

IRSJA RANT: Why Aren't Jungians Good Enough?

I want to ask some questions, but let me first glance backward for a context to mark where these questions began for me:

Back in the beginning of the Inter-Regional Society, the days of creation, the irrepressible Joe Wheelwright used to say of the new Society that it was a “fly-by-night” outfit, so as not to threaten established institutes like Los Angeles and New York , who feared a takeover of their candidates. The fear of that threat has dissolved, the Inter-Regional doesn't have to fly by either night or day, we are 36 years old now, and our candidates manage to turn into pretty good analysts in spite of what we do to them. But I still have this question not only for our Society, but for all Jungian institutes: If we are legitimate, and we are a huge, wonderful, diverse, talented bunch of the finest, mostly-individuated analysts in the world – why aren't we good enough to do what we do *on our own terms*? And why aren't our candidates good enough to practice with our diploma when they graduate? Why do we keep jumping through external collective hoops to legitimize ourselves?

In his essay of the same title in Vol. 17, “The Development of Personality,” Jung writes about vocation, the call to individuation, going your own way; and while he is speaking of individuals, his words apply to groups as well, since groups too have distinctive personalities: He says, “The smaller the personality, the dimmer and more unconscious [the inner voice] becomes, until finally it merges indistinguishably with the surrounding society, thus surrendering its own wholeness and dissolving into the wholeness of the group. In the place of the inner voice there is the voice of the group with its conventions, and vocation is replaced by collective necessities.” (§302) I think we have to question the necessities and conventions of the collective and examine the ways in which we capitulate to them, and

what can be done to change our relationship to that collective to preserve our own unique identity and contribution as Jungians.

The idea of depth, the value of interiority, and the delights of individuality have always been anathema to the collective because they disturb the status quo. And yet, while we Jungians share these values and ideas, we seem also to suffer from a sense of inferiority that these distinguishing hallmarks of our profession keep us outside of a collective system from which we yet seek recognition and approval. Since the more than 90% of Jungians who are introverts are about to become officially pathological in the new DSM-V, such collective approval seems unlikely.

So here are my four questions: First, the Degree Fraud: Why is a diploma in any field from any accredited university or college recognized by everyone, but a Jungian diploma is recognized only by other Jungians? Why do we allow state governments to define our profession without having any idea of what it is we actually do, and to write laws to regulate what they think we do?

Second question, the Licensure Lie: Why do we have to get degrees in fields in which we do not practice in order to get a license to let the public think we are just like clinical psychologists, which is actually misrepresentation at best and fraudulent at worst? Many of you have read your own state statutes that define psychology and its practice. Do these definitions really describe what you do or how you do it?

Some years ago my state of Minnesota passed a law requiring all non-licensed “mental health providers” – a term that should put us all on red alert – to register with the state. The fee for filing was \$75. I am not licensed, and so I filed, and for my \$75 I got a one-page letter from the newly established Board of Unlicensed Mental Health Providers, telling me my application was approved and the letter

acknowledged my filing. It also said, in capital letters and bold face type: **“This acknowledgement of filing does not imply or certify in any way that this mental health professional has met any standards or criteria of education and training.”** That was the whole thing. So now I could post a letter from the state in my office assuring patients that they need not think I had met any standards or criteria of education and training. The next year I decided not to spend \$75 to renew my registration, since this is the kind of silliness up with which I did not want to put. I never heard from the Board and the following year the statute was repealed. I’m not convinced that licenses do more to protect the public than unlicensed registrations, but they do cost more, they subject the license holder to greater liability, and do not confirm the validity of education and training as a Jungian analyst.

The third question is about the Insurance Trap: For a state license we pay an annual fee which opens us to all kinds of liabilities when we place ourselves under the jurisdiction of state licensing boards, which leads us into the insurance trap. Why do we pay for malpractice insurance to give others the privilege of suing us? After all, what the state giveth the state may taketh away, so we buy protection by paying an insurance company a significant sum each year for malpractice insurance, which entitles anyone to sue us for any reason in the hope of getting lots of money. I have no doubt that the risk of lawsuit decreases as the amount of money one might gain also decreases. Isn’t our Code of Ethics sufficient to deal with someone who seeks redress of grievance for ethical misconduct? And for that matter, why do we bother to have our own codes of ethics when we submit ourselves under licensure to the codes of the APA or our state boards? Isn’t ours good enough?

And my fourth question is about the CEU scam: Why do we pay for CEU credits to maintain licenses that do not represent our work for which we got degrees in fields in which we do not practice? Why is our attendance at conferences like this one and so many others not good enough as ongoing

educational experiences, and why, in addition to the cost of coming to such a conference, should we pay to have this ongoing education recognized? Who decides what programs are worthy of credit and on what basis? Why don't *we* offer CEU's for APA's programs?

I know these questions deal with what appear to be unavoidable realities, and I don't have answers to these questions, but my psychic mentor, Trudy the Bag Lady, has a worthwhile observation about whether these should be real concerns for us. Trudy is frequently quoted by Lily Tomlin, which means she's a good-enough continuing education all by herself. Trudy is often accused of being crazy because she speaks with space aliens, but I don't think this is very different than Jung's weird conversations with weird people in his Red Book. Trudy's overall view of things is generally compatible with mine, so I'll quote her to close my rant. Trudy says:

I refuse to be intimidated by reality anymore. After all, what is reality anyway? Nothin' but a collective hunch. My space chums think reality was once a primitive method of crowd control that got out of hand...I made some studies, and reality is the leading cause of stress amongst those in touch with it. I can take it in small doses, but as a lifestyle I found it too confining. It was just too needful; it expected me to be there for it *all* the time, and with all I have to do – I had to let something go.

I'd like to propose that we find a way to let the alleged reality of degrees, licenses, insurance and CEUs just *go*.