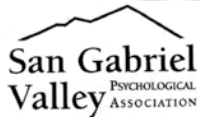


# Analyze This!

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San Gabriel  
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PSYCHOLOGICAL  
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The Official Newsletter of the  
San Gabriel Valley Psychological Association

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AN OFFICIAL CHAPTER OF THE CALIFORNIA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

July/August 2016

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## Upcoming Lunch Meetings



**Date:** Friday, July 8, 2016  
**Topic:** Rethinking Discipline: Cultivating Curiosity, Shifting Our Assumptions, and Moving Beyond Behavior  
**Speaker:** Tina Bryson, PhD  
**Date:** August—No Monthly CE Luncheon—Summer Break!

**PLEASE RSVP NO LATER THAN THE FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH TO YOUR INTERNET EVITE, OR TO THE SGVPA MAIL BAG INFO@SGVPA.ORG.**

### CE credits available for Psychologists, LCSWs and MFTs

Monthly luncheons are held on the second Friday of the month at the Women's City Club, 160 N. Oakland Avenue, Pasadena, from 12:00 to 1:45 p.m.

#### Members Costs:

Luncheon, Service, and Parking Privileges...\$22  
CE credits...\$20  
Audit...\$10

#### Non-Member Costs

Luncheon, Service, and Parking Privileges...\$27  
CE credits...\$25  
Audit...\$15

Please note: Unclaimed lunch reservations will be billed to the individual--So please claim them!

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues

Like most of you, I work in a "box." I work with patients by focusing inward, on my own experience, and mainly on the experience of the other person. Psychotherapy is an inward journey, and the "box" of the office functions as a container that becomes a kind of cocoon, making the inward focusing more bearable while giving the therapeutic couple greater access to each other.

I've worked in many office spaces during my career: Some with windows or daylight, and many without. Some of these offices really did feel like boxes, because they were so small and cramped! At the same time, when the work itself involves intense, traumatic material, both my patient and I could feel figuratively boxed in as well, yearning for a greater space to move in. It as if we all need to seek a balance—finding lots of metaphorical and literal open space to compensate for all the inward focus and closing in that our work necessitates. Narrow inward focusing must be balanced with expansiveness.

Recently, I've found my own large expansive space in Spanish music—particularly a passionate female artist named Bebe. She sings in a language I understand—emotion. Because I'm not fluent in Spanish, her songs allow me to bypass the usual intellectual snags of analyzing and thinking about the literal words, which opens me up to her passionate emotion.

Recorded music is a unique form of communication that permits the listener to return over and over to nuances of emotion, absorbing and responding to more each time. For example, listening repeatedly to Bebe's song, Me Fui (I Left), has helped illustrate a common relational dilemma- whether

(continued on p. 2)



to stay or leave a relationship. In another song, Respirar (Breathe), she declares that everyone, everywhere suffers pain immensely at some time, and reminds us over and over to *breathe*. Somehow, I find both comfort and liberation in this. Not understanding every single word frees me from complete logical understanding, and allows me to just play in the sounds, rhythms, and feelings that the music evokes. What a wonderful wide open space this is for me. I find I relish this different way of processing feelings and experiences, to free me up in another way to approach them again.

All this makes me think about how much time we spend inside our offices not necessarily moving. How can we access more open spaces? There is an expansive sky outside to remember, and to enter into. Speaking of physical as well as emotional health and well-being, we should all get out and walk around under the sky daily anyway. But for myself, I'd rather walk with some wonderful music that encourages me to disengage with a particular person's difficulty for a time, so I can return to it with a fresher mind and heart. Bebe helps me do that, so that makes her one of my own therapists. The sky is another. Then there are the trees, and the ocean. What and who are your therapists?

And then lastly, all of *you* as additional forms of therapy. The eyes of my friends when I really look at them and realize I am being seen are therapy to me. My community, when I leave my sacred therapy "box," is something to pursue like the music, sky, ocean, and trees. Relationships that can contain and tolerate the multiple parts of self, and understand the work that we all do, are such a gift. That is another essential wide open space for me. What are yours?

