

## Memories of Fred Zimring

*The Client-Centered Therapy  
Person-Centered Approach Network*  
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### Introduction

It's the evening of August 24<sup>th</sup>. Instead of returning from California revitalized and energized from the ADPCA experience, I was sitting on my living room sofa with the ADPCA roster and my rolodex calculating who to call to find out how it went. Paula wasn't home. I left a message. Jere wasn't home. I left a message for him as well. I let the phone ring at Ferdinand's. No answer. I wondered if my dates were wrong and if everyone was still there. I called Kathy Moon. Kathy filled me in on some of the interesting gossip and business decisions. I don't quite know how we got to it—talking about the various presentations I think. She told me what a wonderfully stimulating paper Jere had presented for Fred. And then she said something that I heard although I can't say I remember precisely how she said it. Something about her sorrow that Fred was now gone. What an enormous loss it was for the person-centered community. I was silent. And then, "Fred died?" "Oh..., you didn't know..., I'm sorry." I hadn't known until that moment. I felt numb. In the next few moments, stricken by my loss, I remembered my brother-in-law's call to Georgia telling me "Grandmom Imber died." Kathy thought I'd known because people had been talking about Fred's death on the network. No, I hadn't been on the network for several months. She told me about the e-mail dialogue. I asked her if she had the messages and could she share them with me. It seemed odd to be thinking of contacting people to get their consent to publish their messages, but I was. Over the next few days of reading the messages Kathy forwarded to me and missing Fred, I kept wondering if it was too strange to ask people to publish their remarks. I finally decided that I would call Fred's wife Jane for her consent. She consented. All of the messages here have been reproduced with permission. I hope that you will be touched, as was I, by these memories of Fred.

Jo Cohen Hamilton

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>Date: Thu, 3 Aug 2000 21:14:09 EDT  
>Subject: FRED ZIMRING'S PAPER

Dear Friends/Colleagues/and ADPCA attendees and supporters:

Fred Zimring is not feeling well and will not be attending the ADPCA 2000 meeting. I am privileged to be presenting his paper that he prepared for the ADPCA conference. Fred is a long time PCA practitioner and a wonderful person; I am glad to know him. I am sending the paper out in advance. Perhaps some of you will read it and want to discuss it at the conference; I will be hosting such a discussion on Saturday. I like the paper a lot!

Jere Moorman

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>Date: Tue, 22 Aug 2000 08:11:54 -0800  
>Subject: Fred

Dear Friends,

Jane Zimring called a few minutes ago. Fred is gone, she said, and asked that you all be informed.

This was a deep love. She sounds calm, and has her friends, and family, all with her.

Around August 14, I phoned her to say that Fred's paper was distributed by Jere, and highly praised, and to please tell him how fine it was. She said she would tell him, but wasn't sure that he would hear it.

This morning, she said that a day or two later, he spoke, saying, "Wasn't it nice of John to call." -- so she thinks, we like to think, that he heard the message. She said that he worked so hard, to try to finish that paper.

God bless

JMS [John M.Shlien]

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>Date: Tue, 22 Aug 2000 14:57:04 -0500

I am deeply saddened to hear of Fred's passing. He was a lovely man, an inspiration to me in his writing and thinking and in his presence in community meetings. I am sorry not to have had more time to know him. a shared moment of an afternoon spent talking about the old and new Chicago Counseling Center back at the Chicago ADPCA meeting... he told me of having my job years back, and we laughed about the fact that we STILL had the longest staff discussions over whether to buy coffee and tea for the clients (!). I appreciated his openness and kindness and support and grieve the loss of his presence in our community.

Carolyn Schneider

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>Date: Tue, 22 Aug 2000 19:54:31 +0100

Thank you John. I am deeply sad at the loss of a fine man. I am remembering him presenting an earlier paper a few years ago at Ilkley College which deeply influenced me.

Lee Field

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>Date: Tue, 22 Aug 2000 22:46:11 -0500

Thank you, John, for giving us the news of Fred's death. I respected Fred since reading his article in the Innovations book by Wechsler and Rice. As I got to know him over the years at ADPCA meetings, I came to admire and have real affection for him. His great intelligence, wry humor, and sense of wholeness were always evident. His intellectual curiosity and excitement about the theory and practice of client-centered therapy were an inspiration. I am glad he finished that paper.

Marge Witty

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>Date: Wed, 23 Aug 2000 15:44:52 -0400

>  
Dear network,

In a workshop in Ireland Fred gave a demonstration interview . Some years later that young woman said that therapy session had had a strong positive impact on her life.

