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Be untiring in your work, but depend not on your own strength. That would bring you limitation. Look to the Great White Spirit for all your needs and for the release of that inner strength. Be undaunted, be untiring, but depend not on yourself.

~~White Eagle from "The Quiet Mind", p51

I delight in seeing IFS healing spring up right in my back yard. Double delight arose when I visited my former back yard in Newberg, Oregon, where I had lived 30 years ago. Hazelden Springbrook, a residential chemical dependency campus, has sprung up there. While resting on those hills where I once enjoyed daily walks, I suddenly found myself looking through both of my major psychology lenses at the same time. One lens developed during my first decade out of graduate school as I trained my eye on the addictions treatment arena. The following decade evolved into an intensive looking within and without using the Internal Family Systems (IFS) lens. There, at the foot of Chehalem Mountain in my actual former back yard where Hazelden Springbrook is now situated, I gazed through both lenses at once. It felt like turning the tiny ridges of the focus wheel on binoculars to suddenly zoom in on a soaring eagle. How

natural for the wings of IFS and Twelve Step based addictions treatment to lift recovering people to new heights.

Down to earth and back home in Madison, Wisconsin, I landed with a vision of integrating IFS and the Twelve Steps. Practical sharing with several generous IFS therapists already working with recovering addicts was my next action. Their groundbreaking work continues to be so supportive as I explore group therapy integrating the IFS model with addiction treatment. IFS trained Henning von Bauer and Catholic Charities in Madison, Wisconsin, enthusiastically opened their doors for our pilot group. In February 2005, Henning and I introduced the IFS model to a small group of men and women who arrived to "jumpstart" their recovery and clear emotional burdens as we had advertised in a community brochure.

The "forming" stage of our twelve week IFS Addictions group flew quicker than I had forecast. Checking in and speaking for parts which were present in the here and now led, over the next weeks, to checking in for parts noticed between sessions. Parts mapping emerged cogently and clearly in the flow.

The biggest challenge of the weekly group's "storming" stage seemed to be triggering around members experiences and expectations lingering from former treatments and self help groups. One woman declared



she would quit the group immediately if we did not allow “crosstalk.” Another feared at first that the group might undermine her Alcoholics Anonymous recovery program. She informed the group with commitment that she would walk out if her AA program was not supported.

Beginnings of the group “norming” stage fell into place as we used the trigger flash points to slow down, check inside, and speak for parts about these fears. Henning and I met before and after each group to prepare mini lectures on ways the IFS model and recovery programs strengthened Self leadership. We explored Self-led sponsorship, ways a Twelve Step program supports unburdening, and other recovery topics as they surfaced. The “performing” stage of the Addictions Recovery Group shaped into a pattern which group members came to rely on. After checking in and group support the remainder of the two hour sessions branched into one of two routes: Fish bowl with compassionate witness for individual work with one of the group co-leaders, or, going inside as a group with a leader guiding and working with parts. The group debriefs were rich with questions, learning opportunities, and speaking for parts. All participants deepened in understanding of their inner worlds, the unburdening process, and how Self leadership and Self-led recovery work.

The Addictions Recovery Group members unanimously opted to “re-form” after the twelve weeks were completed. It is a small group where Henning and I renew our commitment to keep it simple and provide quality IFS therapy. We can see that the Internal Family Systems model has the potential to increase effectiveness of treatment for chemical dependency and process addictions. I feel particular excitement about the restorative power of Self-leadership work in Twelve Step based therapy groups. I want to see the serenity and Self-leadership which the Addictions Recovery Group is cultivating in our back yard spread to back yards all over the country. My vision is to make this work available to many.

Request:

The next step in integrating IFS and The Twelve Steps in chemical dependency treatment groups is to run a clinical exploration in a residential setting. I am working with The Center For Self Leadership to secure seed grant funding for residential research. IFS interns and volunteers with an interest in addictions treatment are invited to join the team. Residential chemical dependency treatment centers supportive of IFS therapy are welcome to contact Suzan McVicker at 608. 255. 9119 x3 or suznews@chorus.net

- *Suzan McVicker, MA, LPC, is currently an IFS trainer based in Madison, Wisconsin. One of the IFS case consultation groups she leads has an addictions focus. Suzan served as clinical and*

program director for a decade in chemical dependency programs in the Chicago area. She also volunteered many years on state level providers committees and in prevention work in Illinois.

