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### *President's Message*

Janice Victor, LCSW, NCPsyA



I am here to thank our talented and spirited members who have served us well in important positions.

Paul Kreisinger, who has served us both as recording secretary and chair of the continuing education committee has become unavailable to us, due to the other demands upon his life.

Carolyn Grossman who has served us well as treasurer is moving out of the state. Both of these talented members will need to be replaced. Please let me know of your interest at [Janicevictor@prodigy.net](mailto:Janicevictor@prodigy.net).

### Legislative Updates

- Our confidentiality bill has been pre-filed by senator Cardinale as one of 25 important bills to be pre-filed for hearings. We have also discovered that these bills do not need to be started all over again, and can be heard as they are.
- It is important that our members know that we have been working on the continuing education issue. A letter was sent to the board of Social Work Examiners on December 16, 2019.

Luba Shagawat, LCSW  
Director of Legislative Affairs  
New Jersey Society for Clinical Social Work

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## *Letter from the Editor*

**Kaitlin Vanderhoff**

I hope everyone is enjoying this very mild winter so far. No one has been as thankful as me for the lack of intense weather and very small amount of snow that we have received thus far. Sometimes I am guilty of hoping that if I refuse to think of snowstorms happening in my mind that somehow it will actually prevent them from happening. During winters like this I get some undeserved gratification for believing that my thoughts had some effect on the lack of intense winter weather. During most winters I tend to daydream about the spring and summer months ahead in an attempt to get myself there faster or dissociate from the current weather on some level. In this quarters edition of the newsletter we have included an article that falls into phenomena such as these and more by Margaret Debrot. While only the abstract is included in this article the full version can be found in the Psychoanalytic Review's December 2019 issue. It is entitled "Daydreams: Concealed and Revealed in Therapy." For me, the concept of utilizing daydreams within the therapeutic treatment and even as an assessment tool, as Margaret discusses in this article, is a great example of utilizing all possible aspects of the patient's internal life for the benefit of the treatment.

It is so important to be constantly expanding the tools that we use to dive deeper and deeper into patient's internal lives and to provide effective treatments. In my own personal life many opportunities to explore different therapeutic approaches have come to my attention and piqued my interest lately. Some have included equine therapy, sandtray work and processing counter transference through art. As Clinical Social Workers in an ever changing field it needs to become a part of our progression as treatment providers to be constantly learning and evolving as new information is obtained and new treatment techniques are developed. Some great ways to be more in the know about new techniques and discoveries in the field are by enrolling in societies such as ours, subscribing to journals such as the Psychoanalytic Review mentioned above, and by becoming involved in an Institute. It is my hope that all who are reading this will utilize this reminder and take some time to access some more continuing education in order to continue growing and advancing as a therapist. Until next quarter, stay warm and be well!

## **Turtle Update**

**by Janet R. Faust, PhD, LCSW**

I feel obligated to give you an update on my turtle situation. In my last writing I reported that I hadn't seen my turtle in the garden this year. Shortly after, the turtle reappeared! I saw her digging a hole with her hind legs, which means she is preparing to lay eggs. I'm not sure about the outcome, however, because the next day I saw that the egg or eggs had been dug up. I reburied the egg I found, but again the next day the hole was dug up. I'm not optimistic about the turtle's egg/eggs. I read that after this type of box turtle lays her eggs, she is no longer involved with them. Kind of like the loggerhead turtles in Florida who are born in a nest on the beach and then have to make it to the water on their own. They make this trip at night and follow the stars to the water. (You have to turn off your outside lights after nine in the evening so they don't get confused.) I had to wait until the next day to notify my granddaughter about the re-appearance of the turtle because it was past her bedtime. At any rate, I didn't want to leave you hanging about what might have happened to my turtle.

Recently, there was an article in the NY Times about sea gulls who are very aggressive about snatching food from you at the beach. This summer my two daughters, sons-in-law, and five grandchildren were on the beach and were pegged as prime targets for a few good meals for them. We had brought numerous snacks to the beach for the grandchildren. I made the mistake of tossing over my shoulder a treat that had fallen in the sand. The message got out and we were surrounded. The article explained that seagulls co-parent their young, the father taking equal responsibility with the mother for finding food for the babies. That's why they seem so persistent and omnipresent.

