

# USATAA-NET

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Summer 2015

## EDITORS' NOTE



*This edition of the NET continues the process of discovery and thinking about how to enhance our lives and grow our careers with TA. As we think about the future, we will visit TA history and say farewell to long-time TA friends Shirley Jaeger and Claire Marsh.*

### IN THIS NET:

This issue continues the 2015 theme of growing and expanding in TA, especially through the TAP program.

Web strategist Janice Gentles-Jones turns the table on us, asking us to, "consider your action plan a contract you make with yourself to achieve your marketing goals."

Additionally, one of the co-editors reflects on how fate and 66 days shaped her career.

### 2015 EDITIONS OF THE NET

*October 15*

If you are offering TA- and TAP-related training and/or supervision, send the details to [net@USATAA.org](mailto:net@USATAA.org) by one month prior to the next *NET*'s deadline, and we will publish it here and online.

If you would like to contribute an article about how you creatively use TA to build and/or expand your business reach and services, we invite you to share it with us.

## USATAA HOSTS SUCCESSFUL GATHERING DOWN SOUTH

*By Kimberly McClelland*

In March, USATAA hosted a southeast/southwest gathering in the historic town of Abilene, Texas. Our gathering "Journey down the Path to TA," was fun, informative, and motivating. The gathering, coordinated by USATAA's Southwest Regional Representative Sue Robinson and Coordinator of Programs Kimberly McClelland, gave those of us who are old-timers a chance to visit and reconnect with colleagues. Everyone enjoyed meeting and introducing new folks to TA who were energized to learn more. We are planning on continuing the learning of TA by offering a TAP.

Chuck Holland started our day with a keynote address, which gave a rich history of TA. He expounded on the importance of TA in the therapeutic realm as well as how it can help in everyday life. Next, we had three breakout sessions offering participants a view of the power of TA. Catherine O'Brien, USATAA's general coordinator, invited her attendees to explore the internet—especially what Google Hangouts had to offer to those wanting to learn more about TA as well as a way to expand and meet a new generation through technology.



*Southwest Regional Representative Sue Robinson and Coordinator of Programs Kimberly McClelland put together the Southeast/Southwest regional USATAA gathering in the spring.*

Kathryn Sherrod, USATAA Southeast coordinator, gave talks on TA and energy psychology. Kimberly McClelland shared her work using TA and EMDR with children and how to reduce their anxiety and fears.

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## VANN JOINES TEACHES TA IN CHINA



Vann Joines returned from his second trip to Shenzhen, China, where he offered a TA 101 and conducted advanced training. He plans to return to China before the end of the year to offer more advanced training in transactional analysis.

### REQUEST FOR PHOTOS

Email professional pictures of your TA-related training programs and events to [net@usataa.org](mailto:net@usataa.org). We would like to share them with our readers.

Want to contribute to the *NET*?

The next edition will go out on October 15. Send your material to [net@usataa.org](mailto:net@usataa.org) by September 15.

## USATAA IS FOR YOU!

If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2015, please do so at [www.usataa.org](http://www.usataa.org) or by sending your dues (\$50 per year) to

USATAA  
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The United States of America Transactional Analysis Association (USATAA) is the association for the practice of Transactional Analysis in the United States. USATAA publishes the *USATAA-NET* four times a year.

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Note to members: We are re-evaluating our regional structure, since we have added several regions and will update the bylaws accordingly. Your thoughts on regions that make sense are welcome.

## REMEMBERING CLAIRE & SHIRLEY



Claire Marsh

*Claire Marsh died on February 1, 2015.*

In a 2010 article about Claire Marsh, who had been honored that year—her 90<sup>th</sup>—with an award from USATAA, Chuck Holland noted that she was dedicated both to the personal growth of her clients and her own development. Chuck shared that Claire had a deep capacity to self-reflect and to find new ways of loving and nurturing herself. He attributed much of his own inner strength to the “journey” he had with Claire. At the time of the 2010 article, on the cusp of her 90s, Claire was exploring her creativity through the art of painting.

Though she had cultivated her knowledge through training directly with Fritz Perls, Jacob Moreno, and Eric Berne, and became an innovator in applying TA in a variety of settings and integrating it with new technology, many will remember her for the ways in which she touched their lives.

