



The Phyllis Schlafly Report

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A "New Age" for Privacy-Invading Psychiatry

Psychiatry, the practice of treating mental diseases or disorders, is the only medical specialty in which there are no generally accepted professional guidelines. Pick your practitioner and he picks your treatment. The custom is, *caveat emptor*: let the client beware.

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) recently published a 3,000-page, four-volume \$275 book called *Treatments of Psychiatric Disorders*, which attempts to bring some order into the disorderly world of disorders. The publication has stirred up a heated controversy among those who have a direct interest in this subject. (See *The Atlantic*, May 1989, pp. 24-30.)

The crux of the argument is whether psychiatry is a science or an art. Those who claim it is a science say that the book is needed because enough is known about the workings of the mind to publish guidelines for repairing it when it does not function properly.

Those who say psychiatry is an art claim that our knowledge about the mind and human behavior is too limited to enunciate guidelines, and dangerous to practitioners to do so. Claiming that a supposedly authoritative work would restrict their professional freedom and expose them to malpractice claims, some therapists even circulated a petition drive to force the APA to suppress the opus altogether.

The APA compromise was to include a disclaimer saying that the book does not necessarily represent the views of the APA. The only propositions on which all agree are that we don't have all the answers and that any treatment requires a great deal of personal interaction between patient and professional.

With this type of disarray in the professional world, and with consensus so far from reality, we should all be able to agree that psychiatric/psychological treatment should not be forced on anyone, but should be used only when freely chosen, and then only on a one-on-one basis. That may sound simple, but let's look at situations where behavior modification is forced on unwilling subjects — even in group therapy — by people who pretend to have all the answers.

Take, for example, the group psychology and New Age sessions that have become chic in the corporate world. Some companies decide that their employees should be put through psychological seminars for behavior modification or to induce changed attitudes.

The famous business writer Peter Drucker called such employer-ordered treatment "morally indefensible" and an unlawful attempt "to change the employee's personality." He concluded that they are, putting it bluntly, "brainwashing." (*The Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 9, 1989.)

He called this treatment an "abuse of power" because the employee is forced or intimidated into taking the treatment for fear of losing his job. He also said that the public confessions about personal behavior typically induced in the group sessions are an "invasion of privacy" and often do lasting psychological damage, and that an employer has no right to compel an employee to lie down on a couch.

Now, let's move a step farther away from the psychiatrist's couch, from the workplace to the public school classroom, and see what is going on there in the weird world of teaching behavior, attitude, and personality to children. One of the leading gurus of the education world, Benjamin Bloom, laid down the goal when he said that the purpose of education and the schools should be "to change the thoughts, feelings and actions of students."

When parents began to complain to their Congressmen about this perversion of the public schools' purpose, Congress responded by passing the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment. This statute, which passed Congress almost unanimously in 1978, forbids schools to subject students to psychological examination or treatment which requires the pupil to reveal information concerning "political affiliations," "sex behavior and attitudes," "mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student or his family," or "critical appraisals" of behavior and attitudes of family members, without "the prior written consent of the parent."

One of the sponsors of this bill, then-Senator Sam Hayakawa, who had been a university president before he was elected to the Senate from California, described the problem. He said that the public schools have accepted the "heresy that rejects the idea of education as the acquisition of knowledge and skills" and instead "regards the fundamental task of education as therapy."

He further warned that inquiring into the schoolchild's attitudes and beliefs, and psychic and emotional problems, is a "serious invasion of privacy." Yet this psychological/psychiatric methodology is prevalent in public schools today at all levels, kindergarten through 12th grades.

This public school group therapy comes, like Baskin-Robbins ice cream, in dozens of different flavors: drug ed, sex ed, death ed, suicide ed, incest ed, stress ed, self-esteem ed, family life ed, AIDS ed, global ed, New Age ed, environmental ed, decision-making ed, gifted-and-talented ed, etc. Most of these curricula are privacy-invading, emotionally disturbing, morally offensive, value-changing, and experimental, and have no place in the public school classroom.

Where The New Age Movement Came From

The widespread use of psychological treatment on unwilling adults was first brought to the attention of the general public on the front page of the *New York Times* on September 29, 1986. This news article opened the closet door on a cult that is growing in influence in our nation's cultural, social, business, and political life.

As the *Times* described it, this new cult is a curious blend of Eastern mystical religions and Western occultism. Its indicia are psychological techniques such as meditation, hypnosis, chanting, biofeedback, the occult, reincarnation, psychic healing, satanism, prolonged isolation, mediums, and "spirit guides."

Collectively, these strange currents are called the New Age movement. Its avowed purpose is to try to transform people's thought processes. Its foundation, according to the *Times*, is a complete rejection of Judeo-Christian belief in God as the author of eternal moral values, and a substitution of "create your own religion" in which man can do no wrong, so there is no sin or reason for guilt.

