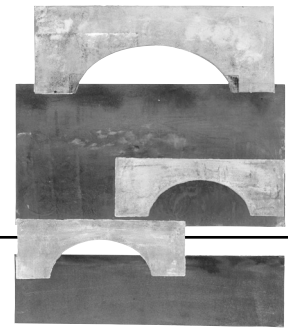


Building Bridges

A Center for Healing and Change



Fall 2006

A Recipe for Failure

By John Brendler, MSW, ACSW

From my experiences as a husband for 35 years, a father of three (ages 22, 27, and 31), and a family and couples therapist, I've tracked how marriages collapse. Here is a fool-proof recipe that guarantees ongoing resentment, unhappiness, and eventual divorce or perpetual misery:

1. **Judge your partner.** Analyze, diagnose, interpret, and criticize the way he or she thinks, behaves, and communicates.
2. **Neglect showing appreciation to your partner.** Ignore small gestures of kindness and consideration, like planning a fun day with your partner out of the house or preparing a favorite home-cooked meal.
3. **Make unilateral decisions.** "We're leaving the party now. I'm ready to go." Avoid collaborating. Find ways to let your partner know that he or she has no influence with you.
4. **Focus on changing your partner.** "All you do is think about yourself. You're not committed to this marriage. You're the one who needs to change." Avoid being accepting and open to each other's feelings and perspectives. Hide your own fears and vulnerability by trying to control how your partner feels and acts. Blame and disqualify whenever possible.
5. **Keep secrets and tell lies.**
6. **Talk everything to death.** Believe that words can solve all conflicts. Avoid cultivating shared activities that bring joy, spontaneity, and connection.
7. **Make generalizations and dredge up old complaints and insults.** "You never help with the cooking, not to mention that time you undercooked the chicken the first time my parents came for dinner." Avoid addressing the actual issue at hand and staying in the present.
8. **Look for allies in your children.** Work out conflicts with your partner through your children and collude with them against him or her.
9. **Overlook the power of playfulness.** It is dangerous to be playful and even a little devilish, like going in on a harmless prank or breaking a rule—together.
10. **Roll your eyes, curse at each other, or walk away.** These are excellent ways of conveying aggression and interfering with building a loving, trusting connection.
11. **Play it safe.** Hold yourself back, don't take risks, and don't express what you really mean and feel. This will ensure invisibility, boredom, and emotional detachment.
12. **Value your children more than your marriage.**
13. **Dismiss affection, sex, and intimacy as unimportant.**



John Brendler, MSW, ACSW, is a family and couples therapist, teacher of family therapy in the U.S. and abroad, and the founder of Building Bridges. He is the co-author of *Madness, Chaos, and Violence: Families at the Brink* (Basic Books, 1991). Requests for information on this topic can be sent via e-mail jbrendler7@earthlink.net.

Lost for Words

By R. Dandridge Collins, PhD

July 25, 2006 was the scariest day of my life. No tsunami had assaulted the Eastern shore of Africa. No lion had gotten loose on a safari. Instead, I had to give a talk to children (approximately ages 7- 15) who had lost loved ones due to AIDS. I was a part of a team of ministers and lay persons who were sent by the National Baptist Convention to organize a response to Swaziland and Malawi, where the African AIDS crisis was most intense. As a psychologist and minister, I am rarely lost for words. But on this day, I struggled to organize my thoughts to address these children and offer some hope. I spoke to these children. I asked for a show of hands of children who had lost a family member or friend to AIDS. Every child in the room raised his hand. I wanted to cry. I had my finger on the pulse of a pandemic.

The term "pandemic" is often used to describe how widespread HIV and AIDS are in much of Africa. HIV has become one of the deadliest diseases in human history. **In the 10th century, the bubonic plague, a highly infectious disease that was fueled by rodents and poor sewage, was responsible for the death of 25 % of the world at that time. HIV in Africa is worse.** The statistics are staggering. In Swaziland for example, 60 % of the population is infected with HIV with the average life expectancy listed at 32.5. In Malawi, the HIV rate is close to 50 % with life expectancy listed at about 36.

In practical terms, it means that in both countries, millions of children have already been orphaned. Sometimes

continued on page 2

children have to raise their younger siblings because often both parents have died. With the population becoming sicker, they are also becoming poorer, because the existing adults are forced to carry the economic load for the family members whose health is failing. Many of the people we met lived on less than \$1.00 per day.

