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PRH -USA
Personality and Human Relations
An International School
of Adult Development since 1970

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When Life Breaks Through

by Ron Spann

As promised in our last issue, we are proud to devote this issue of our newsletter to the most recent major publication of PRH-International, *When Life Breaks Through*.

The book both documents the PRH Helping Relationship as a contribution to the field of human growth and healing methods, but also uses narratives from the words of some of the very PRH professionals and their clients whose journeys together in PRH Helping Relationship become the heart of this book.

On the way to this newsletter, however, we had the good fortune of a workshop for PRH educators to help them make use of and present the book to their various publics. An editor's dream come true, especially one who loves moving targets.

So it is that the following articles are the work of several educators from PRH-USA Center who took part in the workshop in August: Susan Ahrendt, Eveleen Forkin, Dan Lonnquist, Toni Rogers and Lynn Salata.

Susan contributes an overview of both the book and the dynamics of the Helping Relationship process at the core of its contents. Lynn's article revisits what Helping Relationship means to growth and healing.

Our readers have met Dan in these pages before. The interview with him was done out of interest in his perspective as both a PRH educator and also a clinical



Backrow: Susan Ahrendt, Dan Lonnquist, Toni Rogers behind a smiling Irma Gendreau during last May's General Assembly of educators.

psychologist trained in other approaches to the human person.

Toni and Eveleen are both veteran parish ministers as well as PRH educators. Their articles in this issue offer us some insight on the rich dynamics of how it feels to accompany others in Helping Relationship.

These superb friends and PRH professionals have gathered their energies to introduce *When Life Breaks Through* to the readers of this newsletter, and perhaps introduce not a few readers to the PRH Helping Relationship. Enjoy!

In This Issue of the Newsletter

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PRH Helping Relationship and *When Life Breaks Through*

By Susan Ahrendt

My recent opportunity as an educator to take a workshop about the book *When Life Breaks Through* enabled me to zero in on the three underlying thrusts of PRH Helping Relationship: *analysis of sensations*, the *work of healing*, and *the importance of the relationship between the client and accompanist*. The three are closely related because without a developing *skill of analysis*, the *healing* will not progress, and the *relationship* will not grow.

Analysis

Persons need to be able to do analysis well! Analysis is *the one skill* that is essential to using any part of the PRH tool well; without it little or no progress is made. Analysis engages the whole person. The process begins with a live **sensation**. *“What we call a sensation can reveal itself by a feeling in the body, an intuition, a strong emotions, an image ... that has some psychological content to it. [These] inner states, which have their own consistency, also affect the body and are capable of being felt physiologically. Our method is simple but it allows us to penetrate a complex reality.”* (WLBT, p.19).

With any skill the more we practice the better we become, and the benefits are greater. As a golfer's skill improves it takes fewer strokes to get the ball into that little cup. Likewise with greater efficiency in analysis it takes fewer words to go to the heart of the sensation being analyzed. Little by little the content of sensations will reveal more of one's interior lived reality. The analyses done by several of the clients in the book enabled them to name and go

back to re-experience what had wounded them in their past history. This is a powerful testimony to the effectiveness of the tool of analysis.

Healing

The clients in the book are ordinary people who were functioning and successful as viewed from the outside. However, on the inside each of them experienced various difficulties like drivenness, difficulties in relationships, extraordinary levels of fear, and more. These persons were *suffering in their present day lives* because of sufferings that were inflicted on them somewhere in their past.

As they all undertook their journeys of healing, they had little sense of direction or of what they were going to face. PRH Helping Relationship helped each of them to be grounded in elements of their *being* like interior strength, courage, faith, and a level of hope that life could be better. These enabled them to keep moving forward through their interior pain and to commit great amounts of time, energy and financial resources to these long term journeys. As André Rochais stated “A person's growth always unfolds in unforeseen ways (p. 239).”

The Relationship between Client and Accompanist

The healing work hinges on the relationship between the client and the helper. *Wounding* occurred in relationship, and likewise, *healing* will occur in relationship. The client needs to experience the presence of a caring



*Small group work during educators' workshop on *When Life Breaks Through**

person who is fully present to them in whatever they live. There is a commitment on the part of the helper as well as the person seeking help to enter into this deep, restorative work. It is only in learning to trust the helper that the client will be able to relive the wounding experiences of the past and thus purge the past pains.

