

Report on 25th UK Guild Annual Convention. A personal view by Hilary Chapman

Having had a week to clear my head following the latest convention these are some of the impressions I am left with.

First there is the warm fuzzy feeling I get thinking back to all the smiling faces of the friends I only usually get to see once a year.

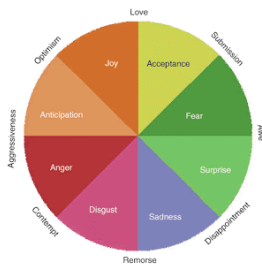
Then it strikes me that the convention is wonderful value for money. We had inspirational speakers who are happy to share their experience and knowledge over a three day period and it only cost £30.

What learning did I get? Well lots. Conversational Decoding was ably presented by Matt Hudson so that it was easy to understand. I've spent the week spotting "away from and toward" types as well as "proactive and reactive" "internals and externals" and so on. It was another view of how people tick, which I think Matt has identified himself. Matt offered to email handouts to anyone who contacted him

Rob Williams stepped in at the last minute to take the place of Kath Carter, who had to drop out because of an injury. Rob has worked successfully with people with addictions. What I took away from this was the simplicity of his approach. A great reminder not to over complicate therapy. Pat Trowbridge was inspirational talking about her work with autism. She came over as a very warm and caring lady who is a little bemused by the amazing success she has had helping autistic adults and children to communicate. Again her approach seems simple using mirroring and storytelling which somehow has enabled autistic people who have never spoken to find language and start communicating with their families.

From Miranda Kennet I enjoyed the exercise on graphing my working highs and lows. I discovered that I enjoy the challenges in my work more than I realised. It is a technique I have used before, but had forgotten about. So that's one to dust off and put back in the hopper.

What also sticks with me from Miranda's presentation is the realisation that most people spend their lives in the uncomfortable emotion zone. Scary!



Sue Stewart gave us a comprehensive talk about supervision and the requirement from some organisations that therapists should have a minimum number of hours supervision. Fortunately Sue provided us with an excellent handout which I really must study as it all seemed a bit complicated but it's made me aware that it's something I should look into.

So what was different about this year?

Well we were ably led by our new chairman Leslie Hubbard, although Wilf was there to make sure we were on course. On the Sunday afternoon instead of having the swap meet type session that we usually have Lisa Morgan (vice chairman) gave us an opportunity to revisit False Memory Syndrome a subject that Leslie had presented at one of the Swap Meets. Having heard both I can say that it is a fascinating subject, one for therapists to be aware of. Matt Hudson gave us a demo of Convincer Strategies that prompted some fierce debate, from the floor. I found it very useful and have been checking out my own and friends strategies this week. I'm getting quite good at spotting them now. If you have been wondering why some clients don't change it's one to look into. I much preferred this use of the Sunday afternoon session and I think the feeling was general as we were still there hotly debating until 4:30pm.

One sad change was that Lenny is no longer at the Palm Court. I missed him as I think did many others.

What was the same? Well lots of heated debates, friendly warm atmosphere, free exchange of learning and experience, fun dinner dance and my obligatory visit to the Scarborough Tandoori for an Indian, on Friday night.

A lot of people must be working hard behind the scenes to put on such a great weekend so thank you for all your efforts, it was brill. I'm already looking forward to the next one.