

Alan Entin, PhD

Interview by Andrea Schara

December 6, 2015

Andrea- Today is the 6th of December and this is Andrea Schara with Alan Entin and we're going to talk a bit about how Alan met Dr. Bowen and what he learned in that relationship with Dr. Bowen and how he began to use systems thinking in his own work, and who knows what else might come up! But witnessing the interview are my two granddaughters Victoria and Bridget Schara and so if I don't behave they can call me to order (Laughs) otherwise it'll be your opportunity...So where do you want to start out...

Alan- Well many years ago I had a post doc at the University of Wisconsin. And I think the first guest person they had there was Murray Bowen.

Andrea- What year would that have been?

Alan- It was 1967.

Andrea- 1967. And what was he there to talk about?

Alan- Well, he was there to talk about family therapy with Carl Whitaker.

Andrea- Oh how fabulous.

Alan- Well you say fabulous but it was like...Carl Whitaker territory and Carl Whitaker is as different as you can imagine from Murray Bowen. As rational, objective, intellectual that Murray Bowen is, Carl Whitaker was warm, intuitive, and psychoanalytic.

Andrea- I met Carl Whitaker.

Alan- So this was completely the opposite and people didn't know what to make of Murray Bowen there. We may have even left early, all the residents...

Andrea- Where psychoanalysis meets systems thinking. Warm and fuzzy versus the strategic...what would you call him?

Alan- Objective, rational thinker.

Andrea- Objective, rational thinker.

Alan- And then there was even social event that evening at someone's house.

Andrea- And so your first impression of Bowen was?

Alan- Wow.

Andrea- Wow. Wow I think I'll leave early (Laughs).

Alan- Yes. Right (Laughs).

Andrea- Rational thinking.

Alan- It was just Carl Whitaker territory. It was what Carl Whitaker did there and Whitaker couldn't explain it and no one could understand it.

Andrea- (Laughs) So Whitaker couldn't explain his own psychoanalytic....

Alan- No, he couldn't explain Bowen. But Bowen was there for demonstration and discussion.

Andrea- With a live family?

Alan- I don't remember.

Andrea- Because sometimes he did live work, he was unusual in that day and age, working with live families.

Alan- Yes, that was a long time ago, I don't remember.

Andrea- So how did you ever come back around?

Alan- Well...HI...let's stop this is Elaina and my wife, Phyllis. And there's Bridget and Victoria and Andrea.

Andrea- Nice to meet you two. I know you (Laughs).

Alan- They were just doing yoga....Tai Chi upstairs.

Andrea- Yes, I love that, I should have come earlier.

(Unclear discussion in background)

Andrea- Alright so back to business.

Alan- Well so it was the spring of the next year and I was looking for what to do. I would have loved to stay in Wisconsin but Madison just produces so many therapists that unless you're in with someone. You need a two years post doc, this experience as a psychologist, in order to be licensed. I didn't have that, of course, I had a year experience. Actually, I wanted a second year post doc in Wisconsin but after the experience I had with previous post docs...(laugh)...The post doc right before me decided to change his name to Swami something or other.

Andrea- Swami? Not psychoanalytic?

Alan- No he was Swami Sachendenango? maybe. And actually I saw that he published a book once and it said with parenthesis with his name in it. He became a hippie, yoga, Maharishi type and no one ever heard from him again.

Andrea- That's a sad story.

Alan- And so you're ready to go out into this world. Whitaker gave me the name of all his friends, notable family therapists and the one that panned out was a job here at Medical College of Virginia, Department of Psychiatry, now known as Virginia Commonwealth University.

Andrea- Wow. Who was the person? Who he referred you to?

Alan- Well he referred me to the chief of psychology, to a psychiatrist named Henry Lederer.

Andrea- I know Henry Lederer. He's died but I knew him well.

Alan- Everybody dies. I say that because I was interviewed by some people when I was here, one of them was Richard Armstrong and another was Morton Schumann, MSW

Andrea- Yes, I remember Richard Armstrong.

Alan- And his wife, I just saw in the paper today, died. And he died a while ago.

