



**VOL. 46 NO. 11
NOVEMBER 2016**

IN THIS ISSUE

Important ITAA Meetings
Held in Coimbatore
3

New Emeritus Membership
4

New Nominations Schedule
5

TAJ on the Parent Ego State
Revisited
7

Changes in Conferences
9

Reflections on Volunteering
in Coimbatore
11

New ITAA Research Award Launched

by Diane Salters

Nominations are now being accepted for the first ever ITAA Research Award (ITAARA), to be given out in 2017. The deadline for nominations is 1 February 2017.

This award was established to recognize an individual(s) or team who has made a major contribution to research in any field of transactional analysis. It will not compete with the Eric Berne

"For a nomination to be eligible, the individual or team being nominated must have produced and published an exceptional research paper or body of research or contributed significantly to the development of research in transactional analysis in any of the fields in which TA is applied."

Memorial Award (EBMA) but seeks to complement it in various ways. Unlike the EBMA, it will be open to anyone, not just members of the ITAA. Nominated work will also not be required to show the development and establishment of new theory but may focus on the effectiveness of current theory and practice. Research will be the necessary focus rather than simply an option.

For a nomination to be eligible, the individual or team being nominated



Diane Salters



Biljana van Rijn

must have produced and published an exceptional research paper or body of research or contributed significantly to the development of research in transactional analysis in any of the fields in which TA is applied. Any written material must have been published in a professional journal (preferably indexed or impacted), a book, or other publication. Unpublished dissertations are not eligible for the ITAARA. Nominations may be submitted by individuals, groups of individuals, or organizations and must be accompanied by copies of the publication and specific documentation

<http://www.tawc2017.berlin>

Save_the_Date_

World Conference for Transactional Analysis

Berlin | Technical University TU | July 27th – 29th 2017

BOUNDARIES – A PLACE ... TO MEET ... TO DEVELOP ... TO DEFINE IDENTITY

A project of EATA, ITAA, FTAA hosted by DGTA and TU Berlin

required by the committee. Guidelines for making nominations are posted on the ITAA website at <http://itaaworld.org/itaa-awards>.

Award nominations will be evaluated by members of the ITAARA Committee, who will possess the expertise and demonstrated competence necessary for judging and rewarding

research in transactional analysis (e.g., a doctorate, experience in active research, currently supervising research projects, research publications, etc.).

The committee will consist of a chair elected by the committee members along with between two and seven members. In addition, up to two consultants with specific expertise related to nominations in a given year may be invited to become temporary committee members for that year. Committee membership is open to all members of the TA community, although the expectation is that the majority will be ITAA members in good standing. Insofar as possible, committee membership will represent the diversity of the worldwide TA community with respect to gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, ITAA seniority, geography, area of specialization or application, and theoretical and practical orientation.

For 2017, the committee chair is Biljana van Rijn, and committee members include Mark Widdowson, Susan George, Anne de Graaf, and Enrico Benelli.

Please consider worthy nominations for this award, check the guidelines online, and send nominations by email to ITAARA Committee Chair Biljana van Rijn at biljana.vanrijn@metanoia.ac.uk no later than 1 February 2017. (The deadline has been extended this time since the call for nominations did not go out until now. In coming years, the deadline will be 1 January.)



Award Nominations Sought

Eric Berne Memorial Award

Nominations Deadline:
1 December 2016

Send EBMA nominations to committee chair Thomas Steinert at itaa@thomas-steinert.de.

Hedges Capers Humanitarian Award

Muriel James Living Principles Award

Goulding Social Justice Award

ITAA Service Award

Nominations Deadline:
1 January 2017

Send nominations for the Capers, James, Goulding, and Service Awards to ITAA Secretary Mandy Lacy at mandy@lacyconsulting.net.

ITAA Research Award

Nominations Deadline
for 2017 awards:
1 February 2017

Send nominations for the ITAA Research Award to committee chair Biljana van Rijn at biljana.vanrijn@metanoia.ac.uk.

