



# Gestalt NEWS Foundation

Informative and communicative six-month issue of Gestalt Foundation  
Psychotherapy & Training Center December 2008 9th issue



- ↳ Editorial.....2
- ↳ Trip to Cythera.....2 & 10
- ↳ Gestalt in Organizations....3
- ↳ A journey of ten years.....4-5
- ↳ Social Responsibility in Psychotherapy.....4 & 8
- ↳ From Theoretical Comprehension to the Challenge of Practice.....5
- ↳ A few words about Dramatherapy.....6
- ↳ Training and Volunteerism.....7
- ↳ The path to Psychotherapy.....9
- ↳ Thoughts on the Paradox of time.....10
- ↳ Voluntary Blood donation.....11

## Ten years of GESTALT FOUNDATION



**G**estalt Foundation has reached already ten years of existence in education and psychotherapy at the area of Gestalt Therapy in Greece, and more specific, in Athens and Thessaloniki.

Two meetings for the 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of Gestalt Foundation took place. The first one was entitled «Psychotherapy and Society» and took place in Thes-

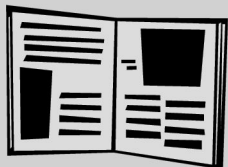


saloniki at 7th of November 2008, at the «Pavlos Zannas» hall of «Olimpion» theatre.

The second one, entitled «Education and Psychotherapy», took place at 23rd of November at the «University of Indianapolis» in Athens.

There was a huge participation in both meetings by members of the «Gestalt Family» from Greece and abroad, friends and collaborators. They all have a common target, the care of one people to another and the love for what they are doing.

This issue is all about those meetings, as well as the next one, in an effort to give you a taste from all the things that happened there and then through the eyes and the heart of those who were present.



Those of you who wish to contribute to future issues are most welcomed! Please contact Gestalt Foundation's secretariat office: Telephone: 2310 283588 or 210 7254010.

email:  
thessaloniki@gestaltfoundation.gr  
or athina@gestaltfoundation.gr.

Express your interest in participating or simply share with us your opinion or ideas!

**We are always interested in hearing from you!**



## Editorial



December  
2008

Winter has arrived for good and 2008 "exits" leaving room for the New Year to arrive. We were late in publishing this issue, but it was for a "good" reason!

We wanted to conclude the two conferences celebrating our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Parts of the presentations from these two big events form the main body of this and the next issue.

When we decided on our main themes ("Psychotherapy & Society" in Thessaloniki and "Training in Psychotherapy" in Athens), we did not know how important these issues would become for Greek society. They are certainly current issues that have troubled us quite a few times through the last years.

I am especially glad for your response and your participation that become all the more active. Trainees, trainers, and participants from experiential workshops share their experiences, messages, and dilemmas.

This "reporting tradition" has grown to such an extent that it is becoming a respectful part of our Newsletter.

I wish that all of you will continue to respond to our invitation and "GFNews" will remain a sharing, informative and communicative forum.

This is another way through which we "create" our "vision" and keep "developing" all together!

**Enjoy your reading; have a nice winter and a Happy New Year!**

**Antonia Konstantinidou**

P.S. I would like to thank Elena Antoniou for my photo "renewal", which was taken in the beautiful terrace of Culture Center of "University of Indianapolis" in Athens, at 23/11/08.

*Antonia Konstantinidou is a Social and Clinical Psychologist (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), Gestalt psychotherapist, trainers and supervisor, Member of EAGT, ECP Holder.*

*She is one of the co-founders of Gestalt Foundation and one of the resident members of the training program. She lives and works in Thessaloniki and Athens where she practices her profession since 1994.*

# Voyage to Cythera...

## Life journeys of each and every one of us

*"Life journeys of each and every one of us" was a workshop on the occasion of a "Voyage to Cythera"; a trip through time and place, a process of quest... with images and instants that each one of us encountered, experienced and made sense of separately, in a truly inspiring setting that helped us make contact and change. These are the moments "we are sharing" today with you.*

**Katia Hatzilakou Maria Farmaki** Workshop Coordinators

### CYTHERA SUMMER 2008

I was asked to write something about the experiential workshop on Cythera - only I just don't really know what to include and what to leave out. It is difficult for someone to describe the range of emotions, the shared way of thinking and deep understanding, the unfolding microcosm everyone experienced, the indelibly magical ability of the island to stimulate all senses to their most sensitive level.

There is just one thing engraved in my soul; the sense of the sublime I felt. As exaggerated as this might sound, there is no other concept so close to what we have experienced.

On Cythera, therefore, I learned the power that weakness generously offers, the feeling one has when emotions skillfully touch hidden chords and produce a crystal-clear sound, the softening of the pain that wells from deeply rooted violence, the silence and the silent cry that brings relief and, of course, the priceless value of those bea-

cons that light our hearts.

Each one of us became a sailor, a boatswain, a stoker, a scout, an observer and a captain on a unique and, at the same time, long journey to places that do not exist on any map; it was a journey within my co-travellers, in a period

ther: we caused a storm, a tempest that deeply shook our deepest foundations.

Upon ending our journey, everyone had already given others a tiny green leaf, to decorate their souls with. May you all be well, healthy and strong, my unique well-



of a few hours that felt like days, or maybe even years. Letting go of any anchor that held us strongly fixed to the ground, our souls flew over Cythera, into a deep blue sky, along with some clouds to rest on, while the sun stroked, almost lovingly, our faces. The tears that had fallen soaked the ground, filling it with breathing whispers...

We all emerged both together and each one separately at the same time, from the sea waters, like lonely waves who found themselves all toge-

loved friends, so we may all give each and every one of us small and humble moments of happiness on a shore of dreams.

Katia and Mary,  
Thank you,  
**Antonis**

**Voyage to Cythera  
is continued in page 10**

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## Meeting of Athens

GESTALT THERAPY TRAINING  
TOOL AT THE BUSINESS  
WORKPLACE

George Stamatis, B.A., M.A., H.S.D., *Business Consultant  
Lecturer at Athens University of Economics,  
Graduate of "Gestalt in Organizations" Programme*

*When two different worlds meet...*

FROM PSYCHOTHERAPY TO  
BUSINESS CONSULTANCY  
(CONSULTING COACHING)

From the end of the 1950s, following the pioneering work of **Edwin Nevis** and **Richard Wallen**, Business Consultancy and development of Organizations have been based on principles and concepts of the Gestalt psychotherapeutic approach.

WHAT ARE THE "INTERNAL" NEEDS  
OF BUSINESSES AND  
ORGANIZATIONS?

- Effective Communication
- Team building and Cooperation
- Conflict Management
- Adaptation to Change
- Development of leadership skills
- Sound Management of power
- "Reappearance" of creativity

WHAT DO BUSINESSES &  
ORGANIZATIONS SEEK SO AS TO  
MEET THESE NEEDS?

- Skills
- Tools
- Training
- Support

WHERE DOES GESTALT "ENTER" TO  
SATISFY THESE NEEDS AND  
REQUESTS OF BUSINESSES AND  
ORGANIZATIONS?

HOW THE PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC  
GESTALT THERAPY APPROACH BE-  
COMES A TRAINING TOOL IN BUSI-  
NESS:

A) By training Trainers  
and Consultants...

(B) who train and support Businesses  
and Organizations...

(A) TRAINING TRAINERS AND  
CONSULTANTS...

