

grounded in Moshe's clinical experience as a psychologist and family therapist, though he readily acknowledges the input from many others. Moshe comments:

Though the voice in the book is that of the therapist, the writers are Tesse and me... Firstly we discuss the story: what tone to give it, what goes in and what stays out... Tesse sits at the kitchen table while I pace the floor and talk. On rare occasions she will write it as I say it... but often she writes it in her own way, differently from the way I talk... I want to give more details and theoretical explanations. Tesse believes in keeping it simple and brief, in allowing the story to speak for itself (p.5).

The book is divided into four parts: part 1, *Children*, which conveys 'some of the playfulness and expression of fantasy' (p.10) that is to be found in family therapy involving children; part 2, *Couples*, which emphasises, 'given the complexity and difficulties of married life, the task of the therapist to think creatively and foster an atmosphere in which new, and perhaps unconventional solutions can be found' (p.89); part 3, *Relations*, in which, during individual therapy, it is considered that 'the individual and family therapy are two sides of the same coin; it is a matter of how the therapist thinks of the issues presented. It is important to consider how an individual's behaviour affects and is affected by others – the social and historical context in which the behaviour pattern developed should not be overlooked' (p.196); and part 4, *Generation to Generation*, which deals with 'the effect of the Holocaust on particular families. No human suffering, problems or symptom can ever be fully understood without taking into account the history of the person's family, and only when the Holocaust was explored did these families' problems become comprehensible, providing the context for alleviation or resolution' (p.200).

Moshe and Tesse's stories invite readers to enter the therapy room and experience the interactions between participants. Actual dialogue from sessions is presented, so that readers can gain an idea of how therapist and clients encounter one another. Moshe offers readers his reflections as to what was happening during the therapy. What I find most refreshing about these reflections is that they are not overly theoretical. Rather, they invite me to reflect on the stories from my own position and so encourage my

Resilience: Stories of a Family Therapist

Moshe and Tesse Lang

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In their new book, Moshe and Tesse Lang draw readers into their world and link them with the experience of those whose stories are told. The stories are

own learning. What I find even more invaluable is that Moshe often shares with readers what happened during therapy to change his thinking about therapeutic processes. Thus, in *The Sad Girl From Ballarat*, (p.17-18), he notes:

We are all children of our time and place. In the early 1970s when I saw this family, family therapy was enamoured with effective interventions and brief therapy. As a result I failed to explore the family's world sufficiently, and this failure led me to suggest an inappropriate homework task. Nevertheless it is still valid that my feelings may have paralleled the experience of the sad seven year old and her family.

In *Incest*, in which a father has sexually abused a number of members of his family (pp.179-80), Moshe comments:

Then Susan said, 'By the way, when you saw us at Bouverie, why didn't you offer to see us without my father, or individually? Didn't you realise that we were very constrained and we could not talk to you freely?'

I answered, 'I was wrong. It didn't occur to me at the time. I was too enamoured of family therapy as I

understood it then, dogmatically committed to seeing every member of the family together. I was insensitive to the issues of the distribution of power within the family and its counterpart, the fear in others.'

I believe it is Moshe's courage in revealing his errors and the learning that occurred from them, that makes this an inspiring work, one that can stimulate readers to contemplate their own mistakes and the learning that is to be gained from them.

This is a truly remarkable book, beautifully crafted, compassionate, informative, enlightening. I believe that it would find a welcome home on the shelf of all therapists no matter what their persuasion or training. It is filled with gems. One of my favourites is *A Suicide Attempt* (p.211). The daughter, who has attempted suicide, thinks that she is her father's problem because she hears him call out her name frequently during his recurrent nightmares. The therapist elucidates that the father is calling out the name of his own mother, who was lost during the Holocaust, and after whom the daughter was named. This is great therapy! Thank you Moshe and Tesse for sharing your stories with us.

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