Participants in the New Age movement freely admit that it brings about an "altered state of consciousness" during which leaders can implant new ideas and change thinking processes. Some admit that these psychological techniques create a euphoria similar to drug use and that "cosmic consciousness" may be the trendy drug of the 1980s. Like the early use of cocaine, the New Age techniques are directed at the smart and the affluent.

The reason that news about this cult was on page one of the *New York Times* was that the New Age movement has swept into corporate America, starting with programs such as Lifespring, Insight, Silva Mind Control, and the Forum. The premise that man himself is a deity who can create his own reality is attractive to those promoting "human potential" as a faith to life by. A survey of 500 California companies showed that more than half have resorted to some of these consciousness-raising techniques. Ford, Westinghouse, and Calvin Klein are among the corporations that have sent employees for training in "human potential" techniques.

Stanford University's Graduate School of Business has a seminar on "Creativity in Business" which includes meditation, chanting, "dream work," the use of tarot cards, and discussion of the New Age Capitalist. Among the books which the *Times* asserts promote the New Age vision are *Megatrends* by John Naisbitt and *The Aquarian Conspiracy* by Marilyn Ferguson.

The *Times* reporter looked for the roots of the New Age movement but couldn't come up with anything more tangible than "the maturing of the hippie movement of the 1960s." However, there is no evidence that hippies have grown up to become corporate executives or best-selling authors.

Those who want to discover the roots of these strange currents should do an investigative reporting job on what is taught in the public school classroom. As the 1984 U.S. Department of Education hearings on the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment proved, the public school classrooms during the 1970s were hotbeds of all these strange currents which the *Times* has just discovered.

Parents testified at those hearings that their children had been subjected to practices of Eastern mystical religions, such as Transcendental Meditation, yoga, hypnosis, and guided imagery. Other classroom practices included fantasy role-playing, sociograms, sociodrama, psychodrama, parapsychology, blindfold walks, isolation techniques, sensitivity training, self-revelation, group encounter sessions, self-disclosure strategies, and psychological and psychiatric exercises designed to affect behavior, emotions, or attitudes.

It's no wonder that some adults are now blending Eastern religions with Western occultism, because that has been done in public school classrooms for many years. At the 1984 Department of Education hearings, parents complained about the preoccupation in many subjects with the occult, satanism, and witchcraft. This type of teaching is frequently given to the brighter youngsters in the Gifted and Talented classes.

In recent years, many schools have started "stress" courses in the early primary grades, in which the children are compelled to engage in various New Age practices. Some are taught that they should consult with "a wise man living inside you" instead of with God, parents or clergy.

This type of pseudo-psychology practiced by unlicensed psychologists on a captive audience of children in the public school classroom, without the knowledge or informed consent of their parents, is a clear violation of the children's First Amendment rights.

Trying To Make The Taxpayers Fund New Age

Senator Claiborne Pell (D-RI) tried to get federal funding for New Age practitioners during 1989 through S.J. Res. 135. This bill would have set up a National Commission on Human Resource Development to "facilitate the fuller attainment of human potential." The bill would have established a "scientific advisory panel," an "academic and industry advisory council," and a plan to "communicate with foreign governments and international organizations." Senator Pell could have just used his free WATS line to call up Shirley MacLaine and get his New Age advice straight from her. But a federal project couldn't possibly be that simple or inexpensive.

The "scientific" panel would have provided a mantle of respectability, the "academics" would have written op-ed pieces to boost the importance of this commission, and the "foreign and international" mandate would have authorized junkets to faraway places where commissioners could sit cross-legged and meditate with others about human potential.

The bill would have set up a "Center for Human Resource Development" to provide an office for those working on this project. The 25 Commissioners would each have been paid a per diem at the rate of \$86,000 per year plus all expenses. The executive director would have received a salary of \$75,500, and there was no limit on the fees that could be paid to "experts and consultants."

This National Commission on Human Resources Act

almost sailed through the Senate in 1989 without any hearings. This attempted snow job, which fortunately was stopped at the last minute by the vigilance of Senator Dan Coats, was rationalized on the ground that hearings had been held by a Senate subcommittee on a similar bill in 1988.

To testify at that 1988 hearing, Senator Pell invited Dr. Herbert Benson, chief of Behavioral Medicine at a Boston hospital and founder of a Mind-Body Medical Institute. He would naturally be expected to favor a new federal spending program, since his own work for the last 20 years has been wholly financed by taxpayer and foundation sources.

Benson said he has devoted his career to "relaxation response" and "mind-body interaction." He told the Senators that the "relaxation response" for 10 to 20 minutes once or twice daily can be an effective treatment for everything from high blood pressure to diarrhea.

