

Revenge

Hatred, Intimacy and Humility

A one or two day Workshop

This workshop will be of interest to anyone who is engaged in situations where individuals, or groups of people, feel themselves to be wronged in some way and where there is an intention to work towards a resolution which effectively brings to an end the cycles of hurt which so commonly follow wrongdoing. This would include psychotherapists, counsellors and trainees and people working directly with conflict resolution but also youth workers, family lawyers, mediators, educators and social policy executives. Furthermore, as the book engages in some detail with child and adolescent development processes it will also be of interest to people concerned with the emotional development of infants, children and young people.

In this workshop it will be proposed that thoughts and acts of revenge cannot be equated with moral or ethical imperatives to justice. Alternatively, it will be suggested that they are an irrational response to experiences which evoke feelings of impotence, humiliation and grief. From this perspective we might be able to begin to develop more creative and enduring responses to feelings of wrongdoing which do more than simply return the suffering, blow for blow, back to the wrongdoer. As is well known, revenge is ubiquitous in the human condition, an enduring historical and literary theme and a source of both immeasurable suffering and temporary relief from suffering. It will also be demonstrated that revenge does not work, despite the overwhelming feelings that it may do so, as a sustainable solution to emotional distress.

One of the features of human consciousness is that it begets a self-importance which renders our species uniquely vulnerable to narcissistic wounding and hence the vicissitudes of revengeful processes. Furthermore, the revengeful relationship can be viewed as a particular form of enduring intimacy - it being commonly easier to fall out of love than out of hate. John's workshop will be an opportunity to explore this all too human phenomena of revengeful thought, feelings and action and to move towards examining the reasons for its inevitable failure as a balm for the hurt we are able to inflict upon one another. From his own experience, John will also share some thoughts as to how this most terrible aspect of human destructiveness might be contained in a less toxic form.

John Waterston is a UKCP registered psychotherapist with a private practice in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. He has also worked as a therapist and trainer extensively in Croatia for many years and has thought, and written, about the impact of revengeful processes as both a personal and a national, historical, phenomena. He is interested in the possibilities inherent in the examination of revengeful action, in both its overt and latent forms, to help facilitate positive social change in small communities.

For further information contact:

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