

## SPECIAL JANUARY JUBILEE EDITION

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Stephanie Law, PsyD  
(626) 354-5559  
[stephanie@drstephaniclaw.com](mailto:stephanie@drstephaniclaw.com)

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Deborah Peters, PhD  
(626) 440-9099  
[drdebepeters@gmail.com](mailto:drdebepeters@gmail.com)

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(310) 948-2687  
[ColleenPsD@me.com](mailto:ColleenPsD@me.com)

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(818) 523-4628  
[davidlorentzen@gmail.com](mailto:davidlorentzen@gmail.com)

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Suzanne Lake, PsyD  
(626) 795-8148  
[DrSuzanneLake@aim.com](mailto:DrSuzanneLake@aim.com)

#### Membership Coordinator

Kelley Vandewalle, MA  
(310) 467-1833  
[kelleyvandewalle@yahoo.com](mailto:kelleyvandewalle@yahoo.com)

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Larry Brooks, PhD  
(818) 243-0839  
[drbrooks@drilarrybrooks.com](mailto:drbrooks@drilarrybrooks.com)

#### Early Career Professionals

Martin Hsia, PsyD  
(626) 403-3500 ext 106  
[martinhsia@gmail.com](mailto:martinhsia@gmail.com)

#### Website Management

David Lorentzen, PsyD  
(818) 523-4628  
[davidlorentzen@gmail.com](mailto:davidlorentzen@gmail.com)

#### Special Interest Groups

Laurie Nougier, PhD  
(626) 755-5622  
[drnougier@yahoo.com](mailto:drnougier@yahoo.com)

#### Governmental Affairs

Linda Nelson, PhD  
(310) 458-4581  
[lnelson@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:lnelson@mednet.ucla.edu)

#### Representative to CPA

Melissa McMullin, PsyD  
(323) 345-01402  
[mcmullin.melissa@gmail.com](mailto:mcmullin.melissa@gmail.com)

#### Diversity Liaison to CPA

Ellen Miller Kwon, PsyD  
(626) 807-5451  
[ellen@drmillerkwon.com](mailto:ellen@drmillerkwon.com)

#### Representative to LACPA

Colleen Warnesky, PsyD  
(310) 948-2687  
[ColleenPsD@me.com](mailto:ColleenPsD@me.com)

#### Student Representative to CPA

John Nelson  
(323) 687-0888  
[johnnelson@fuller.edu](mailto:johnnelson@fuller.edu)

#### CLASP

K.C. Bugg, PsyD  
(626) 209-1194  
[drkcbugg@mac.com](mailto:drkcbugg@mac.com)

### Upcoming Lunch Meetings



**Date:** Friday, January 11, 2013  
**Topic:** Interventions with Substance-abusing Teens  
**Speaker:** Leda Siskind, MFT

**Date:** Friday, February 8, 2013  
**Topic:** Group Therapy  
**Speaker:** Matthew Calkins, PhD and Ryan Spencer, MFT

PLEASE RSVP NO LATER THAN THE FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH TO YOUR INTERNET EVITE,  
OR TO THE SGVPA MAIL BAG [INFO@SGVPA.ORG](mailto: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,

As 2012 drew to a close, I found myself reflecting on what has transpired over the past year, as well as looking forward to the next. It has been an incredible honor to be your President, and to serve you through the year! I am awed by your enthusiasm, your integrity, and your volunteerism. With your help, and the assistance of my wonderful Board of Directors, take a quick look at just some of the things we've accomplished together in the past year!

1. We held our 4th Annual January Jubilee! Along with 175 guests, we had the honor of two politicians in attendance - Jackie Lacey, Assistant District Attorney for Los Angeles (now our new District Attorney!), and Anthony Portantino, State Assemblymember - as well as the then CPA President, Craig Lareau.
2. Our Early Career Professionals Committee sponsored a panel discussion titled Discerning Your Destiny. With four panelists, representing four different sectors/specialties within the profession, early career folks were treated to a discussion by more seasoned clinicians on how to get established in the profession. The ECPC also held a series of informal events throughout the year, particularly one to honor newly licensed professionals.