IFSSM/12-Step Compatibility

by Bill Kavanagh

I don't know why I was surprised to find that many therapists believe Internal Family SystemsSM Therapy and the 12-Steps (originated by Alcoholics Anonymous in 1939 and adapted by over 200 other types of mutual aid groups) to be mutually exclusive forms of dealing with problems, self-discovery and learning to grow as human beings.

Through my own participation in a 12-Step program and in returning to school to become an addictions counselor and psychotherapist, I learned to believe my extreme parts were “character defects” to be overcome by means of (1) a reliance on a Higher Power, (2) a thorough cleansing of the wreckage of my past, and (3) a concerted effort to help others in my initial predicament. I also learned that alcoholics and other drug addicts are supposed to be notoriously hard to work with because of their denial, resistance to all therapeutic approaches and lack of emotional maturity.

Although I readily embraced the tenets of IFS for myself and for most of my clients, a part of me kept hanging on to the above approach of perceiving alcoholics and other drug addicts (which I will shorten to “addicts” for this article), as if their addictions weren't caused and/or sustained by their own well-meaning but pain-causing parts.

It took me quite some time to reorient my thinking to include addictions into my conception of Internal Family Systems Therapy and its healing potential. But I finally did come to realize that not only are the two modalities not mutually exclusive, they are in fact highly compatible. The following is an attempt to answer some of the questions I have heard asked regarding said compatibility of IFST and the 12-Steps:

Speaking from Self

Speaking from Self has the inherent honesty that is esteemed, and (hopefully) practiced by 12-Steppers and which is prominent in most 12-Step meetings. Much of the initial appeal of 12-Step meetings on newcomers is the effect people have -- when they speak truthfully and candidly (from Self) about their addictions, compulsive behaviors, etc -- on people who aren't used to speaking or



living honestly and consequently aren't expecting honesty from others. These newcomers are puzzled yet attracted because they have rarely, if ever, encountered such an atmosphere of openness and safety.

However even after the initial shock wears off, the newcomers find themselves still drawn to those qualities of Self which they find in meetings. When newcomers, or any members regardless of length of time in a given program, let go of their defenses (calm their protective parts) they can speak freely and allow themselves to be vulnerable. They find they can (1) trust those around them to respect their anonymity and (2) know they will be heard and understood because of the confidentiality required by 12-Step programs and the absence of cross-talk in meetings. When this occurs, as it does in most 12-Step meetings, Self automatically comes to the fore. Witnesses intuitively recognize Self and respond accordingly – from their own Selves.

Twelve Steppers also use what they call the "group conscience" to make decisions. This could be termed a meeting of the Selves of the group members. The members who care to speak (as much as possible from Self) regarding the issue at hand and after discussion a vote is taken in which the group conscience speaks. Although some members speak from parts, the general outcome is that the Selves of the members come together and Wisdom prevails. Meanwhile, those who expressed opposing points of view usually feel heard and understood by the Selves of the other members and consequently they are able to let go of the urgency of their positions and accept the group conscience peacefully and without rancor. In other words, with an abundance of Self energy in the room, it is difficult to allow baser motives to prevail.

One Day at a Time

Because of the "One Day At A Time" (ODAT) approach, some believe 12-Step to be a "here and now" practice, eschewing the past and future. However that particular view of 12-Stepwork reveals only that the person hasn't gotten past Step Three. Instead, IFS complements 12-Step work in that we are all "clearing away the wreckage of our past" (steps 4-9). Only in IFS we offer the parts responsible for the wreckage a productive new life on those parts' terms in exchange for their letting go of their wreckage-inducing roles.

Taken further, living ODAT encourages exactly what IFS "centering exercises" and "going inside" seek: being in the present. This is where the Self is found. Parts exist in the past and the future; this is where the emotional pain resides.

The typical addict is a mass of terror, anxiety and resentment, living in the past and the future, never the

present. In the past the addict hones those resentments while being consumed by regrets. A great deal of time is also spent worrying about the future. There is also much fantasizing about how wonderful it will be when the addict gets even with those s/he resents or when the addict gets the attention/respect s/he knows s/he deserves. Twelve-Steppers are encouraged to let go of resentments, worry and fantasy, to focus on what needs to be done in the present moment. Learning to live in the present naturally brings one closer to Self.