You might ask, and one of my daughters did, don't you have anything better to think about than a bird? That's a good question. My granddaughter, the one who helped rescue the "fledgling," said "Gabou (that's the name she gave me before she could say Grandma) knows a lot about nature." Perhaps, since I am a retired clinical social worker I do have a lot of time on my hands. But I'm far from an expert on wildlife. It turns out, her nursery school class will be visiting The Raptor Trust, the bird rescue center that tries to save injured birds. She hasn't asked about what happened to our bird (see previous article, "The Fledgling.") I think I need to get concerned about weightier issues, such as whether an approaching hurricane is headed for Alabama or northward (Sharpie-gate). When I was sitting with my granddaughter we started to create a beach scene initially drawn by me. Then we started adding stickers of various kinds, some of which either 1. wouldn't have been on a beach or 2. wouldn't have been located where we put it. I said to her "logically, something like this would not be on a beach or located where we put it." She said she is an artist. I said if you are creating art you don't have to be logical, and we left it at that. I guess, more

important than that discussion would be Russia or Saudi Arabia, where we would find that you shouldn't take something that doesn't belong to you (Crimea) or you shouldn't hurt somebody that doesn't agree with you (Khashoggi). You shouldn't try to beat up someone who is doing a better job than you are of cleaning up the environment (California). Worst of all, you shouldn't lock up children who look different than you, children whose parents are trying to find a better life. Parents who are like the seagulls. I want to make clear that I am not casting aspersions on the box turtle. I don't know why a box turtle doesn't involve herself with her eggs after she lays them. After all, she makes a trip from wherever she comes from to lay eggs in my garden. It can't be easy. One year I saw her walking all the way up my (long) driveway, where I could have run her over. I wouldn't want to leave the impression that I care more about seagulls than box turtles. That wouldn't be right.

## ***Six Babies***

**By Janet R. Faust, PhD, LCSW**

At my last writing, I sent off drafts to my two daughters and sons-in-law saying I was on the beach with them over the summer and "my six grandchildren." One daughter answered: "Wait...you only have five grandchildren!" One son-in-law thought maybe I wanted another grandchild. The other one didn't see anything wrong with preferring birds over turtles. I was being too egalitarian. My other daughter didn't notice that I put the wrong number of grandchildren. That's pretty scary. She's the one who attended the Fraiberg Conference ("The Magic Years of Selma Fraiberg," San Francisco, 2018) with me and didn't have time to write her share of the story. (At the time she had one two-year-old and infant twins she was breastfeeding. The conference organizers (The Sanville Institute and AAPCSW) were kind enough to give her a room where she could pump in privacy. (Selma Fraiberg was very pro-infant.) Among my daughters and sons-in-law there is one dentist, two doctoral level psychologists, and one architect and real estate investor and manager. Given their various skills, they pretty much can help me out with any problem. So, where did the sixth baby come from?

Freud said, in "The Psychopathology of Everyday Life" (1901), that slips of the tongue, or pen, are unconscious wishes intruding on current behavior. However, I really don't think I want another grandchild; five seems like more than enough! Freudianism is an orthodoxy and seems to have an answer for everything. Winnicott, on the other hand, liked to let his imagination run wild (Dodi Goldman, PhD, New Jersey Institute Conference, Montclair State College, September 22, 2019).

Therapy in the Winnicott sense is like childhood play, replete with "imaginative elaborations." As Dr. Goldman pointed out, the old English word for "play" meant "to take a risk." Therapy is a process, not an orthodoxy.

According to Winnicott, toddlers experience everything with great intensity, and constantly struggle with imagination versus reality. It's very hard for them to end their play, to eat dinner or get dressed (reality.) When your toddler says she can fly, don't say "no you can't," but do pick her up on your shoulders. Children constantly struggle with imagination versus reality, and that is how we develop. Eventually we all find ourselves through our imagination, a self that can deal with reality. In letting your imagination fly, you will find your true self.

The truth is I don't prefer seagulls over turtles; in fact I had a love of turtles before I found out that seagulls co-parent their young. I just wanted to get that straight so that there is no confusion. My turtle, if indeed it is the same turtle that comes every year, is very devoted! I respect that. If one year the turtle didn't come back, I'd be upset about the missing turtle. What happened to it? In that situation you'd be dealing with a loss. We all deal with losses; we can understand that, we are clinicians. But what does it mean to invent a baby that isn't there?

