Dear list members!

Welcome to our Fall newsletter or – if you’re in the Southern Hemisphere – our Spring one! We also particularly welcome the following new members of our mailing group: Emily Lasinsky, Raquel Schmidt, Max Levis.

Heather has been busy writing and is expecting to have an article published in October on dance therapy in dementia which she co-wrote with an American dance-movement therapist. She is also collaborating with an arts therapy colleague to present at an Arts and Health Conference in November. A copy of the abstract is included in this newsletter.

In the meantime, Ilene has been on the road again and has spent a few weeks in Israel. We've included one of her emails below.

As usual we welcome any contributions and/or feedback from readers of this newsletter.

Best wishes,

Ilene and Heather

IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

Introduction to New Members
Society for the Arts in Healthcare Conference 2011 – Call for abstracts
Invitation from the Centre for Spirituality and Aging
Book Review (Psychcritiques)
News of Ilene’s latest travels
Arts and Health Conference 2010 Abstract – “Not like Pills”
New Book
Video Clips

INTRODUCTION TO TWO NEW MEMBERS OF THE MAILING LIST

Xuefu Wang, PhD, having obtained his degrees in the fields of theology, literature, psychology and pastoral counseling, is the founder as well as the director of the Nanjing Counseling Institute of Zhi Mian Psychology, Nanjing, China. His past experience has been teaching at universities, seminaries, and psychological institutions. Dr Wang is an active promoter as well as a pioneering practitioner of professional counseling and pastoral

**Emily Lasinsky:** I'm a Senior Psychology major at Saint Francis University. I plan on attending graduate school in Fall 2011 and I am trying to find the best way to integrate using art and counseling. As far as research, I have attended the Eastern Psychological Association's conference the past two years. My research involved Mate Selection in Online Personal Advertisements and Gender Differences in Book Carrying Behavior. I have also completed research at the university on the Effects of Humor on Helping Behavior and the Effects of Art on Stress Levels of Undergraduate College Women. I am currently working on an independent study (Psychology of Creativity) to further my knowledge about the psychological process of creativity, what makes one a creative individual, and to get to know my own creativity more in depth. I am also involved in a special topics art class.
using hands as my focus because I feel that looking at hands can tell you a lot about a person without having to ever speak to him/her. I have found art to be highly beneficial in my life and would love to use it and introduce it to clients in a future counseling career.

**CONFERENCE: CALL FOR ABSTRACTS**

Society for the Arts in Healthcare's Annual International Conference

**Advancing Patient-Centered Arts**

Hosted by Stanford Hospital & Clinics

April 13 - 16, 2011

Hyatt Regency San Francisco Airport
Burlingame, CA, USA

Abstract submission [guidelines and requirements](#) for papers, panels, workshops, and posters are now available!
Topics include:

**Partners**
Innovative collaborations between organizations such as healthcare providers, education, arts, and cultural institutions

**Practice**
Model arts programs and best practices for patients and caregivers

**Healthcare Environments**
Focus on built environments, evidence-based quality designs, interior and landscape design, and art curation

**Professional Development and Education**
Tools for arts in healthcare program development, operations, expansion and sustainability, or educational programs, as well as model curricula

**Research and Evaluation**
Cutting-edge research and effective evaluation methodologies in arts in healthcare programs, environmental design, and education

**Experiential**
Hands-on workshops designed to renew and inspire.


**INVITATION FROM THE CENTER FOR SPIRITUALITY AND AGING**

Ilene recently received an invitation to join the mailing list of the above organisation and thought that some members of this listserve might also be interested in knowing about the Center, which sponsors events and has resources to help professionals working with older adults to incorporate the spiritual aspects of aging into their care.

Upcoming Event:  The Spiritual Journey of Ageing: Six Key Components.
[http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07e2zeuvvjc8f3377](http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07e2zeuvvjc8f3377)

To receive emails: use this link to sign-up
BOOK REVIEW

Sisterhood: Bonds and Transference

A Review of:
You Were Always Mom’s Favorite! Sisters in Conversation Throughout Their Lives
by Deborah Tannen

Reviewed by:
Ilene Serlin

Reading Deborah Tannen’s book was an extremely personal experience for me, and my review is written from a personal perspective. You Were Always Mom’s Favorite! Sisters in Conversation Throughout Their Lives is dedicated to Tannen’s sisters. So were her first two books; her sisters are a “cherished” (p. 6) part of her life.

Like Tannen, I just lost my mother, to whom I was very close. I also am one of three sisters, as is she. We are both the youngest, but I am a triplet and the youngest by only 4 minutes.

