

Biographical Background of a Psychodramatist

Chapter 1: A Preview for the Revised Edition

When one has been 'retired' a decade, we assume that the record is finished, that the evidence is all in, that for better or worse, the case is closed, destiny has been realized. Not so. I have just begun to live. There is more, much more to tell, even more to experience. As I write I resist the temptation to re-read the first preface. Indeed, I've defied tradition and have cut it from the scene, for I've left the former point-of-view far behind. I live in the same place, but our world rolls on. I'm not as I was at the turn of the millennium, nor are you. I present another point-of-view, which I offer without tedious comparison with the old-me. You're free to do so at your leisure, if that's your bent. I presume that you who've not seen the first book 'could care less.' This is to serve as a sample of what follows.

I was born October 1, 1926, the only child of mature parents---which may explain why I was an only child. This was McKeesport, population maybe fifty thousand, at the confluence of the Monongehela and Youghioghenny Rivers, 25 miles southeast from Pittsburgh. McKeesport thrived as a mill town, the site of the National Tube Works, where nearly everyone worked, especially my father and his brothers. Dad's trades were boiler-maker and pipe-fitter, a fitting background for the repairman of the mill's steam locomotives at the 'round house.'

Mother taught fifth grade at Fifth Avenue School, straddling its middle and lower class homes. She was the only child of Irish-American parents, whose well maintained house on the corner of Coursin and Sixth streets stood out, commanding respect. Our relatives, whose yardstick may not have been representative, thought we were rich. Mother remained single well into her thirties, by default a career woman, whose vocation required that she stay single, according to the law of the state of Pennsylvania at the time. Feminism had yet to break out of obscurity, but even if it had, her duty was to care for her mother, not obviously infirm, and to the family homestead after her father's death. I never met my grandfathers. One seldom lingered in golden years, bathed in the orange toxins the mill's 'open hearth' sprayed over us. Nor did the homestead remain a family monument, for no sooner had the Millers and Donnellys gone, than pork barrel city shakers and movers rushed in to widen a street that went nowhere, as if in anticipation of a broad highway of today that went nowhere much further. Father stayed at home to care for his mother, which his married siblings were only too glad to leave to him. My parents were two of a kind.

I was a skinny child, a nobody who had all the childhood diseases, but suddenly somebody when I started Fifth Avenue School, for my mother had taught there, and continued welcoming all the older teachers to frequent our home. I stole treats from the bridge tables, and when I was banished at 8 pm, I could still listen in on the conversation. I was more at home with adults than children from the very beginning.

But I had three good friends. I'm still in touch with Al, who became a doctor. We went through the first six grades and four years of high school together. I've lost track of Louis, leader of the trio. a year older than us. We three all went to the same church, within convenient walking distance, but on the opposite side of the street, the side spared the wrecking crews 'urban renewal.' On the periphery of us three, Bill, of recent Czech descent a few doors up the street, went to parochial school and eventually became a priest. He related to Al and me one at a time, which was his way. And not at all to Louis. Friendship with Bill ended when my father died and I moved to Greenock, only seven miles away, but in that era this was the other side of the moon. Father and I were alone together, while mother suffered the cancer's erosion in a Pittsburgh's Mercy Hospital. We were home for each other.

Then father was taken to the Veteran's Hospital at Aspinwall. He'd been through six of the major engagements of World War I, missing only one---the only one in the city with that record. He died of a stroke a month after mother, and was buried with a twenty-one gun salute and taps. I can't bear it, even to this day. Before the worst happened Dad designated his sister Corinne as my guardian, for which I am forever grateful. Her husband Walter Forsythe was a 'diamond in the rough, with barely six grades of formal education, like my father. Uncle Walter worked coal mines from age 11 to 25, when he survived a street car accident. Not on the street. The track went through a wooded area, where the trolley jumped the rails and tumbled to the edge of a cliff, which surely would've killed everyone, but it came to rest on a sapling, and no one died. A wake-up call for Walter. He never went back to the mine. He left his tools there, and went to work at the steel mill, where he carefully watched the crane operator operate. The day came when the man failed to come back to his job. Walter told his boss that he could operate the crane. Work there would come to a halt otherwise, so the boss gave Walter his chance. He stayed there 25 years, educating himself in the cab between lifts. Overweight at 50 he had a heart attack, and was not allowed to climb up to the cab. In forced retirement, our bishop offered him a second pastorate, on condition he'd take the course of study and be ordained. The bishop bought him the books. We had the thrill of being ordained at the same service. I was a seminary grad, but I read his books too, and he, in turn read my texts---even teaching a class in summer pastor's school on 'existentialism.' He died at 70 and my aunt Corinne at 80---very much like losing my parents all over again.