Keep on engaging with your community space within SGVPA. We share an unique experience together through the work that we do individually. And, please, tell me about what wide open spaces you have found.

Warmly,

Ellen Miller Kwon, PsyD  
President

## SGVPA Events Calendar

Friday, 7/8/16 — *Monthly CE Luncheon — 12:00 noon*

*Rethinking Discipline: Cultivating Curiosity, Shifting Our Assumptions, and Moving Beyond Behavior*

Tina Bryson, PhD

11:45—Registration

12:00—Presentation begins



Monday, 8/1/16 — Acceptance of applications for the Future of Psychology Scholarship begins

August — No Monthly CE Luncheon—Summer Break!



Tuesday, 8/16/16 —All Members Happy Hour!

Location To Be Announced



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# Political Action Committee Supporters Gather at the CPA Convention

By Ellen Miller Kwon, PsyD  
President

**M**any thanks to our generous members who donated to the Political Action Committee (PAC) via the Annual PAC Dinner in San Diego on April 15. The dinner was a climax of CPA's Annual Convention.

Our chapter raised over \$2000 to help fund CPA's lobbying group, which monitors pertinent legislation efforts in Sacramento. As is frequently highlighted in these pages, CPA is the *only* group at the state level fighting for the issues that govern the practice of psychology in our state!

A special thank you to Dr. Colleen Warnesky, who spearheaded the effort to host an entire table for SGVPA at the fundraising dinner. Special thanks also to students Luis Guzman and Jeremy Cernero, who attended the event on behalf of SGVPA, as well as members Andrea Davis, Adrienne Meier, Colleen Warnesky, and myself. We had the opportunity to hear speaker AssemblyMember Matthew Harper, who sits on the budget subcommittee for Health and Human Services, and to meet him personally as well.

The members listed below donated generously to the PAC on this occasion, so when you see them, give them a personal thanks for helping to keeping our profession strong!

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Andrea Davis, Ellen Miller Kwon, Adrienne Meier, Colleen Warnesky, Jeremy Cernero, Luis Guzman



Adrienne Meier, Assemblyman Matthew Harper, Ellen Miller Kwon



# Applications Open Now for the SGVPA Future of Psychology Scholarship

By Ellen Miller Kwon, PsyD  
President

I'm thrilled to announce that SGVPA is continuing to offer a scholarship dedicated to the "Future of Psychology" for the second year in a row. This \$750 grant will be available yearly, by application, to one deserving member from among our early career professionals—beginning with those in their third year of graduate school, through the post licensure for a psychologist in training.

The scholarship should be used to finance attendance, and other related fees, for the winning member to go to a specific conference, workshop, or other professional event in the year 2017. As you know, every year there are numerous significant, stimulating, and enriching professional events mounted in the greater Los Angeles area and beyond. The Future of Psychology Scholarship is aimed at clearing the path for some of them to go. The scholarship can be used to attend any professional development conference, as the rationale is to better the future of psychology for us all.

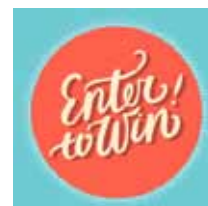
Some suggested events for the coming year are the CPAGS conference, CPA Leadership and Advocacy Conference, CPA Annual Convention, and the CPA-PAC Fundraising Dinner. But there are also many other important events focusing on special areas of psychology or psychotherapy. Applicants would be invited to specify an event that they would like to attend, and make a statement describing its value to them personally, as well as any broader value to the profession.

If you are a more established psychologist, the SGVPA Board is asking that you consider the value of the next generation of psychologists becoming engaged and active in the profession of psychology, and the importance of our doing what we can to make sure this happens. We are planning on funding the Future of Psychology Scholarship with donations

from you generous, seasoned psychologists! Don't be surprised if you receive a phone call or an email asking for soliciting support.

