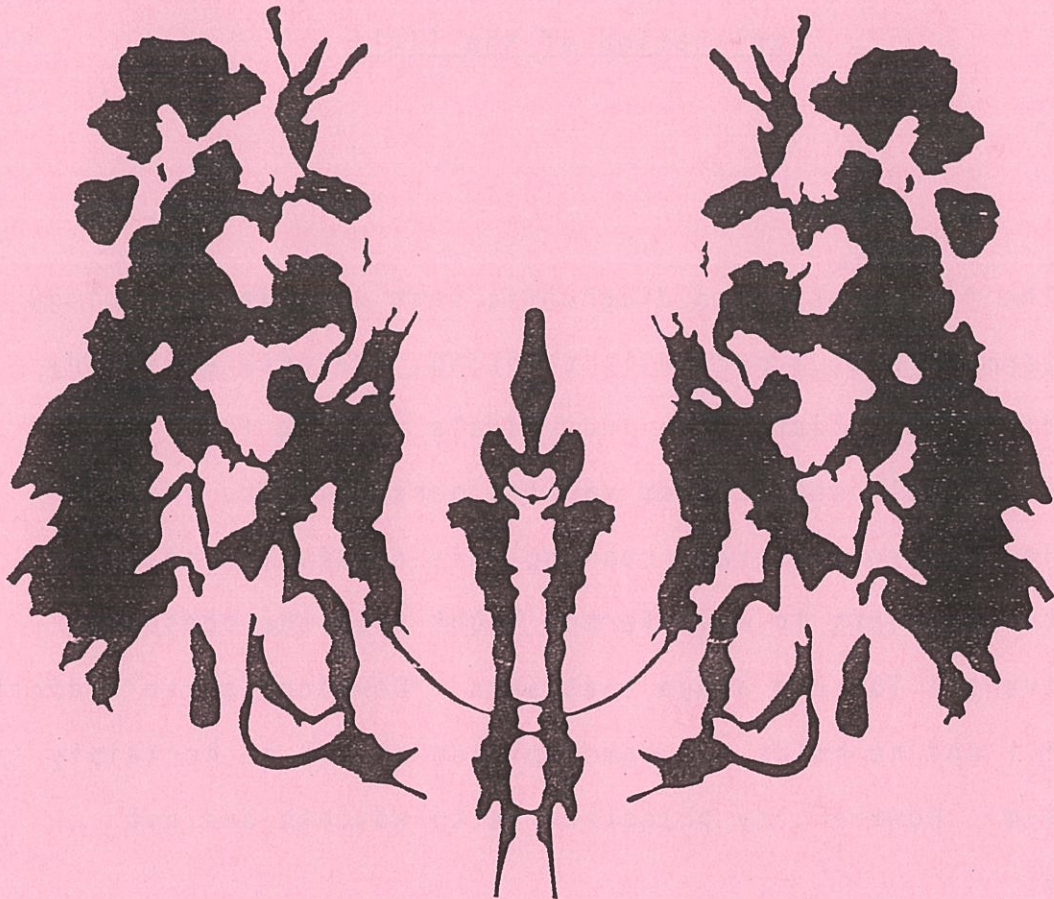


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THE INKBLOT (N.B.)



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Explanation of the Title

The "ink blot" is a diagnostic test used in psychology to determine what a person is thinking. Because everybody has different beliefs, the individuals reading this newsletter will see it from varying perspectives. For example the professionals reading this newsletter may read the contents in a different light than the consumers /survivors. The old adage that says, "Convince a man against his will and he holds the same opinion still" is certainly a truism. However, my objective is to educate and not offend.

The second half of the title, "N.B" can have two meanings. "N.B." can refer to the province in which we live, but it's alternative meaning is "note well".

We hope that you will enjoy reading this newsletter!

-- Katherine Tapley

WHAT TO DO WHEN ANXIETY HITS

by Katherine E. Tapley

1. Check your attitude:
The Chinese word for crisis, "weiji", has two components. These are DANGER and OPPORTUNITY. If you focus on the opportunity aspect of your problem, you will definitely handle the stress much better.
2. Don't Respond Immediately:
Counting to ten, getting up and leaving for awhile, looking out the window, or taking a deep breath before answering that jangling phone may make you feel more in control.
3. Visualize:
Imagine yourself on a sunny beach with the sun warming your body and the waves rythmically lapping at the shore line. Gulls are lazily floating in a blue sky decorated with fluffy white clouds floating by.
4. Pound the Pavement:
Go out for a walk, even if it's just around the block. Of course exercising more will give better results.
5. Hit the Tub:
The warm water of a bathtub can switch the brain from its "alarm state" to its tranquil state. For an especially relaxing bath add 1 cup of sea salt and 1 cup of baking soda. If this makes you too floppy reduce the amount some.
6. Stop Hyperventilating:
When anxious most people take shallow breaths from the chest, further increasing tension. Learn how to breathe from the abdomen. There are many books that can teach you how.
7. Make a Worry Appointment:
Some experts suggest setting a specific time of day to have a worry session for 20 minutes. The trick to this is not to allow yourself to worry at any other time.
8. Go Down the Drain:
Norman Vincent Peale suggest at the end of the day you should wash your hands and pull the plug. As the water swirls down the drain imagine the cares of the day going down with it.
9. Poking Holes in Time:
When a task is overwhelming, employ the Swiss Cheese Method. Take the daunting task ten minutes at a time. Set a timer and you'll be able to do more than you thought you could.
10. Press on Your Temples:
If you literally have a pain in your neck from stress, massaging your temples will provide you with an acupuncture technique that will help relax you.

