

## ‘So long and thanks for all the fish.’

I am always a little bit uncertain as to what I should be writing in the editorial section for the *ANZJFT*. Some editors introduce editorial sections to emphasise personal/professional issues and concerns that they might have in a particular area. Others seem to focus on just introducing the articles that have been produced for a particular edition. For myself, I find that I use a mix of both of these in trying to explain the purpose of the edition and trying to provide a context or framework for you, the reader, in deciding which articles you might read and in which order. This particular editorial is both easier and harder to write as it is also my goodbye to you, as I am resigning from the position of editor. So in addition to telling you what is in this edition, it is also my intention to write my farewell.

I have been involved with the *ANZJFT* since 1999 when the previous editors, Hugh and Maureen Crago, were kind enough to help me write my first article for it. They were sufficiently encouraging that I joined the editorial team in writing a somewhat regular section in relation to research in practice. A section that I came to consider as RIPPIR — Research in Practice/Practice in Research — which I think is a pretty clever acronym for my particular orientation to the idea of research in therapy. I am particularly impressed that I was able to generate not only an acronym but also a palindrome. I don't know whether or not it has caught the general imagination but I have certainly taken a quiet pleasure in being able to do something clever. If you have paid some little attention to what I have written in the RIPPIR sections you will probably know that much of my interest in clinical research is on how to promote and privilege the experience of the clinician, and the use of clinical experiences as primary research material. This tends to go against the current trend in what is understood to be evidence in our field. However, I am certainly not alone, and certainly not a particularly significant voice, in wanting to provide some alternative understandings of what is useful evidence in the area of psychotherapy.

One of my intellectual positions, which is located largely in my own experience of learning to be a therapist, is that there is much to be learned from the therapeutic experiences of practising clinicians. As I have said elsewhere, I think it is a real weakness in our area that fewer and fewer clinicians are writing about their clinical work and describing their clinical reasoning and thought processes. I firmly believe that one of the strongest ways in which we can learn to be good clinicians is by reading other clinicians' reflections on their work, using their cases to exemplify particular issues, practices, or dilemmas.

When I was thinking about taking on the role of editor for the *ANZJFT* I had a vision of special editions of the journal focusing purely on the presentation of clinical cases written by yourselves. Not surprisingly, it is actually a bigger task than I had imagined, as writing by itself can be quite a daunting activity for any of us, let alone adding the complexity of presenting coherent and relevant reflections about

our own practice. There have actually been many contributors since we chose to emphasise this focus who have provided case-based reflections for the publication. This is obviously pleasing for me as it confirms that this is something that you have an interest in and are able to do. Unfortunately, my personal life went quite out of control when I was planning to do the first case addition last year and my fellow editors heroically took on the task of producing that edition at very short notice. I would like to thank them quite directly for their unquestioning support of me and my family at one of the most challenging times that I think people can face.

As I prepared this edition last year it became increasingly obvious to me that, despite the passing of the critical phase of the chaos that had entered my life, I was really not in a position to be able to provide the level and degree of commitment that is necessary to do a good job in this position as editor. I am saddened by this as I do like being involved in my profession at this level and would prefer to be able to continue to have some voice for my own views and thoughts. But, if I have learned anything from the last 18 months it is that the process of living does not necessarily imply or support the idea of choice. A hard lesson but a useful and necessary one which I hope has led to some growth and maturing for me.

It seems somewhat palindromic itself that my first editing of a case-based issue is also my last. I hope that in reading this edition you will find support, guidance, and wisdom from your fellow therapists. I believe that there is a corrective to the dominant ideology of evidence-based practice to be found in both our own reflections on the work that we do and also the reflections of others on the work that they do. Evidence has never been just about experimental design, the reduction of lived experience to measurement, or the focus on what works. In fact I think there is a whole book to be written on the nature of evidence and its relationship to knowledge and to wisdom. I am sure someone has written that already but, if not, perhaps it is time someone did.

I think it is appropriate to begin this edition with a contribution from Jeffrey Kottler and Sally Hunter, who explore the position of the client as our teacher. They provide some very thoughtful and interesting ideas on what would actually constitute good continuing education for therapists. Following from this is a contribution by Desa Markovic, which continues this theme, in a way, looking at the client and the therapist as experts in sex therapy. Then Lyn Radford provides some reflections on being a learner in family therapy and what can be learned from the client and experience of working with the client. Stephen Scher then provides a broader organisational process look at the ethics of decision-making in clinical practice. Kasia Kozłowska provides a case reflection exploring adolescent perpetrating of sexual abuse and this is complemented by a contribution from Elizabeth McNevin looking at adolescent perpetrating within a multisystemic framework. Kasia has also contributed a case reflection looking at the contribution of family-of-origin issues to childhood illness. Finally, Sally Young reflects on the concept of triangles in therapy as both a positive and negative process in human relationships.

In this edition we are also publishing an obituary by Barry Mason for David Campbell, a founder member of both the British Association for Family Therapy, and The Institute of Family Therapy (IFT) in London. There is also an interview with Dr Michael Kerr, a leading figure in Bowenian family therapy.

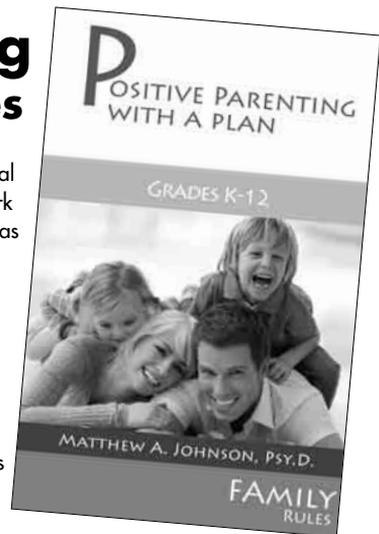
In conclusion, I don't think I can express my thoughts better than this further quote from *A Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*: 'I may not have gone where I intended to go, but I think I have ended up where I needed to be'. And isn't that just an excellent summary of what the living of life seems to be about? It's not 42.

**Alistair Campbell**

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