Any SGVPA member early career psychologist (3rd year graduate student up to licensure for a psychologist) may apply. Please submit a 750 word (maximum) essay by December 31, 2016 in which you describe your hopes for the future of psychology, and your aspirations for your own career. Please also submit a separate, brief description of the event that you are proposing participating in with the funds available in the Scholarship. You must also express your commitment to submitting a follow-up article for the SGVPA newsletter, *Analyze This!*, in which you will share your experience of the event, and what you learned as a result of attending it. Finally, the Board requests two brief letters of recommendation from supervising psychologist, mentors, or professors, and one letter from your school's Director of Clinical Training (if you are a student), to verify your standing and enrollment in school. If you are already graduated, we request a copy of your diploma or transcript as well. Your submission should be sent directly to Ellen Miller Kwon, and will be considered by a Scholarship Committee composed of Board members and other psychologist members of SGVPA. All materials must be received by 12/31/16 @ [ellen@drmillerkwon.com](mailto:ellen@drmillerkwon.com) to be considered.

I encourage all of you eligible to consider applying! Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have. Good luck!



*Dr. Ellen Miller Kwon may be reached at [Ellen@DrEllenMillerKwon.com](mailto:Ellen@DrEllenMillerKwon.com).*



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# A Glimpse into the Future of Psychology: Lessons from the Science of Consciousness Conference

By Karissa Burnett, M.A.  
Future of Psychology Scholarship Winner



In the 19th century, William James—often regarded as the founder of American psychology—stated, “to have a glimpse of what consciousness is would be the scientific achievement before which all others would pale.” Infinite numbers of questions remain regarding the nature of existence, awareness, and our place in the universe. The Science of Consciousness Conference (TSC) is the largest and longest-running conference addressing such topics. TSC brings together many perspectives and methodologies, in an exploration of the most profound mysteries of life.

The annual conference is impressive in its integration of psychology, neuroscience, cognitive science, molecular biology, quantum physics, philosophy, spirituality, and the arts. This year, the Tucson, Arizona, conference hosted over 1,000 participants from 60 countries.

Catalyzed by a fascination with Jungian thought, and a drive to further understand the unconscious mind, I chose TSC as the conference I would attend with my SGVPA scholarship. For a week I was thus immersed in the study of consciousness, emerging with a deep sense of awe beyond anything I had expected. As an early career professional, I gleaned so many new insights for my clinical work and research. I also grew as a person, becoming more whole, connected, and individuated as a result of my experiences.

I found three TSC encounters especially formative. First, I attended a workshop on Consciousness and the Arts, presented by several filmmakers and actors. I was struck by the applicability of the workshop’s content to psychotherapy. The workshop’s theme was the substance and significance of *storytelling*. One filmmaker demonstrated how our emotional reactions to a scene in a film change depending on the background music. An actor stated that dramatic performance is not about pretending, but becoming more in touch with one’s own experiences and emotions, in order to empathize with the character more fully.

Finally, another filmmaker described the history and reasons for storytelling. He began with its oral tradition around the campfire, described the massive shift that took place thanks to written language, and finally, addressed the recent emergence of storytelling through digital mediums. He argued that our brain seeks meaningful patterns—“the story”—in everything we experience. Storytelling enables survival and evolution, he said, by allowing us to navigate our external world, empathize with others, and develop abstract ideas.

I became especially excited when the filmmaker referenced Jung and Campbell’s work on archetypal story arcs, such as “the hero’s journey.” He noted how such archetypes can be considered a bridge to deeper objective reality. This workshop was thus helpful when reflecting on narrative interventions and meaning-making in psychotherapy, while also inspiring me to involve my creative side more in my work.

Another formative experience was a keynote address by Deepak Chopra, MD, and David Chalmers, PhD, titled, *Consciousness and Reality*. It was interesting to hear Chopra, a “New Age guru” often deemed controversial, balance his perspectives with those of Chalmers, a renowned philosopher and “Distinguished Professor.” Both explored the concept of reality, with Chopra arguing for “qualia (subjective) science,” and Chalmers asserting that virtual reality thus is just as “real” as anything else. Chopra’s talk was meaningful, since his language was more accessible to me than many of the other quantum-related talks I attended.