See the [ITAA Web site](#) or contact the ITAA at info@itaaworld.org for details on making nominations for these awards.

the SCRIPT

Newsletter of the International Transactional Analysis Association

5932 Corte Cerritos
Pleasanton, CA 94566-5880, USA
Fax: 925-600-8112

Email: info@itaaworld.org
Website: www.itaaworld.org

Editors: Laurie Hawkes and Steff Oates
Managing Editor: Robin Fryer
Desktop Publishing: lockwood design

Deadlines—15th of the month prior to the month of publication (e.g., 15 November for the December issue)

The Script (ISSN 0164-7393) is published monthly by the International Transactional Analysis Association. For information on membership, visit www.itaaworld.org or contact the ITAA at the above address. © 2016 International Transactional Analysis Association, Inc.

Important ITAA Meetings Held in Coimbatore

by Mandy Lacy

The ITAA held both a board of trustees meeting and an ITAA annual general membership meeting in conjunction with the South Asian Association of Transactional Analysts (SAATA) Conference in Coimbatore, India, in August 2016.

Board of Trustees Meeting

With the advantage of technology, we were able to have all of the trustees present at our meeting in Coimbatore, with five members joining us online. The results of the two-day meeting epitomize the hard work and energy that trustees contribute both at meetings and throughout the year. Here are the highlights and main points from the Coimbatore meeting:

- The new ITAA bylaws officially took effect on 8 September 2016.
- For the second year in a row, the ITAA has had a balanced budget and a positive bank balance.
- TAJ distribution to India and Bangladesh had been problematic due to many factors, and we are happy to say that a thorough investigation has now resolved those problems.
- No Eric Berne Memorial Award was given out in 2016.
- The communications and website committees have been working primarily behind the scenes over the past 12 months to establish strong foundations that are



Board members present in Coimbatore (from left): Emily Keller, Mandy Lacy, Milly De Micheli, C. Suriyaprakash, Chitra Ravi, Thorsten Geck, John Heath, and Diane Salters (not shown: A. Geethan)



Board members present electronically in Coimbatore (top row): Izumi Radomoto (far left), Michael Harsh (far right); (center row from left): Charlotte McLachlan, Krispijn Plettenberg (EATA President), Mandy moderating; (bottom row from left): Bill Holloway and Alex van Oostveen

becoming evident in the current website and active engagement in social media forums.

- The position of the European representative to the ITAA Board of Trustees received three nominations. That means that an election is required, which is now underway. The ballots were sent out to European members in

early September and are due back no later than 7 November 2016.

- Reviewing and updating the ITAA Guidelines is now a high priority in order to bring them into line with the newly approved bylaws and articles of incorporation.
- A task force has been established to suggest a new structure for the ITAA Board of Trustees as an

alternative to the regional representative structure.

- A new schedule for ITAA conferences is now in place and is based on a 3-year cycle that includes (1) a world conference, (2) an ITAA conference, and (3) supporting a conference organized by another group (such as the one in Coimbatore this year).
- Preparation is underway to ensure that all board terms ending in 2017 will have adequate succession planning.
- An awards manual is being developed to clarify and support the processes and protocols for all ITAA awards.
- The partnership working group is in discussions with potential partner organizations to formulate the basis for future partnership agreements with interested organizations.
- The professional standards committee is formulating an options paper for the board regarding interim certifications.
- The supervision exchange project has, to date, received \$500 of donated time from supervisors.

Annual General Meeting

Interestingly, for this annual general membership meeting (AGM), 45 proxy votes were sent in, the most recorded for many years. This ensured that there was a quorum when those proxies were combined with 27 ITAA members present at the meeting. Reports were received from the president, vice presidents, treasurer, Asia regional representative, and secretary. John Heath stood down from his role as past president and was officially honored for his tireless work and leadership over the last 6 years.