Andrea- That's one reason to do these interviews before people die, it's nice to get their side of the story. The emergence of Murray Bowen into the world of psychiatry.

Alan- So Dick Armstrong and Mort Schumann were interested in family psychiatry and Bowen was coming once a month and said that in the fall he was hoping to come back once a week. I guess there may have been a symposium at MCV a year or two before that with a whole bunch of well-known family psychiatrists.

Andrea- So this would be like 1968.

Alan- 6 or 7.

Andrea- Before he had started at the MCV clinical days?

Alan- Yes, so he came down. I think it was actually weekly that he came down. For the first two years that I was there he came down weekly.

Andrea- So he worked with him and Lederer, I know that.

Alan- Henry was very supportive of Bowen but Henry made some promises that got him in trouble with the legislators. I think there was talk of him... he wanted to build a psychiatric institute that never came through. He ended up leaving MCV and to go back to the VA in DC. And Bowen meanwhile was coming down once a week and doing a clinical program and so I spent every Friday with Bowen.

Andrea- For how long?

Alan- It was two years.

Andrea- And was that when he was interviewing the W_____’s and the B_____’s?

Alan- Yes.

Andrea- I came to some of those too, the W_____’s and the B_____’s. What did you make of that? Because he’s still the rational, thinking...

Alan- Yes, and then there were the programs in DC, the clinical conferences, a group of us from Richmond went to those. And I presented a few times at those...

Andrea- At the symposium?

Alan- Yes, at the symposium and at the...

Andrea- How did you get over your “I think I’m going to leave early because he’s thinking and he’s rational...and asks all kinds of weird questions...”

Alan- Well I met with a bunch of people, Andy Ferber, you’ve probably never heard of Andy Ferber...

Andrea- No, I knew Andy Ferber.

Alan- Oh I loved him. He was like a young, good looking dynamic guy who Guerin would later tell me stories about (Laughs). He went sort of off the deep end.

Andrea- Maybe too much temptation when you’re a young, good looking person. The deep end gets to be very appealing.

Alan- It wasn’t that kind of deep end but he was...had problems.

Andrea- Not enough rational thinking...

Alan- Right. So I never knew really what happened to him and I met Harry, Sal Minuchin and a guy Nathan who was up in Canada, he had moved to Canada.

Andrea- Nathan Fox?

Alan- No. He moved to McAllister in Toronto. He said, “Oh Yes, we wanted you to come and take a look.” It’s like drive my wife’s old Nash Rambler cross country then you won’t pay for gas or anything. So I ended up coming down here because it was a real job. So I was working in the department of psychology, in the division of psychology, department of psychiatry.

Andrea- And so you developed a private practice out of that?

Alan- A clinical practice and a private practice.

Andrea- But I'm still not clear how you made the transition to being interested in Bowen, coming from Whitaker, the psychoanalytic and the feeling world...

Alan- Well it was easy.

Andrea- It was easy (Laughs).

Alan- He was here and I worked with him every week and read his stuff and listened to him and it made more sense than trying to figure out....Whitaker was great but Whitaker was very intuitive. Actually I just read a book, well I didn't read a book, I read about a book that a psychologist wrote about intuition and the value of initiation, she's a psychologist and artist. But Whitaker once had this great conversation with my daughter who was like two at the time. And she had a balloon and he was talking to her through her balloon. And she was shy and not responding. And he connected with her through the balloon, he was marvelous at connecting with people.

Andrea- I remember my favorite Whitaker story was he would take people out in his canoe in Wisconsin...couples...and his dog. And a dog and a canoe and if they were able to talk about things that were calm and so forth, the dog would be calm. And then if they got excited the boat would start to shake and the dog would bark. And he was also famous for: in his office he would go into a trance and put himself to sleep while he listened to you talk about your things that were bothering you and hurting you. And you would look over and he's sound asleep. And then he'd come out and say, "I had a dream" (Laughs). And it would be something about a balloon. It wouldn't be exactly...

Alan- You couldn't replicate what he was doing. You couldn't do it.

Andrea- But there are many books written about him, he was an amazing guy, I met him and he told me, "You'll learn a lot from Bowen, but be careful" (Laughs).