I resonated, therefore, with her approach throughout the book. She says, for example:

My family is my foundation. My adored sisters, Mimi and Naomi, have a special place this time. If I didn’t have them as sisters, I would not have been able to write this book, nor would I have wanted to. They have been generous, patient, and insightful in answering my questions and in allowing me to turn their lives into material along with my own. And my debt to them has been set in relief by another circumstance: This is the first book I have completed, and therefore the first acknowledgments I have composed, for which my mother and father are no longer alive. My parents’ absence from this space, as from my life, is yet another reminder of how precious is my sisters’ presence in it. (p. 211)
And, like Tannen, I am also a Jew, from a family who came from Eastern Europe to New York during the early 1900s. There is a particular poignancy in the warmth, wisdom, and disappearing shared customs as the generations change.

As a child, I was also fascinated with the patterns of interaction and language that informed our little family and community. Two of us sisters became psychologists, and we are both sure that it comes from growing up in analytic, Jewish, normally neurotic families (Serlin, 2005). Because Tannen draws her descriptions and analyses directly from her subjects’ own words, they take on a power and ability to communicate easily with both professionals and lay people. Her work is eminently readable and will resonate with many readers. It would be interesting to see whether her book affects men compared with women, as Tannen’s work continues to enlighten the field about gender differences.

Tannen’s method of narrative analysis is also consistent with increased interest in the use of narrative and a powerful tool for psychologists. It also fits within the contemporary psychology scene as a needed corrective to what I have always felt was an overemphasis on the role of parents as significant others and from the perspective of transference and countertransference.

As a psychotherapist, I have often wondered at the intensity and importance of the sibling bond in the therapeutic relationship, and have even thought that the mother/child (vertical) bond has been emphasized at the expense of the sibling (horizontal) connections. There has been a lot less written about sisterhood in attachment, developmental, and Freudian theory, so I was delighted to see Deborah Tannen’s book.

Second, the book comes at a time when narrative and stories are being used for therapy and research (Polkinghorne, 1988; Sarbin, 1986). In this way, You Were Always Mom’s Favorite! makes family dynamics accessible from tangible and observable patterns.

Third, the book comes out at a time of renewed interest in gender differences in brain structure, language, and ways of knowing (Gilligan, 1982; Goldberger, Tarule, Clinchy, & Belenky, 1996). It therefore contributes a particularity of sister discourse situated within a context of women’s ways of knowing and communication.

What Is a Sister?

The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants series of books and other writings use the terminology of sisterhood. What are sisters, and why is their study important?

Tannen defines sisters in a very approachable way. Her approach is conversational rather than academic as she describes linguistic patterns in everyday events with which most clinicians and family members can identify. Familiar patterns of conversation include simultaneous bonding and competition.

She analyzed transcripts of recorded conversations and interviewed over 100 women about their sisters. The women came from a broad range of ages, ethnic backgrounds, and sexual and marital statuses. They spoke what one of them called “sisterspeak” (p. 10).
Tannen’s goal was not only to understand their relationships by analyzing conversation, but it was also to use conversation as a way to help women make healthy changes. Most sisterhoods, she notes, are like marriages, with a real mix of comfort and pain. They can be very intense and passionate: “No matter how difficult my sister is, she is still part of me, part of my past, my present, and my future. . . . Love her or hate her, I can’t imagine life without her” (p. 7). Sometimes sisters keep each other alive, as in the case of Anne Frank who waited until her sister Margot died to let go herself.

Sisterhood can be dark and dangerous, as stories like Cinderella show us. The figure of Cinderella shows up cross-culturally; the first appearance of a Cinderella figure appeared as Yehsien in a Chinese story from about the year 850. The stories of Rachel and Leah, as well as stories found in folk music, show us the inevitability of one being more beautiful, more desirable, or more able to bear sons. Most stories exemplify the basic human dimensions of connection and comparison.

Sisters bring us back to early developmental states of being; we remember smells that bring back memories of summer nights, the family dog. Sometimes the sharing is so profound that sisters cannot remember which event happened to whom.

In an interview in the *New York Times Magazine* (Solomon, 2009, p. 16), Tannen says that she grew up in Brooklyn as the youngest of three girls. Her first linguistics book, based on her dissertation, was a study of New York Jewish conversational style.

For Tannen, a sister is someone she knew growing up and observed keenly for many years. Further investigations should explore cross-cultural differences and similarities in the sisterhood language/relationship structures.

**Reflection**

Tannen is a linguist and not a psychologist. Although she attends to language and cognition as a psychologist might, she still skims over the role of attachment and competition in her analysis. Being a linguist, her assumptions are that language forms behavior; thus, she understands that making patterns explicit can also change behavior.

As a dance therapist and psychologist, I find that patterns exist in the body as preverbal echoes of early development. Language does not only shape behavior, but it also reflects and even disguises it. My own experience is that these behavioral patterns are closely connected with nonverbal rhythm, space, and boundary dimensions. I think that Deborah Tannen’s analysis would deepen if she added nonverbal dimensions to her study.