It is clarifying to see how the healing that occurred for the persons who are featured in *When Life Breaks Through* was a result of all three elements coming to bear, despite the uniqueness of each case history. For even one element to be absent, the journey into healing would not have been as thorough. I hope that these reflections will help new readers of this wonderful resource mine more of its treasures.

Susan lives in Sioux Falls, SD, and has undertaken both the individual work of a PRH educator, and also with her husband Wally, leads some of the PRH workshops created for couples.

Helping Relationship and the Elderly

By Eveleen Forkin

For the past 20 years, I have worked part-time in a parish setting. An important aspect of my work is visiting the homebound, who are mostly elderly people. I have stayed in this work because, even though it isn't directly PRH, it is very PRH.

Most of these home-bound people are old, in their 80's or 90's, and have no specific activities other than taking care of their personal needs. All of them live alone and they have a lot of time to think. What attracts me to them is who they are. I try to help them have quality of life at this stage as I firmly believe that the wisdom of old age is *the best is yet to come*. It is the last stage of life, for which the first was made.

Another goal I have in mind is to prepare them for the transition into the hereafter. They all grew up with the “old religion”. They frequently experience a lot of guilt and they carry a lot of suppressed pain. The work is quite challenging, at least in the beginning of the relationship.

Little by little they begin to trust me. They tell me of husbands who were always absent, of the second daughter who had an unhappy marriage, of the in-laws who never accepted them or another heart break. Each person's story is different; each has an element of sadness or regret. I help them to tell their story; they weep and weep while I quietly listen. This goes on for some time. I never speak about the PRH process; I just live it with them. They

gradually begin to make connections, and resolve issues. They brighten up. We laugh together and have fun.

Every year one or two pass on to their eternal reward. I miss them, though I know that they are in a better place, that they know and see God. It is in the process of being accompanied in their last leg of the journey that they confront their fear of dying. They confront their images of God, of the God who waits with the scales to measure the good and the bad. Usually in their minds, the bad far outweighs the good. We talk about God, and they finally accept that a loving God is waiting to greet them with open arms. They no longer have a need to be afraid. This change usually takes place over the course of a year because some of their guilt is deeply imbedded since childhood.

Most of the seniors I visit at present are much happier and at peace. They look forward to my visits, and I enjoy my time with them. So many times I have wanted to discontinue this work since PRH is my primary focus, but after discerning from within, the call to this type of Helping Relationship is loud and clear. This part of my work is just as important as the sessions and GRACs are.

I got a call one day to visit a gentleman of 72 (now 78). He was bright and alert. He had his PhD in chemistry. Because of physical problems, he could not attend sessions. I gave him the book *Persons and Their*

Growth. I explained certain passages he had difficulty with. He had an exceptional capacity to access his being. The book helped him understand more about his interior life. This brought him new life and hope. Gradually he entered into a healing type of Helping Relationship. He got in touch with his childhood hurts.

He grew up in Europe; both his mother and father were absent. He lived this early abandonment, sobbing and sobbing as he relived his childhood hurts. He had great tenacity and stuck with the process. It took a long time, about two years.

Today the past is behind him. He lives from his being and he appreciates life so much more. His Parkinson's disease has worsened; however, he has no pain. He exudes a peace and serenity and lives a transparency in his life that is so life-giving for him and his wife (who is now also into her growth). I continue to visit them weekly with my pastoral duties. Our times together are times for being.

These events fill my heart with gratitude for the gift of PRH in the lives of my older people. Even in the final years there is an opportunity to journey into healing and growth; there is so much more to us than we can imagine. It is a gift and a privilege for me to journey people to the end.

Eveleen is hopelessly Irish, speaks French, and has been in the vanguard of forming PRH educators on our USA teams in Helping Relationship for years.

A Short Catalog of PRH™ Workshops

Visit <http://PRH-usa.com/usacal.asp> for more information,
or call an Educator to learn of Additional Offerings, Mini-workshops, etc.

Who Am I?

In this session, the focus is on one's being, the positive center of the person. The being, self-image, relationships, intellect, feelings, body and deep conscience are explored to increase self awareness. A reflective writing method (PRH Analysis), and a decision-making process (PRH Discernment) are taught and practiced in the workshop.

My Interpersonal Relationships

Participants focus on their relationships with those they love. They review and clarify their relationships in order to grow in their capacity to give and receive love.