BASED ON THE GESTALT APPROACH,  
which is:

- Phenomenological
- Existential
- Holistic
- Experiential

II. THROUGH THEORETICAL MEANS,  
such as:

- The field theory
- The systems theory
- The paradoxical theory of change,  
e.t.c.

III. USING TECHNIQUES, created  
through experience gained within  
Businesses and Organizations

... SO THAT TRAINEES MAY BECOME  
A FACTOR OF DEVELOPMENT FOR:

- Presence
- Awareness
- Congruence
- Experimentation
- Intervention

And have a major impact and positive  
influence within the Organization

B. TRAINING BUSINESSES AND  
ORGANIZATIONS...

...ALONG NEW PATHS, SUCH AS:

- Managing polarities
- Improving learning abilities
- New orientation
- Integration & commitment
- Sharing responsibility
- "Unfreezing" fixed situations
- New "paradigms" for leadership,  
e.t.c.

... SO THAT EVERY PERSON WITHIN  
THE ORGANIZATION CAN PERFORM  
MORE EFFECTIVELY AND CREATI-  
VELY, THROUGH:

- CONTACT with themselves and their  
environment.
- AWARENESS of who they are and  
what they want.
- MOBILIZING on the basis of options  
available.
- CREATIVE ADJUSTMENT of their  
attitudes.
- EMERGENCE of their leadership  
skills.
- WEAKENING the resistance of  
hidden obstacles...

... In other words, a kind of rebirth....

THIS IS WHY THE OPPORTUNITIES  
AND PROPERTIES-QUALITIES  
"PROVIDED" BY THE GESTALT  
TRAINING PROCESS ARE:

- Authenticity
- Contact
- Relating
- "Open" Attitude
- New Perspectives
- Self confidence by trusting the  
process
- Longterm solutions between  
Consultants and Organization  
members

## CONCLUSION:

Gestalt Therapy constitutes a unique  
Training tool within businesses...

...offering excellent possibilities!

... revealing unique qualities!

*When two different worlds meet...*

... A process of rebirth may  
commence!

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## Meeting of Thessaloniki

## Gestalt in Organizations

Lia Zografou, 2008 Gestalt in Organizations

One of the distinguishing features of  
the Gestalt approach is its unique  
method of handling resistance within an  
organizational framework.

Phenomena such as refusing to  
complete a task, lack of interest,  
boredom, procrastination, low pro-  
ductivity or even verbal attacks, ab-  
senteism, etc. (all expressions of  
varying degrees of creativity or toxicity),  
are regarded as normal reactions which  
contain valuable information for the  
manager who is trying to implement  
changes at the workplace.

The Gestalt consultant views  
resistance as a healthy process and  
instead of trying to quash it, s/he  
accepts it and uses it as a tool to achieve  
change.

The theoretical framework that  
allows and often encourages resistance  
as an inexorable and necessary part of  
the organizational process is provided  
by field theory.

According to field theory, we cannot  
separate the individual from her/his  
system, in this case the organization in  
which they belongs. People's per-  
sonalities and their behaviour are the  
result of multiple dynamics that occur at  
any time both in the organization and in  
their lives outside it. This holistic ap-  
proach absolves non-cooperative  
persons, i.e. 'bad employees or mana-  
gers', who are possibly demonized as  
the ones responsible for failure, as is  
usually the case. We are all aware of  
many examples of companies which, in  
blind panic and despair, fire their CEOs,  
hoping that the next, highly salaried  
boss will bring the much desired  
reversal of its fortune only to see the new  
hero quit or get fired within a year. And  
so the desperate search for change  
continues *ad infinitum*.

In other cases we fire a "bad" em-  
ployee but to our great disappointment  
another baddie mushrooms somewhere  
else. The current economic crisis is full  
of examples of this mentality in various  
fields whether financial, political or  
professional. We falsely believe that if  
we get rid of the culprit, we will have  
gotten rid of the crime as well.

The Gestalt view is that there are no  
scapegoats and no heroes. There are  
functional or non-functional dynamics,  
under the influence of which, a person  
may at any time express toxicity or  
ability, often acting on behalf of the  
entire group.

Each field is different and it is  
subject to its own particular circum-  
stances and forces. Each field has its  
own way of self-organizing and po-  
tentially contains all phenomena, both  
visible and invisible.

An extension of this belief is that a  
dysfunctional organization exhibits such  
behaviour because for x reasons it is  
organized in a specific manner at this  
point in time. This does not preclude that  
the organization does not have the  
potential of being organized in a heal-

thier and more productive manner, given  
the opportunity. Furthermore, all  
members of the organization are  
collectively responsible for the quality of  
their experience.

Based on these premises, a Gestalt  
consultant enlightens the organization  
about the ways in which it experiences  
itself. The consultant offers managers  
and employees ways to understand how  
they sustain dysfunction and possibly  
deny themselves more effective ways of  
cooperating. For example, a team of  
employees which is exhibiting high  
absenteeism due to illness, low pro-  
ductivity and a general atmosphere of  
mistrust, realizes that despite everyone's  
good intentions nothing changes.  
Employees are usually obliged to  
communicate mainly via email, which  
offers fertile ground for misunder-  
standings and conflicts and every team  
member expresses his or her fear of  
loneliness in their own way. One gets  
sick, another becomes aggressive,  
another one becomes excessively  
compliant, and so on.

The Gestalt consultant's inter-  
vention in this given field functions  
supportively. The consultant who is field-  
aware does not offer solutions, does not  
act as a saviour or an expert, but is fully  
aware of his/her own contribution to and  
responsibility for the organization and  
maintenance of this given field.  
Therefore, s/he responds accordingly.

In our example, the consultant does not  
call for individual interviews, which  
would intensify the current *status quo*,  
but calls the whole team for a group  
meeting instead. She mentions all their  
observations and facilitates the team's  
perceptual acuity. The team realizes  
what conditions prevent it from func-  
tioning more powerfully and decides to  
act collectively. Solutions begin to e-  
merge because the field is now beginning  
to tap into its creative potential. The team  
realizes that the most serious reason why  
the group is exhibiting such symptoms is  
the architectural layout of their offices  
which does not allow for immediate face  
to face contact. Architectural inter-  
ventions include the tearing down of  
walls, the creation of a wide, open plan  
work space and the establishment of  
regular group meetings. The phenomena  
of resistance disappear.

In conclusion, the Gestalt consultant  
functions as a catalyst, an illuminator and  
a calm regulator of the dynamics of any  
organization so that solutions which have  
been lying dormant, beyond awareness,  
are allowed to come to the surface by the  
organization itself.

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### Meeting of Thessaloniki

Drama has always been a social policy tool, providing a secure vessel wherein each society placed its perceptions, problems and expectations. Dramatic Art, as served by Euripides and Aristophanes, is the fertile ground where social dialogue in the *polis* grows, and space is given to the voices of the strong and the weak alike, the misbegotten and the sick, the imprisoned and the dejected.

Dramatherapy is a particular form of psychotherapy because most of us have already experienced it while playing as children. Wearing our parents' clothes, talking to the mirror or assuming different roles when playing with our friends, we learned the difference between 'me' and 'not me', we were socialized through learning the subtle dynamics of empathy and we developed our ability to relate to others.

Dramatherapy uses drama systematically and employs its therapeutic and psychosocially supportive and educational properties in a way which promotes therapeutic change. It is a unique form of therapy which uses mainly theatrical practice in pursuit of therapeutic goals with the use of symbolism, different types of play (embodied, projective and role play), dramatization, masks and ritual. The dramatherapist works with individuals or groups in sessions which can last from 40 minutes to an hour and a half, which typically include a warm-up phase, followed by a phase of active exploration through drama and closing so as to return to the 'here and now'. Maintaining the precise boundaries between fantasy

and reality is an absolutely necessary precondition and great emphasis is placed on the physical and emotional safety of all participants.