HAVE YOU FELT THE STIGMA LATELY?

by Katherine E. Tapley

Mental illness is a very cruel disease, because of its invisibility. We survivors often have tremendous difficulty explaining to those who are "normal" how much we suffer inside our minds. The problem seems to lie in the fact that the general public has certain specific markers that indicate illness. If one is emaciated, has his or her leg in a cast, is sitting in a wheelchair, or is lying in a hospital bed with tubes coming out of all orifices, yes then they are genuinely "ill". But what is a mentally ill person supposed to look like? Probably like an ordinary person, I expect. But herein lies the stigma. If you don't look sick to people then they assume that you don't work because you are just malingering, that you are on welfare because you are just one of those "bums", and when you can't function up to par you are just being "irresponsible".

We who suffer from mental illness, not only have our symptoms and medication side effects to contend with, but we suffer like a persecuted minority. It's socially acceptable to make fun of "crazy" people. Just take a look at some of some of our society's everyday vocabulary -- "nuts", "crazies", "loony tunes", "psycho", "bananas", "wacko". The stigma can be more subtle also. Even saying you're depressed may spark people into instant sermonizing. Have you noticed that when you have a breakdown everybody and their dog suddenly become amateur psychologists? You get tons of home spun philosophies and advice, but not too much listening going on.

There's not a lot of sympathy out there if you should become suicidal either. Most people say that you're just bluffing and that if you talk about suicide, you really don't want to die. However, studies prove that most people who have killed themselves always leave clues and talk about dying.

It's shocking to discover first hand that most people are incredibly ignorant about mental illness and hold to myths from the dark ages. Even more frightening, a lot of them don't want to be educated about it. This is not because of a lack of information either. Rather, it seems to be a closed mindedness to the subject -- an attitude of "I've got my own problems, don't bother me with yours." Our society gives the most positive reinforcement to those who are healthy, wealthy and upbeat. The mentally ill are often poor, depressed, and unemployed -- divested of power. In short, society preys on the mentally ill more than the mentally ill prey on society. Have you felt the stigma lately?

Manic depressive composer, Gustav Mahler said when he was nineteen, "The fires of supreme zest for living and the most gnawing desire for death alternated in my heart, sometimes in the course of a single hour."

DR. CLARKE ON DEPRESSION

by Katherine E. Tapley

Although depression has often been labeled "the common cold" of mental illness, those who suffer from it find it nothing to sneeze at. It is a crippling illness which results in loss of income, higher separation and divorce rates, reduced social functioning, and more visits to health professionals. According to Dr. David A. Clarke Ph.D., "... the consequences of depression can be severe, enduring, and pervasive, even after the clinical signs of depression have remitted."

Dr. Clark reports that two-thirds of depressions go undetected and untreated, but spontaneous remission usually occurs within six to nine months. Fifteen per cent of depressed psychiatric patients become chronic depressives, and 25-30% of depressed patients do not respond to antidepressant treatment. Even those depressives who have been successfully treated with antidepressants will have relapse rates of 50-80%.

Some of the causes of depression can be a lack of neurotransmitters such as serotonin and norepinephrine, genetic predisposition, early childhood trauma, major life stressors (loss or failure in the interpersonal realm in the last 1-2 years), chronic life strains (bad work situation, marital discord, etc.), lack of social support, poor coping mechanisms, and trauma (war, natural disaster, etc.).

Depressives usually have personality traits that include such things as being dependent, very self-critical, perfectionistic, and having low self esteem, and negativity. Cognitively, those who suffer from depression have increased self-focused attention, catastrophizing, feelings of helplessness, selective recalling of bad memories, and minimization of the positive. Dr. Clark comments, "In sum, depression is not caused by a single factor, but rather it is a multifaceted, heterogeneous set of disorders with multiple causes that interact in such a way as to initiate and maintain a depressive episode."

The good news is that in recent years major research has advanced knowledge about depression, resulting in improved diagnosis and assessment. Also, there are new and more effective treatments for depression such as some of more recent antidepressants and cognitive therapy. Even if all these fail fortunately there is a naturally high spontaneous remission rate.