The ITAA Board of Trustees talks to members at the Annual General Membership meeting

Questions from the floor stimulated excellent discussions in the following areas:

- How membership is distributed geographically
- Possible organization partnership agreements with ITAA
- The possibility of bequests being made to the ITAA
- A possible column in *The Script* for exchanging information about giving and receiving TA artifacts, books, and services
- Exploring partnerships with tertiary institutions

It was announced that the 2017 TA World Conference will be held in Berlin, Germany, and ITAA board and general membership meetings will be held in conjunction with it. Thanks were given to all who are involved and support the work of the ITAA, particularly European representative to the board Milly De Micheli, who completed her term at the end of the meeting. Acknowledgment and praise was expressed to SAATA for so quickly mobilizing a conference in Coimbatore after the conference in Bangladesh had to be canceled because of the July terror-

ist attack there. Sadness, concern, and caring were expressed for the Bangladesh TA community.

Mandy Lacy is ITAA Secretary (mandy@lacyconsulting.net).

New Emeritus Membership Inaugurated

by Michael Harsh

The ITAA has been blessed with a long and distinguished history of individual contributions to the development and practice of transactional analysis. Much of that history was created by people who have been members from the early days of the organization. To recognize those long-term members who are no longer actively practicing and have performed singular service for transactional analysis, the ITAA Board of Trustees has created a new category of membership: Emeritus Member.

To honor such individuals and their contributions, the board will consider granting Emeritus Membership to those who have been members for 45 years or more, are no longer in practice, and have received some recognition from the ITAA in the

past. Emeritus Members will be life-long members, have voting rights, and will receive *The Script*.

The board is pleased to name the first two Emeritus Members of the ITAA: Fanita English and Pam Levin. Fanita joined the ITAA in 1964, was a colleague of Eric Berne's, and twice received the Eric Berne Memorial Award (in 1978 and 1997). Pam joined the ITAA in 1966, was also a colleague of Eric Berne's, and also received the Eric Berne Memorial Award (in 1984). Both of them have made significant contributions to transactional analysis theory and practice as well as to the life of the ITAA.

We also want to note that their names will henceforth be included in the list of long-time members (last published in the October 2016 *Script*) as individuals who have been members for 40+ years.

We are honored to have them inaugurate this new membership category. Congratulations, Fanita and Pam!

Michael Harsh is the North American Representative to the ITAA Board of Trustees (imokayurokay@me.com).

New Board Nominations Schedule

by Mandy Lacy

The new ITAA Bylaws, which took effect on 8 September 2016, are underpinned by the ITAA Articles of Incorporation. They provide the framework and rules for ITAA's structure and operations. Establishing the new bylaws involved a great deal of effort to ensure that they set the parameters for the work of the ITAA today and into the future. A copy of the new bylaws can be found on the website under "About the ITAA/Governance Documents."

Among the more important bylaws changes to impact members is the timing of nominations and election for the ITAA Board of Trustees. The changes are designed to (1) move the deadline for nominations to at least 6 months prior to the annual general membership meeting (AGM), (2) move any election early enough in the year so that the results can be announced 2 months prior to the AGM, (3) reduce the time an election takes by stipulating that ballots must be returned within 45 days instead of 60, and (4) involve the nominating committee in actively seeking potential nominees for open positions.

In 2017, the AGM will be held in Berlin, probably on 28 July, which means that the deadline for nominations must be no later than 28 January 2017. Once nominations are closed, the nominating committee will inform the board about whether an election is required because there is more than one nominee for at least one position. At that point, an election will be organized and ballots sent out.

For details on the 2017 open positions and nominations, please see elsewhere on this page.

Here is the schedule for 2017 nominations and any potential election:

1 November 2016: Call for nominations published in *The Script*

28 January 2017: Deadline for submission of nominations

15 February 2017: Nominating committee informs board of all nominations received and whether an election is required

1 March 2017: List of nominees published in *The Script* and notice of whether an election will be held

14 March 2017: Deadline for mailing ballots if election required

1 May 2017: Deadline for receipt of ballots, announcement of election results in *The Script*

28 July 2017: AGM in Berlin, at the end of which new trustees will take up their positions

We encourage all ITAA members to begin thinking now about members they think would be good to fill the open positions.