As a form of therapy, dramatherapy has its roots in two different worlds. On the one hand, we have the world of theatre and drama and, on the other, the world of psychology and psychotherapy. Recent developments in the fields of experimental theatre and psychology, most notably through the contributions of Winnicott, Freud, Klein, Jung and Rogers from the field of psychology and those of Brecht, Brook, Stanislavski and Grotowski from the field of drama, have rendered dramatherapy a powerful agent of change at a psychological, political and spiritual level.

Dramatherapy's social dimension is inherent in its provenance and constitution. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, despite the widespread use of drama in European psychiatry since the age of the Enlightenment, we saw a great and unexpected rise of dramatic activity in clinical settings. Three men in particular, Iljine and Evreinov in Revolutionary Russia in the years between 1905-1917 and Moreno, a contemporary of Freud and the father of psychodrama, established drama as a *bona fide* form of therapy and a reliable method of personal and collective exploration into more efficient ways of living. Iljine established his Therapeutic Theatre in Russia between 1908 and 1917.

Evreinov regarded dramatic action as a fundamental human need and basic human instinct, akin to breathing, eating and having sex. All humans need to experience belonging, playing and relating. There is no nation, no tribe on the planet which has

not developed its own form of theatrical expression.

To Moreno, drama was the catalyst which enabled people to discover their lost spontaneity and begin to live again with inspiration and creativity. Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, dramatherapy has been inspired by developments in theatre in education, pedagogy, anthropology and ritual, as well as by contributions from sociology and dramaturgy and became an established agent of change in people's lives.

What makes dramatherapy more accessible to a wider range of social groups than other, more conventional forms of psychotherapy is that it does not rely exclusively on speech. Indeed, dramatherapy often bypasses it in favour of symbolic expression. Clients may express their anger through making monsters out of clay, dancing like fire, painting the Witch in Snow White or howling like the big bad wolf in Little Red Riding Hood. Therefore, like music therapy or art therapy, dramatherapy can be applied in special conditions, as with people who are not able to use speech, or cannot speak the language of the country in which they reside as is the case with many asylum seekers. The latter client group is especially sensitive, since people may suffer from extremely serious physical and psychological trauma. Furthermore, people with severe learning difficulties, physical disability or autism, who may not have access to other forms of therapy, may benefit from dramatherapeutic intervention.

Dramatherapists, therefore, ought to be more than simply trained; they need to possess acute social sensibility and wider anthropological know-

ledge which will enable them to handle cultural diversity fluently and consistently. The dramatherapist, like an ancient master of ceremonies or shaman, functions as a benevolent theatre director in every client's psychological drama. He or she offers clients the possibility to be both protagonists and audience of their lives so that they may discern, appreciate and decide on their future course. The sense of social responsibility is high, since the dramatherapist constantly reflects on his/her role on the 'razor edge' between being a non-directive fellow traveler to their clients and a keeper of safe boundaries and structures of the session. She establishes a frame but does not interpret nor predetermines. If they did that, it would be like attending a theatre performance having received instructions as to how we're supposed while watching it, before we enter the auditorium.

My own perception of my work is that, even though I do not declare my manifesto or publish in the press, I effectively perform a political act each day in my small studio, trying to assist each client to gain deeper and more responsible awareness of his/her contribution to the social fabric, the roles in which he/she is trapped and those which he/she has the potential to play.

**Lia Zografou,**  
dramatherapist

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# FROM THEORETICAL COMPREHENSION TO THE CHALLENGE OF ACTION

Challenge, as defined in Greek dictionaries, springs from the verb 'evoke', i.e., to call somebody to come out and confront me, to arouse, to stimulate. (Dorbarakis, 1994). It is an invitation for participation and confrontation in a fight, battle or game, in order for someone to prove their competence or value. It might, also, mean disputing the truth, pertinence or validity of a theory or idea (Crowther, 1995). I recognise the significance of challenge in the context of psychotherapy whenever circumstances demand that the therapist should proceed in a transcending manner.

Numerous factors make transference from theory to practice challenging. The following three take the lead:

(I) the element of the unknown, and, occasionally, the mystery, that covers the greatest part of human mental life with its plurality of contradictions and paradoxes;

(II) the fact that the therapist, the client and their interaction constitute part of a wider ever-changing field;

(III) the fact that the main "tool" of a therapist and an integral aspect of the therapeutic process is the therapist's own self. These three factors lead to a series of questions, dilemmas and challenges that every therapist - and every School - is challenged to answer.

On the basis of relevant literature and my personal experience, I would like to focus on four *basic* if I may call them that - challenges:

## 1. The challenge of meeting a client experiencing borderline situations.

*Borderline*, as determined by Jaspers (1983), might mean love, death, illness, loss, loneliness, random incident, collapse, failure, or, according to others, the existential facts of life. There are quite a few moments during my working with clients when I feel stressed, anxious, tense, sometimes even disquieted, to mention but a few of my awkward feelings. The challenge here is how, despite the intense internal reaction created within me during my contact with the client, I can maintain the required degree of objective judgement, in order to be present and available for my client. Hycner (1993) reports the possibility that only after many of years of practice this type of intensity becomes less painful for the therapist; however, it is never fully resolved. This point underlined by Hycner seems to me to be a very interesting field for further research.

## 2. The challenge of subjectivity of perception and experience.

*Subjectivity of perception and experience*

means that each individual attributes meaning and experiences various stimuli differently. The challenge here is for me to be on the alert, so as not to lose contact with my client due to escaping into my own subjectivity. I will give an example of how differently we perceived a session, my client and I. He was very angry with his girlfriend, because while he was sick and bedridden she did not adjust her



schedule so that she could be at his place and take care of him. He was furious that she did not recognise what it was that he needed and believed that care had to be taken for granted. It goes without saying, that he had not asked anything from her. I chose to focus the client's attention to the manner in which he recognised his needs, expressed them, turned to the environment, requested, claimed, etc. We worked on that for a long time. The client seemed to have changed his attitude significantly and he appeared to be pleased. Similarly, I was also pleased, considering that the client had been sensitised as to how to express his needs. At the end of the session, when I asked him what his 'take-home message' from the session was, if there was something that appeared important to him, he answered in a celebratory tone (!): "Of course; I realised that care has to be taken for granted, otherwise it loses its value". There are numerous ways in which one could approach the client's issue in this example (The Arrow Phenomenon, Polster, 1995:88). As for me, the 'les-son' of the story is that everyone sees things differently. This has led me to keep checking what it is that the client says and what it is they comprehend. In other words, comprehension can by no means be taken for granted.

## 3. The challenge of theoretical expectation.

We first encounter the term 'theoretical expectation' in Jung (1997: 61). In our case and in my view, it is con-

nected with the meaning of predicting human reaction and behaviour. Let me give you an example of how one can fall victim to theoretical expectation: a client was diagnosed with a serious disease. On my part, I made the assumption that this news would be shocking for my client. I based my assumption on the theory which predicts that an individual is likely to react with shock, denial, anger, etc,

when they learn that they suffer from a serious disease. Furthermore, I supported this assumption on the basis of how I would personally react in a similar case (subjectivity) and I was internally prepared as to how I would approach my client. Naturally, I felt surprised when the client not only did not show to be shocked but, on the contrary, he clearly reported that this diagnosis had brought great relief to him. For him, the matter was not the illness itself, but the clarification of what it was he suffered from; once he knew what he had to deal with, he could have the appropriate medical care. This example proved to me that action serves to test and question our knowledge and we need to be open to what is in order so that it may emerge. Being able to remain open is a form of transcendence.