AVOIDING A CHEMICAL SUNBURN

Psychiatric drugs can lead to major sunburns. Those most likely to fry you are Mellaril, Tegretol, Haldol, and Largactil. Even on cloudy days caution should be exercised. Apply a sunscreen a ½ hour before going outdoors. Also, try to avoid going out in the sun between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.. Coppertone Sport S.P.F. 30 is recommended.

FROM THE ANNALS OF PSYCHIATRIC ABSURDITY

From A.D. 865 to 925, Rhazes was an Arabian doctor who was considered to be an outstanding scholar of the times, wrote over 200 different volumes on medicine, religion, philosophy, and astronomy. As he rose to prominence, he became physician-in-chief to the Baghdad Hospital, which was a remarkable institution of its time, because it had a ward exclusively for the mentally ill. Rhazes saw the body/mind connection and even used a primitive form of psychotherapy. However, Rhazes ran afoul of the other influential Arabian doctors who believed that all illness was the result of demons. Since Rhazes disagreed with them he was sentenced "to be hit over the head with his own book until the book or the head broke." This early psychiatrist was rendered blind after his punishment. (Taken from The History of Psychiatry by Franz G. Alexander and Sheldon T. Selesnick, p.62-63)

Avicenna (A.D. 980-1037) was considered a child prodigy by the age of ten. He was interested in psychotic delusions and their treatment. The History of Psychiatry reports, "When one of his patients claimed he was a cow and bellowed like one, Avicenna told the patient that the butcher was coming to slaughter him. The patient was bound head and foot; then Avicenna proclaimed that he was too lean and had to be fattened, and untied him. The patient began to eat enthusiastically, 'gained strength, got rid of his delusion and was completely cured.'"(taken from p.64)

During the 13th and 14th centuries mass movements arose, driving many psychotic. In Hungary, in the year 1231 a cult arose that believed the plague was cause by personal sins. "They marched through Europe singing hymns, bearing red crosses on their breasts, and carrying whips with knots from which hung iron tongs." (History of Psychiatry p.67) Known as "flagellants" they and their converts whipped themselves in public. Although their group was condemned by Pope Clement, another group of flagellants emerged in 1418 in Strasbourg.

The mortal sin of suicide was extremely repugnant to the medieval mind. Those who killed themselves had extreme punishments carried out on their corpses to enact symbolic shame. The book, Legal Lore, by William Andrews explains that, "The body was, by the customary law ... to be drawn to the gibbet (instrument for hanging) as cruelly as possible The very door-step of the house in which he lay was to be torn up, for the dead man was not worthy to pass over it. Impalement, transfixure by a stake, though well enough known on the continent as a punishment of the living, became there (in France) and in England alike, the special doom of the suicide."

THE STIGMA, THE PAIN

OH, IT'S A BITTER PILL TO SWALLOW,
TO KNOW THAT YOU'RE GOING INSANE.
WHEN YOU'RE IN DEEPEST, DARKEST SORROW:
WHEN YOU'RE MIND IT IS IN PAIN.
IT'S AN INVISIBLE ILLNESS,
BUT IT SICKENS THE SOUL.
AND WHEN YOU FEEL THE STIGMA,
IT CERTAINLY TAKES ITS TOLL.
THERE'S NOTHING SO DEPRESSING
AS DEPRESSION, IT'S FOUND TO BE.
I WISH PEOPLE WOULD QUIT JUDGING
AND SHOW SOME UNDERSTANDING FOR ME.

-- Katherine E. Tapley

NEVER AN EMBRACE

NAKED, MY SOUL
HUDDLES AGAINST THE BLASTING
TEMPEST OF DESPAIR.
TRUST CRUMBLES LIKE A SANDCASTLE
WIPED OUT BY HIGH TIDE.
I LONG FOR AN EMBRACE,
BUT REALIZE THERE WILL BE NONE.
SO, I CRAWL BACK INTO MY SHELL
AFRAID TO COME OUT AGAIN.

-- by Katherine E. Tapley

COMING APOCALYPSE

NEVER MIND YOUR PRETENSE,
WE HAVEN'T GOT TIME FOR THAT ANYMORE.
DIDN'T YOU HEAR THAT THE FOUR
HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE
ARE RIDING HARD AND FAST?
YOUR MATERIALS WILL NOT SAVE YOU.
AND YOUR MONEY WILL DO YOU NO GOOD.
IT'S A SPIRITUAL BATTLE NOW.
GLOBAL WARMING, FLOODS, FAMINES,
WAR, RUMORS OF WAR, HYPERINFLATION,
THE BURNING OF THE RAIN FOREST,
COMING ECONOMIC EARTHQUAKE.
OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO
REPENT AND PRAY.

-- Katherine E. Tapley

POINT LEPREAU

by

Katherine E. Tapley

There I was frantically turning the dial on the radio for news of the sabotage. All I could get was, "He shoots ! He scores!" Hockey night in Canada, damn. Why couldn't they have some news on?