Character Defects/Extreme Parts

12-Step programs do have a deficit/"character defect"-based view which, after some consideration, I have learned to translate to IFS. The primary difference is that 12-Steppers don't realize their "defects" are trying to work for and not against them. Rather than dismissing all 12-Step philosophy because of this I look at it as I would clients who don't yet know their parts aren't trying to hurt them. It is their parts' thinking that is "defective," rather than the parts themselves or the parts' intentions for them.

Working with Extreme Parts/Character Defects

12-Steppers do know, as we IFSers do, that trying to force a damage-wreaking part out of its job only causes more pain, havoc and wreckage. The 12-Steppers rely on "God as we understood God" to remove the defects of character while IFSers use the Self to witness, appreciate, and acknowledge the parts and to moderate the parts' release from the bondage of their roles. Many IFS therapists use the idea of a Higher Self connected to our Selves, whose energy and aid can be accessed through Self. Also, the use of guides can incorporate religious figures that assist in working with and unburdening extreme parts. This of course brings us to . .

Spirituality

The idea of trying to live life according to spiritual principles is common to both modalities regardless of how that spirituality is defined. Spirituality is not to be confused with religion. Many people see spirituality as the opposite of materialism: a focus on the inner (and outer) wisdoms available to us all which we seem unable to see or hear when we are focused on the material distractions in life.

To many IFS therapists and clients, the Self is directly connected to a higher energy, a spiritual force, God, a god, goddess, or just something bigger than us. As stated previously, some also actively use their own and/or their clients' spiritual/religious beliefs in their use of IFS Therapy. If clients' parts want to give their burdens to God, Allah, Mary, Jesus, Light, the Elements, etc., then to me it is the same as letting "God remove our defects of character"



(steps 6 and 7).

There are of course therapists, clients and 12-Steppers who don't believe in or attempt to access anything outside of a person's internal system. For example, Alcoholics Anonymous has an offshoot called AAAA, which is AA for Atheists and Agnostics. While I don't necessarily believe these people to be wrong, I do believe they are missing out on a whole world of therapeutic opportunities. However, in applying the principles of the 12-Steps and utilizing the group conscience they are essentially making use of spiritual components and may be taking advantage of the guidance of a "power greater than themselves" without ever using that terminology.

Both Internal Family SystemsSM and the 12-Step are, to me, exercises in Self-building. The main differences seem to be that while IFS posits Self-building as a primary objective, actively working the 12-Steps allows this to come about gradually. AA's *Promises* offer what amounts to a life with Self leading and parts in harmony with each other. In both models the vision of the life that can be is a prime motivator for parts to change and grow; to leave behind the old ways (no matter how safe they may have felt in their dysfunctional roles) and to accept the promise of a life that, in AA terminology, is "happy, joyous and free".

As a frame of reference, I have included a copy of the Twelve Steps as written by Alcoholics Anonymous® and practiced by numerous groups which have adopted these steps. I have followed that, in an attempt to further clarify the similarities between the two models, with my interpretation of The Twelve Steps as they might be written for IFS first using 12-Step language and then The Twelve Steps as they might be written for IFS using IFS language. I don't mean to imply that the 12-Steps should or need to be rewritten. Nor do I wish to imply that IFS should adapt and/or adopt a version of the 12-Steps.

Please note that I have left steps eight and nine blank in the "using 12-Step language" version. I did this because, after much consideration, I wasn't able to come up with anything I felt that accurately represented these steps in the practice of Internal Family Systems Therapy, given the limitation of using 12-Step language. Please feel free to replace any of my versions of the Steps with anything with which you feel comfortable.

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous®

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol -- that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The Twelve Steps As Written For IFS

(using 12-Step language)

1. We admitted we were powerless over our parts -- that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that Self -- initially at least, with the help of our therapists -- could provide/restore peace of mind.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our life over to the care of Self, *as much as our parts would allow*.
4. Made a searching, if not systematic, inventory of our parts, witnessing and calming their fears and concerns.
5. Admitted to our parts, to Self, and to our therapists the exact nature of our extreme, negative, pain-causing and vulnerable parts' effects upon our systems.



6. Were entirely ready to have Self unburden these managers, firefighters and exiles.

7. Worked (at least initially with our therapists) to unburden these parts and to allow them new, more productive roles.

8.

9.