## 4. The challenge of working on the issue of a client that also preoccupies the therapist.

Here I am referring to cases when an issue concerns the therapist, e.g. a blind point or open business, e.g., some traumatic fact the therapist is still sensitive to and he has no awareness of. I will never forget an example from my own experience. While I was completing a session and after the client left, I started feeling some discomfort. I was in a bad mood and I felt my body becoming heavier. I felt numb and weak, but could not tell why. I went home and kept thinking about it. In the evening I met with some friends and was still preoccupied. This went on for about two more days and it



## Meeting of Athens

took a dream to give me a hint that referred me to the particular client. The matter became clear! In fact, the work with the particular client had activated an issue of mine, from my own past, which was still painful. Finally, I had help from my own therapy and overcame the obstacle. This example shows me what ordeals we might go through due to our work, but also how important it is for the therapist to be surrounded with support in his own personal life and to provide themselves with opportunity for therapy, supervision and sharing with other colleagues. As a conclusion, I would like to stress what I myself perceive as the need for transition from "doing" to "being" with a client, a paradigm shift expressed by the term *healing through meeting*.

**Kostas Konstantinos**

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## A journey of ten years...

**G**estalt Foundation organized two oneday meetings on the occasion of its tenth anniversary. It was quite a rich course, the results and efforts of which, were reflected in those two meetings. I attended both meetings and, so, I have various images in my mind. The two days shared some common features, but were also quite different. Two different cities, two different topics, yet two aspects ultimately combined into one. I am about two years old as far as this journey is concerned. My first stop:

Thessaloniki, November 7, 2008

The topic of this meeting was *Society and Psychotherapy*. I entered a packed hall. I had arrived a little late. They had already started. Around me I could see colors and faces. I felt warm. My group was sitting somewhere at the back. I went and joined them. Right in front there was the usual 'gang': Katia, Antonia, Yianna, Despina. I observed the audience: they were concentrating hard, paying special attention. Topics presented were very inte-

resting. I listened carefully. I watched silently, having thoughts, asking and responding in imaginary dialogues in my mind. Speeches about professional volunteerism had a distinctive experiential aspect. They were particularly touching. The audience responded and commented positively.

Break...time for real dialogues - Pleasant encounters tasting of coffee. A chance for sharing and a touch of humor... I returned to the hall. Group presentations followed; they were full of creativity and



### Meeting of Thessaloniki

energy. I felt anxious but also proud of my group's presentation of. Finally, everything turned out fine. Next to come were the graduates' presentations filled with strong images and words.

We came to the end. The group went upstairs. Emotions were intense. This course included everything: from difficulties and experiences shared to joy and sorrow.

I decided to attend the

## The Importance of Social Responsibility in Psychotherapy

**T**o start with, I would like to thank Gestalt Foundation for giving us the opportunity to participate in this conference. We wish Gestalt Foundation all the best.

I am attending as the representative of Adler's Psychology Centre and I should clarify, in the first place, that our Association functions with volunteering coordinators; these are trained and supervised by psychologists and they attend seminars and are in continuous education and training.

According to our statutes, the aim of our Centre is to disseminate and apply Adler's theory. For this purpose, there are organised study groups aiming at prevention rather than treatment.

Nevertheless, our members get acquainted with new theories, discover alternative outlets and find encouragement in an atmosphere of acknowledgement, equality and mutual respect. Their broadened horizons help them attempt changes in their own lives. And even if they do not fully succeed, they learn to love and to accept themselves as they are.

However, I would not dare name what we do "psychotherapy". It is a method of getting acquainted and familiar with Adler's theory and its application, because he was the first to stress the importance of social aspects in the formation of a healthy personality and he underlined the significance of social interest. In other words, he believed that positive and constructive relations between fellow-people were the focal point of mental balance for individuals.

Adler argued that three fields are decisive for our lives: work, friendship and love. They are decisive because through them we draw satisfaction; through them we find meaning in life. These allow offering and accepting the offer. The feeling of social responsibility, i.e. focusing on a common goal and being detached from the narrow limits of one's ego, mutual offering and sharing generate a feeling that makes individuals happy and healthy.

Starting from the closest personal relations and widening the circle towards friends and, then, to relations at work, Adler confirmed the theory that humans are by nature social beings, who cannot live and, even more, who cannot develop in isolation, without collaboration, companionship, affection and love.

One of the main and decisive needs of everyone is the need to belong, to find one's place in the community and to determine, that way, the aims that will lead them to self-realization and to developing into independent and whole individuals.

The feeling of belonging develops when individuals feel certain about their personal value and it diminishes when they are preoccupied with feelings of insecurity and inferiority.

Likewise, when they feel that the community accepts them and that their participation in and contribution to common interests are positive, when they feel safe, important and useful, then their self-respect is improved.

According to Adler, at any given moment,

individuals are themselves responsible for their emotions, reactions and actions and they are not at the mercy of their instincts and their subconscious. Every one of their actions constitutes the resultant of feeling, reasoning and compulsion composing, that way, the wholeness of human personality. Creativity, capacity to make choices and ability to change are inherent in all of us.

Thoughts, feelings, desires, goals and memories render each individual special and unique. Everyone sees their own life from their own viewpoint, experience their own reality and, through their actions and choices, seek to confirm their beliefs, concerning themselves, their life and others.

Society offers individuals the field within which they may find and offer affirmation; social responsibility helps them encounter the reality of others, face their own restrictions and accept the potential of others. Society helps individuals develop and, maybe, find healing.

Our groups also function like a small ideal society. Inside the group, members, regardless of their gender, age or profession, are sensitised to understand themselves and others better; they are encouraged by the atmosphere of acceptance, equality and respect, which are our basic principles.

They are sensitised, so that they may also be able to offer to the community and to make a difference in their own lives and the life of others in their environment. As for us, the coordinators, we work with an enhanced feeling of social responsibility, with zeal; we are volunteers with a professional ethos.

### Yvonne Kapon

Rogerian Counselor, Trained Coordinator of Adler's Psychology Center



### Meeting of Athens

meeting in Athens, since I had always been curious to get to know my 'missing part'. Therefore, this was the next stop:

Athens, November 23, 2008

I felt anxious and curious. What would it be like? What and who would I encounter? I entered the hall only, this time, everything looked white - no colors, no familiar sights. I set with a friend. The topic of the

meeting was *Education and Psychotherapy*. The outset was strong, with an intense emotional touch. I listened to guest speakers with the same concentration and interest. So did the audience. Guest speakers came from different schools of therapy. It was, indeed, interesting, this common ground of fields and opinions. As time passed, colors become more vivid and I had already developed a feeling of familiarity.

Break time: for coffee and lunch - only this time, with a panoramic view over the whole

## A journey of ten years...

of Athens. I felt happy to meet people I had met before on Mt. Pelion.

The meeting followed a similar course: group presentations full of life, touching speeches by volunteers, and conscientious and interesting presentations by graduates. The closure moved me, yet more. I cherish Katia's strong words, the Despina's nervousness and Yianna's and Antonia's emotional response.