I was trembling inside because a previous thirty second news flash had announced that the nuclear power station, Point Lepreau was suspected to be a target for terrorists. Situated near the city of Saint John, New Brunswick the plant was a two and one half hour drive from my hometown of Sackville. I had heard that radiation could funnel right up the Bay of Fundy to reach us. My thoughts turned to the nuclear disasters of Three Mile Island and Chernobyl. I recalled a terrifying picture of the radiation burns some of the Russians got. The T.V. screen had showed one hapless patient who had burns so deep that there was a big hole in his hip, exposing the bone.

I tried the radio again. "And the Maple Leaves are winning two to one!"

By now I was sweating, and pacing up and down the kitchen floor. Maybe I'd better have one last meal before the end, I reasoned. I got out the mustard and ham to prepare a sandwich. Hurriedly, I slapped it together and boiled the kettle for a cup of tea. But, when I sat down to eat my stomach seemed to close of and my throat was so tight I could not get any food down. It was a classical case of bad nerves.

Just who was going to sabotage Point Lepreau? Was it Saddam Hussein getting revenge for the Persian Gulf War? Could it be the guy who bombed the World Trade Center? Maybe it was some psychotic who was good at making high powered homemade bombs? How incredible. The Maritimes are going to be blown off of the map and all I can get is some stupid hockey game.

Then it occurred to me to telephone someone and see if anybody else had heard of the impending doom.

"Gerry, have you heard anything about Point Lepreau being sabotaged?"

"No! You're kidding aren't you ?"

"Well, I heard something on the radio about two hours ago about a couple of terrorists trying to blow up the nuclear power plant. But all I can get on CBC is hockey.

"Keep me posted if you hear any more news. This is really heavy stuff! I never thought that anyone would bomb a nuclear power station in New Brunswick! But, I guess anything nuclear is a hazzard to have around."

After I hung up the phone I asked myself what would be appropriate thing to do in the last few hours of my life.

POINT LEPREAU CONTINUED

Repent and pray, that's what. I dragged out the dust covered Bible and read prophetic parts like Daniel and Revelation. I was preparing for Armageddon. But the midnight vigil got too much for me. I went to the radio dial again and frantically twisted it up and down the scale. "Your cheating heart will tell on you ... (click). It's ten degrees Celsius... (click) ... Randi Travis will sing (click) ... He shoots, He scores!"

Next, I tried the T.V. for some news of Point Lepreau.

"Tonight, "W 5" will take a historical look at some of the Nuclear protestors of the 1970's", Eric Malling said in his practiced, documentary-type voice.

"The year was 1977 and the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility presented a brief to Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau. In the brief the Coalition protested the proliferation of nuclear power plants because 1. "The treat of uncontrolled nuclear proliferation could possibly lead to a global holocaust through nuclear warfare and 2. There is a danger of accidental poisoning of our global ecosystems with lethal radioactive substances equivalent to the fallout from thousands of atomic bomb explosions."

As I was listening intently, a commercial broke in. "If you use the Thigh Master for thirty days you can have legs as beautiful as Suzanne ... !" Several other commercials followed in rapid succession.

Finally, W 5 came back on.

"Herbert Scoville, Former Head of Scientific Intelligence with the CIA has the following warning about nuclear energy proliferation... These weapons will soon fall into many hands in many corners of the world -- into the hands of unstable national governments, aggressive military cliques or irresponsible terrorist groups -- with incalculable consequences for us all. The danger is the direct result of the uncontrolled growth of the nuclear power industry, which is making widely available the materials needed for such weapons. The peoples of the world must recognize the danger of what is going on and act to protect this and future generations", Malling soberly read.

He continued, "It is said that separated plutonium can be diverted or stolen by criminal or terrorist organizations. It is easily transported and is worth more than either gold or heroin by weight, even on the open market. Black market plutonium will be worth more."

Mallings voice raised in pitch as he concluded, "Dr. Alvin Weinberg was the first to use the term, 'Faustian bargain' to describe the world's love affair with nuclear power. It is now common to use the term, 'Faustian bargain' to refer to nuclear power."

The program ended with the credits transposed on a picture of a giant mushroom cloud.

POINT LEPREAU CONTINUED

Greatly fatigued and troubled, I went to bed, sleeping only fitfully. My dreams had mushroom clouds appearing in them constantly. When I awoke, I looked at the clock and it was 7 A.M. . My first thought was of Point Lepreau. What had transpired during the night? Had the sabotage taken palce yet?

"Boom!" an explosion had certainly taken place and my heart seemed to stop. This was it, this was the end. Then I heard my father curse and say to my mother, "I blew up a poached egg in the microwave again. Guess I shouldn't have put it on high.

