



Journal of the Association  
of Mormon Counselors  
and Psychotherapists

**FEBRUARY 1979 VOL. 5/ISSUE 1**

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## PREFACE

This publication features various presentations which were given at the fourth annual convention (September, 1978) of the Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists (AMCAP). Included in the next AMCAP journal will be additional convention presentations as well as articles submitted directly to the editor.

Publishing of these convention presentations is not only because of their quality but perhaps more importantly because of the spirit they convey. An opportunity to rub shoulders with professional colleagues and friends from sundry geographical locations and employment who maintain and hold priceless their common spiritual, ethical, professional and moral values is cherished by many. The intent of this issue is to help perpetuate that feeling and spirit well beyond the two days of meetings and workshops.

We certainly appreciate your patience and support as this journal gains momentum. We are confident that it supports and will continue in the future to support even more strongly your unique personal, professional-spiritual dimension. As you can appreciate, getting a journal going and keeping it going is always quite difficult. We invite your constructive suggestions, and by all means your articles for publication. Letters to the editor will be gladly received.

Finally, it is appropriate that we acknowledge the excellent work done by our outgoing editor, Robert F. Stahmann; associate editor, D. Russell Crane; and editorial board members, Joseph L. Daly, Barbara L. Fisher, Jane C. Garside, and James C. Hurst. Thank you. Thanks also to Roy Marlowe for his invaluable assistance in producing this issue.

Henry L. Isaksen, Editor

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page		Page
<b>Speech to the Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>The Marriage Relationship and Personal Crisis Adjustment</b>	<b>15</b>
Neal A. Maxwell		Clark Swain	
<b>"Let All . . . Anger . . . Be Put Away From You . . ." or The Case Against Anger</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Family Therapy - An Eclectic Approach</b>	<b>17</b>
Bruce C. Kelly		Carl M. Rowley	
<b>Mental Illness and Family Uphear</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Strengthening Father-Child Bonds</b>	<b>21</b>
Louis G. Moench		Terrance D. Olson	
		<b>Family Systems Therapy</b>	<b>24</b>
		Lynn Scoresby	

# Speech to the Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists

Elder Neal A. Maxwell\*

*(Presented at the annual convention of Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists [AMCAP], September 28, 1978, Salt Lake City, Utah.)*

\*Elder Maxwell is a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Brothers and sisters, my first, and perhaps my most important, statement to you tonight is one of appreciation. I am very conscious that I speak to a group of individuals who have done much to blend the truths of the gospel with their professional training, so that correct concepts and proper principles are employed in your professional efforts. Next, I want to thank you for enduring the travail that is often yours as you attempt to help others to better their lives whether in improved decision making concerning career choices, in saving or enriching a marriage or, in some cases, in moving people away from the edge of self-destruction. I salute you for those contributions and want you to know that you have my personal gratitude as you "succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees." (D&C 81:5.)

Because you are who you are and because of your loyalty to the Kingdom, it is possible to talk to you about a few basic principles that bear upon your discipline as, indeed, upon each of our lives.

I need not inform you that one of the vital things which a healthy person does is to recognize reality and to cope with it. Unfortunately, in recent years the word "reality" has been appropriated in large measure by disbelievers. Further, "reality" has come to mean only the "here and now" things, when actually it includes ultimate as well as proximate reality. Since the well-being of any human turns upon his or her understanding of, and acceptance of, and adjustment to reality, we as Latter-day Saints must recognize, more than we sometimes do, that we are in possession of some overarchingly important truths about ultimate reality.

I have taken as my text a statement by the poet-prophet, Jacob, in which he speaks of how the Spirit teaches us the truth of "things as they really are, and of things as they really will be." (Jacob 4:13.) This declaration is the only time in all of scriptures, so far as I know, where the adverb "really" is used, and herein it is used twice within one sentence for exceptional emphasis by Jacob.

In 33 A.D. when Pilate asked Jesus, "What is truth?" no answer was given, but an answer was given in 1833 A.D. when the Savior told the Prophet Joseph Smith, "And truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come." (D&C 93:24.) That is the same consistent, basic message as in the text for this evening from Jacob about the reality of "things as they really are, and things as they really will be." It is the same basic message given to us by

Paul who noted that the Spirit of God searcheth "the deep things of God." (1 Cor. 2:10.) The "deep things of God" give us deep and spanning knowledge which is emancipating and makes us intellectually free. Without the perspectives of the gospel, the universe becomes a prison or an unfathomable maze, causing some to act out through hedonism and others to sink into despair.

No therapy or counsel will be lastingly successful which does not turn upon the truth or which does not recognize reality and does not prepare people to deal with the implications of reality. It is vital for us all to recognize the existence of the central realities--the reality of the living God and His Son, Jesus Christ. No wonder George MacDonald said that while men are "always struggling to make our home in the world, we have not yet succeeded. We are not at home in it, because we are not at home with the Lord of the house, the father of the family, not one with our elder brother, who is his right hand." (*George MacDonald Anthology*.)

We must also accept the supporting realities such as the living prophets and the living Church, and the living scriptures.

Likewise, so far as human behavior is concerned, it becomes exceedingly important for us to take account of the reality of the resurrection and the judgment, for these two realities are among the things that "really will be" in a coming day of unavoidable accountability for all mankind.

When we can read and accept the scriptures about that judgment day, then we have taken a major step forward in understanding the nature of this life. Alma said of the impending drama facing the unrepentant wicked:

For our words will condemn us; we shall not be found spotless; and our thoughts will also condemn us; and in this awful state we shall not dare to look up to our God: and we would fain be glad if we could command the rocks and the mountains to fall upon us to hide us from his presence.

But this cannot be; we must come forth and stand before him in his glory, and in his power, and in his might, majesty, and dominion, and acknowledge to our everlasting shame that all his judgments are just; that he is just in all his works, and that he is merciful unto the children of men, and that he has all power to save every man that believeth on his name and bringeth forth fruit meet for repentance. (Alma 12:14, 15.)

By way of contrast, Enos wrote of how the righteous would stand before God and "see God's face with pleasure." (Enos 27.)

To nonbelievers, of course, the basic truths about reality are disregarded; some are, in fact, contemptuous of such ultimate realities. But these realities will not go away simply because we refuse to recognize them.

To appreciate even in part how incredibly important these absolute truths are, all one needs to do is to look at the personal and societal consequences of disbelieving in divine, unchanging standards, and, therefore, of a society which does not live by such standards.

How can a society set serious priorities if there are no basic standards to guide by? Are we to make our calculations using only the arithmetic of appetite?

A society not based upon key values like loving our neighbor will inevitably subsidize selfishness; it will also place a premium upon an apostate form of individualism at the expense of community. If we do not see ourselves as more than temporary, biological brothers, our behavior changes. When we repudiate our traditional relationships with God, it is so much easier to repudiate our relationships with man, to repudiate debt and relatives.

If self-interest were the final determinant, why should we be inconvenienced by the needs of others?

If there were no God and we were merely mortal transients, then what is wrong with governments pushing us around? *Indeed, what is really wrong about anything at all?* Remember Korihor's culture in which "whatsoever a man did was no crime"? (Alma 30:17.)

Once society loses its capacity to declare that some things are wrong *per se*, then it finds itself forever building temporary defenses, revising rationales, drawing new lines--but forever falling back and losing its nerve. A society which permits anything will eventually lose everything! Liberated lemmings who continue the march to the sea may proudly think what they like, but soon the watery grave will envelop them.

Take away a consciousness of eternity and see how differently time is spent.

Take away an acknowledgement of divine design in the structure of life and then watch the mindless scurrying to redesign human systems to make life pain-free and pleasure-filled.

Take away regard for the divinity in one's neighbor, and watch the drop in our regard for his property.

Take away basic moral standards and observe how quickly tolerance changes into permissiveness.

Take away the sacred sense of belonging to a family or community, and observe how quickly citizens cease to care for big cities.

Our awareness of "things as they really are" must bear in upon proximate things like lifestyle. Take, for instance, the truth given to us by the Savior which says to us all--quite simply and straightforwardly--"he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (Matt. 10:39.) Personal development through selfless service to others *for Christ's cause*--not just any cause--is a fundamental orientation to life; it sends us, as believers, in an entirely opposite course from the paths taken by those for whom self-fulfillment is basically self-indulgence.

Therefore, when you and I counsel or teach people that they must reach outward and be interested in others, as well as in themselves, we should be encouraged in such efforts by knowing that this approach is grounded in the absolute truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ! Such an approach is not just another form of transitory therapy.

We as Latter-day Saints, more than others, should be able to understand the terrible implications of the growing selfishness in the world and what it costs the individual as well as society.

Selflessness, however, creates in us attitudinal space and frees our time and talent for noticing the needs of others. It even permits us to develop a proper sense of humor. President Kimball, for instance, is so selfless and so unconcerned with his own needs that his quick mind sees mirth and incongruity in situations which a selfish person would not even see because of the latter's intense concern with himself. We see so much more when we look outward. G. K. Chesterton observed:

How much larger your life would be if your self could become smaller in it: if you could really look at other men with common curiosity and pleasure . . . You would begin to be interested in them, because they were not interested in you. You would break out of this tiny and tawdry theatre in which your own little plot is always being played, and you would find yourselves under a freer sky, in a street full of splendid strangers. (*Orthodoxy*)

Selflessness is closely tied to humility. It frees us and emancipates us in so many ways. For instance, in group situations the selfless person is not caught up in conversational ping-pong and point-making but is tilted toward genuine listening.

If we could but get it through our heads and our hearts that God loves us perfectly, then we would have ultimate security and recognition and could ride out the proximate snubs and the mortal slights. Mortal peck orders are so transitory anyway--like the place among peers derived from the numbered plastic cards which determine when we will be waited upon in a store. If the person with the Number 1 card in the store assumed he had everlasting preeminence over his peers even when he left that store, we would see him as vain and

foolish! Think for a moment back to some episode in your life such as in elementary school days when someone crowded in ahead of you or stole some recognition that belonged to you. My, how maturity can squeeze such things into insignificance.

The selfless person emerges as a relaxed, warm, open, secure individual who will go on contributing and serving with or without recognition. Indeed, the individual who seriously strives to keep the first and second great commandments will find the other commandments no great struggle.

Sydney Harris, in contrasting winners and losers, noted a certain generosity of spirit: "A winner tries to judge his own acts by their consequences, and other people's acts by their intentions; a loser gives himself all the best of it by judging his own acts by their intentions, and the acts of others by their consequences."

Selflessness makes room in our minds and hearts for appreciation of God, of life, of others, of nature. Selflessness makes it possible for us, using Alma's phrase, "to give place" in our lives, so that we can experiment with the goodness in applying the principles of the gospel.

Selflessness is the only form of yielding which is also gaining. It is the only surrender which is also a victory.

Because genuine selflessness is so atypical, it will be inevitably misunderstood by some. Selflessness then must be a tough virtue, or it will be abandoned because of the shame of the world.

Only when we understand "things as they really are" will we become convinced that "me" is not the center of the universes; the gospel is a gospel of "we".

In this celebration of selfishness sex has become the secular religion. The secular religion uses the word "love" but not in a way that has anything to do with the first and second commandments or the other eight. Selfishness shouts, "Forget your parents if they slow down your pleasure-taking!" "Covet another's marriage partner and take that person if you can!" "Use the Sabbath Day for pleasure--besides you have worked hard and you deserve a little relaxation!"

Selfishness is really self-destruction in slow motion; it is like taking a horse, lathered from a long ride, and letting him drink all the ice-cold water he wants--just because he wants to.

Selfishness replaces empathy with self-pity; it is like complaining of one's sore finger while calling on someone who is dying of leukemia.

Each spasm of selfishness narrows the universe that much more. Selfishness causes us to settle for so much less than

that which we are capable of as it relentlessly shrinks our supply of self-esteem. C. S. Lewis once wrote:

We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered to us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in the slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by an offer of a holiday at the sea . . . we are too easily pleased. (*A Mind Awake*)

Selfishness, by shutting down our awareness of others, makes us more and more alone. As we are thrown back upon ourselves, there is the terror which comes with this isolation. In this, the solitary confinement of the soul, sensations are desperately sought for in order to reassure one that he is still alive and that he is a distinguishable part of the universe.

The calisthenics of Christian service, however, are such that we not only increase our capacity but we feel better. It is like the sick Prophet Joseph Smith rising from his sickbed to go to bless others on a riverbank. He both healed and was healed.

Someone said that the only true slavery is service without love. True, but duty will often precede delight as we develop. As we practice our love, we increase our reach, finally touching those with whom we would not have previously bothered.

Deep down, for instance, inside the grumpy and grumbler who are encrusted with selfishness is bruised love trying to come out. Buried inside the hypocrite are redeeming qualities which need recognition and encouragement. But those who have become hardened, tight knots of self-concern have to be reached and helped by the selfless souls who fortunately have not allowed themselves to be preoccupied with themselves. Thus the disciple must be different in order to make a difference in himself and in the lives of others.

It is so vital that we let the light of the gospel shine through us. Jesus said of Himself in one of His marvelous prayers, speaking of his disciples, "Father, for their sakes do I sanctify myself." (John 17:19.)

Only when we understand the reality of who we are and why we are here will we sense both our possibilities and our duties. Disciples especially must see others not only for what they now are but for what they have the power to become.

When we take the first step in serving others without waiting for them to make the first move, we not only emancipate ourselves but others. It is all very much like a free prisoner first unlocking the cells of others.

For me, at least, the Latter-day Saint psychiatrist, psychologist, and counselor is to play (as we all must do in different ways) a contributing role in helping others to do that which Jesus said all of us should seek to do *first*.

