Psychosynthesis Research Foundation

November 25, 1968

Dear Colleague:

The third meeting of the 1968/69 series of Psychosynthesis Seminars (held on the third Friday of each month) will take place on Friday, December 20th at 7:30 P.M.

Our speaker will be Dr. Daniel I. Malamud of New York, addressing s on the subject "Self-Confrontation Games in Simulated Family Groups." ollowing his talk will be the usual group discussion.

We trust it will be possible for you to be with us at the forth- oming meeting.

Cordially,

JACK COOPER, M.D.

Date & Time of Meeting: Friday, December 20, 1968 - 7:30 P.M. prompt.

Place: "Directors Room," mezzanine floor, Park Sheraton Hotel, 7th Ave & 55th St. N.Y.C. (There is a public car park across the street from the hotel.)

Speaker: Daniel I. Malamud, Ph.D.

Subject: "Self-Confrontation Games in Simulated Family Groups"

PSYCHOSYNTHESIS SEMINARS

1968/69 SERIES

Third Meeting: December 20, 1968

Speaker: Daniel I. Malamud, Ph.D.
                   49 East 96th Street
                   New York, N.Y. 10028

Subject: Self-Confrontation Games in Simulated Family Groups

Participants:

George Bailin, Ph.D.	Frank Hilton
Mrs. Bailin	Mrs. Hilda Hilton
Jack Cooper, M.D.	Barton W. Knapp, M.A.
Mrs. Rena Cooper	Daniel I. Malamud, Ph.D.
Mrs. Martha Crampton, M.A.	Mrs. Ann Malamud
Dikran Dingilian	Victorija Mickans, M.D.
Abraham Elizur, Ph.D.	Nicolas T. Morano, Ph.D.
Mrs. Elizur	Mrs. Morano
Albert Greenberg, Ph.D.	William Wolf, M.D.
Mrs. Greenberg	Alfred D. Yassky, M.A.
Frank Haronian, Ph.D.	

<u>Introduction by Dr. Frank Haronian:</u>

I want to thank Dan Malamud for being here. I would like to give you a little of his background so that you will know what he brings with him, and how he relates to psychosynthesis. His training, originally Sullivanian psycho-analytic, has been influenced by the orientations of such people as Carl Rogers and Fritz Perls. He is in full time private practice in individual and group psychotherapy. For the past 20 years he has been developing a Workshop in Self-Understanding at New York University. Three years ago he published a book with Solomon Machover called "Towards Self-Understanding: Group Techniques in Self-Confrontation" (Charles C. Thomas) and tonight he is going to talk on the topic of "Self-Confrontation Games in Simulated Families."

<u>Dr. Malamud:</u>

For the last 20 years I have been developing a repertoire of self-confrontation games for use with groups of relatively normal adults interested in learning more about themselves and their relations with others. These pro-cedures have evolved as part of an adult education course which I teach at N.Y.U., one which has undergone various changes in its title, but which is now called simply "Workshop in Self Understanding." This Workshop is a non credit course open to the public at large and accomodates groups of about 30 members varying widely in age and educational background. We meet once a week for about two hours and the whole course consists of 15 sessions.

The Workshop has been steadily evolving and changing. I will attempt to describe my current orientation as clearly and simply as I can, but please remember that the actual course is far from being a finished product, and that I am still engaged in working out ways of dealing with problems and dilemmas that arise. I might also say that some of the games and techniques that I will describe might interest you from the point of view of adapting them to your work with in-dividual patients. I am doing this usefully with some individuals I work with and also with private therapy groups that I lead.

The course is organized around the concept of the "<u>second chance</u>"family. I tell the group at the outset that they will form self-selected, simulated families, that they will work within these "families" throughout the course and that their "families" will represent new or additional opportunities to experience a kind of sharing, confrontation, and support that they may not have had enough of in the course of growing up in their actual childhood families. Each member, I tell them, will be responsible for doing all he can to create a good "family" atmosphere, one where he can feel free to examine himself with minimum defensiveness, learn to give and take nourishment and challenge, expand beyond his usual boundaries, and try out new ways of relating. I acknowledge that this is a tall order for a 15 week period; I emphasize that what is important is not the actual achievement of an ideal family, but the new possibilities we discover about ourselves as we engage in the process.

The course is divided into three stages. In the first stage, usually consisting of three to five sessions, members become acquainted with each other in order to form some basis for deciding whom they wish to choose or avoid in selecting their "family." The second stage is devoted to the formation of "families"; this involves a graduated series of structured exercises in which members come to grips with the conflicts and dilemmas inherent in <u>choosing</u> who is

going to be in your family, _inviting_ people to be in your family, _rejecting_ members who want to be with you but whom you don't want to be with, and _being rejected_ by someone with whom you would have dearly loved to be. These exercises lay the groundwork for the final climactic event in the second stage, that is the actual choosing of each other as "family" members. In the third and last stage the "families" focus on developing a good working atmosphere, and individual members explore their relationships to themselves and to each other with the objective of helping each other to grow.

Self-confrontation games are the chief vehicles of movement in each stage. These games are semi-structured, open-ended activities in which I encourage members to involve themselves with an attitudinal blend of playfulness, curiosity, and risk taking. Simple enough so that all in the group can participate, each exercise is at the same time sufficiently novel so that students' conventional responses are circumvented, and they have an opportunity to see themselves from an unfamiliar or even surprising perspective. Some games resemble training exercises in that they are repetitive activities designed to provide practice in new ways of self-expression or relation.