COULD PHOBIAS BE ALL IN YOUR EARS??

by Katherine E. Tapley

An American doctor, Harold Levinson of Great Neck, New York is both a psychiatrist and neurologist. His specialty is in treating inner ear problems. While treating patients for ear disorders, he found a very interesting thing -- they had phobias that were identical to some of his psychiatric patients. This lead Dr. Levinson to conclude that there may be a connection between inner ear trouble and phobias. He maintains, "Balance is controlled in the inner ear. If it is not working and your balance is off, you might be afraid of heights ..." . Dr. Levinson knows that his viewpoint is in the minority, but to reach his conclusions he did twenty years of research on over 20,000 patients. Also, he has had many success stories in treating phobics.

A FRIEND IS ...

SOMEONE YOU CAN DO NOTHING WITH AND ENJOY IT.
SOMEONE YOU WON'T SAY YOU LOOK TERRIBLE WHEN YOU LOOK TERRIBLE.
THE ONE WHO IS ALREADY THERE DOING IT WHEN EVERYONE ELSE IS SAYING, "IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO?"
A LITTLE BIT DIFFERENT EVERY DAY, BUT ALWAYS THE SAME.
A PERSON WHO KNOWS YOUR SENSITIVE SPOTS, BUT WILL NEVER POKE YOU THERE.
A WHOLE LOT OF WONDERFUL PEOPLE ROLLED INTO ONE.
SOMEONE YOU CAN TRADE SECRETS WITH AND NEVER WORRY.
SOMONE TO BE CLOSE TO.

(Taken from "For Friends to Share" by Gayle Lawrence)

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE MANIC DEPRESSIVE?

by

Katherine E. Tapley

I'm told that manic depression affects every sufferer in a different way, so I can't speak for everyone who has the illness. However, I have thirty years experience with my own bipolar condition to draw from and for what it's worth I will share some of my thoughts and feelings on the subject.

My first episode was a depression when I was about age fourteen. I constantly lay on the couch listless and miserable, unable to stir myself to do anything. My body felt like lead and every movement was a tremendous effort. Emotionally there were feelings of guilt, worthlessness, and complete despair. I had no idea what was happening to me, but it felt like I was in hell. The doctors seemed to think that I was just going through a bad adolescence, they did not recognize that I had a mental illness.

When I was not extremely depressed I was manic. I laughed uncontrollably, was extremely hyper, and had a lot of hallucinations. Everywhere I went I felt that some invisible force was pursuing me. This feeling was especially intense when I went up stairs or around corners. I became afraid of the darkness of my bedroom, hid when anyone came in the house, and wouldn't go out with my friends anymore.

When I moved to Ottawa for a year I had a wild manic episode. Everyday I would go out to the canal and skate for ten miles as fast as I could. Indoors, I would wash the walls, floors -- anything to keep in perpetual motion. I was studying at Algonquin College at the time and as I walked down the corridor one day, my pants fell off me. Because of my mania I had lost weight so rapidly that I hadn't noticed until this embarrassing event happened.

The particular variety of manic depression that I suffer from is know as "rapid cycling". It is harder to treat than the regular variety of the illness. I have been tried on every psychotropic drug in the book. In 1988 I was on seven different kinds of pills at one time, and still wildly out of control. I was even kicked out of Weight Watchers because I was talking too much and upstaging the leader with my funny remarks. However, I finally found a medication that helped me control myself better. It was Tegretol, an anti-seizure drug. Although I am also on an antidepressant and a tranquilizer besides, I consider Tegretol to be my anchor drug.

I have talked to numerous manic depressives who have been tremendously helped by lithium, however, it did not work in my case. Lithium is ineffective for 30% - 40% of bipolar patients. Tegretol is particularly effective in rapid cyclers, as is my case.

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE MANIC DEPRESSIVE? (CONTINUED)

Even with the three medications that I am taking and continuing in psychotherapy my illness is still very hard to cope with. When I found out that my mental illness is chronic and will last the rest of my life, it was almost like somebody dropped an atomic bomb on me.

It is hard to make plans when you are a rapid cycler, because you never know what kind of mood you are going to wake up in. I could feel very high, or extremely depressed, or even have a mixed state of mania and depression. A moderate high is sort of desirable. I feel very stimulated and alive. In this state I start all kinds of ambitious projects, call all kinds of people on the telephone, and feel I have lots of energy. However, as I go higher it gets uncomfortable. It seems that my thoughts are crashing into eachother and I am driven to go faster and faster. I get irritable and impatient and wonder why everybody else is going so slowly. It's almost like having sixteen T.V. channels on all at once. Invariably, after the high comes the crash into depression. I have found that the higher I go up the lower I go down.

The depressions are particularly difficult, because there are thoughts of suicide that come with them. In these low periods there is a loss of pleasure and purpose. Added to that there is an extreme hypersensitivity to what other people say. Just one innocuous remark by a friend could send shock waves of emotional pain through me. In depression my body feels extremely slowed down and there is an exhaustion that sets in mentally and physically.

