

From the Editors

By Deborah Weatherston, Hiram E. Fitzgerald, Editors, Michigan, USA and Maree Foley, New Zealand

Daniel Stern: He captured our attention; he challenged our capacity to see more of what was hidden from plain sight; he pleaded with us to slow down, listen, watch and learn before constructing a story; he introduced us to babies and their interactions in a dynamic fresh way; he called us to be present with the language of experience.

When WAIMH members received word that Dan Stern had died, many around the world expressed deeply felt sorrow for the loss of a colleague, a mentor, and revered leader who had an enormous influence on the infant mental health community. The WAIMH Board sent a note of sympathy to Nadia Bruschweiler-Stern (Dan's wife), his children and family, but struggled with how to say "good-bye" and honor a man who was so very important to the development of our thinking about babies in relationships and the rapidly growing infant mental health field. After considerable thought and a flurry of e-mail communications, board members agreed that there could be a special edition of Perspectives in which we would publish remembrances, personal and professional. In turn, several colleagues responded quickly, confirming their willingness to contribute their reflections.

As a result, this Winter 2013 issue is dedicated to Daniel Stern and contains a series of reflections from colleagues, concerning interactions and experiences they had with him. These generous offerings provide a rare window into the person of, and the work of, Daniel Stern. They highlight the fact that he didn't talk the walk, he walked and sometimes even danced the talk.

In addition to the contributions from those who knew him, we have made one article available, with permission from the publisher, the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health: Stern, D. (2008). "The Clinical Relevance of Infancy: A Progress Report," *Infant Mental Health Journal*, Vol. 29(3), pp. 177-188. This is representative of the many books and journal articles that he published during his wonderfully productive career.

Finally, we hope that this issue of Perspectives will help keep Daniel Stern's many contributions alive and in mind as all of us continue our work with and/or on behalf of infants; and as we enter into meaningful working relationships with one another, savoring every moment.

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President's page

By Miri Keren, WAIMH President, Israel

Some two months ago, our daily work was interrupted by the spreading news about Dan Stern's death....

While writing this very sentence, I reflect on my hesitation of which word to choose...»passed away», or «was gone», or simply «died»...Is it because the notion of «death» is too difficult to comprehend ...not only for children but also for grown-ups...that we tend to use metaphors such as «gone forever», or, as we commonly say in Hebrew «went into his/her world»? The first reaction is almost, «What? It can't be. I just talked to him a month ago...Well, yes, he was very sick, but he got through each time...»

Losing our parents and our teachers is a «natural» fact of life and still it presents us with existential questions...especially for those of us who already have half of our lives behind us. When one of my residents in Child Psychiatry was waiting for his first baby to be born a few weeks ago, I thought of a common denominator between the two extremes, life and death. The exact time of the first breath, as well as of our last breath, is unpredictable, even when birth as well as death is more often than not expected. In a way, birth as well as death is always sudden and as such, surprises us. May be it has to be so because these two «present moments» (as Dan would say) are so overwhelming in their intensity and their absolute, «all or none» quality, that it is better, in psychological terms of survival, not to know them in advance. We know what happened to Adam and Eve when they ate the apple from the Tree of Knowledge...they started to experience fear, anxiety...what we call negative emotions!

In that sense, life is not less anxiety-provoking than the prospect of death. The difference is that in life, the young children, the adolescents, and the young adults can talk to their elders and get a sense of what is lying ahead of them so that they can prepare themselves, make plans, use the experience of others. They also know that if they feel alone or afraid, they can turn to their attachment figures (hopefully!). Death, and what comes after, if anything does, is the only life event that nobody can give a good advice about it. If only one could tell us about what really is in the aftermath...

The closer the deceased person is to us is, the more we are bothered by the question, "What is the «present moment» now for Dan?" Whether there is one, we will never know...but for us, the living, the way to continue Dan Stern's "present moment" is to go on teaching our students and young colleagues not only Dan's major concepts of affect attunement, selves, motherhood constellation, but also his philosophical and scientific stance: to observe directly and then to reflect on the significance of the observed phenomena.

I met Dan a year ago, at the IACAPAP meeting in Paris. He was already very sick, but I was struck and deeply moved by his tenacious way of thinking about what he observed around him... as if it had become a reflex behavior...This is, in my eyes, the most powerful legacy Dan Stern has given us and the following generations of infant mental health clinicians and researchers.

This issue of Perspectives in Infant Mental Health is fully dedicated to the many ways he has been perceived by many of us...