Alan- (Laughs) So I spent a lot of time with Bowen and working on it. So I have to tell you at one of these clinical conferences, it was my turn to present a family, and the family came and Bowen came he wanted a cup of coffee. So I said sure and I'll get some for the family and then he said, "So Al" and no one calls me Al, "Well Al, how did the family hear about it?" And I said, "Well Mur," nobody calls him Mur, "they heard good things about me and they wanted to see me. So I said the only way you can see me is if you get interviewed by Murray Bowen first. And he said, "Well Al, I got a lot of fantasies about that" and I said, "Well Mur, you ought to share them" and he said, "No" (Laughs). So I got three cups of coffee and he wondered why, and I said "Because you're a very stressful interviewer". So we got to the interview room and I said, "Murray, I'd like you to meet my father and mother." And he interviewed them.

Andrea- Was it really your father and mother in real life?

Alan- Oh Yes. I had lost a lot of weight and they wanted to see me. And so they heard that I looked good and that was the tie in and I said only if they'd be interviewed by Murray Bowen. And it was the worst interview he ever did. It was boring. It was boring.

Andrea- He did it just for you, I guess.

Alan- No, it was boring.

Andrea- Are your parents boring?

Alan- Yes, they don't talk about themselves. And then at one point I don't remember the question, but Bowen asked my mother about her mother in law, my grandmother, my father's mother and she let him have it. Whoa!

Andrea- So your father's mother was an object of contention?

Alan- Oh Yes! She said they almost got a divorce because of that women.

Andrea- I believe it.

Alan- And she was fairly mild my mother. She said she once got so angry and my grandmother was so nasty to her that she threw a milk bottle across the room.

Andrea- That's exciting.

Alan- That she was so angry.

Andrea- Milk is a good symbol too. Breaking the milk bottle.

Alan- I don't know what I did with that tape though.

Andrea- Oh you have it on tape... well the national library is collecting all these tapes.

Alan- I don't know where....

Andrea- Well if you find it they'd be happy to have it. So anyway, you thought Bowen could be funny, he could tease with you...but when he had to interview your parents they were tough for him.

Alan- Well no, it wasn't because of him. My parents they were just... they don't talk much about family.

Andrea- Only about mother in law.

Alan- Only when you hit the button. You hit the button.

Andrea- And brought a little excitement. So...go ahead.

Alan- No go ahead.

Andrea- I was thinking that you developed your systems ideas but you took them in a slightly different direction in your work with families...

Alan- Yes, I'll come back to that. But I'll tell you this: that my father had a younger brother and he never, ever, ever, ever, never spoke about his younger brother.

Andrea- So that was a mystery for you and you...

Alan- See, when I was little I found some letters that my uncle had written and somehow I saved them.

Andrea- Alright.

Alan- And a few photographs. My uncle was probably the black sheep of the family and no one ever spoke about him, even after my father's death.

Andrea- Wow. So you didn't speak to your father about him either?

Alan- I tried.

Andrea- You had the letters, you had the photos...

Alan- But nothing.

Andrea- Nothing. Sealed.

Alan- My father once met someone who said, do you have a relative with the name Bernie? And my father said he just passed out.

Andrea- Passed out?

Alan- Passed out. What happened? "I just passed out." And then what happened? I don't know what happened. Did he leave you dying on the steps? Did you ever see the guy again?

Andrea- These are good rational questions about a very emotional topic.

Alan- Yes and he never said. He never said. But it was actually my cousin's mother, the one in Darien, his mother knew him.

Andrea- So the one in Darien is your mother's cousin?

Alan- No, it was my father's mother's sister's daughter. My first cousin. And after my mother died then she started talking to me about my uncle.

Andrea- What did she say the mystery is?

Alan- Have you ever heard of the Spanish Civil War?

Andrea- Yes, I have heard of the Spanish Civil War.

Alan- But you've just barely heard about it.

Andrea- I wasn't Spanish but what happened...

Alan- It was the war against Franco. Franco took over...

Andrea- Before the Second World War

Alan- Right. Right. And my uncle went to fight against Franco.