Maybe, like toddlers, I was having my own struggle with reality. Maybe if you have five grandchildren it is so many that what does it matter if there are five or six? Of course, that would be pretty insulting to them because they are all individuals. I was letting my imagination spin out of control. If I really believed that I had six grandchildren I would be out of reality. Winnicott (Goldman, 2019) thought the "inner imaginative world" is another reality. Such as in art, where the reality can be in the mind of the beholder. Interestingly, Winnicott felt criticized by various orthodoxies and thought he, like children who have the right to play, had a right to his own language. Toddlers who are pre-verbal sometimes have their own language which very often only the mother can understand. Other schools of psychoanalytic theory thought of him as a rebel, or an adolescent, or a Peter Pan. Peter Pan is "a free-spirited and mischievous young boy who can fly and never grows up" and "spends his never-ending childhood having adventures on the mythical island of Neverland" (Wikipedia). In Neverland he interacts with fairies, pirates mermaids, Native Americans, and other children.

Unfortunately, "magic is a dirty word in psychoanalysis" (Goldman, 2019). By the way, my little grandson (16 months) is going to be Peter Pan for Halloween and his big sister is going to be Tinkerbell. I'm going to be one of the inhabitants of Neverland (it's a secret). In California, "Frozen" characters are prevailing. Lots of room for imagination!

## ***Adolescent Development: The Good, the Bad, the Confusing***

**By Kaitlin Vanderhoff, LCSW**

Ever wonder what is going on in the head of an adolescent when puberty strikes and they seem to have lost their minds? As a parent you might feel as though it is a full moon every day. You wonder if you've lost the child you once knew forever. This article will help clarify some of the internal processes which contribute to the irrational, moody, and downright strange behavior we see in adolescents.

Adolescence ushers in a stage of further development of the psyche, the end goal being the attainment of the experience of "true reality". True reality is the reality most adult's experience, which is a more informed, flexible and well-rounded view of ourselves and the world around us. On the way to this fully developed psyche and attainment of "true reality" adolescents first develop what is referred to as a "new morality". This can entail a loss of innocence and the view of adults as all good and all knowing. Additionally, during this process adolescents may develop rage and harsh judgement of both adults and authority figures. The way adolescents separate from their parental figures is through a rebellious stage marked with anger and even hatred. The alternative, which is separating from an object that you consciously love and rely on for life, might be too painful. This process is needed in order to solidify an adult self. Concurrently teens become overcome with rage. This is because they come to believe that things should be just. Further, they believe that they should act and be treated like adults and their intentions should be heard understood by others, a privilege which they are often not afforded.

Now that we understand where our teens are coming from we can take a look at why they look so crazy doing it. The reason for this is all wrapped up in development. At this time teens are seeking desperately to get their intentions and opinions heard and understood. At the same time they have not yet developed the capacity to fully see the perspectives of others. You may notice many adolescents writing in journals or expressing their thoughts through writing. This is a clear illustration of where the teens are at in terms of their development. At this stage teens lack a capacity to express their thoughts verbally. I know I often utilized a journal, personal blog or social media page to make known my most thoughtful quotes, beliefs and statuses.

Knowledge of teen relationships and their link to adolescent development is also helpful. Potentially more today than any other period of time adolescents and teens are exploring the idea of homosexual feelings. Adolescents are dwelling on their sexuality often and early today. Relationships in adolescence serve a developmental function much different from the function of relationship seeking in adults. Teens utilize relationships to fill a variety of needs. These include being treated as equals to adults being heard, and being understood. Friendships are also important in fulfilling the adolescents' needs of being seen and accepted. Successfully having this need met sets the stage for the

adult self to become further solidified.

Problems arise when teens do not get the acceptance they so desperately need. This can lead to a "paranoid impasse". With this teens may end up joining groups which are counter- anything (religion, education, political, American, etc.). Counter-cultures can serve as the means of attaining the community, acceptance and platform for voicing their opinions. When teens are unable to separate from their parents they start to utilize internal defenses such as introjection and projection. Counter-culture groups then often become a substitute for the normal enemy status that the parent would take on. Their views towards the anti-groups can often take on a paranoid quality. Again, this is all in service of the consolidation of the adult identity.