Call for ITAA Board Nominations

The following positions are open for nominations now. **Deadline for nominations: 28 January 2017**

Officers (nomination and election by all ITAA voting members):

President-Elect (2017-2018)

Vice President Development (2017-2019)

Secretary (2017-2019)

Regional Trustees (nomination and election only by members of the region):

Australasian region (2017-2019)

India/Asia region (2017-2019)

Nominations require the name and consent signature of the nominee (it may be yourself), the name of the person making the nomination, and the name of the person seconding the nomination. To be eligible for nomination, trustees may not have already served two consecutive terms of office in any position on the board. Position statements (charters) that describe the function and selection criteria for each of the officer positions are available from ITAA Secretary Mandy Lacy at mandy@lacyconsulting.net. Nominees are encouraged to read and understand these before accepting nomination.

Send nominations to ITAA Nominations Chair Sumithra Sharatkumar at sumithrask@gmail.com.

Those who accept nomination to the above positions must email a written statement and digital photo to the nominations chair as soon as possible and no later than the 28 January 2017 deadline. Statements should be a maximum of 250 words.

Election Procedures: As per the ITAA bylaws, if there is no more than one candidate per position, there will be no ballot, and the results of the election will be announced in *The Script* newsletter. An unopposed candidate will take up his or her position following the annual general meeting (AGM). If there is more than one nominee for a position, a ballot will be sent to all voting members within 45 days of the close of nominations. The deadline for return of ballots is 45 days from the date of mailing. The results of the election will be announced to the candidates within 30 days after the election results are determined and to the voting membership as soon as practical thereafter.

If you have not already submitted a Consent to Use of Electronic Transmissions so that you are eligible to vote electronically in case of a ballot, we urge you to do so immediately by visiting [here](#).

Election Now Underway for the European Representative to the Board of Trustees

There are three nominees for the position of European representative to the ITAA Board of Trustees: Vladimir Goussakovski, Alessandra Pierini, and Thomas Steinert. This requires an election, and as per the ITAA bylaws, only European members will receive ballots to vote in this election. The candidates' statements were published in the June 2016 issue of *The Script*, which is available on the ITAA website at www.itaaworld.org.

European members who have a signed "Consent to Electronic Transmissions" form on file with the ITAA should have received an email sent on 8 September instructing them on how to vote electronically by logging online. Once there, members must print their name in the designated area. Ballots without names will not be counted.

European members who do not have a signed "Consent to Electronic Transmissions" form on file with the ITAA will receive a ballot by postal mail (sent on 8 September) along with instructions on how to return it. Members must print their name on the ballot before mailing or faxing it to the ITAA at 5932 Corte Cerritos, Pleasanton, CA 94566-5880, USA; fax: 925-600-8112. Along with the ballot, there will be a "Consent to Electronic Transmissions" form, and we hope members receiving their ballots by mail will sign and return that form so that they can receive electronic communications in the future.

Deadline for ballots to reach the ITAA office: 5pm, Monday 7 November 2016 (San Francisco USA time)

Announcement of Chairs of PSC and IBOC

by Thorsten Geck

Since the ITAA Board of Trustees meeting in Coimbatore, India, in late August, a good deal has happened. I am delighted to share that we have new members on two boards/committees related to professional standards and training.

The chairs of the Professional Standards Committee (PSC) are now Charlotte Daellenbach of New Zealand and Janice Dowson of Canada.

The chairs of the International Board of Certification (IBOC) are now Karen Pratt of South Africa and Chitra Ravi of India.

To those individuals who have agreed to remain in their positions, thank you for your service so far. To those who are new to these committees, thank you for supporting us and the membership with your participation. I wish you a good start.

I also want to thank Ragini Rao, who served as PSC chair until last year, for her service and contributions. Ragini, all the best!

Thorsten Geck is ITAA Vice President of Professional Standards (thorsten.geck@gmail.com).

