Enjoy being with others - that is the goal of life.

Love, Dad

Tomorrow we are having a long staff meeting just on this topic for it is very important.

07.01.2010 Time: 17.34 pm

Sub: Being Strong

Dear Sundar,

All of our reactions to any contact with another person or thinking about another person or situation can be taken care of in a satisfactory manner for us as long as we are aware of what we are doing with our energy.

So, our energy is the special operative word, for first of all we are using our energy whether we are feeling, thinking or believing - in whichever manner we are reacting or expressing ourselves to the other person. We express our energy according to the need of acting. The need depends on the action we have to take in our life at the present moment.

Can you be aware of the energy you are feeling at any time? What is this energy leading you to think and tend to do?

I am sorry I have to leave it right now - I have had a bad day for visitors - one visit by 4 psychiatrists.

Soma's father just died this afternoon and they were trying to get in touch with her - they did and she phoned me - she was in Pune.

All the best - Dad

10.01.2010 Time: 17.12 pm

Sub: Ego states

Dear Sundar,

We used the "ego states" to refer to the three different energy awareness that we can have with ourselves at any time. One is the Child ego state which is concerned with my feelings - fear , anger, happiness, sadness. The Child ego refers to when I am having my attention and awareness mainly in my feelings, be they happy or negative feelings.

Then there is a Adult ego state when I am mainly occupied with the thoughts, attitudes and direction that I am giving to my consciousness.

The third ego state is the Parent ego state which refers to the times when I am coming from the directives I give myself, or the principles that I use in guiding my thoughts and expressions.

At all times in my active conscious life my consciousness will be directed through one of these three ego states. One of the reactions in one or other of the states will be the one which causes me to speak, behave or act in a certain manner. As for example - when a person is laughing - we can say the person is in their child ego states - the same if they are sad or weeping. Or if the person is wanting to buy something and is calculating how much the item will cost he will be in his adult ego state. When I am deciding what is going to give me happiness during the day I will be putting my energy in the Parent ego state. When I am pointing out their faults to another person then I will be usually in the Parent ego state. In order to shift our energy we have to be aware of whether we are occupied with feelings or with thinking, or with self-directing.

What I have to pay attention to is to see whether I am examining my feelings, or paying attention to my thinking, or remembering the best way to speak or explain how I am directing myself at the present moment - like asking when buying something - "Is this too expensive or not?" - and other questions like that.

What is necessary is to keep aware of the variable thoughts and thought patterns coming up in my consciousness - are these patterns helping me to relate to the people and business going on around me? or do I have to stop and examine the reasons why I am feeling like I am at the present moment...All of this will help me to keep in charge of myself and make myself understood to other people.

And so I must always be reflective - able to feel at ease with myself at any time - not bogged down by heavy negative feelings or not keeping negativity or animosity towards other people.

We can discuss all of this as we go. Love, Dad

07.02.2010 Time: 22.16 pm

Sub: Being Strong

Dear Sundar,

Sorry for my delay in writing to you - I keep you in mind, have been thinking of you but these past weeks I have been more than busy. What I believe that you are desiring to improve is your ability to meet and interact with people. This is some thing that can be difficult for everybody as other people are they are - they do not fit into the ways and manners that we would wish to have with us. It seems that we often have to try and fit in with the other person even when it is difficult for us.

So I need to be strong within myself and fully conscious of myself and what I am feeling - I must at least be open in some manner because I wish to be able to "get along" with the other person, which means I want to be able to come to some understanding and mutual respect with the other person. So it is best to begin with an "open mind" as they call it. I am in a way non-committal, which means that I have not made up my opinion whether I will be easily acceptant of this person or willing to be friendly or open with them. I am in a way cautious, yet in some manner open, expectant as to how this person will be with me. It is best to be open and acceptant of the other person until I come to know them better. I will stay reserved within myself and in my talk and conservation as I experience how they are speaking and what feelings may be coming to me because of the words or manner in which they are talking. I remain reserved within myself, and my talk will be fairly quiet and wondering how the other will be speaking or thinking of me. Within myself I remain strong and reserved, yet within myself making the assessment of the other's talk and the manner in which they are with me. I do not make a judgment on them until I seem fairly certain that now I have a good understanding about the other person.

I hope that this gives you some direction to take with others when you have to deal or talk with them. It is often not easy to measure how the other will be with you, so it is necessary to be patient in the beginning and wait till you can make a judgment about them.