As with any mental illness, stress seems to be the nemesis of bipolar people. Being emotionally fagile our illness can be exacerbated by a poor environment, lack of support, and financial problems. When I feel myself slipping I have to take time for myself so that I won't go into mania or depression. I try things like taking a hot bath, walking, reading, hobbies, and talking to friends. When my condition worsens I have to seek professional help or extra medication. It often feels like I'm a bird on a wire trying to balance myself between the two extremes.

COMMENTS ON HOSPITALIZATION IN THE 18th CENTURY

"Once confined, the very confinement is admitted as the strongest of all proofs that a man must be mad When after suffering so much wrong, he has an opportunity to speak . . . supposing him not to give way to his feelings, but to control them, . . .his entreaties, his anxious representations, his prayers for liberty, what do they avail!" (THE AGE OF MADNESS by Thomas Szasz p.11)

JESUS COMES TO NEW BRUSWICK

by Katherine E. Tapley

I've often wondered in mind's eye what it would be like if Jesus Christ were to make a visit in the flesh at the close of the twentieth century. More specifically, what if He came to Moncton, New Brunswick?

Picture it. Jesus is on Main Street by the stationary store. He is dressed in long flowing robes and is swarthy because He is a Jew. His eyes are luminous and reveal the omniscience of the Holy spirit. At four thirty, rush hour is on and cars are whizzing past Him on the street. Throngs of pedestrians are passing by. Jesus begins to give a sermon on loving your brother. Some people scowl and stomp by, while others are fascinated by this most unusual man. He has a presence like none other.

One unfortunate man comes by with a cast on his leg, hobbling on uncomfortable crutches. Jesus smiles winsomly, then touches the man on the shoulder. Instantly, there is a feeling of warmth flowing through the injured leg. Throwing down his crutches he leaps and shouts, "This man healed me!"

Soon a sizable crowd gathers, with Jesus at the center of it all. He heals an old woman of crippling arthritis, a young boy with Hodgkins disease, and a workman with a bad back. The crowd now grows to the point where there is not enough room on the sidewalk and it spills over into the street, blocking traffic. Everyone near Jesus is feeling an amazing sense of love and peace, like being bathed in warm oil. It all was so wonderful. That is until the psychiatrists found out.

Police cars began arriving in riot gear to disperse the crowd. Two burly constables grab Jesus and charge him for disturbing the peace. They stuff Him into a squawd car and check their computer at headquarters to see if Jesus has a criminal record.

"What's your name?" one of the officers barked.

"Jesus. Jesus Christ."

"That's what all the nuts say!" scoffed the second officer.

Off to the psychiatric ward they go and unceremoniously admit Jesus as an involuntary patient. The psychiatrist, a six foot four man with stern, menacing demeanor asks curtly.

"Do you talk to God?"

"I am God." Jesus replies calmly.

The doctor writes, PARANOID SCHIZOPHRENIC on Christ's chart, then promptly instructs the attending nurse to give the patient 30 mgs. of Haldol (known affectionately to psychiatrists at "Vitamin H") STAT.

While Jesus is on the psych ward, He compassionately stretches out his hand to each of the incarcerated patients and heals them. But, this creates a terrible problem for the staff, because everybody insists that they don't need

JESUS COMES TO NEW BRUNSWICK (CONTINUED)

their pills anymore. And worst of all the patients start acting normal and want to get out. There is only one solution the psychiatrists can think of -- put Jesus in seclusion and increase his medication beyond what the CPS indicates as safe limits, (also known as "snowing").

Still Jesus is insisting He really is God. So what can the psychiatrists think of next? The last weapon in their armamentarium is shock therapy. Jesus is given twice the normal amount of ECT. But, He still will not recant.

The treatment that Christ gets while in hospital definitely reminds him of His crucifixion on a Roman cross, only this form of torment is torture twentieth century style. Also, He is shocked at the lack of compassion found among the staff -- the way they seem to show a contempt and disdain for the mentally ill like the latter are the scum of the earth. He feels that something has to be done to right the scales of justice, so he afflicts the psychiatrists and nurses with all sorts of mental illnesses. They suddenly suffer things like agoraphobia, schizophrenia, mania, depression, and suicidal thoughts. It is a psychological plague. Not suprisingly it has the desired effect of humbling the proud and haughty. There's nothing like mental illness to take one down a peg. When the plague ends both staff and patients are reconciled. Everybody is hugging and crying and apologizing. It is such a great moment and people feel so greatfull they seek for Jesus, the One who made it all happen. But He has left; His mission accomplished.

WHAT IS HYPOMANIA?

