

Yehuda Tagar, the principal of Persephone College in Melbourne, Australia, visited South Africa to finalise the courses in Philophonetics-Counselling he will be running in Johannesburg and Cape Town over the next five years. Rosemary Miller attended a workshop.

In his 16 years of counselling, Yehuda Tagar has found that 70% of the issues presented for psychotherapy originate in our first seven years. And about a third of these issues stem from sexual abuse which results not only in emotional and mental trauma but also actual energetic toxicity which can be observed. All our ages, he says, are within us at every given moment. An adult, who was sexually abused as a child, expressed it as 'something foreign has been deposited into my body, coming from the outside. It frightens me. It hurts me. I cannot stand it. I cannot stay in its presence. I cannot get rid of it.'

Inspired by the teaching of Rudolf Steiner, Yehuda has evolved a method of counselling and psychotherapy he has named Philophonetics-Counselling (the love of sounds) and describes as 'the awareness of one's experience through body awareness, movement,

visualisation and the sounds of human speech'. Abuse which takes place before the age of seven, a largely non-verbal, non-reflective phase of our lives (and which manifests in adulthood as fears, pains, hurts, blocks, frustrations, defences, projections, locked potential, etc) cannot be reached at a purely verbal level. These experiences 'live behind rather than in front of the conscious mind' and he has found that conversational counselling alone is too slow, too long, too 'second-hand' - and, in South Africa, too expensive for the majority of the population. Philophonetics-Counselling 'grants a channel of direct communication in experience's own indigenous language' (sensing, movement, visualisation and sound) which makes direct and dynamic contact with the abused child within.

Yehuda is very clear that 'he is not in the business of removing

PHILOPHONETICS COUNSELLING

A Therapy in the Healing of Childhood Abuse

defence mechanisms' and will only coax the abused child to 'come out' when he is sure his client is ready and able to care for it. It is easy, he says, to open people up in a counselling session or a workshop. But the training and skill of the facilitator rests in the ability to recognise the level of vulnerability that has emerged, provide safety for it and then conclude in a way that assures the client is able to function out in the world.

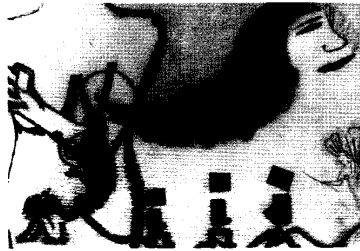
Using the metaphor of Johannesburg, City of Gold, Yehuda illustrates the process of Philophonetics-Counselling. In our deep subconscious layers lies the rough ore we need to bring to the surface to transform into gold. The mine-shaft into those hidden layers of self is whatever is troubling us in the present, in the now. When we sense this emotion it will take us to where the pain can be felt in our body. Acting out our response to this pain, in gesture and movement, will bring up a picture of the original experience, sometimes gradually, sometimes instantly. The basic sounds of the alphabet are the hidden language of our inner life, the vibrations of our subtle or etheric (chi) bodies where our experiences are stored. These sounds can be used as tools of release.

Although sexual abuse in South Africa includes aberrations such as the rape of babies and of virgins as a perceived cure for AIDS, Yehuda says that global statistics point to a world-wide pandemic - and it is growing. While statistics here and abroad reflect an increase in the reporting of rape cases which were formerly hidden, they also suggest that the numbers of those sexually abused are doubling every decade. In South Africa, statistics show that one in three girls and one in five boys will be abused before the age of 18, and in 85-90% of the cases the abuser is known to the child. (*Carte Blanche* reported that 'in South Africa there is a rape or attempted rape of a child every 24 minutes').

Nine out of ten children who are sexually abused will, as adults, abuse themselves, their spouses or their children. (Yehuda has found that addiction to pornography and sexual abuse carry the same energy). He believes that the most effective way to break this cycle is to heal the abused. The insights, he says, which are received during the recovery process are profound and become an inspiration for life, creating courageous and compassionate people and powerful healers who will 'stand for the children'. He calls his workshops for recovery from past sexual abuse 'The Redemption of Innocence'.

In June 2001, Yehuda was invited to present a paper at the national conference of the South African Association of Psychotherapy (SAAP) at Rhodes University on the recovery of sexual abuse through Philophonetics-Counselling. During this visit he was also asked to share his work in Johannesburg and

Pictured below, are a series of paintings by 'Jess' - painted after each counselling session with Yehuda. Initially, she had no memory of being sexually abused as a child. Nor was she an artist. Gradually the abuse unfolded through her art, and her artistic ability blossomed.



Cape Town by members of the Anthroposophical Society who had read his paper on the possible renewal of Anthroposophy. He arrived in South Africa on the day of the solar eclipse. A metaphor for spiritual enlightenment is 'the sun at midnight' - but here a great shadow covered the midday sun. For him this was a fitting metaphor for sexual abuse which, he believes, is our failure to see the Divine in one another.

He was deeply moved by the open-minded and enthusiastic acceptance by the South African academic world of this new approach to counselling by a man who is still to complete his PhD - he is currently writing his Masters Thesis in Social Science (Counselling). He was also amazed by the fresh and powerful response to the potential of Philophonetics-Counselling by ordinary South Africans. He believes that the 'energy of the redemption that took place in South Africa, and the gratitude that the change did not result in bloodshed, still reverberates' and that 'the beneficial spiritual forces are working full-time to support our efforts towards reconciliation'. Our success or failure will influence the future of mankind.

Yehuda has committed himself to run his three-year, part-time courses towards Persephone College's Advanced Diploma in Philophonetics Holistic Counselling in South Africa over the next five years, travelling from Australia four times each year to conduct classes. The first two intakes will begin in April 2002 and have attracted an exceptional quality of participants. His wish is that his graduates will not only use these skills in their own practices but in time will train others, ever widening the circle of healing and closing the cycle of abuse. ○

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DETAIL 1 Jess has left her body through her ovaries (suggesting sexual abuse) and has become an automaton. The guardian fairy is unable to help.

DETAIL 2 The black tar at the bottom of the painting, is a hideous toxic substance that 'pollutes' her body. The fire is her fury at being 'contaminated.' To the right, is the abused child, unable to escape. Her guardian fairies cannot free her.

DETAIL 3 When severe abuse has taken place, it is common for the victim to leave the body, her spirit hovering some distance away. During counselling, a way must be found for the self to return to the body. In every case, there is a place which remains pure - this is the place where the self is able to re-enter. For Jess, it was her heart. The fiery devils have been banished, and her fairies have access to heal her.

Born and raised in Israel by parents who loved him, Yehuda Tagar grew up to trust himself, which fuelled his ability to think creatively and originally. Discovering the Gospel of St John, he found it a 'mind-blowing' revelation, which led to a personal connection with the Christ energy. At that time, he met his teacher, Rudolf Steiner who believed in a holistic approach to humanity and taught that: you cannot give people knowledge, only the raw material to extract spiritual protein. And so Yehuda was inspired to adopt the therapeutic aspect of the performing arts, among others, into his counselling, which had evolved out of his personal journeys.



Odyssey