I am sure the effect he had on other people's lives will go on like waves going out and out when you throw a pebble in a pond.

At the Knoxville meeting both Fred and I studied Jerome Bruner's books for our presentations. I was impressed by Bruner's taking his truck and equipment out to the playgrounds where the children were. Fred spoke about narrative and how many social sciences deal with telling a story.

I also remember at a meeting in Boston a story Nat Raskin and Fred told about a division of labor they had worked out for delivering their papers - one made the presentation, the other did the worrying.

I shall miss him.

Ruth Sanford

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>Date: Wed, 23 Aug 2000 15:30:57 -0400

Dear network,

I remember Fred at the Knoxville, Tampa, and Evanston ADPCA meetings.

I remember swapping Internet addresses with him when we had the pool to ourselves the last afternoon of the Tampa meeting.

His talks included current cultural criticism as well as classic social thinkers and interacting with PCA made stimulating combinations. They were a chance to learn new French thought, linguistics, philosophy, and anthropology in a PCA context. His most recent paper using Bateson, Bruner, and Wittgenstein as well as George Herbert Mead is a good example.

It wasn't only theory. At Tampa he talked about hanging out hoping to connect with his client. They were playing ping pong. He, distractedly, lobbed a return, leaving him vulnerable to a slam. He said, "Oh! I really set you up!" He lost the point but made the connection.

I will miss him.

Ed Bodfish

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>Date: Wed, 23 Aug 2000 10:24:56 -0400 (EDT)

I feel very alone with Chuck and Fred gone. Fred came and gave to our trainees three- ten day- intensive trainings. He lectured, facilitated, understood, supported, refereed, shared jokes and lived with us. He was a PCA pragmatist. While supervising the staff he told one of us who could not accept what she thought a gross error. "then you will suffer". Sensitive, with a heartfelt smile, a genuine laughter, a very human therapist. A good friend, generous with his thoughts, his comments on the program, his advice. A disciplined well measured person, always careful he used to poke fun at his hesitant step by calculating step, into the sea at lunch breaks, while the liberated group would rush exuberantly >into the water. The last group he facilitated fell into a very telling silence at the news of his illness. He shared generously with us and every time he left behind the quality of the person, the therapist, the facilitator that he was. He took with him every time our profound respect and our love.

Ioulios

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>Date: Thu, 24 Aug 2000 16:04:40 EDT

I have not had contact with Fred for many years. I knew him as a student though Gene Gendlin and remember him as kind and supportive. I wanted to renew the contact and wish him well . I sent an e-mail. The next day I learned he had passed away. I regret not trying to reach him sooner

Garry Prouty

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>Date: Thu, 24 Aug 2000 22:02:56 EDT

I was in a small group with Fred at the Evanston (Chicago) ADPCA. I discussed some of my issues involved in writing papers. As the group was ending, he said to me strongly, but with empathy and caring, "WRITE, WRITE, WRITE!!!!!!!!!!!" I found these words stayed with me during the subsequent year, as I completed a paper that was very meaningful to me. Being the troublemaker that I am, several years later (at the ADPCA hosted by Carol), I told him how helpful he was to me, but I wondered if he had violated the principle of non-directivity. I forgot what he said, but I remember his laughter.

Ed Kahn

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>Date: Thu, 24 Aug 2000 20:37:09 - 0500

>CCTPCA All,

For those of you who can retrieve attachments - here is a photo of Fred taken about 10 years ago at an ADPCA meeting, with Jerold and me.

Barbara Temaner Brodley



>Date: Sat, 26 Aug 2000 00:05:53 -0800

On September first, there will be a memorial service for Fred Zimring, at 4PM.

Church of the Covenant, 11205 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland. (On the University campus)

That message is from Jane Zimring.

A number of you have sent email messages about Fred, to our network. Sometimes they are addressed to me. Sometimes to all of us. They really should go to Jane Zimring, and she would LIKE to have them, to keep.

jms

\* \* \* \* \*

>Date: Thu 24 Aug 2000

I am so grateful to Fred for having called to question the clarity and explication of my ideas in a paper on empathic understanding of clients. I ultimately published that paper in TPCJ. It was because of his constructive criticism that I was able to improve the manuscript and feel proud of my accomplishment. The paper started out very mediocre. It might have been published that way if he'd have let it go. I didn't at all get the sense that he considered it substandard...only that it could be more. I felt challenged to make it so.