10. Continued to take a parts inventory and when parts are triggered enough to cause pain, to work with them.

11. Sought through therapy, and sometimes through meditation, to improve our conscious contact with Self *as much as our parts would allow*, seeking Self's guidance, unconditional love and peace of mind.

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we introduce Internal Family Systems Therapy to others when asked, and practice these principles in all our affairs.

The Twelve Steps As Written For IFS

(using IFS language)

1. We decided (generally after considerable emotional pain) to make changes in our lives and sought out a therapist to assist in those changes.

2. Were introduced to the IFS concepts and began to accept that Self (initially at least, with the help of our therapists) could achieve/restore harmony among our parts and provide us with peace of mind.

3. Decided to trust in Self, *as much as our parts would allow*.

4. Used Internal Family Systems Therapy to access and identify our parts one at a time, witnessing and calming their fears and concerns.

5. Worked with our parts, leading and mediating with Self, to discover the nature of our negative, pain-causing and vulnerable parts and their effects upon our systems, witnessing their stories, acknowledging the altruistic and protective nature of their intentions for us, negotiating with polarized parts and offering them new roles of their choosing within our system.

6. Gained our parts' permission to allow Self to unburden these managers, firefighters and exiles.

7. Worked (at least initially with our therapists) to unburden these parts and to allow them new, more productive roles – the roles they were born to have.

8. Re-witnessed, while working with our parts, the traumatic events (whether real or perceived) that caused our parts to take on extreme, nonproductive roles.

9. Worked in therapy and in our daily lives to bring perspective and closure to these parts' traumas.

10. Continued to monitor our parts and when they were triggered enough to cause pain, to work with them.

11. Used therapy and meditation to continue to become more Self led, *as much as our parts would allow*, seeking Self's guidance, unconditional love and peace of mind.

12. Having become more Self led through the use of Internal Family Systems Therapy, we guide others to IFST when they ask about our new "selves", and bring our new peace of mind to every aspect of our lives.

The AA Promises

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through.

We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.

We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace.

No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.

That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.

We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.

Self-seeking will slip away.

Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.

Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us.

We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.



We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not.

They are being fulfilled among us - sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly.

They will always materialize if we work for them.

Alcoholics Anonymous p83-84

Bill Kavanagh LCSW, CADC, creatively working as a psychotherapist/addictions counselor for Family Service and MHC of Oak Park and River Forest and in private practice in Oak Park, IL as well as running a digital audio recording studio, playing bass guitar with various local artists, continuing to learn how to be the father to two lovely young women, working with his own parts and exploring ways to keep new a wonderful marriage of 31 years.

IFS and Twelve Step Retreat In Planning Stages *by Suzan McVicker*

IFS Self leadership work and Twelve Step programs are known by many IFS practitioners to mutually support each other. After the 13th Annual IFS Conference in September 2004 Bill Kavanagh and I evolved a list of 70 people who, at various levels, integrate IFS and addictions work. Our thanks to those of you who signed your names and e-mail addresses on the clipboard at the conference. Your interest in a retreat to begin a community dialogue on expanding this integration of the two modalities, IFS and Twelve Steps, provided the green light I needed to proceed.

After the conference, planning with The Center For Self Leadership for an IFS and Twelve Step retreat began. We decided to listen closely to exactly what people need and want for this new type of retreat. You will be receiving an invitation to participate in a listserv dedicated to the integration of IFS and the Twelve Steps. The listserv moves in the direction of a wider discussion which has already begun. It can link IFS voices interested in Self led self help/mutual aid groups with those who work toward clearer ways to use the model in Twelve Step-based addictions treatment. Out of that conversation we hope to shape the retreat. Watch for the listserv startup announcement. Or, e-mail your interest to suzanmcvicker@yahoo.com

With gratitude and joy,
Suzan McVicker

A WHOLE NEW WORLD

By Karen Locke

One morning I woke up after a terrifying dream. At breakfast I told my husband about it. He showed concern and asked which part of me might be having scared feelings. I said I had already had a little inner dialogue and realized that I'm having a difficult meeting at work this morning, which is scaring the part of me that's a perfectionist. In my inner dialogue I had talked with that part and reimagined a "good enough" meeting, taking only responsibility for doing my own best job. My stomach relaxed, and I felt better.