Those same people can take comfort in imagining Claire among the “angels” she referred to below, when she wrote, and said better than we can, the following:

*“Many of those who taught me have left this plane  
and I presume are now teaching angels about Parenting and Childing....  
I can see Bob and Mary (Goulding) sitting on a cloud  
with young angels sitting around and learning!!  
I imagine John (Gladfelter) at my lake house,  
standing with me and looking across the water ...”*

*Shirley Jaeger passed away on January 16, 2015 at the age of 80.*

It was the fall of 2001 and I had been in Vann Joines’s Redecision training group for three years. I said to myself, “It’s time to broaden my horizons.” I had heard about the Jamaica Gathering in the middle of the winter when it was cold and gray. It was sponsored by USATAA for folks who have an interest in transactional analysis. So I announced to my best friend Shirley, with whom I shared a private practice office, I’m going to Jamaica next year to check out this community and see if I’m a fit for it or it’s a fit for me. I’m going with you or without you. The rest is history. Shirley became my traveling companion.

This was the first of many of our adventures. It began with sitting in Kingston on the patio of the airport, telling stories and eating “patties.” Those of you who were at the Gathering in January of 2002 will recall with a smile the phrase, which Shirley shared, “Bless your heart.” As I sit writing this memory of Shirley, a smile comes to me as I think of all the times we shared laughs together. Shirley was a welcoming and fun person with whom to travel. We were always looking for new places to explore and new things to learn. Being a part of the TA



*“Shirley had a kind of intelligence that is rare – the combination of head and heart – so her speech and actions always felt genuine.”*

Lucy Freedman

community was a joy for Shirley because of all the international friends we made. People meeting people on a personal level, this is what Shirley loved to do.

At conferences we frequently went to different sessions just so we could share ideas and notes. Shirley was a lifelong learner. May we all aspire to be lifelong learners. But at conferences and gatherings it

was not just about the learning, it was about the play. For Shirley, every night was a dinner party with new and interesting colleagues to meet. That is the way we spent those days on the beach at the gatherings in Jamaica and at conferences in Mexico, Scotland, Canada, Nashville, San

Francisco, and New Orleans: telling stories, laughing and learning, that is what Shirley enjoyed doing and who Shirley enjoyed being.

I can't think about Shirley without acknowledging how she helped me keep my sanity as I helped plan the 2005 USATAA conference that took place in Nashville. Shirley was the social chair for that conference. What a party she planned for Saturday: Halloween costumes, food, and music. Everyone had a good time. Again, for those of you who attended, my wish is that just thinking of the party brings a smile to your face as you remember that Shirley's hand guided that party as well as the mixer where we all became the insects of our horoscopes.

As I sit here thinking about my best friend I ask myself what I would want *you* to remember about her. Shirley always said that the foundation of her therapy tool box was her knowledge and use of transactional analysis. Everything she used to help people was based in TA. I would want you to remember a phrase that Shirley told clients to help each individual attain autonomy; that is to keep balance in their lives by thinking clearly, acting wisely, and feeling deeply.

Always remember that you cannot think, act, or feel in isolation of the other parts of yourself; it is in doing all three, at all times, in balance with one another that you achieve wholeness.

*Suzanne Wilson, in Tennessee*

Shirley had a kind of intelligence that is rare – the combination of head and heart – so her speech and actions always felt genuine. She was also very humble, given her extensive knowledge and experience. I never saw or heard her one-up anyone or be mean-spirited, in fact, quite the opposite. She had such a beautiful voice and presence. Her desire was always to help and to heal. Also to have fun, usually in a gentle, relaxed way. I'm glad that since Shirley and Suzanne Wilson came to Jamaica and then stepped up to host the Nashville USATAA conference, I was able to share in the learning, caring, and fun times with her. We are fortunate now to have a friend in Shirley's daughter, Kris Ellis, who we hope will join us again in Jamaica.

*Lucy Freedman, in California*

#### GATHERING/PAGE 1

We enjoyed a great lunch with a very informative panel that shared their insights into how to start a private practice. The panelists offered key moments and valuable information from their own journeys, including how to get on insurance panels, tips on marketing a practice, and insight into the types of obstacles they had to overcome.

After lunch, we went back to work and offered a course about Ethics for today's world, which I presented with Catherine. We shared information regarding our newest challenges with the latest technology that has entered our practices.

Finally, *The Magic Shop*, presented by Chuck, incorporated music and a journey down to the Old West. Attendees were invited into shop, which involves guided imagery for the Child ego, engaging it in a safe and fun manner. After all, it's the Child ego state, where real and lasting work and learning occur, for our clients, and hopefully for those who attended the gathering.