These games provide opportunities for learning in a personalized, first-hand way concepts such as the following: that expanded self-awareness is possible through focussing on what one is experiencing in the here-and-now, that the sharing of personal reactions can be more useful and less dangerous than usually anticipated, and that the self can be an active, deliberate agent in its own growth and development. Incidentally, when I have finished this talk I hope to go with you through some of these games. And now I would like to give you some examples of the games I use in each of the three stages.

In the first stage, you remember, the members center on becoming acquainted with each other. For this purpose I introduce a series of structured encounters, both verbal and non-verbal, which enable each person to interact with every other person in a variety of ways.

Name exercises rapidly acquaint members with each other's first names and at the same time provide significant stimuli to self-exploration. For example, I conduct a go-around in which each member chooses whether he wishes to have his first name whispered by all the other members or shouted by them. When he expresses his preference to the group they oblige by whispering or shouting his name three times in unison. When everybody has gone through this experience, we exchange our reactions. (This exchange and exploration of reactions takes place after every game; we do something, then we talk about it.)

The instructions for another name exercise are as follows: "Spell out your first name in reverse. For example, my name is Dan, in reverse it is Nad. Look at your reversed name. Pretend that it spells some strange, new word. Pretend that this is a word that comes from a language of an alien species on the planet Mars. Roll this alien word over your tongue, and decide how it is pronounced on Mars. Now write out a definition of the word as it would appear in a Martian dictionary." The group then hears each person's definition of his reversed name. As you might expect, these definitions touch very frequently on some central dynamic or theme for each member. For example, Bernice hated being a housewife; she defined her name Ecinreb, which she pronounced Ekinreb, as "a small household receptacle which is used for spitting in."

In a variation of this name exercise, one I have found very useful in therapy with individuals, I tell members: "Pretend that each letter in your name, spelled backwards, is the beginning of a word, and that all of these words put together compose a secret message from your unconscious self,* some piece of wisdom or some profoundly important guidance. So concentrate very hard on each letter and see if you can receive this message. The words do not have to make sense in the ordinary way, and the message may be in some symbolic or cryptic form, so don't discard something that comes to mind because it may seem trivial, childish, or far out."

*communicating something to you,

Now some of these messages are very clear. People who receive them know perfectly well what they are saying to themselves. Other messages are obscure and you have to "stand on your head" to understand what is being expressed. An example of a clear one is the "telegram" by Richard; his name spelled backwards Drahcir, and the message was "Don't regret anything. Have careless intercourse, regardless." And when he thought about what his unconscious was saying to him he said, "This means: 'Live a little, don't always anticipate what is going to happen and what the consequences are going to be.' I am always bogged down in that. I lose precious moments by being concerned about the weeks and months and years."

I emphasize the likely significance of these telegrams: "Never forget the message you sent to yourself. If you can't figure it out, mull it over before you go to bed at night; decide to dream about it; talk it over with a good friend; bring it up later with your classroom 'family'."

The Birth Order exercise is another get-acquainted experience: I group members according to their birth order in their original families: those who were the oldest children in their original families come together in one group, the youngest in another, the middles in a third, and so on. These sub-groups locate themselves in different parts of the classroom and then go on to explore the various experiences they had by virtue of their birth order position.

In another way of breaking up the group into subgroups, for quick, getting-to-know-you interactions, I read off a set of three statements, values of one kind or another. Each member decides which one of the statements he considers the most important, and which one the least important. The participants are then divided into smaller groups according to their patterns of choices. For example, the items might be: "To be generous towards other people." "To be my own boss." "To have understanding friends." All those who choose "To be generous towards other people" as most important and "To be my own boss" as least important gather together in one subgroup to talk over their choices. And similar subgroups are formed for every other combination of choices. After five minutes of discussion we all get together to respond to another set of items, and we may repeat this procedure for several sets, breaking up the group each time into new groupings. Another set, for example, usually the last of the series is: "To have a good meal with a friend. To get a good night's sleep. To have a good orgasm."

In another game each participant brings a set of index cards, and I tell the group, "You will write and deliver telegrams to each other. Each word in the telegram costs one cent. Pretend you only have a dollar. Keep track of the number of words that you use so that you spend your dollar but not more than a dollar. You may send telegrams to as many or as few people in the group and as often as you wish within the dollar limitation. Write each telegram on a separate card." Members then write brief telegrams to each other which they deliver personally. As you can readily imagine, they are confronted in this experiment with the

need to make a variety of real-life choices: what messages to send to whom, how to respond to the messages they get, and which messages to respond to, and which to ignore.

The next exercise I call "You are you, not me." I give the following instructions: "in this game we will pretend that a new religion is sweeping the country. We will engage in one of its rituals which involves the family getting together on a given night and sitting in a circle, as we are doing here. The father looks around, picks a member of the family, and says, for example, 'Jane, you are Jane, not father'. Jane looks back at him and says, 'Yes, father, I am Jane, not father.' It is now Jane's turn to repeat the ritual. She looks around the family and picks a member, let us say, Peter, and says: 'Peter, you are Peter, not Jane.' And Peter replies, 'Yes Jane, I am Peter, not Jane.' Then Peter repeats these ritual sentences with another member, and so forth. As a religious ritual this goes on for many, many hours into the wee hours of the morning, but here we are going to practice it only for about ten minutes. You may choose whomever you wish as often as you wish, but we will always use the same two ritual sentences. We can introduce variations in our exchanges through changing our tones of voice, the emphasis we place on this or that word, how quickly or slowly we say the sentences, or the gestures we make as we say them." And then I begin the game by picking someone out.