When I got to work that day I discussed my scared part with my co-worker. She said she had had some of the same fears. So when we opened the business meeting we first discussed everyone's fears and hopes for the meeting. This relaxed our inner critics and fearful parts, and the following meeting went very well.

That afternoon I took my daughter to soccer practice. I managed to pull the coach aside and clued him in that my daughter is very afraid of being goalie, with all those balls coming at her. During practice he asked my daughter what would help her feel better about soccer. She said she'd like not to be goalie any more, that it wasn't a position she felt comfortable in. The coach said he honored her scared part, that there were things that made him afraid too (he mentioned speaking in front of crowds) and that she didn't need to push that part by being goalie. He moved her to a different position.

The trend continued that evening, as the news anchor people were analyzing the president's actions in Iraq. They said that he was showing bravery in some areas, but that he seemed weighted too heavily toward his macho side and wasn't balancing it out with skill and knowledge. They predicted that if he didn't find those parts of himself Congress would be forced to cut off his funding until he could be a more complete leader.

That night I went to sleep after journaling about the meeting, the soccer game, and some general unease I felt about an upcoming trip. I realized I had learned a lot about my own parts and those of other people that day. I slept much more soundly than I had the night before.

I wish that these events could have really happened. I wish this was how the world worked right now, that people recognized parts, their own and others', and acted



accordingly. As it is, I can only imagine what this will be like in an imaginary future.

This future, the one including general knowledge and skill with parts, is one I'd like to further during my lifetime.

First, a bit of my background. I discovered "parts" about 18 years ago in a Psychosynthesis class. Roberto Assagioli, a psychiatrist who was a contemporary of Freud and Jung, invented this form of psychology which advocated synthesizing all different aspects of people, including their subpersonalities (as he called them) as well as body/mind/emotions/spirit. I was immediately taken with the idea of parts. It was exciting to me that I could have unconscious parts that had different feelings and needs. Little did I know HOW different! And how needy!

Since then I have studied many different ways to connect with parts, mine and those of clients and friends. Much of my work has been done alone or with one or two peers. I've found that much of the time I can find and heal my parts myself, through body-centered practices and with the help of what Assagioli called Higher Self, what IFS calls Self.

I was very excited when I read about Internal Family Systems on the internet last summer. This was one more step in the direction of finally understanding what this "parts" stuff was all about. The concepts of Firefighter, Manager and Exile are helpful in seeing what is going on outside me as well as within me. I also enjoyed the community that has formed around IFS. It made me think that my fond wish for more global understanding of parts might be possible.

As I think about my goal of promoting general understanding and skill around parts, I look at other movements that have educated lots of people. One of my favorites is the 12 step movement, which I learned about in my 4 years as a member of Workaholics Anonymous. 12 steps have formed in many different addictions, educating and supporting people as they struggle to grow and change. It seems to me that a peer support network would be helpful for people learning to work with their parts, people both in therapy and those who want to work more on their own.

I've written an outline that might perhaps be helpful to in forming such groups. In 12 steps the steps are used in 2 ways; both as an over-arching process that newcomers go through in their own time (may take weeks or months or years), and as a review for people who have been around to check and see if they are still being true to the program. I see these principles the same way. People could go through them in their own time and they could re-check them periodically to see if they are still true to their goals.

PARTS AFFIRMATION GROUP

The goals:

To offer acceptance and caring to all parts of all people.

To offer strength and hope through sharing our healing stories.

To support and demonstrate skills in dealing with inner parts.

The Nine Principles

These principles could be used as personal affirmations, beginning readings for groups, principles to discuss 1 per week with examples, and goals for understanding, skill development and acceptance.

1. I have different parts of myself that I'm not always conscious of; I am connecting with and learning about these parts.
2. Each of my actions is carried out by some part of me with a positive intent and need. I look for the needs and find ways to meet them.
3. Each of my parts deserves to be heard, and I am learning to hear them all.
4. Each of my parts can be healed, and I am learning ways to heal them.
5. There are resources, including Self/ Higher Self/Higher Power/God, available to help and direct the healing process. I am learning to connect with these resources.
6. The culture around me sometimes distracts me from listening to my parts and their needs; I am learning to see and resist these distractions.
7. Addictions and distractions aren't helpful in giving my parts what they need, so I am learning to identify my addictions and meet the needs in other ways.
8. I share my experience with others so they can learn to listen to and heal their parts.
9. I listen to and honor the parts of others, helping them meet their needs when that is appropriate.