Leading My life

Returning to the pivotal centers in the person (Being, "I", Sensibility, Body and Deep Conscience) explored in "Who Am I?", participants observe how they function at each center. They discover what they need to support the development of their being. They identify personal life goals and how to realistically live these goals day to day

Approach to Self Through the Body

Through simple relaxation and movement exercises, participants grow in awareness of their body and its messages. They learn to describe feelings and follow them in writing to uncover the truth in their experience. This workshop is a step by step development of the PRH analysis skill.

I Am Seeking God

By exploring the history of their search for God, participants discover means to create an optimum environment for spiritual growth. They define their relationship with God, and cultivate attitudes for deepening it.

A Person's Growth and the Experience of Transcendancy

Exploring their unique experience of Transcendancy, participants become aware of how this experience impacts the growth of their being. Participants learn to identify and describe their personal experience of the "More Than Me" and become aware of their journey in relationship to Transcendancy

Helping My Children Become Themselves

Parents explore ideas and patterns that influence their relationships with their children of all ages. Needs and aspirations of the child are examined, including the need to be loved and guided, and to be a child in a secure environment.

My Affective Life

Identifying unmet needs of the past, participants begin to heal from experiences of not feeling loved. They discover the basic need to love and be loved and grow in their capacity to love themselves and others.

Initiation into PRH Helping Relationship

People taking this workshop learn the components of the specialized PRH Helping Relationship. They practice helping and being helped with real problems. The knowledge, tools, and experience gained lead to confidence in the use of this method.

My Relational Life Today (Creative Expression)

Participants use creative expression to explore their relational life. They express sensations stirred by current relationships in line, form and color. Important aspects of growth are revealed as participants explore their sensations and current relationships.

My Childhood Past (Creative Expression)

By using art materials, participants reconnect with their childhood. Happy, as well as painful, childhood memories that are still alive today are explored. This is a healing and growth-producing exploration.

Life Within Me and Its Obstacles (Creative Expression)

Participants explore their positive qualities through line, color, and form. Art experience is not necessary. While moving along the road to self-discovery, they recognize what enhances and inhibits their growth and especially the expression of being.

Managing My Growth

Participants cultivate practical skills and attitudes helpful in making the most of their potential. They learn how to plan and manage their lives for optimum growth and healing.

My Essential Course of Action (My Life's Work)

Participants sort out what is and what is not life-giving in their activities, and where they want to focus their time, energy and creativity. They review their past and present activities to clarify their life's decision.

Becoming a Couple

Couples learn to listen to each other from their hearts, and share more of themselves. They reflect on what they experience in their relationship in order to clarify the bond that draws them together. They also grow in awareness of the behaviors that block their growth as a couple.

An Interview with Dan Lonnquist

Ron: Dan, what impressed you when you read *When Life Breaks Through*?

Dan: My first impression of the book was of how well it was written, particularly the introduction, the explanatory sections, and the more technical sections and of course, the case studies. I liked the appendices to the book, which gave concise explanations for each PRH tool (component) and a description for each of the PRH sessions.

Ron: You took part in the educators' workshop based on the book. Did it give you any additional insights?

Dan: The [workshop] benefited me in realizing [that you can hold] unrealistic expectations for the book. For instance, I now appreciate that not everyone will share my enthusiasm; the book won't just blow every reader away. After reading it I also recognized that I had expected the case studies to be intensely dramatic stories of miraculous transformations. After all, my own experience in PRH includes some very dramatic turning points. I came home from one workshop so deeply affected that Lynne could immediately sense a major change in my personality. In *WLBT* many of the case studies are deeply moving without being especially dramatic. Their value is in reflecting the lives of ordinary persons who might not seem like who you expect to seek a Helping Relationship.

Ron: Do any other things stand out from your workshop experience?

Dan: Well, we looked at what differentiates the PRH approach from varying psychological approaches.

Ron: For instance?

Dan: Foremost, PRH is an educational versus a therapeutic approach. That is, it puts a great deal of stock in the individual's need for freedom to decide what is best for them as choices develop from work in Helping Relationship. Of course, this is based on our unwavering regard for the being and its wisdom.

Ron: That does not mean that there is never any confronting feedback from the PRH accompanist, does it? I say so because another non-PRH professional asked such a question after reading the book to discuss it with a group of PRH educators.

Dan: Of course not. *WLBT* shows the importance of mirroring back what a clients say. For me, that means trying to mirror back places where they need to confront themselves. PRH Helping Relationship is gentle, but it's also very direct.