At first there is considerable tension in the room. Members find the procedure very strange, and are usually concerned about saying the sentences just right. Gradually they become more relaxed and begin to focus on what they are saying and to whom they choose to say the ritual sentence. From time to time the group breaks into good natured laughter as members distort the sentences or say them in a surprising manner. (For example, one student sang his sentence.) After about ten minutes I stop· · the game and we discuss the experience. This exercise usually has such an impact on the group that members will often return to the ritual statements as certain incidents arise in class. For example, when Steve says to Mike, "I just can't see why you would want to do that!", Mike answers, "Look, Steve; you are Steve, not Mike!" and that often has considerable impact.

In the second part of this game I instruct members to close their eyes: "Select a member of your real family and imagine yourself saying to this person several times, 'Look, you are you, not me, and I am me, not you.' Notice the reaction in this person's face and listen to what he or she replies." After a few minutes the group opens its eyes and discusses its fantasies. These imagined confrontations are often extremely dramatic and focus on central interpersonal conflicts in the lives of the participants, usually involving parents.

Very early in the course I engage the groups in little chants. I devised these chants to get at self-defeating attitudes, fears and expectations with which members come to the course. I ask the group to stand up and to close its eyes. I tell them that we will engage in a "very, very serious chant", that they should listen carefully to each phrase, and repeat it after me with the same expression that I use. I then begin to chant in a melodramatic way: "I am afraid to open my mouth in this group!" And the whole group comes back with the same sentence, "I am afraid to open my mouth in this group!" Then I go on with mock terror: "I might say something clumsy or foolish or offensive and that would be a catastrophe!" And then they repeat the sentence in the same tone. I go on: "You might think that I am silly, or ignorant or a jerk, and that would be ghastly and unbearable. In this class I must not do anything that will make me look

foolish. And I feel foolish right now. Who chants in a classroom? What would people think if they were to walk in here right now?" And then the last line: "God, what if my mother were to walk in right now!"

Funny as this may seem, many members recognize that they are expressing feelings that they actually have. Other chants I am working on are: "IT bothers me. Not I, not I." "My parents told me, and they should know." "Avoid, avoid, avoid !" (Cooper: Or "Don't, don't, don't!") That would be a good one!

And here is a game that I have become very intrigued with recently. It is not one that I created, but one which originated with Mrs. Barbara Long for use with children. She is a clinical psychologist at the St. Louis State Hospital. It is an experience that I have tried out with adults and which seems to be very promising. I tell the group that we are going to hold an auction. Each member has to pretend that he has $2,000 to spend and that he may bid up to that amount for as many or as few items for sale as he chooses. Before the auction begins, however, the items for sale will be on exhibition, and I pass out to the group a mimeographed sheet containing about 60 items. These items all have to do with themes suggestive of various life values. For example, an item for sale would be, "Leave me alone!" The idea is to buy various items in order to make a future life for yourself, depending on what kind of a life you want. And these 60 items offer different possibilities. For instance, "I want to live my life the way my parents did - and they're okay," or "an orgasm a day keeps the doctor away."

After allowing time for the members to read over the list and make their decisions, I caution them to choose wisely since at this auction there are no returns, and the amount bid must be paid. However, the item purchased is theirs for "keeps." Then I ask if someone has spotted an item on which he would like to place a bid. And very quickly the group falls into the spirit of the thing, the bidding is lively, and for many items most competitive. I run it just like an ordinary auction, for instance, "I am bid $200 for 'Leave me alone'. Any further bid?' Going once, going twice," and so on. After the auction is over we discuss what each of the items meant to the buyer, or to the loser, and how satisfied they felt with the way they participated in the bidding.

In this first stage I simply invite members to "see what happens" in the games, to share their reactions without analyzing them. I am content at first to draw the group's attention to the dramatic diversity of responses, and to the difficulties experienced by members in their efforts at "simply seeing what happens." As members become more able to adopt a "see-what-happens" attitude, and as they become freer in sharing their reactions, I very gradually encourage an active "figure-it-out" orientation. I draw the group's attention to the possibility that the manifest and the objective may have dynamic significance not immediately perceived. I stimulate members to notice repetitive patterns as they go about living out one game after another.

During this first stage I do all I can to create an atmosphere of safety. I communicate a noncondemnatory attitude towards all forms of human experience. The student is under no compulsion, indeed has full freedom, in deciding how far, if at all, he wishes to enter into any games. I try to maintain a supportive, personal relation with each student. Now 30 students are a lot to do this with, but I have developed various effective procedures. For example, I ask them to bring in one-page autobiographies with their photographs attached so that I can rapidly learn names, faces, and personal histories. During the last five minutes

of each session, members write one-page letters to me. I take these letters home with me and I respond in writing with brief annotations on each letter, a question, a comment, or some provocative statement, and I return these annotated letters in the following session. Thus throughout the course by means of these letters there is a kind of individualized dialogue between myself and each student.

Particularly supportive is the fact that I participate in the games along with the group members and share my own personal reactions. Most students begin to question their stereotypes of authority when they learn, much to their surprise, that I have my own personal hangups with people, that I get depressed, that I have a touchy, grandiose side, that I am sometimes unduly concerned about other people's approval and that I have my own troubles and dilemmas as a husband and as a father.

