

Some Reflections...

from four of the Quarterly's authors about their experience writing with us,
how interpersonal neurobiology has touched their lives,
and the future of IPNB

When we resume publishing in 2012, we hope you may feel inspired to try
your hand at writing for the new *Connections & Reflections*.

From Lara Saft...

The shifting focus within psychotherapy over the past decade to embrace a “whole person” approach to mental health has been both inspirational and validating to me as a clinician and as a person. Before our field started moving toward this new science of empathy and honoring the holistic wisdom of the body and right hemisphere, I felt like an inferior therapist when I had strong feelings and reactions toward my clients. I’ve since learned to view *all* the thoughts, feelings, relational choices, sensations, spiritual associations, and intuition my clients and I experience as valuable pieces of data. Within the interpersonal neurobiology paradigm, no part of human experience is seen as superfluous. Even subtle, barely perceptible changes in tone of voice, posture, facial expression, or seating choice in the room can be tremendously meaningful from a relational perspective. I now pay close attention to my perceptions of my clients and myself when I am with them, to learn what my tears, distraction, boredom, anger, tightened chest, or nausea (for example) tell me about my clients’ psychological life and their connection to the world around them.

Writing for GAINS has helped me consolidate what I know and continue to learn about IPNB. My confidence in applying a “brain-based” model of clinical practice has improved dramatically through the process of writing about cases from an IPNB point of view. The editors of our publication embody core relational values such as openness, curiosity, flexible thinking, collaboration, and respect for difference when they help contributing authors like myself. The experience has been so rewarding that I’ve since branched out into a new area of creativity, writing short fiction stories about being a therapist. Thank you GAINS for the support and inspiration!

From Richard Hill...

One of the fundamental developments in my work has been the privilege to write for the GAINS Quarterly. Not only did I receive a warm acceptance despite my lack of experience and being in Australia, but Bonnie took me under her wing and taught me a million things about the skill of writing well. I *really* know what it is like to feel a long way away and disconnected from the mainstream, but GAINS genuinely practices the IPNB it preaches. If you not only want to express your thoughts and experiences, but hone them into a fine craft, then share my enriching experience of the wonderful forum of the GAINS Quarterly. (Just wait till you have the tingles of seeing your name in the writing credits and in the editorial!)

From Terry Marks-Tarlow...

Many congratulations to GAINS for such informative and heartfelt contributions to the worldwide interpersonal neurobiology community over the past five years. I appreciate the opportunity to take stock of past and future directions along with the journal. I first discovered interpersonal neurobiology around the time this journal launched. For me, both personally and professionally, this period has been revolutionary.

I entered this wonderful group of colleagues while struggling to write a book. I had been revising and re-revising my manuscript over and over, chucking draft after draft. I loved the ideas I was playing with. I loved chaos and complexity theories, and I especially loved fractal geometry. It all seemed quite profound. I saw links between nonlinear science and art. I saw links between nonlinear science and spirituality. I envisioned how fractals could model entangled boundaries between self, world and other. I stalked the psychological paradigm of the future. I believed I was hot on its trail. I envisioned a brand of science flexible, open and expansive enough to serve as a meta-framework for all approaches to psychotherapy.

I was dancing with my ideas. But the problem was, I danced alone. At the time I sought a publisher, someone suggested Wiley might publish my book—*Psyche's Veil: Psychotherapy, Fractals and Complexity*—if I could start a nonlinear book series there and find someone famous as co-editor. Dan Siegel was the natural choice. He had already embraced a complexity model, and kindly agreed to write my preface. But there was one problem. He already was the editor for the Norton series on Interpersonal Neurobiology.

I decided to approach Allan Schore. Allan was enthusiastic about jumping on board, and we were off and running. All seemed great, except that Wiley got bogged down with technical details. The scheme fell apart. But my affiliation with Allan did not. I realized how much Allan's perspective had to offer, how much it complemented my own. My head had been in clouds of abstraction. My ideas were not grounded in bodily processes. So I joined the Schore study group and started reading neurobiology like a fiend. It was entranced. Here was the concrete manifestation for all the nonlinear ideas I loved so much. There is chaos in the brain. There are self-organizing dynamics in how one mind/brain/body shapes itself in the context of another. During therapy, the coupled system of two mind/body/brain systems evolves to the edge of chaos. Here higher complexity arises. Under the complexity lurk fractals. Self-similar fractals structure and processes abound in recursively embedded physiologically levels, all operating simultaneously according their own time and size scales.

Interpersonal neurobiology helped bring me down to earth (as you can tell, I'm still trying to land). I discovered colleagues who belong to my tribe and think along similar lines. The GAINS community, with its freewheeling, open-hearted, artful approach is fabulous. Not only is the journal interesting, but the articles are actually useful! They even have pictures. They don't contain ungainly words or pompous intention. And I am grateful for a place to plant my own creative seeds. The essay I contributed on play mushroomed into a full-blown paper now in press at the *American Journal of Play*. I thank you all, especially Bonnie Badenoch with whom I've had most contact, for support and encouragement. And now I've come full circle with the publishing. Allan Schore took over as series editor at Norton, and now I have the chance to put my nonlinear ideas into play in yet an even more embodied way. As I embark on a new book for Norton's Interpersonal Neurobiology series called *Clinical Intuition in Psychotherapy*, I look forward to more opportunities for cross-fertilization with the IPNB folks in the years to come.

From Ward Davis...

I am an Assistant Professor at the Rosemead School of Psychology at Biola University. As I reflect on my own IPNB journey, I can say with confidence that IPNB has completely revolutionized my personal and professional life. It has enabled me to become a kinder, more well-integrated and mindful person, educator, and psychotherapist. Professionally speaking, it has offered me a compelling, integrative theoretical framework from which to teach psychology and to practice psychotherapy integration. As an early career professional in the field of psychology, I have found it invaluable to have a scientifically grounded, theoretically sound framework to guide my work.

Moreover, as a practitioner who is spiritually, psychodynamically, and interpersonally minded, I have always recognized the interconnectedness between the person of the educator/psychotherapist and his or her professional work. As such, for the past few years, having IPNB as a guiding framework for not only my professional life but my personal life as well has helped tremendously. Doing so has enabled me to grow toward self-actualization in my own mind, brain, and relationships, thereby modeling and promoting the same in my students and psychotherapy clients.

With regards to "Whither IPNB," I feel that we will continue to see IPNB make inroads into a vast array of domains—ranging everywhere from public policy to healthcare, philosophy to religion/spirituality, research to education, and organizations to suburbia. IPNB is such a universally applicable, compelling, and transformative framework that, as more people become aware of it, it will likely grow exponentially in both popularity and influence. It is an honor to be a part of this GAINS community, as it is a tangible embodiment of our collective efforts to make this world a kinder, more compassionate place for ourselves, our families, our communities, and our world. My warmest wishes are with you and with our community as we continue to journey forward.