The nation was at war and I was losing classmates to the military. Both Al and I passed the navy V12 examination, for which they provided him with his medical education, but I didn't want them telling me what to do. After Al joined, I quit high school, passed college entrance exams, and enrolled at Asbury College for my freshman year. My room-mate Doug became my best friend, which accounts for my early period in Louisiana, where I was a country pastor going to LSU. His mother nursed me back to health when I came down with malaria. Doug married and took a pastorate in Washington, his wife's home state. He found a pastorate for me too, and I followed him there to enroll for my senior year, graduating from Seattle's huge university. I lingered to enjoy my simmering Seattle love adventure, taking graduate courses on the Rorschach and sociology, before driving East to Connecticut where I collected my MDiv from Yale and simultaneously an MA in psychology and anthropology from Trinity College in Hartford. Meanwhile, my love in Washington had dumped me. I was 'courting too slow.' I resolved not to repeat that mistake. At last, barely prior to graduation, I married 18 year old Marjorie Singer, with whom we've had ten children over the years. We went from there back to LSU, where I obtained my PhD in Clinical Psychology. Obviously that leaves out a lot of juicy detail for chapters below. I add a few anecdotes to the previous edition, and subtract many more. I aim that you know, for better or for worse, who I am.

So we bypass a five year professorship in Indiana. and nine years at St. Louis State Hospital, as successively in charge of admissions, chief of the clinical psychology unit, and head psychologist of the Youth Center. I was far into classical psychoanalysis and frequented the analytic institute library, as if to make it a second home. But it was the introduction to Lee Fine and then Doctor Jacob and Zerka Moreno, which detoured me around that fate. Almost imperceptibly I shifted my personal loyalty to psychodrama. I made ten train trips to Beacon, New York, as a student and saved myself the pain and cost of a full scale psychoanalysis. I graduated from the Moreno Institute, and after the death of Dr. Moreno, I came several

summers a few weeks at a time as dean of training while Zerka was in Europe earning the funds to support the nine employees who depended on her.

I mention the next ten years at Johnston College in Redlands, California, where I was faculty fellow (we didn't believe in ranking) in social and clinical psychology, but teaching psychodrama every session. This was the seventies. I got to know college students as I'd never known them back in Indiana. But we lost two sons. Paul Herbert at nine months crawled into a swimming pool while the sitters weren't watching, and Jonathan David, a budding genius at 17, was already accepted at our college when he was stricken with acute leukemia. Beth, our eldest daughter married, had three children and ended up in Madison, Wisconsin. Mark and Jan remained at home. Jan is retarded and still living with us, along with Mark who has put himself through two years of college and has acquired expertise in computers. Of all our children, he is the only one active in the church of his choice.

When the university closed down our college, with our sons Harvey and Ted I tried the business world as owner of two natural food stores in Santa Cruz, and served a pastorate in the cotton country, where son Don Forsythe made an impact in the local high school, and began his career as martial artist. Today he has more trophies than we have room for. He's sixth degree black belt and his wife Candy is hard at his heels. She has already reached fifth belt. Marjorie, Chantel, and he moved back to our home in Redlands.

After our Santa Cruz businesses closed, I left the Corcoran pastorate. With no job on the horizon I moved alone to Philadelphia and the Horsham Clinic, where I was full time psychodramatist on the adult and teen services---and pastor of small churches. Our youngest daughter Chantel, then in high school, joined me there, and Marjorie left her job as substitute teacher---we no longer needed her income, to make us once again a family. This is where I matured as a psychodramatist, became involved in the Federation of Trainers and Training Programs, where I served as vice president and president, chairing an international conference at Beaver College (now known as Arcadia) where I taught group psychotherapy, mandated for those in their masters program.