In Matthew 6:33 we read, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be

added unto you.” In the inspired translation of the Bible, the Prophet Joseph Smith gave us some significant additions to that scripture. “WHEREFORE, SEEK NOT THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD: but seek ye first TO BUILD UP the kingdom of God, AND TO ESTABLISH HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matt. 6:38.) Notice that we are, brothers and sisters, to *seek* not the things of this world but to *build up* the kingdom of God and to *establish* his righteousness.

To do these things *first* is a challenge in a wayward world—even when we know what we do about the ultimate realities of “things as they really are and of things as they really will be.” Without the precious perspective of the gospel to follow, that taxing admonition of the Lord’s is exceedingly difficult.

The deep problems individuals have can only be solved by learning about “the deep things of God,” by confronting the reality of “things as they really are and things as they really will be.” Hard though this process may be, painful though it may be, it is the one true course for human happiness here and everlasting joy in the world to come. Whatever we do in our individual lives and through the influence we have on the lives of others must move us and others to come to terms with these ultimate realities. To move in another direction is folly and misery.

Knowing some of the truths about things as they really were helps us to understand the present better. I cannot, for instance, ever see mortal power grabs without thinking of the drama in our earlier experience when Lucifer sought ascendancy at the cost of our agency. Likewise I cannot see selfishness in myself or others without thinking of Satan who is truly swollen selfishness at the end of its journey.

Moreover, when we try to impose our misery on others, I think of what a prophet said of Lucifer, “for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Nephi 2:27) and “he sought also the misery of all mankind.” (2 Nephi 2:18.)

Because you believe in these ultimate things and apply them in appropriate ways to your efforts to help others, doing this will put you at variance with colleagues who have other

value systems and other priorities. Latter-day Saint professionals in a variety of fields will come to know what it means to bear “the shame of the world” and yet to despise it. We are given several scriptures concerning this irony of our interface with others, but one will suffice: “Wherefore, we would to God that we could persuade all men not to rebel against God, to provoke him to anger, but that all men would believe in Christ, and view his death, and suffer his cross and bear the shame of the world . . .” (Jacob 1:8.)

For us to endure, knowingly and deliberately, either the disapproval or even the contempt of others is a difficult thing indeed, but it is often necessary. In fact, it is imperative as a statement of what the Savior has told us about life. We simply cannot turn aside from these realities because of the peer pressures that may come in upon us.

Revelations are not accommodations; they are directions. We may disregard them but we cannot amend them. We may fail to follow them, but we cannot erase them.

We do what we do not only for our own spiritual preservation but for the sake of others who have lost their way. Others must know that there is but one alternative to anarchy and chaos. Not several alternatives, just one. As custodians of those concepts, as keepers of those truths, we must therefore remember, as George MacDonald wisely said, “A candle is not lighted for itself, neither is a man.” The illuminated individual who really believes that the Light of Christ “lighteth every man” will go on trying—long after other helping agents have surrendered to the darkness. His light may be a little one, but lights have a way of being seen, especially in the darkness.

Please deepen your personal scriptural scholarship, for in it will be truth, relevancy, renewal and reassurance. Remember that at the very center of the deepest doctrines are the pearls of greatest price! Remember that in the Inspired Translation of the Bible the Savior’s phrase, “the key of knowledge,” is defined as “the fullness of the scriptures.”

God bless you with the increasing light of the gospel, for it is by that light that you and I will see everything else—“things as they really are and things as they really will be”!

# **“Let All . . . Anger . . . Be Put Away From You . . .” or The Case Against Anger**

**Burton C. Kelly, Ph.D.\***

*(Presented at the annual convention of Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists [AMCAP], September 28, 1978, Salt Lake City, Utah.)*

\*Brother Kelly, outgoing president of AMCAP, is Professor of Guidance and Counseling and head of Program Evaluation for Student Life at BYU.

President Dallin Oaks of BYU, in our BYU pre-school conference, offered an analogy that I think has relevance to us. He spoke of the BYU faculty in terms of the three degrees of glory. He suggested that those of the celestial kingdom were in active opposition to the leadership of the Church and destructive of faith--and indicated that there were very few, if any, faculty members who fit that category. Those comparable to the terrestrial kingdom were described as having no opposition to the Church, having loving devotion and a good family, but were just "not valiant in the testimony of Jesus." His opinion was that most of the faculty were on the upper rim of the terrestrial level. Those comparable with the celestial level he described as using the insights of the gospel in an affirmative way. They live by the Spirit, but, he cautioned, not instead of being professional but in addition to being very professional. He went on to say that just teaching by the Spirit without preparation was not being better than the terrestrial level. We were challenged to "overcome by faith" and to have an added spiritual dimension.

I'm not going to suggest where we as AMCAP members are. I trust that we are at least striving for the celestial level; that is, using the gospel as our basic framework and still being conversant with the best professional insights; or as Elder Neal Maxwell put it, have our citizenship in the kingdom of God and our passport into the professional world rather than the other way around.

In discussing physical healing, Brigham Young expressed a related view: "If we are sick, and ask the Lord to heal us, and to do all for us that is necessary to be done, according to my understanding of the gospel of salvation, I might as well ask the Lord to cause my wheat and corn to grow, without my plowing the ground and casting in the seed. It appears consistent to me to apply every remedy that comes within the range of my knowledge, and to ask my Father in Heaven, in the name of Jesus Christ, to sanctify that application to the healing of my body." (*J of D.* 1966, Vol. 4, p. 24.)

Yes, we need to obtain learning by study and by faith, and this I have attempted to do in the preparation of these thoughts. I hope and trust the thoughts I will share with you will be meaningful to you and, furthermore, will be a blessing in the life of each of you and the lives of those with whom you interact. They have been a blessing to me and to

those with whom I have interacted. Further, I view the ideas I will present as being in harmony with the counsel and request of President Kimball. "... we must be willing to break with the educational establishment (not foolishly or cavalierly, but thoughtfully and for good reason) in order to find gospel ways to help mankind. Gospel methodology, concepts, and insights can help us to do what the world cannot do in its own frame of reference." (President Spencer W. Kimball, "2nd Century Address," Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, Oct. 10, 1975, p. 9.)

The late George Kelley (no, not a relative of mine) in a most intriguing article entitled, "Sin and Psychotherapy," in discussing the enterprise of determining what is good and what is evil, stated, "The psychologist who attempts to assist his fellowman should keep this truth central to his system of practice. The task is to assist the individual man in what is singularly the most important undertaking in his life, the fullest possible understanding of the nature of good and evil." The apostle Paul, in speaking to the Romans (Chapter 1:16), stated, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation unto everyone that believeth . . ." and I suggest the power by which we might ascertain truly the difference between good and evil and the most important dimensions of the helping relationship.

Most would agree that there are at least three basic steps in all established therapeutic relationships. The first is to determine what the problem is; the second, to determine the therapeutic goal; and the third, to determine and implement the therapeutic or behavioral change process to achieve the desired therapeutic goal. In each of these steps of therapy the gospel is basic, and especially in the determination of the therapeutic goal. A very superficial analysis immediately indicates that goals are based on values. While scientific findings may support given values, science really does not discover nor posit them. Thus, in goal selection, the gospel is critical.

I've been asked to speak on our theme from Ephesians 4:29, 31-32. I've chosen an emotional response cited in the theme and will focus my comments on a gospel-based goal for helping people cope with that response. To pique your curiosity a bit, this emotional response is probably the most frequent of emotional disturbances; it is a symptom of and/or a determinant of virtually all, if not all, diagnosed emotional



disorders. For some of them, for example passive-aggressive, it lies at the heart of the disorder. In depression, it is one of two major dynamics. If this particular emotional disturbance were to be eliminated, there would be few, if any, divorces, a virtual absence of family conflicts, as well as neighborhood, community, national, and international conflicts. Physical health would be enhanced--the incidence of hypertension, certain types of headaches and backaches, etc., would likely be reduced significantly. (Novaco, Raymond W. *Anger Control*, Lexington, Mass. D. C. Heath & Co., 1975, pp. 60-64, and McMillen, S. E. *None of These Diseases*, Spire Books, 1968, pp. 69-72.)

Some of the confusion that exists regarding this emotional response is portrayed in the following clipping from the Provo Daily Herald dated the 15th of January, 1978. It's entitled, "Mass Slayings Create Fear, Questions in Illinois City."

ROCKFORD, Ill. (UPI) The phone rings constantly at the Winnebago County coroner's office.

It has been ringing since Saturday, when the mutilated bodies of six children were found in their West Side home. Their father, Simon Peter Nelson, 46, was charged with murder.

\* \* \*

Ruth Anderson, chief deputy coroner, said children have been asking teachers, parents, and even the coroner's office how they can be sure their parents won't kill them in a fit of rage.

And parents are wondering just how far they could be driven by anger, she said.

So, Mrs. Anderson is setting up a seminar to deal with the community's questions and fears.

She said parents and children have bombarded schools and the coroner's office with telephone calls, asking how they can be sure that what happened to the Nelson children won't happen again--in their families.

Dr. P. John Seward, the coroner, said he has received numerous calls at his private medical practice from people asking how to cope with the fear triggered by the Nelson slayings.

"Children are asking 'How do I know my daddy won't get that mad,' and parents are asking themselves, 'Could I do something like that if I got really angry?' " Mrs. Anderson said.

"It's really a soul-searching experience. People are frightened--frightened most probably by the knowledge of what anger can bring a person to do. They're asking for help in dealing with this, and I hope we can provide it."

(Please Note:)

The answer, she said, is the one-night seminar, entitled "Helping You and Your Children Cope with Major Tragedies." The seminar will feature comments from a panel of experts, headed by Seward.

"What we want to do is help people deal with death, with tragedy, but not be brought down by it," Mrs. Anderson said. "Dr. Seward feels very strongly that if we have to deal with death every day, we should do something positive for the living--something that will help them deal with themselves and with tragedy."

"People have legitimate questions about death and life and we're going to try to deal with those questions and those feelings. This is the first seminar of its kind anywhere."

This illustration is instructive. I think the developers of the seminar completely missed the point. This incident illustrates how easily people may focus on tangential issues only to miss central issues.

Yes, the emotional response I am referring to is anger. Specifically, I'll be dealing with the case against anger. First, let's look at the anatomy of an emotional response. For an emotional response to occur, there must first be an awareness of some event, some thought, memory, some perceived stimulus. In addition to the receipt of certain sensations, there must also be an interpretation made of those sensations, and it is really out of these interpretations that the emotional response arises. Generally speaking, there are three types of evaluation: relatively positive, relatively neutral, or relatively negative. The emotional response that occurs is accordingly relatively positive, neutral, or negative. That the emotional response arises out of the interpretation rather than from the stimulus per se is well evidenced by the experiences of each of us; i.e., we have all experienced many situations where different people have received the same stimulus sensations and yet have responded very differently emotionally. For example, a couple of our missionaries in Germany were standing on the porch talking to the woman of the house when her husband came up. When he found out they were Mormon missionaries and were attempting to interest his wife in the gospel, he became very angry. After inviting the elders off the porch, he slugged the one elder in the jaw and knocked him down. The elder calmly got up, brushed off his pants, picked up his hat, put it on, and said "Thank you," and turned and walked away with his companion. The man was so impressed by the elder's response that, after recovering from his amazement and astonishment, he ran after the elders, invited them to return and had them teach him the Gospel. (Yes, he joined the Church.) Obviously this is a bit different response.

"As he [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he." (Prov. 23:7) or as Ellis, Maultsby, basic stoic philosophy, and others have well stated, it is not experiences and events that determine our feelings and response but what we think about those events. Since each of us is responsible for our own thoughts, we then are responsible for our emotional responses. Brigham Young colorfully stated (*J of D*, 1966, Vol. 2, pp. 134-135).

Suppose, when you arrive at home from this meeting, you find your neighbors have killed your horses and destroyed

your property, how would you feel? You would feel like taking instant vengeance on the perpetrator of the deed. But it would be wrong for you to encourage the least particle of feeling to arise in your bosom like anger, or revenge, or like taking judgment into your own hands, until the Lord Almighty shall say, "Judgment is yours, and for you to execute."

Thought originated with our individual being, which is organized to be as independent as any being in eternity. When you go home, and learn that your neighbors have committed some depredation on your property, or in your family, and anger arises in your bosom, then consider, and know that it arises in yourselves.

On the other hand, suppose some person has blessed you when you return home, brought you a bag of flour, for instance, in a time of great scarcity, and some butter, milk, and vegetables, thought would at once spring up to bless the giver. The origin of thought and reflection is in ourselves. We think, because we are, and are made susceptible of external influences, and to feel our relationship to external objects. Thus thoughts of revenge, and thoughts of blessing will arise in the same mind, as it is influenced by external circumstances.

If you are injured by a neighbor, the first thought of the unregenerate heart is for God to damn the person who has hurt you. But if a person blesses you, the first thought that arises in you is, God bless that man; and this is the disposition to which we ought to cleave. But dismiss any spirit that would prompt you to injure any creature that the Lord has made, give it no place, encourage it not, and it will not stay where you are.

Most people usually do not assume responsibility for their anger. Instead, what we typically hear is, "You made me angry," "They made me upset," etc. I trust it is evident that these types of statements are not true. No one else can "make" us angry. We have to make ourselves angry. What others say and do is, yes, a part of the equation, but without our contribution to the equation, anger cannot arise nor exist. This can be a very threatening conception of anger, and yet it is also very freeing, for as long as we do determine our own emotional responses, we are free to change and to control them. If other people or events were, in fact, responsible for our emotional responses, then we would not have the freedom nor ability to change them—unless we could control other people and events, which is much more challenging and usually impossible. Thus, *principle 1* in the case against anger is, *we are ultimately responsible for our own anger.*

The substance of my next points may be even more threatening or challenging. I trust that you will not make yourselves angry over them.