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3. Our chapter emphasized the importance of social justice issues in our community. For the first time in 15 years, our chapter participated in a local community project aptly named Pasadena Mental Health Day. Fifteen of you helped host our table for the event.
4. There was also an emphasis on diversity and multicultural awareness. Not only were two Special Interest Groups started that reflect this core value – Community Mental Health and Intercultural Diversity - but there were also articles written for the newsletter highlighting issues of diversity.
5. We updated and ratified our new chapter Bylaws.
6. We successfully finished and launched a revised chapter website. With a calendar of events, a membership directory, a chapter blog, and the option of paying online for various services, our new website will better serve you.
7. Our Student Representative, John Nelson, MA, received the Student Advocacy Award at the CPA Conference for his active role in our chapter, and in CPA.
8. Our chapter supported student members by providing scholarships to attend the Advocacy and Leadership Conference in March, and donating funds to the CPAGS Advocacy Conference in November.
9. Our chapter took an active interest in issues of advocacy by sending both the President and the GAC to the Advocacy and Leadership Conference in Sacramento; by launching a campaign to raise funds for the PAC; and by hosting a legislative meet-n-greet with Senator Ed Hernandez in September.
10. We moved our monthly luncheons to a new venue! Located in a historical landmark, our luncheons drew in an average attendance ranging from 40 individuals to as many as 70.
11. We supported eight Special Interest Groups that continue to be active and relevant!
12. And last but not least, membership grew to 220 this year!

Looking forward to 2013, please think about ways to get more involved, and raise your professional visibility in SGVPA. I firmly believe you'll be blessed by greater participation in this warm professional community. And lastly, don't forget to attend the January Jubilee on January 25th. We will be acknowledging the incoming Board of Directors, as well as honoring Dr. Linda Bortell--a long time SGVPA member and Past President--for her many years of service to SGVPA, and to the professional community at large.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Law, PsyD  
President

## **Mobilizing for the Future: The Transformation of Mental Health Care**

By Linda Nelson, PhD  
Governmental Affairs Chair



**A**s your Governmental Affairs Chair, I want to convey as strongly as possible that we are on the threshold of an enormous paradigm shift in the way healthcare services will be organized and delivered. The Affordable Care Act, aka Healthcare

changes.

Although it is still to be decided exactly what the new system will look like, it's a fact that each state will have a pivotal role in the design for their state. That means, among other things, that California legislators will determine the new parameters of the more familiar utilization review criteria for mental health and substance abuse treatment services.

Team-based integrated care models for delivering mental health are one big change ahead. This means that private practice psychologists, like all other healthcare providers, will be expected to link with larger entities, such as managed care organizations or hospitals, in order to accept the new health insurance under the ACA. One possibility is that

*(continued on pg 6)*

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# A Tribute to Dr. Linda Bortell

## January Jubilee Honoree

By Lydia Glass, PhD  
Past President



If Dr. Linda Bortell were a listing in Webster's Dictionary, synonyms for her name would be *advocacy, dedication and professional entrepreneurship*. If she were listed in Wikipedia, her list of accomplishments and contributions to the field of psychology would rival the most accomplished in our field. A

clinical psychologist par excellence, she is an engaging and entertaining speaker and communicator, respected by her colleagues and appreciated by her clients. I am both grateful and proud to add that she is my personal friend.

Because of the prolificness of Linda's involvement with organized psychology, I can regretfully only touch on the highlights here. Linda began by joining SGVPA before she was even licensed. She spent many years concurrently serving on both the SGVPA Board and the Los Angeles County Psychological Association (LACPA) Board, and is now serving at the state level with CPA. Within SGVPA, she served in various board positions continuously from 1995 to 2011, including as Co-President (with Dr. Marilyn Simpson-Wright) in 2001.

At the same time, Dr. Bortell served as President of the Wright Institute commencing in 1996, and subsequently as treasurer for four more years. While doing this, as well as working with SGVPA and LACPA, Linda also found time to serve as a founder, then board member, of the Rose City Counseling Center, which she continues to do to this day.