Another danger in the teenage years is the development of depression. Teenagers may wrestle with their new awareness of the discrepancy between their current real selves and their idealized selves. Teens focus often shifts to idealism which can look like "obsessions" with certain celebrities, political parties, etc. They can also exhibit disillusioned idealistic thinking about how the world should function; schools should be run, etc. This discrepancy alone can cause a period of self-hatred, lack of motivation and hopelessness. Further, when teens are pushed towards perfection from their family and through cultural messages the disparity between that ideal and their reality can also become too much to bear and can lead to depression. Yearnings for idealism can also show up in dangerous and violent ways such as violent protests, self-harm and other defiant acts. Teen may start to conceptualize concepts like long-term planning, compromising and reasonability needed to view the reality of the discrepancy effectively; however their grasp is tenuous to say the least.

For therapists treating adolescents it is important to be aware that client's will often try to create and re-create a dynamic in which the therapist is the powerful, persecuting object and the teen in the position of needing to rail against. These dynamics must be processed and shut down right away to ensure a productive working alliance. Some ways to keep this at bay is by helping the client process their initial suspiciousness towards you as the therapist in an open and honest way and to keep questions objective in the beginning of treatment until an initial alliance is formed. As you move forward with teens keeping an environment of genuineness and openness will help set the stage for an environment where clients can process even pre-oedipal issues which might come up including feelings of shame, humiliation and anxiety which are so commonly present in teens today.

### References

Meissner, W.W. (1989) "Psychotherapy and the Paranoid Process". Jason Aronson, Inc.

## ***Why is it so difficult to ask for help?***

By Andrew Walsh, MSW, MHRM,  
LCSW, LCADC Intern

I believe I have the best job in the world. I am a therapist based in Florham Park and Montclair. As a therapist I get to connect with people on an individual level. Over a cup of tea and the course of a session I get snapshots of clients' lives. With time I get to see people create or recapture lives that appeared beyond their grasp.

In full disclosure though I must admit that not every session goes fantastic. Not every client comes in for their own personal growth and development. Some clients are propelled into therapy to escape from troubles. Maybe it is a spouse who is fed up. Sometimes it could be parents who are threatening to cut off their child. Other times it could be the threat of academic or career destruction. Sometimes I meet people whose lives are a wreck.

Now I have no issue with clients like that. I am not judging them. I think raging infernos are a great place to start building from. But some of these clients, coming in with destroyed personal and professional relationships, still struggle to open up.

Below is a dialogue with a fictitious client which illustrates this.

Me: So what brings you in? How can I help?

Client: Ah I've had some minor hiccups at home and at work.

Me: Okay so you got some friction going on both fronts. Flesh it out for me. Zoom in to the 30,000 foot view.

Client: I really don't like my boss and my wife is a little annoyed with me.

So I am sitting there with a client who appears relatively calm, cool, and collected. I find myself thinking, "Well this guy is presenting as a 3 on the scale to 10 of infernos. We'll do some minor cleaning up, give him a little booster shot, and get him back into the game."

Except I got collateral information from the client's wife. Turns out the client is on the verge of losing his job for getting into serious and public verbal altercations with his boss. On the home front the wife is packing his bags and getting ready to call the locksmith.

Me: You know I spoke with your wife. She is giving a slightly different picture. Something about some altercations with your boss.

Client: Yeah I guess so. But it isn't that bad. We are buddies and he wouldn't do anything.

Me: Strange. I was under the impression that you received

your last written warning. Next stop is termination.

Client: Hmm you got me there.

After countless interactions like this a central question started to formulate in my mind. **"Why are people so reluctant to share the WHOLE truth?"**

With this question in mind I went directly to the source; my clients. Whenever I would become aware that one of them was holding something back I would ask them why.

Me: When I inquired about how your weekend went you said it was pretty good.

Client: Yeah that's right pretty normal weekend I guess.

Me: Interesting. Did you crash your car this weekend? And were you drinking at the time?

Client: It wasn't terrible but I did crash my car. I am okay.

