

HRD 564

GROUP BEHAVIOR AND GROUP PROCESS

TERM PAPER

05/03/90

BREAKTHROUGH

10/02/90 SWEETY

Mom and Dad wanted the best for Sweety. They had learned what Success means (that is, to be like everybody else, with a little house, a little car, a nice job, etc.) and they were determined to teach Sweety. It all started with Mom choosing the perfect Dad for baby. Mom and Dad's plan of action worked to perfection for many years, to be more precise, about seventeen years. Sweety learned potty training and table manners at an exceptionnally young age. School years went by like a breeze, with no traumatic experiences, at least for Mom and Dad. Daddy was so proud of his little Sweety, he even let her join an athletic club (he loved track and field). Come rain or shine, Sundays were spent running around a stadium, beating her friends to win medals. And so went the early years. Slowly but surely, Sweety developed an itch, an irresistible itch, for freedom with a big "F", - a get me out of here quick itch - and when Dad "suggested" technical school, she said, " No more, no more, no more, no more; "Art school," she said, and "Far away." And so off went Sweety.

But far away did not do the trick. Mom and Dad and Them came along, no matter how far she went; they were under her skin and would not rub off. In her naive and innocent mind a decision had to be made to undertake systematic destruction of eighteen years of lovely programming. Luckily, or maybe not so luckily for Mom and Dad and Them, there were plenty of "how to" books on the subject and plenty of devoted helpers.

The ghetto was lovely, the remodeled garage and the not so remodeled storefronts, the artsy-fartsy friends, the motobike, the 1959 GMC pick-up, macrobiotics, the primal scream, the church bus mobile-home,

sweat lodges and vision quests. Pregnant little Sweety this and nursing little Sweety that. One little baby came in the desert, one little baby in the tub, one little baby in the carriage house, and one little Sweety ran, wee, wee, wee, wee, all the way home. All the way home to Mom and Dad and Them.

30/04/90 SWEETY PART TWO

There she was, sharing the house of her childhood with her parents and three kids after ten years of self-imposed exile. A zoo, it was a zoo. But Sweety was high, she had worked soo hard on herself. She had even achieved a friendly divorce. Her expectations were only of making it big, do all the things she liked and why not, meet her soulmate. Had everyone not said to go for your dreams - go for it.

Anyway it came down like a bullet. She had hardly put her foot on the continent, that she was already invited to a group experience. And there came Prince Charming charging - He was everything Cinderella would have dreamed of - and much more - He even had a lovely wife, lovely children. Everything was ecstatic - ecstatically painful. Sweety switched on her little girl dream channel, and good old reason was blasting to get through, to no avail, that channel was off.

Little Sweety trusted, admired, loved unconditionally - Did he not know what he was doing and that it was right - Was he not a psychologist and almost old enough to be her father. This love was written in the sky. It was going to be the marriage of the century. It was sublime.

Sweety did have an alarm system and it went off, and she said "No more, no more, no more, and closed shop. Prince Charming was so beautiful that he even let go of his true love.

If I started with this short story, it is to set the tone of what issues and break-through came up in the group process. It was essential to let go in order to trust again, or it was essential to be able to trust again in order to let go. For a whole year, I had intentionally stopped all personal growth process, simply because I was hurting too much and because those processes were closely intertwined with the relationship (Prince Charming) and its failure.

04/28/90

I trusted my dad that he would do the best for me and protect me from pain and I got hurt

I trusted my husband blindly and I lost myself

I trusted that he knew what we needed and he did not

I trusted this man that he would love me until the end of time and he will - but he went back to his wife

I trusted that he knew all about life and he did not

I trusted my therapist that she wanted the best for me

She only knew what had been good for her

I trusted groups' leaders to be understanding of the participants and of my process and they could not

Because they are just human just like me

How painful and powerful a place it is to realize that only I am in charge of my life

It is taking a long time to come to terms with trust. The very trust I had in people has been the very source of my revolt. From day one I was programmed by my parents, by school education not to trust myself, but to trust the authority figure. So I learned to trust, but this form of trust is also a form of dependance and it creates unhealthy relationship with others. I had a model and the will to revolt. Unfortunately this is not a war one can win over night. I find those unconscious currents so

overwhelming and insidious that acceptance will probably become in time the most effective tool to just be myself. Trusting the process and letting go of "Kicking and Screaming" might bring peace. As I learn to be confident that I do not give up on myself in becoming accepting of all that I am and carry with me, I will I am sure be less hurtfull to myself and to others. I do not want however social conditioning to run my life and the life of my children. I believe that in order to change the world, one has to start with self.