Since first meeting Fred I experienced him to possess an extraordinary blending of brilliance and approachability. I'm not sure if anyone ever experienced him to be intimidating—as brilliant thinkers are at times perceived by others. He absolutely never came across to me that way. I always understood, when in contact with him, that any sense of intimidation I felt belonged solely with me.

I felt disappointed that Fred was not going to attend the Kutztown ADPCA meeting. But he didn't simply not show up. He let me know that he wouldn't be able to attend because of an overseas commitment. I felt considered. Acknowledged. Cared about. Important.

I could trust Fred to listen to anything I said. In the midst of an hysteria, a psychosis, or a full-fledged sarcastic defensive retort, Fred could always be counted on to take me seriously.

Jo Cohen Hamilton

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>Date: Fri, 25 Aug 2000 21:42:48 -0700

Hi all,

I just read about Fred Zimring's death, catching up with the network mail. I much appreciate reading the many messages from those of you who knew him. He was planning to come to

this years ADPCA meeting - and had sent in all the fees, etc., including a contribution for a scholarship. I received a call about two weeks before the meeting that he needed to cancel his trip. He wanted to make the scholarship contribution anyway. I know he regretted not being able to come.

I met Fred at the Counseling Center at the University of Chicago many years ago when he was a graduate student there. I remember that he and Gene Gendlin would spend hours talking over therapy process and experiencing theory, and cover wall to wall blackboards in their office with ideas and descriptions over many weeks. There was not an empty space anywhere on the blackboards, and they would struggle over what to erase so they could add more ideas!

Over the years I found Fred to be unfailingly friendly and encouraging, and dedicated to helping and teaching others. I, like so many of you, will miss him. I also want to take some time to say goodbye.

Best wishes

Ferdinand van der Veen

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>Date: Thu, 31 Aug 2000 10:07:53 -0800

As previously announced, Sept 1 at 4PM is the time of the memorial service for Professor Fred Zimring, at 4PM. Jane is not expecting that people from outside the local region will be coming.

Contributions in any amount will be welcomed by  
The Friends of the Cleveland Public Library  
325 Superior Ave.,  
Cleveland, OH., 44114

jms

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Date: Thu, 31 Aug 2000 12:25:02 -0400

Friends,

The news of Fred's death comes as a double blow. One is personal. The other is the blow to our whole community. People have been honoring his wonderful written contributions and the range of his knowledge and wisdom. Ditto. Over the last few days I've been flooded with wonderful moments with and around Fred. One that stands out is a small group experience at ADPCA some years back. There was a woman who had been knocked hard in life and she reported (details not perfect here) that she had been to seven therapists and not one had met her. Her tone was "That's just how it goes..." Instantaneously, powerfully, effortlessly and fluidly, Fred seemed to jump over the coffee table separating them. He leapt

over with his whole being carrying the message: "That's not how it goes with me! That's not right! I am coming to meet you!" When the group broke up he stayed with her. No grand act. No big deal. That was just his being touched by hers. A natural response from Fred.

Another time, we were standing outside the community room and I was reporting my take on something with frustration. With a twinkle in his eyes and a deadpan expression, he responded and I couldn't stop laughing for minutes. He managed to acknowledge my perspective, let the truth as it was emerging be named and give me a totally new perspective, all with one perfectly wry comment.

Then there was his generous encouragement. Julie and I kidnapped him for a grocery and beverage run at the ADPCA Redwood City meeting. I was stuck in writing and he said, "Well, you are a mess now, but in awhile you'll know just what you are doing." I asked "Well how long is THAT supposed to take?!" He said, "Oh about five years and you'll be fine." I said thanks a lot! And don't you know he was right. The last time I spoke with him about some ideas he said, 'You've got nothing left to do but start writing.' I have much gratefulness for Fred's being.

Carol Wolter-Gustafson

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>Date: Mon, 4 Sep 2000 11:09:51 -0500

Dear Friends,

I have just learned of Fred's death, and am saddened beyond words. We collaborated on a number of writing projects, including the chapter on person-centered therapy in the APA's commemorative book, "One Hundred Years of Psychotherapy," and often worked together, in the United States and in Europe. My affection and respect for Fred is profound. He was such a teacher! Who can forget the way he checked with us as he gave a talk, to make sure we were understanding him, step by step? He seemed endlessly creative in finding new ways of looking at concepts that for most of us were settled for good.

He was a wonderful friend. For a number of years, we roomed together at Jerold Bozarth's Warm Springs conferences, took long walks together, and would laugh ourselves to sleep. I could always count on Fred to help me when I was troubled or in conflict. He was marvelously empathic.

I will miss him sorely.