And now let me tell you about the second stage, usually consisting of two to three sessions and involving the formation of "families." In this stage they actually choose their "families." Now the choosing process is fraught with potential conflict and trauma around such events as deciding whom you want, taking the initiative and reaching out to invite your dearest "relative", rejecting people who want you, and being rejected by those whom you invite. Since all of this can be painful I lead up to the final event of choosing with a series of practice "immunizing" exercises, each of which focusses on one or another of the above themes. For example, in one exercise members mingle in the center of the room and non-verbally extend invitations to each other. And in this game every invitation has to be accepted; no one is rejected. So people invite and as they accept each other's invitations, they clasp hands and move out of the center. They return promptly to the circle to invite or accept new invitations, clasp hands with someone else, move out again, return, and so on. So it is a process in which people are going in and out of the center of the room, inviting each other, pairing off, and getting repeated practice experiences in actively reaching out and initiating invitation.

A similar exercise gives them practice in rejecting each other. (In response to a question. Ed.) No, there is no talking, the inviting or rejecting is purely non-verbal. You can nod or shake your head, you can scowl, you can flirt, you can wink, you invite or reject in any way you wish.

So in this second exercise they experience rejecting; nobody gets out of the center of the room and nobody accepts anybody's invitation. "Your job is to invite and to be rejected, and to reject the invitation of others." So there is a kind of milling around in which people are nervously and sometimes laughingly going through this silent process of rejection. After a few minutes of this we discuss our reactions.

A third "immunizing" exercise involves the group's closing its eyes and imagining the following: "You are now going to select your family. You are in the center of the room. You are moving up towards one person of your choice, and you are extending a hand to this person. And the person sneers and turns his back on you and walks away. Imagine how you feel right now. What are your thoughts? Now you swallow hard, pull yourself together, wander around the room and pick somebody else out. You move towards this person and as you are about to lift your hand in invitation, the person looks right past you and accepts another's invitation. You feel awful. Think the thoughts that are running through your mind now. You can't stand it. You run out of the room, and call up your best

friend to talk this over." Then I say "Open your eyes, everybody", and break them up into pairs. One person in the pair plays the one who has just been rejected and the other person plays the part of the "best friend." For about three minutes the 'best friend' does all he can to help the "rejectee" work through his feelings and gain some constructive perspective. At the end of three minutes each rejectee repeats this encounter with a new "best friend", etc., etc.

In another preparatory exercise a volunteer walks over to a member of his choice and asks him to do something for him, and the other person is free to say "yes" or "no", and the volunteer has the experience of asking somebody for something and also running the risk of being rejected. I encourage members to feel free to turn each other down. I make a big point of the value of learning how to deal with these universal situations: "We all have to cope with inviting and rejecting. You don't do your fellow classmate a favor if you hold yourself back from rejecting when you feel like rejecting."

Now after a series of such small experiences we finally come to the climactic one during which the choosing takes place. I have still not settled on any one way of conducting the final choosing process, so this is something that I an still experimenting with. In one procedure members mill around in the center of the room silently. They send out non-verbal signals to each other, signals of invitation, of acceptance or rejection. When two members communicate mutual acceptance they take each other's hand and sit down. After all members have been paired off this process is repeated except that now the pairs come into the center of the room and silently send out signals to other pairs until mutually accepting quartets are formed. And these quartets are the "families." This procedure can be varied in numerous ways depending on how large the total group is and how many "families" are desired. For example, members can form trios instead of pairs, and then, later, sextets.

Another possible way of doing this, which I am still developing,is to have each person compose two imaginary advertisements, one, a "Family Relative Wanted" in which he describes in a few words the kind of family he wants and, a second one, "Family Relative Available" in which he describes what kind of a family relative he could be. These ads are then distributed and responded to.

Now, the third and final stage. This begins as soon as the "families" have been formed. Each "family" is assigned an area in the classroom which is its home base for the duration of the course, and in the very first meetings the "families" share their reactions at being together, and bind the "wounds" of individuals still recovering from the stress of "family" selection.

Next, members in each family discuss the following questions: "How do I want this 'family' to be similar to or different from my actual childhood family?" "How do I want to be different with this 'family' from the way I usually am with people?" This in turn is followed by members informing each other as to the personal difficulties they anticipate in participating in the "family". Finally, each member tells his "family" the kind of help that turns him on and the kind of help that turns him off.

"Family" members exchange phone numbers so that when one is absent the other members in the "family" can take the responsibility for calling him and inquiring about his absence. I encourage each family to hold at least one alternate meeting every week on their own, at a time and place of their own choosing. I usually suggest specific exercises and games for these alternate meetings.

Now in the final stage, some games are played by the class at large and then discussed in the separate "families"; and some, those involving considerable self-disclosure and depth, are played within the separate "families". There are three types of games I draw upon in this final stage:

One set of games aims at giving practice training to the members in how to be a good family, in some of the <u>elements of working together in a helpful way</u>; how to talk openly and directly; what is involved in really listening; the value of observing facial expressions and body movements; how to confront someone without squashing him, and how to be supportive.

For example, an experience in dealing with the here and now: we all sit in a circle and each of us in turn says a single sentence which must reflect something that we are experiencing in the here-and-now. And we go around, each person doing this, for about 20 minutes or so, around and around. Not only is this a valuable training exercise in focussing members on the here and now, but it is also valuable in providing silent members, in a relatively safe way, with an opportunity to practice sharing with others what is going on in them. In variations of this go-around exercise each person might shout an angry sentence, or practice saying he is bored.