The Society for Depression and Manic Depression in Manitoba (1-800-263-1460) gives the following description of a hypomanic state. "... (It) clinically presents a clearly recognized, well defined syndrome. This consists of a cluster of symptoms that include pressured speech; increased, often purposeless activity; marked decreased need for sleep and perhaps food; and a marked need for instant gratification, attention, and approval. Noticeable irritability and displeasure prevail. Hostility and argumentativeness occur when the individual is thwarted. There is a need to expand and exaggerate all behaviors. Voices are louder, and the colors of clothing brighter. There is more spending of money, letter writing, phone calling, travel, gift bestowing, and advice giving. There is marked lowering of inhibitions and a pronounced disregard for the rights and feelings of others. There is also increased risk taking. Example: relationships with strangers are personalized at an inappropriate level and with little regard for social amenities.

FIFTEEN TIPS FOR LESS STRESS

1. Act on nagging problems. For example: If you spend too much money make a budget and stick to it.
2. Don't overestimate your abilities and expect too much of yourself. Be realistic about how much you can do.
3. Put humor into your life and see the funny side to things. A good laugh a day drives the stress away.
4. Talk about your problems with a trustworthy person, but avoid constantly dumping on the same friend.
5. Do something just for fun. Read a light novel, see a live play, or take a nature walk.
6. Accept the things you cannot change and change the things you can.
7. Use a 10 minute music break to destress yourself.
8. Don't put off high priority tasks in favor of doing easier to handle low priority tasks. This habit may precipitate a future crisis.
9. Trying to do too many things too fast creates stress, so try to do fewer things and do them well.
10. Notice the stressors in your life and try to avoid them if possible.
11. Persons who are socially isolated experience more stress, so try to develop a network of supportive relationships.
12. Don't spend \$1000.00 worth of emotion on a 50¢ problem. Save your energy for the big problems and don't sweat the small stuff.
13. If you're anticipating a future stressful event, practice visualizing yourself coping successfully.
14. Make your living area pleasant by using pictures, plants, and cheerful colors.
15. Don't try to control other people. This always leads to stress and bad relationships.

BE A BETTER LISTENER

Someone adeptly observed that most people do not really listen to each other, they just take turns talking. Human beings are able to understand speech rates of up to 600 hundred words per minute, but the average rate of speaking is usually about 140 words per minute. This leaves the listener with lots of time to daydream and to let other thoughts crowd in. As a result communication often breaks down and the full message of the speaker is not understood. Good listeners are active listeners who become involved.

Five ways to become a more effective listener are found in the following mnemonic, "CARING".

- C - CONCENTRATE on what the speaker is saying and do not allow yourself to become distracted.
- A - ASK for clarification if you are unsure of the meaning, but don't interrupt the speaker.
- R - RECOGNIZE the feeling tone and style of the speaker.
- I - IMPLIED meanings should be looked for.
- N - NOTE the essential ideas and summarize the key points.
- G - GREET the speaker with sensitivity and an open mind.

SOME TIPS FOR GOOD INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

1. GOOD POSTURE: Stand tall and move naturally and easily.
2. NATURAL GESTURES: Be relaxed when you speak.
3. APPROPRIATE DRESS: Dress and groom yourself appropriately for the environment you are going to be in.
4. EFFECTIVE SPEECH: Use clear language, make planned pauses, and eliminate non-words.
5. USE HUMOR: Humor can help create a bond between you and the listener, but don't use it to promote prejudice or racism. Be tasteful.
6. BE AUTHENTIC: Most people can spot a phoney, so be real.
7. USE EYE CONTACT CORRECTLY: Avoiding eye contact can indicate low self esteem, but staring is considered rude. Learn to look another person in the eye while talking, but don't make him or her feel uncomfortable. Some experts feel that 5 seconds is the appropriate length of time to hold eye contact.

A. Positive Attitude Does Wonders

Positive thinking will not solve all your problems and make your life a bed of roses, however, it will make you more open to solutions when they come along. Before getting out of bed in the morning try to think of something inspirational and positive. Aids you may use are notes on your mirror, cartoons, pictures, or affirmations that are laid out for you the night before so that when you awaken you will have something positive to think about.

If you are a habitually negative thinker it will take some effort to switch over to being a positive thinker, but the benefits of the latter are the following:

1. Higher energy levels.
2. Greater creativity.
3. Inner beauty even though if you are not considered physically beautiful.
4. Better physical health.
5. Positive things coming your way.

Habitually magnifying the negative can make you feel worse, especially if you are constantly catastrophizing. However emphasizing the positive can make not only yourself, but others feel better. Positive and negative attitudes are contagious. Try to surround yourself with little reminders of the positive things in your life. What are some of the things that make you smile? Is it a material possession? Something you have achieved? Someone you love ... ?