TAJ Theme Issues

"Gender, Sexuality, & Identity"

Coeditors: Brad McLean and Bill Cornell

Deadline: 1 January 2017

"Social Responsibility in a Vengeful World"

Coeditors: Bill Cornell and Sylvie Monin

Deadline: 1 May 2017

“Standing on the Shoulders of Giants: The Parent Ego State Revisited”

by Steff Oates and Diana Deaconu

Love it or loathe it, the Parent ego state is a fundamental cornerstone of transactional analysis theory whereby Berne expanded Federn's (1953) ideas of dialogue “between two parts of the ego” to include a third part.

Certain of his [Mr. S.'s] attitudes did not belong to either the “child” or the “adult.” ... These anomalous attitudes were collected and crystallized into a third ego state which came to be called the “parent” since they were evidently a reflection of parental prejudices. (Berne, 1957, p. 297)

Loria (1988) proposed that Berne's conceptualization of the Parent ego state was gleaned from others, for example, Ferenczi's (1949) concept of *internalization of the aggressor* or Federn's (1953) idea of *internalization of the object*. In advocating that the therapist should operate from an uncontaminated Adult ego state, Loria wrote:

Since the Parent ego state is the collection of introjected thoughts, feelings, attitudes,



Steff Oates



Diana Deaconu

and behaviors from parental figures, doing therapy with active Parent ego states means that the therapist is responding to the pressure of the internal influencing parental introjects and is relating transferentially to the client through projection. Therapy becomes an imitative replay of what the therapist experienced in his or her family of origin. ... Such therapy violates the client's need for the authentic presence of the therapist. (Loria, 1988, p. 44)

It is possible that Loria wrote his article as a challenge to some of the predominant uses of the Parent ego

state as technique in the 1970s, namely the Cathexis reparenting approach and the therapist being encouraged to use permission, protection, and potency.

Cornell (2000), in his article “If Berne Met Winnicott,” taken from a keynote speech, challenged what he considered to be the overuse and overreliance on the parental functions of the therapist. This is not to throw the Parent out with the bathwater but to allow reflection on what may be foreclosed if the emphasis remains on correction and behavior and what may be missed and needs to be understood that may be communicated unconsciously.

In the same spirit of fostering reflection instead of prescription, but this time supporting the contribution of the Parent ego state, English (2011) wrote:

As a therapist I have to be careful with “permissions” challenging beliefs in the Parent of my clients. ... Otherwise there is a risk that they ... discard values that correspond to certain ethical standards of their parents or their culture, although these may be important in certain areas. (p. 280)

Commenting on the role of the educator, Barrow (2007) suggested inverting the metaphor of the ego state diagram and placing the Parent at the base of the three circles. In his view,

by reversing the Parent and Child ego states, there is a recognition that in healthy individuals the Parent wisdom, security, and surety both ground and uphold the desire to be alive. ... It is as if symbolically the Parent ego state is the solid base from which the hopes and aspirations of the Child lift the whole individual. (p. 208)

In inviting papers for this themed edition of the *Transactional Analysis Journal*, we found ourselves stimulated by how effective use or possible misuse of our own Parent ego state influences our work. How can we as practitioners bring reflection and meaning to such ideas? How do they contribute to shaping our role as psychotherapists, counselors, organizational consultants, and educators?

We were stimulated to think about asymmetry in the therapeutic (or other kind of professional) couple and wanted to consider Ogden’s

“We cordially invite authors to share reflections and experiences with regard to the therapeutic or antitherapeutic, the conscious or unconscious use of the Parent ego state.”

(1995) idea of the analytic third. In his paper “Analysing Forms of Aliveness and Deadness of the Transference-Countertransference,” he wrote this:

The analytic third is experienced through the individual personality systems of analyst and analysand and is therefore not an identical experience for each. The creation of the analytic third reflects the asymmetry of the analytic situation in that it is created in the context of the analytic setting, which is structured by the relationship of roles of analyst and analysand. The unconscious experience of the analysand is privileged in the analytic relationship: it is the experience of the analysand (past and present) that is taken by the analyst and analysand as the principal (although not exclusive) subject of the analytic dialogue. (p. 697)

In terms of this themed TAJ, we cordially invite authors to share reflections and experiences with regard to the therapeutic or antitherapeutic, the conscious or unconscious use of the Parent ego state. Our hope is to contribute in this way to further expanding and deepening the already existing literature on the Parent ego state as well as to acknowledge the legacy of previous writing on this topic.

