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*Editor's Commentary: When Being
Bad Is Really Being Good!*

In this chapter Moshe Lang, an Australian, joins American therapists like Haley, Whitaker and Erickson, and Italian therapists like Selvini Palazzoli and her colleagues and Andolfi in the skillful use of paradox. However, apparently he also fashioned much that is innovative in using paradoxical injunctions in training and supervision, evolving this technique by trial and error experimentation quite independently.

As is usual in the history of ideas and inventions, several people in different parts of the world, quite separately, seem to create a new way to solve a problem or fill a need. The current of scientific or professional thinking may be leading in a particular direction which is conducive to a discovery whose time has come. Innovative pioneers have the courage to risk departing from tradition to introduce something radically different in response to an externally apparent or internally felt gap.

In reading Lang's account of how he began training therapists to do "bad therapy," one can sense his frustration, born of finding that in some situations orthodox strategies did not work. Like Keith and Whitaker (1978), who imply they only resort to acting crazy and other absurd behaviors when the normal interventions are not fruitful, Lang also reaches toward the novel to circumvent getting stuck and jolts trainees and patients.

Lang's note on deroling or debriefing illuminates a process I also utilize. However, I have attended programs where leaders did not and participants were left in a state of acute anxiety. This caveat to derole by Lang merits attention.

I for one am grateful to Lang for sharing with this wider readership his delightfully engaging article and for his unusually clear explication of what he does, when, why and how he thinks it operates. Such clarity is a rarity in the ingenious sphere of the intuitive wizardry of paradox.

REFERENCE

- Keith, D. & Whitaker, C. Struggling with the impotence impasse: Absurdity and acting. *Journal of Marriage and Family Counseling*, 1978, 4, (1), 69-78.