In large part, it is thanks to Linda's efforts that SGVPA has maintained a prominent reputation with LACPA, its larger sibling chapter under CPA. She began as SGVPA's rep to LACPA's Board in 2001, and subsequently was recruited to become president of LACPA three years later. She also holds the distinction of being the only person to hold the office of president for two consecutive terms in LACPA's sixty year history. In that role, she participated in lobbying for the field of psychology in Washington DC, two years in a row. It was during this time that the power and importance of political advocacy was made clear to Linda, and she began participating yearly in CPA's Leadership and Advocacy Day, in Sacramento.

Linda has been a speaker on a number of different topics at numerous CPA conventions. While at a convention in 2005, Linda was invited to serve on the Diversity Task Force, which later became the Division of Diversity and

Social Justice (Div. VII), on the board of which she still serves. Because of this involvement, Linda speaks authoritatively to a number of different attorney organizations about the importance of understanding diversity issues which may be involved in divorcing families.

On the home front, Linda has a thriving practice specializing in child trauma and high conflict divorce cases. Within the high conflict divorce arena, Linda works with many court-ordered cases involving re-unification therapy, co-parenting, child therapists, and as a Parent Coordinator.

Linda asserts that her involvement in professional organizations has definitely helped to build her private practice. "I firmly believe that getting involved in organized psychology is one of the best things you can do. Our ethics code tells us that we should give back in some way, and for some people, that means seeing patients pro bono. I do some of that-- but, the way I most enjoy giving back is by working *for* psychology." In fact, that turns out to be her strongest advice to colleagues and young psychologists: "*Get involved!* There's so much to do---and you'll have fun doing it."

Among my favorite fun facts about Linda is her title of "Dr. Scream," the indirect result of a lifelong passion for roller coasters. Several years ago, when LACPA received an inquiry from Magic Mountain asking for a psychologist who could speak on the topic of the roller coaster experience, Linda was named as the perfect person for the job. So, Magic Mountain brought Linda on board and gave her the sobriquet Dr. Scream as she was interviewed on camera for TV as an expert. Two years later, Magic Mountain hired Linda to teach a class for roller coaster phobics, which was detailed the LA Times.

Another lesser known fact about Linda is that, as a RAP music enthusiast, was she tapped to be an advisor on a documentary film entitled *AKA Eminem*. Linda chuckles the fact helps "give me street cred with some of my teen (patients)."

Linda lives life to the fullest and serves our profession with zest, laughter, dedication, and with a heartfelt commitment to advocacy. She definitely deserves our admiration, respect and gratitude. And... she's a really cool friend!



Dr. Lydia Glass can be reached at [lydia\\_glass@msn.com](mailto:lydia_glass@msn.com)

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## Learning from Linda

By Kalea Chapman  
Listserv Manager



Looks like you got yourself a supervisor,” said the voice on the other end of the line. It was, happily, Dr. Linda Bortell--who had been popping in and out of my budding professional life ever since she first raised the hairs on the backs of the necks of us interns at Santa Anita Family Service with one of her lectures on psychology ethics. I seemed to be bumping into her constantly at professional functions. One such outing was an SGVPA event. I encountered Linda before the presentation, looking over some of the leaflets and other handouts. “Hmm,” she said, eyeing me. “You seem to be turning up everywhere these days.” But the truth was, I was only being a curious graduate student, attending a few events here and there... And it was actually Linda who was everywhere.

A number of established psychologists, one of them being Dr. Bortell herself, had energetically pressed the point that joining psychological associations was very important to one’s professional development. Besides her participation in SGVPA, I knew Linda to be a past president of the Los Angeles County Psychological Association (LACPA), and I knew her to be much involved in CPA. She was also very active at the Wright Institute, where I attended her lecture on building up a private practice. In fact, I knew her to be involved in seemingly everything. So, as my supervisor, she was going to make sure I would start by getting involved in SGVPA myself. “Well, what does SGVPA need done?” I wondered out loud, clueless. “How about setting up a Listserv?” she suggested. So I did.