Me: I am glad that you are okay. Cars can be repaired much easier than people. I have to ask. Why did you not share that with me before I asked about it?

Client: I guess I was embarrassed about it.

One of the most important concepts of therapy is establishing a strong therapeutic relationship. My belief is that without the relationship no sustainable change can occur. It is the basis for all of the work that occurs. I articulate this belief with all of my clients so they understand why I focus so much on our relationship. Every time that I discuss this concept with clients is an opportunity for them to "buy in" more. Throughout the course of therapy I am always checking in with clients to see how our relationship is.

Me: How do I feel about the therapeutic relationship?

Client: You think it is incredibly important. I think you used the term "Alpha and Omega" to describe it.

Me: Spot on. What does "Alpha and Omega" mean?

Client: It means the beginning and the end. Everything we do flows out of that.

Me (smiling): Looks like my osmosis process is working with you.

Client: (laughing): Yeah you got me. Somewhere along the way you talked about that and I guess it always stuck with me.

Me (laughing): That's what happens. I'm sneaky like that. Before you said that you were embarrassed to tell me about the car accident. Let's revisit that. Why were you embarrassed?

Client: Well I felt like I was letting you down. You have been great with me and I really like coming here. I just felt guilty that I got into an accident and that I had been drinking.

Now what we have here is rupture in the relationship. In essence there has been disruption. There is no need to be scared of rupture. It is inevitable. What we do with it though makes a huge difference. With rupture there are really only two potential outcomes.

1. Dissolution of the relationship
2. The relationship is repaired and becomes stronger than ever.

Me: Sounds like some heavy emotions you were experiencing about the incident. Let's start with your embarrassment and guilt as it relates to me. Now you've known me for a while. Put yourself in my chair. What do you think I would say.

Client (after thinking for a few moments): Something along the lines of I have nothing to be embarrassed about with you.

Me: What else?

Client: That you can only work with the puzzle pieces I give you.

Me: Now that's very interesting. What do you mean by that?

Client: Well, basically if I withhold stuff from you then you don't have all the information that you need to help me.

Me: Oh I like that. I am definitely going to steal your answer and use that with other clients. And yes I can only see what you show me.

Client (nods head in agreement)

Me: With that in mind, I want to circle back a bit to our relationship. What is a phrase I often use regarding me making any judgments.

Client (smiling): You always say "Who am I to judge?"

Me: That's right. Now I might make assessments on steps forward but I am not here to judge you as a person. That would be inappropriate and unhelpful. I am simply here to walk on this journey with you side by side.

At this point I have repaired the relationship. Rupture in this instance was fantastic. Earlier in this article I mentioned buy-in. There are different levels of buy-in. Up until that point the client and I had talked about the importance of the relationship. Intellectually he understood.

However this was the first instance where the rubber met the road. He was reluctant to bring the car accident to my attention out of fear of judgment and rejection. By responding in an open and honest manner I was able to assuage the client's fears. His positive reaction to the interaction makes this evident.

Client: What you are saying makes sense. This was the first big new thing that happened since I started seeing you. I wasn't sure how to tell you.

Me: So it sounds like something happened that you were embarrassed about and you are concerned that by sharing it with me that I would look at you differently.

Client (nodding his head): Yep

Me: How do you feel now that we have talked about it?

Client: I feel better. It was weighing on my mind and I felt bad about not telling you.

Me: All good. I think that was a real growth experience for you individually and in our working relationship. I am excited about the possibilities moving forward.

Client (smiling): Me too.

Again the dialogue above is just one of similar conversations I have had with clients. It is human nature to withhold what we view to be potentially embarrassing information from people we enjoy talking to. My job as a therapist is to demonstrate to clients that they can bring things to me and that I won't judge them for it. By affirming their concerns and acting in a positive manner it invites clients to continue to open up. As I tell my clients, I really do believe I have the best job in the world.

I encourage clients to think about relationships as emotional bank accounts. With regular bank accounts we can make deposits or withdrawals. We also do that with relationships. There are emotional deposits that we can make. Every time we are present, provide words of affirmation, provide attention, or do acts of kindness we are making emotional deposits. Alternatively every time that we withhold, let other people down, or are mean we make withdrawals. When a bank account becomes overdrawn we incur penalties. Similarly, when we overdraw in our relationships we can incur penalties. The people we are in relationships with may become distant, hostile, or angry. They may choose to limit their interaction with us or cut it out completely.