The fellowship is open to anyone who shares this goal and is willing to come and sit and be with others and their parts. Just as in 12 steps, there will be those who want to also do therapy and those who prefer to find ways to work in a peer relationship instead. All paths, like all parts, are welcome.

Ground rules in meetings:

- If people feel like they're going to be flooded by a



scared or angry part, they are encouraged to breathe and ask for more Self energy. However, all parts are welcome at meetings, and each meeting will have a meeting chairperson who can remain in Self to respond to angry or scared parts.

- Participants share their stories of hope and reconnection with parts, as well as fears and problems they have with them.
- Participants also share their understanding about parts, what their own parts have done and what they were trying to do, so new people get a demonstration about how this “parts stuff” works.

I think it's also important to stress that these aren't therapy groups. If people need to work extensively, directly with injured parts, they might seek a therapist or learn some self-therapy exercises. These groups are for reporting on progress, asking for support, seeking guidance on how to deal with parts challenges in one's daily life. The in-depth, guided work would be saved for another format.

I'd be interested in hearing from others who would like to help form this project. I trust that the process is unfolding and that interested others will feel moved to join.

I woke the next morning with a glad heart. I knew I still had parts with issues, but at least I had friends and family for support in working on them. The world situation, too, was looking brighter this morning; I knew there were people with parts knowledge and skills ready to support change in the larger world arena. I was ready to face my day, but first I had to check in with my parts and see what was going on inside. That was my priority in this wonderful, challenging new world!

Karen has studied Body-Centered Transformation, visualization, IFS and psychosynthesis. She is writing a book on parts and self-healing in addition to hopefully starting a Parts Affirmation Group in the Minnesota area. She also teaches at a brand new, online, project-based charter school (EdVisionsOff-Campus High School).

The 2005 IFS Annual Conference

To register online, go to:

<http://www.selfleadership.org/conf14/conference14.htm>

We Help

by Nancy B. Ging

We help
from different places
a variety of spaces
deep inside ourselves
with motives many
mixed
some innocent
and pure
some convoluted
coming from a need for drama
a distraction from our pain
by falling into traumas of another
to lift the focus from our own malaise
motives shift from stages
phases of our lives
so often gratitude inspires our actions
repaying the Divine for intervention
at those times we've been dejected
disconnected
finally resurrected
through a rescue by a friend
then again we've found our center
sometimes in helping
we are seeking
quite unconsciously
to balance
those bad places
deep and dark within
yet always there's a spark
of Light involved
with any kind of service
lifting pain of friend or foe
lifts us as in those moments
we take on an angel glowing fragrance
as agents of the God we're born to be
whatever human else goes on
with you and me.

*Nancy Ging, L.C.S.W. is a pioneer in wholistic psychotherapy, clinician in private practice in Hinsdale, IL for the past 25 years, consultant, teacher, author of the book *Simplifying the Road to Wholeness*, poet and reporter for *Conscious Choice* magazine. Her website is: <http://www.nancyging.net/>*

IFS Social Transformation Network Teleconferences

by Lindsay O'Keefe

1/24/05: We spent considerable time introducing ourselves, given that this was our first meeting. We



discussed how IFS might contribute to social change.
Highlights:

~ Most social change work does not allow for interior change. When things break down, there is a lack of attention to the interior individual and interior collective. It is important to establish a container to invite the interior to show up.

~ The Self can “work magic”—when it shows up in the room, it also changes the world—there is a radiating effect.

~ When people are trained in IFS methods, there is “a lot of connecting and opening”. This is more than just individuals growing; it is the creation of a subculture. If we wanted to transform society, we could just keep expanding that subculture.

~ *You can dis-identify with your position in a group and express vulnerability, yet still be attacked by one of your parts. Groups can be successful, yet when discussion moves to the personal level, it's really scary for the person who goes first.*

~ It's ok for us to flounder in our teleconference conversations.

(7 participants)

1/31/05:

1. We examined our experiences with consensus decisionmaking (originally a set of Quaker skills):
 - a. Consensus techniques are deeper than activism without reflection.
 - b. “Standing aside” is similar to a technique Jon uses called “gradients of agreement” (to assess where each person stands along a scale they find themselves).
 - c. Consensus techniques are usually introduced when a decision is contentious. Individuals are identified with a part. IFS could help with language at this point.
 - d. Also valuable to identify parts people share in a group. Jay's list of parts might be helpful here.
 - e. ITP group in SF uses Integrated Transformational Practice: consensus techniques developed at Esalen. “Staying current”= if something is going on with another person, each has a responsibility to stay current with the other. “Makes for a beautiful community.”
 - f. Consensus takes time.