To conclude, both meetings were impeccably organized, of a high scientific level with substance, professio-

nalism as well as emotion. As for me, I had the chance to get to know, a little bit better, the other 'part' of Gestalt Foundation, to think deeply, to feel, once again, I was part of it all and to recollect my own parallel biennial course during these ten years. And the journey continues...

**Katsamaka, Vicky**  
3<sup>rd</sup> training year of  
Thessaloniki

When we decided on the title of our presentation for the anniversary meeting to mark the ten years of Gestalt Foundation, we began to walk along the paths of experiential and theoretical education. Relevant literature review led us to the two types of education, i.e. formal and non formal/experiential education, in psychotherapy.

Formal education is the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded "educational system" that begins from kindergarten and continues up to university, which includes, apart from general academic studies, a range of specialised courses and institutions for full-time attendance in technological and professional education (Jeffer & Smith, 1999). It is characterized as a place of comprehensive information on a variety of issues, often unrelated to each other, which the trainee acquires on a theoretical basis. Most of the times the educational process has a considerably impersonal character and leads to the acquisition of a degree.

On the contrary, non-formal education concerns organised educational activities beyond the established educational system (Jeffer & Smith, 1999). According to Rogers, the main characteristics of experiential education are that it works and is led through discussion; it includes investigation and development of skills and can take place anywhere. Its goal is others' prosperity and respect for the unique

## Paths of theoretical and experiential education - The Road to Psychotherapy

principles and dignity of every human being. It supports equality for all, because its main tool is "dialogue"; it includes the personal involvement of trainees and has diffused repercussions on them. If, for the sake of simplicity, we would like to characterize each form of education with a single verb, we would say that formal education may be characterized with the verb "know" and non-formal with the verb "do".

The role of the trainer in experiential education is to facilitate learning by creating a positive atmosphere, by clarifying the trainee's aims, by organising and creating accessible training sources, by counterbalancing the mental and emotional aspects of learning, by sharing feelings and thoughts with trainees and by avoid dominating over them.

In psychotherapy education, trainees, through the use of psychotherapeutic methods, learn-experience what it is to be a client, what it feels like to sit on the "hot chair", what it is to make contact. No matter how many times we read about experiments, no matter how many times we read on defence mechanisms, we cannot fully comprehend them, if they we do not experience them first hand.

Certainly, in order for education in psychotherapy to be complete, mere experience is not enough; it also needs theory and research.

Friedlander believed that everything is polarized in its two opposites. If someone is trapped by one of these opposing forces, they acquire a one-sided view and their life loses its balance (O'Leary, 1995). Let us imagine, therefore, psychotherapeutic education as a continuum in that a training course may be found either at one pole or the other or at any point in-between. An effective educational course should balance both forms of education. The Gestalt example, as we, the trainees of Gestalt Foundation experience it, is an example of the type of education that includes both poles as an integral part of its philosophy.

At this point, it would be important to clarify that it is not our aim to judge or to cancel academic education; we simply want to point out the reason that makes us claim that training in psychotherapy should be supported by both forms of education.

### Skordou, Maria

in collaboration with the 2nd Training Year Class in Gestalt Psychotherapy (Gestalt Foundation)



## Meeting of Thessaloniki

The title of the panel includes two implied messages that are not quite clear to me. These are: a) whether a psychotherapist might have no social responsibility? Or b) whether a psychotherapist's social responsibility might be so significant that the power wielded is catalytic enough for us to discuss it at a conference such as this?

I believe that all this discussion emerges from the criticism initially addressed to traditional psychoanalysis and, later, to behavioral therapy, around the '60s and '70s, as methods and practices that might cause social harm either to the person in therapy or to society as a whole. Such potential harm was related to the phenomenon of psychorationalization and individualization of social problems, on the one hand, and to the entrapment of each patient in roles of personal passivity and social impotence, on the other. It was criticism against theories and therapeutic practices that at least in their initial application - invested in the weakness and deficits of patients, their intensified feelings of guilt and inadequacy, in fatal chronicity and the idea of dead-ends for the individuals who trusted such methods and gave psychotherapists the role of an almighty Big Brother, who observed as an assessor and declared what the Truth was about one's condition and how far one was from this truth, prescribing the way towards the solution. If the solution never occurred, that was due the patient's deficient dynamics (cognitive inadequacy) or/and to their blurred no-good consciousness or unconscious (resistance) that was masochistically abolishing the scientifically enlightened, "objective" judgment and intervention of one's psychotherapist.

And, of course, all that in a schematic manner, entailing the risk of overgeneralization, since, naturally, at all times and in every therapeutic direction, a psychotherapeutic session also entailed aspects of reinforcement and emancipation of the patient, mostly through their authentic meeting with their the-

# A PSYCHOTHERAPIST'S SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

rapist if this was possible - whether it was imposed by theory (as later on according to humanitarian schools) or "escaped" traditional therapists since, even therapists were only humans with feelings. Allow me, though, to support that, in cases where these therapies had a reinforcing result for patients, that happened beyond and despite the existence of such aspects as those I have mentioned above. In this sense, I would support much of the criticism expressed to date against psychotherapy as a method for handling personal problems.

All the same, I think that the systemic way of thinking, which I

tions to their problems.

For a systemic-thinking therapist there is no personal problem, since everything is perceived within the core concept of systems consequently, there is no personal solution. This type of therapist constantly discusses with their clients in the context of the social components and consequences every moment of their personal development might have. Still, the way each one of the clients will handle this information remains a matter of personal choice for them.

A systemic therapist does not guide (neither in the direction of social activation nor towards com-

consequences, to the point, of course, that each directly interested party will allow their therapist to influence them. I believe that there lies our own social responsibility (as, e.g., that of a farmer avoiding lethal pesticides, or of a car mechanic fixing my car correctly):

- In showing, at any given moment, the limited boundaries of our action and recognizing the limits of our own thought, avoiding megalomaniac references to hypertheories, which, historically speaking, already constitute a kind of antique for case study in the postmodern times we live.

In opening before our interlocutors numerous, new, enriched versions of "reading" their problems, as these are reported, and potential solutions.

In contributing, with all due respect for and trust in their clients, towards the latter reconnecting with their indisputably present strong points and reserves, so as to take decisions that might be useful for their lives.

In being there, as reflective mirror of a client's course, for only as long as they request us to do so.

In constantly showing the broader, that is to say, the social consequences, of what happens to them as information that is important for them.

In encouraging them to connect with their natural supporting systems.

In considering our collaboration with them, as a brief temporary and, mainly, non-vital process for clients' lives.

Among other things, our society needs in order to be productive and live in relative prosperity people who are strong and aware of their own power. However, we therapists can achieve quite the contrary as well: we can contribute in that. This is where I see our own social responsibility.

Thank you.

**Anna Emmanouilidou**

Clinical Psychologist (Dr. Phil., M.Sc.)

Systemic Psychotherapist (IGST)



hereby represent, constitutes exactly the historic result of such criticism. In its theory systemic thought directly cancels any rationale or practice which might become a social hazard in the modern way of thinking.