Another game that I have found very useful in stimulating members to explore their patterns of helping each other is one I call Dilemma Dialogues. Each member in a "family" writes out on a separate sheet of paper (as many sheets as there are "family" members, usually five or six) a single sentence stating some difficulty, problem, or dilemma that he is experiencing in his simulated family. For example, a student may write: "I am having a difficult time telling all of you how I really feel." And he would write that same sentence, if there are five other people in his "family", on five other sheets, one sheet for each member of his "family". When all members have written out such sheets and have headed each of them "From me to you," with the "me" being the name of the author of the dilemma, and the "you" being the name of each of the other members, these sheets are distributed to the appropriate "family" members. When a member receives a sheet, he reads the problem and writes a one sentence response. He then returns the sheet to the original author of the problem, who then writes a one sentence reply. With this ongoing back and forth exchange of sheets and of one sentence responses, each member of the "family" develops a dialogue with every other member around the same problem, as well as a dialogue with every other member of the "family" about each of their dilemmas.

At the end of about 20 to 30 minutes I stop the "families" and invite them to examine their written dialogues in terms of what happened in the exchange, what impasses may have developed, or been broken through. (Interestingly enough, this exercise seems to be useful in breaking some impasses, for some members feel freer to write out their negative feelings than to express them verbally.) I also ask each person to rate the responses on his dialogue sheets from 0 to 3, depending on how helpful he found them. We then compute Helpfulness scores which reflect the extent to which each member's way of responding was regarded as useful by the other members in his "family". This game gets us into the whole area of how you help each other, what kinds of things you say to help others to express themselves more freely, or what kinds of things you say that cuts them off, and what dynamics might underlie these differences for different people.

Another exercise with a similar aim is one in which I might tell a group, for example, "I have to give a paper at a Psychosynthesis Research Foundation
meeting

and I feel scared to death"; and I would ask each member to respond to me with a single sentence. I respond to each sentence with either an "Ugh!" or a "Thank you." For example, if somebody says to me, "You shouldn't be nervous! After all you're a psychologist!", I answer "Ugh! I don't want to talk to you!" But if, on the other hand, a student in the group says to me "Gee! I have felt that way too," I say "Thank you." So I go around in this way; it is a simple thing, but they get the point.

Some games involve the "family" in a simulated family difficulty, and then they see how they work together to solve their common problem. I will say, for example, "Pretend you are a real family at home and imagine that each of you wants to see a different program on TV at the same time. You are going to try to settle this problem, but instead of all of you talking and arguing at once, have a go-around in which each of you in turn makes a one sentence statement. Remember, one sentence, one at a time, and make an effort to work this problem out in some way." And they go round and round until the "family" has come to some kind of resolution. Sometimes the members of one "family" will sit in the center and the rest of us will watch to see how they work on some such simulated family problem, give them advice on how they might work better together.

Another how-to-work-together exercise I call Crisis: I ask members to close their eyes. I say, "Imagine that some person in your simulated family has just said something angry and hurtful to another member. You see this other member wincing. Look and see who specifically it is in your family that did say something hurtful. See who it is that winces. See how _you_ feel. Now let the scene develop. Who says or does what next, and so forth." Then after a minute or so I ask the members to open their eyes and to discuss their fantasies. Other crises which I ask members to imagine and develop include noticing tears in a member's eyes, a member wanting to "divorce" his "family", and the "family" ganging up on a member.

A second set of games focusses the members' attention on <u>sharing and exploring their childhood experiences</u>. For example, members submit their first memories to the group for discussion and analysis. They bring in photographs of themselves as young children, pictures in which they may appear with parents, and these are then examined and discussed by the group.

In another exercise students list all the repetitive sayings, proverbs, slogans, advices, admonitions, that were repeatedly expressed in their childhood families and then read them aloud in a go-around. Here are some examples from their lists: "Your mother is your best friend." "It's as easy to love a rich boy as a poor one." "What will the neighbors say?" "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything." Members explore how some of these repeated sayings may have been taken too seriously by them and may still operate as self-defeating assumptions underlying their current relationships, especially those in their simulated family.

There is something about confronting past experiences in which necessarily the central character is a child which seems to facilitate feelings of mutual acceptance and tender support in the simulated family. Also, knowledge of each other's childhood backgrounds enables members to better appreciate each other's current reactions, especially those which are transferential.

A third set of games centers on an <u>exploration of each individual's identity</u> in an effort at clarifying his conflicts, difficulties, and strengths, and

on <u>developing assignments and tasks which he can undertake to change in desired directions</u>.

One such game, the Right Hand-Left Hand Dialogue, was inspired by Fritz Perl's approach. I say to the members, "Pick up your pencil with your right hand and write a one sentence statement to your left hand. When you have done this, shift the pencil from your right to your left hand, and have your left hand write a one sentence response to your right hand. Do this until you have written three interactions between your hands, that is, a total of six sentences." These dialogues are read and explored in the "family". The kind of relationship that each person seems to have to himself is often reflected with startling clarity in the exchanges between his two hands.

In the Mirror Image exercise, the member is invited to look at himself in a pocket mirror, but only at the left half of his face, covering the right half with his hand. He jots down the various features, traits or expressions that he sees in the left side. After the members have shared their reactions to this experience, I then instruct them to follow a similar procedure, this time looking at the right facial half, and I suggest that quite different features, traits or expressions may now be evident, and usually this does occur. Then in the discussion that follows, we explore whether the two sets of perceptions may reflect important inner conflicts, and whether either set reminds them of one of their parents.

The Balloons Game is a favorite of mine. Members are requested to bring in balloons. I ask them to blow up their balloons as far as they wish, to tie a knot at the end and to observe what they experience as they do this. I request them to rub their blown-up balloons gently against their cheeks, keeping eyes closed as they do so, and allowing some image to pop into mind. Next I tell them to make noises with their balloons in any way they wish (slapping, rubbing, tweeking) and to notice what these noises bring to mind. I ask the group to look at the shapes of their balloons and to see what these shapes remind them of. Students will usually refer to various objects or animals, but tend to be very reticent about mentioning penises, breasts, or nipples. This reticence is brought to the group's attention for discussion. As a final task, I invite the group members to break their balloons in any way they wish and to observe themselves as they do so. This exercise confronts many students with sensuous, sexual and aggressive feelings and impulses hitherto so covert as often to be beyond awareness. In addition, the experience emphasizes that even apparently trivial behavior sometimes merits attention and can be useful to pursue as clues to self-understanding.