Andrea- Whoa. Because your family's from Spain?

Alan- No, because he said it was the right thing to do.

Andrea- Because he hated Franco?

Alan- Well it was a war for justice and equality. They wanted to prevent what would become the Second World War. They wanted to prevent the rise of Nazism; they wanted to prevent the spread of fascism. There's a current movie now called Trumbo.

Andrea- Trumbo?

Alan- T-R-U-M-B-O, which you ought to go see and that's about the blacklisting of Hollywood screenwriters during the McCarthy era.

Andrea- Oh Yes, I saw the previews for it, it's out now. It's a new film out now.

Alan- Yes, and it refers to the Spanish Civil war. It's the same issues because back then communism was a very fashionable and very important thing and a lot of intellectuals were supportive of communism and the war in Spain.

Andrea- But not your father apparently.

Alan- He never spoke about it.

Andrea- So his younger brother goes to fight in a war and he reacts to that somehow...

Alan- Somehow. But it's unclear whether or how much of it was before the war or how much had to do with the war or him going off to war and he wrote his mother letters from Spain and then she developed a stroke. And how much... she dropped out of college.

Andrea- So your father could have seen his mother suffer because your brother left and went to fight in a war of ideas.

Alan- Yes, but according to my cousin there might have been other things even that...

Andrea- That he had done to upset his mother?

Alan- Well, the two brothers didn't talk to each other

Andrea- But that's a nice triangle if you do things to upset your mother.

Alan- Yes, you're right. Or somehow they fought like....Bridget would you pass me the pen that's over there, please.

Andrea- This one?

Alan- No this one. I mean it was like, they couldn't say "Andrea, could give me the pen?" They would say Bridget.

Andrea- Wow, that's pretty intense, when the person becomes a non-person in the family. The person is in the house but no one talks to them.

Alan- They don't talk directly to each other. And I could go on...I've done papers on my uncle.

Andrea- Oh ok, we can read about them.

Alan- He died in Spain.

Andrea- At a young age.

Alan- At 22.

Andrea-At 22. But the disapproval of that brother lived on in your family to become kind of a mystery.

Alan- A mythical. A mythical person.

Andrea- That's pretty interesting. And he left the family a mythical heritage.

Alan- Yes, he did.

Andrea- They couldn't get around this...

Alan- Right, and he may have fathered a child...

Andrea- So then your daughter could marry somebody who turns out to be her... (Laughs)

Alan- It would be her first cousin. Right.

Andrea- In some states that's not allowed. So it is fascinating though that in families that are highly threatened if you don't go along, if you differ too much, then you are cut off. I call it the church of the cutoff.

Alan- Yes and all the people who went to Spain did it with pseudonyms and they did it for lots of reasons. They didn't want their family to know and they didn't want recriminations against their family. Because if you listen to the McCarthy era stuff that they took it out against the family members.

Andrea- So if your brother or your son goes to war...

Alan- If they were a communist. You could lose your job or become ostracized.

Andrea- Very serious thing. And may not have been the first generation but emotional cutoff is probably the most different from any other concept in psychiatry. In therapy there's no emotional cutoff. So that was part of your attraction to Murray Bowen...

(End of interview part 1)

Andrea- Brand new memory storage in the interview with Alan Entin and he was talking about his brother.

Alan- My uncle.

Andrea- Your uncle, I want to make him your brother. You don't have a brother.

Alan- I do.

Andrea- You do have a brother. So maybe we'll talk about your brother, but this is your uncle.

Alan- My father's brother.

Andrea- Your father's brother. Who died in Spain during the...

Alan- I'm going to tell you about him, the process, not content. So I couldn't find out anything about my uncle and then one day I had a friend who was leaving Richmond but started to do some family theology work and said, "oh by the way I have this genealogical, like ancestry.com, anyone who you want me to look up?" I said, "Oh Yes, my uncle Bernie." Then I got the brilliant idea that I never had before why didn't I Google my uncle and see what comes up. I mean everyone is always Googling things, why didn't I Google him and I said "well, what's the likelihood of finding someone who died 70 years ago in an obscure world, in an obscure war, in an obscure place..." Well, I Googled his name and something popped up immediately.