The core of our thinking is that a psychotherapist is nothing more than a capable interlocutor, who is ethically obliged to respond to the request of the person before them rather than to any of their own imaginary therapeutic fantasies simply through raising facilitating, skilful questions that shed light to aspects of their client's experience, which have been temporarily neglected or hidden from sight. This helps clients reconnect with their strong points and reserves so that they will be able to reimagine and apply their own solutions, suited to their lives. For a therapist of systemic thinking a problem reported as such does not result from any learning or cognitive deficit, or former trauma or developmental fixation; it is simply a circumstantial blockage of the overall current capacity of an individual to find solu-

tion, e.g., of their client); on the contrary, they are constantly presenting new versions for discussion and open ways for the imagination so that they may contribute towards an essential and conscious choice to be made by their interlocutors which ultimate choice the therapist neither knows nor judges, either. Therapists reserve for themselves the role of a counsellor, in the ancient Greek meaning of the term (the one who holds counsel with), whose opinion may not be persuasive; this is considered as something positive, as an act of autonomy and empowerment of the interlocutor rather than as a sign of therapeutic disobedience or an expression of inadequacy or resistance.

I would argue that a psychotherapist has the same social responsibility as any other citizen, i.e. to participate in their own way and means in raising the quality of life of the members of the society they live in. They cannot save or destroy anyone. They can, however, contribute, up to a point, towards reinforcing or wrecking their interlocutors and that also has social



# TRAINING AND VOLUNTEERISM

Nowadays, traditional forms of charity are not as forceful as they used to be. Volunteerism has replaced charity to a significant extent and presents fundamental differences in its philosophy. Volunteerism has its roots in popular movements during periods of social crises when there is demand for psychological support to suffering social groups, e.g. war victims, cancer or AIDS patients, the elderly, abused and neglected children and adults, persons going through loss and bereavement, immigrants experiencing cultural shock, etc.

Those who experience crisis have lost their balance and their functional contact with their main levels of support - their body, their reflection capacity, their environment. We could, therefore, define crisis as a phase in the life of an individual who has lost their familiar picture of their environment and their own functionality within it; the person finds him/herself in a state of biological and psychological imbalance due to a situation that has caused them great stress. A crisis is usually short-termed; however, it can cause sharply experienced discomfort for the individual involved.

Even though this is considered a normal process, if it is not resolved, it may lead the person to psychological dysfunction with regard to relations, work and sociability.

Volunteers who support individuals in crisis need to develop intervention skills, as well as their own personal points of support, for their body and feelings, their reflection capacity and judgment; they should also consider the possibility of seeking professional and personal support from their environment, i.e. they

should remain functional and able to have this emotional contact; such contact should be well tolerated by both the 'client' and the volunteer, otherwise it is an act of violation in both directions.

Let us see, therefore, what relations and interaction might be developed.

## RELATIONS AND INTERACTION DEVELOPED

The volunteer - client relation is contained within a frame which both of them have established. There is dynamic and mutual interaction which includes factors that may influence them both. Such factors may be their family, nationality, religion, place of residence, gender, financial state, education, sexuality, needs, and so on.

Their relation is not based on one-sided support from the stronger to the weaker; it is a mutual and horizontal dynamic relation that helps develop both parties involved in every aspect of their existence.

Let us, now, see what it means for a trainee psychotherapist to become a volunteer and to work in contexts and institutions where crisis intervention is needed.

A trainee psychotherapist needs, on the one hand to develop their therapeutic intervention skills and, on the other, to broaden their boundaries and to develop as individuals. When in contact with different persons who are faced with the existential dilemma of life or death, trainees are redefined, firstly, as personalities, and then through recognizing their boundaries, i.e. their potential, weaknesses and restrictions. They develop moral principles through respect for and ac-

ceptance of pain, loss and death, both at the personal and interpersonal levels.

Thus:

Trainees, as volunteers, become sensitive to the effectiveness of intervention schemes, and to the "how, when and who" might be using them.

They also recognize the need to expand their support networks not just at a professional but at a personal level, as well. They develop deep awareness and responsibility in the sense that, in order to support, they need to be supported. In this manner, they establish a collaboration network with other specialists who can help them in their therapeutic work - psychiatrists, doctors, social workers, nurses, etc. They recognize the need for supervision concerning both issues of professional competence and issues of ethics. They are sensitized with regard to professional burnout and become aware of their own personal limits. They also recognize the importance of personal support at the level of personal relations, family, friends, recreation, personal care, etc.

Moreover, they learn that organization helps them be functional and not get lost in the labyrinth of stress and fear their clients experience; in this manner, they develop the ability of setting limits, of making emotional contact with clients, of internal organization and of applying a system in the intervention plan.

This has an immediate effect in the person's calm stability and understanding for the client, which is both catalytic and therapeutic.



## Meeting of Athens

While they learn to listen to the signals their own body sends to them, volunteers adapt and creatively manage their personal stress and recognize when they are approaching 'burnout' state.

They develop creative ways of communication that are not based in "must do", but in the need that emerges at any given moment between them and their clients.

Beyond the relation with their clients, trainee volunteers are sensitized and activate their social interest and so they acquire social responsibility and altruism values.

Furthermore, let me add that the peak of a volunteer's development is the opportunity to learn, through 'interculturalism' in the broadest sense - to respect and manage difference-ality'.

I will close with my personal experience and conviction, as a volunteer - supervisor, that all of us who come to contact with our personal pain and the pain of others become better persons and experience more substantially the happiness we enjoy by the daily, minor or major, challenges in our own lives.

### YIANNA YIAMARELOU

MA in Clinical Psychology, Gestalt Psychotherapist, Trainer & Supervisor, EAP & EAGT Member, Co-founder of Gestalt Foundation

## For a life journey...

November, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008

On behalf of the Board of Directors of K.E.F.I. Association, I would like to thank the Organisational Committee for their invitation and to wish Gestalt Foundation to celebrate many more decades in the future.

We are patients who are faced with cancer, unique personalities of different origins, with varying experiences, of various ages and family circumstances. Each one of us has experienced, in their own special way, the adventure that has undeniably marked their lives.

We have created the Association because we know better than anyone else the changes and the new needs that CANCER brought into our lives.

We have shaped an integrated program of psychosocial support for patients, that aims, not only at dealing with the crisis that the diagnosis of CANCER causes, but also at improving our quality of life; we try to get patients

out, to get them off the couch and convince them, that the infirmity of their bodies due to treatment cannot overwhelm the soul of the person as well; this often contradicts the daily struggle all of us have experienced in overcoming this discomfort and organising the Association in an effort to offer psychological support to every new patient and their families.

One of the most important programs is that of volunteers. Volunteers are the backbone and the driving force of our efforts. A volunteer can not replace experts or change the environment. S/he is more like a reflection, a mirror, of the needs and difficulties each one of us may encounter under special circumstances when we ask for human help which can be offered by a well-trained volunteer.

The patient will feel better when they hear "I know, because I have also been through the same thing".

Our experience shows that the need

of such human contribution becomes all the more necessary in view of the social isolation of our times.

Our collaboration with Gestalt Foundation Centre is in its fourth year. Under the supervision of Ms Yianna Yiamarelou we have managed to prepare the first trained volunteers' team. Through systematic scientific training, volunteers go to the Hospitals and support cancer patients, helping them to discover their personal internal strength, under the threat of death, to recognize the big difference between EXISTING and LIVING.

This year, the program is more integrated. Apart from volunteer training, there is a reception group, a support group, a volunteers' supervision programme, and individual sessions; our immediate goal is to establish a health cadre aiming at the exchange of opinions, training and "recharging" of those who work at Oncology Centres.

Finishing, I would like to warmly thank not only Ms. Yiamarelou, but also all group coordinators who offer their voluntary services to K.E.F.I. Association.

By 'unfreezing' the pain and overcoming the fear of pain, by giving voice to the silence, everything becomes easier and patients, as well as their significant people, feel less alone along a difficult course ..... on their life journey.....