Another self-confrontation game I call <u>Your Bag and You</u>. I ask members to bring in shopping bags large enough to go over their heads and shoulders, with faces drawn on the outside and with large holes for eyes and nose. At my signal we put these shopping bags on, and sit in a circle sharing our reactions. After about ten minutes of this I invite them to get up and follow me in single file out of the classroom into the street and we walk around the block, all of this with our shopping bags on. People in the street stare, giggle, and throw questions at us. After five to ten minutes we return to the classroom, remove our bags, and talk about what happened. Some members are delighted with the experience; feeling hidden, and therefore protected, they feel freer to talk, to do what they wish, and to shed their habitual over-concern about what others might think. In contrast, some students say they feel suffocated by the bag experience. Others have difficulty being alone with themselves, feel isolated, and painfully cut off from everybody.

Sometimes they mention that after removing the bags they see other members' faces more vividly, almost as if they were seeing these faces for the first time.

In this last stage I often encourage members to "try something new," and to move beyond their habitual ways. The games in themselves usually represent entries into the unconventional and unfamiliar. In addition, after the group has discussed its reactions to an exercise, I often suggest: "Let's repeat the exercise, but this time consider how you might participate in the situation differently, perhaps in a way that you might find more satisfying, even though it may involve taking some risk that you ordinarily avoid." At times I will close a session with an assignment: "Do something new in the next few days based on what you experienced in this session, write up what happens, and tell us about it."

I have conducted well over 200 workshops thus far, and as my experience grows, so does my conviction that the future holds a special place for this kind of mental health education, whether it be this approach or any number of other approaches now developing (e.g, see Perls, Huxley, Schutz, Otto, Gunther), as long as it is an approach which can provide large groups of relatively normal persons with opportunities for confronting themselves in ways that are vivid and dramatic, and which can sharpen their sense of identity, heighten their feelings of self-acceptance, and make a difference in how they relate to themselves and to each other.

Now in conclusion, I would like to say a few words about Psychosynthesis. When I read Assagioli's book a couple of years ago I was very excited by it. I imagine that the influence of the book must be evident in some of the things that I have shared tonight. What particularly appealed to me was Assagioli's conception of therapy as consisting of a series of activities in which the patient is engaged in an intensive, searching way, yet where the spirit is a playful one, neither overly serious, nor overly dependent on words.

I also found very congenial the emphases in Psychosynthesis on the teaching of specific techniques which the patient can then use on his own, the strengthening of the patient's weak functions through actual training exercises, and the use of imagination involving images and guided visualizations.

In reading about the development of the will it struck me that the whole process of choosing, developing, and using a simulated family may contain almost all the will ingredients that Assagioli writes about: uncovering · unconscious motivations, decision making, commitment to the decisions made, and action involving the maintenance of a persistent direction.

As far as the key concept of Psychosynthesis is concerned, that is, the concept of the transpersonal self, a higher center of pure awareness that is in each of us, this is something I have so far done relatively little with in my groups, at least not in a conscious, deliberate way, mainly because I have only recently become seriously interested in such a concept myself, and have much to learn about it as applied to me, or perhaps better put, as applied to the "self" behind, beyond, and above the "me".

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<u>Demonstration</u>

(At this point in the meeting the participants moved their chairs to form roughly a large circle around the room. Ed.)

<u>Malamud</u>: I thought we would try a few exercises to give you an idea of what happens in each of the three stages. Now for the first stage: Imagine that you are a group of new students who don't know each other, and I want to help you to become acquainted with each other as rapidly as possible. I have already told you how you will be choosing amongst each other for members of your "family", and that in order to do this you have to first get a sense of what sort of person you want in your "family" and who it is you have here as raw material to choose from. So, to help you get to know each other as quickly as possible, I am going to divide you up into pairs calling one member in each pair A and the other B. Each A will have a brief encounter with the B he is paired with around a specific task or theme that I will suggest. At the end of one minute I am going to ask every A to get up and to move to the next B (At this point Dr. Malamud went around the group naming each one alternatively A and B. Ed.), so all the As will move clockwise round the room. After another one minute encounter on the same theme, every A will again move to the next B, so that at one minute intervals you will be experiencing a number of different people around the same task and you will get some sense of how different people react differently to you.

For the first minute each pair will discuss "What I usually feel in a new group," obviously a very appropriate theme for a beginning class. We start off with something simple like this and then gradually move to more loaded situations. So "How I usually feel in a new group." Take a minute to talk it over.

(After one minute Dr. Malamud had all the As move on to the next Bs, repeating the same discussion on the same topic. Ed.)

<u>Malamud</u>: Ordinarily I would have you moving around and around, repeating this, before changing the task but in order to speed things up, here is another task: Each A and B will thumb-wrestle, each member of the pair trying to pin down the other's thumb.

(This was repeated three times with a change of partners as before. Ed.)

<u>Malamud</u>: That is an example of a relatively innocuous nonverbal encounter which, while playful, contains some obvious elements worthy of later exploration. And there are numerous kinds of nonverbal experiences that you can find for this purpose in books, such as the one by Bernard Gunther.