Andrea- What was it?

Alan- Well, it was a reference to him by someone who wrote an article and he wrote that he was in Germany with a choir and they were going to perform and his son was with him and daughter-in-law and he was going to publicize his book... oh! but that's not what I wanted to tell you. But I had a flashback and it was in Germany and the flashback was when I was in the Spanish Civil War and... my best friend...

Andrea- It gives me chills.

Alan- Yes! It gave me the chills. And he talked about his best friend, Bernard Butch Entin. This is like 2000, he's writing this. And how he saw my uncle and he got a wound in his shoulder and he thought he would be back to war soon and he said, "that was the last I saw him." And I named my son, who was with him, Butch, I gave him the middle name of Bernard, after my best friend.

Andrea- Oh, wow.

Alan- What kind of story is this. I called, I had tried to find him. He had recently died a few years before. I called the son and never heard from him. So I called him back, eventually I called him back and he wasn't home. And his wife said, "Can I help you?" And I said "This is going to sound strange but your husband was given the middle name of Bernard after my uncle." Yes I called him a couple of days later. Now he says he called me back, but I never received that phone call. I wrote him and then I called him. And his sister called me, we spoke. And he had a book and I had bought the book and there were lots of references to my uncle, a lot of anecdotes. So that's where I had most of the knowledge about my uncle.

Andrea- You're kind of telling this story about how families get big holes in them. Like black holes.

Alan- It's like wait a second, this guy lived until 2002 and you never contacted our family to say: your brother was my best friend.

Andrea- And he died in the war.

Alan- And he died in the war in 1938.

Andrea- But it also tells you more about your uncle, who he was and how he was a best friend and how people loved him...

Alan- Oh Yes, people loved him. I met a couple of guys who knew him. One guy I spoke to said, "When your uncle went to Europe I gave him \$5 for his mother, no, I lent it to him...no I gave it to him". I said, "You got to tell me if you gave it to him or lent it to him. `Because if you lent it to him I owe you a lot more in interest now" (Laughs).

Andrea- That's so funny.

Alan- So I met people who he knew and a lot of people knew him by stories and stuff.

Andrea- What do you think that does for families? This kind of looking back at the past and understanding your family and bringing them alive.

Alan- He was mythologized as this hero and everybody... what's amazing when I went on these trips...

Andrea- His friends saw him as this hero and his family saw him as a

Alan- It was a cutoff going on these things. We went all around Europe, all around Spain. We go to these places and they just have people from all over the world there and then we went to different cities.

Andrea- What's so important about people healing these holes in their families, do you think?

(Map is taken out)

Alan- Oh here! We went to Madrid, we went over there, here to Zaragoza and then to Barcelona. We went to Madrid, we were just walking around, and there was a building, and we wore a dumb tee shirt like your wearing, and the building said, "No you can't come in, it's a private library. What does that tee shirt you're wearing mean?" And I said, "Well, we're here commemorating the international brigade who fought against Franco" and they said, "Come right in. You get that you saved our country. Your relatives came and they weren't paid, they were volunteers from around the world came to fight for Spain to save the country," and these people were treated like heroes. We'd go to cities and they'd get roses, they'd get beautiful presents: books, silk scarves all sorts of commemorative items. Back home they were premature antifascists, blacklisted, here they were real heroes in Spain. Trying to understand how or what motivated them.

Andrea- Families do have a way of casting off certain members of the family into the black hole. We call it cutoff.

Alan- And from all over. One woman whose father {indiscernible} but she was just furious at her father, he had never told her about his involvement in the war. She didn't know anything about that.

Andrea- That's an interesting story. I have sort of similar story with my father who fell apart after the Second World War, he was dismissed from his family and seen as an alcoholic. And despite having been on Curtis Lemay's staff and done a lot of the designing of the firebombing of Japan and had a lot commendations, he was the first intelligence officer to fly a B-29. He left a whole book of photographs and on the front of it was a statement saying, "Perhaps this tome presented to you by your granddaughter Andrea Roth Maloney..."

Alan- You?