All the best you - Fr. Hank

10.02.10 Time: 12.51 pm

Sub: All right

Dear Sundar,

Please realize that the problem which has been solved this morning could have been solved two days ago if both you and your uncle had been able to remain calm and listening and considering what each person wanted to say. To give into feelings of anger will never solve a problem but just make everything more upset and then no helpful conclusion will come about.

I support both of you to understand and be able to trust each other. That is the ideal that helps all people to live helpfully with each other - the trust that must exist between each other. And the only tool that enables persons to trust is simply trust as each makes a sincere effort to remain open and accepting of the other's viewpoint. All the best to you - may all be well. Fr. Hank

24.02.2010 Time: 15.17 pm

Sub: People

Dear Sundar,

There are all sorts of people whom we live, meet, talk with, learn about, have a pleasant time with, some we are close to, some who seem to understand us and want to be with us more, some who may want to give us information, some who will listen to us and understand, others who listen but do not seem to understand us and some do answer, respond when they have said that they will respond, some people will be interested in us and we can believe that they really want to be close to us, others may seem to say they want to be close to us but who not seem to understand us.

So, there are all sorts of people, persons with interests like us, others who are not interested in what we are interested in, some seem to understand us, others do not understand us yet seem to try to direct us.

We have to realize that we cannot really understand many of the people whom we meet, even many who are our relatives and of our extended family tree. It is good when we feel understood by some people, but will not feel good when they do not seem to understand us. So, we have to realize that we cannot expect to understand all people, even our relations, aunts or uncles, or cousins, each person is living his own life and having his own ideas and thoughts and desires, and directives. So, we need to be open and realize and careful and be aware that some people will not accept me even though they might seem to be with me in understanding and friendship in the beginning.

So, at times I have to move on - not be upset by the reaction that some people show to me - not answering, not paying attention to me, or anything like that. I just have to accept how they are and move on - not become upset or angry with them. They have their

own world so let them be in their own world. I need to keep my friends, for I must have some friends with whom I can share my life with some few people.

Love, Dad

Sundar has recently been accepted for a responsible job, independent of the job he had at his uncle's office. I am very pleased that he has been able to overcome the difficulties that he has had in his personality, and able to express himself independently in his life.

Mangala

I considered the change that has happened in Mangala as a very special development in a person's life.

Here was a young girl stumbling with great difficulty in understanding the very first classes that she was attending in her hope to become a doctor.

In the beginning, there was no possibility that she could have ever developed her ability to study and set aside the personal problems she had.

What she did with herself was to decide that she could develop and earn a future as a medical doctor, just by taking charge of herself and doing what was excepted of her.

And she realized that there were people who accepted her and trusted that she could do what she was dreaming of doing.

She used her motivation to build up what she needed to know and do.

I asked her to share for me her experience that brought her to be the mother of two children and be a professor at a government medical college.

In this letter below she has expressed to me the efforts which she made in becoming the person she is today.

I have also put together some more correspondence that I shared with her.

Letter from Mangala

February 3, 2012

Dear Dad,

How are you. I am fine. I am writing this letter to share my experience in ASV.

I joined there on 19th October 1993, before which I had 3 spells of psychosis.

I entered ASV where I came to know about the diagnosis and features of my disease slowly. Ms. Mennal. was my buddy with whom I was to share and talk every day a few minutes.

The structure and discipline in ASV was new and difficult for me in the beginning. Later on the same was very useful for me.

Slowly, I came in touch with feelings and was able to recollect my bitter past experience. Group therapy, feelings check, positive stroke, yogic therapy, meditation were all very useful.

Slowly, I started extending my relationship with Donna, Dielta, Dale and Fr. Hank. Having relationship was very difficult for me initially. But slowly I started trusting these people and developed good relationship with Fr. Hank (Dad), Dielta.

Luckily, I had good peers with me. Leena, Cecy and Manisha were good friends as well.

I learnt the following things –

- (1) Being in touch with emotions
- (2) How to handle them appropriately
- (3) Relationships are good and are important in life
- (4) Trusting people who are close to me
- (5) Anger is a feeling which I used to express in a dangerous way. I started doing anger program.
- (6) I started to work on self esteem, by which I gained confidence.
- (7) I implemented the habit of giving positive stroke to myself.