What types of thoughts create our interpersonal anger? Please note that the remainder of my comments are limited to interpersonal, psychogenically determined anger.

1 In order to get angry at a person, one must have first judged that individual. There are two typical meanings of the term "to judge." One is to discern the nature of our experiences, and the other is to condemn. All of us, hopefully, are continually discerning, but not condemning. In Matthew

7:1-2 the Savior says, "Judge not that ye be not judged." In the Inspired Version, the same verse is rendered "Judge not unrighteously that you be not judged, but judge righteous judgment." I suggest that discerning between the rightness and wrongness, the nature, etc., of a given act and discerning under the inspiration of the Spirit are appropriate, or righteous judgments. Condemnation is the unrighteous judgment referred to. In the act of discerning we do not get angry. It's only when we judge to condemn another that we get angry, when we make the judgment that he/she is bad because of what was said or done. We have to have sinned, condemned another, to make ourselves angry.

Secondly, anger is a selfish response. We have three types of "shoulds" in our lives. There is the scientific "should," the past tense of shall, which does not get us into trouble in terms of anger; that is, if I drop this pencil, it should fall because I've done everything necessary to make it do so. Or, if we have judged and condemned an individual, we should be angry at that person because we've done what's necessary in order to be angry. Another "should" that typically does not get us into trouble with our fellow human beings, although it may, is the "shoulds" of eternal truths. We believe that we should be kind to one another, considerate of each other, courteous, open and receptive to truth, etc. These "shoulds" refer to laws and principles that we think people should typically follow because it is best for them. These "shoulds" usually don't lead to anger. It's the third kind of "shoulds" that gets us into difficulty. These are the "shoulds" wherein we think another person should or should not do something because we did or don't want them to, or, more associated with anger, is our demand that they gratify our wishes and desires. You should and ought to do such and such because I want/demand that you do. President Kimball stated in one of his Conference addresses last April that there were three major things we needed to do in order to truly become Zion, and one of them was to overcome our selfishness.

Third, a major function of anger is to control others. Some people have learned this art very well. They get what they want by becoming loud and angry. The recipients of the anger tend to do what the angry individual wants in order to placate. Thus, a major function of anger is to attempt to take away the freedom of another person.

In summary, then, I am suggesting for *principle number 2* that *interpersonal anger is a result of sin*; that is, judging in the sense of condemning another person, selfishly demanding that another gratify our desires, and attempting through inappropriate means to control another's behavior.

Having concluded that interpersonal anger can result only after having committed sin, is there anything in the nature of anger and its personal consequences that is also sinful? Yes, when sin is defined as anything that retards the growth or progress of an individual. For purposes of this analysis, I'll assume that the anger is suppressed and not outwardly expressed in a destructive manner. Note, however, that anger

will inevitably be expressed some way; that is, it may be expressed openly and outwardly in either a destructive, neutral, or constructive manner, or may be covertly expressed in terms of passive/aggressive responses such as tardiness, not keeping commitments, etc., or be entirely suppressed and manifest itself only in psychosomatic problems. As mentioned, I'll assume that the anger is suppressed. The act of getting angry at another leads one to focus one's attention on that other person in a negative, critical way. The focusing of one's attention on another individual deprives one of that time, that energy, and that attention to devote to constructive, progressive thoughts or actions, and, hence, retards one's growth and progress. When we become obsessed and controlled with these negative thoughts of another, that person has become our god, that is, the center of our attention and devotion. He has conquered us, has for the period of our anger gained control over us. The focus of bitterness prohibits a focus of love. Further, we do become like the thoughts we harbor.

Anger is also considered to be physically destructive--to the angry person. The exact results of anger are not really well-known. The following, however, are accepted. There is an excessive secretion of acid in the stomach, an engorgement and inflaming of the blood vessels of the stomach, and increased stomach motility (Wolf & Wolf, 1947). Accordingly, suppressed anger and rage have often been cited as a major cause of ulcers. Also, it is known that anger elevates both the systolic and diastolic blood pressure (Hokanson, J.D., Burgess, M., and Cohen, M.F., 1963, Affects of Displaced Aggression on Systolic Blood Pressure, *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. 67, pp. 214-218; and Hokanson, J.E. and Shelter, S., 1961, The Effect of Overt Aggression on Physiological Arousal Level, *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. 63, pp. 446-448), and it has been, hence, hypothesized that anger is a significant determinant in hypertension. At present the missing link is how temporary elevations of blood pressure become persistent elevations. (Novaco, *op. cit.*, pp. 60.) Some headaches are also associated with anger. The term, "He gives me a pain in the neck," is appropriately transformed to "He gives me a pain in the head."

A couple of weeks ago while I was waiting with my daughter in the doctor's office, I noted a pamphlet entitled, "A Doctor Discusses Care of the Back." Having a long waiting period, I decided to skim through it. Knowing this address was coming up, I was most intrigued by the following statement therein: "If I were to postulate one general rule when it comes to back trouble--and there would be exceptions of course--the rule would be this: *Angry people get back trouble--unless they have a constructive way of expressing their anger.*" (Neimark, Paul G. in consultation with Milton Glickstein, M.D. *A Doctor Discusses Care of the Back*, Chicago: Budlong Press Co., 1975, pp. 95-96.)

Thus, in consideration of the retardation of progress and the destructiveness to one's health, I submit *principle number 3* that *anger* is not only a result of sin, but in terms of

*personal consequences* is also a sin in itself. Numerous scriptures support this concept, a few of which I will cite later.

*Principle number 4, the interpersonal consequences of anger* are often, as we are all well aware, *sin* in the form of conflicts, contention, injuring the self-esteem, and denial of full dignity and respect for another, for example. There are, of course, ways to express anger neutrally and even constructively--an example of constructively being where one is led to confront another and to rationally and constructively discuss a solution to a problem. An improved relationship may well result. For a neutral illustration, I am reminded of the professedly true story of an aged individual who was noted for his spriteness and his vigor. Upon being asked as to what he attributed his vigor and vitality, he responded, "When my wife and I were first married, we agreed that if I were to get angry, she would go in the other room until I had calmed down so we could discuss things rationally and meaningfully. If she were to get angry, I agreed that I would go outside until she calmed down. This outdoor living has really been health promoting."

Now you may well be thinking, "Are you saying that we shouldn't ever get angry, using 'should' in the sense of a general principle?" Yes, I am saying that virtually all, if not all, interpersonal anger is destructive and as our scriptural theme states, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice." (Eph. 4:31) I cite additional scriptural and prophetic support. Matt. 5:21-22 states, "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment...." Ah, it seems like we've got a loophole; as long as we have a cause, then we are not in danger of the judgment. However, as we read those same verses from 3rd Nephi, we find, "But I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of his judgment." (3rd Nephi 12:22) According to E. Cecil McGavin (*Cumora's Gold Bible*, 2nd Ed. Salt Lake City: Sun Litho Co., 1948, pp. 63-64) "None of the modern translations contain the words [without a cause] since they're absent from the oldest and most genuine manuscripts. The conservative translators of the revised version were loyal enough to ancient sources to omit these doubtful words. Authorities insist that they contradict the teachings of Jesus and were likely added by some sensitive person who thought the Master would surely make allowances where one had a good cause for anger." Many scriptures decry anger. To cite a few--"Be . . . slow to wrath for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." (James 1:19-20) "Wrath is cruel and anger is outrageous." (Prov. 27:3-4) "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself anywise to do evil." (Psalms 37:8) ". . . anger resteth in the bosom of fools." (Ecc. 7:9) In a positive vein, from the Doctrine and Covenants, 38:27, "I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine." Also, note the message of the angels to the shepherds regarding the birth of the Savior (Luke 2:13-14), "Peace, good will toward men," a fundamental message of the gospel and purpose of the mission of the Savior.

From many statements by the brethren, I cite: "Anger that leads a man mildly to condemn his brother is crime." (President David O. McKay, *Pathways to Happiness* by Lewellen R. McKay. Bookcraft, Inc., Salt Lake City, Utah, pp. 321) From President Wilford Woodruff, "The moment a man or woman becomes angry, they show a great weakness, and so it is with any of us when we do anything wrong." (*J of D.* 1966, Vol. 4, pp. 98) From Brigham Young, "Do not be angry. I will permit you to be as angry as I am. Do not get so angry that you cannot pray; do not allow yourself to become so angry that you cannot feed an enemy--even your worst enemy, if an opportunity should present itself." (*J of D.* 1966, Vol. 5, pp. 228) "Never suffer anger to arise in your bosom; for, if you do, you may be overcome by evil." (*Ibid.*, Vol. 6, pp. 290) "If you see anybody angry tell him never to be angry again." (*Ibid.*, Vol. 10, pp. 295) "Never encourage malice or hatred in your heart; that does not belong to a saint. I can say in truth, that with all the abuse I have ever met, driven from my home, robbed of my substance, I do not know that a spirit of malice has ever rested in my heart." (*Ibid.*, Vol. 10, pp. 197) In speaking personally about his life up to 23 years of age, he said, "I do not know that I had ever committed any crime, except it were in giving way to anger, and that I had not done more than two or three times." From Amasa M. Lyman, "Let rising anger be suppressed; let the place where it had its incipient being become its grave. Never let the mouth utter the word that should not be spoken." (*Ibid.*, Vol. 10, pp. 87) And from Elder Boyd K. Packer, "But now, to both of you, as you enter the marriage covenant, never a cross word. It is neither necessary nor desirable. There are many who teach that it is normal and expected for domestic difficulties and bickering and strife to be a part of that marriage relationship. That is false doctrine. It's neither necessary nor desirable. And I know it is possible to live together in love with never the first cross word ever passing between you." (Eternal Marriage, BYU Devotional Address, 14 April 1970.) That anger is inevitable and thus okay is a philosophy of the world, not of the gospel, and, hence, from a gospel framework, *principle number 5, the goal in therapy is not just constructive release of anger but the elimination of anger.*

Some of you may be thinking, "Well, how can it be that we are not supposed to get angry and it is a sin for us when God Himself gets angry?" There are repeated references, as probably you are all aware, in the scriptures to God's wrath, God's anger, etc. Would God command us not to get angry and yet be a God of anger Himself? I submit to you that God does not get angry, that it is contrary to the nature of God, who is a God of love, to get angry. All right, how does one then interpret the scriptures in this regard? From Mark 3:5, after the Savior healed the man with the withered hand on the sabbath day, the people sought to accuse him. "And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts, he said unto the man, stretch forth thine hand." Note that it says, "When he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts." There are a couple of critical phrases in that statement. First of all, the Savior was grieved because of

the hardness of their hearts. He was concerned about them, caring, compassionate. His professed anger did not arise, as does ours, out of a judgmental condemning of others, selfishness to get His own ends met, nor of the desire to control people and deny them their freedom. In the first part of the statement, "He looked about on them with anger," that statement is, of course, an inference. Anger as an inner feeling of hostility, resentment, wrath, ire, etc., was not present and, I believe, never is present with God. I believe God's actions are interpreted at times as arising out of anger because he applies consequences, including punishment, for violation of His laws. As we examine the purpose of His application of consequences and punishments, they are entirely to bless His children, to help them to change their behavior and obtain greater happiness. In this sense, God is not a God of punishment but only a God of blessing. He gives that to His children which they inwardly most desire and/or that which they most need to help them improve their behavior. Parents, when functioning appropriately, also apply consequences to their children's behavior to help them learn the truth. There are numberless scriptures stating that the chastisement from the Lord and the associated suffering that occurs are for the benefit of His children and arise out of compassion. For example, in Moses 7:37, in speaking to Enoch of the misery that would befall the wicked, the Lord says, "... wherefore should not the heavens weep, seeing these shall suffer?" From Acts 3:26, God sent His son, Jesus, "to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." In Hebrews 5:8-9 we find that Christ himself became perfect through suffering, and from Hebrews 12:28, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." In other words, even God's punishments are manifestations of love--hardly a sign of human anger.

Another point; we read from the Doctrine and Covenants 1:24, "Behold, I am God and have spoken it; these commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding." In D&C 19:6-7, the Lord indicates that He has spoken of His punishment as eternal punishment and endless punishment, not that there shall be no end to the torment but "wherefore it is more express than other scriptures that it might work upon the hearts of the children of men altogether for my name's glory." In other words, the word anger in the scriptures as applied to the Lord, in my conviction, is so applied because we understand that language and for the statements to have a more significant, positive impact upon us.

I used to think that the term "righteous indignation" as applied to the Savior, such as when he cast the money changers out of the temple, was merely a euphemism. I no longer believe that. His application of punishment and consequences is righteous and a manifestation of love rather than "our" type of anger.