11/14/89

Is it letting go of my illusions now

Would there be anything left without them

Do they keep me in pain

Or do they keep me going

Acceptance

Can there be love without illusions

04/27/90

I found the courage to let go and mourn the loss

Of dreams which belonged to childhood

And found in its place

The dreams of a mature adult

And the courage to carry them through

03/25/90 DREAM

I jumped in the river with someone. The currents suddenly became uncontrollable and pulled us in dangerously. In trying to save myself, I realize I have a float and I put it on. I am holding the person with me to keep him from drowning. I feel people pulling me under, holding on to me from under the water. I hold on tight and manage to stay afloat.

I learned so much, but I hurt so much and so many. Learning must not come at any cost. I am glad to slowly leave behind the arrogance of the twenties but it is so hard to let go of the dreams of childhood.

It is easier to reject tangible objects of reality, such as a husband and hoping that all the shortcomings projected on him will disappear with his leaving. Being a dreamer, I am shocked to realize that letting go of dreams - growing up dreams - allows me to accept reality. This is so stupidly obvious. With this I see my marriage as OK, with all the growing pains, all the dreaming clashing with reality and the just dont know any better, the cure is not to rid of the person, but to let go of updated dreams.

04/27/90

I've come home

But what road did I take

I was blind and I wandered off

I was crippled and I could not walk

I was mad and could not think

I was dreaming and traveling the underworld

I was flying to the upperworld

Indulging the journey

But what took me so long to come home

And is there someone there

Will there be someone there

Once I walk home

I was a child wandering away

Wandering at so many mysteries

Forgetting all and everybody around me

Like a child who does not know

That mom has died of worry three times

By the time I got home

I learned so much

I hurt myself and I hurt others

I just did not know that I was OK

@4/13/90

Group is communication

It is working through the barriers

Testing the pretence, the lies

And be rewarded for letting down the walls

Rewarded with closeness, understanding, humanity

Rewarded with belonging finally

It is letting go of this strange alienation

Of intense loneliness like if I was from Mars

And where my own children seemed like strangers

Is there anything more precious

Than to feel I belong

Group is pain for discovering so many things undone

For holding on to the high of aliveness

And clashing with daily realities

For seeing the light only to enter another tunnel

For discovering that holding back is painful

For admitting that we are alone in making choices

Group is being a child again

Trusting like never before and wanting to give the world

The freshness of a new self

Loving like never before and forgetting the fragility

It is believing in fairy tales all over again

Group is a process

In and out

Wanting to experience life again and taking chances

Learning and getting hurt

And finding the courage to let again a group revive the hopes and the pain

Group is to become responsible

For all that we are

For all our choices

It is the best and safest place to grow up

I had become afraid of growing with the help of groups or therapist because it greatly influenced my choices of what I should do. I always put my trust in the process, but also in people, who I wanted to believe, in my insecurity, to know what I needed. I was resentful of the influence I let them have over my life, yet there has been so much growth that I know my anger to be my problem only. I wished that someone would have told me what I know now.* I could not make sense of this non-structured happening dropped in a rigid academic structure. Yet by the second week-end I realized this setting was giving me what I had most needed in previous group experience - follow up. I had not just been dropped back in the craziness of reality with my pains and my high and just a "good luck to you" - I was given a chance to make sense of the turmoils in a safe way and let go of the resentment built from previous experiences.

Regardless of the pain involved in the process and all the short comings one could think of, Group is a most valuable and precious experience. I was struck by the effectiveness of a non-structured approach; having had previous experiences of this kind in a structured setting, I can say without hesitation that this method comes far ahead. I became aware that if I am given even the smallest amount of leadership, I will unconsciously delegate part of my responsibility to the leader for safety, know how, reinforcement; I set up a dependant relationship. If it is made clear that there is no structure, the necessity for each

*** IF THEY HAD, IT WOULDN'T HAVE WORKED!**

individual to take charge of their process is eminent. But to what extend can leadership be removed so that participants feel totally responsible, and is non-structure threatening to some individual to the point of not being able to benefit from the experience.

The structure of this course is in a sense independant of the content, yet it provides something which, from my experience, is essential to the process, namely: follow-up. In this case the second part of the course which provides a tremendous sense of security and trust just by giving the participants a chance to feel that there is more time for a safe continuation of the process.

I suspect that the issues raised and the quality of the interactions taking place is dependant on the participants, giving much greater opportunities for growth by not restricting the group to exercises the leader could think of.

@4/27/90 DREAM

An earthquake - My parents or the people I am with try to stop me from escaping. They think there is no hope and that we should all wait for the end together. I refuse to just not try at all and take off. I struggle through the danger and I think make it.

When I grow up, I want to be NE

Merniquee, this is one of the most beautiful and powerful papers I have ever received. Thank you.

I would like to see it published, and would like to use parts of it in future classes & workshops. (Anonymously, of course). If this would be OK - please return a copy. And if you are interested in publishing it, send me 2 - and I will send it to Tom Dearing at the J.H.P. for review & comment. Again, this could be anonymous if you wish. *Bing*