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Authority in the Clinical Setting: *The Therapist's Responsibility*

Written by Ms Annikki Kurvi, M.S.W.*
(IIGP Graduate in 1994)

Authority is not a popular word in our permissive democratic society. It carries an echo of abusive, dictatorial authoritarianism. As children we had to obey the rules of others and trust the guidance of those who were more powerful. These "rulers" may have been more or less reasonable, even abusive at times. Whether or not our experiences with authoritative or authoritarian figures were realistically abusive, it may have felt so to us due to our vulnerable, powerless state of being when we existed without an ability to comprehend, to protect or to defend ourselves.

Understandably, confusion remains regarding these terms. "Authority" and "authoritarian" are often used synonymously. Webster defines authority as "the power or right to give commands, enforce obedience, take action, or make final decisions. Or, power or influence resulting from knowledge, prestige. A person with much knowledge or experience in some field whose opinion is hence reliable. Expert." Authoritarianism is defined as "the principles, policy or practice of unquestioning obedience to the authority of a dictator or a small dictator group, or, believing in, relating to, or characterized by unquestioning obedience to authority rather than individual freedom of judgment and action." Authority implies power in decision making and knowledge, but not unquestioning obedience. Unquestioning obedience has no place in adult living, much less in psychotherapy. Authority based on knowledge and competence, however, is of crucial importance.

The success of psychotherapy involves using proper authority based on the role and knowledge of an expert who assumes responsibility for treating emotional illness. Much like a physician, the psychotherapist's task is to treat and hopefully cure the patient's emotional illness. Unlike a physician who has laboratory and test results, scanning and x-ray machines to assist him or her in diagnosis and treatment, a psychotherapist stands solely as the instrument of change. This includes the responsibility to be an authority in the clinical setting.

* Excerpt from the original article in IIGP's
"Journal of Psychotherapy and Critical Thought", V.II, n.3,p.6 (1994)



Retreat Reprise

In 1977, the Institute (known as B.L.E.A.) held its first "retreat" for faculty, fellows and professional guests. The "retreat" was conceived of as an opportunity for our community of mental health professionals to spend a week or so (at our own expense) away from our usual environment. There we met daily in a "process group" to work on our own personal limitations as psychotherapists. The rest of time was spent in recreational activities. The



basic idea was to rejuvenate the tired therapist while sharpening his skills as a practitioner. Several years ago due to a variety of practical difficulties, we shortened our annual retreat to a long weekend at a location in Michigan outside the Metropolitan Detroit area. Unfortunately, the practical issues ultimately led to us not having any retreat at all for several years. We missed this time together. But since the value of this time together had been so compelling in the past, we found a week for most of us to spend together this year. Joanne Coleman, IIGP graduate, arranged condominiums for us in Florida. Every morning we met for a long group

session, which all in attendance found personally and professionally useful. The afternoons and evenings gave us time to reflect on what went on the meetings, and to get some much needed rest and relaxation. We are currently in the process of planning our next retreat.



October 17, 2012

Our next Benefit Dinner is scheduled for October 17, later this year. Anyone who has attended in the past knows how much fun it can be, having a chance to say hello to people you might otherwise not run into. And it's for a cause all of us can truly believe in. Put it in your calendar today!

Reflections

Thinking in the Shadow of Feelings: A New Understanding of the Hidden Forces that Shape Individuals and Societies.

Written in 1985-1986, more than 25 years ago, Dr. Reuven Bar-Levav wrote,

A Sensible Code of Conduct for International Relations

1. Although we pretend otherwise, the world's affairs are essentially determined by the law of the jungle, not according to the rules of any civilized order. No world "community" or "family" of nations exists, and no general agreement to abide by any one law. So it is delusional and utopian for the West to act as if they existed, and it is naive to expect that anyone but believers would follow a nonexistent code.
2. Every country claims superiority for its rights, values, and system of government: no agreement exist about which, if any, have universal validity. No one can rationally expect its own yardstick of morality to be used by everyone else.
3. In the jungle, might alone determines what is right. No one has sufficient power to dictate moral and political principles to all others. Even if the West has such power it would still not have the moral right to demand that those who follow practices that are abhorrent to its tastes and values should change. Our repugnance for man's inhumanity to man causes some of us to promote efforts to overthrow regimes in South Africa, Nicaragua, Iran or even those of Poland, Czechoslovakia or Bulgaria. *(recall, this was written 25 years ago- editor's note)* Whatever our claims, our only right is our power. Whether and to what extent we use this power are separate questions.
4. Justice is irrelevant in the jungle. We do not even agree on its content. Those without it often enforce their will on others anyway, if the have the power and the will to pay the required price. Since everyone in the jungle resorts to use of force to advance and protect themselves, the West must also be strong enough, or disappear.
5. The most stable order that the world can hope for is based on the principle of living according to one's own preferences and letting others live according to theirs. This does not maximize justice by our standards, but it helps the chance for peace.