Chopra asserted that every form of consciousness (i.e., sentient living thing) experiences the world subjectively. Subjective experiences—occurring as sensations, images, feelings, and thoughts—are referred to as “qualia.” Chopra believes that we live in a “qualia universe,” where pure objective data does not exist. He contends, “Classical science will always be useful for the creation of new technologies, but *qualia science* could take our civilization in the direction of wholeness, healing, and enlightenment.”

The timing of Chopra’s talk proved empowering, as I have been working on my first qualitative research project in class! I’ve always struggled to understand how true objectivity was possible. My empowering experience at Chopra’s talk was then further rounded out by meaningful conversations at the concluding poster session.

During this session, I started to realize the fullness of what I had learned throughout the week. Two beautiful encounters with like-minded females, one a psychology student from Australia, another an American psychology professor, further helped me see the richness and beauty of human beings’ subjective experiences. Having long stifled much of my personal drive to create and explore, I emerged from TSC a more empowered and whole human being. And, in true synchronistic fashion, it also “just so happened” to be my birthday.

As the recipient of SGVPA’s Future of Psychology Scholarship, I was blessed to participate in this conference. Thank you to the SGVPA Board, and to all of the members who made this experience possible.

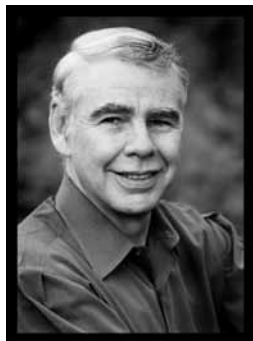
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2016 Future of Psychology Scholar Karissa Burnett, MA, can be reached at [karissaburnett@fuller.edu](mailto:karissaburnett@fuller.edu).

# The Transformational Journey of Aikido

## Part I of a Series

By James S. Graves, PhD, PsyD



*“Our enlightened ancestors developed true budo based on humanity, love, sincerity; its heart consists of sincere bravery, sincere wisdom, sincere love and sincere empathy. These four spiritual virtues should be incorporated in the single sword of diligent training; constantly forge the spirit and body and let the brilliance of the transforming sword permeate your entire being.” —Morihei Ueshiba, 1938*

These words were written (in Japanese) by the Founder of Aikido, whom we call O’Sensei (great teacher), in his 1938 training manual entitled, *Budo*. Aikido is a Japanese martial art or budo (martial way of life) developed in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by O’Sensei, and his son, Kisshomaru Ueshiba. Aikido translates as “a way of life in harmony with the spirit.” As the name implies, the primary aim of practicing Aikido is not to prepare for combat—although with years of practice it is an effective self-defense system—but rather to foster physical, emotional and spiritual development. The non-violent self-defense philosophy of Aikido is to subdue an attacker without intentionally causing injury. In practice, this philosophy brings about emotional growth and personal transformation.

Aikido training is mainly comprised of partner practice, in which one partner is in the role of the “attacker” and the other in the role of “defender.” As the attack (i.e., a grab, strike or kick) is launched, the defender moves to a position of safety, blends with the momentum of the attack, unbalances the attacker (often in circular fashion), and ends the interaction with a lock or throw. As students become more adept in the art, this process takes on the speed and force of real attacks, creating a cauldron of controlled hand-to-hand combat. In order to practice safely, each practitioner must also gain skill in the art of ukemi (taking the fall; **see photo**) to perform the attacker role.

### Psychological Benefits of Aikido Training

As O’Sensei’s quote (above) indicates, Aikido has from its inception been about personal transformation and not about fighting. A student in our dojo (i.e., training hall) with only four months of experience recently wrote: “... I was expecting to learn some self-defense techniques; however, what I have happily stumbled upon is increased focus, mental clarity, confidence ...”

So, how does this physical activity facilitate these important mental qualities and more? Unlike most other martial arts, most of the movements and techniques in Aikido are counter-intuitive. For the vast majority of novices, regardless of their

athletic ability, there is an awkward period in which performing techniques even close to correctly is beyond them—a humbling experience. But, as an early-stage student begins to develop both defensive techniques and the necessary tumbling skills, confidence grows. Achieving the movement and timing necessary to perform a complex technique successfully requires intense focus and mental clarity, and these mental qualities are reinforced dozens of times in a single class.