Some of you may be thinking, "Well, it says in the Doctrine & Covenants, Section 121:43, that we are to reprove betimes with sharpness." I suggest that sharpness in

this instance means pointedly, in a very direct, confronting way, in a manner that will not be misunderstood nor misinterpreted. "... then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved lest he esteem thee to be his enemy." I suggest that the only way we can really show that increase in love, unless it be some time afterwards, is to have not been angry in the first place, but to truly have been moved upon by the Holy Ghost. For example, Elder Orson Hyde, speaking of the prophet Joseph Smith after he had severely chastised the brethren while on his journey from Kirtland to Missouri, says, "Did he turn to be their enemy because he had spoken hard things against them? No! His heart was melted with sympathy--his bosom glowed with love, compassion, and kindness. . . Every act of his, during that severe trial, gave additional assurances to the camp that, with all their faults, he loved them still." (*J of D*, 1966, Vol. 7, pp. 110)

Well, then, how do I keep from getting angry? There are some relatively sound approaches taught in the profession such as rational behavior therapy, elimination of self-defeating behavior, and an experimental treatment of anger control by Raymond Novaco, (*Anger Control*, Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath & Co., 1975)--which to my knowledge is the most conclusive and best experimental treatment of the subject. Parenthetically, of the three major steps in therapeutic relationships cited at the beginning (problems, goals, process), my experience thus far indicates that it is in the area of therapeutic or behavior change process that the profession has the most to offer. However, I'm committed to the fact, *principle number 6*, that *the gospel has the answer to eliminating anger*. In a general sense, the entirety of the gospel is addressed to this goal. Some of the selective principles, as I see them, are:

1. *Believe and commit*. The first is to really believe that we are expected to get to the point where we do not get angry and that such is a possible goal, or in the words of Nephi, "I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them." (1 Nephi 3:7.)

2. *Knowledge of true principles*. As in the first step of repentance, there must be an awareness or recognition not only of the anger but of the dynamics of anger. There must be a knowledge of true principles, "The truth shall make you free." (John 8:32) We must be aware that it is we ourselves who make us angry. We must recognize that our anger arises out of not what others say or do but our condemnation of them for what they say or do, our shoulds and selfish demands on their behavior, our desire to control their behavior. From Brigham Young, "Much instruction has to be given to enable us to overcome our passions, and to govern and control our feelings and disposition." (*J of D*, 1966, Vol. 3, pp. 52) We must modify our perceptual templates--through knowledge.

3. *We are stewards*. Suppose all of us not only knew but always really believed that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," (Psalms 24:1), that everything we have, all

of our possessions including our body, is a gift of God and that we are stewards over our body and our possessions; that is, at this point we do not own them but are responsible for their care and keeping. Destruction or injury to, or theft of our possessions would be seen in a different light. If we recognized that they were in fact God's with ours the responsibility to look after them the best we could and His responsibility as the owner to assist us, we would be able to view such maltreatment differently.

4. *Trials, afflictions for growth*. We need to really believe that this world is a testing place for us, a place to experience life in its various ramifications with its vicissitudes and trials that we might grow and develop and perfect ourselves. As stated in the scriptures, Romans 5:3-5, "... we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope. . . ." From the D&C 90:24, "Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together for your good, if ye walk uprightly and remember the covenant wherewith you have covenanted one with another." Further, D&C 58:2-4, "... ye cannot behold with your natural eyes, for the present time, the design of your God concerning those things which shall come hereafter. and the glory which shall follow after much tribulation. For after much tribulation cometh the blessings." Again, from Paul (Romans 8:28), "All things work together for good to those who love god." Or suppose we were to recall that Christ became the captain of our salvation and perfect through suffering (Heb. 2:10, Heb. 5:8-9). In the words of two of our modern-day prophets: from John Taylor, "What if we have to suffer affliction! We came here for that purpose: we came in order that we might be purified; and this is intended to give us a knowledge of God, of our weakness and strength, of our corruptions, . . . to give us a knowledge of eternal life, that we may be enabled to overcome all evil and be exalted to thrones of power and glory." From Brigham Young, "Every vicissitude we pass through is necessary for experience and example, and for preparation to enjoy that reward which is for the faithful. . . . There is not a single condition of life that is entirely unnecessary; there is not one hour's experience but what is beneficial to all those who make it their study, and aim to improve upon the experience they gain." If we were to, yes, really believe and ponder these thoughts, then we would be able to and would thank God for even the irritations, difficulties, and provocations which come into our lives, and in a state of thankfulness could, of course, not be angry. We would take our irritations as stimuli for self-analysis, for needed growth, for possible derived benefit. Our ultimate objective in a provocative experience would be growth, not vengeance--which is the Lord's.

5. *The beam in our eyes*. Recognizing that anger arises out of our own selves, we would examine our own behavior to see to what degree we had contributed to the professedly inappropriate behavior of the other person(s). With the focus on how we could improve our behavior or remediate a negative influence of our own (or first casting the beam out of our own eye), (Matt. 7:3-5) we, of course, would not be focusing on the faults and failings of another.

6. *Forgive.* Suppose we are truly and purposely slighted. The counsel of the gospel is to truly forgive. "... ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin." (D&C 64:9) From our theme, for example, note that after the giving of the commandment, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. . . ." the key to doing such is given. "And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you." (Eph. 4:31-32) Suppose we would say like the Savior (Luke 23:34) "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Or, like Stephen (Acts 7:60) as he was being stoned to death, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Or as Paul, (II Timothy 4:16) even though all men had forsaken him, "I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge." Yes, if our hearts really were imbued with the gospel spirit of forgiveness, it would be difficult to get angry in the first place and impossible to retain anger.

7. *Help the offender.* Our focus needs to be on helping the needy and specifically a true or professed offender of ourselves: From Paul to the Romans (Romans 15:1-3), "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves," or from Paul's teachings to the Galatians (Gal. 6:1-2), "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." If we were to ask ourselves, "What can I do differently?" or "What could I have done differently that would have helped the other individual to respond differently?" it would be difficult for us to be angry. We only help others to offend less when we in fact help them to learn correct principles. By getting angry at another person, we not only do not teach correct principles but, in fact, incorrect principles, and at the same time model inappropriate and undesirable behavior. Think of this in relation to our responses to family members.

8. *Self-discipline.* Self-discipline is another needed key principle from the gospel. In the words of two of our prophets: Brigham Young, "How easy we get out of patience! We get a little hasty, and do a little wrong, because we do not train ourselves--do not conquer ourselves, and subject ourselves to the law of Christ." From Elder Packer, "I've had to evict some thoughts a hundred times before they would stay out. I have never been successful until I have put something edifying in their place." (Cf. The Parable of the Swept House, Matt. 12:43-45 and Luke 11:24-26.)

9. *Identity--a child of God.* We are aware that high self-esteem is positively related to a lower incidence of anger. A conception of and pondering of oneself as a child of God, as a person of infinite worth, as one who is always loved by our Heavenly Father and our Savior is most productive of this needed self-esteem.

10. *True charity.* An obvious key to not getting angry is genuine love as spoken of by Paul (I Cor. 13:4-5, 7), "Charity [or the pure love of Christ, Moroni 7:47] suffereth long, and is kind; . . . doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; . . . beareth all things . . ." or from the Doctrine & Covenants, 88:125, "The bond of charity . . . is the bond of peace and perfectness." But how do we love everyone with whom we interact, and more particularly those whom we find difficult to love? Again, the Savior in giving the commandment also gives the way to fulfill the commandment; that is, (Matt. 5:40-44), "And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." And following the statement, "Love your enemies," in the same verse he gives the key, "Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you . . ." Peter gives similar counsel, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing." (I Peter 3:8-9)

11. *Living with the Spirit.* We need the Spirit of the Lord, the companionship and influence of the Holy Ghost. From John Taylor, "What will enable you, brethren and sisters, to govern yourselves? The Spirit of God dwelling in you,--you must have the light of revelation, or else you cannot do it. If you get the gift of the Holy Ghost and walk in the light of the countenance of the Lord, you can govern yourselves and families, that is, if you retain it by your good works." From Heber C. Kimball, "And how can you keep the celestial law without the Holy Ghost? You cannot . . . 'How long will it be before the celestial law will be put into force?' Never, until you put it into force and execute it on yourselves."

12. *A Perfect Model Needed--The Savior.* And finally each of us needs a model that we can look to with complete and unquestionable faith. That model is the Savior. If we think upon Him, think upon His responses to provocative situations, think upon His compassion, His tenderness, His always evidenced caring, and if He becomes the focus of our pondering and of our thoughts, we will eventually become as He is. We need to remember Him in all things as we covenant each Sunday in partaking of the sacrament. If we are to represent the Savior, we need to attain to His character. (III Ne. 27:27) I love the scripture, Matt. 11:28-30. Note the keys to lightened burdens and rest. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." In order for our burdens to be light and to enjoy rest, we must take His yoke upon us and truly and deeply learn of Him.

I firmly believe that if we follow these scriptural and gospel guides regarding anger, we will not need to worry



about controlling it because we will eventually come to the point where we are living the celestial law and do not have any anger to control.

You may be wondering with my awareness of these points and having explicated these principles, do I still get angry? Unfortunately, yes, but not as often, not as intensely, nor for as long. When I stop and consider these principles, my anger fades away.

Until we achieve that goal of no anger, does the gospel contain explicit guides to the constructive expression of anger? Yes, it does. Time does not allow discussing them, but since one of them comes from the 4th chapter of Ephesians just preceding our theme, (verse 26) I'll cite it: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath . . ." Translation: deal with the expression of anger as it arises rather than allowing it to fester.

[Further, I am not unmindful of other relevant factors in dealing with anger such as starting where a person is, of the heightened possibility of increasing guilt levels when elevating standards, of the need to help people, including ourselves, to admit and face anger rather than to deny and repress it, etc. Time is too short for the elements chosen and does not permit even a partially adequate treatment of these other issues.]

Are there not any positive functions of anger? With qualifications, yes. Anger does tend to mobilize our energy and increase the amplitude of our responses, and perhaps in some situations may be self-protective. Unfortunately, the responses made in anger tend to be more disorganized and non-functional. It may help us to take a sometimes needed corrective action with a person/situation that otherwise we would undesirably pass by. We may be led to confront a person where otherwise we wouldn't, and if properly done, may lead to helping the individual and improved relationships with that person. Anger helps eliminate vulnerability by preempting anxiety and externalizing conflict. (Good or bad?) *Principle number 7: with an understanding of the dynamics and functions of anger, probably the greatest positive value it has is similar to that of pain.* As you know, pain is often a blessing in that it signals a problem that needs correcting. Likewise, my anger is a signal to me that I need to correct some of my thoughts, those which induced it, and a reminder of weaknesses to overcome.

As I conclude, I realize that the goal of elimination of anger is a tremendous challenge--that some may not think the goal is even an appropriate one. I suggest that we ponder some thoughts from Isaiah (55:8-9), "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." To use the three degrees of glory analogy once again, I suggest to you that the philosophy of "let it all hang out," say what you think and what you feel, when, where, and to the degree that you experience it is the law of the

celestial kingdom. For a very informative and interesting review of the evidence regarding the effects of ventilating violent emotions or vicariously gratifying them (it is negative), I refer you to Leonard Berkowitz's article in the July 1973 issue of *Psychology Today*. For a similarly intriguing study of the relationship of venting anger to physical violence in families, I refer you to Straus, Murray A. "Leveling, Civility, and Violence in the Family," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Feb., 1974, pp. 13-19. I suggest that just learning to constructively release anger is the law of the terrestrial kingdom, but that the law of the celestial kingdom is to eliminate anger entirely from our lives. While we are in the process of developing to that point, the counsel of Paul (Romans 14:22) may be helpful: "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."

So I leave each of us, including myself, the challenge of living what I believe to be the celestial law pertaining to anger. In so doing we will not only improve markedly our own interpersonal relationships, increase our personal joy and happiness, but also enjoy better health, more energy, more vitality. Further, as we do this we will become really prepared to help those whom we serve eliminate the destructiveness of anger from their lives. The more experience I have in therapy and counseling, the more convinced I am that until we have really met a challenge ourselves, we have little success in helping others to meet it.

Also, I believe that with this commandment, as well as with most, if not all, others, we are in the same position as Adam (Moses 5:6) when he responded to the angel's inquiry as to why he was offering sacrifices unto the Lord, "I know not, save the Lord commanded me." Meaning, we will not really know the blessings nor fully understand the purpose of living this commandment until we have lived it. The blessings and full understanding and meaning come *after* having lived the commandment, not before.

A concluding analogy, from a portrait photographer. "When I plan to make only a small portrait, I put the negative over a low-intensity light, but the larger I plan to make the portrait, the brighter I make the light so that I'm able to see all the imperfections and clear them before the final print is made." (Gothard, Bill. "Forgiveness," Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts Manual, Oak Brook, Ill., 1974, pp. 8.) The larger we want our service and contribution to become, the brighter must be God's light to detect the flaws in our life and enable us to correct them.

May the Lord bless each of us to live this celestial law and reap the promised blessings, I ask in His name. Amen.

# Mental Illness and Family Uproar

Louis G. Moench, M.D.\*

(A workshop presentation given at the AMCAP Convention, September 29, 1978.)

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In the early days of medicine, the physician's motto was, "I treat what you have." The modern physician's motto is, "You have what I treat."

Enchantment with a certain systems theory of family disharmony may create a Procrustean Bed of treating every marital and family stress with a single technique, and the more specialized a counselor becomes the more the tendency to, "You have what I treat."

While new insights into the dynamics of family interaction have been revealing and gratifyingly helpful in family counseling, sometimes the "patient" or "client" is really a patient or client, and not merely the "identified patient onto whose head the disturbed family places all their pathology". Sometimes we add insight to injury.

Three cases of family uproar are presented. One is an example of a problem best handled by traditional family counseling; one is an indication we may be on the verge of exciting discoveries; one illustrates the hopeful application of psychiatric medicine.

In Greek mythology, a handsome youth spent his days admiring his image in a pool. One day he fell in and drowned. From the spot grew a beautiful flower, the Narcissus.