We are interested in authors’ views regarding making use of our experience, especially when the Parent

ego state of clients or practitioners is stimulated, and to muse with interest on the transference and countertransference possibilities inherent in this exploration.

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Steff Oates and Diana Deaconu will be editing this special issue of the TAJ. Steff is a member of the TAJ editorial board and has previously guest edited several TAJ theme issues. She can be reached at lcfan@me.com. Diana Deaconu is a coeditor of the TAJ and can be reached at dianardeaconu@gmail.com.

Changes to Conferences: ITAA Seeks Hosts for 2018 and 2019 Conferences

by Emily Keller and Vladimir Goussakovski

For ITAA, 2016 was a year without a conference. Instead of hosting or cohosting an international event, we offered our support to the South Asian Association for Transactional Analysts (SAATA), which at the time was planning its conference in Dhaka, Bangladesh, a first for that country. A dedicated team of people poured hours of work and passion into planning that event. At the same time that the TA community was planning on coming together to explore and promote the basic tenets of TA in the world, a string of anti-OK events had started to occur more frequently.

Then, on the evening of 1 July 2016, Dhaka suffered the worst terrorist attack in recent history when gunmen stormed a popular restaurant. The men, armed with guns, bombs, and machetes, held several dozen people hostage. By the end of the attack, 29 people had died.

Following that horrific and tragic event, conference organizers made the difficult decision to move the conference. The transition went smoothly. Even without a policy in place, they managed the last-

minute move from Dhaka, Bangladesh, to Coimbatore, India. Those of us who attended that gathering in September were immensely impressed with the swift and smooth work they did and the wonderful event that resulted.

Now, we are asking, “How do we manage emergency situations such as this?” In addition to asking the SAATA conference team about the valuable lessons they learned, we will consider, at the time of conference planning, possible risks involved in travel to and visiting a potential conference location. We will consider existing travel advisories and make back-up plans for ITAA Board or Trustees (BOT) and annual general membership (AGM) meetings and exams. These may include relocating, rescheduling, and refunding exam fees.

The SAATA conference in India taught us another lesson: The model of having the ITAA offer support to another association’s conference worked well. Support consists of the following: some marketing, agreeing to hold the ITAA BOT and AGM meetings at that location, and agreeing to offer workshops and



Emily Keller



Vladimir Goussakovski

host exams there as well. The marketing support will likely include articles and information published in *The Script*, an ITAA website graphic and link to the conference website, and some email marketing support.

Based on our positive experience in supporting the SAATA conference, we have agreed to experiment with the following conference schedule: One out of every 3 years we will host an ITAA conference, one out of every

3 years we will cohost a TA World Conference, and one out of every 3 years we will support a national/ regional/ similar conference as we did this year with the SAATA conference.

The benefits of this schedule include:

- The reduction of stress in finding locations willing to host a global event
- Lessening the burden of a small group of people in putting together one large global event
- Bringing in TA talent from examinees/board members/ITAA members to locations they might not consider traveling to without this support
- Lessening the burden of potential conference financial losses on the ITAA
- Allowing us to continue offering education services every year
- Offering a location for the BOT and AGM meetings
- Reaching out to smaller pockets of TA talent, inviting them to cooperate with a larger TA organization, and potentially increasing our diversity of talents and interests as well as our person power

In identifying and selecting a local/ regional/national conference to support, priority will go to those held in locations offering relative ease of travel; that have more potential examinees in their area; that communicate an organized conference plan, contract, and theme; and that are not located in Europe because of

the likelihood that TA World Conferences will be held in a European country.