I thank you all.

### Zoe Grammatoglou

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## 4 DAY WORKSHOP 2007-2008

## Thoughts on the Paradox of Time (Point and Counter-point)

If I let some time pass, this usually puts some distance between me and events or circumstances; my feelings and thoughts have time to settle and, therefore, I am able to see more clearly, as many aspects as possible of the situation I experienced. This is what I am doing right now: while I am writing, I try to share my experience from this year's Mt. Pelion trip. It was an experience that was completely different from that of last year; an experience of awareness, personal work as well as deep reflection.

I "played" a lot with concepts during this 4-day workshop, not only in terms of Time, but also in terms of flexibility and respect for the pace, the process, the diversity, the inspiration - concepts that I have learned to respect through Gestalt therapy, which by now is an ideology for me, a way of seeing things and acting within and with them.

I would like to warmly thank the trainees of the 2<sup>nd</sup> training year group of Athens, who shared experiences, thoughts and feelings with me, who gave me the motive to recognise the points and questions we shared. I would also like to personally thank Petros Theodorou and the *Playback TING! Group* for helping me along the path of my personal growth with their inspiring work. I would, also, like to thank Dick Lompa, whose experience, smile and blue eyes acted as a catalyst and helped me connect to and shed light to my emotions and physical sensations in the 'here and now'.

I believe that during this 4-day workshop Time and I had a paradoxical relationship. Indeed, I realised all the things time means to me, yet, I was forced by the heavy schedule to "drain" it out, to "drag" it on, as much as possible, which resulted in not respecting time. "I" as "Time" did not exist throughout these 4 days. I had no time to spend with myself, to spend with those parts of me I was discovering or letting go of during the experiential workshops. I felt like Time was chasing me and I was chasing Time it was a game during which respect for the process was left aside.

I felt like everything had to be on time either in order for me to catch up with something or for others to be able to do so. What was most important of all was not to stand in the way of others' time. And that was the point that led to the problem with the length of the movie presented by us, the 2<sup>nd</sup> training year group of Thessaloniki.

When we began our discussions and filming, at the end of January, the joy and excitement were overwhelming. The whole group was functioning at different paces, which was spontaneous and inspiring. We laughed a lot throughout this process and our deepest wish was for our project to be liked, to have a statement to make. We wanted our excitement to be contagious.

Through my own personal therapy, I have learned to acknowledge inspiration, which might arise from a person, a word, a feeling, a genuine contact, out

of awareness, respect for diversity, or an intense need. This is why when the inspiration is transformed to creation, it cannot be interrupted; it cannot be presented before it is complete. For me, this short film did not only symbolize the 40 minutes of the story you watched, but, also, all those things I experienced, negotiated, felt and thought throughout the time of its preparation. It had been a process of "I" and "We", of "I" within "We". And for that reason the atmosphere before the screening, the underlying objections, all that tension in the air, managed to cancel the excitement I felt inside me through all those months. Joy was replaced by stress - anxiety if everything was going to work out through the end, anxiety not to cause any problems to the presentations after ours. And everything happened too quickly on Sunday, under pressure, keeping an eye on the clock all the time, because the experiential workshops were to start at 12 and we should not run behind schedule.

Certainly someone might claim that the time at my disposal, when I work as a therapist, is those 50 minutes and that I should keep this time limit in mind. Yes, I agree. I can see it that way but not only that way. The presentation of a project is mainly related to our role as trainees rather than as therapists. This is also a process which follows the pace of the persons involved in the presentation; for them exceeding time by a few minutes might be necessary. The teaching period

at the state school where I work is 45 minutes. Nevertheless, when the class "has something to tell me" I take over part of the break. After all, it's not the end of the world! After all, closure in the educational process is as important as in the therapeutic one. And what could be greater joy for a teacher than to their class flourishing and getting ahead with everything taught?

Besides, we all agree that growth and development do not occur only through realization, awareness or assimilation of personal pieces or experiences, but also through encouragement, care, availability of space and time that any framework, whether educational or therapeutic, can provide us with. Therefore, I suggest that in the next 4-day workshop, one day should be entirely dedicated to trainees' projects, so I can have plenty of time to listen, assimilate, discuss, argue, be taught through others' and my projects, because learning is not only about knowledge; it also means sharing and contact. It is a continuum and I stand before it in reflection, in search of what is mine and what is others' contribution.

With these thoughts I conclude the presentation of my experience during "Pelion 2008". I hope this point of view invites a counterpoint to further the beauty and dynamics of co-creation.

Katia Soueref  
2<sup>nd</sup> Year Thessaloniki Training Group

## Voyage to Cythera...Life journeys of each and every one of us

### Our journey...

This was a trip we went on together ...that's why it was so fulfilling. The silence on that Sunday morning was a silence of acceptance, understanding and being united. It may sound unbelievable, but indeed it was possible that in just two and a half days 19 persons and two "tutors" did come close to each other. They were able to travel together: to the past, the present, the future. We were able to cry, to laugh, to help, to get emotional, to feel the pain, to give hope to one another and to understand that this was a pain shared. And when we are ready to bring this pain out into the open, we will find co-travelers, we will find support. Some of us might be somewhat ahead of others, some might be lagging behind, but this does not matter; What matters is this sense of togetherness within the circle of Agia Moni, an image imprinted in our minds.

The voyage to the Cythera was tough and demanding: 24 hours to get there, 14 to return. But it was all truly worth it. Whoever had told us that living was easy was not telling us the truth. If you don't try hard, if there's no pain, there will certainly be no gain. And we are all able to make it - together...

**Alexandros Triantafillidis**

### MY CYTHERA

18/07/08

"The trip to Cythera is a quest, mostly images and moments that each one will see and sense, in an inspiring milieu..."

The experiential workshop "Life journeys" on Cythera was a trip to the ideal destination.

The past, the present, the future...separate but, at the same time, intertwined!

How was it for me? How do I feel in the "here and now"? Where do I go from here?

Moments of solitude counter-pointed with togetherness. Sharing, caring, understanding, happiness, laughter, sadness, tears, touching, hugging, intensity, kissing, loneliness, togetherness, courage, excitement, questioning, adventure, blessing, dreams, contact, pressure, struggling but also STRENGTH AND

FREEDOM: this is what I felt in that strange land!

The energy of the people and the place were invigorating! Relating to myself was truly deep!

I want to warmly thank Katia and Mary and all co-travelers to Cythera for giving me the opportunity to have this unique experience.

I feel blessed, because my soul is enriched with knowledge and my life with people who are already important to me, *soul mates*, on the journey along the secret paths of our souls!

Remembering Cythera fills my soul with warmth and peace!

Grateful TO YOU ALL!

**Christina Iakovidou**

## VOLUNTARY BLOOD DONATION

I am really grateful to be living at this historical moment, when the ten-year old dream of Gestalt Foundation for the establishment of a blood bank, for the needs of the people of our community has become true.

I am touched by the fact that, beyond the treatment, the education, the self-knowledge and the general care and support, in general, that it offers, Gestalt Foundation steps forward into a deeper operational field in covering human needs.

The offer is tangible evidence of our wish to participate in a common effort through which we adopt values and establish positive attitudes towards both our fellow humans and ourselves.

The existential sense of drawing satisfaction is gained not only through accepting gifts but also through the action of making an offer.

Individuals who really love



life are those who, without hesitation and after mature thought, proceed to offer as volunteers.

An act of offer is an ex-

pression of one's social and moral duty.