Andrea- Yes... "will help you to deal more effectively with the most difficult thing in the ignorance of man." That's all my dad wanted me to do (Laughs). Help the ignorance of man. But 20 years after he died, I had a party, a celebration, at the Williamsburg Pottery Factory, his brother owns that pottery factory...

Alan- Really?

Andrea- Yes, and my dad worked with his younger brother, who was the boss man after the war and we lived in Virginia beach so I wasn't close to my father because he fell apart, didn't function well, and this happens in a lot of families where the hero in the war sense falls apart or dies and becomes this...

Alan- Well PSD, but it wasn't called that.

Andrea- It becomes a scapegoat. And the family disowns them.

Alan- Who knows why but it happens so universally and it wasn't just my family. And I did see a lot of these guys who went off to fight came from single, head of the household families. Whether their fathers weren't there and they grew up in orphanages and stuff.

Andrea- There was a whole lot of that. But I think scapegoating is universal. If you look at hydrases that are 4 billion years old, those little cellular colonies and they would gather around when nitrogen becomes depleted in the atmosphere the hydrases say: "Wait a minute, some one of us has to fix nitrogen and give up their reproductive rights and I think it'll be...we'll pick on Victoria today (Laughs)"... What if she doesn't want to do it, then she'll have

to find someone else to scapegoat. She's going to have to convince Bridget to give up her reproductive rights. Or me. Or you. But someone is going to have to adapt to the changing environment. The easiest thing to do is to blame someone for the anxiety. The anxiety goes up and somebody's got to be at fault. And yet when you take them back, when you take the person back, what happens is that your own life becomes somehow different.

Alan- In the thing about the Spanish Civil War is that these people treated like heroes and you can't... no one wants to talk about them in clinical terms

Andrea- (Laughs) Yes. I made a book about my father and I gave it to all the people that came, people in the colonist club that knew him. But my uncle, my father's brother, refused to come. And I gave him the book and he looked at the book and said, "Your father was still an alcoholic" (Laughs). And so there's a little reciprocal thing that you can get off of blaming the other one and I said, "Well that's ok, you and my dad used to fight all the time." And he said "I didn't fight with your dad." And I said, "That's probably just my dad's version of the story."

Alan- Yes right.

Andrea- Everyone has a story, and their version and that's ok. But that was an intense time to take my father back into the family, again, even though he had been dead since 1967. Just 20 years later.

Alan- My uncle I found in the McCarthy house of American activities report in the '50s and he died in '38!

Andrea- That's something to think about.

Alan- I did some once in the family history, the woman was talking about the importance of my uncle in all of that, that wasn't part of the story (Laughs)

Andrea- But the importance of your uncle to you.

Alan- Yes and my development but I said: no that wasn't part of it. So I've been working on commemorations of him and going to Spain.

Andrea- You do this with your clients? You tell them the story, or you encourage them to bring in photographs of their family members.

Alan- Ok, so let's switch gears. To my head, so Tim did something... he did a presentation on his Irish family and I photographed it and we presented it as part of the entertainment at dinner at a Georgetown symposium. And after we had stopped talking about photographs and I said, oh I could probably figure out of way to use photographs to operationalize Bowen theory...Huh?

Andrea- (Laughs) Over peoples head.

Alan- Over peoples head. And I came back and did it. Actually it was the following year or the year after that, I presented at the Thursday symposium. The clinical day I presented Bowen theory in slides and cartoons and he said, "Well Al, you said it all without saying a word".

Andrea- I don't remember that.

Alan- And I did present a paper on photographs and psychotherapy there.

Andrea- So how do you do it? You ask people to bring in their pictures?

Alan- Well what I did was: I developed a theoretical framework for thinking about the different concepts of Bowen theory and operationalize them in photographs.

Andrea- How did you operationalize differentiation in a photograph?

Alan- Well I couldn't. Well really, that's not true.

Andrea- Ok. I remember the button you had- "differentiation is only a generation away."

Alan- Oh good for you! I showed a picture of Freud and his family.

Andrea- And that was differentiation?