This is why it is essential to renounce the principles of international "law" openly and consistently, and to make clear that we do not consider ourselves bound by it. Governments will no longer need to cover up their legitimate activities, and they will not have to perform them furtively and sneakily, in the manner of the thief stealing in the dark of night. The truth that international "law" itself is a fiction and that its basic principles are lies must become widely known. Discarding it is not a matter of concern for legal experts only or for sophisticated interested in worlds affairs. Every citizen in the West has a direct personal stake in this issue, since everyone's safety and welfare are dependent upon the government's ability to govern.

(Excerpt from the chapter "NOTES ON THE FUTURE OF THE WEST" pp311-312)

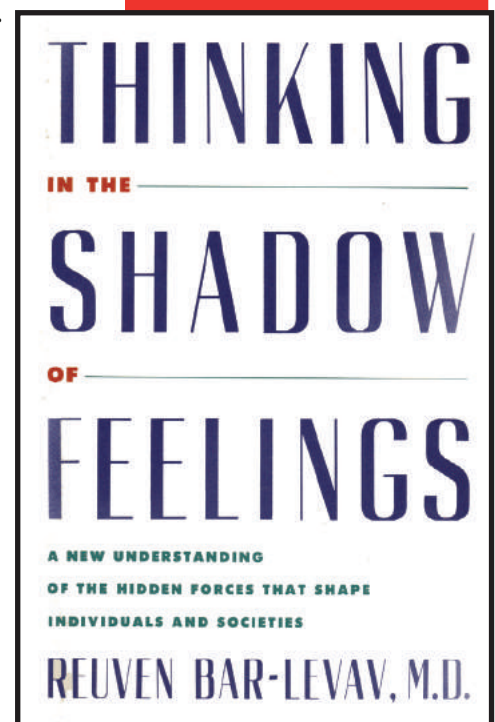
In this election year, and considering especially all the upheaval internationally in the past few years, the editor thinks it would be wise to consider the above words of our founder.

—Paul P. Shultz, ACSW, Editor



THINKING IN THE SHADOW OF FEELINGS (1988: Simon and Shuster)

The founder of the Institute, Dr. Reuven Bar-Levav, wrote the book "Thinking in the Shadow of Feelings". The book defines the theory of human motivation that guides our clinical work at IIGP. Each issue of INSIGHTS includes a brief discussion of an excerpt from the book. The book is available in its entirety on our web site www.iigp.org



Educational Updates

IIGP is pleased to welcome **Anne Herrick**, MSW, who brings a fresh point of view and enthusiasm to our program.

Our other three trainees, **Stephany Elliott**, MSW, **Danielle Moncrief**, M.A., and **Robert Rogers**, Ph.D. continue to train in psychotherapy groups led by Institute graduates and faculty members. Here as therapists in training, they join in with the senior therapists as part of the co-therapy team.

In June, the four trainees will begin to attend an ongoing case presentation led by Institute faculty members and Institute graduates serving as adjunct faculty members. There they will follow the treatment of one patient over several weeks, examining the treatment process and their own personal reactions to it.

IIGP Newsbites

Robert Rogers, Ph.D. (IIGP Trainee) recently wrote his psychology board exams. We congratulate Robert on this important milestone in his career! (Obviously, he passed.)



Victor Stoeffler, LMSW, (IIGP Graduate) had his paper, "Two Goodbyes: Leaving, Retirement, and Healing" published in the Spring 2011 Journal of the American Group Psychotherapy Association.



Mark Acetura, Esq. (IIGP Board Member) won a second place at the London England Book Festival for his recently published book "Blood & Money: Why Families Fight Over Inheritance and What to Do About it". Also Mark was interviewed by AARP Magazine for an article on this subject, to be published in October.