YESTERDAY -- TODAY -- TOMORROW

"There are two days in every week about which we should not worry, two days which should be kept free from fear and apprehension. One of these days is YESTERDAY, with its mistakes and cares, its faults and blunders, its aches and pains. YESTERDAY has passed forever beyond our control. All the money in the world cannot bring back YESTERDAY. We cannot undo a single act we performed; we cannot erase a single word we said ... YESTERDAY is gone. THE other day we should not worry about is TOMORROW with its possible adversities, its burdens, its large promise and poor performance; TOMORROW is also beyond our immediate control. TOMORROW'S sun will rise either in splendour or behind a mask of clouds -- but it will rise. Until it does we have no stake in TOMORROW for it is as yet unborn. This leaves only one day -- TODAY. Any man can fight the battle for just one day. It is only when you and I add the burdens of those awful eternities -- YESTERDAY AND TOMORROW -- that we break down. It is not the experience of today that drives men mad -- it is remorse or bitterness for something which happened YESTERDAY and the dread of what TOMORROW may bring.

LET US THEREFORE LIVE ONE DAY AT A TIME!"

IMPORTANT CONTACTS IN MENTAL HEALTH

Lithium Information Center/ Obsessive Compulsive Information Center: Dean Foundation for Health and Research and Education, 8000 Excelsior Drive, Suite 302, Madison, WI 53717-1914. Phone (608-836-8070).

The Society for Depression and Manic-Depression of Manitoba Inc., 4-1000 Notre Dame Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3E 0N3.

Schizophrenia Society of New Brunswick: P.O. Box 20062, Saint John, New Brunswick E2L 5B2.

Midwest Center for Stress and Anxiety: Homestudy Correspondence, 106 N. Church St. Suite 200, Oak Harbor, Ohio 43449, U.S.A.

Agoraphobic Foundation of Canada Inc./ Fondation Canadienne Pour Les Agoraphobes Inc., P.O. Box 132, Chomeday, Laval, Québec H7W 4K2. Phone: 514-688-4726.

COPOH (Coalition of Provincial Organizations of the Handicapped): # 926-294 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0B9. Phone: 204-947-0303. Fax 204-942-4625.

Patient's Advocate (for involuntary patients) Luc Doucette, 100 Arden Street, suite 200, Moncton, New Brunswick E1C 4B7.

Regional Community Worker for CMHA: Muriel Doucette, Box 5001, Moncton, New Brunswick E1C 8R3.

Human Rights Commission: Phone: 1-800-565-1752 .

Premier's Council for the Disabled: Phone: 1-800-442-4412

Secretary of State (Disabled Person's Program): Phone: 819-953-3209.

Legal Aid: Phone: 853-7300

National Eating Disorder Information Centre: Toronto General Hospital, 200 Elizabeth St., CW 2-332, Toronto, Ontario, M5G 2C4.

INSPIRATIONAL SAYINGS

"When a man forgets himself, he usually does something everybody remembers."

"Don't let yesterday use up too much of today."

"The trouble with trouble is that it always starts out as if it were fun."

"Profanity is the use of strong words by weak people."

"Dignity cannot be preserved in alcohol."

"The person who says he is willing to meet you halfway is usually a poor judge of distance."

"Before credit cards, we always knew exactly how much we were broke."

"The best way to catch a squirrel is to climb up in a tree and act like a nut."

"Reduce errors at work! Arrive late, leave early."

"Swallowing angry words is a lot easier than eating them."

"We use people and love things, we should love people and use things."

"Running people down is a bad habit, whether you are a motorist or a gossip."

"A man wrapped up in himself is a pretty small package."

"Any fool can criticize, condemn and complain and most fools do."

"A lie travels around the world while the truth is putting on her boots."

"A fool and his money soon go partying."

"Defeat never comes to any man until he admits it."

"A frown is a wrinkle looking for a place to roost."

"There are two kinds of cleverness, one consists of thinking of a bright remark in time to say it. The other consists of thinking of it in time not to say it."

"There is some consolation in the fact that even if your dreams haven't come true, neither have your nightmares."



INKBLOT PERSONALS

Agorophobic patient would like to have wild house party. P.S. I haven't been out of the house in 22 years, please show up. Apply to Box 006.

Psychiatrist currently having a nervous breakdown would like to become the new editor of THE INKBLOT. Will pay for articles and poems submitted with Haldol, Prozac, and Xanax. Apply to Box 002 or dial 1-800-GET-DRUGS.

Schizophrenic man offers steady employment for mental patients making bumper stickers which read, "I BRAKE FOR HALLUCINATIONS." Apply to Box 22.

INKBLOT HEADLINES

Mental patient reveals startling new 7 day diet. Recommends putting on a straight jacket for a week to keep away from refrigerator and potato chips. Can lose seven pounds in seven days.

Mental patient sues the makers of O' Henry Bars for putting nuts in the candy. Says this is "stigmatization in a bar".

Manic depressive woman goes shopping at Salvation Army Thrift Store and drains entire bank account.

(CREATED BY KATHERINE E. TAPLEY)