Alan- It might have been. {Undecipherable} No one was holding each other and said, "He was standing like that, and maybe he was differentiated in his family and able to develop the kinds of theories that he did."

Andrea- Just being more emotionally separated. That's good. That's a good one, I like that.

Alan- And emotional cutoff and cutout and cut people out of pictures.

Andrea- Usually their spouse but sometimes...

Alan- Or their ex-spouse when they divorce.

Andrea- Brothers are common. My brothers probably would have been tagged with that Bowen theory, I'm pretty sure.

Alan- So that's what I did, and I came back and I presented it. I got the idea of doing it from a photographer I knew, who made photographs into three dimensional works and from Peggy Papp and the family sculpting, I said, "you could do the same thing looking at photographs". I looked at photographs and developed some of these to think about them according to Bowen theory. Then presented them at APA and you do enough of that and people call you.

Andrea- You practice builds up. And then people carry on.

Alan- Not only does your practice...but I got a call from someone once who read about it on an airplane.

Andrea- Oh wow, a magazine on an airplane.

Alan- A magazine. The women wrote it for a California paper and it got written up in American Airlines magazine. And the woman said my name is Jane Brody and I write for the New York Times, could I interview you? Oh sure.

Andrea- Then you're going to appear in the Boston globe, too.

Alan- Oh yes, but that one was on the front page of the Science Times.

Andrea- Oh, that's amazing.

Alan- And once it goes to the front page of that it's picked up and all the magazines around the world, TV...

Andrea- I didn't know about that either. But congratulations.

Alan- Then people always refer back to that and so a couple of years ago there was an article in the New York Times about Photoshop and I said, "Where did you get my name?" and he said "From the New York Times article." And this was for the New York Times.

Andrea- We can Photoshop your family and make them perfect. No problems.

Alan- Right! It was called, I was there. And there was a teacher reading that article to his class at NYU and all of suddenly there was a scream in the room and it was this young women saying, "That's my uncle Alan!"

Andrea- It was your niece?

Alan- Emotionally. She was our best friend's daughter. She was a photography major at NYU. And there she was.

Andrea- So it took off.

Alan- It really took off and then there was a guy called named Tom Wessells who used to come around and he and I were friends and he wanted me to supervise him and he was doing a dissertation on working with veterinarians and anxiety when their pets are sick.

Andrea- That`s where we were today. Two emergencies while we were there and people were pretty anxious, even in the vet clinic.

Alan- It`s how to work with vets and anxiety and then he wanted to present it at APA and so he wanted me to sponsor him and I said, "Oh sure, I`ll give a talk too". Like what the hell do you know about animals, you don`t even own one! But that`s ok I`ll do one. And I gave him a call and ...are you ready? The Pet Focused Family.

Andrea- Oh I love that! The Pet Focused Family.

Alan- Well you`ve heard of the child focused family, well the pet focus family! And I became, I hate to tell you this, especially in front of these two young women, I became the expert in pets in the family at APA. So that if a reporter even needed a quote on pets, pet death... I once got a call from the BBC and they wanted to do something on whales and I said something like, "It must be making the biggest splash across the Atlantic" (Laughs). That`s how I developed that speciality using Bowen theory. And then I talked to a guy in the Virginia Beach area.

Andrea- That`s where we`re headed to.

Alan- That`s why I`m telling you. And I actually wrote an essay on families for the Chrysler museum. You`ve heard of the Chrysler?

Andrea- I`ve been to the Chrysler.

Alan- I wrote it on family theory for the Chrysler and there were two photographers and one of them, he said "Oh my father served as ... or my father used to work with pets too". Like...Yes...everyone says their father works with pets. Then I said, wait a second your father was...

Andrea- His father was Tim? Tom Weasel?

Alan- No, no his father was Boris Levinson, who was the photographer who... it was Levinson but it was his father who was the first psychologist to work with pets. It was really the truth. It was like...REALLY?

Andrea- They use dogs still in all kinds of things.

Alan- In all kinds of ways, Yes. So I presented many, many papers, many times on pets. So I`ve expanded Bowen to use both with photographs and pets...