When I first learned that Linda was going to be my supervisor, you might understand I was just a little bit intimidated. I knew her to be intense and opinionated. From what I knew, she did not appear to be someone that suffers fools gladly! Supervision with Linda, it turned out, was both delightful and practical, and not intimidating at all. She was up-to-date, funny, informed, opinionated, connected, and kind. I knew her theoretical leanings well. I was happy to find that they were in no way dogmatic (you see, I was just finishing up at the Wright Institute). She was very responsive to my questions and concerns as someone still developing my professional identity. On a weekly basis I had, at my fingertips, one of the most proactive, knowledgeable, and practical (did I mention practical before?) psychologists I knew of. She treated me as a colleague and a mentor. I felt very lucky.

I don’t see Linda all that much these days, at the occasional event, or at her year-end bash, usually. But if ever I’m hashing out a particularly tricky professional question with someone, her name inevitably comes up. We all know

we can count on Linda to be thoroughly versed in the issue at hand--whatever it is--and if there’s any doubt in her mind, she’ll always know who to send us to. And we know she’ll do it without hesitation. More than a few times I’ve opined to a colleague: “I think you might want to call Linda Bortell on this one.” I feel lucky to know her.

*Dr. Kalea Chapman can be reached at  
kaleachapmanpsyd@gmail.com*

## Thank You Linda

By Colleen Warnesky, PsyD  
Secretary



Dr. Linda Bortell was my very first instructor in graduate school, teaching Clinical Interviewing. (Later when I taught the class myself, I based my syllabus on hers.) It was September 2000, and I sat there as a young, fresh-faced pupil, eager to learn--and Linda did not disappoint me.

She was serious and funny all at the same time, presenting a wealth of knowledge, very clear in her role as professor, and obviously such a strong clinician herself. Linda often talked about professional psychology organizations, and why it was so crucial to join.

Not much has changed in the 12 years since, except that I now call Linda my friend. After learning so much from her as a teacher, after graduation I came in contact with her again as a member of the Los Angeles County Psychological Association (LACPA) Board of Directors, where she was also serving as liaison to SGVPA. In typical Linda fashion, she worked so hard and impressed everyone so much that not long after that she was elected president of LACPA, and is the only president to serve two consecutive terms there. Prior to being LACPA president she held an esteemed position in SGVPA as Co-President in 2001.

After graduating, I remembered that Linda helped to establish Rose City Counseling Center in Pasadena, a non-profit psychodynamic training center that offers therapy to lower income clients in a private practice type setting. I applied, and began my training there due in large part to Linda’s influence. Linda has helped me in countless ways both professionally and personally. I have consulted with Linda on cases, and made breakthroughs in my work with clients because of direction she has given me. If I ever have an ethical dilemma, I turn to Linda for guidance, or sometimes as an example. She holds herself and others to extremely high standards, and I believe I am a better psychologist because I know her. Thank you, Linda, for all you have done for San Gabriel Valley Psychological Association, and for me.

*Dr. Colleen Warnesky can be reached at  
colleenpsyd@me.com*

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# Weed Revisited

## Part I of a Two Part Series

By Daniel Goldin, MFT  
Substance Addictions SIG Chair



An estimated 17 and 39 percent of Americans have smoked marijuana; and according to a survey conducted in 2009, 7 percent of eighth-graders, 16 percent of tenth-graders and 21 percent of twelfth-graders have done so. It's also undeniable that kids are starting to get high at younger and younger ages. As with many adults, young people seem to operate under the belief that weed stands alone among drugs as not only harmless, but as a kind of elixir for the brain--good for insomnia, anxiety, pain, appetite, and as a general adjunct to creative thought. It's seen as an innocuous herb unfairly branded by a government too inflexible to admit its mistake.