A case history of a narcissistic character disorder is presented as an example of family uproar. She nobly sacrificed all her time, effort and talent for the family, but woe be unto them if anyone tried to break away from the play the mother writes, produces, directs, and if anyone should even hint that mother's noble efforts were in the least selfish, the scene could be transferred to the stage of the Metropolitan Opera.

Working with the family was the treatment plan of choice, the "patient" being outraged and indignant at the implication there was anything wrong with her, unless it was that her motives were too noble; the problem was just the despicable, ungrateful family. The husband was encouraged to start by reading *Kiss Me, Kate* and graduating to *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Life in the family of the hysteric is seldom boring. Intolerance of boredom is a characteristic of the hysteric, with dramatic self-presentation, exhibitionism, seductiveness, and hyperemotionality being some of the diagnostic characteristics. She (there are few male hysterics) may be charming, gracious, warm, ingratiating, coquettish, as long as she is the center of the stage, but there is crying, temper tantrums, guilt induction, inability to assume mundane responsibility

or chores. The courtship is often ecstatic, but running a household and calling the plumber for a clogged toilet is just too much to ask of anyone so sensitive and artistic. Emotions take precedence over rationality. She cherishes her emotionality, as a source of pleasure and pride, regardless of how painful or deplorable to others.

Through a facade of sweet innocence and virtue, she collects scalps, her conquests filling an endless need to demonstrate her desirability. She is often a destructive person, going through the ward and stake creating divorce, dis-fellowshipping, excommunication. Bishops, physicians, therapists are natural targets. "Let's not talk about me, let's talk about you. What is it you like about me?"

It behooves the spiritual advisor or the therapist to be aware of the fragility of the hysteric's domestic tranquility. The hysteric's biggest threat is to the counselor's own domestic tranquility, and he should beware of getting drawn into an emotional vortex which spins him to disaster.

While the hysteric has been considered a "moral" problem, or a "willpower" problem, recent studies indicate that hysterical females marry men like their fathers and brothers, who are apt to be sociopaths, and sociopathic males are apt to marry women like their mothers and their sisters, who are apt to be hysterics. So whatever the kids get they get in spades. And the incidence of the hyperactive child syndrome is roughly four times as common in families with hysterical and/or sociopathic parents.

This suggests a genetic factor, and a molecular approach might be anticipated. Some of the endless (and often frustrating and fruitless) professional hours spent in patient counseling in these conditions may be less necessary sometime in the future. It is already clear that some adult sociopaths are simply grown-up MBD (Minimal Brain Dysfunction) or hyperactive children, and small amounts of selected neurotransmitter substances may make profound changes in their family and social adjustment.

If mental illness is a myth, as Tom Szasz claims, the Bipolar Affective disorder (Manic-Depressive Disease before the Age of Euphemism) is a myth with a high genetic component, with almost the same inheritance pattern as red-green color blindness. It starts relatively early in life, and rarely does the patient go two years without an episode of depression or mania. It can be extremely disrupting to the patient and family. If the episodes of hypomania are in the Horatio Alger, Junior Chamber of Commerce mode, they

(Continued on page 20, column 2)



# The Marriage Relationship and Personal Crisis Adjustment

Clark Swain, Ph.D.\*

(Presented at the annual convention of Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists [AMCAP], September 28, 1978, Salt Lake City, Utah.)

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The information in this presentation is intended to support the following concepts:

1. A potential crisis event may or may not result in an actual crisis for an individual or couple.
2. One's judgment or definition of the event contributes more to his emotional state than the event itself does.
3. Coping resources have a profound influence on the severity of a crisis that a couple or an individual experiences.
4. Though a physical handicap or chronic illness can bring stress to a marriage, it can also bring certain benefits.
5. Personal happiness contributes directly to marital happiness and vice-versa.

Our schools are far more likely to give human relations training for success in business, education, or politics than they are to give human relations training for successful marriage and family relationships. Even parent-child interaction classes are much more common than preparation for marriage classes. Yet, marriage can be the most complicated and challenging of all human relationships. This is true because of the following facts about marriage: (1) It is a permanent relationship, at least ideologically, for a majority of couples. (2) It goes on 24 hours a day which means anything that a mate does night or day can influence the life of the spouse for good or bad. (3) Marriage brings the pleasures and problems of sexual intimacy. (4) It is a financial partnership and (5) for most couples, marriage is also a parental partnership.

The marriage relationship is the hub of all other relationships in a family. This is true whether the spouses are in excellent health or ill health and it is true regardless of having or not having a physical handicap in the marriage. Just as an individual can have good or bad physical or mental health, likewise a marital relationship can be healthy or unhealthy. And whether there is a handicap or state of chronic illness in a marriage or not, it is important for marital happiness that a couple keep their marriage in good health. This is true because the marriage relationship is a model for all of the other relationships in the family. In my initial marriage counseling interviews with a number of couples, I have learned from them that they have three dimensions of conflict in their families: Marital, parent-child, and child-child. Even when there is conflict in all the family relationships, I usually start the counseling by focusing on the marriage. After helping the husband and wife resolve their conflicts through a number of counseling sessions, I then turn to the other family relation-

ships. Often a couple tells me that there is now no need for them to bring their children in. They say now that they have overcome the conflicts in their marriage, they no longer are having conflict with their children, and the children are no longer arguing and fighting with each other.

In 1956, I was a missionary in Eastern Canada. On a sunny afternoon while attending a football game with other missionaries my eyesight began to go blurry. Within hours I could not see well enough to distinguish one person from another 15 to 20 feet away. Six weeks later I took a plane home to Utah to be hospitalized and eventually was released from my mission after 14 months of service.

I was blind except for shadow vision. This means I see like a swimmer sees while opening his eyes under water. At this point I was not emotionally upset because I thought my blindness was only temporary.

My fiancé, Eleanor, and I, in our third year of courtship, continued our wedding plans. To my knowledge, she never seriously considered not marrying me because of my physical handicap and we were married in the Salt Lake Temple 10 months after the onset of my blindness.

I was not unhappy during the early months of my blindness, but later I became unhappy about it. This change came not because the blindness became more severe but because my attitude changed. Upon learning from medical specialists that I would never regain my eyesight, I began telling myself how awful, how unfortunate, and how tragic this was. This "silent sentence self talk" brought on an emotional state of depression. My experience supports the principle that it is not the event as much as our attitude toward the event that determines our emotional state.

I fell into "the justice trap" as explained in the book *Your Erroneous Zones*, by Dr. Wayne Dyer. I told myself how unfair it was that blindness came to me at the age of 21. After 22 years of blindness, I have concluded that I was right--it is unfair. However, God has not promised us that life on earth would be entirely fair. I grew up in a loving family. I live in a free country and have had the opportunity to get a college education, yet millions of people in the world are denied these benefits. This, too, is unfair in my favor. Unfairness is part of the human condition.

Epictetus, a Greek slave who lived some 100 years after Christ, taught that it is not the event itself that emotionally disturbs an individual, but one's judgment or way of thinking about a negative event, that upsets him. Psychologist Albert

Ellis also teaches that it is not A, the event, that results in C, one's state of emotional disturbance, but it is B that causes one's disturbance. B represents one's beliefs about the event. His beliefs or attitude about the event result in his consequential emotional state.

Reuben Hill, a distinguished LDS Family Relations professor, has written of the importance of coping resources in helping a family or an individual adjust to a crisis. In essence, he explained the ABC's of crisis adjustment as follows: A, the event, interacting with B, the crisis coping resources that a family or individual has, interacting with C, the attitude toward the event or how a family or individual defines the event, equals the severity of the crisis.<sup>1</sup>

Consider the following as resources that would likely help an individual cope with a crisis: Having good health, being well educated, being vocationally trained, having a good income, having close friends, having a devoted fiancé or marriage partner, and being happily married.

Throughout the twenty-one years of our marriage, my wife's life-style has essentially been the same as it probably would have been had she married a man having no physical handicap. I have always made an effort to be as independent as possible so that my wife can lead a "normal" life. I make an ongoing effort to be fair, which means if Eleanor has spent part of the evening working with me on students' papers, I work with her in the kitchen or at some other household task. I have always wanted Eleanor to be glad that she married me even though I have a physical handicap. On a daily basis, I help with household chores and child care. (Our five children range in age from 5 to 18 years.) I participate in these activities because I enjoy them and because I do not want to be a burden. I know that nearly every day I will need my wife's assistance as a chauffeur, reader, or professional collaborator.

I would not recommend that anyone go out and look for a marriage partner with a handicap. The greater assistance that a handicapped individual will need from a mate can put a marriage under stress from time to time. But there are some benefits that the non-handicapped spouse can derive from this kind of marriage. There is the increased sharing of activities that can enhance companionship. A handicapped husband probably spends more time at home than most other husbands. For example, while other men are away from home attending a local ballgame, I am usually home listening to the same game while I work in the kitchen. While other men are playing golf, I am probably home playing with our children.

Some knowledge of the psychodynamics of crisis adjustment can help family life professionals and family members function more effectively as people helpers. In adjusting to a crisis, I believe most of us go through a roller coaster pattern as referred to by Reuben Hill.<sup>2</sup> The recovery and rising again of a "human roller coaster" after a crisis event is usually gradual and painful. For most of us, our comeback is characterized by triumphant hills and discouraging valleys. Gradually and painfully we regain our equilibrium. We usually do not achieve gain without some pain. Eventually we can find ourselves again at the top of "our mountain". We have adjusted to our loss and it no longer hurts. We have psychologically permitted our previous selves to die and our new selves to emerge.

## REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup>"Generic Features of Families Under Stress," in *Crisis Intervention: Selected Readings*, ed. Howard J. Parad (New York: Family Service Association of America, 1965), p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>*Op. cit.*

# Family Therapy - An Eclectic Approach

Carl M. Rowley, MSW/CSW\*

(A workshop presentation given at the AMCAP Convention, September 29, 1978.)

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It is a choice opportunity to be asked to conduct a workshop for the Annual AMCAP Convention. I feel it especially exciting to be able to tie in one's professional ideas and values with our religious orientation in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I believe there is no conflict with truth, whether found in professional values or found in the Gospel - truth is truth. In my role as a social worker I have found a great many social work principles which have expression in Gospel principles yet are manifest in different terminology or words. Social work is based upon Christian ethics and is deeply entrenched with basic concern for the rights of the individual and the advancement and protection of society. An example of a basic principle in social work and a similar principle in the Gospel would be the principle of self-determination in social work, with the same principle being expressed in the Gospel under the wording "free agency". There are many other examples which could be discussed but are not within the scope of this presentation.

There is no question in my mind that man was created in the image of God, and as such, has God-like qualities and attributes which can be appealed to and utilized towards his own progress. I believe that every person has the right to self-advancement and realization and that every person has innate worth as an individual. Certainly the Gospel is replete with such attitudes and a variety of scriptures could be quoted, such as: "Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God."<sup>1</sup> "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me;"<sup>2</sup> the story of the Prodigal Son;<sup>3</sup> the Good Samaritan;<sup>4</sup> the adulteress being told to go and sin no more,<sup>5</sup> etc. The helping profession's primary goal should be social restoration and assisting individuals and families to develop more effective methods of solving problems and developing Christlike attributes.

I have found family therapy to be one of the most challenging and exciting methods of therapy that I have been involved in over the years. It is extremely relevant since we can actually observe (right in front of our eyes) the enactment of family problem-solving techniques or the absence of such. Family problems are shared rather than being heaped upon one individual as the focus of change. It is generally observed that everyone in the family is "hurting" if one or more members are exhibiting problems.

It is interesting to trace the history of various efforts to assist families. Approximately 15-20 years ago the general approach was "the child guidance" approach. Generally the child was seen by a separate therapist and either one or both parents were seen separately. In recent years there has been

more and more emphasis upon conjoint family therapy in which the primary family is seen by one or more therapists with little children also being included. There has been a good deal written about the pros and cons of including younger children in therapy. Generally I like to have younger children present for at least one or two initial interviews. Little children tend to be extremely honest, show their feelings visibly and can be of great assistance in helping one observe child rearing practices exhibited by the parents. For example: it is very easy to observe the over-protective, controlling parent who will not let the child exhibit any freedom, self-expression, etc. On the other extreme, one observes the extremely permissive, *laissez faire* type parent who exercises no discipline or control over their child. Obviously such extremes in child rearing practices find expression in the dysfunctional behavior of their children.

In recent years there has been more and more emphasis upon helping groups of families as a treatment modality. During my presentation I would like to talk about an approach which we are taking at the Youth Program at the Utah State Hospital in which groups of families are seen, in what we call the "Family Forum". Also at the end of the presentation I would like to discuss with two family constellations their feelings and observations during this type of approach and the opinion as to the effectiveness of this type of approach.

The reason I entitled my presentation "Family Therapy - An Eclectic Approach" is because I have tended to borrow information and treatment modalities from a variety of sources. Perhaps the first would be the writings of Virginia Satir<sup>6</sup> and others associated with the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto, California. Certainly the serious family therapist should be very well acquainted with her book "Conjoint Family Therapy". Another interesting author is George Bach and his colleague, Peter Wyden, who wrote the book "The Intimate Enemy".<sup>7</sup> Dr. Bach, like many authors, has perhaps over-extended his theory but there is some interesting material about helping "families fight more productively". He, in the course of this therapy, gives his subjects "fight training". Essentially what he is talking about is helping families develop more effective methods of solving problems and resolving family arguments and differences. Another author who I have very much enjoyed reading is William Mainard. Mr. Mainard has written "Operate Group Psychotherapy in a Total Institutional Setting",<sup>8</sup> in which he describes three basic principles which are useful also in family therapy: 1) Total and complete honesty, 2) Responsibility for one's actions and behavior; 3) Responsibility for the actions and behavior of others in your immediate environ-

ment. Dr. William Glasser's book entitled "*Reality Therapy*"<sup>9</sup> is very serviceable in this field in helping individuals realize their responsibility for their own dysfunctional behavior. The serious family therapist should also read Thomas Gordon's book "*Parent Effectiveness Training*"<sup>10</sup>.