**Conclusion**

However, this book is important for families and therapists in helping them to become familiar with “sisterspeak” and begin to find ways to understand and use it in the therapeutic hour. As such, the book does accomplish what it sets out to do and has been used by both professionals and laypeople to better understand family dynamics. In my own consulting room, I have lent Deborah Tannen’s books to my clients, and they have reported
that the books have helped them better understand their own situations. It is difficult to write books that enlighten both professionals and the lay public; in You Were Always Mom’s Favorite!, Deborah Tannen has done just that.

References


NEWS OF ILENE’S LATEST TRAVELS

We include here an email Ilene sent during her trip to Israel:

Hi everyone,

I keep thinking of writing a note, but find it so complicated to describe life here.

I’m not living like a tourist...I’ve been in one place since I arrive, so most of my observations come from the daily life of students, interactions, and talking with friends. It is an intimate sense of everyday life...I awake at 7, have breakfast with the other residents of this residential beach hotel in Netanya. They are mostly elderly Russian Jews and French tourists. I speak French, so hardly practice any Hebrew. We eat the usual Israel breakfast of eggs, herring, salad, fruit...and then I drive to the campus to teach until 5. I return to the hotel by 6, have a walk along the Mediterranean and sometimes swim if I overcome my fear of the very prevalent and huge jellyfish. The water is warm, beautiful, filled with families....and floating plastic bags and debris. Everyone knows me by now, I have 1 place where I used to be able to buy the International Herald Tribune (which included Haaretz), but these days the newsstand is sold out by the time I get home. I either meet a friend for dinner or eat in one of the little fish restaurants in the town center. Netanya is a mostly working class town, fairly right-wing, but wonderful at night--a town plaza with no cars, lots of families, booths, restaurants, music and a carnival atmosphere.

I will do a few tourist sights--I plan to visit Ein Hod and bring my sketchbook--it is a beautiful artist colony. Tamar Krieger, a former (?) Kol Shofar member’s grandparents were some of the original settlers and her mother owns a gallery there. On Tuesday I plan to go to Jerusalem to be at the Wall for Tisha B’Av. Thursday I will do a workshop for Selah, the trauma center I told you about and some of you were good enough to contribute the tzedakah collection. Friday Shabbat dinner with a former student and good friend (the one whose son was killed in the homophobic incident last year--it is now the yarzheit) and with our cousin, Avram, who lives in a religious kibbutz near Gaza. I've had
dinners with good friends and colleagues--Eleanor is the daughter of Ruth Bar-On who started Selah (Ruth is a formidable woman, somewhat like Golda Meir), and a psychologist who has a model of posttraumatic growth very much like the one I work with. I’m interviewing Eleanor on Sunday, and hopefully her mother over the next few days. Friday night I spend shabbat with Rivka, a Jungian analyst who has been a close friend for 20 years, and her twin sons' birthday. Folk-dancing with Eleanor on Sat. night--they still do this in the streets of Tel-Aviv during the summer nights.

The class is beautiful. I’m teaching an intensive on holistic health at the Lesley University campus, wonderful people there. The usual story of paradoxes and contradictions--the one man in the class is religious, and during an imagery session he shared one image of bulldozers razing his home in one of the settlements. Yet he does t’ai chi and meditates. Yesterday was his birthday, and he brought us fresh squeezed organic sabra fruit juice from his garden, organic sprouted garbanzo bean spreads, and is gentle and nurturing. His son just had a child yesterday...I asked him if it was his first grandchild, and he has about 20--he has 14 children! Another student is a religious woman, who told us that meditation is becoming more prevalent, and her shul sometimes starts services with a short silent meditation. At the Rosh Chodesh lecture I went to with another student, I saw hundreds of young people who were seeking spiritual guidance in Kabbalah, in Eastern practices---and this comes alongside the arrest of Anat Hoffman and the conversion bill in the Knesset. Closed and open at the same time. Another student who lived in Palo Alto for 12 years still absolutely considers her home to be Israel. She doesn't defend Israel’s actions, but asks that we all understand how small Israel is, how real are the existential threats, that Israel is still a democracy (although imperfect). I told her I'd be writing to you, and she was eager to have outsiders understand the strains Israelis live under.

So I'm writing in that spirit, just to give one taste of one week in Israel. I stay one more week, then go to Boston to teach at the mother campus of Lesley University there, where we (Jeff will join me there) stay with faculty in the dorms of the Episcopal Seminary that is now part of the Lesley campus in Cambridge. Be back home on July 31.