In Athma Shakti, there was a beautiful therapy called anger therapy which was very useful for me. By this program I could make a drastic change in the relationship with my natural father. Before coming to ASV, I used to hate my father but now I have a good relationship. Thanks to Fr. Hank (contract Dad). Not only the feelings that I worked on, I also concentrated to work on my thoughts for which Dielta was very helpful. Most of the time I had negative thoughts and my presentation also would be negative. Because of this work, I slowly started looking at my daily life positively. Everyday, I say “Today is a good day and the most precious day for me”. So life turned out to be positive.

In 1997, I joined M.S. (Anatomy) in St. John's Medical College, Bangalore. This was again a gift for me from God. Because during my higher studies, I had an opportunity to visit ASV in the weekends.

During this time, I would have therapy with Dad regularly. So, I would say God is great in all His ways.

I was even feeling proud in front of new kids because I was an ex-kid who got fully well and doing higher studies. God has blessed me by giving this golden opportunity of three years.

When I was in ASV in 1995, Ali, a kid from Australia gave me the responsibility of cleaning Dad's room and taking care of his laundry. This I felt as a big boon because this big job will be given only to responsible kids.

After completion of my PG degree, I joined at Jipmer where I continued the practice of writing my feelings check. And whenever I was very angry, I would do the anger program. In Jipmer, I continued meditation, swimming. I kept myself busy by going to driving class, music class etc.

Whatever I learnt in ASV, I am using in my daily life for my students, because we meet students suffering from depression, anxiety etc. and I am able to do counseling from the therapy which I have undergone in ASV.

Counseling is something which has become important for most of the students because the level of stress is high.

With lots of love,

Mangala

MANGALA's earlier letters

Dear Dad,

I am happy to write to you. Dad, I am doing fine. I have got many lectures this month. So, quite busy. I have occupied myself in the evenings by going for long walks.

I discovered a swimming pool where my hostelmates go for swimming. I am also going for the swimming on Sundays with one girl. I have got one friend in the hostel to whom I am moving closer slowly. (I am scared to move fast and have a break) I like her. She is doing M.D. in pharmacology. Once in a while we both go for outing, beach etc., Dad, I have started driving lessons. Today was my 3rd class. On the whole I am content with myself, watching out that I don't over do.

Dad, once in a while when I am depressed I write feelings check. Do fantasy work with you. I am very happy that I had an opportunity to meet you in my life. Dad, I remember you in my prayers. How is ASV?

Dad one sad news. Tomorrow is my graduation day. I am not able to go because of some reasons. It is in St. John's campus. My back is not that healthy to make two consecutive night bus journey. Last year I used to dream that when I come to stage entire student's crowd will be clapping hands (because my students like me) . Always my dreams never come true (little exaggeration)

Dad, I am happy in the department. I appreciate myself for the changes I have made.

Dad, I will come to ASV to see you in the month of April or May.

Convey my regards to all kids and staff.

Remember me in your prayers.

With lots of love and a huge hug,

Mangala

Dear Dad,

How are you? I am able to sit and write to you in my busy schedule. Dad, your granddaughter Hema, my parents and myself are fine.

My husband had come home during Easter and he spent four days with us. He enjoyed very much our daughter's company. My husband is a very nice man, lovable person. One thing which I can't agree is that he is spending a lot of money for his relatives. On this point, we both get into clashes quite often. Otherwise I thank God for giving me a nice life partner. My daughter recognizes me now. Feeding her is a problem because she is a fussy eater.

Dad, if I start writing about her, I will not end now.

My mother is getting old and she is still in the sorrow of her children's' loss. She gets irritated with me very often. Dad, I get easily angry with my mother these days. I am working on that to bring it down.

Dad, how is your health? Convey my regards to each and every one in ASV (all kids especially). Dad, you are the person whom God has given as a gift for me. Every minute I shall thank God for that.

Dad, how was Easter Sunday?

I will be joining on my work on June 2nd . Pray for me and bless me that my family life be peaceful and joyful.

Dad, I remember you in my prayers.

With lots of love and tight hug

Mangala & Hema

Letter written to Mangala from Me

November 4, 2007

Dear Mangala,

Many thanks for your letter. I apologize for not replying immediately. Yes, please come.

I am in good health – my doctor has told me that he is satisfied about how I am doing. I do not have any aches or pains. I have to be more regular in my morning walks though. I still do the regular yoga exercises as always with the kids. The community goes well enough, there is a good spirit. We have been able to complete the building as planned but there are still some bills we have to cover. Many houses have come up around us. I took a good time in September to be off on retreat, something that gave me much new strength in my spiritual awareness of myself. It gives me great comfort and consolation to know that I am fulfilling the will of the Father, our Father, in my endeavour to make this life a more meaningful and happier life for others. I keep to my meditation time in the morning. This carries me along and gives a deep undercurrent to my daily immersion in the therapy and care for others.