Such ideas have prevailed in the counterculture for a long time, but have gotten wider play since the Compassionate Use Act of 1996, which provides a get-out-of-jail-free card to those who use weed for "medical purposes." It is well known that a demi-monde of doctors, hired by dispensaries, will provide medical marijuana cards to anyone with a physical or psychological complaint, real or invented, for about 35 dollars. And yet even such a clearly spurious medical imprimatur wields powerful influence on public thinking, so that marijuana as a benign cure-all has become a California meme, rapidly spreading across a population--largely adolescent--who wants to get high and feel green at the same time.

Medicalization has also resulted in a drug of much greater potency than in times past. As one of the largest cash-crops in California, marijuana is now cultivated in laboratory-quality centers, financed by entrepreneurs who invest millions of dollars in order to tweak the plant into maximize production of THC (the major psychoactive ingredient of cannabis). Over the last thirty years, when weed came largely from the fields of South and Central America, the content of THC was estimated to be in the range of 1 to 3 percent. Today it can reach up to 20 percent--an enormous difference, with huge ramifications.

While weed was never truly innocuous, "weed 2.0" is downright dangerous. Numerous emerging studies have shown that cannabis (even at 1970's doses) impairs cognitive functioning, and is particularly damaging to

developing *young* brains. It blocks short term memory, and has also been linked to testicular cancer, low testosterone, infertility and respiratory illness. To top it off, unlike most psychoactive substances, THC is lipid soluble, which means it sinks into fatty tissues throughout the body, continuing to seep into the brain as long as four to six weeks after use. All these dangers increase dramatically at higher doses. And yes, weed is addictive.

But by far the most frightening indication of harm comes from numerous recent studies showing a link between use of weed and the onset of *schizophrenia*, an effect tied to dosage, age and biological vulnerability. All this makes intuitive sense when one considers that cannabis is mildly hallucinogenic or, more aptly, "psychotomimetic." Weed produces effects similar to the positive and negative symptoms of schizophrenia, including paranoia, ideas of reference, mild hallucinations (positive symptoms), and anhedonia and apathy (negative symptoms).

A recent study in *The Journal Archives of General Psychiatry* suggests that THC interferes with the brain's ability to distinguish between stimuli that are important and those that aren't, which is a hallmark of psychosis known as "abnormal salience attribution." In short, weed induces a kind of *soft psychosis* by pulling the periphery into the center of things and tossing the center to the side. It is not hard to imagine the appeal of this effect on an adolescent beginning to look twice at mainstream values, and at the same time overwhelmed by the stresses of becoming an adult. Weed temporarily reduces this person's anxiety, not only through its euphoric effects, but by pulling focus from the pressure of competitive goals. At the same time, it expands this person's consciousness by allowing him to notice suddenly those little spiky things on the backs of cucumbers, or an unusual thought that appears along an unlikely tangent. Soft psychosis produces its wonders -- but not without considerable risk. Weed 2.0 can generate paranoid ruminations out of trivial interactions, shroud one in apathy, and trigger a full-blown psychotic syndrome in vulnerable individuals. Chronic use can also make one forgetful, impotent, and infertile. Bottomline: Weed 2.0 needs to be taken seriously as a dangerous, addictive substance-- particularly for young people whose brains are the most vulnerable.

*Daniel Goldin, MFT, can be reached at [DanielGoldin@gmail.com](mailto:DanielGoldin@gmail.com)*

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## Following the Leaders

### Conferring New Recognition on Chapter Founders

By Stephanie Law, PsyD  
President

As a reflection on his many celebrated accomplishments, Sir Isaac Newton once said, *“If I have seen farther, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.”*

This comment by Newton seems to have particular relevance as I introduce a new program in SGVPA, the *Founders Circle*. Ever since I first joined SGVPA six years ago, and became heavily involved in leadership myself, I’ve been continually struck by the wisdom and generosity of the more mature and long-time members of our organization. I have watched as they’ve been quick to welcome younger clinicians, and generously provide formal and informal mentoring to them. These seasoned clinicians are wise, professional, and warm--and without their participation, I’m convinced that SGVPA could not be what it is today. The longer I’ve been a board member of SGVPA, the more I’ve wanted to find a way to intentionally honor these individuals for their past contributions, as well as for their continued loyalty and dedication to SGVPA.