ARTS AND HEALTH CONFERENCE 2010, AUSTRALIA

Heather and colleague William Feez, an arts therapist working in aged care, will be presenting a paper at the Arts and Health Conference, in Melbourne, Australia in November. ([http://www.artsandhealth.org/](http://www.artsandhealth.org/)). We include the abstract below:

NOT LIKE PILLS – THE ARTS AND RELATIONSHIP IN DEMENTIA CARE

As long time arts therapy practitioners in the field of dementia, we have seen the wonderful contribution the arts are able make to the lives of people with dementia. We have also witnessed in recent years an increased appreciation of the arts by other care and recreational staff, who – faced with the inadequacy of traditional aged care activities to engage people with dementia - are beginning to introduce arts activities into their programs. We welcome this development. However, we are also aware that staff often use arts activities simply as another tool in the toolkit - a pill in the medicine box - to be
delivered without particular attention to context, quality of experience, or mode of engagement. This neither does justice to the arts nor to the quality of experience for the participants.

For the arts experience to have value in this context, we believe that it is not enough to talk about the what, no matter how colourful or creative that may be. For the arts to truly contribute to the wellbeing and growth of people with dementia, we need to go beyond the what to a focus on the how. And for us, the how is necessarily embedded in relationship. The manner in which the arts are presented, the appropriateness to the needs and interests of participants, the quality of the arts experience – all flow from the relationship between staff and participants.

In this paper, therefore, we will describe in more detail what we mean by the arts in relationship and how that plays out in our own practice with people with dementia in different settings: a dance/movement program, and Art Club and storytelling project in aged care residential and day respite settings.

The arts have an amazing potential to enrich the lives of people with dementia. Based on our experience, though, it is clear to us that their effectiveness with people with dementia is reliant on the quality of relationship within which the arts are experienced.
NEW BOOK

Creative Arts in Interdisciplinary Practice, Inquiries for Hope and Change

Book Released and is Now Ready for Purchase!

(From Cheryl McLean email 26/8/10):

About the Book

The book, "Creative Arts in Interdisciplinary Practice, Inquiries for Hope and Change" (editor Cheryl McLean, Publisher of The International Journal of The Creative Arts in Interdisciplinary Practice, associate editor, Dr. Robert Kelly, Associate Professor, Fine Art, University of Calgary) is a project of IJCAIP, The International Journal of The Creative Arts in Interdisciplinary Practice, and is published by Detselig Temeron Books, Calgary.

The groundbreaking text introduces an emerging and rapidly growing field with a dynamic collection of illustrative articles featuring leading academics, health researchers, nurse educators, physicians, educators, environmentalists, artists and others who actively use the creative arts in interdisciplinary practice in cutting edged research and in methodologies for hope and change. Readers will learn how the creative arts can offer unique opportunities to embody and re-illuminate the human story, stage human vulnerability, foster citizenship and give voice to narratives of human experience.

At over 400 pages, this is a rich and multifaceted collection of articles and chapters about the creative arts in research and action, an accessible yet highly informative text that enlightens the reader about the inquiries and the processes while offering first hand insights into approaches, stories of the work in practice, how to method based exercises and lists of comprehensive references.
**Cost:**

In Canada total cost per book includes shipping $54.95

USA and International total cost per book includes shipping $59.95

*Discounts may apply for orders over 10 copies. Please inquire*

**TO ORDER:**

**Online:**

http://www.creativeartpractice.blogspot.com

**By mail:**

For those who would prefer to order by mail you can now contact the editor at CherylMcLean@ijcaip.com and we will invoice for payment. Once payment is received we will ship your copy or copies of the book by mail without delay.

**Your Book Purchases Will Help Support OA Journal.** $10 from the sale of each book ordered will be donated to IJCAIP (International Journal of The Creative Arts in Interdisciplinary Practice) to help support and sustain publishing operations for the open access journal which offers free subscriptions and access to free and accessible research and information about the creative arts in interdisciplinary practice to individuals and organizations worldwide (including developing nations). IJCAIP, The International Journal of The Creative Arts in Interdisciplinary Practice has been providing free web based access since 2006.

**VIDEO CLIPS:**

- Verdi Opera in Dizzengof Centre Tel Aviv.  
  30 singers from the Israel Philharmonic mingle in the astonished crowd.  
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNqosHRbWog&feature=related

- This is the website of an organization of film-makers who are commissioned by community groups, organizations etc. Of particular interest is the section on embodied emotions which shows a drama artist working with children on emotions. Also senior blues, which is about treating (and sometimes how not to treat) older people with depression. And then there’s the joy of seeing a video clip of older people dancing, with its images of seniors who through dance are able to connect with their creative potential and to demonstrate their vibrant spirit.  
  http://www.loudminority.co.uk/

**Attachment:** Serlin Continuing Education flyer “Expressive Therapies: Integrating Mind-Body therapies into practice”