Ron: So what would you say to a prospective reader about *WLBT*?

Dan: That it's an excellent introduction to PRH, its Helping Relationship, and the potential riches of healing in one's life.

Dan is a clinical psychologist for Salem Veterans Hospital in Virginia and specializes in post traumatic stress. With his wife Lynne, he directs the Center for Growth and Wellbeing of Roanoke.

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The Creational Gaze In The PRH Helping Relationship



(PRH Professionals learn what is perhaps a unique practice in their training as personal helpers of others: to develop an interior disposition of profound regard for those they accompany expressed in terms of holding them in a gaze of creative hope. It is an inward affirmation of the re-creation that those on healing and growth journeys are undergoing. The following paragraphs are an adaptation of a personal analysis that Toni Rogers wrote during the workshop for educators on When Life Breaks Through.)

The gaze is what stands out most in me. It is a soul to soul gaze that embodies gratuitous love, respect, and acceptance of the other. From this gaze a parental bond either happens or not, but in that gaze love stands at the service of the other, seeing the good and giftedness that the other cannot as yet see. It is a creational gaze that brings to life what was there from the beginning. There is deep faith in the inherent wisdom of the original creation, the child, the adult was meant to be.

The deep, saving love that comes from the being and

reaches to the other's being by invisible bond is contained in the gaze. The presence to the other as they are is there too. The elements of the gaze are all contained in one another and cannot be separated because of the humanity of the helper. The vigilance to the healing of self and observation of self is the key to the helper's ability to hold that gaze and to hold the other in it.

In my own Helping Relationships, I am attentive to what is going on in me, reactions, subtle movements that may provide clues to my own healing and avoid blocks to the client. The PRH tool is the underlying key to my growth and the client's; it is in the analysis and healing that we allow space for re-education to begin. The deep connection between the helper and helpee is aided by these tools for growth. Coming to BE is the reason for our existence. Our help to the other's being is our main intent.

Toni Rogers has lived in Los Alamos, New Mexico for the last two years. Besides launching PRH work in this part of the South West, she is also responsible for adult religious formation in a local parish.

Why A Helping Relationship?

By Lynn Salata

From time to time, my participants ask, "What can a Helping Relationship do that I can't achieve alone with my journal?" I find that many of us, in our quest for growth, progress very slowly alone. Writing in a journal is not necessarily enough to move forward. As a PRH Educator, I find that participants often journal in order to "vent" or "question" rather than grow and heal. Even with a serious growth journal – using written analysis of sensations with psychological content – we move ahead more quickly when accompanied.

In Helping Relationship, the relational dimension brings us a means to be seen and heard, to be received, and to securely exist in our true selves. We are brought out of isolation into life-giving human connection. Helping Relationship is a vitalizing human environment which calls us forth in our deepest self.

"Our personal history is marked by relationships from the moment of our conception. We were conceived in a relationship, we have grown more or less easily because of our relationships, we have suffered because of the absence

of relationships or because of difficult ones; also, as children, we may have developed ourselves because of harmonious relationships. As human persons, we need relationships in order to advance.

"Unfortunately, what we most often observe in adults involved in a growth journey is the absence of true bonds, the incapacity to form bonds, the incapacity to be relational, the incapacity to belong. If, with our PRH tool, it would suffice to analyze in order to heal, that is, to analyze on our own in order to evacuate the pain from our wounds and to heal from it, we would not need helping relationship in order to advance. The written and rigorous analysis of our inner lived experience would fully meet our need for clarity about ourselves, our need to understand our sensations in order to manage our reactions. The same would apply to persons who systematically take charge of their growth and development. However, observation and experience has shown that this is not reality. Wounds always happen in



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Why A Helping Relationship?

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relationships, and we can truly heal only through relationships." (— PRH International APP 109)

In my experience, relationship in our growth journey is essential in order to satisfy normal needs and to bring back into balance any abnormal needs. Just as every child must progress through a crawling stage in order to develop soundly, each of us has relational needs which cannot be overlooked. The need to be seen, the need to be received, the need to be loved for oneself... are developmental needs which cannot be "skipped". Each is essential – and each requires the attentive presence of another. PRH Helping Relationship offers that relational "presence".

Lynn serves on the Directive Council of PRH-USA Center as its President. She conducts her PRH practice from her home in Clarkston, Michigan where she and artist husband John have just received union cards as new empty-nesters.

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