Benson described the relaxation response as the repetition of a word, sound, prayer or phrase while putting other thoughts out of your mind. Just sit quietly, he said, close your eyes, relax your muscles, breathe regularly, and repeat over and over again for 10 to 20 minutes: "The Lord is my shepherd," or "Lord, Jesus Christ, have mercy on me," or "Shalom," or "peace," or "love," or "one," or whatever phrase comports with your own value system.

Senator Pell asked, "Could a mantra substitute for that?" Benson replied that each one should choose his "own word or mantra. We have found no inherent superiority of one phrase over another." Other techniques which he said can be used to elicit "the hypoarousal physiologic changes of the relaxation response" include "the practice of Zen, Yoga, and Transcendental Meditation."

To demonstrate, Benson led those at the Senate hearing in a "relaxation response" experience. Senator Pell asked if anyone experienced "any physiologic changes." Nine raised their hands out of the 15 or 20 in the room and one called out, "I felt a difference in my heart." Benson asked, "How many of you noticed a warming of your hands and feet?" Half a dozen hands went up.

Pell's next expert witness, Robert Schwartz of the Tarrytown Business Center, described how Venezuela had carried on a "human potential" program for five years under the direction of a National Minister for the Development of Human Intelligence. The Venezuelan President invited a Harvard group to study this program, and they solemnly reported that the program brought about "an increase in I.Q." in the "nation at large." Predictably, this led Schwartz to voice enthusiastic support for "government supported programs to develop human potential."

In the 1920s and '30s, a Frenchman named Emile Coué made a big name for himself and presumably a fortune by telling people to repeat over and over, "Every day in every way, I'm feeling better and better." The difference between then and now is that, 50 years ago such hucksters had to peddle their wares by seeking out the suckers (whom P. T. Barnum said were born every minute), but years of liberal spending programs have encouraged such persons to think they can make the taxpayers pay for their posturing.

Even worse than that is the way some public schools are experimenting with varieties of New Age methodology on the captive audience of schoolchildren in the classroom.

"First Aid Kit" In Florida Schools

The middle schools in Okaloosa County, Florida caused an uproar among students and parents in 1989 when they started a new course called *Bridges*. Given for the first 20 minutes every morning, the course uses New Age and privacy-invading techniques.

Bridges is a lengthy curriculum, much of which is unobjectionable except that it consumes so much time that should be spent on academic lessons. The part that provoked parents' ire is the couple of hundred pages called "First Aid Kit," which is taught on two of the five days each week.

The First Aid Kit spends much time teaching the child to reduce "test anxiety" through "DEEEEP BREATHING" exercises like yoga or self-hypnosis, predicting that this will give students "higher scores on tests." No wonder the children are stressed; they are first told that a test is a "monster" and the picture on the page shows a gargoyle.

The children are taken through "relaxation and imagery" exercises to teach them "centering" and how to talk to individual parts of the body as though they could act independently ("Eyes, WAKE UP"). Centering is a favorite New Age technique designed to make you think you have a "space" in the center of your body which can be filled by new energy or wisdom (or, parents fear, by occult influences).

On one day, the teacher leads a group discussion on whether each pupil would rather be "an only child, the youngest child, [or] the oldest child." After each child writes a paragraph explaining his choice, the teacher takes a survey to see which sibling is the most popular. You can imagine the effect on the children who don't fall into the "most popular" category.

Pupils are told to write their own epitaph for a bulletin board display. They are even given a picture of a tombstone with an angel on it to get in the spirit of death.

In a "self-concept" lesson called "Who, Me?", the students must draw a picture of themselves as an animal. No wonder juveniles sometimes act like animals when the school teaches them to pretend they are!

Each child is instructed to make a list of 10 to 20 "things in my house," then identify which family member was "responsible for bringing it into the house," and then further identify each thing by writing "LUX" if the child thinks it is a luxury or "NEC" if the child thinks it is a necessity. The child then evaluates his parents' decisions.

In another privacy-invading game, the pupils learn about their "Paper Bag Self." On the outside of a bag, each one attaches pictures of things which represent personal traits that are shared with others, and on the inside of the bag pictures of personal traits that other people don't know about. Then they must share these inside traits with the class.

In a lesson called "How Do **You** Spell Family?", the pupils are told to write statements that express their feelings about their own family. Students are told to "discuss the similarities and differences between their favorite T.V. families and their own families."

Students read one depressing story after another, such as "The Scapegoat," in which bullies take out their anger and aggression on Eddie and make him squirm, and "The Maligned Wolf," which purports to show that the wolf in the story of Little Red Riding Hood was mistreated. In an exercise

called "Boiling Point," students are instructed to make "an anger thermometer" telling what kinds of incidents make them "extremely angry."