During the presentation I will use material obtained from Dinkmeyer and McKay, which is called the STEP Program (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting).<sup>11</sup> We have used this approach at the Youth Center at the Utah State Hospital and have found it beneficial in assisting families to develop better communication techniques and child rearing practices. The "*Parents Handbook*" in the STEP program has proven to be a very effective guide. It is written to the lay public, has excellent and attractive illustrations, and is very down-to-earth with helpful exercises for the family to perform. Chapter 8 of the *Handbook* is devoted to "The Family Meeting" and sounds amazingly like what the Church attempts to accomplish through the Family Home Evening program.

An additional reference is the series of Family Home Evening Manuals which we have received from the Church over the last several years. There are many family exercises and lessons which can be incorporated in family therapy sessions and have proven extremely beneficial. An additional book which I have found helpful is Maxwell Maltz' "*Psycho-Cybernetics*".<sup>12</sup> This book certainly exemplifies the scriptural reference "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he."<sup>13</sup>

I would now like to briefly discuss my basic tenets and philosophy in relation to family therapy. The first consideration I take in working with a family is "establishing a love base". It is my feeling that we must initially determine if basic love and concern for one another exists in the family or whether it does not. Generally most families were founded on love and such love has existed or does now exist even though it may be disguised and covered up by a great deal of hurt, anger, aggression, etc. If the "love base" cannot be established, I feel that it is useless to attempt family therapy at that point in time. There are a number of methods that can be utilized to attempt to establish or find the love base--for example, direct questioning about whether or not you do or have loved your mate, members of your family, etc. Such questions about how do you show love, how do you say it, etc., can be utilized. I make an early effort to establish "the language of love, acceptance, concern, etc." There should be a very definite effort made to look for assets and personal strengths and help the family recall pleasant experiences, happy memories, successful resolutions of problems, etc. I feel it is also very important to identify "anger" as "hurt" and help the family realize how much of the anger expressed was really misdirected and miscommunicated love. For example, a father may be quite angry at his daughter for coming home late but what he is really feeling, and not expressing well, is his concern for her safety and his love for her.

Communication theory is also very helpful in family therapy and much of the efforts to assist the family can be

directed towards helping them develop better communication skills. Research has demonstrated that a person cannot not communicate. We are told through the literature that upwards of 70% - 90% of all communication is through body language and non-verbal communication. There are a great many complications in the communication process when one analyzes the complexity of the matter. There are so many things to consider relative to the "sender" of a message, the actual "message" sent and the various methods of sending it, as well as problems of receiving the message or problems that the "receiver" may have. Much of family therapy is concerned with helping the family develop "crystal clear messages," helping the family make "perception checks" and to getting good "feedback" regarding the intent of the messages. The family therapist should be an expert in fostering feedback, helping the family attain proper perceptions of messages sent and generally being a skilled enabler of productive communication skills. Gordon's description in "*Parent Effectiveness Training*" of "I" and "You" messages is very helpful in developing more acceptable communication styles. Gordon's book also is helpful in helping parents, as well as children, develop "problem ownership".

Another concept which I have found helpful is the concept of "content - process". A story might be told to demonstrate this principle. When I was working as a psychiatric social worker in Fresno, California, my primary job was to provide follow-up services to patients released from state hospitals. On one particular occasion I visited the home of a woman who had been given the label of "schizophrenic reaction - paranoid type". When I knocked at the door, she just barely opened the door and was very reluctant to invite me in. Once I convinced her who I was I began discussing her hospitalization in Stockton State Hospital, whether she was taking her medication, how things were going with her husband, etc. This was the "content" of the interview and I was "getting nowhere fast". Out of frustration I looked around the room and noticed she had a tank of tropical fish. At that time I was very much interested in tropical fish and we began discussing the tropical fish and all the peculiarities of raising such creatures. This then became "the content" of the interview. We discussed at length our experiences in raising tropical fish and the frustrations and disappointments. In "the process" of doing so we developed fairly good initial relationship and enjoyed one another's company, experiences, etc. Afterwards I was able to get much of the information which I initially tried to obtain relative to her taking her medication, relationship with her husband, her adjustment since leaving the hospital, etc. Many family therapists, including Virginia Satir, feel that the "process" is much more important than the "content". In other words, during the course of the family therapy session, almost any topic or interview content could be discussed; what is most important is the feeling tones, relationship, and communication skills exercised.

An additional method, which I use in family therapy, has to do with "contracting" or helping the family members reach basic agreement which they will commit to following. There are very basic things, such as agreeing to attend family

therapy sessions, being totally honest, not talking for other persons during the course of the family therapy sessions, a commitment to "helping" rather than hurting, etc. I also like to give homework assignments and ask various family members to write down in various forms information about themselves, make commitments, describe feelings, goals, etc.

Virginia Satir and her group in Palo Alto developed what has been called "Structured Family Interview". I have found this a very useful tool as a starting point in family therapy. The interview has several parts, such as helping the family identify the main problem, helping them plan activities which generally are fun and enjoyable and helping the family see how they do or do not reach conclusions. The interview is fast moving and generally enjoyable to all family members. Such an approach is very helpful in inducting the family into family therapy and removes many of the initial resistances and fears. There is also a great deal of diagnostic material obtained. Often I have taped such interviews and have used the tape with the family to help them identify family problems and possible solutions.

As stated earlier I have also used some of George Bach's material relative to "fight training" and in Dr. Bach's material he talks about unfair fighting techniques, such as "head hunting," "rattling the bones," "character assaults," etc. Since many dysfunctional families have severe arguments and fights it is wise to help them analyze how the fight developed, how it got out of hand and how it could be handled differently in the future. Thus the whole concept of "fight training," which is just a cliché to help families learn how to disagree responsibly, is very useful.

The work of Thomas Gordon in his "*Parent Effectiveness Training*" is also very beneficial in helping families see problem ownership, developing "I - You" messages and in developing a whole system, which he calls "no lose" method of resolving differences and considering alternatives which would be acceptable to all of the parties involved. The "no lose" method could also be called "no win" method. No one in the family imposes their complete wishes or desires upon the others.

May I briefly discuss the Family Forum which was primarily developed by our psychologist at the Youth Center at the Utah State Hospital, Mr. Spence Wood. The Family Forum is composed of between four and six families who come to the hospital every other week for the Forum. The first 45-60 minutes of the session is designed for the parents. During the second portion of the Forum the parents are joined by their children who are patients at the Youth Center. The Family Forum is open-ended with families being added to the group and families leaving the group as their children recover and leave the hospital. The membership is also rather fluid in the sense that extended family members are able to come, such as aunts and uncles, grandparents, etc. Also siblings occasionally attend, although mostly it is composed of the parents and the hospitalized child. The need for a co-therapist is obvious because of the complexity

of the group and the opportunity to play various roles as the therapist. An effort is made to utilize the various principles and methods described earlier in this paper.

Originally I had a good many fears regarding the Family Forum, feeling that not enough individual attention would be given to individuals and/or families. I also feared that material or information shared would be too sensitive for a group to handle. Both of these fears have been alleviated as I have been involved in the Family Forum for a number of years. There tends to be a similarity of problems noted and even though an individual or a family may tend to take a very quiet or passive role, I have found that they are generally very much involved in the process. They frequently remark "that's just the way it's been in our family." There is also a great feeling of empathy and sharing of problems which help to remove many of the feelings of isolation and alienation.

I have found "the topic approach" and the "hot seat approach" helpful in the Family Forum. In the "topic approach," topics such as friends, curfew, use of drugs, school, etc., can be considered. It is virtually impossible for a person not to expose his basic orientation and attitude toward such topics and these reveal important points about himself. The "hot seat approach" allows the family to ask for the focus or the therapist may direct a more intensive discussion of the family or members of the family, during the course of the session.

Many interesting situations and dynamics have occurred in the Family Forum. I have seen parents get very close and involved with other youngsters apart from their own family. We have had dinners and social events outside or after the Family Forum. We have also had birthday parties, Christmas parties, etc. Families and their children share with one another the joys and sorrows of admission and discharge from the hospital and generally get very emotionally involved in a healthy way with the life and problems of other members of the group. I suppose that such phenomenon can and do occur in any intensive group therapy situation.

Both parents and youth can be and often are excellent therapists. With a number of families present, various personal experiences and life experiences from the participants' background can be very helpful in "golden therapy" moments. For example, on one occasion we were talking about early marriage. One of the mothers admitted that she was married when she was 15 years of age and proceeded to explain some of the problems associated with early marriage. On another occasion a youngster was very angry and tearful regarding going to a foster home. One of the parents present had been a foster parent and was able to share her experiences as a foster mother and helped relieve much of the anxiety the child was experiencing. Another mother shared the fact that she had been a foster child herself and was very empathetic with the ambivalence the youngster demonstrated.

The attendance of older or married siblings has also been very helpful and these young adults tend to bridge the gap

between the parents and children. Other parents can also be helpful in enhancing communication between immediate family members. We have a great deal of shifting of loyalties, a richness of opinions expressed around any given topic or issue, which creates good discussion and helps the members develop more tolerance for others' opinions. The families tend to get very close and very concerned about one another, as well as the various youngsters involved in the group.

In closing I would like to say that family therapy is extremely enjoyable, challenging and exciting. It offers a real life opportunity to observe families in action and to become part of the family constellation for a brief period of time to assist them in developing more effective methods of communicating. As stated earlier I feel that most people in families do, in fact, love one another and it is our challenge to help them rediscover that basic love and concern and to express it in palatable ways.

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- <sup>1</sup>Doctrine and Covenants 18:10
- <sup>2</sup>Matthew 25:40
- <sup>3</sup>Luke 15:11-32
- <sup>4</sup>Luke 10:30-35
- <sup>5</sup>John 8:3-11
- <sup>6</sup>Satir, Virginia. 1964. *Conjoint Family Therapy*. New York: Science and Behavior Books, Inc.
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## Mental Illness and Family Uproar

(Continued from page 14)

may seem highly desirable, but too often they become too bizarre, with grandiosity, flight of ideas, euphoria, hyperactivity, push of speech and plans, insomnia, and irritability if crossed. Insensitivity, limited empathy, overfamiliarity, arrogance, narcissism, publicity-seeking may all contribute to the abrasiveness. Satyriasis is common, and the hypomanic is attracted to the hysteric, whose emotional excesses are tiresome to most other men.

The depressed episodes are often so disruptive that the patient is unable to function, and the family may become a rudderless ship at sea in a raging storm.

In the genetic history, there are both uni- and bipolar ancestors. Often, suicides are common, and alcoholism is a genetic marker.

Psychological approaches to the manic or the depressed episodes may be harmful because they foster the belief that adequate interpretation might ward off psychotic breaks, when it may actually precipitate breaks. The genetic component is so well established that the psychological defenses and the infantile traumas are best left unexplored as diversionary distractions.

Some persons with wide mood swings are being linked to the biological problem of the bipolar disease, rather than being dismissed as character disorders. The Emotionally Unstable Character Disorder has been an enormous challenge to the family and to counselors.

Some persons whose diurnal metabolic cycles do not correspond to the clock or the calendar are running out of phase with themselves and with the rest of the world, and they, too, can be extremely disruptive in the family and community. The counselor often finds himself running after the patient through the dark, back staircases of the mind.

The above three conditions usually respond very well to Lithium, which is just a mineral and not a drug in the usual sense, and may save enormous amounts of counseling time and avert untold family misery and uproar.

# Strengthening Father-Child Bonds

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(A workshop presentation given at the AMCAP Convention, September 29, 1978, Salt Lake City, Utah.)

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## PREFACE

The content of this paper, Strengthening Father-Child Bonds, is serving as a vehicle to illustrate a dilemma facing anyone trying to teach relationship skills to others. The basic dilemma is like the "be spontaneous" paradox referred to, among others, by Watzlawick, Weakland and Fisch (1974). By requesting spontaneity, it can no longer be offered. Demanding something of someone makes it impossible for them to freely give it. So also, when training therapists, educators, students, or clients in new behaviors, we may, by our very role as trainers, create conditions which *reduce* the likelihood that the new behavior will be learned. (How many of you counselors can remember being in training and being observed with a client by your professors and peers? You were supposed to show unconditional positive regard and use techniques "a" and "c" with the client. Effective counseling--or relating--probably requires total involvement with the other person. How could you do that if you were psychologically concerned about the observers? How effective were you with a client who did not have your full attention? I can remember feeling *very* ineffective but didn't figure out until later that one reason was the fact that I was "playing" to the observers and being such a "good counselor" for them that I was, in fact, a terrible counselor for the client.)

Anytime a person is trying to learn a new behavioral skill, he or she feels as awkward as when first learning to ride a bicycle. The novice bicycle rider may be paying attention to an assigned technique ("Chuck, remember to turn the front wheel in the direction the bike is falling"). But to turn the bike into the fall seems, cognitively, daring, impossible, or foolish. Then, at some point, the bike rider gets the "feel" of the bike and its balance, and suddenly is *doing it!* Hooray! How did it "happen?" Usually, the now confident biker cannot say exactly. He or she just "caught on" to it. Rarely does the trainee say "Well, I just turned the wheel in the direction the bike started to lean." However, after the fact, the bike rider *sees* the logic of the suggested technique.