So it is with great pleasure that I announce the creation of the Founders Circle. The purposes of this group are the following: 1) To consistently honor the individuals in SGVPA’s history who have helped establish and promote the organization; 2) To honor those individuals whose unswerving loyalty and dedication to our chapter have maintained and encouraged its excellence; 3) To formally recognize the value of maintaining ties to prominent past SGVPA leaders as a means of expressing our appreciation; 4) To promote on-going, accurate archival history of organizational programming and happenings; and, 5) To formally recognize the value of faithful service, devotion, and tenure in leadership.

In order to continue to honor these “giants” in our community, there will be annual acknowledgement at the January Jubilee each year, intermittent newsletter articles to showcase inductees, and a place on the SGVPA website for Founders Circle happenings, and listing of new inductees. The “founders”’ services to SGVPA are precious and deeply appreciated. This is our way of saying “thanks,” and intentionally recognizing their past and present contributions in leadership, their continued participation in SGVPA, and the value of maintaining SGVPA’s awareness of its history. The first inductees of this illustrious group will be acknowledged at the next January Jubilee, in 2013.

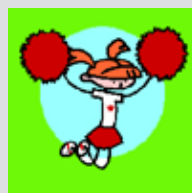
## Mobilizing for the Future *(continued from pg 2)*

solo and group practices may be “bought out” or purchased by these larger organizations. Another possibility is that contracts will be need to be formed between psychologists’ private practices and these organizations. But regardless of the specifics, the health insurance market consolidation is leading to more payer power, and less provider power overall.

Our future will depend on our ability to work in the model of evidence-based medicine, which means empirically demonstrating utility, effectiveness, improvement, or success of our patient treatment. The age of open-ended talk therapy as a treatment, without a measurable outcome, will be disappearing. So, the take-home messages: Learn more about what changes to expect from the new system... Think outside of the box... Be flexible and willing to change... Be prepared... Start now... Get training in niche areas of psychology to expand your scope of practice.

And I must add the single most important and effective thing you can do right now is-- Support our CPA Political Action Committee (PAC)!! This is vital!! CPA needs funding and your participation in order to promote legislation in the very near future that will benefit the positive practice of psychology in California. When an SGVPA Board member reaches out to you, please contribute generously to your PAC. Or simply go to CPAPsych.com right now, and click on the Donate to the CPA-PAC button. Our future relies on all of us actively promoting our professional best interests at this crucial time.

*Dr. Linda Nelson can be contacted at  
lnelson@mednet.ucla.edu.*



### NEW MEMBERS

Leslie Loubier, PhD

Eric An  
Emily Peiyi Chen  
Thomas Duke, MA  
Hannah Evan  
Jessica Lara  
Tiffany Suen

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# Psychology and Family Law

## How to Help Insure the Best Outcome in Your Family Court Case



By Mark Baer, Esq.

In general, clients would be more satisfied with the outcomes of their legal cases if they learned basic principles to follow in interviewing and selecting their attorneys beforehand. Potential clients frequently inquire about what the law says on matters pertinent to their case. Yet the truth is that any reputable attorney should be able to intelligently discuss legal issues in their field of practice. So simply asking a prospective attorney what the law says is in and of itself not the best way to go about selecting a lawyer.

Clients also want to discuss the particulars of their situation with the attorney during the consultation. If the lawyer is an expert in a particular field of law, then the particulars of a given case don't really change the fact of his or her expertise. Why then does a client want to get into the particulars of their situation with the attorney? The client wants to get the attorney's advice and/or opinion. Yet lawyers' opinions are not usually determinative of the ultimate decisions in legal cases.

Thus, even though clients frequently ask a prospective attorney whether they have a good case, or if they can expect to get what they want from the legal process, the truth is that even quite experienced attorneys' opinions on these questions are decidedly unreliable. According to a recent study of lawyers' predictions of case outcomes, published in *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, "Lawyers frequently made substantial judgmental errors, showing a proclivity to overoptimism. The most biased estimates [occurred when] lawyers were [initially] extremely overconfident." Moreover, "the data provided no support for the hypothesis that lawyers with more practical experience are better calibrated than lawyers with less experience."

