

A reflection on why we should bother

*By Gayle-Anne Drury
December 2009*

I was in Geneva in the summer where the United Nations was celebrating the Year of Astronomy, 2009. A large display situated between Lac Lemman and the luxury hotels housing diplomats and business people from all over the world, was trying to bring people's focus to understanding that we are all part of one earth.

Shortly after enjoying the display, I found myself sitting in the park by the lake, breathing in the peace, noticing the inviting, crystal clear water, the seemingly endless blue sky and the luscious green earth, while enjoying the cool, invigorating breeze and the comforting, heart-healing sunshine.

I watched a family who were also basking in the sun. The Mother was lithe, strong, and beautiful – her long, shiny, mahogany hair piled lazily on top of her head. Her bare feet carrying her on the earth beneath her with a solidity and security borne of her sense of her authority in her world. The Father was bronzed, toned and casually chic. His confidence and his subtly communicated yet obvious wealth surrounding him like a silken shroud. Their small daughter seemed oblivious, unknowing, nestled carelessly in the parental cocoon holding her. Her every move displaying her casual acceptance of the enveloping care that has always been hers.

I watched as these doting, attentive parents worked together, caressing their child as they applied the much needed sun lotion. Their hands, their eyes, their movements, consistently carrying their messages of never-ending love. Their child's head, held high with the confidence of those who are adored, her slight frown, her impatient, flashing eyes, her desire to be free of this cosseting, this gift of loving which to her felt so natural, so constant, she barely appreciated it. Yet, I wondered, what devastation would she experience if it were gone?

I thought about the display I had just seen. I thought about the striking but artificial colours used by NASA and others when publishing photographs of our universe. I reflected yet again on our understandings or lack of understandings of what in our lives and our world is myth and what is real. I thought again of how our only reality is the given, present moment. Our greatest myth is perhaps our belief in constancy. Our trust in a certain level of constancy means we miss the vibrancy, the potency, the gift of each present moment.

When I witnessed that small child taking so much for granted, I asked myself – what do I take for granted? So I ask you – what do you take for granted? What does our family, our workplace, our society, our world take for granted? And what do you or I think we should do about any of that?

Why should I spend time reflecting on a small family scene I witnessed for no more than five minutes in Geneva? Why is it important? One of the questions we are



asking in this newsletter is why should you bother? Why do we bother to write reflections like the one above?

As therapists, coaches and managers, we are very aware of the dangers of neglecting our thinking or feeling about our past, our present or our future. Neglect of any of these times of our lives holds slightly different traps for us to fall into if we are not vigilant. If we fail to pay attention to our past we may be driven by repeating processes and dynamics we don't understand and cannot change. If we fail to pay attention to our present we miss the only thing of which we can be assured, the existence of the present moment. If we fail to pay attention to our future we may be carried along on the whims and fancies of life and of those around us, maybe missing our own goalposts. We ask people to question what they think or feel, to ask what is myth, what is reality, what belongs in my past, how does this inform my present and how does it help me plan for my future? It is our belief and our experience that by doing so we can improve our present moment, our lived reality.

I will leave you with these sobering words from songwriter Jack Johnson in the hope they will inspire you to think and feel further and deeper – you never know where it may take you.

“Never Know”

Extract from a song by Jack Johnson

It's shocking but we're nothing

We're just moments.

We're clever but we're clueless

We're just human.

Amusing and confusing

But we're trying.

But where is this all leading?

We never know.

<http://www.jackjohnsonmusic.com/music/detail/inbetweendreams/>