Andrea- So in the ten questions which we have mostly covered without asking, I think with what you contribute, and how to do you think Bowen theory might grow and develop in what areas or who could it help in society if they knew about it.

Alan- It could help everybody if they really knew about it and applied it. Probably help figure out how to save the world from this crazy situation we`re in now without all this fear and panic. Even the President was speaking today about the anxiety and the panic in the world and how it`s just contributing to making things worse...

Andrea- The world is following its feelings. There`s a woman who`s a friend of Kathy Wiseman`s and she is a single mother and she has a child about eight and she`s planning to take the child to Paris and now she just cancelled the whole trip, and I asked her statistically speaking, what are the chances of your having a problem in Paris, and she looked at me like I had two heads. Statistically speaking. You`re way too rational. Get in the feeling bathtub with us, let`s feel some panic. And I don`t allow it.

Alan- Right. It`s crazy.

Andrea- But it`s hard not to feel it when you turn on the TV and people are showing you shootings every week. And then Bridget told me that people are getting used to it. They didn`t react as much.

Alan- Sure. I usually, I haven`t lately, get called for every mass incident. Now I don`t think they even call psychologists to ask them, what do you think? How do you deal with the kids?

Andrea- What`s your normal response to that?

Alan- Depends. I did one after 9-11, and I said shut the damn television.

Andrea- (Laughs).

Alan- See you're laughing.

Andrea- Yes, it seems so obvious but kind of funny. People don't think of that, it's too rational.

Alan- And then, I said, probably won't get on the news tonight. Bless her heart if she didn't say, "Dr. Entin said shut the television off."

Andrea- That's a good way to do it. Let's talk about it and not just sit there glued to the TV and be...what do you call that? Manipulated.

Alan- Yes.

Andrea- Well let's see, what else here is worth trying to enclose here.

Alan- I think it has applications, but people are so emotionally oriented that they just can't even focus on the rational way of dealing with it. That you don't have to be feeling oriented or go to war.

Andrea- If only Donald Trump could get a machine gun we would have no problems in the world. He would build walls and bomb them out and they're not human so we don't have to care for them anyway. Well that's, I think, that Bowen used to call it a regression.

Alan- Yes, a societal regression.

Andrea- People would go back to an earlier age, and I was wondering what age it is when people want to fight all the time. What age is that when they're unable to be rational.

Alan- The Stone Age.

Andrea- (Laughs) I was thinking more like.... four...where they bite you and carry you around, pre verbal. Kind of all emotion. Well I appreciate the time and the thinking that goes into this. How are we doing on time?

Alan- It's one thirty.

-Unrelated discussion-

Alan- So that's what else I wanted to say: early on, so somewhere really early on I suggested I take pictures and I documented all of the events that I was at and when Murray Bowen was here in DC and made albums, upon albums, upon albums of photographs.

Andrea- Did you give them to the Bowen family?

Alan- Yes I did and I gave one to Bowen, too.

Andrea- Well that's the Bowen family.

Alan- I'm sorry I gave them to the Bowen family and to Georgetown.

Andrea- I don't remember the albums there, but the Bowen family has a lot of albums and they're donating them to the National Library of Medicine but if your name isn't in it then they won't.

Alan- No it's a gift. It's not in it.

Andrea- But if there are pictures there that I didn't take then they're pictures that you took. I'll send you a release for the National Library so you'll get the credit.

Alan- Sure but I took them and I gave them to them and to Georgetown, a few, maybe a shelf load.

Andrea- I gave mine to the National Library of Medicine.

Alan- You didn't ask me the follow-up question, the follow up question is all the letters and there were only about 6 letters that my uncle sent from Spain, they're in Hamilton Library in NYU. When I started there was no information...

Andrea- On the Spanish Inquisition?

Alan- No, on my uncle. Spanish Civil War. And by the time I finished I had what they call a vertical file, I wrote a bunch of articles and gave them information.

Andrea- So we could Google you.

Alan- Oh Yes, you could Google me and my uncle.

Andrea- And you and the pet.

Alan- Oh God. Don't even.

Andrea- Alright, well I am going to end this for the moment, maybe listen and come back again and do another one and get a picture of you and the girls for the record book...