- g. Consensus does not need to take time; using Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication techniques shortens the time.

2. We (people in teleconference) all have IFS as something in common; there is an assumption of depth in how we all work.

- a. Doing activism again is an “unpleasant choice” for two participants.

- b. It would help in making a commitment to know that there is a community committed to doing internal work.

3. Crisis is a way of creating change, but it isolates the actors. Dialogue is not something you do in a crisis.

- a. Crisis is firefighter led. Social change is usually manager led.

- b. Hard to know how to get going without a crisis.

- c. Firefighters keep us from having a vision and moving toward it.

4. History of social change movements:

- d. Pre-1960's: oriented toward alleviating poverty.

- e. 1960's and 70's: oriented toward identity (Black Power and Women's Movements).

- f. Now is time for another shift: not crisis oriented, but toward fundamental change in society: IFS, with it's interior orientation, has much to offer.

- g. IFS helps people see they can take care of themselves, not depend on a charismatic leader. Different from Socialist model: criticism and self-criticism.

4. Need to see ourselves in terms of legacy burdens: cultural unburdening/cultural burdens of particular groups.

- a. Activists bring cultural legacy parts to their work.

- b. How might we share our own stories with one another, to help unburden the legacies and other parts we bring to social transformation.

(6 participants)

2/14/05: We agreed that we are still in a process of discovering who we are as a group that teleconferences. We agreed to share live examples of what is going on in



our lives that might invite using the IFS model. We agreed to each invite one person to the next teleconference.

1. Jay shared an overview of a parts system he is developing, similar to the Eneagram or Myers-Briggs. He hopes it will be useful in teaching IFS to the public, especially in developing a community that will use IFS techniques and do peer counseling.
2. Roberta shared her experience of being invited to join the Ministry and Counsel Committee of the Friend's Meeting (Quakers) where she attends. Two people in the Quaker meeting were strongly against her joining the committee, dividing the group. Roberta provided information on parts that might belong to the group and parts coming up personally.

(5 participants)

3/15/05:

1. Discussion of workshops teleconference participants would like to offer at September IFS conference in Chicago:
 - a. Mark will offer a workshop that appreciates conflict as a way to strengthen the social fabric. He has developed group process strategies similar to the work of Marshall Rosenberg and is influenced by the human development model of Robert Kegan.
 - b. Jay will offer a workshop on the "Pattern System" that examines how our parts are related to each other at different levels. Included will be problematic attractions, how some parts are naturally conflicting, and how we are frightened by some parts in others.
 - c. Discussion of how we might develop a workshop on social transformation together. Examine "what is the breadth and diversity of our thinking" on social transformation and look for common themes. Challenge: how to bring together the people who have been teleconferencing (talking regularly) with those who have been on the sidelines? Personal connections are a critical part of the process: meet people where they are, as well as bring people up to speed on the current conversation. Challenge: how to bring people into the conversation who have less experience with social activism?

2. Mark shared information on conflict within the community where he works with men who batter. In particular, he raised the issue of how traumatized parts shape the behavior of the larger group; e.g., some women have parts that believe no interventions with men who batter will ever work, and how this in turn shapes the allocation of resources in a network of groups that work with domestic violence.

(4 participants)

4/12/05: The conversation continued focusing on Mark's description of the struggle in the domestic violence community in St. Louis. He shared some detail of Robert Kegan's model of human development, which includes 6 levels of Self, and added some language from the IFS model:

Level 1: I am my experience. (infant)

Level 2: I am the one who is having the experience, and if I want to be different, I can change myself. (child)

Level 3: I am my role and who others think I am. (adolescent; most people make it to 3rd level and struggle getting to the 4th)

Level 4: I choose what roles I play and what relationships I have. Issue: how to be honest and also act in ones own best interest?

Level 5: There's a part of me that wants to be this way, and another part that wants to be another way. Which of these aspects do I want to be now?

Level 6: I'm the one that draws from these parts to choose how I want to be now.

We are all at all six levels all of the time, but we are unconscious of it.