Back in Santa Cruz, our son Bill had established himself as a computer expert for the county, but his chronic illness caught up with him. We transferred him to UCLA hospital, too late to save him. He was central to the whole family, married Pauline, fathered a son Scott, and died at age 37, when Scott was only 11---a fate reminiscent of mine. Marjorie is the most unselfish person I've ever met. She donated a kidney to Bill about 20 years earlier. I officially 'retired' from three positions at age 68, and we returned home to Redlands to write and train upcoming psychodramatists.

The Miller Family Shares Christmas 2010 with You

Long ago when a three year old lifted up wide open eyes asking "Why do we have Christmas?" I gave a lame reply. Today I'm much older and a bit wiser, so I say to children now grown up, that God is better than the best person I know, who welcomes the new life we've brought before him into this abundant Eden our forbearers have bequeathed to us.. On Christmas we focus on the birth of that special child, who represents our hope for a better tomorrow. This, I believe, is a promise we all can share with everyone, the gift of a dear soul who loves us, and whose love we mirror to others..

Marjorie and I had ten children, but our "dynasty" is just beginning. Ten grandchildren have come forth, and from them and seven great grandchildren so far. Nor does it end there. All the in-laws have families, and several families blend. This surely resembles what the patriarch Abraham may have felt. From my perspective It goes in two directions, those who've

come before and those who come after, with us in the midst. Didn't I say relationships are important?. As an orphaned only child, my family had tottered at the brink of extinction.

But the human family is more than the continuity of DNA. The Forsythes, who took me through my teens, form my model. Cousin Duane Forsythe has headed the Miller Family Reunion, on July 4 meetings at Greenock, Pennsylvania on the Youghiogheny river. I've made that family my own, and gained two sisters and a brother in the process, including their marvelous children. Cousin Jean remains a precious memory. Etheldean, now into her 90's, while keeping her health and independence, lives near daughter Bonnie and husband Ken at Virginia Beach. With this tribute to the past, we focus on the present, where everything happens. I'm lonely no more, as we choose our futures together.

Margie and I flew to Ashland, Oregon to join granddaughter Chandra and Gregory Krug in marriage. Gregory is devoted to their son Henry. The rains came to cancel our ceremony in the park. We scrambled for an alternative, and found, at no cost, a hotel lobby to use when business was low, thanks to family staying there, including Terry, who gave away step-sister Chandra, while another sister Heather served as maid of honor. Both college age youth. Great kids!. Greg's father and a friend flew all the way from Baltimore, while brother Kevin came in from Arkansas to stand by Greg as best man. No time for rehearsal. Typical groom reaction, "It's perfect." His father Larry remarked, "not perfect, but it will do."

Here's a family worth knowing. We made a start, for outgoing planes on Monday were late. One of Greg's co-workers from Goodwill, came with his toddlers "for them to see what a wedding is like," and they behaved themselves surprisingly well, while Chandra frantically finished stitching her wedding dress, with phenomenal results. Gorgeous! The groom gasped. At the reception Chandra introduced her "boss," who instantly amended that to "friend." Margie and I stayed two nights at the luxurious home of family friend Leslie. Next day the rain had abated, and Margie set out on foot to experience this charming college town, site of the annual Shakespeare festival. Greg and Chandra, like my own parents on their wedding day, are both over thirty. Prognosis is good, for maturity has taken hold.

Maturity has its downside, but we fight it. I've replaced two cataracts with implants, weathered root canals for 7 teeth, and finally wear hearing aids for both ears. Otherwise the coast is clear. Margie is six years younger than me, and more energetic. She can reach the lower shelves. We suffer at the loss of Paulette in Santa Cruz, identical twin of our late son Bill's Pauline. For grandson Scott Nash, single father of two, aunt Paulette was a second mother. Pauline has asked us to pray for her. We know that grief.

We love music. Ted and Kathryn's Jonathan, a skilled pianist, is a music major. Patricia's an appreciative and popular high school senior. We miss Gerry Tremblay's opera fellowship. I'm steady bass in our church choir, and with Don Wirth at piano we've led two songfests for church seniors. We carol tonight. So Sing along with us, wherever you are.