Unfortunately, the researchers agreed with the following conclusion set forth in an article published in *Cognitive Psychology* in 1992 titled, *The weighing of evidence and the determinants of confidence* by D. Griffin, & A. Tversky: "It can be argued that people's willingness to engage in military, legal, and other costly battles would be reduced if they had a more realistic assessment of their chances of success. We doubt that the benefits of overconfidence outweigh its costs." In short, in hiring an attorney based upon their

advice or opinion regarding a particular case, clients are hiring attorneys who tell them what they want to hear. Since probability dictates that is most likely an incorrect assessment, is that a good way of selecting an attorney? I don't think so.

Far more relevant than asking specific questions or predictions of a lawyer is for clients to ascertain if an attorney is well-regarded within his or her field, and how he or she is rated by peers. The following sites can be very helpful in this research: SuperLawyers.com, BestLawyers.com, Martindale-Hubbell.com, and AVVO.com.

Another pertinent approach is for clients to ascertain whether the attorney in question has been selected for any honors and awards which recognize them for their legal work in their given field of practice. Has the attorney published scholarly articles--especially on the area of law the client's case falls into? What did they publish, and in what publications? Has the attorney done any scholarly lectures and/or writings? It might be of interest to note the audience for such lectures and/or writings because that might give an indication of industry recognition.

It's also a very good idea for the client to select an attorney based upon their credentials, philosophy, and explanation of the different processes available for resolving the particular type of dispute. In the family court cases I handle, I always remind my clients, "Like it or not, if there are children of the relationship (regardless of their age), the family still exists after the relationship ends. The manner in which you end a relationship determines whether your family will be functional or dysfunctional from that day forward."

If a client's philosophy differs from that of the attorney they retained, isn't it possible that the client will be dissatisfied with the ultimate outcome? Most certainly!

Family law matters can be handled, variously, through traditional litigation, mediation, or collaborative divorce. If the attorney does not explain the different processes available, it isn't possible for a client to make an informed decision as to which approach might work the best for them. In litigation, the parties are adversaries and turn decision making over to a judge. In mediation, a mediator assists the parties in resolving their differences. Collaborative divorce is an interdisciplinary team approach, involving attorneys, mental health, and financial professionals.

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

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# *Obsessive Ruminations*

## Sexuality As Dialogue:

### The Three Levels of Intimacy

By Alan Karbelnig, PhD, ABPP

Reader Discretion Advised  
(Dedicated to “The Navajo”)



The basic elements of the most wild, passionate sexuality imaginable exist in any interaction, even between friends discussing philosophy at Malbec’s. The friends must be capable of dialogue and negotiation, whether intimacy occurs in a restaurant or a bedroom. Three basic levels of interpersonal relatedness exist – the actualized, the immature, and the perverse. These different levels of closeness can perhaps be most viscerally demonstrated by using graphic sexual imagery as a vehicle.

Beginning with the most inter-subjective, sexuality between consenting adults reaches limits only at the end of human imagination. As Jean-Jacques Rousseau pointed out in the 1800s, and Jacques Lacan reminded us in the 1900s, humans appear to be the only animals who “play” with their instinctual drives. Rather than eat fresh-killed deer outside our offices, we dine in restaurants with white linen table clothes and fine flatware. In the bedroom, living room floor, or the Langham Hotel parking lot, humans capable of authentically identifying their needs and speaking them, in a true I-Thou fashion, may enjoy whatever sexual activities they desire. Beyond sexual positions culled from the Kama Sutra, common variations include oral sex, anal sex, ejaculating on body parts, sadomasochistic enactments, and using sex toys. Actualized participation in these forms of physical intimacy requires two or more mature adults, fully capable of identifying their wishes and desires, and also fully capable of asking for more, less, alteration, or cessation.