## How Collaborative Divorce Works

By Paul D. Kreisinger, Esq., LCSW

*Collaborative divorce has been around in New Jersey for over twenty years, but many still don't know what that means or how it works. In collaborative divorce, each spouse has an attorney, and all four sign a declaration that they will forswear court proceedings and instead resolve all divorce issues by way of negotiation, with the assistance of a facilitator, usually an LCSW or psychologist, who can read the room and keep the parties (and counsel) in the crucible of settlement. Consultants are brought in as needed to assist in resolving custody, shared parenting time and financial issues. It is a team approach, with all working together to craft a settlement that works for each family member. Below, NJSCSW member and attorney Paul Kreisinger, who is both a family law attorney and a psychotherapist, describes a divorce that he handled in a collaborative fashion some ten years ago, with an excellent outcome, notwithstanding a grave situation at the outset.*

This is the story of one my best divorces, one that started out miserable, and full of (justified) anger and betrayal, but evolved to a respectful and fair conclusion. Allison was furious. After 15 years of marriage, Dan was having an affair. More than furious: betrayed, embarrassed, insulted...there were not enough adjectives in her vocabulary to describe how she felt. "I mean, we didn't have the best marriage—*who has a perfect marriage?*" But with Diane—of all people...*her best friend?* Dan said that he just couldn't take it anymore, and that he was sorry, but that he should have disclosed that he was unhappy and unfulfilled but "didn't want to hurt" her. Allison felt betrayed all over again.

Allison's parents were angry, too—then sad, then angry again; they thought of Dan as the son they never had—*"how could he have done such a thing?"* How could Diane? Allison and Diane were friends since middle school. Allison's sister reacted harshly: "rip his eyes out...hire the biggest SOB lawyer you can find and *gouge!*" That is exactly what Allison was determined to do.

She visited *that* attorney. She promised to do (metaphorically, that is, in the legal system) to Dan all they things she (and her sister) wanted to be done to exact a price for his behavior—she wanted the marital home, alimony, child support, his pension, a BIG piece of his business. The attorney said she would need a \$25,000 retainer to **get started**, and said that she'd "go to war" for her, but that it might well go over \$150,000 by the time they finished and—one more thing: *were her parents able to sign on as guarantors of his fee?*

Allison was emboldened, but shaken. Dan moved out the day she found out about his affair... now there were two sets of bills to pay. She and the kids were not alone: she had her parents, her sister, her friends, and her therapist. In her therapy sessions she railed against Dan and cried a good deal too. She saw the toll this was taking on her. She was still furious at Dan, but he was a good father to them and they

loved him. He saw the kids on weekends, from Saturday afternoons to Sunday evenings. She couldn't deny that they were truly happy to run out to the car to go off with him. They didn't register the same hurt she did. How could they? He is the only father they have.

In therapy, Allison started to second guess her initial plan of going to war. As her initial anger and hurt subsided, she began to think about the emotional landscape of a contested divorce and the effect it would have on her and the kids, not to mention the financial consequences. Did she really need that? Over the years she had talked about other's people's divorces and vowed she'd never do that to her kids.

Allison researched alternate ways to divorce. She didn't think that she could discuss finances with Dan at the dining room table, on her own—she was too angry and hurt; he knew too much about their finances, his income and benefits; and she still didn't entirely trust him. She would need help. She heard about mediation, but she'd be on her own with him there, too—and a neutral mediator, true, but still—it would be just Dan and Allison in a room with the mediator. There would be no lifelines, and she couldn't call a friend.

Her therapist mentioned something she had heard about at a conference—collaborative divorce. Each client has an attorney—but they contract not to go to court and to work out all the issues at the conference table. There would be a mental health professional moderating the discussions, taking notes and reporting after each session what documents each spouse had to produce, what they agreed to, what they would discuss week by week: custody and shared parenting time, alimony and child support, college, the marital home, Dan's pension. There would be a child specialist available to help her or the kids if the going got rough, as well as a joint accountant to value Dan's business. The work of solving the family financial puzzle would be performed with a team and not against adversaries.