As a way of getting to know people better, I often ask how they spend a day. Among men spectator sports get immediate mention. Indeed, often it's serious business. Daughter Beth's current love interest is a professional hockey player scout. I found another use for a hockey stick when I was a teen. I wrapped a box of chocolates around it, and skated on virgin ice 15 miles upriver bearing the gift of my heart to an unrequited love. As it turned out, all was not lost. Our relationship ended. She married a subsequently longsuffering old friend.

Today I'm a tennis fan. I dutifully read Andre Agassi's "Open" and sit in the stands (or on the living room couch) cheering Belgium's Kim Clijsters to her string of victories. Blackbelts son Don and wife Candy, continue attracting newspaper notice for teaching Karate. Their son Michael follows family tradition. Though not yet in kindergarten, he's advanced to orange belt.

I've heard that at cocktail parties, a likely question asked of new acquaintances is "What do you do?" Seems gauche, but one wants to know. Saying that one is retired may forestall further inquiry, as if at 84 there's nothing to talk about anyway, except what I used to do, and who cares about that?

I care, and I'll tell you what I used to do only if I'm still doing it, and if I no longer do it, how I choose to spend my life.. Every week I offer "Action Methods for Spiritual Growth" at our church. This is a code name for psychodrama experience and training., well attended by the 'unchurched' and a few brave souls who dare to explore their spiritual ventures in action. Scary? Only to those who've yet to drop in.

Coming up Spring 2011 in Clearwater, Florida at the American Society for Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama, we're offering a seminar on how a lawyer may use the psychodrama method to discover the client's story. The accused may not be clear in his own mind on how he could've done the thing he did, or if he's convinced of his innocence how it happens that others can imagine he'd do such a terrible thing. Our task is to create an atmosphere where the jury will give a fair hearing, and not automatically buy into the prosecution's theory of the case. The imprisoned desperately need advocates. Why not me?

My new effort fits in nicely with the habit of reading and writing mysteries. This year I hustled enough time to read a half dozen of favorite authors: Donald Westlake, Dick Francis, Robin Cook, Ed McBain and Sue Grafton. Also William Peter Blatty's "Dimiter." My current read is Eric Metaxas' biography of "Bonhoeffer," whom Nazis executed. He was a spiritual giant, a role model "par excellence" How an "outsider" sees our education and church life deserves our attention.

I was uneasy with my previous year's "Flying on Empty" a novel centered in the Alps, so I rewrote the last third of the book. We exposed the fugitive and caught a murderer in the act, but they were not who we thought they would be. Then I experimented with something I'd not done before, a German story with a female lead, called "Dead in the Water." Don't be squeamish. You know what mysteries are like. As if to counter balance any apparent frivolity I wrote two texts for psychodrama students, one on my "24 story system" and the other on "how to direct."

My ministry has grown to include Marriage and Family Therapy. I am current president of the Inland Empire chapter. I qualified for licensure 1985, coincidental with the demise of our natural food stores., but only recently have I taken an active role in this vitally important field. We're sure others are needy, but few among us are willing to concede we may need such services for ourselves. More outside the church are ready to begin. As participants working in a group situation professionals grow under supervision..

I'm hardly the sole writer in our family. Beth wrote a children's book, "Foxy Tail." Son Don comes up with exciting plots and cartoons. Ted has written "Quake," which calls attention to animal behavior as predictive of earthquakes. Handy book to have here in California!. Son Mark does "handy man" here, a role I do no more, and he lends his expertise to plug the gaps in my outdated computer functioning.

Our once 'peppy,' now elderly dog 'Pepe' begs him---successfully, to go for a walk. Daughter Jan, when not glued to the DVD occupies herself with her young cat Kenny, earning a flood of purrs denied to the rest of us. Margie dog-sits for neighbors. Our children's households have added three more pets. We love animals.