Descending now from that ideal level of inter-subjectivity to the immature level, humans commonly stray into any number of sadomasochistic interpersonal contracts. As Lewis Aron emphasized in his book, *Meeting of Minds*, most couples fall into patterns of submission-dominance as a defense against interpersonal intimacy. These roles are safer. Negotiation becomes simpler because mature mutual consent vanishes. Consider, for example, a situation in which a man, who consciously consented to being hog-tied and horsewhipped, fails to speak his wish to stop because he fears disappointing his partner. At this immature level, authenticity is sacrificed.

The immature level is evident in soft-pornography. *Playboy* and *Playmate* magazines, for example, provide alleged personal information, thereby flexing the wall

between viewer and object. As you gaze upon the mostly-full-nude pictures of a woman on the pages, you read that she attends graduate school at The Chicago School, studies clinical psychology, and wants to help emotionally troubled children. The text beneath the photos advises you that she grew up on the Jersey shore, feels close to her grandmother, and dates a USC Medical student. The photo, thus, seems to offer up something true about what looks like a real person, a real subjectivity. But of course this is a one-way relationship, with one party appearing in only two dimensions.

If you venture even deeper into the perverse level of interpersonal relating, one party in the relationship treats another party as an object or thing, rather than as a human subjectivity. In this literal example, a woman on a first date with a man she met through Match.com was driven by him to a Home Depot. He asked her to wait in the car while he purchased a set of chains and power tools with which to enact his internal, fantasied sexual drama. Fortunately the woman learned of her date’s actual intentions, and fled from the car to safety. She evaded the perverse encounter by asserting her subjectivity.

Perverse individuals cannot relate in a “whole-object” sense. They are incapable of empathy. They relate to a thing, not a person. The perverse level, usually inhabited by malignant narcissists or psychopaths, is the perfect opposite of inter-subjective relating. It is in this realm that one finds what psychoanalysis means by the concept of “part-objects.” The most primitive levels of pornography, namely the most perverse, depict erotogenic parts of persons, like a nipple, labia, or clitoris, or glans penis.

Often immature and perverse interpersonal relating results from trauma, and this can usually be helped by psychotherapy. One hopes that all persons, wounded or not, would aspire to the highest level of authentic inter-subjectivity. They can then enjoy mature interpersonal and adventurous encounters in restaurants, bedrooms, or parking lots. Everyone deserves passionate, intense sexual engagements. And, after both parties feel satisfied, one might say, “Whoa, how totally amazing! Shall we go for dessert and espressos at Starbucks now?” And the other party would respond authentically and, if agreeable, they would proceed there arm in arm, full of love for one another.

*Dr. Alan Karbelnig can be reached at [AMKarbelnig@gmail.com](mailto:AMKarbelnig@gmail.com).*



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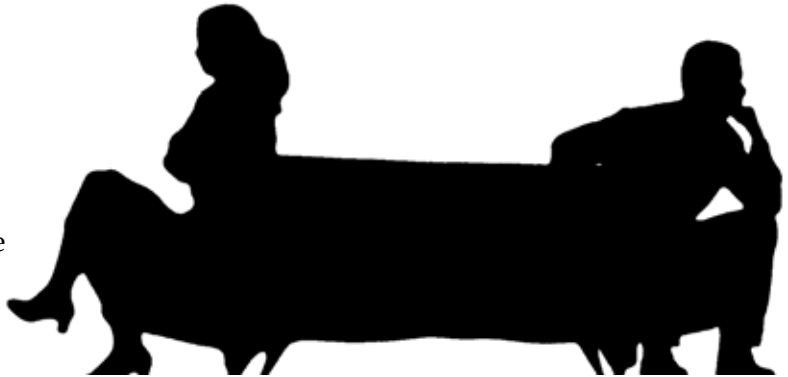
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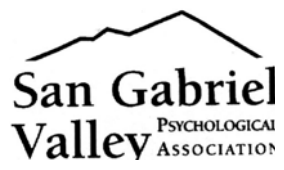
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