We hope their learning continues through some of the books that were purchased onsite at the bookstore. The bookstore featured *TA Today* and *Personality Adaptation*, by Vann Joines and Ian Stewart, and Steve Karpman's *A Game-Free Life*.

#### TAP TRAINING

##### TAP Training Program

With Catherine O'Brien

Learn More:

<http://catherineobrienmft.com/ta-training/>

##### Ongoing TAP Training Program

With Vann Joines

Southeast Institute, two locations:

Chapel Hill, NC

Louisville, KY

<http://www.seinstitute.com>

##### TA 101

With Vann Joines

Southeast Institute

Chapel Hill, NC, Sept. 24-25

<http://www.seinstitute.com>

##### Jamaica Gathering

January 23-30, 2016

Connect with TA trainees and practitioners from around the world, and engage your Parent, Adult, and Child on a unique learning adventure!

Email [Jamaica@usataa.org](mailto:Jamaica@usataa.org) for full details.

# THREE PRACTICAL MARKETING TACTICS TO GROW A FRUITFUL BUSINESS

By *Janice Gentles-Jones*  
Marketing and Website Strategist

As a transactional analyst, you know the ins and outs of providing a safe place for your clients to resolve conflict. But where do you go when *you* need help as you build your practice? It may feel natural for you to guide others, but your business needs guidance as well.

This is where having a marketing plan helps because it is a way to make sure that your target audience knows about you. Let's take a look at these three steps that will help you get clients and grow your practice: create, identify, and clarify.

## Create an action plan to get clients.

When you work with a client you may have a contract that lays out the results they are looking for. Well, consider your action plan a contract you make with yourself to achieve your marketing goals. Take a step back and ask yourself the important questions that you need to address. This will do a couple of things for your practice. First, it will allow you to assess your current status. Second, you can then use this information to break down the steps needed to make improvements. Your action plan will be your formal guide to follow so that you make consistent daily efforts towards reaching your goals.

## Identify your audience.

The type of work offered from transactional analysts varies depending on the focus and type of practice. Does your work focus on counseling, psychotherapy, education, or organizations? If you are a counselor, do you focus on individuals, couples, or groups? Or all of the above?

Identifying your audience is an important part of shaping the message you convey in everything from your newsletters to your website. Once you identify your audience, your next step is to be clear about the problems that you solve for them. You want to make sure that every message you relay is talking directly to your client's needs and concerns. If you have multiple audiences, you may want to consider dividing the content on your website and mailing list, so that each message is targeted to a specific audience.



## Clarify where you're stuck.

This is sometimes the hardest part when you're working on an action plan. You may know what can be improved in your practice, but taking the steps to get "unstuck" isn't always right in front of your face. When it comes to marketing, there are so many avenues to try it's easy to not know where to start.

To simplify the process, let's talk about the marketing cycle which includes the following: filling the pipeline, following up, having sales conversion, and closing sales. Identify where you're stuck and write down five to 10 daily action steps based on where you're stuck.

If your problem is filling the pipeline, try going to networking events or hosting a free webinar to get leads. If you need to close sales, see if you need to revisit your pitch and work on confidently relaying how you add value to your clients. The key is to be consistent and choose actions that you actually enjoy doing. The closer you stick to your marketing action plan, the closer you will get to a thriving TA business.

*Janice Gentles-Jones helps solopreneurs successfully promote what they do so they can get clients, live debt-free and serve others through an abundance of time and money.*



Join Janice Gentles-Jones in a free webinar and learn how to design and implement an easy marketing action plan to get more clients. **Visit [janicegones.com](http://janicegones.com)**

# NATURE, NURTURE, AND ... FATE:

## THE SOMETIMES FORGOTTEN HAND THAT SHAPES OUR LIVES AND CAREERS

By Emily Keller

Just more than a year ago, I started to see a client at least twice a week for four months until he moved. In the beginning of our work together, he started each session by melting into a chair, sighing, and saying some version of, “Ups and downs, just ups and downs.” He looked exhausted, sea sick even. As he sat motionless in the chair, he struck me as searching for stillness. He reported being relieved to have a place to just sit and “be.” The “doing” of life, following through with the bare minimum of what was required, drained him.