So today when I spoke, I tried to focus on issues that would make a difference. I talked directly about some of the practices that are fueling the spread of AIDS, such as:

1. Promiscuity
2. The myth that having sex with virgins can cure AIDS and
3. The myth that AIDS is spread by using condoms.

I also talked about their grief and how to cope with their profound bereavement. Some had lost both parents to AIDS. Siblings are left to raise siblings. I had a hard time taking my eyes off one sister-brother dyad. The sister looked to be seven. The brother was an infant. And she had him on her lap, consoling him throughout the training. I was also intrigued by one teenager, who said he liked the idea of having bereavement support groups and wanted me to send him information on how they could get some support groups up and running. I smiled even wider when this same teenager said, "When are you coming back?"



R. Dandridge Collins, PhD, is a psychologist with over 25 years of experience integrating pastoral care and behavioral health. He is the founder of the Pastoral Counseling Network, with offices in Media & Philadelphia. His book, *The Trauma Zone: Trusting God for Emotional Healing*, a self-help guide for people who have endured significant emotional pain, will be published (Moody Publishers) in January, 2007. He can be reached at 610-627-9060 or via email drdan19@comcast.net.

Slowing Down

By Karen Gibson, MSS, LSW

....watching and waiting...in a world that is moving faster, is this even possible? What does it look like and how is it helpful? During advent this past year our minister asked the congregation to really think about this concept. My thoughts immediately went to *The Little Prince*: "Come and play with me....I'm feeling so sad," the little prince said to the fox, and the fox replied, "I can't play with you...I'm not tamed." "What does tamed mean?" asked the little prince. "It's something that's been too often neglected. It means, 'to create ties'..." answered the fox. In our personal and professional lives, creating ties, whether it is within a therapy session or outside one, is of utmost importance. Can we slow down long enough to even begin this process? "Please tame me!" the fox begged the little prince. He responded, "I'd like to, but I haven't much time. I have friends to find and so many things to learn." Sound familiar? The fox said, in his wisdom, "The only things you learn are the things you tame."

Slowing down... it goes against the tide...remember hanging out clothes on a clothesline – how great those sheets smelled when you lay your head on the pillow? Remember doing dishes together after dinner and fighting about who would wash, dry or put away? Raking leaves and the fun of jumping in the pile? Shoveling the driveway after a great snowstorm and the reward of hot chocolate with those tiny marshmallows? Today we have dishwashers, microwaves, leaf blowers, and snow blowers to help us spend less time doing the things that once gave us pause and patience – and built relationships as the work was divided. Cell phones, blackberries and computers all increase communication access and, therefore, less personal time. What did we do without them.....how are we really doing with them? How are our children doing?

Slowing down...going with the flow has taken on a whole new meaning and has opened the door for a worrisome sense of entitlement. Does anyone drive the speed limit anymore – or anywhere close to it? If you drive the speed limit, you most likely have someone on the bumper of your car waving wildly and honking and feeling quite justified doing so. If you are going too slowly (for whom?) in the line at a store, your personal space is closed in on and you are bumped to help you get moving. Saving up for anything seems an activity of the past as people feel they "should" have everything now, and the bigger the better. At a recent workshop, I mentioned family gathering together and sitting down for dinner and the presenter said, "What a novel idea!"

Slowing down. 'to create ties'... are we doing it – can we help our clients do it? Milton Mayeroff wrote in *On Caring*, "I must be able to be with him in his world, 'going' into his world in order to sense from 'inside' what life is like for him, what he is striving to be, and what he requires to grow. But only because I understand and respond to my own needs to grow can I understand his striving to grow; I can understand in another only what I can understand in myself." Understanding someone requires slowing down and creating ties... When my mom was diagnosed with Alzheimer's at 49, I began to understand slowing down; when she died at 66, I began to practice slowing down and appreciating every precious moment. This spring I celebrated my 50th birthday, my first wedding anniversary and the gift of private practice...understanding, slowing down and creating ties...and enjoying every single moment!!



Karen Gibson, MSS, LSW, is in private practice at Building Bridges and enjoys working with individuals, families & groups. She can be reached at 610-742-0759 or via e-mail KHugs252@aol.com.

The Energy of Autumn

By Tricia Kramer, MAC, LAC



In classic Chinese Medicine, there are 5 Elements – wood, fire, earth, metal and water. These elements correspond to our seasons – spring, summer, late summer, autumn and winter.

We tend to think of seasons as taking

place outside in nature, but they also are within each of us – in the rhythmic cycles of our lives.