Last Spring we visited daughter Chantel in Philadelphia, where her love interest Christian chefs at his Italian restaurant. We celebrated his son's 21st birthday while I was there. Michelle's husband Ryan is an Italian chef in Wisconsin. Chantel and Michelle were childhood friends. Beth's Melanie is concierge of a Chicago hotel. Single father Chris and son came home to Dad Harvey in Surprise, Arizona, where Harvey manages a nearby GNC. Linda's daughter Amber graduated Magna Cum Laude in an MA psychology program. Mother Brandi and step-father Dennis McDonald, with a new baby of their own, moved from Arkansas to North Carolina, with great granddaughter Sarah, now 14 and in high school already.

Memories return unbidden. Our first Christmas eve together Margie and I decided that most of all we needed new shoes. So we ran to the one store still open, where the clerk gift wrapped our selections. "Merry Christmas Rev," he smiled. An early memory of my father was the Christmas when he gave me my own Lionel Train, securely nailed to the floor. Mother had a fit. In 1932 Dad worked as locomotive repairman at the 'round house' in McKeesport, PA.. The family at 1610 Helena Lane, Margie, Don, Jan and Mark, wish you a memorable 2011.

What Psychodrama Offers Us

Psychodrama is both a method and a collection of techniques. Those with a passing acquaintance easily pick up on the latter, but even though they find them convenient, they fall short of deriving the full benefit, when they haven't developed the skill to use them properly. A method includes a variety of techniques, which can be used in any context, but the method requires the strategic use of technique. I came into psychodrama trained in psychoanalytically oriented psychotherapy, which I imposed on the array of techniques. The result was gratifying, but gradually I graduated to grasping the method itself, leaving the psychodynamic behind, which got in the way of a more effective treatment.

One may begin the presentation of a discipline in the logical, systematic way we find in the typical introductory college text. but one should seek experience in a psychodrama group first. Formal instruction becomes more meaningful when one participates in multiple episodes. Our approach requires personal investment rather than objective distance.

Description: Psychodrama resembles a play. We set up a sequence of scenes, taking us from a story's beginning, which shows how the protagonist's attempts to cope haven't worked out, through a middle where we consider options available, to an end as we explore where taking this option or that may lead. We use a stage, a director, actors from the group, a protagonist, and an audience. The director is usually on stage with the protagonist, guiding the flow, highlighting the central conflict, and bringing the story to a satisfying resolution. But unlike drama, the psychodrama creates its own script in accord with the protagonist's real goals and objectives. There is no rehearsal, nor a production for an audience seeking entertainment. The audience is there to give, not to get.

Psychodrama is like group therapy, where the whole group acts as therapist. The designated leader creates a climate of acceptance, where people feel free to reveal themselves without holding up an image. We provide understanding and support, while the protagonist takes himself apart and puts himself back together again---better this time.

Unlike group therapy, psychodrama puts the whole matter into its setting, always acting in the here and now, rather than merely talking about something which happened at another

time or place. Psychodrama engages the feelings early on, facilitating expression and integration. With a more vivid spectacle to experience, others are in a far better position to understand and share what has happened to them, which parallels what they've just seen happen to the protagonist on stage.

So in psychodrama we function like a healthy family, providing an atmosphere which fosters growth, and gain resources for facing the world. Frequently we deal with anger, guilt and loss, work through the grieving process so that we can take up our lives again and function effectively. We face our pain, put it behind us without minimizing or passing around it, to be fully present with what comes up later.

Definition: Psychodrama is that professional practice which uses action based on the theory, philosophy and methodology of Jacob L. Moreno. This calls for enactment, sociometry, group dynamics, role theory, and social systems analysis to facilitate constructive change in individuals and groups through the development of new perceptions, or through reorganization of old cognitive patterns. Our improvisations produce spontaneity, the goal toward which we strive.

We move beyond ventilation, enhance awareness and gain insight leading to full integration. Through a titrated letting go we gain more effective control, whereby a self-made-whole gains the freedom to be who he or she is, whatever the situation, no longer a passive victim but one in charge of himself, reacting realistically to the situation confronting him.. Current applications include but are not limited to clinical, social, educational, creative and research activity.

Historical: The roots of psychodrama are a hundred years old. Far from being a new approach, it is quite venerable, and well established. Several more modern theories have been built on its foundation, without acknowledging it.