According to the current schedule, the 2017 conference will be a TA World Conference cohosted in Berlin. After that, the 2018 conference will be an ITAA conference, and the 2019 conference will be a supported conference. If you would like your area/ region/country to host the 2018

ITAA conference or if your local TA organization is planning a conference for 2019 and would like ITAA to support it in the ways just described, please contact Vladimir by email at v.gusakovski@gmail.com.

This process is an experimental one, and the schedule will assume the flexibility needed to ensure we are offering consistent, convenient conferences. ⑤

Recent Publications

Laurie Hawkes has a new book out entitled *L'Art de penser dans un monde distrait et violent* [The Art of Thinking in a Violent and Distracted World], published in October by Odile Jacob. It is about mentalization, which is conceived of as resting on four pillars: thinking, feeling (with affect regulation), acting (agency), and others (intersubjectivity). Laurie began by considering whether instead of thinking too much, perhaps some people think “wrongly,” with limited, absent, or disrupted mentalization. She describes how the pillars must all be used in combination and in varying proportions depending on people and circumstances: thinking about feelings, feeling about thoughts, and acting on one’s thoughts and feelings, all the while taking into account the thoughts, actions, and feelings of others. One chapter is about jihad and other cultish problems, including how people’s minds get taken over like a computer can become infected with a virus. Other chapters consider issues faced with borderline and narcissistic individuals and how to address mentalization in psychotherapy. At the end of most chapters, bridges are made with transactional analysis concepts, including ego states, racket feelings, scripts, and discounting.

The most recent issue of the Dutch-language *TA Magazine* was published this fall. This digital publication comes out four times a year and is put together by members of the Dutch NVTa and the Belgium VITA associations, whose members receive it as part of their membership. (TA students and others may download it for a small fee.) Its purpose is to reach a broad group of psychotherapists, educators, counselors, consultants, leaders, and coaches who are interested in using transactional analysis in their work. The magazine is theme based and includes interviews, articles, and reviews. In 2016 the themes have been migration, the changing role of educators, and power in organizations. The upcoming December theme is healing in relationship. Non-Dutch-speaking authors may contribute (they will be translated into Dutch), and anyone interested in contributing a piece may email redactie@tamagazine.eu. For more information: www.tamagazine.eu.

Emily Keller is ITAA Vice President Operations and can be reached at ekeller@seinstitute.com. Vladimir Goussakovski is ITAA Conference Committee Chair and can be reached at v.gusakovski@gmail.com.

Standing By Each Other in Solidarity

by K. V. Jayashree and Rema K Giridhar

The following conversation between two of the volunteers who helped make the 2016 South Asian Association of Transactional Analysts (SAATA) Conference in Coimbatore such a success highlights some of what they each experienced. We hope it will encourage others to attend TA conferences worldwide and perhaps even to volunteer.

Rema: Jay, what made you choose the slokas that you chanted at the conference opening? Can you share some about their meaning?

Jay: I cried when I heard about the terrorist attack in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in July of this year. I had heard a lot about the gentle Bangladeshis from P. K. Saru and was eagerly looking forward to meeting them. The terrorist attack changed everything. Hearing that the SAATA conference had been changed to Coimbatore because of the concerns for participants' safety was, therefore, a moment of joy but also filled with sadness and disappointment.

I was asked to sing an invocation (prayer) song on the inaugural day of the conference. I couldn't decide what to sing, but then one afternoon I awoke from a nap with certain chants/slokas in my mind. All of them resonated with the theme of



the conference: "Freedom Within." Each of us has a choice in everything we do, even though it may not always seem so. Only the Light of spiritual knowledge can remove the cloud of darkness in our minds so we are free within and without. That's when it struck me that it was not a conscious choice of which song to chant but rather an obligation to convey a divine message: "Asato mā sad gamaya, tamaso mā jyotir gamaya, mṛtyor māmṛtam gamaya" (Bṛhadaranyaka Upanishad): "From the unreal lead me to the real, from the darkness lead me to the light, from death lead me to immortality."

Jay: Rema, what was it that inspired you to offer so much of your time and energy to volunteer for this conference?