Now I will give you another kind of theme: "You know, it could be really risky to talk to you." So will you change partners again and then talk about that for one minute. (This was done. Ed.)

After thirty or forty minutes, if we kept on doing this, everybody would have contacted a goodly number of people, but if you want everyone to contact each other, at some point you have to change the As and Bs around - the Bs become As and the As, Bs. If you do that with every alternate pair and then continue with the exercise, everybody will indeed sample-contact everybody else in a wide variety of ways.

I would now like to move on to the second stage and give you a taste of what it is like to choose your own "family". Instead of fully preparing you for this I am going to ask you to plunge right in and we will bandage up your "wounds" later - if necessary! I am going to ask you to stand up and see what it is like to mill around and to pick out some person to be in your "family". Don't talk to each other. Send out nonverbal signals. If you don't want a particular person to be in your "family", don't just accept any invitation that comes in your way,reject him! You can do all this either crudely, rudely, or nicely. When two of you show by your signals that you mutually accept each other as "family" members, you hold hands and sit down; so that eventually we will have ten pairs sitting down. (The group totalled 20. Ed.) Then pairs are going to come into the center and mill around and non-verbally invite other pairs, and when two pairs mutually accept each other, a quartet will be formed and this quartet will be your "family" for the rest of the night. So move around now and make your choices. (For some minutes the group moved silently to and fro communicating silently with each other, pairing off and sitting down. Ed.) Now will the pairs talk to each other about how you felt during this experience. (After about two minutes Dr. Malamud asked the group to get up again as pairs, move around and again silently choose other pairs, each pair having to find a mutually acceptable pair. Ed.)

Will each "family" now sit down, please, in a separate part of the room. Put your chairs in a circle, and sit closely to each other so that your knees are touching. Your first task is to talk to each other about how you feel being together. By the way, at this stage we don't concern ourselves with, "Who is father and mother and so on?" Those things develop spontaneously later on.

And now will you discuss how you would like this "family" to be different from or similar to your actual childhood family? (After about three minutes Dr. Malamud halted the very intensive discussions going on in each "family". Ed.)

I would now like to give you an example of an exercise which I usually introduce in the third stage, one in which the focus is on each of you, and yet one in which you have an experience in common which you can explore together within a helpful "family" atmosphere. The specific experience involves a guided fantasy.

Please close your eyes and visualize as vividly as you can that you are in a room somewhere. Notice which room you find yourself in. (These instructions were given very slowly with long pauses to allow the participants to enter into the fantasy. Ed.) In the corner of this room there is a cage. Look at the cage and see what kind of a cage it is. There is a bird in the cage. It is jumping up and down excitedly. The bird is saying something to the cage. Listen, and hear what the bird is saying to its cage. And now the cage is answering the bird, and a dialogue develops between the bird and its cage. Listen in, and hear what they say to each other. And now the bird is trying very hard to get out of the cage. It finally succeeds in getting out of the cage, and is flying into the room. Watch the bird and see what the bird does. And now the cage is saying something to the bird. Hear now what the cage is saying. A curious thing is happening. The bird is flying back into the cage. For the first time you feel like saying something. You say to the bird, and hear yourself saying this, "Idiot! what are you doing? You just got out of the cage!" The bird, now in the cage, looks you directly in the eye and answers you. Listen. All right, now open your eyes and share your experience with the members in your "family". (Because this was for demonstration purposes Dr. Malamud, after about 15 minutes cut short the active discussion going on in each "family". Ed.)

Malamud: Will you now say goodbye to your families and get into a large circle so that we can have a discussion.

First let me say that I am developing other guided fantasies, similar to this one about the cage. In one, the fantasy involves you and your mirror image; in another, you, a stage, and an audience. But I would be interested in your reactions to what we have done.

Bailin: (Tape unclear. Ed.) . . .a pretty little bird and a nice cage, with someone shouting at her. . .it seemed to me that that "jostling" element could be omitted.

? : I wonder if you should stop at the point where the bird is out, or may be carry it one step further, rather than this situation which forced the student to put the bird back into the cage.

Malamud: That would be a perfectly useful adaptation; but it seemed to me that, without knowing what I was doing as I evolved this, I think I must have been saying to myself that we are so often caught up in the struggle of trying to escape from our "cages" and, to our dismay, find ourselves returning to them. And it was this that I was feeling and attempting, through the fantasy, to share and involve the group in.

Mrs. Hilton: This I did not get at all from you; I was disturbed because up to that interjection - "You idiot, etc." - in my fantasy it was much more sensible for the bird to come back into the cage. This was because, in the conversation between the cage and the bird, the cage said "Go out if you want to and try it; but you are not an outdoor bird, you have been bred indoors and therefore you cannot take care of yourself" and so forth. And the bird eventually realized this and then as it was coming back into the cage you came out with the startling remark "You idiot!"

Malamud: But then the bird had the chance to talk back to you! I did not know your story, but your bird has a chance to talk back. (Haronian: And correct you!) (laughter) All right, as long as there is room for the bird to talk back.

Wolf: This technique, and all the techniques we have discussed this evening, will, I think, take on more and more significance and importance in the next ten years or so when the actual family will be reduced in influence, when your childhood family will have less and less significance, when the population is increasing and so on, we will have this type of "producing" families as they have in the Kibutzim in Israel and places like that. It will be an extremely important feature and I think this should have much more emphasis, not only in your course; I think it should be propagandized much more. Because this will be an actuality in the not too distant future. Would you not say so?