As students progress beyond the early awkward stage, they are exposed periodically to multiple attack scenarios. Anywhere from two to five attackers, depending on the experience of the student, launch their attack one after the other in rapid succession. This training provides opportunities to develop poise under pressure, and to respond to each attack with intentional focus, before going on to the next. Also, students are taught to choose and approach the next attacker, rather than waiting for the attack—clearly a metaphor for assertiveness.

Aikido is non-competitive, which is an important aspect of the art as a tool of personal development. In mainstream Aikido there are no tournaments and no champions or losers. On the surface of it, we train to develop self-defense skill, not to compete with or defeat others. This characteristic of Aikido creates an atmosphere of cooperation and harmony on the training mat—even in the context of throwing each other around—rather than an ego-promoting sense of competing with each other.

### Experiencing Personal Growth

In my 30 years of teaching Aikido, I have had the pleasure of witnessing clear personal growth in my students—some more, some less. I recall Carl, a man in his early 40’s with a very shy and timid personality. Over the four years that Carl trained, he became a much more self-confident, even assertive, individual—both on and off the mat. Carl’s transformation is not unique, albeit perhaps more dramatic than

most, given his starting point. But when students continue their practice for years or decades, they almost universally describe elements of their personal development as being related to their Aikido training.

Part II will describe Aikido as “mindfulness in motion.”



*Dr. Jim Graves, a long-time member of SGVPA, has a private practice in Pasadena. He is also Owner and Chief Instructor of Southland Aikido in Monterey Park, and holds a 5th degree Black Belt with World Aikido Headquarters in Tokyo, as well as Instructor Certification with the United States Aikido Federation headquartered in New York. He can be reached at [j.graves@sbcglobal.net](mailto:j.graves@sbcglobal.net).*

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# Integrating Self and Culture

## One Man's Struggle

By Wayne Kao, PsyD  
Diversity Chair



I've been an adjunct professor at Pasadena City College for the last six years, teaching Psychology of the Asian American. My students are predominantly of Asian descent, and more recently, Asian international students have

come to comprise the majority in my classes.

As a college instructor, I'm typically happy just to keep my students in their seats and awake in class. It's even better if I find a few students each semester that find my class useful, which gives me the feeling that I've done what I hope to do in my job. Yet my struggle over the years has been in observing increasing ambivalence and apathy in my students. More and more, they appear to be satisfied playing with their cell phones in class, and show very little interest in their education, or their futures. Many of them come from affluent backgrounds, having had everything readily provided to them, so consequently, they seem to appreciate nothing. It's been quite a challenge for me to find anything that will help connect with them, as a way to engage them in caring about the class, and their education in general. As a way of understanding and hopefully counteracting the apathy trends, I assigned the following prompt for their midterm paper: *Does my life belong to me?*

As I read the students' papers, I began to recognize two general themes: 1) International Asian students from affluent backgrounds felt their lives were pre-determined and already decided for them; 2) American Asian students felt confused about their futures, and not sure if their decisions mattered anyway.

Both groups felt their lives did *not* truly belong to them, and thus, they felt little investment in their own actions and decisions. They felt their parents had already determined their futures, their college majors, even who they would marry and where they would live. None of this involved any existential engagement with life on their parts, only tasks to complete. The only decisions they felt they could make were what clothes they wore and what they chose to eat.

As I explored all this further, I realized that they all did, indeed, want to be happy—including craving a sense of agency and responsibility over their lives. However, the international students' parents had already arranged things

so that their lives were financially well-provided for, and thus, their educations were not particularly necessary—just a trophy to collect. The other students struggling with their future paths, felt that no matter what they might choose themselves, their goals were not valid, not even worth exploring. The result ultimately led to a common existential crisis: "There's no real point to my life or anything I do. My life, at 20, is decided."

I realize that what I've described here goes against what is commonly believed about the Asian community, the so-called "model minority." It's believed that Asian students work hard, obtain high level education, and land in well-paying careers. We don't think of our Asian community as worrying about their futures, or feeling ambivalent, or overwhelmed by the weight of expectations. However, this is exactly what I see with my students, and with my Asian clients as well. They are so often facing pre-determined futures and careers - often ones that they may not even want. They are told that this pre-determined future is the only way to achieve happiness.