Nat Raskin

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>Date: Mon, 4 Sep 2000 13:43:35 -0600

Dear friends,

I met Fred in 1982 at the First International Forum on the Person-Centered Approach in which he enthusiastically participated.

Since this first contact I was impressed with his kindness, his genuine interest in people, his willingness to be of service to others and his humor.

I also recognized his commitment to the theoretical development of the client/person-centered approach with a special emphasis in cognitive aspects.

During all the years since then I had many opportunities to confirm my first impression, and the pleasure and privilege of becoming friends.

In homage of this wonderful person I include his bibliography; it will help some of you get a flavor of his academic interests.

Alberto

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>Date: Oct 19 2000 20:23:40

I haven't had e-mail since early August until now so I'm going through an avalanche of 600 or so messages; hence the lateness of my response. I was stunned at the news of Fred's passing but not entirely surprised. After his illness last year and his missing ADPCA, I had an uneasy feeling.

Fred was my thesis sponsor until he moved to Western Reserve. More importantly, we had near adjoining offices at the University of Chicago Counseling Center (the last one, on University Avenue) for more than a year. We would have serious discussions: Ideas animated him incredibly and he would use anyone for a sounding board with a fierce intensity. Most of my memories of him, though, entail laughing together over goofy things. The time we watched someone in a Lotus Europa drive under the parking gate of the lot across the street comes to mind. I also remember his listening to me with the same kind of near-prehensile attention that I fancy people experienced when being listened to by Carl.

Two other miscellaneous things:

When I encountered Fred about 20 years after our time at UC, I asked him how Matthew (Jane's and his son) was. He seemed genuinely surprised that I remembered him and his name, and a little ill-at-ease (He complimented me on my memory as if I were doing some kind of parlor trick.). I don't know why that stuck with me but I've puzzled over it. It almost seemed that he didn't realize the impression he made on others (at least me) and when it was brought to his attention it made him a little uncomfortable and perhaps a little shy.

Part of the time Fred and I were neighbors, he was a therapist for my wife at that time. Of course, we never mentioned it but, more importantly, it wouldn't have even seemed appropriate to mention it. It really didn't exist, not in how he behaved toward me and, as a result, in how I was with him. I think I got my first lesson in the kind of compartmentalization we client-centered therapists can do, something that other schools (and so-called "ethics" authorities) say we can't.

Bruce Allen

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>Date: Fri, 20 Oct 2000 13:35:15 -0700

Fred Zimring and I co-edited the pilot and first issues of The Person-Centered Journal. After the first year, Fred decided to no longer edit the journal but to help others to prepare their manuscripts for publication. This was reflective of my general experience with Fred. He preferred to be one on one with the ideas of individuals.

I first met Fred in the early 1960s in Chicago when I took a seminar, which he taught, on Client-Centered Therapy. We did not meet again until 1986 at ADPCA in Chicago. Fred, Nat Raskin, Barbara Brodley, David Spahn and I decided to initiate a "Person-Centered Workshop." Thus, the Warm Springs workshop was born in Georgia in 1987. Fred attended eleven of the workshops but did not attend the last three because of training program commitments overseas. He was always an empathic force in the Warm Springs workshops. His natural state of fascination with the frames of reference of others helped him, among other things, to be cool and collected in the turmoil of some of the large community conflicts. During the course of Warm Springs, we worked together on several projects and discussed ideas and personal experiences with each other. I was always struck with Fred's use of the word, "Lovely." It was a term that he frequently used when analyzing an idea, referring to a person, or identifying a behavior. He used it in relationship to my daughter, in describing a time I walked out of a group, and in assessing my idea about the "Specificity Myth" in mental health treatment. Fred used the term, "Lovely," in succinct but meaningful ways. He used the term to communicate approval, support and even unconditional regard.

Fred, Reinhard Tausch and I were writing a chapter about client-centered therapy when Fred was diagnosed with cancer. Fred completed much of the review of early research and proposed the chapter title: "Client-Centered Therapy: Evolution of a Revolution." I was in the last hour of finishing the final revision of the chapter when I heard that Fred died. I was going to call him several days before but decided to wait until I finished the revisions. I missed hearing his last comments about the chapter. I imagine him saying that it was "lovely." Fred was a vital force in client-centered theory and practice. He always provided support. He was a good friend. I will miss him.