Mark described a meeting of 20 organizations that work on domestic violence issues where he had hoped to move the conversation from 3rd level engagement to the 4th level. His curiosity lay with discovering that one woman coming from a 2nd level order of Self undermined his effort. During the teleconference conversation, it became apparent that the organization is itself at the 2nd level, although most participants are at the 3rd level. As individuals they could consider a conversation at the 4th level, but as a group they could not.



From an organizational development perspective, Jon suggested that it is important to build a “relational field” before tackling a contentious issue. From an IFS perspective, Mark’s position (representing the batterers) may be so triggering that building the relational field may be extremely difficult. Furthermore, pre-existing power relationships may impact the level individuals act from in a group, especially if most powerful are at 2nd level of self.

(7 participants)

5/3/05: Continued conversation regarding the struggle in the domestic violence community in St. Louis. Roberta reframed the problem: “it is unsafe for battered women to be in coalition with men who batter, but this is carrying over into organizations, and this is not healthy.” Mark spoke some about Spiral Dynamics (Don Beck model) where social change agents stay ½ step ahead of where constituents are and show constituents how transformation is in their own best interest. Another group, based on respect and confidentiality, has formed among some of the members of the broader domestic violence community and Mark feels that as this group develops, it may serve as a catalyst for change. Mark also shared how the experience of support from others through the teleconference has helped him.

(3 participants)

6/21/05: Discussion of how to bring IFS to general public. Issues discussed included: 1. Constraint model (asking parts to step aside until Self is present) vs. the Resource model (developing qualities of the Self before inviting Self into the room); 2. whether anyone has developed materials for people who are not IFS clients; 3. safety: how to know when something is coming up that should not be tackled by non-professionals.

(5 participants)

7/12/05: Regulars on teleconference calls were joined by members of CSL who have done two 3 day workshops with IFS clients on how to use IFS in their daily lives. Introductions: Jay would like to develop a new community based on peer counseling; John and Mark are interested in work with churches and activist groups; Lindsay is interested in work with activist groups; CSL is exploring work with existing clients, their families and possibly to the corporate world. In the existing CSL pilot programs, individuals have support beyond the workshops in that they are clients in IFS therapy with trained therapists: if they go deeper in training than they can presently handle, they have back-up. Workshops give people the big picture, working with parts by themselves and with peers, learning to

unblend, learning more about the model. Activities include firedrills, sculpting, and working with Self. Future pilots may go for 6 weeks: do a weekend workshop followed by 6-8 weeks of follow up.

Dick would like to take the model to the general public; Gretchen hesitates. In August, there will be a client conference in Chicago, and clients are being encouraged to bring family members. Bill (?) on the East Coast is doing 13 week workshops (2 hrs./wk.) with general public.

Question was asked: how do you structure the workshop to keep it at the manager level, not take it into the exile world? Response: people go anyway. We had 20 clients, 4 assistants and 2 workshop leaders to deal with this. Could also follow up workshops with group coaching, focused on a topic. Jon has worked with interfaith coalitions to do leadership training. Churches have a social justice tradition but usually not activist, e.g., politically moderate. Relationships are important in the building of community. Interpersonal work between congregations, where small groups shared around social justice and family issues was valuable. Mark has also taught conflict resolution in his church. Jon might take the IFS model to individual churches, not as a workshop but to use as a tool in the norms of congregational life (budget committee, grounds committee). Linda would like to use it this way in corporate life. Gretchen and Dick took the model to train managers of DSS in Chicago: deliberate sequence. First step was to become familiar with own parts (might not acknowledge publically, but learn to unblend). This was a huge learning as a competency, and created enough safety to allow individual to decide whether to reveal vulnerability. Everybody can get the concept of speaking from parts vs. speaking for parts.

Issue: how to gather people in? Suggestions: find one person, share model, and ask them to invite others. Existing IFS tapes of marriage partners working on interpersonal issues is a way of showing the model to new people. It is important to distinguish between organizational development and teaching interpersonal work: you must analyze your entry point. Example: in a church, is it the pastor or the deacons? One can use the IFS model to assess an organization: where are the exiles, where is the Self energy? Gretchen has done this with organizations, Dick has done this with banks in Germany. Another suggestion: there are a lot of leading edge organizational development people willing to try new methods. Also, organizations want to attract the best workers, which might make them more open to the model.

(8 participants)