It is not an act of charity but a humanitarian obligation.

I applaud this effort of rare

humanitarian interest and I am deeply satisfied that I have contributed towards making this dream come true. Present-day society needs to be consciously assisted by through such kind offers of love.

We invite everyone between 18 and 62 years old on 13<sup>th</sup> November to Gestalt Foundation, from 9a.m to 1p.m, to respond to this new campaign, the fruits of which may benefit us when there is a vital need for blood.

I would like to end by pointing out the importance of this action of respect, love and awareness of the need of a fellow-person who can complete his course of life, precisely because offered them this opportunity...

Apostolou, Amalia

In charge of the Gestalt blood bank, 3<sup>rd</sup> Training Year

## Gestalt positive!

It was early in the morning when I got to the waiting-room. According to the calendar it was the 13th of November, a Thursday, the name day of St. John Chrysostom of Constantinople; I don't know if the moon was waxing or waning. The surroundings seemed rather odd to me: syringes here, other instruments there, two black armchairs for relaxing and watching TV. My mind went back to an afternoon in the Gestalt Centre kitchen, when I ran into "Ms Aggelopoulou" her given nickname. The echo of the European Gestalt Gathering was still in the air when I popped the question: "Katia, why don't we start a team of blood-donors? The other day my grandma was in hospital and I realized how difficult it is to collect the neces-

sary blood"...

I was standing in the centre of the waiting-room, seeing people, each one of them coming to offer their "special something", to offer 20' of their time and a small plastic bag of their blood, which

one can never stress it enough can save a "whole life"...

Now that "close blood bonds" have been established among us, now that there is one more thing connecting us the Gestalt Foundation blood-donor team members I feel as if the same vital fluid runs within us; it's something like sharing our very own blood group:

"Gestalt positive".

*\*In order to offer your own "G positive" fluid, you can visit "Hippocrateion" Hospital, during blood donation hours, every Saturday and Sunday, 9 a.m. 12 noon and 5-7p.m. For further inquiries contact Amalia Apostolou on 6973778722.*

Yiannis Katsiyiannis



# A MEMORIAL

For twelve years, from 1990 to 2002, I believed "I was there", experiencing the pain. I had learned to attend, to be aware, to sense the pain - believe me you can't learn this at any university; this is learned when one soul "feels" the pain of another.

I went through difficulties that were tough to handle while practising my chosen vocation as a coordinator at the Dpt of Transplantations at the "Hippocrateion" Hospital of Thessaloniki.

When faced with loss, even health professionals, encounter every case anew. This is how I experienced the whole procedure. There was always an escalation leading to the moment when I felt life leaving me; it is a cursed moment for everyone. I had to announce the bad news of the irreversible situation, i.e. brain death, to the relatives and raise the issue of donating the organs of their beloved person who had passed away.

It was a hateful but also truly humanitarian moment. There is nothing in the universe like two, three, four people suffering like that, souls bleeding with tears - not transparently flowing but fiercely slashing their faces, their souls.

It is difficult for me to write this; I feel that it's my soul and not my hand writing. I consider these moments as truly my very own, my treasures. For twelve years I was fortunate enough to snatch humanity from people who, at their very moment of despair, managed to rise above the occasion, extend human power to others (how rare nowadays!).

These relatives managed to contain their own sorrow and consider other people, who were hoping to get whatever might be given to them and it was given, offered generously.

I was always lost for words; all I could do was to allow a sob rising from deep inside me to come out and join that of the relatives of the deceased; I never regretted it.

I would like to say a big "Thank you" to all these people who made me feel truly human, a person with sensitivity, aspirations and high ideals, a being with the supreme gift of life, which only the Creator and humans can offer.

Nowadays people need the presence of soul, sensitivity, love so that they may flourish after death, and pass in this manner - from death to life.

There is nothing I admired and praised more in my life, than people who turn into 'Mother Earth', into a blooming heart, offering humanity and adding another dimension of the defeat of death.

I thank all those known and anonymous, organ donators, for the sensitivity they demonstrated, over these twelve years who shared their human qualities with me and became my tutors, while I was getting paid for my work (in Ms. Katia Hatzilakou's words).

I thank from my heart Mrs. Dora F.Z. who reminded us that humanity, love, this extra dimension have not disappeared.

Let the soul of every organ donator rest in peace; those left behind did the right thing, by being human in a manner that will show the way to more people, in a manner that those deceased would have chosen themselves, if they had been asked while they were alive.

This is the best memorial for those who pass away: an act of love for our fellow humans.

Respectfully,

**Amalia Apostolou Antoniadou**  
3<sup>th</sup> Educational Year Gestalt

Thessaloniki, November 17<sup>th</sup> 2008

Attention of  
Antonia Konstantinidou and  
Christos Maglousidis  
73, Egnatia str.  
p.c. 54635, Thessaloniki

Dear Antonia and Christos,

The Executive Board and the volunteers of the Friends Volunteers of Child Care Institution of Thessaloniki would like to thank you for the contribution of three thousand eight hundred and twelve Euros that you kindly offered to our Association's fund.

We include the receipt attached and would like to reassure you that this amount will be invested in the creation of a playground inside "Eleona Prison" in Theves, where women with children up to 3 years old are incarcerated.

We wish to congratulate you on your wedding as well as on the unique idea you had to offer your wedding gifts to such a worthy cause.

Our best wishes to you for a prosperous and happy life together!

Yours faithfully,  
On behalf of the Board

The President  
Katerina Ioannou

The Executive Secretary  
Paraskevi Panagiotidou

The choice we made to offer our wedding presents to people in need has rewarded us with emotions of affection and joy.

We would like to inform you that the bank account at Piraeus Bank under number 5200-036681-753 is no longer in valid.

Moreover, we attach the letter dated ....., which inform us how the gathered amount of money is to be spent.

We cordially thank you for your response.

Let us all wish that our offer will benefit our fellow-people through the difficult times they experiencing.

*Antonia Konstantinidou - Christos Maglousidis*

## CORRESPONDENCE...



## CORRESPONDENCE...

group closed. At first I tried to keep in touch with some of the group, although, intellectually, I realised that we had separated. It angered me that although we had got really close with some of them, we were not even exchanging calls. They had forgotten me and I had forgotten them. Was what we had shared and experienced ever real?

For me, my training group was an internal journey:

## Where "do" Gestalt training groups "go" when they close?

By Giorgos Kalaitzis

It is four years since the out of the depths of my humid sorrow, oblivion and loneliness I came up to the surface in tears. There I faced all of you: in one member I found a playmate, in another a companion when I felt abandoned and lonely; in some I found joy; in all of us I found camaraderie in mourning and support so as not to get lost in the open sea, the endlessness of time, of sorrow. Thus, in 'growing up' together with you, because I was indeed young inside me, alone and weak, from being 'ugly' (i.e., 'unformed/unshaped' in the Greek etymology of the word), I became 'beautiful' (i.e., 'formed/shaped')

and I gradually acquired shaped my own form. That happened to all of us. There were things we borrowed from one another, a smile here, a tender glance there, our tears, an embrace from each one and all of you.

So, where "did" my training group "go"? Basically it **lives inside me**; you are parts of me. It also lives outside: you refer clients to me, because you believe in me, you love me with a quick glance when we meet at congresses; you help me when I ask you for help.

Good luck for what is to come... to all of us,  
Giorgos, May, 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

Visit our site [www.gestaltfoundation.gr](http://www.gestaltfoundation.gr)