

Armin's Last Songs



Pain

My Beloved, thank you for asking me to tell you about my pain.
Not only past pain, but present and then future pain as it happens.
I am moved by your wish to know me in that way.

I have tried all my life to transcend and overcome my pain.
I have rarely shared it with anyone, including myself.
I have worked very hard and with much of my energy
To control and deny my pain.
I have been successful to some extent - and lost much of my spirit.

I hear acceptance of, and respect for, my pain in your request.
It has encouraged my own acceptance and respect of pain,
Mine, yours, and ours.

Now as I face my pain, I find it everywhere.
It is with me, trying to keep me company.
Indeed, I find that my fear was unnecessary.

My frightening pain is revealed as a friendly companion,
Mixing well with all its fellow feelings,
In fact, it is closely related to many of them.
My acceptance of it changes their relationships.

My pain helps me in my struggle to be more deeply open,
More open with pain and other feelings in me and more open
With pain and other feelings in you.

I thought that controlling myself would limit my pain,
But as pain appears more friendly, it seems to be telling me,
"Your deepest fear of openness is really of your own emotional freedom,
Your nothingness and everythingness."

I realize that deep openness is lack of authority,
lack of meaning, and lack of ability to blame.
It leaves me to nowhere and to being nothing - in cultural terms -- or everything.
It leaves me thrillingly terrified.

Deep openness seems to render my cultural conditioning weak.
Irrelevant, and, ironically, "disempowered."
My prejudgments and criticisms fail,
As do my fear of them.

What remains and stands out even more brilliantly than ever
Is the deep, beautiful, and powerful unconditionality of your love.

However, experiencing that they are experiencing their own worlds and --
That we are interacting – is enough for me.

It feels like freedom, peace, and all the more freedom to love without restraint.

It feels like freedom from the worship of knowledge and control,
Freedom from a life of objects and from an imagination of life as an object itself.

Perhaps, then, even some more freedom from my fear,
My fear of the cessation of that life, of that existence.

Armin Klein
2000

Hearts Touching Each Other
The Interactions of Poetries and Poets

I began to write in a poetic form to express myself when I realized
How blocked I was in writing prose.
I shared those new expressions with but very few trusted friends,
Certainly not daring to call them poems.
My sharing was in slow, tiny steps.

I was shocked and gratified by many experiences of response.
The most surprising was the increased contact,
The deeper connection I felt with my readers and listeners.
"These writings must be different," I said.
"They must be poems!"

I had thought they were still practical, intellectual essays.
Then, I began to see how they were encouraging our hearts
To touch each other.

In meetings where I explored the use of my poems in psychotherapy,
I was told that my poetry came across as deeply genuine,
That poetry, itself, might be the deepest congruence!

I began to ask others to share their poetry in meetings where we were trying
To get to know each other, to build community, or to explore
The evermore potential of the person-centered approach.

I found so many hidden poets!
Those hidden poets, also, were finding their voices in poetry,
Voices that came from their heart.

I saw how that kind of personal group facilitated their poetry.

In turn, I saw their poetry facilitating growth in those groups,
Even among those persons who denied any friendship with poetry.
And,
I loved all their poetry!

I have come to see the interactions of poetries and poets in personal groups
As hearts touching, hearts mixing.
It feels magical.

Armin Klein
January 2000

"Teaching of Empowerment" is fascinating to me.
They have so much in common. Yet they are so different.
They have so much to contribute to each other.

The nurses in our empowerment workshops are not asked to share
Their inner worlds, their feelings, their emotional struggles.
Of course, they are not discouraged from doing so, either.

There is much discussion, and the teaching is student centered.
My colleagues, the nursing professors, are interested in what the learners
Are trying to express, being empathic with them,
Along with the lecturing and intellectual sharing.

In addition, students volunteer for "demonstrations" of
Empowerment consultation by my nursing colleagues and psychotherapy
Demonstrations by myself, as well as sampling small group process.