Jerold Bozarth

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>Date Wed 01 Nov 2000 10:06:38

Re: Fred Zimring

Fred was my teacher and subsequent colleague at the University of Chicago. Unlike my other teachers and subsequent colleagues Fred showed no change in his relationship to me. My change in status did not affect him. I was Marvin Frankel when he first met me and I was again Marvin Frankel as his colleague. Fred liked me. He liked the quality of my engagement in the world of my concern. Had I been a janitor he would have liked me no less and no more. Such was his vision.

We never had the opportunity to vent our differences and so I never had the satisfaction of enjoying our differences. Nevertheless I know that with Fred our differences would be embraced and be a source of mutuality rather than division. Fred inspired unity rather than division and it is all the more remarkable that he did so since he was a very sensitive and vulnerable human being. I never heard a bad word about him. This is not because Fred was beyond a bad word. Who is? I think it was because there was something terribly lovely about Fred's vulnerability. His quality of sweetness was too lovely to provoke criticism. The reader who is not unaware of the psychological politics of the University of Chicago in the 60's and early 70's may be unable to appreciate that cynical criticism was the daily bread of students and faculty. Fred was always outside the tent of such self-serving goings-on. One anecdote if I may. I was interning at the Counseling Center and on going to my office I observed an uncommonly beautiful woman in the waiting room. Catching my breath I walked into Fred's office and exclaimed on what I had just seen. Fred smiled. "You must have seen Jane," he said. It was his wife to be. His expression was precious. He was all at once the little boy enchanted by the beautiful Jane, the adolescent was drawn to his beautiful Jane and finally the man who had found his life's companion with the beautiful Jane. I walked out. I envied him. What else could I do?

Marvin Frankel

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>Date: Mon 06 Nov 2000 21:53:53

Re: Fred

Fred's death has hit me harder than those of either of my parents. Consequently it has been a struggle to write something. I loved Fred as a "big brother". We met in 1960 when I began the practicum in CCT at the U. of Chicago Counseling Center. He was my teacher, consultant, a mentor and after 1967 when I left the Center also a person I knew I could turn to if I needed help. He helped me in many ways over the years. Fred was always starkly candid with me, and this went both ways - he let me know when he felt I was off in some way and he gave me a profound sense of support. I felt he was protective towards me and I think that is how the brother feeling emerged. In April Fred sent me the paper he was working on - "Empathic Understanding Grows the Person" - which was theoretically right on the button of the study I was doing then. There has often been the sense that our interests were running parallel. That was exciting and, of course, added a lot to my understanding and thinking about CCT. When I learned Fred was ill I got scared for him and he remained constantly on my mind. I really

can't adequately express how much I feel the loss of him. Aside from my personal feelings of loss, I ache that he isn't still with us to continue his brilliant contributions to client-centered therapy.

Barbara

>Date: Nov 04 2000

Some e.mail correspondence with Fred Zimring about his paper.  
Jere Moorman

April 2000

Dear Fred:

I have just read with a sense of great excitement your paper *Empathic Understanding grows the person*. For me, these developing ideas of yours are important developments. Many reverberations happened for me in reading your paper in understanding the incredible growth and changes in my own life during the past thirty years.

I have especially appreciated seeing these changes as the growth of an underdeveloped "I" than as a regression to narcissism.

I heard some of this at the ADPCA meeting in Wheaton; but it seems that you have developed your thought some more; and of course I understand more with my in depth attention to your ideas. I look forward to seeing you in La Jolla in August; and I hope you will consider my interest in your work if you are ever looking for a reader or for feedback.

You make the point of not favoring the "I" over the "me"; or at least the necessity of both. It is hard not to see a favoring of the "I," but perhaps this is because of my continued need to develop the "I."

I am interested in workplace relationships; and it has seemed to me over the years that people have had an intense/life-changing PCA experience-- and have dropped the "me" altogether.

As a businessperson, I would be interested in encouraging the development of the "I;" whilst appreciating the role of the "me" as well. This requires some maturity of training policy.

You are on to something exciting.

Jere

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Dear Jere,

The relationship of the Me and the I is complicated, According to my understanding of G.H. Mead, the Me operates automatically on the basis of knowledge about the world until faced with a new situation when the I, reflexivity about the uniqueness of the situation and the self, comes into being. I have bundled a deeper purposiveness into this reflexivity. If I am

concerned with a shallower purpose-getting a larger pay raise, for example, I focus much on the world, and little on self and purposes. With a somewhat deeper purpose, to develop my concepts about the inadequacy of the concepts of psychic determinism, for example, involves a focus both on self, my feeling of inadequacy of the concepts and also on the world-how the concepts have been and are used, etc.

Regards,

Fred

## **Policy Statement**

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