Allison went to see a collaborative divorce attorney. His approach was completely different from the first attorney's. She felt that he understood her anger and betrayal as she told him her story, and let her vent without joining (or exacerbating) her fantasies of retribution. He had an "it shall pass" attitude. Yes, it was bad now, and it will be bad, but it will also be better. She felt seen and heard by this collaborative lawyer—as opposed to the litigator whom she would use as a tool to get even with Dan. He mentioned her as yet untapped resilience. Her therapist talked about this, too, but it was too early for Allison to recognize it.

She retained the collaborative lawyer, whose retainer and expectations of the cost of the collaborative process were much less than the litigator's. Allison thought this might be a lot less divisive and more economical. Her lawyer sent Dan a letter suggesting that he, too, see a similarly trained and committed attorney. Dan was guilty about what he had done, and was seeing, weekend by weekend, how their separation was playing out with the kids. He missed being home with them. He missed his house. The dog. He even

missed Allison, but knew that he would not be able to continue with her. He thought that collaborative may be a better way to get all of this unpleasantness out of the way. He, too, hired a collaborative attorney.

They had a series of meetings—four parties at first: Allison and her lawyer, Dan and his. Together, they discussed and signed a Participation Agreement, where they committed to resolve all of their issues out of court, in discussions with each other and the team of professionals. In this fashion, all of the negotiations could be contained by the team. In the unlikely event that one of them wanted to abandon the collaborative process, they could, but they would have to retain new counsel—their current attorneys would be unavailable to represent them in court. This meant that with each meeting, as they went deeper into resolving their issues, there was increasing motivation to continue and complete the mission. This collaborative approach put a lid on either one of them going ballistic—which meant that Allison could make demands upon Dan without fear that he'd "go nuclear" (and, conversely, that Allison would not be gouging out Dan's eyes). Instead of everything spilling out in court, Allison and Dan embarked on a more contained, controlled and private way to divorce.

At the first meeting, they decided to retain a mental health professional (a psychologist or social worker trained in collaborative divorce practice), to serve as a Facilitator who would guide the negotiations and keep everyone on track. Together, they decided on an agenda for each meeting. The Facilitator monitored the exchange of documents proving the value of the marital assets and debts.

Dan and Allison visited a child specialist, a collaboratively-trained therapist, who assisted them with a Custody and Shared Parenting Time Agreement. The Child Specialist interviewed Dan and Allison together and separately and saw the kids as well. She got to know each member of the family, and their hobbies, their schoolwork, and how they spent their family time. She then sat with Allison and Dan to work out details of their future living arrangements. Allison and Dan each felt seen, heard and recognized by the therapist, and together they crafted a shared parenting time agreement that they felt met the needs of the children and gave each parent good enough time with the kids.

This was a major accomplishment for this couple. Dan's actions had torn the fabric of the marriage and family. That could have been continued for years in court. A contested divorce would have maintained and amplified everyone's rage, self-justification and suffering. Instead, the kids were going back and forth between Allison and Dan and were happy. And each parent was happy to see their kids happy. Maybe things wouldn't be as bad as Allison originally thought.

The next meeting focused on Allison's staying in the marital home with the kids and how they would pay for it. After the third meeting, they called in a collaboratively-trained accountant, who consulted for both of them, reviewed their incomes and expenses and helped craft a support package that respected their incomes and the budgets in both households. The accountant also reviewed the tax returns and books and records of Dan's consulting business, and came up with a valuation to support the discussions about

what Allison's share would be and how she and Dan could use a combination of cash and assets to buy out Allison's marital share.

At another meeting, Dan announced that he found a home a block away and wanted to purchase it, so that the kids could go back and forth between their homes, attend the same schools and have the same friends. Dan could not afford this and still make the payments he needed to Allison...at least not until Diane sold her home. Yes, he was still with Diane, who was herself divorced and living in her marital home. They were planning to marry. What about Allison and Diane? Best friends, to the surprise of many, stayed best friends, although that took more than a few long talks, over several bottles of wine.

In this most unusual and enlightened divorce, Allison and Dan (and their families and friends) were able to mourn the loss of what was and focus instead on living in the present and moving on with their lives. In fact, Allison's parents (who were retired, and well to do) agreed to put up the \$300,000 Dan and Diane needed to close on the house, which they would repay, with interest, as they would a bank, as soon as Diane's home closed.