I would very much enjoy meeting and talking with you. If it is at all possible come for a short time with all the family or come by yourself for a shorter time if that is possible. We have Meeta's house where guests can stay for some time but it is not free all the time, as depends on who may be coming and when. But I would like to speak with you.

I have more contact with parents lately. I have had a day with them in June, July and September and a special one in October. My attempt is to give the parents some idea of the therapy that we are practicing here so that they may be more helpful to the kids when they return home or go for visits at home. Remember in the old days we did not have any strong contact with the families. I find though the parents have great difficulty in understanding the personality of their son or daughter and cannot really have the patience or the time to reflect on what really has been the problem that has caused the young person to develop the personality problem that has been created without anyone's wish or desire. The parents want the person to return very soon to what they call the "main stream" something that interprets as wanting the person to be working and earning a living. They want this without realizing the tremendous adjustments in personality, in attitudes and beliefs about

self and others, in learning to deal with negative feelings and reactions that often still arise in some situations, in being clear and stable and open in their thinking.

The young person has to do so much reflection and come to a deep and serious self-knowledge in order to function in an active and demanding life that is the present ever evolving social world. Young people can become well and can move out to a new life. I do believe it is well worth the effort to bring persons to a new experience of themselves. And this I will always carry on accomplishing.

Again thanks for writing. Believe you are always in my heart and mind, as I pray to Christ to give you his Spirit to strengthen and to guide you.

Love, Dad

Fr. George

In this letter I am fulfilling my duty that which I need to carry out. I need to speak to you about the death of one of our kids, a person who had lived and found a new life because of his coming to Athma Shakti. He was here for about two and half years growing within himself. He committed himself to changing his life, his future.

The person I am trying to describe was one who marvelously was able to find a whole new future for himself. He was very close to me and happy to address me as "Dad". I am speaking about Fr. George. One day he had phoned me – this was when we were in the first building we had. George had phoned me from Delhi and asked me if he could come and spend time with me because he wished to develop and bring more life into his person. I agreed immediately and told George to come down from his studies in the Christian scriptures in Delhi. At that time George was fairly lost within himself and having troubles with his studies. He flew down and the way he was hesitant gave me some indication of the problems he was having. It was a beautiful day with the sun and open sky, hot at the time George came, with a huge heavy coat and a hat on his head. Immediately I recognized that yes, he was having trouble trying to figure out how he could adapt himself to the world. He was a person who worried about everything. I could see that this was his basic problem and I welcomed him profusely.

George gave me a bit of a problem. Here was a man who was a serious scripture scholar who seemed lost and looking for some guidance and help. He just was not functioning clearly and well. He was worrying too much and was always overly careful about whatever thoughts were being put forth. It was alright to be a careful scripture scholar but worrying was no way to handle the various difficulties.

I admired the openness and freedom of George as he settled in with the other 18 young patients whom we were looking after in Athma Shakti at that time. We had young people from Australia to United States, all young men and women full of life and energy, very open and lively. George settled down very much with the group who crowded together in some small rooms we had then. George did all that he could to fit in and adapt with these people who were younger than him and certainly had different interests and conversations that George would never have had. George became very close to me and called me his father. He referred to me always as his father. I guess the average age of the kids was between 18 to 20. George who had spent years in training as a priest in Christian scriptures, set aside his scripture studies and, concentrated on developing his personality and in time, he became a great friend of all other persons in the community. George gave his full time to developing his abilities to understand psychology and the practice that would enable him to function successfully as a catholic priest and scripture scholar.

He was able to return and be a professor of scripture at the Jesuit house in Delhi. He was a very good scripture scholar, enjoyed what he was doing and he was appreciated very much by the people who lived with him. His writings and his classes were very much respected. He was also a very popular member of the community. He always was friendly and active among his fellow teachers and students.

But, this was all to end when George had a slight accident when driving which caused his death. It seems he didn't realize what happened in that small accident, and in a few days he found that something was wrong in his head. He seemingly developed a few blood clots in his brain because of the accident. This was the cause of his death. In the last years of his life he had had to spend some time every year for special studies on how his brain was functioning.