The contrast between demonstrations of psychotherapy and
Demonstrations of empowerment consultation is fascinating to me.
The nursing consultants are clearly teaching, not exploring feelings.
Yet, their manner is clearly psychotherapeutic.

As a psychotherapist, I am clearly not teaching - I am exploring feelings.
Both sets of student volunteers are surprised, as are the observers,
At how much they find themselves opening up.

I have come to realize how much my understanding and empathy
For my psychotherapy clients' struggles with their feelings of
Helplessness has been sensitized, enriched, and deepened
By the teaching of empowerment and its growing, beautiful theory.

I experience my positive regard as unconditional.
I feel myself moving much further into that way of being.



I love the process of opening, emptying, that has developed for me in my work.

It has enriched and changed my work, which I love.

This process, however, has also changed my life.

It has become a wishful model for all my relationships and my self explorations,
Although the framework of non-therapy relationships is markedly different.

In psychotherapy, I am devoted to the explorations of the other person.

I am always surprised at the unexpected gifts I receive from their explorations.

In my friendships, the structure jumps over all the possibilities.

The responsibilities are more in the background, and they are more shared.

I am still, however, always trying to be more open and more empty of culture.

When I succeed, I feel, here also, very loving.

I experience my positive regard as unconditional.

This model has become my vision of how, with many ups and downs,

I am trying to live. The ups are joyful.

I sense the deepening of my openness and my emptiness as

Being at the core of the successes and joy

That I have both in my work, and in my friendships.

When I am less open, closing a little or closing a lot,

I diminish my genuineness,

The people who work with me in psychotherapy are very forgiving.

My friends are also very forgiving.

I am very grateful and encouraged that both groups of people

Recognize and treasure my struggle to be deeply open with them and myself.

Reaching for the place of deeper, loving openness brings me

To Unconditional Positive Regard.

Three Years of Dying

Yesterday, I went to a powerful photographic documentary presentation
About the vast numbers of children orphaned in Zimbabwe
By the death of their parents with AIDS. (13 million in Africa)
Some children, I learned, get various levels of care,
Greatly diluted by their vast number and the breakdown of their extended families.
Many children, however, get no care at all.
These are the children left to live on the streets.
I learned that when they reach the streets
They have a life expectancy of three years.
They die of malnutrition, exposure, rape, murder, exploitation:
Essentially, they succumb to, and die of, multiple abuses.
I cried and cried. I feel a powerful identification with these children.

*I walk along many paths in exploring my world.
Often, I am searching for the feelings in the events
Which have shaped my life, looking for an emotional reconciliation.
Often, I run into walls which seem to have no gates
Where I sense gardens of growth within, gardens contaminated
By buried pain,
Pain not open to the healing air,
Nor to the process of my own natural growth.*

*There was a time in my life, a time of great loss and pain
Wherein my human spirit, my mind, and my body barely survived.
I have been able, gratefully, to find much of that pain.
Much more has stayed buried.
Being inaccessible, it has been emotionally handicapping.
I have not been able to feel, or see clearly
The emotional nature of that pain itself.*

*When I was five, my family exploded.
Until then I had two mothers, a loving woman hired to take care of me, and*

Yesterday, when I cried for those children,

It took me awhile to see that I was crying for a special bond between us,
For myself and my three years of dying as well as their three years of dying.

I survived because of a change in my environment at the last moment,
But before that I had given up my spirit and my wish to live,
As I imagine these children are doing.

The story of these children, told and shown so effectively,

Is helping me integrate my pain.

I am still crying and I will continue to cry.

I hope that I will never lose these tears,
This awe-inspiring sadness - for them, for me, and for all of us,
As I realize how we all struggle with the deep pains of childhood.

I want to honor these children.

I want to extend my reach and touch the balance scale of their lives.
I now realize that is what I hope for

With all the people who work with me in psychotherapy.
I feel helpless about the enormity of this on-going disaster in Zimbabwe;

If I could contribute to, participate in, any change in their environment,
Perhaps I could feel part of all of our scales tipping a little with theirs.

Armin Klein
July 20, 2000