The season of autumn corresponds to the Metal Element. Metal refers to the riches of the earth: essential minerals, salt, gems. It's about enduring strength and structure. It's the time of harvesting, reaping the fruits of our labor. Metal is about finding what matters the most. For our ancestors, autumn was a time to assess what was of value and what would sustain them through the winter and help them make it to another spring. Autumn is a perfect time for pruning.

The lung and large intestine meridians (energy pathways) correspond to the element, Metal. Life begins with the first breath of the lungs and ends when the last breath is gone. The large intestines gather the last nutrients and then return the remains back to the earth. Autumn is about taking in inspiration and then letting go. When we close up or hold in disturbing thoughts or feelings, we are liable to experience physical imbalances, such as breathing difficulties, eruptions on the skin, swelling, diarrhea, or constipation.

Acupuncture releases energy that is stuck on physical, mental or spiritual levels. The needles open up the body's pathways and stimulate blocked energy

to flow. When energy is unblocked and balanced, our bodies are able to heal themselves. Like the power of Dorothy's ruby slippers that took her home, we all have the power to find "home" within ourselves, to feel centered and comfortable within our bodies.

Some of the opportunities of autumn energy include:

- Giving acknowledgement and respect. Write that letter or make that call. Set up an appreciation journal. Practice self-encouragement, self-acceptance, and self-love.
- Honoring life's spirit and beauty and bringing it into everyday life. Surround yourself with people, activities and beautiful things that bring you joy. Use the good china! Give yourself permission to be a beginner. Let go of the need to be perfect and do an activity just for the joy of it. As an experiment, assume that things are easy and are happening just as they should.
- Grieving, forgiving and letting go...all our life lessons are about learning to let go and bringing balance and harmony into our relationships. As Kahlil Gibran states in *The Prophet*, "When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight." I take great comfort in this thought.



Tricia Kramer, MAC, LAC, is a licensed acupuncturist at *Building Bridges*. She currently serves on the board of the *Maryland Acupuncture Society*. She is certified in *Facial Rejuvenation* and

has advanced training in pain management. Tricia can be reached at 610-565-4987 or via email triciakramer@msn.com.

WE STICK BAYOU!

Acupuncture to Commemorate the Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina in Media, PA

Events around the country to support free acupuncture in Louisiana for stress and trauma

Since October, 2005, Acupuncturists Without Borders (AWB) has treated about 6000 people in Louisiana with free community acupuncture in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina...the situation there continues to be severe, with people experiencing acute stress and trauma and a desperate lack of services. Acupuncturists Without Borders would like to continue to send teams for at least 4 more months, and possibly longer.

To commemorate the anniversary, and to raise more funds to keep these programs going, please join your local acupuncturist, Tricia Kramer, who is offering community style acupuncture at *Building Bridges* on Saturday Oct. 14, 2006, 11 am to 4 pm.

Donations for treatments will go to AWB's work in Louisiana. Suggested donation per treatment is \$20.00.

Community Style Acupuncture will consist of:

- Treatment done in a group setting to help reduce stress and anxiety; help with trouble sleeping; provide a general sense of well-being.
- 30 – 45 minute treatment
- All needles are pre-packaged, sterile, and disposed of after use.

See testimonials and more information on AWB by visiting www.acuwithoutborders.org.

Mystery

By Bonita Boyer-Pearsall, MSS, ACSW

"Days pass and years vanish. We walk, sightless, among miracles..." This prayer quoted in My Grandfather's Blessings, by Rachel Naomi Remen, lives with me every day in my personal life and my work with individuals, couples and families struggling with their emotional pain. Recently, I received a call from the husband of a client of mine to tell me that she had died. Ronni had lived well beyond what her doctor had predicted, given the extent of her cancer at the time it was discovered.

The next morning, as I sat with my own grief and prayers, I thought of how much I had come to love and respect her in the years we had worked together. She was a remarkable woman filled with a life force which insisted that she thrive with gratitude and wonder, despite the severe abuse in her childhood and the knock downs in adulthood, including lung cancer. I remembered her habit of wearing a different animal pin whenever I saw her. She told me once that the animal had chosen her each day. She would pin it on and think what it symbolized for her, like the bear for strength and the fish for Christ consciousness. We often began our sessions with the theme that was pinned to her shirt. I thought that morning about the symbolic meaning the hummingbird had for me in regard to her. To me, the hummingbird represents joy and almost seems mystical in the way it hovers, flies sideways and backwards, flapping its wings at a rate that mystifies scientists. These were the associations that arose in me when I thought of her.