Allow me to quote a paragraph that he wrote in his writing on the Sermon on the Mount.

"The Sermon on the Mount(SM) the first and the most important of the five discourses of Jesus in Mathew's Gospel, presents his radical , moral teaching in a systematic fashion. It has fascinated

the world, fired the imagination of great minds like Tolstoy and Gandhiji. The later has confessed that it “went straight to his heart and was along with the Gita one of the two influences that shaped his moral-political thought. Many people across the world also consider it as the essence of Christianity”.

I shall always be filled with appreciation and thanksgiving for having known Fr. George. I can say that he was one of the beautiful personalities that I have experienced in the years I have been involved here in Athma Shakti. I myself learnt from him. He was so very serious in his studies and so willing to donate his time and knowledge in helping other people.

I believe that he was certainly one of the most generous and helpful of the people whom I have been fortunate enough to experience and appreciate in the many years I have been involved in helping people.

Letter From Fr. George

I am happy to testify that I was a member of the Athma Shakti Vidyalaya therapeutic community about 17 years ago. I had a nervous breakdown when I was 37 years old and was teaching as a college lecturer. I had serious problems and I received help from this community to resolve these problems for which I have spent 5 years there undergoing its excellent method of treatment. The community's approach which emphasizes working on one's problems and getting one's therapeutic needs met as part of a family-like community rather than on medication was very appealing to me. Although it is slow and takes time it has enabled me to resolve my problems in depth and to get fully well. After the period of treatment I resumed my work as a lecturer and after a few years started also on my doctoral studies. I have since finished my doctorate in a prestigious European University. I am happy to add that I also received the highest academic grade in this University for my doctorate and my doctoral dissertation has been published in a renowned international scientific series in my field. I am now fully back in my work teaching both at the graduate and post - graduate levels and occasionally contributing in scholarly journals in my specialization. All this involves great progress and would not have been possible without the timely and competent help I received at Athma Shakti Vidyalaya. It is a project that needs to be generously helped and supported. In fact it is a pity that there are not enough such competent institutions in this country although the need is so great.

Fr. George

Part - VI

Hope for the Future

The problem begins when the parents discover that their child is mentally ill. At this point they need to believe that things can be worked out, even though it seems impossible in the beginning.

It must be remembered that there is no easy solution to the problem even though they go through a lot of talk and medications.

There can be a solution, but it is necessary that anybody who is involved should be open to possibilities and follow through.

In my work, I have found some of these possibilities, and I have come away with a belief in each person who is having the problem, because you never know which one of them might be willing to be open.

If you think you can do any work with them then be ready and open, freely and openly to form a relationship with them. Some of them may foster it, some of them may not. Even though the success with any person with mental illness, depends on various factors, every opportunity must be followed though. I believe that it is not correct to guess and say that there is no way that this will not work with this kid.

We have to be ready to see that much more may be needed, because we will be meeting different people with different degrees of illness. Communities are necessary to provide this kind of varied support. So, much depends upon having communities functioning together and accepting the many different problems presented by the young people.

And those who are ill need to believe that it's worth while to follow and trust that there will be help available if everybody stays together and asks for help.

It follows that what we need are not just committed individuals but committed communities looking after a number of people working together. I believe that every young person who has been struck with mental illness should have the opportunity to present himself in those communities and receive the support of staff, parents and other friends who may need similar help.

These communities should be financed by the government. Years ago, I have treated young men and women from abroad, in

communities here, their expenses for the treatment were supplied by foreign governments. But in India, parents have to fend for themselves, which makes it doubly difficult.

At present, those communities which look after the mentally ill because they have serious mental problems need the support of government for taking care of the mentally ill, both in terms of money and legislation that understand the functioning of the community. Every seriously mentally ill person needs to receive government aid, for getting well. The future of those who can come out of their illness will need to be secured with a system that will provide them with job opportunities.

With this encouragement received, there is hope in these communities for the mentally ill.

Summary

The Athma Shakti Vidyalaya is a school, a research institute, a therapeutic community, and yet something more for those to whom it has given hope where there was once despair. Perhaps this something more is best expressed in the following lines quoted by the kids themselves.

We Came

We came to find ourselves,
and discovered one another.
We came to find love,
and discovered loving
We came to find a way,
and discovered there are many
We came to grow,
and found we will always be growing

It is the dream of Athma Shakti Vidyalaya that eventually, through training, research and education, hope will be within the reach of the victims of schizophrenia and their families throughout the world.

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