With another meeting (their fifth), they completed their negotiations. Their attorneys prepared a formal Marital Settlement Agreement based upon the understandings reached in their collaborative sessions and recorded by their Facilitator. After a month of exchanging drafts and fine tuning the terms, they appeared in Court for an uncontested divorce hearing. Even the Judge congratulated them on "how well you have retained control over your family, your finances, your destiny."

Why would anyone do any of this? Because each of them saw the benefits of moving on and not indulging their wounded pride or outrage. Allison was furious—she had a right to be. Dan could have been as well—defending his pride and self-esteem with never before spoken allegations of how Allison disappointed him in their marriage. All of those emotions were very real for each of them, but they did not want to visit "all this adult unpleasantness" upon the children.

Collaborative divorce helped Dan and Allison grow beyond the rupture of Dan's affair and let each of them repair their losses and go on with life. Allison, too, found someone a year later, although she is not ready to get married again. She is content with being single and felt herself to be "born again", as she told her therapist.

And the kids? The kids are fine, doing well in school, playing sports and going back and forth between two homes where they know they are loved for themselves, without the stain or scars of their parents' emotional lives.

Divorce isn't pretty—no divorce is...no one expects to have to go through that after that walk from the altar. But if it has to happen, and problems between spouses cannot be resolved, there is a way to go through the transition without having to leave families scarred for life.

This story is as much about the resilience, patience and understanding of Allison and Dan (and their families) as it is about the collaborative divorce process. The collaborative

model enabled Allison and Dan to be the architects of their future, by keeping their children—and themselves—in mind at all times, resisting the temptation to call themselves “litigants” and empower lawyers and a Judge to decide what their lives would look like.

This is the story of one of the best divorces I have ever handled. And I’m happy to say that it is not the only one—there were several others.

The important thing to note is that it happened, and can happen again.

### ***Daydreams: Concealed and Revealed in Analysis Abstract***

by Margaret T. Debrot

Daydreams and night dreams are similar in that both share the wish fulfillment aspect of dreaming. Even though the difference between day and night dreams is obvious—daydreams happen when a person is awake (conscious) and night dreams happen when a person is asleep (unconscious)—the boundary between day and night dreams becomes blurred when the ego has been severely compromised. The focus of this paper is on the analysis of daydreaming and its relationship to the ego. As in the analysis of nocturnal dreams, analysis of daydreams provides another opportunity for discovery of repressed material. Analysis of daydream material also provides an opportunity to assess the development of a patient’s ego. When development of the ego has been severely compromised, daydreaming may become a mechanism of defense. A literature review is presented, followed by discussion of daydreaming and the ego. Case examples illustrate major points in the discussion.

### ***Day Dream Review***

by Jodi Kosofsky MA, LP, NCPsyA

Margaret T. Debrot LCSW, PsyA in her well- researched and informative paper entitled DAYDREAMS: Concealed and Revealed in Analysis, Psychoanalytic review 106(6) December 2019 offers detailed clinical material that will provide some of the necessary analytic data with which to begin an exploration of the nature of daydreams and their role in the analytic process. Debrot brings together our most

distinguished psychoanalysts to show how daydreams are a valuable substitute for and complement of dream material for therapeutic dynamics and prognostic value in psychoanalysis. Debrot communicates a less touched upon topic of daydreams, fantasy, and phantasy. She is grounded in what we know about childhood development , attachment theory, ego development, relational theory, and neuroscience. She is candid about sharing her counter transference feelings with us. Through her clinical illustrations, engaging style, and careful examination of the inner world of the patient sensitively handled, Margaret provides all of our readers, students, educators an insightful perspective. She is to be commended in bringing to light a less touched upon neglected topic.

December 29, 2019

## ***Poetry Corner***

### **She**

**By: Carol Freund, LCSW**

Her wide eyes are wild with fear.

If I move toward

she is ready to fight

or she curls in on herself

She is crazy.

I want to leave her

At the same time

I think she lives her humanness

closer to the source.

She can teach me

she can teach us

what we’re all avoiding

in our mad rush

to be somewhere

anywhere

but in our

animal skins