At first, I wondered if he was in touch with his feelings and if he were in touch with them, if he had the emotional vocabulary to express them. I soon found out he was and he did. His problem wasn’t lack of awareness of his feelings or a lack of words to use. Rather, the problem was the “ups and downs,” that followed after his wife demanded a divorce he didn’t see coming.

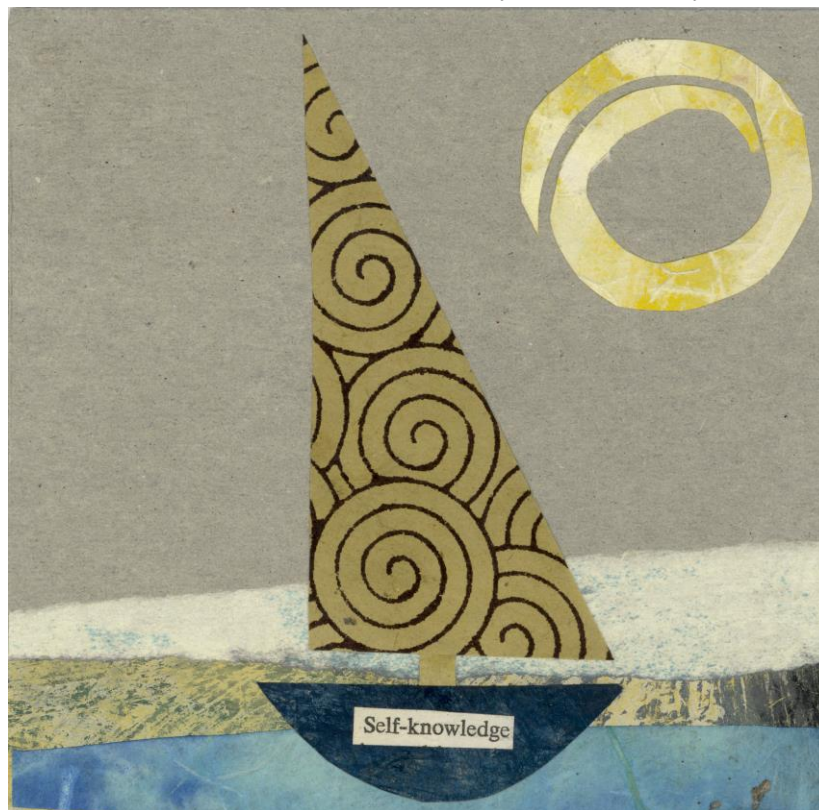
To him, they had the perfect relationship. To her, she thought that if she could keep quiet about everything that upset her, her anger would evaporate. It didn’t. When she finally spoke up it was to tell him she was leaving and would never return. Since then, he had been navigating the ups and downs that accompanied his hope of her coming back and his acceptance that she might never want to. The word “might” was key. He had no evidence that she wouldn’t suddenly return, just as she had suddenly departed. The possibilities—the mights and maybes—offered hope,

the probabilities—what he sometimes thought was most likely—squelched it. More powerful than the emotions that accompanied the hope and lack thereof, was the frequent and abrupt exchange of positive feelings and negative feelings.

Today, I know that my client was suffering from

“ambiguous loss” (Boss, 1999). This complex form of loss occurs when a loved one is physically present and psychologically absent, such as in the case of Alzheimer’s. It also occurs when someone is physically absent and psychologically present, which occurred when my brother went sailing and didn’t return. Without any evidence to tell us what happen, we – his closest family – straddled two worlds. In one world, we imagined the worse and were mournful. In the other, we refused to let go of hope.

Until I found the book, when people would ask me how I was doing, I would answer, “Ups and downs. There is no other way to describe it.” Sure, there were other ways. I could have talked about the intense bouts of sadness that stopped me in my tracks. I could discuss the electrifying hope that jolted me out of bed in the middle of the night and spurred hours-long searches for any information related to his situation and others like it. I could describe the awkwardness that accompanied speaking between my long-divorced parents. I could have attempted to describe the guilty sense of peace and protection I felt when I heard my mother tell my father, for the first time that I can remember, “No matter what, we are family. Our children bind us and we will get through this



together.” As intense as these emotions were, they all took a back seat to the intensity of the pattern of the ups and downs. I was on a ride I desperately wanted off of, but there seemed to be no end.