J.L. Moreno, MD pioneered group therapy. It had its humble origin in a bordello in Vienna as a labor union. Another root was a mystical religious experience involving automatic writing on the inner wall of a public health officer's study. Moreno first published those WORDS OF THE FATHER anonymously, but after 12 years he acknowledged that he himself was the vehicle. The germ of his elaborate outlook is prefigured there in surprising detail. Catholics, protestants and Jewish clerics have found much there they could identify with. Another root is the theater, especially in its improvisational form. The fourth root is sociological.

Moreno's interest moved beyond the individual and the mental health field to the community at large. His seminal work, WHO SHALL SURVIVE? published 1934 shows how the sociometry he invented reflects broad social processes and may be applied to practical situations. Reminiscent of Darwin and Wallace, who simultaneously arrived at similar theories, the sociologist-philosopher G.H. Mead, also published in 1934, an independent view which paralleled and corroborated Moreno's. Moreno's merit was having tested out and validated the principles in action.

Both Moreno and Mead considered the relationship, not the individual, the basic unit for explanation. Psychiatrist Harry Stack Sullivan agreed. But not even today has this basic ground been fully appreciated, for the medical model, especially in its hospital manifestations continues with the accent on the individual. Our whole legal system likewise focuses on one individual at a time. Marriage and Family Therapists know better but still must knuckle under to the individualistic suppositions of the medical and legal models within which we work.

Love Story: When Moreno came to the USA he rented a room at Carnegie Hall as a center for spontaneous theater. Persons who'd been to Broadway's theaters began to come together here, to perform on a smaller stage, just as they'd seen the professionals do, but without a script to follow. The same crowd kept coming back. An ingenue we'll call Mary, sweet and lovely, was an audience favorite. A regular we'll call George, a successful playwright during the day, applauded Mary louder and longer than anyone else. They began seeing one another outside the theater. One day George came to Dr. Moreno, confessing he'd fallen in love with her, and asked the doctor whether it would be all right to court her. Moreno gave his blessing, and the couple married. They returned to their theater, and everything seemed to go on as it had before. Later George spoke to Moreno privately: "I don't know what has happened to us," he said. "Mary is an angel on stage, but a devil at home. I want my old wife back."

Moreno replied, "George, the time has come for you to join her on stage," which he did, with the result we had scene after scene of marital conflict. What they had done at home they did now on stage, with the unforeseen result that the home problem ceased. They matured before our very eyes. The marriage was saved. Suddenly it occurred to Dr. Moreno that this same process was available to all, so psychodrama was born about 1925, and the original psychodrama stage setting was completed 1936 in Beacon, NY, sixty miles up the Hudson River. Franchot Tone funded the theater, while Joan Crawford and Peter Lorre were among those first to use it. Moreno's motto, "Let people have their psychodrama." welcomes fantasy in action, whereby reality may take hold. He also treated the psychotic inmates of his Sanitarium there on stage nearly every day.

Some specific applications of psychodrama: I mention only my current involvement.

1) **Family Therapy:** I find psychodrama entirely consistent with Murray Bowen's approach. The accent on triangles suggests treatment strategy. Moreno speaks of the social atom, which we know as the family of origin, those few persons closest to us in early childhood, who become the framework of our subsequent relationships. They linger in the background of our nuclear family, integral to our identity. When triangles function properly, each of the three remains in full contact with the others. The flow of communication continues without impediment, supportive of the dyads.

But on the other hand, our response to the relationships at hand may involve dyadic fusion, with no discernable boundaries, at the expense of another relegated to the fringes. This is unstable, involving destructive competition and pain. Freud recognized this much with his oedipus complex, but he based it on the instincts, and failed to grasp its omnipresence. How often we've seen a child with a symptom for the family, or the marital bond compromised with a parent-child fusion. It doesn't end there, for a person may be at the fulcrum of more than one triangle. And the triangles cross generations. The ease with which psychodrama stages these facilitates perception and offers an avenue for attacking them directly, resolving one triangle while indirectly affecting another. On the other hand, given the limitations of the medical marketplace, where we must resort to band-aids, we may not reach full awareness, but nevertheless treat a second triangle while focusing on a first. Bowen recognized this in his preference to work on the parent generation in treating the nuclear family.

