

From the President, Dan Keusal

In between sharpening your clinical skills and learning how to market them, I'd like you to consider the possibility that the most important task on your counselor's to-do list may be integrating the sacred feminine into your work. To bolster my case for this proposal, I'd like to draw on three sources as diverse and eclectic as SCA's membership: the recent best-seller lists, an urban horticulturalist named Tom, and an Excel spreadsheet from the SCA archives.

In just three and a half years, Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* has joined the list of all-time best-selling novels, with copies-in-print comparable to *Harry Potter*, *Gone With The Wind*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, and other classics.¹ In spite of the ways a cultural phenomenon like *The Da Vinci Code* can leave us feeling saturated and numb, I think it's important to ask: why all the fuss? What nerves have been struck? What larger cultural wave is this novel riding?

Critics have attacked both Brown's research and his conclusions—about hidden mes-

SCA meets on the 3rd Friday of each month (except July, August and December) from 8 AM to 11 AM at the Swedish Cultural Center, 1920 Dexter Ave. N. More info: 206-283-1888, or www.seattlecounselors.org.

sages in works of art, about the intentions and operations of secretive societies, about

the assertion that Jesus fathered a child with Mary Magdalene and that their progeny live on today. But as sexy as these specific debates are, and as much as they've probably helped keep Brown on the best-seller lists, I think they mask an attack on *The Da Vinci Code's* broader, more important assertion: we can no longer afford to ignore the effects of suppressing the archetypal, divine feminine in our day-to-day lives.

Which leads us to Tom.

Listening to the radio as I drove home from the grocery store one spring evening, I heard Robert Siegel, the regular anchor for National Public Radio's evening news show "All Things Considered," interviewing urban horticulturalist Tom Ogren about the unanticipated effects of cities across the U.S. having planted all "male" trees—specifically, the emergence of toxic levels of pollen. Ogren

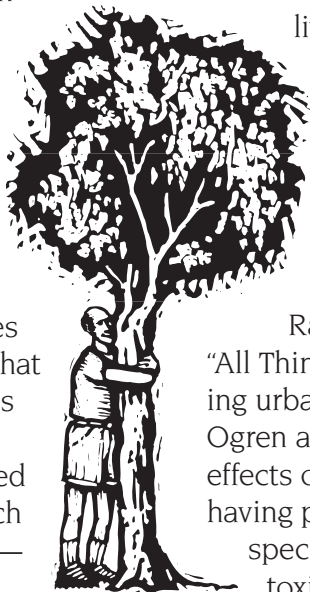
"A copy of this newsletter can be downloaded from www.seattlecounselors.org. Go to 'About SCA' and click on 'Newsletters.'"

explained:

"In horticulture they made the swap 30-40 years ago: in return for less 'litter' (no seeds or fruit)

they planted male versions, but they never thought about the pollen aspects. In Urban landscapes there is virtually no sexual diversity. There's a big preponderance of male trees and shrubs, and a scarcity of females. So, for example, if I'm in a typical city and I see an ash tree, which is one of the most common landscape trees, 99 times out of a hundred it will be a male tree, and being a male tree it will produce pollen, while a female tree will shed seeds. So we now have pollen loads in urban areas that are much higher than they are out in the countryside. Out in the countryside you basically have sexual diversity of plants."²

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NOVEMBER PROGRAM

November 17, 2006
9:15 am to 10:45 am

Biological Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions to Anxiety, Depression and Anger

A presentation by Dr. Kristen Allott

On November 17, 2006 at SCA's monthly meeting I will be discussing some of the physical causes in clients of anxiety, anger, depression, and food cravings. In my practice, I use 5 levels of screening for health concerns. This area of diagnosis and screening is within Level 1. As skilled therapists, you all know about the importance of referring a client to a doctor to screen and treat any major medical diseases such as anemia, hypothyroidism, diabetes, and hypertension which could be causing or contributing to the client's suffering. I consider this Level Two screening. Level Three is Chinese medical diagnosis. I find that when there is a clear diagnosis from the prospective of Traditional Chinese Medicine, I can use acupuncture to move the client to a place where they feel more relaxed, more energy and more mental clarity. If they have not been at that place in awhile, the treatment will provide hope that they can find it on their own. Level Four is assessing individual neurotransmitter deficiencies through foods, amino acids

and supporting cofactor supplements. Beyond helping to decrease anxiety, anger, and depression, I find that with some food cravings, the client is attempting to eat foods that will allow for the production of the neurotransmitters that she or he is lacking. Level Five assesses and attempts correction for individual metabolic variations which impact excesses and deficiencies of specific biochemicals which can then impact the functioning of the brain.

In my work, I educate my clients on the intention of the interventions so that they become tools



for good health rather than routines dictated by a doctor.