Another typical depressing story, called "The Ialac Story," recounts a child's day in which his brother calls him "you lazy jerk," his mother says "you just don't care how you look," his sister says "drop dead," his teacher and classmates all make accusatory remarks, and the poor kid goes to bed thinking, "nobody likes me. I might as well give up."

Pupils are required to spend many sessions role-playing such depressing parts as: "your best friend is telling others he or she doesn't like you any more" and "you're a bully who takes money from smaller kids."

In this course for 6th, 7th and 8th grades, pupils discuss ways to "alter the world." They sit on the floor in silence and play "a card game for practicing nonverbal communication." One morning, the students pretend that they are different types of eggs, including "I feel like I have egg on my face," "I'm an egghead," "I'm hard-boiled," "Some folks think I'm cracked," "My thoughts get scrambled," "I'm an eggspert," and "I get eggsuberant."

The schools have refused to remove this course, despite vigorous complaints from parents.

Stress Courses Use New Age Techniques

Classroom curricula where New Age and other pseudo-religious exercises are imposed on schoolchildren are frequently entitled courses to "reduce stress" or to "increase self-esteem." These courses are usually introduced in the elementary and middle schools.

Among the New Age-type courses that have been used in public schools is DUSO (Developing Understanding of Self & Others) published by American Guidance Service, St. Paul, Minnesota. Parents complain that DUSO contains 42 guided fantasy exercises, subliminal messages, and techniques commonly associated with New Age practices. In New Mexico, parents were so upset about DUSO's group therapy by unlicensed psychologists that in 1987 they persuaded the State Senate to pass a Resolution demanding that "the teaching of or counseling by certain mind-altering psychological techniques be entirely eliminated in New Mexico public schools."

"Project Self Esteem" caused a debate and lawsuit in Capistrano, California in 1986. The curriculum's purpose was to "help kids with their self-esteem." Fourth-graders, however, claimed that they had been told to lie flat on their desks and to feel and imagine different situations, and that the instructors had "tried to hypnotize" the students. This course took the place of mathematics every other Friday. Fifty parents withdrew their children from the course.

"Coping for Kids" caused a furor in Oregon the same year. It was advertised as a "complete stress control program for students ages 8-18, grades 4-12," including 28 pre-planned stress control lessons and taped relaxation exercises on two cassettes. Parents objected to the "healing practices," which included psychoanalysis, hypnosis, Transcendental Meditation, biofeedback, and acupuncture. Dialogue 4 led the students through lengthy visualizations such as "picture yourself lying on a cloud." After parental complaints were filed, the District Review Committee voted to suspend use of the "Coping"

course because the religion criticism was "borderline" and the program was "questionable" and "not appropriate."

Another strange course called Quieting Reflex has been used in various public schools. It programs the children to escape from the real world into an imaginary fantasy world and subjects them to the early stages of self-hypnotism. Q.R. lessons include telling the children to "pretend you are on a soft, fluffy cotton cloud. Stretch out your wings and fly back to earth. Breathe slowly through imaginary holes in your feet."

Some public schoolchildren have been subjected to Transcendental Meditation, a religious exercise brought to North America from India. When the schools persisted in this offensive course, New Jersey parents took them to court and got a U.S. District Court decision in 1977 holding that TM is religious in nature and may not be taught in the public schools. (*Malnak v. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi*, 440 F. Supp. 1284)

Sometimes corporations become so entranced with the New Age courses they give to their employees that they finance sharing such courses with the public schools. For example, the C&P Telephone Company (a Bell Atlantic Company) of Charleston, West Virginia, inserted a four-color flier in all its customers' bills in the fall of 1989 bragging about its new "partnership with educators, students and parents in 20 West Virginia public schools."

This advertising flier stated: "The partnerships program revealed that C&P management development courses are very helpful to educators so we sent some of them to 'school.' Now teachers and administrators sit alongside C&P managers and participate in courses like 'New Age Thinking' and 'Time Management.' C&P takes some of the more timely courses right to the school during teacher in-service days." The picture that accompanied the text showed one program called "New Age Thinking For Achieving Your Potential" by Louis Tice and two others on "Stress."

Parents should be on guard against school courses about "stress," "self esteem," or "human potential." They usually contain elements which are unconstitutional because they use religious practices or psychological/psychiatric treatment.

Phyllis Schlafly, who writes and speaks frequently on education, edited the hundreds of testimonies given at the 1984 U.S. Department of Education hearings on the federal Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment. *Child Abuse in the Classroom*, the book that resulted (\$4.95), is the best explanation of the changes in public school goals from the 3 R's to group therapy. A 30-minute video under the same title (\$21.95) is available to help local communities become aware of these changes. She is the president of Eagle Forum Education & Legal Defense Fund which publishes the *Education Reporter*, a monthly newspaper with current news on these same subjects (\$25/year).

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