A sort of motion sickness accompanied me everywhere I went. Not nausea, just a visceral attempt to keep stable outwardly no matter what was going on inside. I stepped cautiously because I never knew when my compass would switch from an intellectual satisfaction that he had probably died to an unexplained *felt* certainty that he was alive.

If I had ever come across the term ambiguous loss before, it didn't stick with me. I found it late one night on one of my hunts for information, *any information*, that could help me make sense out of where he was, how long he could survive, or even, how long it takes a body to decompose in the ocean. During these times, my Adult ego state transformed into a Pac-Man eager to consume any little dot of data it found that was even slightly related to disappearances at sea.

Once I named what I was going through, I felt less insane. I searched for more information and discovered the book, *Ambiguous Loss Learning to Live with*

*Unresolved Grief*, by Pauline Boss. I ordered it immediately. Two days later, I saw that in addition to a chapter titled “Mixed Emotions,” there was a chapter titled “Ups and Downs.” I felt sane.

Until this point in my life, my career growth had been shaped mostly by talents that came rather easily to me and by skills I have had to work to acquire (and am still acquiring). They have come, in effect, by both nature and nurture. Scholars may argue whether great leaders are born or made, I believe they are born and made. Furthermore, I agree with the character Malvolia in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* who said, “Be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon ‘em.”

Whether tied to the supernatural or chance, fate has a way of thrusting the unexpected upon us. Through fate, we explore terrain that had never before piqued our curiosities and that we had tried to avoid. In that terrain, we discover—by tripping over the obvious or digging deeply—strengths and talents within ourselves that we didn't know were there.

Unlike most cases, my ambiguous grief was resolved. My

brother was rescued by a freight ship after 66 days at sea. I got the call just hours before my going away party. My family and I were moving the very next day. With his return, the ups and downs stopped, but my feelings were still in the back seat. When the torrential flips came to a halt, and after the initial shock, I was numb. I felt nothing. I don't know if this is what happens when ambiguous grief is resolved or if this was just what I needed to do in order to prepare to move my four boys half-way across the country and then care for them for more than two months while my husband traveled. What I do know is that after weeks of simply not caring about anything except getting through each day, I have started to feel again.

I have yet to cry about leaving friends or even about my brother's return, but I have moments of feeling. There are moments of sadness for moving away, moments of joy for being back “home,” and moments of anger and frustration in my temporary role as solo-mom. Gradually, the moments last longer and aren't so far apart. The numbness is fading.

What won't fade is what I gained during the experience of ambiguous loss thrust upon me. I didn't ask for it. I didn't want it. I don't ever want to go through it again! I am, however,

grateful that I have one more way to connect with clients. The next time one of my clients says “ups and downs,” I might just say, “ambiguous loss,” and they might just feel sane, as I had.

I am not glad for the ordeal we went through as a family, I am, however, glad for the greatness of the experience. It is one more way, not discovered through nature or nurture, in which I can really “be” there for my clients, with my clients.

No matter what fate brings, she invites us out of our comfort zones and into the unknown. She requires us to reflect and reconnect with ourselves in new ways, which helps us make new authentic connections with our fellow human beings. While I hope that fate is kind to you, I also hope that when she isn't, you will make meaning out of it, and then make more meaningful connections. The beauty of fate is that she grows us beyond both nature and nurture.

## References

Boss, P. (1999). *Ambiguous loss: Learning to live with unresolved grief*. Harvard University Press (Cambridge)

*Whether tied to the supernatural or chance,  
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Emily Keller

## USATAA COUNCIL IS READY FOR YOU!

USATAA needs your organizational skills and experience to enhance our ability to serve members and the greater public. Consider which of the available positions would be the best place for your talents and the time you are willing to offer.

We meet by phone once a month, and execute well-defined projects in between. Not sure if you are ready to make a full commitment? Try us out. Take on a short-term project before committing to a longer-term position.

In exchange for your time, you will get to know and work with other interesting and engaged transactional analysis practitioners. You will help grow TA in the United States and Canada. Council members are dedicated to spreading TA and responding to our members and the public about the practice of TA. Positions that are or will soon be open include Pacific Regional Representative and Coordinator of Programs.

If you are interested in one of these positions, email Catherine O'Brien at [coordinator@usataa.org](mailto:coordinator@usataa.org) and we will schedule a time to further discuss the role. Your talents truly are in demand! We look forward to hearing from you.



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What are you waiting for?  
Share your laughter and TA  
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**January 23-30, 2016**