Part of my education is emphasizing what therapy is providing as a tool for mental health. The client is better able to discuss his or her experiences, particularly depression or anxiety. The "curious/observer self" is strengthened. The client's ability to take responsibility for his or her actions exists. All of these factors help them to better engage the world and better engage with

change. More importantly, when the client is seeing a therapist, she or he has a therapeutic forum to practice new behaviors and lay down new neurological tracts once the physical contributors to their depression, anxiety or other mental health concern has been identified.

Just last month, a woman who was struggling with depression and the abuse of alcohol, came into my office and said "I am not depressed for the first time in a couple of years, and I am enjoying the chaos at work rather than getting overwhelmed with it." She was looking forward to examining how to not drink. Sometimes the change is just that quick; other times improvements come slowly and consistently.

At my presentation, you will receive a screening tool and some handouts to treat some of the causes of anxiety, anger, depression, and food cravings. I am looking forward to our discussion. If you are interested in some resources before we meet, please look at my blog through my website www.dynamic-paths.com.

Dr. Kristen Allott, ND, MS, L.Ac, is a licensed Naturopathic Physician and Acupuncturist in the State of Washington. She specializes in biological non-pharmaceutical interventions for depression, anxiety, addictions, food cravings, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Prior to attending Bastyr University, Dr. Allott was a residential counselor for adolescents in mental health crisis. As a black belt in Aikido, she has studied the intimate connections between the mind, emotions, and body. Additionally, she lectures locally and nationally to a wide variety of audiences.

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The seeds and fruit of our clients' problems and passions can litter the clean-swept sidewalks of our cherished therapeutic theories and methods. Seeds are messy. They ride the wind and scatter in unanticipated directions. They take root in unexpected places. They bear fruit in their own time, not in ours. In spite of all this, or perhaps because of it, I believe something deep in the heart of every counselor longs to open to these seeds, to emulate mother earth and provide fertile ground in which these unruly harbingers³ of life can grow. The arts are one such kind of fertile ground.

Which, believe it or not, leads us to the Excel spreadsheet.

When I first became involved in SCA a year and a half ago, I learned that while members of SCA's leadership team would carefully read through the speaker evaluation forms turned in by participants at the end of each meeting, there was no system in place for compiling and analyzing the data. Keeping in mind Mark Twain's aphorism ("There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics!"), I offered to create a simple Excel spreadsheet that would allow us to record the data from every evaluation form, and then compare how participants rated different speakers. So far, we have data on a dozen speakers, and the one with the highest overall rating didn't present a step-by-step method on solving a

current clinical dilemma, nor did she offer advice on how to market one's practice—two pursuits that are essential to our craft, but whose bent toward problem solving nudges them into the territory of the archetypally "masculine."

Instead, SCA's highest rated speaker to date is Dr. Jayashree George, who presented on art therapy this past April.⁴ I believe the acclaim she received has much to do with the way she modeled integration of the sacred feminine into counseling.



Dr. George began her presentation by gathering everyone around a small table in the middle of the room. On that table she used fine grains of rice flour to create an intricate mandala called a "kolam."⁵ She explained that each morning as a young girl, following an ancient tradition, she had recreated this kolam at the threshold of her family's home in India, using a design passed down for generations from mother to daughter. I remember being struck by the way everyone around that

table fell naturally into a reverent silence, a silence that deepened as the design grew more intricate and everyone gathered felt the presence of something ancient, something transcendent, something healing. Dr. George later spoke eloquently about the thresholds at which our clients find themselves, and about the ways we as therapists can help them through such transitional spaces.

The reverence, the silence, and the high ratings this presentation received all speak to the hunger counselors have for more soulful approaches to our work, approaches we sometimes hesitate to employ—because of the methodological and record-keeping gymnastics required to reconcile them with prevalent medical models of therapy, because the patriarchal structures that fund our practices may balk at them, because even some clients have been conditioned by cultural norms to protest ("I don't want to draw pictures, I want you to fix this problem!").

Something else to consider: while this presentation garnered the highest ratings, attendance was a bit below average. Is there an analogy here—do we attend the least to that which some part of us values the most? Do the pressures of just trying to survive in an increasingly complex and competitive market pull us away from that which feeds our souls?

As I stood there watching Dr. George create her kolam, I won-

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CLASSES, WORKSHOPS & GROUPS LED BY SCA MEMBERS

Listings are free of charge to current SCA members. Some workshops give discounts for members.

WORKSHOPS

Assertiveness and Decision-Making Workshops Assertiveness (saying “No”, setting limits, values clarification, dealing with anger and rejection, internal and external criticism) and Decision-Making workshops (decision-making styles and strategies, procrastination, risk-taking, action plans and follow-through) workshops coming up soon. Contact: Sharon Sanborn, MA, LMHC Open Door Counseling and Workshops 18 W. Mercer St., Suite 150, Seattle, WA 98119 www.SeattleArtTherapy.com (206) 283-9767 SSanborn@SeattleArtTherapy.com

GROUPS

Self Care Group for Helping Professionals

Each month you will

- Receive information that will increase your energy and mental clarity.
- Learn that when you eat is as important and what you eat for health and weight maintenance.
- Learn natural ways improve or prevent depression, anger and anxiety.
- Receive support implementing life-style changes to improve your physical and mental health.