2) **Defending the Accused:** Clients typically arrive with their feelings muted, as they seek to be objective, but only succeed in justifying themselves in placing the blame on others. A few others are so caught up in their feelings the lawyer dare not put them on the witness stand, for they would only injure their defense.

The lawyer's goal is to discover the client's story, which the client himself doesn't know yet. Perhaps you've had a group experience using Russian dolls, where there are dolls successively hidden within each one. Everyone in the group receives a doll. In turn each person describes the outer layer, which also describes of the speaker's persona, the self he presents to the public. Then we remove the outer layer to reveal and present what lay directly beneath, going round the group as before. We go deeper as we uncover the next doll and the next. Groups have found this a profoundly moving experience.

The lawyer's variation on this we call 'chairback.' This is not classic psychodrama but a newly derived variation. Whereas with the Russian dolls one speaks as oneself, the lawyer's team works without the client present, but based on having had full interaction with the client previously. The lawyer uses himself as a instrument to discover the client's story, which he cannot yet set forth. We place one chair behind another, reminiscent of the protagonist and his double. Here we have the lawyer in the first chair, speaking as if he were the accused detailing his story to the jury. The lawyer moves back to the second chair where he retells the initial story. But here he tells what the accused is afraid to tell the jury. The full story emerges, which the lawyer encourages the client to face and present in court. This makes emotional contact with the jury and is the accused's best hope for a favorable outcome.

This process guides the trial lawyer in the Voir Dire. He makes personal contact with the jurors, admitting his own foibles, and encouraging them to mention their own parallel experiences to one another. The lawyer knows the facts most inimical to the case, which cannot be avoided. Accordingly he seeks out the fixed prejudices within the jurors, often leading the juror to admit he or she will have difficulty being objective. Thus the juror may disqualify himself, or the other lawyer may do it for him, leaving only a few for the defense to eliminate. Done this way, the defense lawyer tries not to dismiss any at all, for by this time, he has them more open to hearing the story of the accused.

Knowledge of the client's story allows the defense to make an opening statement which makes sense. There is an "elephant on the table," which he's already implicitly introduced in the Voir Dire, but now he comes forth with it openly, defusing the opposition's power to capitalize on it. One accepts the truth and doesn't deny it. If the accused is placed on the stand, he has not been rehearsed in what he ought to say, but through the psychodrama method has practiced being who he is, as he tells the court his own story. In developing the client's story with his team, the defense makes explicit use of typical triangles, especially one involving the betrayal of trust, leading directly to the crime.

3) **Action Methods for Spiritual Growth** is the title of the psychodrama group our church sponsors, but does not monitor, every week. A minority from the church attend, who do not see faith in the narrow sense of the word. The majority who come are professional family therapists, lawyers, and college students. The specific psychodrama which unfolds on a particular evening may not seem religious at all. Nevertheless, there is hardly any experience which doesn't have a spiritual dimension, though long alienated from organized religion. Catholics, protestants, Jews and agnostics all can function within this pluralistic context. We take the protagonist's specific faith as a given and work within that.

Typical psychodramas here have to do with the implications of injury, loss and death. Why do bad things happen to good people? Surely this is not the will of God. Accordingly we welcome direct confrontation between the believer and an empty chair where he can imagine God sitting, if God sits in a chair. When that's too hard to imagine, Christians typically

choose Jesus, and when that's too much, they select their prime representative of the faith, whether it be pastor or parent. Agnostics have placed the cosmos in the empty chair. What comes out of all this is the acceptance that bad things happen, that perhaps God suffers along with us rather than visiting the suffering upon us. What remains under our control is the present and the future. Here we can work out a stand. We have the group here, who have been where we are. They proffer no cheap or easy solutions. A constructive option is to focus on 'how it happened' rather than 'why.' The Divine Being will be with us as we react to the old and move to the road ahead.

In the process we often discover that parent figures have used religion against the child to keep him in line, such that their 'God' echoes parental authority. We use the concept 'God is better than the best person I know' to point the protagonist in the direction of making faith a support rather than an impediment to functioning. Protagonists typically make this discovery themselves when they take the divine chair. Within each religion there are views implying acceptance and forgiveness, and there are ready Biblical examples of such. Using action methods we move far beyond mere talking to actual resolution.