Yet they're also told that their parents sacrificed endlessly for them to be able to have the lives of *their* choosing. So there is an inherent contradiction: Raised to believe their lives belong to them and that "the world is their oyster," they're simultaneously confronted with lives dictated to them by their elders; such that in effect, their futures are *actually* their "parents' oysters." Compounded by current economic conditions and social volatility, it's no wonder Asian and Asian American young people are unsure how to determine their future paths, and in many instances, become uninterested in it.

What I've come to realize is that we of Asian descent too easily fall victim to the fallacy that a well-paying job, a spouse, and children are sufficient for happiness. Never mind that you may hate the vocation that was chosen for you, that you may not be in love with your spouse, and as a result, the children you share with that spouse may remind you of the life you did not really want. Somewhere along the way, it's important that my students learn that the career, the spouse, and children only makes sense if it is on terms that they are satisfied with. Come to think of it, young Asians are not that different from any other community: They want to pursue a life they will be happy to live.

*Dr. Wayne Kao can be reached at [dr.waynekao@gmail.com](mailto:dr.waynekao@gmail.com).*



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# Psychology and Family Law

## The Importance of Empathy in the Legal Profession

### Part I of a Series

By Mark Bear, Esq.



Recently, I was invited to speak at the first official meeting of Bruin Professionals Lawyers Affinity Group. The group comprises lawyers from a variety of fields, and I was asked to present on a topic which would be relevant across various specialty areas of law.

I immediately decided to talk about *empathy*, because it is a central concept for me, which I believe is much needed in the legal profession. I named my talk, The Importance of Empathy in Our Work as Lawyers, and defined it like this: “Empathy involves understanding another person’s situation from their perspective. The more we are able to understand and identify with each other’s emotions, attitudes, and needs, the better able we are at resolving conflicts and disputes.”

There was a relatively small group of twenty at the meeting, including myself, which facilitated the kind of spontaneity I prize in making presentations of this kind. I began by posing the question, “Why do you believe that people call lawyers?”

After some discussion, the consensus was that people call lawyers to help them to solve a problem. I then asked, “Why do you believe an increasing number of potential clients are trying to handle such things on their own, without the help of attorneys?” Discussion ensued, and the audience concluded that the common perception is that lawyers are *conflict creators*, and that they’re too expensive.

Putting aside for the moment the notion that attorneys are, indeed, often viewed as argumentative warriors, rather than conflict resolvers, I turned to the cost factor. I stated the following: The four main variables in determining how much a case will cost in legal fees are: (1) complexity of issues involved; (2) difficulties managing client expectations and needs; (3) level of conflict; and (4) choice of counsel. I explained that the choice of counsel (4) greatly impacts variables (2) and (3), and determines the process and approach used to address the complexity of the issues, variable (1). I asked if anyone disagreed with that assessment, and not a single attorney did.

Since I’m writing this piece for a psychological association, rather than a legal one, I’d like to explain those factors a bit further, before going on to elaborate on them in Part II.

*Complexity of Issues* may be understood by taking the example of a very short marriage in which both spouses receive all their income from employers, in situations where they have no ownership interest, and they are W-2 employees. There are no minor children or adult children with special needs, no

retirement accounts, and the spouses live in an apartment that they rent. As we add more factors to the mix, the issues become more complex. Importantly, situations with the exact same “complexities” can be handled in either a combative approach (litigation); or by negotiation, mediation, or the collaborative law process. Whichever approach is taken is going to be a huge factor in the ultimate cost of the case, inasmuch as litigation is the most costly way to proceed, in good part because it exacerbates the conflict.

With regard to *Management of Client Expectations*, the example I like to use is the following: Let’s say a person involved in a car accident believes they will receive \$1 million from their personal injury case, but the recent jury verdicts in that particular courthouse at that particular time for similar injuries is approximately \$30,000. If the lawyer cannot adequately manage their client’s expectations—meaning, persuade him that his expectation of \$1 million is unrealistic—then that case will have to be litigated in court. (In family law, since lawyers work on an hourly basis, it’s ironically true that the less skilled or less willing they are at managing their clients’ expectations, the more legal fees they’ll generate.)

