

# Roads to Reconnection

The E-Journal for Bonnie Miller's Inter-Action Consulting  
Writing about the ideas, tools and practices of reconnecting life to living.

In this issue: Conversations with your body

**Q: When is a door not a door?**

**A: When it's ajar.**

Anybody who knows a 9-year old has probably heard that joke... and after you've groaned, you might be wondering what the heck that has to do with anything.

**Its all about Meaning and Identity**

Last issue, I said we'd look at physical problems- conditions like asthma, diabetes, chronic injuries or limitations- and consider how externalizing conversations might be helpful. I've been thinking about how to approach this for several weeks now- and then last night, I remembered the joke.

**When is a door not a door? When it's ajar.**

Suddenly the function and usefulness of the door is altered- no longer a passage way, a useful tool to get from one space to another- it is transformed into a container, something with a lid, to be stored on a shelf until a use is found for its contents. What does that bring up for you?

For me, whew- suddenly I am thinking about the shift that took place when I went from using my body without thinking, to the awareness of my body as a somewhat troublesome and demanding container full of complications. How the heck did that happen?

**New label; new meaning**

For myself, and for my partner, our motorcycle accident injuries have taken on significant meaning- the limitations that our bodies now impose have brought changes that are not neutral- ideas about ageing come along with our limits to activities, and feelings arise in response to these ideas. And yet, the limitations are real. The bodies we now inhabit have actual, physical demands- they are loud demands at times, and actual, sometimes severe punishment follows if we do not respond appropriately.

**An Invitation to Practice-**

I'd love to take you through this process.

If you want to try it, send me an email with 'the Problem is the problem' in the subject line, and I will put you on a separate list. Once you are on this list, you will receive a series of short exercises that will take you through some steps to externalize a problem, and explore your relationship with it.

[bmillerconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:bmillerconsulting@gmail.com)

More Information about On-line counselling

If forums and journaling work for you, then on-line counselling might also be a good method when you want to change your relationships to problems.

On-line counselling is not time-synchronized- you can write when it is convenient, and I will respond within two days time.

### **The relationship has changed.**

**My experience now is: my body is in charge. And that is not a neutral thing- it brings up feelings. I know I am not unique- it is something I have encountered many times at the walk-in clinic where I work. Whether a person is living with diabetes, HIV, chronic pain, or any other demanding condition- the body is now in charge- and the people I see are in rebellion.**

**Illnesses and chronic conditions bring feelings with them: anger, disappointment, loss, refusal, shame, blame, guilt-like heaps of unwanted styrofoam, plastic wrap and noodle packing that come along with your necessary and expensive computer replacement parts- what the heck are we supposed to do with all this extra junk?**

### **Redefining the relationship**

**Like any other relationship, our engagement with our bodies needs conscious attention. When this is about pampering and self-nurturing we may have one set of feelings. When it is about limitations and demands- those may be quite a different set. There may be little that we can do or think to change the facts of a chronic condition- but we can change our relationship to the feelings and meaning that we come along as a result.**

### **Read the label, check the fine print**

**One step is to think, write, talk about the meaning that the condition has taken on- how has it changed your self-image? And what feelings come along with this change? Once you have a list of the feelings that you notice, think, write or talk about what those feelings get you doing. For example- does anger get you to ignore the needs of your body? Does shame have you hiding your requirements or limits from your family or friends? Is blame encouraging you to argue, fight or even separate from people you once felt close to? Is sadness stopping you from doing things that are still possible? How is this affecting your life? What are the consequences relative to your body and its needs? Are these things okay with you?**

### **Buy a different product**

**Once you have teased out the feelings attached to the meaning you make of your body's demands, you have some choices. Are there feelings that you might have some influence over? How might you exert that influence? If it is sadness, for example, is there a way for you to acknowledge the sadness and then do something you enjoy, in a smaller dose? If anger is influencing you to ignore your needs- what will be the long term results of this? and is that okay with you? How might you speak back to this anger, acknowledge and reduce its influence? Is there a person who might help you overcome the effects of shame?**

I respond by placing my comments in the body of your message- the result reads more like a conversation than a letter.

If you would like to learn more, please visit [www.iac.privacemail.com](http://www.iac.privacemail.com)

*Copyright Bonnie Miller and Inter-Action Consulting 2008*

If you'd like to share this newsletter, please feel free, as long as nothing is changed!

If you would like information about on-line or face to face counselling sessions, visit: [www.inter-actionconsulting.com](http://www.inter-actionconsulting.com)

**It is easy for me to write about this- not that easy for folks to do on their own. The challenge is that physical limitations and conditions are often treated in isolation, through practical means- the feelings and meanings of these conditions are rarely addressed.**

**If you take anything from this issue, I hope it would be that physical conditions are appropriate topics for counselling consultations- talking to someone about the feelings and meanings might be an extremely useful step in developing a better, lighter relationship with a body changed by chronic illness**

## **Therapy Speak**

**Most people are familiar with the term 'denial'. I am not exactly sure what it 'officially' means- but I am guessing it is another word for 'argument'. Sometimes therapists talk about a person being 'in denial'. At other times, they will say that a person is 'resistant'. I think it might be useful to explore what these commonly used terms actually stand for, what they might be demonstrating...**

**What is being denied, exactly? Is it the condition, is it the meaning that seems to come along with the condition, or is it something else? What is being resisted?**

**Sometimes our denials and resistances can point us to what is valued and valuable in our lives- things that may have gone unnamed, or taken for granted. When a change is imposed, these valued ideas and hopes can become illuminated- perhaps because they are threatened, or even seem to be lost. Don't these things deserve a little bit of our attention? Even if we find that ultimately, we must say good-bye to certain cherished hopes- don't we need some time and space for that process?**

**If you have thoughts or comments on this, I would truly like to read them-**