Patrice Duquette, MD (trained at IIGP) will give a 30 minute presentation on "The Clinical Relevance and Application of the Real Relationship in Patient Treatment" at the American Psychiatric Association in May, 2012.



Andy Tweddle, (IIGP Board Member) and his wife Qing are to be congratulated on the birth of their son. Born on February 14, 2012 – Grant Bowen weighed in at 8 lbs. 3 oz. Both mom, dad and baby are doing fine and are extremely happy!



Natan HarPaz, Ph.D., (IIGP Faculty Member) is pleased to report that his second book, Kiki Kangaroo, is now available at Amazon.com. The book provides a simplified psychodynamic illustration of abandonment and separation issues.

Ron Hook, LMSW (IIGP Faculty Member) recently taught a course to Master's Degree candidates at Madonna College in Livonia for which the students will receive scholastic credit.



"The single most important thing that makes psychotherapy a success is the character of the therapist.... This is the core of our training program"

Leora Bar-Levav,
MD

Far and Wide

The following is an email received by Dr. Leora Bar-Levav, IIGP Faculty Member early in January. It speaks for itself, illustrating how important it is that the Institute succeeds in educating the next generation of psychotherapists.

Dear Madame,

Your father's book "Thinking in the Shadow of Feelings" fell into my hands at a flea market on the Spanish island of Ibiza, where I live. This book has been key to my understanding of my illness and I am very grateful for it. I have read many books about emotional dependency and narcissism but none explained the problem as your father has. It shocked and saddened me to learn from the internet that he is no longer with us.

For three years now, I have been quite depressed and lacking energy. I have sought help with psychotherapists but have as yet not felt much improvement. I would very much like to find a good helping hand as well as try the marathon sessions your father advocates to treat my fear of abandonment. Do you perhaps know of any institute in Europe that treats along the principles that your institute follows? It would be a great help if you could recommend somebody. Thanking you very much in advance and wishing you and your family a happy and good New Year, Genevieve Scholten

Unfortunately, IIGP has no graduates practicing in Europe.

Help Us Train Therapists

Before the year is out, please consider a contribution to our Annual Fund (A self-addressed envelope is attached to this Newsletter). IIGP is a 501(c)(3) qualified non-profit organization that relies solely on the generosity of people like you. Founded in the 1970's, we have trained dozens of professionals in the practice of Integrated Individual and Group Psychotherapy. However, a "quick fix" focus has become popular, and treatment mostly by medications (many advertised on television) is now wide-spread. Hoping to buck this trend, we need your financial help to promote our training program. Psychotherapy leads to real change in ways medications cannot.



From left: Pamela Torracco, LMSW; Natan HarPaz, PhD;
Paul P. Shultz, LMSW; Leora Bar-Levav, MD;
Ronald J. Hook, MSW; David A. Baker, LMSW;
Marcia B. Stein, LMSW



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2012 TUESDAY SEMINARS

**Helping engendering civility, respect, compassion and self discipline:
How does character education fit in the clinical setting.**

May 1, 8 & 15—12:15pm - 1:30pm—\$50.00

Ignoring the Obvious: Collusion in the Psychotherapy Group

June 5, 12 & 19—12:15pm - 1:30pm—\$50.00

TBD

September 4, 11 & 18—12:15pm - 1:30pm—\$50.00

TBD

October 2, 9 & 16—12:15pm - 1:30pm—\$50.00

Treatment of Narcissism in Group Psychotherapy

November 6, 13 & 20—12:15pm - 1:30pm—\$50.00

TBD

December 4, 11 & 18—12:15pm - 1:30pm—\$50.00

GENERAL INFORMATION

All seminars are held at
**29600 Northwestern Hwy.
Ste 100A
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The Institute offers these classes for physicians, psychologist and social workers. IIGP is approved by the Michigan State Medical Society and by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for physicians and psychologists. IIGP maintains responsibility for the programs and its content. Our programs are approved by the Michigan Social Workers Continuing Education Collaborative for Social Workers for Continuing Education.

Reservations are required.

Please send an email to seminars@iigp.org or call (248) 535-5333 for reservations of for special accommodations.

Visit us on the web at www.iigp.org