As far as *Level of Conflict* is concerned, it’s up to the professional or professionals involved to either de-escalate the conflict, or, alternatively, to *escalate* it. Attorneys inclined to prefer litigation tend to escalate conflict, since litigation is a combative process. On the other hand, professionals who provide facilitative and transformative mediations, or collaborative law services definitionally work to de-escalate the conflict.

Then, there is *Choice of Counsel*, which impacts all the other variables. The chosen lawyer is involved in the selection of process and approach, management of client expectations, and the level of conflict.

It is important to note that all four variables are determined by “the lowest common denominator.” Thus, if one spouse hires a mediation-minded attorney, and the other hires a litigator, the latter will pretty much determine how the case progresses in terms of process, approach, level of conflict, management of client expectations, etc. The more aggressive attorney sets the tone, and hence the likelihood of costs rising. Significantly, the average cost of a litigated divorce in California is \$45,000 per side, or \$90,000 total. The average cost of a mediated or collaborative divorce is a bare fraction of that.

In Part II, I hope to demonstrate how the cultivation of empathy among attorneys can yield huge benefits in financial as well as human terms.

*Mark Baer, Esq., can be reached at [Mark@MarkBaerEsq.com](mailto:Mark@MarkBaerEsq.com).*



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# Evidence-Based Poetry

By Catherine Fuller, PhD  
Member



A poem is a metaphor, and a lot of what goes on in therapy is a metaphor. Consider this poem's phrase, "you don't have to be good." We hear these words in our practices a lot. It could be the "be good" of the misattuned mother, narcissistically over-involved in her child's behavior. Or it could be the "be good" of the perfectionistic and guilt-ridden patient, feeling he must excel at all salutary human qualities, or fail to have worth.

A poem speaks to our feelings in a different way than we as therapists do. Both therapist and poet struggle for words. The best poets "get it," and we therapists aspire to put just the right words together, to convey to the patient what it is she is experiencing. The end of the poem reads, "the world offers itself to you, calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting—over and over announcing your place in the family of things." This is what we would like to give to all our patients—a deep, unequivocal sense of belonging.

A poem by Mary Oliver (b. 1935)

## Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.  
You do not have to walk on your knees  
For a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.  
You only have to let the soft animal of your body  
love what it loves.  
Tell me about your despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.  
Meanwhile the world goes on.  
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain  
are moving across the landscapes,  
over the prairies and the deep trees,  
the mountains and the rivers.  
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,  
are heading home again.  
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,  
the world offers itself to your imagination,  
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting --  
over and over announcing your place  
in the family of things.

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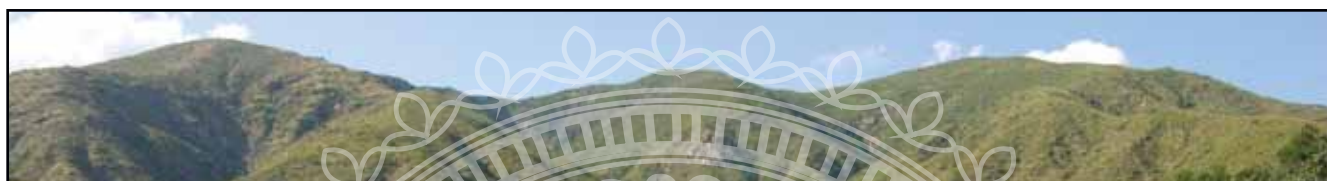
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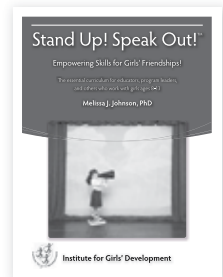




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Registration: <http://tinyurl.com/zdqjcx5>

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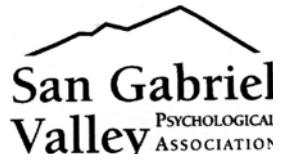
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**c/o Suzanne Lake, PsyD, Editor  
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