Malamud: That is a very interesting idea. It makes me think of the resistance that "families" have to breaking up once they have formed. In fact a number of families continue their meetings after the workshop has been completed. As regards the future and the population explosion, the possibility of creating families on an artificial basis may very well become a real one in an ongoing way in a person's life. (Wolf: It will become more and more of an actuality . . . .) Yes, and it is a very exciting idea.

Elizur: (undecipherable comment too far away from the mike. Ed.)

Malamud: Yes, and in Eric Fromm's recent book, Revolution of Hope, he talks about such small groupings for various purposes, for political aims, and in terms of something more communal.

Hilton: This is one of the first steps towards the eventual psychosynthesis of humanity which Assagioli speaks of. That is a long, long way ahead, maybe thousands of years ahead, but this is a step towards interindividual and social psychosynthesis.

Malamud: Yes, and I noticed that in Assagioli's book he talks about "inter-individual psychosynthesis," ever larger groups.

Morano or Yassky: I wondered in the first pairing encounters if we were not taking a backward or sideway step in the dialogue "It might be risky talking to you"; that it might emphasize an aspect of human relationships that might be minimized. Would it not perhaps be better to say "How much we might gain from one another"?

Malamud: Yes, and another theme could be "It would be a lot of fun talking to you." In other words, focussing on both negative and positive.

Greenberg: What do you expect to get from the negative approach? (**Cooper:** Well, you had a sample - what did you get?) Thank you.

Mrs. Greenberg or Mrs. Morano: I did not think it was a negative approach; I thought it was a fruitful approach.

Mrs. Hilton: My private thought was that it could lead to suspicion - and is that a good thing?

Cooper: Well, that is what it led _you_ to - but this is only a sample of what is done.

Malamud: In actual classes what very often gets expressed, when they talk about "It might be risky to talk to you", are reactions such as "you might not like it," "I might be embarrassed or humiliated," "you might be critical," "you might not like me," etc. It is this kind of thing that comes out; and there is no point in sidestepping that because people come into the class with feelings like those. (**Morano:** Does it aggravate those feelings?) No, I don't think so; bringing them out tends to reduce them.

Cooper: We people here are too sophisticated, you see; we are dealing with it all the time.

Haronian: Yes, perhaps that is more of a problem with the students in your class than in such a situation as this tonight.

Malamud: Yes, of course. (**Mrs. Hilton:** Is it due to the fact that your classes are of younger age and lacking in maturity?) They are far less sophisticated.

Haronian: What types of people do you have in your classes?

Malamud: All kinds of people. (Haronian: Are they college students?) A minor-
ity - mostly high school graduates and above. In my elementary course most people,
I think, are single; and I have another course which is an Advanced Course where
I think that probably more people are married.

Wolf: What is the difference between the advanced course and the elementary?

Malamud: People who have gone through the elementary course can go into the
advanced course as "families" and then we continue working some more. (Elizur:
Do you get any actual married couples in the course?) Yes, on occasion.

Greenberg: Is there any possibility of a follow-up being done on your class
members, or is that out of the question?

Malamud: It is not out of the question; it is an excellent idea, but I have not
been able to do much of it except in so far as I get informal feed-back. In the
very last session I have them write up a statement about what specific things
happened to them, and throughout the course I have these letters that I spoke of,
which tell me about this or that incident that might be meaningful.

Haronian: Is this procedure generally written up in your book or available else-
where? (Malamud: A number of these procedures are described in my book, but the
"family" approach is new and as yet unpublished.) The other question I would
like to ask is: what is your own impression of the effect of the course?

Malamud: Well, I think that one of the most notable effects is in the direction
of increased self-acceptance. That has always been one of the major effects of my
classes, but with the introduction of this "family" format it seems stronger than
ever. With that "family" support, something seems to have happened to the course,
qualitatively; that is, there is a qualitative leap in the reactions of members.
With "family" encouragement and support people seem to be trying out new ways of
behaving far more frequently than they used to do.

Haronian: In this experience tonight you did not ask us to break down families
into father, mother and so on. Do you usually have that?

Malamud: No, it is never that kind of simulated family unless we are playing a
specific game, requiring such explicit roles. At some point, after they have
worked together for a while, I will ask them "Who is the father in your family?"
"Who is the most motherly?" "Who is the baby in the family?" and so on.

Mrs. Hilton: Do I understand that you don't just give them a theme but also en-
courage them in the "family" to actually talk about their own specific problems
and ask the others their advice? In other words, do you always want them to
work on a theme which you give to them?

Malamud: So far my preference and emphasis has been on tasks, themes, games that
I introduce, and to use those as 'take off points'. So that if something happens
in a game, something that you are also dealing with in real life, you can
obviously bring it in and discuss it. But I do not encourage using the group
situation as a group-therapy-like situation where you come in with your personal
problems and say "I want to tell you what happened to me" etc. However, I must
say this, when they go off by themselves and meet at their own homes and I give them

homework - I will say "We are going to play this game" and I give them instruct-
ions and "Now you are on your own" - very often they just ignore it and they
just talk about their personal problems. So, I don't know what my reaction to
that is; I kind of accept it; and whether this means that I will have to move
somehow inside of myself, to take this very strong drive in them into account, I
do not know.

Elizur: Would it be right to say that in many "families" it would not be in the
form of "mother, son", etc., but more in the form of a cohesive group in which
they give support to each other more or less on a deeper basis?

Malamud: Yes, that is one way of describing what they are moving towards.

Crampton: What are your reasons for preferring a more structured approach
than, say, a free interplay?

Malamud: That is a very complicated question and the answer to that would
involve first of all me and my way of being and what makes me feel comfortable,
but I might as well stop here!

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