Ronni had withdrawn in the last weeks as she hovered near death, allowing contact only with her husband and one of her brothers. Although I understood and respected her detachment as her way of using all her available energy to prepare for dying, I had also felt a sense of rejection and bereft of a chance to say good-bye to her. Feelings of regret and self-doubt which often plague survivors of a deceased person gripped me. Thoughts like, "What did I do wrong? How had I let her down?" would come, only to be answered by, "She needed to meet her death in her own way." And back and forth my thoughts would go.

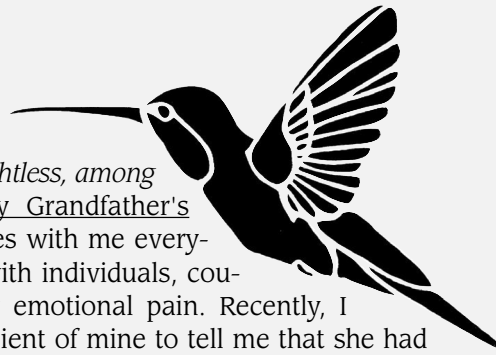
Suddenly, my husband interrupted my reverie as he bent down to kiss me good-bye before going off to work. Directly in my vision as he kissed me, I saw the tie he was wearing, sprinkled with hummingbirds all over. This was a tie he rarely wore. A coincidence? A message? It felt like a reminder about the mysteries in every day life, which Rachel Remen refers to as miracles unseen. Seeing those hummingbirds at just that very moment did reassure and comfort me deeply.

Mystery in this sense is all around us, and it is the wonder about mystery which helps us to see with new eyes. There are times in therapy, as in life, when the recall and honoring of those moments is a powerful resource in bringing spirit back into life. And the more we notice mystery, the more it appears before us.

At Ronni's memorial service, her husband walked up to me to deliver from her a note and a small box. In the box was a beautiful glass hummingbird.



Bonita Boyer-Pearsall, MSS, ACSW, has worked with clients of all ages for 20 years. She specializes in trauma recovery, including grief and loss and life-transition issues. She incorporates imagery, hypnosis, EMDR and Somatic Experiencing in her work. She can be reached at 610-566-9114 or via email bonitaboyer@verizon.net.



Areas of Expertise

- Adoption
- Anxiety
- Attention difficulties and impulsivity
- Chronic physical pain and fatigue
- Depression
- Divorce and remarriage
- Eating disorders
- Ethnically diverse families
- Family and marital/couple conflicts
- Gay and lesbian adults and youth
- Infidelity
- Learning differences (children, adolescents, & adults)
- Obsessive compulsive behaviors
- Physical violence
- Sexual abuse
- Stress management
- Substance abuse
- Suicidal thinking/behavior
- Trauma

What We Provide

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John Brendler, MSW, ACSW / 610.566.4011

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610.566.9114

Art Therapy
Janine Cwiklinski, MA / 215.565.5617

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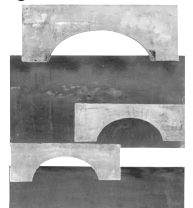
Nutrition Therapy
Bryn Boyer, RD / 484.947.6106

Career and Life Coaching
Nancy Clifford, MA / 610.876.0438

We welcome comments, questions, or suggestions about the topics in this edition or any areas of interest that you would like us to address in future newsletters. Correspondence can be sent via e-mail to John Brendler at jbrendler7@earthlink.net

Building Bridges is a facility where independent, helping professionals pursue their distinct practices in a caring and supportive environment, sharing a common concern for the well-being of their clients.

Building Bridges
A Center for Healing and Change
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Design by Amy Pollack Graphic Design

A STUDENT'S REFLECTIONS

"We are not here to play, to dream, to drift, we have hard work to do and loads to lift, shun not the struggle, tis God's gift; be strong!" -Unknown Poet

Prior to every football game last year, my friend P. J. Kommanyon would use this quote as inspiration. At first I didn't really think that it held much relevance to me or my life. All I could think about during the ritual was how badly I wanted to hit someone. As I look back at the situation it became a telling of my life journey. Football has played a huge part in defining who I am, and who I want to be. This past year I was named one of the captains of the team and was pushed to my best by coaches, players, and by me. Because of this encouragement I was able to provide leadership, dedication, and integrity.