So also, in training therapists and educators, it may be more appropriate to assign a task ("See how well you can understand what this client is feeling") than it is to assign a technique ("Use reflective listening with this client"). The latter assignment creates a non-spontaneous way of relating to the client, while the assigning of a task leaves the counselor free to examine how to achieve understanding.

Therefore, a recommendation of this author, *in advance* of discussing *techniques* of strengthening father-child bonds, is that when training fathers, counselors consider assigning tasks to the fathers in terms of intended outcomes, rather than

assigning specific techniques themselves. Techniques serve as illustrations of processes, not as rules of behavior. (For a theoretical base for this recommendation, see Polanyi, 1962.)

A second prefatory note: This paper encourages therapists to *educate* fathers. Educating means teaching skills and attitudes to someone to expand their behavioral repertoire. Therapy refers to getting someone to the point where they can learn from their experience. Therapy makes possible seeing the impact of their behavior on others. Some fathers may need therapy before they can benefit from education. The task of this paper will be to discuss educational processes.

## INTRODUCTION

Sufficient empirical support now exists for the notion that certain parental behaviors do contribute to the positive development of children (See Baumrind, 1971; Rollins and Thomas, 1975, for example). This means that marriage and family therapists, when confronted with individuals or families with defective or disruptive interaction patterns, can recommend and demonstrate alternative ways of behaving for their clients which are validated by literature in the field.

In addition, it is proposed that when unable to work with entire families, therapists could serve as educators of their clients as to what behaviors they could add to their parental repertoire. Educating fathers for more productive involvement with their children can be a prime task of family therapists, as well as family life educators.

The purpose of this paper/demonstration is to identify significant dimensions of positive father behavior and to advocate some specific means of training fathers in obtaining positive bonding with their children. Although these dimensions of behavior apply to mothers as well, it is maintained that the style of expressing these behaviors would differ somewhat by sex. Consequently, the focus of this paper is on how these behaviors can be integrated into the behavior of males in the father role.

At least four dimensions of father behavior can be noted as beneficial for their children. These dimensions are nurturance, induction, agency, and control.

## NURTURING PROCESSES

Nurturance refers to the expression of care and concern. It refers to communicating warmth, support, and affection toward others. A nurturing parent strengthens the impact of his or her modeling on the child and produces children more



likely to exhibit a concern for others or to offer help to others (Yarrow, Scott & Waxler, 1973; Staub, 1971).

Specific nurturing behaviors could include giving emotional support verbally by sharing feelings (Father says: "I'm glad you're my daughter; I've enjoyed this time with you; I've missed you; I feel bad that I don't understand"). Physical contact, including the arm around the shoulder, the soft punch on the forearm, the hug, are means of communicating warmth.

Disclosing past experiences can be a particularly rewarding nurturant activity. However, if fathers wish their disclosure of past experience to be nurturing and bonding, they need to disclose the *processes of discovery* through which they have passed, and not just the outcomes. For example, young Danny is complaining about having to walk a mile to school. The stereotyped father's response to this usually includes "disclosure" of how father tramped three miles to school in waist-deep snow when he was a boy. That kind of disclosure does little to bond son to father or to encourage son to meet the "journey to school" task any differently. The type of disclosure father is employing is disclosure of outcomes.

If father were to report the processes of discovery which were involved in his snow-tramping, he would, of necessity, be disclosing his *emotions* about walking to school, as well as *how* he dealt with the task. A sample paragraph of this kind of disclosure is offered:

Danny: Boy it gets cold walking that mile to school. I hate it.

Dad: I can remember hating the cold, too. I didn't like it at all. I remember putting two pairs of socks on inside my boots to keep my feet warm and then getting to school and having my feet start to itch in the warm schoolroom.

In disclosing discovery processes and the emotions associated with them, parents are teaching the how of life as well as something about its reality. When fathers report only that which shows them as supermen, they teach an illusion as if it were reality. When fathers acknowledge emotions with which their children can identify, father-child bonding is more probable.

The author acknowledges that, traditionally, men have been less nurturant and less disclosing than women (Kenkel, 1963; Jourard, 1971). That fact is one of the basic reasons for advocating the training of fathers in nurturant and disclosing behaviors. In addition, some evidence exists for the fact that when men do exhibit nurturant (expressive) behaviors, it is most likely to occur in a family setting (Leik, 1963), and is positive for the development of children.

## INDUCTIVE PROCESSES

The second father behavior advocated here is induction, or the use of reasoning. Reasoning with a child means pointing out the consequences of behavior to the child. Induction

can include pointing out the "right" or "wrong" aspects of behavior as related to others.

One way to use induction is to specify, point by point, what will happen if the child pursues a certain course of action. For example, a father could point out that if Julie spends all of her allowance on candy, then there would be no chance to attend a movie later that month.

A second way to use reasoning is to ask the child to rehearse the future. Father could ask a series of questions to guide the rehearsal: "Julie, if you spend all your allowance now, what does that mean about your activity the rest of the month?"

A third way to use inductive processes is to help the child learn from others' experience by rehearsing what choices others have made in order to obtain the consequences observable. Whether it is a neighbor, a TV character, or a newspaper story describing some incident, it can lead to a parent-child inductive discussion. For example, a news item describes a fire in a neighboring city which destroyed a home of a family away on vacation. Father can begin dinner-time discussion with "What if our smoke alarm went off in the middle of the night--what should you do?" As children answer these questions, they are learning to reason further--and gain some knowledge of what to do and not to do in such situations.

Reasoning is often ignored by fathers who are ignorant of its impact on children, or who find that their goal is not the transmission of values, but "obedience." Fathers who use commands and demands repeatedly in their child-rearing ("Hurry up! Sit down! Stand up! Do it! Do it this way!") may produce obedient, but emotionally distant, children. As the children grow older in stature, they may not grow older in wisdom, because of a lack of practice in reasoning. Frequent use of induction produces a greater likelihood that children will begin to assess the consequences of their actions before they act. Such sons and daughters, when older, will have the skills, as teenagers, to reason with others rather than to resort to rebellion. Using inductive processes early decreases the probability of negative parent-child interaction patterns as the children get older.

## AGENCY PROCESSES

In discussing the third dimension of father behavior--allowing children the exercise of agency--a working definition of agency is presented. Agency is the opportunity/responsibility to make choices. Normally, the more knowledge you have of the consequences attached to certain activities, the wiser you can be in your choice-making. Some decisions will always have to be made not knowing what tomorrow will bring, but others need not be made so blindly. A father who uses induction with his children is teaching them to look for consequences. A nurturing, inductive father is increasing the probability that his children will pay heed to his example in reasoning and reflecting on consequences. *And*, a nurturing, inductive father who allows



children the exercise of their agency, is teaching them to learn from their own (and others') experience about the relationship of personal choice to behavioral outcome.

A father starts with small things (out of small things come that which is great). A boy is given choices regarding when certain of his home responsibilities are to be carried out. A girl is offered instructions on how to study in whichever school subject she chooses. Choices are given within parental boundaries at first, so that children are only given choices parents are willing to allow them to choose. As a child gets older, those boundaries expand even to include some alternatives which, if pursued, might not be wise—except as a learning tool. Ultimately, of course, individuals choose according to self-set boundaries. Their experience with various sets of consequences helps them choose courses of action which are, hopefully, self-developing rather than self-defeating. A father's giving his children opportunities to exercise agency in small matters helps prepare them for the exercise of agency in the larger matters facing them in their tomorrows. To foster the best use of agency as a learning tool, fathers should offer knowledge of consequences to their children. Explaining in advance to children the potential good and bad news of their choices makes it unnecessary for "I told you so's" after decisions are made.

Secondly, fathers can point out alternatives to children. Many poor decisions are made by children who face a poverty of options. Offering alternatives makes possible comparisons and the weighing of different sets of consequences. Finally, father needs to get out of the way while the child is making the decision and then be supportive of whatever the decision is. (If father cannot be supportive of the child's choice, then the alternatives discussed must not have been within parental boundaries).

#### SETTING LIMITS/CONTROL PROCESSES

The fourth process, control, is used in the literature as a major heading under which comes sub-headings like love-withdrawal, induction, or love demands (see Hoffman, 1963). Induction has already been given major status in this paper, and is not seen so much as a method of control, as a method of instruction and training. In this paper, control refers to limit-setting by parents and the methods they use to enforce the boundaries established. When control is exercised, whether it be by one's personal authority, physical size and strength, negative, non-nurturing commands and demands, or other extrinsic punishments, the ideal teaching or training situation has been abandoned. The use of these control techniques can be seen as attempts to "steady the ship" or reassess family directions, values, and goals. However, parent-child power struggles can be rooted in situations which neither party fully understands nor knows how to resolve. Moreover, a patterned power struggle, repeated regularly, is a self-defeating pattern. It will not steady the ship, but capsize it. When control is exercised by the stronger family members against other family members, there is a breakdown of cooperation in the family. Whether fathers find themselves in such situations is of less concern than whether they know how to extricate themselves from them.

The exercise of control measures becomes necessary when the boundaries are over-stepped. But even then, a hoped-for outcome is the cooperative resolution of the conflict. This author claims that most control/forced obedience issues can be resolved through the re-institution of nurturance, induction, and agency processes as *applied* to the issue at hand. The parent who uses these processes in the midst of conflict keeps the door open to resolve the conflict.

Typically, some conflict spews from disagreements between the parent and child. If the parent first tries to seek agreement (and fails), then some kind of control technique is used by either side in order to "win." An alternative approach is to ignore the disagreement itself. Put on the shelf the goal of achieving agreement and seek instead to *understand* the perspective of the other. When understanding is placed first, there is a possibility that agreement can be achieved or that disagreement need not be disruptive to the relationship.

A father and a daughter disagree over some issue, major or minor. Dad offers to hear his daughter's rehearsal of how unjust dad's "use of the car" policy is. After two and a half hours of the father seeking to understand his daughter, he still disagrees with her. Dad's perception of the time is that it was wasted. Daughter's perception differs: "I didn't think Daddy cared about me enough to listen to my complaints for a whole evening."

They still disagreed, but was the time spent wasted? Too many people seek agreement when understanding ought to be the goal. It is possible to accept disagreements when understanding has been achieved. It is unlikely that agreement will be appreciated if understanding has been ignored.

Even a role-reversal, where the daughter might use her father's arguments and where he plays the role of his daughter, might make limit-setting more acceptable to both. Setting limits is less likely to produce hostility when understanding is obtained, even though the parent and child might yet disagree.

#### SUMMARY

Four major behaviors in which fathers could be trained have been defined and illustrated. Nurturance, induction, agency, and setting limits were discussed, and it was recommended that fathers be assigned tasks with their children rather than be assigned techniques. The processes by which a father might be trained in the use of these behaviors is deemed one of the most valuable educative functions performed by a therapist.

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# Family Systems Therapy

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(Presented at the annual convention of Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists [AMCAP], September 28, 1978, Salt Lake City, Utah.)

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## INTRODUCTION

The explanatory concepts of general systems theory have not been fully organized into predictive relationships. As such, they do not collectively qualify as a predictive theory. Yet, systems concepts combined with communication theory can be used to explain the inner workings of organizations like families and provide a basis for a plan of therapeutic intervention. Because the concepts show relationship among elements or parts, and between sub-systems and the whole system, they describe human interaction at a fairly general level. Other more specific theories of human behavior can, as a consequence, be used quite appropriately in connection with general systems theory. Someone attempting to use systems concepts need not neglect the use of any other theoretical approach in doing so. The purpose of this paper is to outline some explanatory concepts derived from general systems as applied to the family, then to describe a possible therapeutic approach based on the concepts.

## EXPLANATORY CONCEPTS

There are many concepts that are specific to general systems. Those included in this paper are those most appropriate to understanding the nature of family and intervening in family problems. This is not an attempt to be exhaustive or exclusive but to highlight those that shed some additional light on the complex inner-workings of family life.

## RELATIVISTIC VS. SUBSTANTIVE MEANING

The meaning of behavioral events are determined by the relativity of one event to another or others. This is contrasted to traditional or substantive theories of behavior that nominalize (label) responses as they fit or do not fit into some conceptual framework. Traditional personality and counseling theories suggest that descriptions of human personality can be organized into several frameworks. When attempting to understand the actions of a human being or a group of human beings, the actions are compared to one's knowledge

of these theories. From this approach is derived a diagnostic or what is referred to as the medical model of understanding of human behavior. This implies that it is first important to assess an individual's behavior and then compare it to the therapist's knowledge of personality theory. In contrast, general systems suggests that human behavior be understood in terms of its relationship to other bits of human behavior. Some of these may be: (a) the sequence or chaining of behavioral events, (b) the frequency of communicational events relative to other possible or probable events, (c) the ratio of one's responses to that of another or others in the same social situation, (d) the duration of responses as compared to others, (e) the calibration or timing of behavior relative to other behavior.

Now this difference in what behavior means, suggests that one seeking to apply general systems to the family will use a different conceptual method of organizing data than traditional forms. One would collect varieties of information and make comparisons of one individual's behavior with that of another or others. For example, consider the family of father, mother and son. The presenting problem was the low esteem of a male child in late adolescence. This low esteem was manifest by chronic failure at tasks attempted and self-deprecating remarks. When gathering information about the family, the father, mother and son were interviewed separately. The father appeared to have a good grasp of language and communication except it was noted during his interview that he frequently qualified many of his comments. For example, if asked, "Are you a success in business?" his response was, "I guess so, but I'm sure there's more I could do." The mother was a fairly quiet woman, quite reserved, exceptionally optimistic and positive. The male child had several accomplishments to his credit including many that would have given him social recognition and a sense of accomplishment. Instead of using these as a source of es-

teem, he referred to himself in a very depreciating manner. When the family was brought together into a family conference, it was possible to see that whenever the son spoke in a depreciating way, the mother would interrupt him and inject a positive or optimistic note and the father would qualify his negative statements in a positive direction. It could be observed that the son could achieve the praise or positive attention from his parents by making self-depreciating remarks. This illustration shows that the son's behavior would be understandable relative to the communication behavior of his father and mother in this sequence.