Rema: What happened in Bangladesh was unsettling, but all I could do at that time was to keep the affected families in prayer. When I was told that the conference was shifting to Coimbatore, I made a promise that I was going to stand up and do my bit, walk an extra mile to tell the world that we have the strength to hold and not to yield. I wanted the conference to go down in history to mark that human beings can be destroyed, but the human spirit can never be defeated. Our teacher P. K. Saru often quotes that "the intention orchestrates the outcome." True to that, I experienced in volunteering for the conference how the collective consciousness helped in every possible way. Phenomenologically, interpersonal bonding and cooperation between individuals, from Adult to Adult, can lead to warmth and liveliness that invites connectedness and love at a

highly evolved level of consciousness. However, this growth does not occur by itself. An inner spiritual decision to foster personal dignity, sincerity, and mutuality is required to maintain an Adult ego state that subsumes into itself the best that can be distilled from Parent and Child energy. The same spiritual quality is needed to keep this Adult ego state in touch with clear perceptions and altruistic concern so that it will choose life and an active stance oriented toward the good of humanity and the protection of life forms on planet Earth. This is something I learned from Pearl Drego. In Coimbatore, we all stood together to prove that nothing can be daunting when human beings work together, stand by each other, and love each other.

Rema: Jay, what helped you to go out there on the podium and speak confidently when you had been so anxious about it?

Jay: I first read Susan Jeffer's book *Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway* in 2011, and since then that has been my mantra and has helped me be open to new experiences. As I overcame my fears and became aware of my resources, my belief in myself

strengthened. With this improved sense of self-confidence and an urge to expand my comfort zone, I readily volunteered to be the master of ceremonies for a day at the SAATA conference. Imagine my surprise when I started developing cold feet

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and anxiety as the day drew closer. My self-belief was floundering. I even started experiencing physical symptoms. Once I became aware of the negative inner dialogue, or like Susan Jeffers says, the "inner chatterbox," Louise Hay's book *You Can Heal Your Life* came to my rescue. The affirmation "I move forward in life with ease and with joy at every age" became my mantra then. I was determined to face my fear head on.

Of course, belonging to the TA community, where I know I will not be judged if I make mistakes, also helped me. I remembered Mahatma Gandhi saying, "Freedom is not worth having if it does not include the freedom to make mistakes." So with faith and trust I decided to go ahead and do what I could. On the day, my hip pain miraculously disappeared without medication, and I joyfully, easily, and confidently did what I had to do. The appreciation I received for it was very affirming. Today I know I moved out of my limiting script that day. I was open to making mistakes and being myself. I was aware of what was happening to me and knew where

to look for help. I had the strength to use my resources and the love and energy of my team.

Jay: Rema, how do conferences contribute to the spread of transactional analysis? Do you think they are still relevant in our modern, web-based Internet world?

Rema: That is an important question. I appreciate technology and am in awe of the way the Internet can bring the whole world together. I also think and feel that the humanistic value of conferences is powerful in satiating the hungers people feel and can support purposeful learning in a way that technology can never replace. It is important to meet, to share with, to accept, and to grow with others in person. Conferences help the learning process by creating knowledge from the transaction between social knowledge and personal knowledge. Meeting people is essential in gratifying the existential hunger to belong, to establish identity, and to be accepted. The conference offered a safe, accepting environment with immense opportunities for appropriate stimulus, fitting recognition, and proper structure. Conferences also create an experiential learning environment in which our behavior is changed as a result of reflecting on and drawing conclusions about the experience. These experiences then motivate and direct our behavior.

References

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Dr. K. V. Jayashree is a medical doctor who now works as a counselor and psychotherapist; she is also a *Heal Your Life* teacher. She has been training in TA for about 7 years and has also been profoundly influenced by Louise Hay's *You Can Heal Your Life*. Dr. Jayashree can be reached at japra69@gmail.com. Rema K Giridhar is a consulting psychologist, counselor, and educator with a master's degree in applied psychology and 5 years of TA training. She works closely with children and young adults. Rema can be reached by email at rema.k.giridhar@gmail.com.