My life has been a roller coaster ride filled with struggles and hard work. There were many obstacles that I had to overcome in order to better myself. Some of these issues stemmed from the resentment I had for my father as well as the questions surrounding my adoption. If I did not embrace the hard work that I put into myself throughout my two years here at Hyde, I would not be able to say Dad, **I love you**. I have finally realized that struggle is key for growth in life. Here at Hyde it is impossible to turn away from struggle or to give it the cold shoulder. Because of these lessons I have become a better son, a better brother, a better friend and most of all a better man. This year I was able to reconnect with my higher power and realize how important it is to have a relationship with God and to have faith. I believe that God has given me obstacles to keep me humble. I have faith that one day I will reunite with my birth mother to ask the simple question, WHY?

Many people these past two years have seen me as just an athlete with brute strength, (aka meat-head) but deep down I am a sensitive teddy bear. I use my strength to show this to others around me through concern and care. When it came to certain issues this year, instead of running away like the old Dave would have done, I faced them head on and began to talk about my inner struggles with my brothers here in order to receive help.

My relationship with my family, my view of myself, all has been tested since arriving at Hyde. Now as I stand here today I can finally say I am on my way to becoming a man of truth, compassion and integrity with the tools I so longed to embrace.

*David Stefl, Hyde '06
Commencement June 3, 2006*

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Maria Sykorova-Pritz, MS	610.461.2095

The final letting go—the freedom to love

By M. Friel

I have finally started to get it- that what this is about is the freedom to love without any conditions or attachments. Love was always a step away- if I just did the right thing then maybe there would be love. And you know what I finally realize it that it was something that I was not able to achieve because the standard for love was not my standard, but a perceived standard of someone else. So therefore nothing I did could really make that happen. So it is really very basic- I can love someone just because I love them and not for what they do, or who they are, or who

they will become. I grew up thinking that I could make someone love me if I just did that one something. But what happened is I just lost my own direction and therefore I never got to love freely or be loved freely without any strings attached. So the reality is that it is not about success or failure- there are no successes or failures. There is just life and our freedom to love ourselves and those around us for who they are- not for what I needed them to become to make me feel better about myself. And I get to stop fighting the battle and I get to stop trying to prove that I can win.

Although I guess I have to ask the question- win what? And now I know the answer- it is not the winning I want, it is the freedom to love and be loved for just who I am and not whom someone wanted me to be. So I would have to say that the freedom to love and be loved is the gift that I was seeking. The wall is gone and I get to walk out and be free to love and be loved. And I know that as long as I love then I will do what is right, because it is absolutely true that love never fails.

THE DANCE WITHIN

By Beth Berman

Life happens in the between spaces,
Between the words, between the glances,
Between the grimaces and between the sighs.
Life happens when it is unrecorded,
When it is energized, not compromised,
Decidedly unapologetic and completely candid.
Life is lost in complacency, suffocated in self-righteousness
And abandoned in the anxiety of perfection.

Life happens in the between spaces,
Between the intimacy of two bodies
Locked in the silent conversation of discovery,
Revealed yet withheld, spoken and retracted,
Visible to the blind eye, sensed by the calloused heart.
Life is what we no longer wish for
But grasp unabashedly in the palm of our hand.

Life is the individual dance within the universe,
The tap of the foot, the rhythm and rhyme,
The sway of the skirt to the pulsing beat.
Life is meringue,
The miracle of mournful flamenco,
Technical yet tenacious, alluring and sensual,
Choreographed both with simplicity and complexity,
Life is a delicate dance.

Therapy Groups

Contact leader for information on each group.

CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS

Adolescent Girls (ages 11-14, 14-18)
Amy Fantalis, MSW, LSW

**Adolescent Girls Diagnosed with
Bipolar Disorder and their Families**
Amy Fantalis, MSW, LSW

Adolescent Boys
R. Dandridge Collins, PhD

Art Therapy Group for Adolescents
Janine Cwiklinski, MA

Writing Group for Adolescents
John Brendler, MSW, ACSW

PARENTS

**Support Group for Parents of
Adolescents**
R. Dandridge Collins, PhD

Mothers of Young Children
Nancy Shapiro, MSS, LCSW

ADULTS

Adult Psychotherapy Group
David Marion, EdD

Women's Psychotherapy Group
Nancy Shapiro, MSS, LCSW

Single Adults Group
Nancy Shapiro, MSS, LCSW

Grief and Loss Group for Adults
Bonita Boyer-Pearsall, MSS, ACSW

Men's Group
Ted Glackman, MEd
Larry Schwab, LMFT

Couples Group
John Brendler, MSW, ACSW

Mid-Life Women's Group
Nancy Clifford, MA

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to find out more about who we are and what we provide.

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