

WHEN I FIRST MET FAY FRANSELLA I FIRST MET GEORGE KELLY

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When I first met Fay I first met George Kelly. In the pages of a book called *Personal Change and Reconstruction*. I was working at the time as a speech therapist, specialising in stuttering. Along with a number of colleagues I was dissatisfied with the largely behavioural approaches to treatment that were offered us. Something more was needed. Something deeper that would bring about second order change, not just first order change. Fay's research for the book focused on elaborating the experience of fluency, rather than trying to eliminate the stuttering and it made perfect sense. Her ideas came to form the basis of some of my own, not only related to stuttering but to all communication problems and, indeed, to life itself. This work has inspired therapists and others from all over the world.

I was about to embark on some reading when Fay advertised an introductory course in PCP. It seemed just what I wanted. And it turned out to be the most enlightening course I'd ever attended. To begin with I sat there rather bemused in company with some very experienced counsellors and psychotherapists. But I soon got over my thoughts of being 'just a speech therapist' as I realised that the others were as enthralled and stretched as I was.

When that course was over we demanded more. Which was how the Advanced Course came about. This was held in Fay and Roy's house and was the high-light of my week. I don't know how long Fay had been brooding over creating a Centre for PCP but one day she told me something of her ideas for it and, to my amazement, asked me to work with her to get it started.

From this point on I am thoroughly dislodged. As I was involved with its very beginnings I feel I ought to be able to produce a neat early history. Unfortunately, so much has happened in my working and my private life since then that I can only retrieve some unstructured memories. But as they seem to hold something of the essence of those early

days I'll describe a few of them.

The first that comes to mind is a day when I went to Fay's house. She opened the door without a word, led me into the sitting-room and pointed to the table. On it was half a bottle of champagne and two glasses. This could only mean that the offer Fay had put in for a house in Warwick Way had been accepted. Then followed some weeks of builders tearing down walls, volunteers painting, deliveries of furniture and so on. And we didn't wait for all this to be completed before we started new courses and took on clients.

Then there is the memory of a robbery. Fay and Roy were on holiday and one morning I was in the basement talking to a colleague. When I came upstairs into the main office I found the equipment cupboard doors wide open and the tape-recorders and OHPs gone. It really was no wonder. The front door was wide open and workmen in and out all the time. We had a frantic day with policemen adding to the bodies filling the house. The workman were most indignant at being questioned. By the evening the equipment had been found and the young men who had taken it caught. It was my birthday.

A very different occasion was the day of Fay's 'launch'. I can just remember people crammed into the office. Reporters asking questions, friends saying supportive things. Then came the high spot of the day. Three lovely ladies entered in long black dresses and diamond necklaces. No – they were probably diamante. How they managed to stand upright in the crush I don't know, let alone sing. Their faces were barely six inches from their audience. But they gazed steadfastly at the back wall, looking relaxed and serene. One of the singers blew a note on a pan-pipe and they sang perfectly in tune unaccompanied. I've no idea how they left. I sometimes wonder whether they did leave or would one day be found squashed in some forgotten corner.

Courses continued to be developed and students

began to come from Ireland as well as the rest of Britain. Later they were to come from as far away as Yugoslavia. Projects were designed for companies like British Airways. Client numbers began to build up.

People had demanded some recognition of the work they were doing on the Advanced Course and so the Diploma was born. A Diploma Board was set up to design the Diploma, then to monitor the work through assessment. I've never been too comfortable on Committees or Boards, especially as I always seemed to be lumbered with doing the Minutes. The Diploma Board was different. We were developing something new to PCP and at each meeting we moved forward another step. We went out to lunch afterwards in those early days and I was in the company of some of my favourite people. I'm going to show off here: I was the first to gain the Diploma in Psychotherapy and Counselling. I'll never forget the occasion of the first awards as Don Bannister, Gavin Dunnett and Tom Ravenette were all present.

I do remember well some residential Workshops we put on. They took place in a kind of barn, round which there was a group of pretty cottages way up in... well, way up... I'd never been to one before the first and was rather bemused. I expected a nice friendly occasion of discussion and experiential work and couldn't understand why people got upset from time to time. Someone told me solemnly that it was the mark of a powerful workshop if there were some tears! Come the second workshop I was in a role-play with the workshop leader and something hit me right in the gut. I understood. Clearly I had been closed on the first occasion, not this time.

Fay always encouraged us to do our own thing and I was interested in working with children. Teaching on Foundation Courses I'd gone on about PCP not being dependent on words alone. That it could be used with those without language. No-one seemed to believe me. I ran a workshop called Beyond Words. I had a burst of invention of non-verbal procedures. I was up half the night before the workshop, pulling faces ranging from agony to ecstasy, in order to produce visual emotional constructs. When I think about it, these procedures have stood me in good stead ever since. I was feeling quite pleased with my efforts until I realised that no-one, but no-one, had cried.

Then I had to leave the Centre. Due to family ill-

ness I could no longer be sure of being free to work. And by the time things improved for me the courses had been separated from the other activities of the Centre and Ray Evans took them over under the auspices of PCP Education and Training. I joined him and others but many of us had roles in both companies.

When Fay and Roy moved down to Falmouth, although we were still in touch I saw less of her. This was when I began to bless the invention of the email. It has done a lot to extend our relationship. We have done some chapters together and a book, *Personal Construct Counselling in Action*. I've always enjoyed writing with Fay.

And now the Centre has joined the University and there is the prospect of more frequent meetings. I look forward to many events in the future.

This article is based on a talk given at the conference on 'PCP: a personal story' organised by the Centre for Personal Construct at the University of Hertfordshire on September 29, 2006.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peggy Dalton: I went to Oxford fondly imagining I'd be an English Teacher. By the end of my stay there I had decided to go into the theatre. After ten years of that I thought I could spend my time more fruitfully and trained to be a Speech Therapist. Some years later I was dissatisfied with my understanding of the psychological aspects of speech and language difficulties and studied for the PCP Diploma. It's probably a bit late to start anything else, but psychodrama? ... Email: Daltonpcp@aol.com.

REFERENCE

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