The Details:

- Date: Second Friday from 9-Noon for 4 months (Jan 12th, Feb 10th, Mar 10th and Apr 14th).
- Cost: \$360 (\$90 per session).
- Max of 8 people.
- For more information, please contact her website: www.dynamicpaths.com.
- To sign up, please call 206-579-2757.
- Dr. Kristen Allott, ND, L.Ac. specializes in biological non-pharmaceutical interventions for depression, anxiety, addictions, food cravings, and mental health concerns.

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dered what a difference it might make, both in our work as counselors and in the lives of our clients, if we began every session with a ritual like the one that was unfolding in front of us. As I look back on that morning, I recall another fundamental theme of *The Da Vinci Code*—that the mysteries of the sacred, archetypal feminine are passed along through invitation rather than imposition, through art and ritual rather than theory and technique, through aligning ourselves with the rhythms of Mother Nature rather than with the ego-driven, fear-based inclinations of man.

What if our trainings did more to integrate the feminine in these ways? What if SCA’s monthly gatherings featured not just cutting-edge clinicians and astute marketing coaches, but also painters and priestesses, poets and dancers, musicians and playwrights, comedians and clowns and novelists? What if we came to value such pursuits so highly that we worked to convince legislatures and professional associations to have them “count” toward the continuing education upon which licenses depend? What if such approaches to healing became so much a part of the mainstream that potential clients began screening their therapists for artistic aptitude the way they now screen them for insurance coverage? Perhaps one day, the requirements for becoming a counselor will more closely resemble those that Dr. Jerry Smith reminded us were once demanded of those aspiring to become a Celtic Bard—be able to sing “a song of sorrow, a song of joy, and a song of tranquility.” One song for each of the opposites, and a song that transcends them.

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OFFICE SPACE FOR RENT:

Beautiful office space for lease in Pioneer Square psychotherapy suite. Shared waiting room, high ceilings and windows, lots of light, great rents. One block from the Sound. Call Ken (206)447-1895 ext 1 kenkimmel@comcast.net

JOIN SCA

For membership information and an application to join SCA, please log on to our website:
<http://www.seattlecounselors.org/application.html>
 or call Doug McClosky at 206.245.8993 or email him at douglmft@msn.com

BOARD AND CHAIRS 2006-2007

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Deadlines and Publication Dates for SCA Connections:

Deadline	Newsletter Mailed
November 28	January 1
January 28	March 1
March 28	May 1
July 28	September 1
September 28	November 1

MEETING SCHEDULE

8:15	Begin introductions
8:50	We have 10 minutes to network
9:00	We will conduct SCA business
9:15 to 10:45	Speaker will talk
10:45-11	Time for networking
11-12	Board Meeting, all invited!

Refreshments provided

SCA Membership and Program Meeting Fees

Annual Membership Fees

Individual	\$85.00
Agencies	115.00
Student/Senior	42.50
Half-year price (April-September)	42.50

Meeting Fees

Member	20.00
Non-member	30.00
Students/Senior	15.00

COMING IN 2007!

A new look for SCA *Connections*!

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Footnotes:

1. In an exchange of emails and phone calls with staff members from Publishers Weekly, I learned that exact sales figures are difficult to come by, since only publishers know the data for their books and most are reluctant to cooperate in supplying such data. However, estimates for U.S. sales of *The Da Vinci Code* are currently at about 20 million copies, with similar sales for each volume of the *Harry Potter* series; sales estimates for *Gone With The Wind* and *To Kill A Mockingbird* are in the range of 30 million each.

2. "Too Much Pollen? Blame the males." NPR All Things Consid-

ered, 4/27/06. Archived audio of the interview is available at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5367114>.

3. According to Merriam Webster's Third New International Dictionary, harbinger's definitions include "a person sent before to provide lodgings."

4. Keeping in mind Mark Twain's warning, and the fact that we're talking about very small differences, the next highest-rated presentations were the one I gave on "Deepening Our Clients' Questions In An Age of Answers" in April of 2005, and Alexandra Hep-

burn's on "Grief" this past May; I'd like to see a spirited discussion of whether "questions" (rather than answers) and "grief" are archetypally masculine or feminine topics.

5. For more on kolams, including a picture of one, visit <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolam>.

Dan Keusal, President.

*Dan Keusal invites and welcomes comments on this column.
Email him at
dankeusal@dankeusal.com*

Mission Statement

Seattle Counselors' Association is a professional community of mental health counselors serving the entire Puget Sound region. We challenge ourselves to continue growing in our work. We invite an exchange among diverse individuals and disciplines, embrace creative tension, support the self-reflection that underlies ethical practice, and welcome new practitioners. **SCA**

SCA CONNECTIONS
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