## VARIATION AND RELATIONSHIPS

Organizations differ in terms of the amount or variation of communicational events within the system. The quantity of communicational events tends to produce three types of relationships. These were first written about by Gregory Bateson in *Steps To An Ecology of Mind* (1972). He wrote that interactional behavior develops into classes because there is an exchange of signals that identify certain behavior. He suggested these signals are of a higher logical type than the messages they classify. While pointing out that the framing and labeling of messages is quite complex, he nevertheless identified three classes or categories of interaction based on the quantity of exchanges between people. He suggested that complementary interaction exists in the case where opposite behavior is exchanged in low quantities. Conversely, symmetrical interaction exists when exchanged in low quantities of behavior. Symmetrical interaction is defined as the exchange of identical behavior. A third type of interaction is labeled parallel. This occurs when people exchange greater variations of different - not positive - behavior than is the case for either symmetrical or complementary. The three types of interaction have been further elaborated (Watzlawick et al 1967) and used as the framework for viewing diadic relationships. From their writings, the following characteristics have emerged:

1. Symmetrical and complementary interactional classes are dimensional suggesting that lower quantities are more healthy and greater proportions may be more pathological.
2. Symmetrical and complementary interaction escalate: symmetrical to increased instability and complementary to increased rigidity.
3. The three categories are non-overlapping, indicating that while the same behavior of an individual may fit into any one of three, the response and the initial behavior become an interactional exchange that is either symmetrical, complementary, or parallel. An interaction cannot fit into two categories simultaneously. These three classes or categories of communication are measurable and can be used to identify differences between families prone to conflict and stress and those families that are more effective at coping and integrating positive family functions. Furthermore, most conflictual communicational pat-

terns in marriage and family will be marked by a high frequency of symmetrical and/or complementary behavior. Consequently, a therapist will likely be engaged in developing interventions that are designed to modify complementary and symmetrical interaction toward an increased variation resulting in parallel communication.

The concept of modifying the variation of communication within events, relates to the system concept of open and closeness. While true that some families may have so much variation that poor integration and unity result, it is also often the case that some families have such a restricted flow of communicational events that positive improvement will result only when family members are taught to increase their variety of communicational exchanges among family members.

## HIERARCHY AND LOGICAL TYPE

A concept taken more from communication theory than from general systems theory relates to the hierarchical nature of human communication. Simply stated, this means that any communicational event simultaneously occurs on several levels. These levels are of ascending logical order (e.g. the second level subsumes the first, and the third subsumes the first and second and is therefore of a hierarchical type). The higher levels communicate about the lower but the lower do not communicate about the higher. This concept may be applied in several ways:

- (a) Any verbal communicational exchange has a topic, analogue (non-verbal) and context. The topic or linguistic meaning is the lowest of the logical orders. The analogue or non-verbal behavior is the next higher level because it subsumes the topic (e.g. many different topics can have the same analogue but a change of the analogue changes the linguistic meaning). The context of the communication is of the highest logical order because it defines the meaning of both topic and analogue. For example, suppose a father says to his son in the kitchen, "The garbage is piling up." The meaning is quite clear to the son that the father intends to have him remove the garbage from the kitchen. If, however, the same statement in the same relationship is made at the garbage dump, the son will interpret a very different meaning from the communicational event in the kitchen.
- (b) Hierarchy also applies to the psychological family experience relative to each individual. The individual is the lowest level of hierarchy followed by diad or triad relationships. It is possible to conceptualize an individual alone, or understand one person relative to a diad or triad relationship, or understand an individual as compared or contrasted to the entire family unit.

- (c) Hierarchy applies also to the individual, family unit, extended family, and society.
- (d) Hierarchy and logical type suggest that communicational disorders occur because interactants are responding to different logical levels of communication. A solution can occur when people communicate on the same logical level. The most notable example of this concept is written by Haley's definition of schizophrenic behavior suggesting that more pathological communication focuses on the analogue, the intentions and non-verbal behavior rather than the meaning resulting from the linguistic combination of words. So that a person or people who respond more frequently to *how* a person talks rather than *what* is said tends to produce more unhealthy interpersonal relationships. (Haley, 1963.)

#### REDUNDANCY

Family behavior forms itself into patterns or sequences that are highly redundant and subsequently quite resistant to change. This is similar to the concept of interactional chains, where one person produces certain behavior which is bonded to the response of another followed by the response of another and so forth until an entire sequence is illustrated by all the participants. These interactional redundancies may include speaking order, escalations of conflict, positive problem-solving and a variety of other redundant patterns learned by the family. It is possible using the concept of redundancy, to see that many cases of psychosomatic illness, alcoholism, marital conflict and delinquency are all relationship events but are escalated redundancies that have existed in the family for many years prior to their manifestation.

#### CONCEPTUAL FRAMES

Individuals are said in systems theory to conceptualize information in pairs of opposites. Several pairs are categorized and become conceptual frames. These are transmitted and maintained as beliefs by the family members. An example of this would be the pair of good-bad. This concept may be placed in categories of moral behavior and used to define that behavior which is good or that behavior which is bad.

In family systems, the most obvious method of categorizing the meaning of events is that of things that are or exist, and the category of things that are not and do not exist. For example, families who discuss problems have found an *is* or present frame of reference that contains problems and the discussion of problems. They are much more articulate about the nature of the problems, why the problems occur, and the result of problems on their families. This communication becomes redundant and families live out their lives haranguing, discussing or analyzing the nature of family problems. To be helpful, systems theory suggests that the family be helped to identify things that *are not* (that is, solutions are positive events that do not presently exist in the family but should in order for them to function more happily) and then change things that *are not* to become the present *is*. This

means that one difference between healthy and unhealthy families is that the things that are present in the unhealthy family consist mostly of problems and things related to the problems; and in the healthy family, the conceptual frame of things consist of happy or positive rewarding events. Therapeutic improvement requires that family members begin to more readily identify the things that are positive and useful and discuss those more freely and openly than the nature of problems and why they occur.

#### PARADOXICAL CONFLICT AND SOLUTIONS

Interpersonal conflict in families is said to be paradoxical because the attempted solution of person (A) prevents person (B) from responding in a fashion desired by (A). (B's) behavior in turn prevents (A) from responding in the desired aim of (B). Thus each person contributes to an apparently unresolvable and therefore paradoxical dilemma. This implies that in order to understand the nature of families and family problems plus their solutions, one important ingredient is to find and learn what people have done as attempts to solve family problems. In some cases, the problem is not what people think it is; it's that they think they have a problem and attempt solutions that compound the problem and therefore do not work. In this case, it is the attempted solutions that constitute the problem and not the problem itself.

#### NODAL FAMILY EVENTS

Nodal family events are those that stimulate the creation and adjustment of the family system in response to them. Death, illness, divorce, deviance, traditions, birth of a child, or repeated conflict are some of these. Family life and the nature of the family system can more easily be understood by obtaining a perspective of the nodal events of family life. For example, it would not appear a mystery to some people why many physicians who have problems with their children have problems with their oldest and/or next to the oldest. One can understand this situation in light of the fact that when the father, who is the physician, was in medical school or was completing his medical education, the first and second children are born. The lack of time and proximity because of the educational requirements tends to become redundant and a distant father-child relationship is created that often perpetuates throughout the life of the child. This distance makes their relationship vulnerable to external conditions which may or may not produce a deviant or conflict situation in the family and the behavior of the child. This example seems to imply the need to identify nodal family events and inquire as to the adjustment and the conditions in other family members at the time these events occurred or where experienced by the family.

#### SYSTEMS INTERVENTIONS

The explanatory concepts outlined in the previous sections suggest some methods of intervention. These included here are those that are derived primarily from the concepts and are more germane to general systems theory than to other theories or concepts relating to human behavior.

## MAPPING THE FAMILY SYSTEM

At the beginning of a therapeutic encounter, the family can be mapped or understood from a variety of perspectives. These may include taking the family history to ascertain the nodal family events. In addition, a family can be viewed in terms of its stage of development, that is, the range in ages of children and its relationship among its kinship network. Furthermore, relationships within the family can be mapped to determine the style of relationship between the child or person who is the presenting problem and other family members. Then the family can be mapped in terms of its relationship to other elements of its environment including religion, social circumstances, school or education, and work. When the family is mapped in these variety of perspectives, it is possible to see the individual relative to other diadic or triadic relationships, all the other family members, and compared to larger elements of society. Once sufficient data is accumulated, a therapist can begin a procedure to bring about modification of the family system.

## AMBIGUITY AND CONTROL

By the time a family has sought therapeutic help, they generally have made a number of attempts to solve their own problems. These attempts have compounded layer upon layer of interaction related to the problem so that one observer may not be able to tell the difference between the nature of the problem and family attempts to solve it. Furthermore, the behavior of family members toward each other is likely so redundant that attempts to modify the behavior by an hour of conversation each week is somewhat difficult and may even appear impossible. In light of the foregoing, it seems useful for the therapist to assume that some control must be exerted on the family system by the therapist or in collaboration with other family members to bring about the possibility of therapeutic change. In order that this may be accomplished, a therapist typically has to interject his or her own behavior into the family interactional patterns creating sufficient ambiguity that some ground rules or control by the therapist can be exerted on family members. Failure to do this often results in the family system or patterns of interactions actually using the therapist as a means to perpetuate the conflict. The most common example of this is the husband who talks to the therapist about his wife attempting to get him to focus on her, to whom the wife responds to the therapist, communicating to him about the husband attempting in her efforts to get him to modify the husband's behavior. Consequently, the therapist and his attempts to modify the marriage, are used by either husband, wife, or both, as bludgeons to perpetuate the conflict. This implies that the therapist needs to be fairly alert to attempts by the family system to incorporate his/her interventions into already existing family behavior.

## INTERVENTION IN SEQUENCE AND PATTERN

Once the therapist has assumed some control over the nature of therapeutic rules and family behavior, intervention can begin in the sequence and pattern of family behavior. This can be accomplished by asking family members to report the nature of episodes that reflect the specific patterns of communication associated with the problem. A therapist

can be helpful in this by asking for specific accounts of each person's behavior. This takes the form of "who did what," and "then what happened," and "then what followed," and "then what happened," and "then who responded," so all members can see that everyone's behavior is connected in some way to a family problem. Once a sequence or pattern of the family is identified and recognizable to the family, there are a number of therapeutic strategies available. Sending the family into a repeat of an existing pattern by plan. Behavior can often be modified in a family, not by asking for it to change, but asking them to exhibit the same behavior for a different purpose or reason. This creates a paradoxical situation that prevents the family from maintaining its old style of sequence and pattern. Other interventions include distractions, escalating the sequence of behavior so that the chain of events related to the problem is broken by either failure to act, failure of one or more persons to act at the expected time, or by escalating events so that more events happen than can be handled in redundant ways by any of the participants.

## THE ALTERING PERCEPTION OF INTERPERSONAL REALITY

Another general form of therapeutic intervention consists of changing what people believe to be true about the nature of their relationships with other people. One of the most common conditions in therapy is that people in conflict tend to attribute cause of the conflict to others. Each accumulates evidence to support his/her own innocence; and which supports the view that the other person is the guilty one. Two common interpersonal realities to be changed are: (a) that there are no innocent victims and all conflict has multiple causes; and (b) that each person must learn to focus on the consequences of his/her own behavior as much as they focus attention on how they are acted toward by the other. This reality is similar to helping each person assume the responsibility for his/her actions instead of attributing it to another person or other people. There are many other parts of interpersonal reality that may require change. A skillful therapist will accumulate information about the perceptions people have about their problems and about themselves, and will organize events so that each person can be permitted to make a reassessment of what they believe about each other and about themselves.

## PARADOXICAL SOLUTIONS

One of the most recent and intriguing attempts to explain the nature of change in family organizations is that of paradoxical solutions. The most specific of these have been described by Watzlawick, Fischel, and Weakland, titled *Change, Change: Principles of Problem Formation and Resolution*, (1974). Their conclusion is that therapeutic interventions work when a therapist asks people to engage in events that will throw them out of their symmetrical or complementary exchanges. For example, where people are engaging in escalating symmetrical conflict, a therapist can assign one to drop a bean in a can each time the other partner criticizes. Furthermore, the person who drops the bean in the can cannot speak but can only record his displeasure by dropping the bean. The therapeutic benefit of the bean and

can is seen in that it is a response of a nonspecific nature that prevents the other person from responding in a symmetrical way. Thus the symmetrical exchanges that are related to the conflict are broken and the couple can change the nature of their interactional spiral. The authors of this book record several such strategies designed to modify the nature of conflict and other problems that may result in families.

## CONCLUSION

The explanatory concepts and suggestions for therapeutic intervention are made with the hope that counselors working with families may understand them with an additional perspective and also may find some opportunity to provide therapeutic help. This author has observed some of the complexities of family life and the profound influence exerted by family members on each other. For those of us who believe in the eternal nature of the family, it may easily be observed that family relationships are the most profound for a human being

to experience. The levels of influence are so many and so varied that it is easy for one to understand how styles of discipline, values, and beliefs are transmitted from one generation to the next. I have learned a new respect for the family. Successful family life, among all other possible successes in life, must still be rated as the finest.

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