

Interview with Lilian Rosenbaum
Conducted by Priscilla Friesen

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For the Murray Bowen Archives Project of Leaders for Tomorrow at History of Science
Division of the National Library of Medicine

Friesen: I will start the interview with the time.

Rosenbaum: And we have an hour?

Friesen: And we have an hour, yeah.

Rosenbaum: So, like, give me a little warning here and there.

Friesen: Yeah, I will tell you. We'll hear it a 45-minute bump with the tape recorder. So it is April 14, 2013. And this is an interview with Lilian Rosenbaum. Priscilla Friesen is doing the interview. Lilian, let's begin with you and your personal, some person facts. When, ah, when did you know Dr. Bowen, when were you involved with Dr. Bowen? How did you meet him? And what was your- the nature of your relationship with Dr. Bowen?

Rosenbaum: M, kay. I don't know, I didn't take it that way, but I'll do my best. As I said to you, when you asked me, invited me to do this, I thought, "How can I talk about this for an hour?" And then I preparing to come today, I thought, "How can I do it in an hour?"

Friesen: [Laughter]

Rosenbaum: So much- more than fifty years. Try condensing more than fifty years, of one's life. Into this. I think you're doing a wonderful project, I wanna say that first, and I think your learning space and everything you're doing about it, is

Friesen: Thank you.

Rosenbaum: awesome, and, it fits part of the answer, to your question, because, it's not in order here, but I met Dr. Bowen when I was either 28 or a little bit younger. So, and I'm 78, so I have a, at least a fifty year history here.

At the time, I had two kids; I actually have four kids, and also now, eleven grandkids. I was

thinking about it even today, that patterns in family- I don't want to use the word system, cuz it sounds too stretched, but, family ideas and family process, were familiar to me before I even heard Dr. Bowen's name. I was in high school, and there was some kind of something going on with, between my dad, and his brother-in-law. That's the man married to my mother's sister. And someone, you know, the grandparents, and I-I may have been a little older than 15, probably not much, I say, "you know what, let's have a meeting."
[Laughter]

Friesen: [Laughter]

Rosenbaum: And I can't believe I did that! But I orchestrated a meeting; it went very well,
[Laughter],

Friesen: [Laughter]

Rosenbaum: I was in high school! So I was doing family systems, probably, without having a clue, but there it was. Earlier than that, when I was four, and I remember it vividly as if it were yesterday, my father had- my father literally saved his mother, his sister, and the sister's daughter from the Holocaust. And they arrived in our home, after long- I won't get into that part of the story, there was- he had another sister, and her husband and they were in Paris and they thought they were safe, and they both died in Auschwitz. So I can remember my grandmother arriving and (inaudible) like this, in Guatemala, with her coat, and I knew the story, I knew why they were there. And then for years, listening to the Voice of America every single day. With him and my grandmother sometimes, trying to figure out- I figured that out later, a little bit whether the other sister that was in Paris might have died. And- which was actually confirmed by the International Red Cross. Later, when I started to do, you know, formal research. They did die in Auschwitz. But so family ideas, family process, family people were always important. I don't have a memory of when it wasn't.

I mean, it's really interesting that I remember that. I don't remember being like, scared, it was just like, okay, this is-

Friesen: So it- so you were born, in what year?

Rosenbaum: Yeah, Guatemala, 1934.

Friesen: In Guatemala.

Rosenbaum: And my dad got them out in '38, and the reason he could do that, is because he had come to Guatemala in 1930. Before you know, all of this. Without getting too much into that story, but

So the ideas of family, were like in my tissue. [Laughter] In my bones and my brain and my cells.

I was never without it. So, listening later to Dr. Bowen, at (inaudible) Center I was like, "Yeah, alright. That's cool. I understand- I get that." It wasn't like, "Hmm, what's that?"

Friesen: So this was though after graduate school?

Rosenbaum: After- No, I was in between.

I was in between. I graduated college, I figured out 57 years ago, had my Tufts reunion, of 55 or more, two years ago. And in fact, there's a link, which I meant to mention here, the easier way to find that is just my name, Lilian Rosenbaum with one "L," International Center, Tufts University. And I was interviewed for it, and I have more of the story on that.

But um, so I had not yet gone to graduate school. So one of the basic concepts of Dr. Bowen, in terms of the importance of family, and transmission, and the theories and the concepts, it all made, so much as he had at the time, which is very early, we're talking like 60, early 60s, (inaudible) all made sense, and then the other key concepts, *evolution*, well I-I grew up with that. And so that didn't seem to be, to me, any like, "Okay, so, yeah."

Friesen: In what way? In-

ROSENBAUM: of course, I get that, of course. That's cool." And the example I'm going to give you, is a brief one both of my parents, of course, you know did a lot of reading, and such, but anyway, my father spoke about evolution, and also, by the way, about recycling and conservation, and all of that. Seventy years ago, before the word was even around! And he used to be very proud, and pleased if any one of us kids, I'm the oldest of three, would ask a question that he didn't know the answer to, and he couldn't easily find it in the Encyclopedia. There was one, remember, there's no internet. Called the Lexicon. And he was very proud, and he would say, "That's evolution. When the kids know more than the parents."

Friesen: Ahh.

ROSENBAUM: And otherwise, he said, we'd all still be living in caves. It was just a wonderful (I'd) grow up and learn

I wanted to, kind of a thing, but a very low-key, kind of thing. So, I want to say a couple more things about this, before I change the topic a little bit, or you do.

It was that same kind of feeling, of "Great, the kids know more than the parents." That I was, and am, oh, what would be the word? Proud, professionally satisfied, that people, you, went on to do more, you (Mary Lee), for instance, who didn't do bio- well, actually, she did, she did some personal biofeedback, but she would be a, you know, she wasn't in clinic as you know, but she is about to publish a book called 'Conquering Concussion.' In which she's using neuro-feedback, probably in a different way than you do. That's feedback, that's more feedback. And, you know, all the other people, that you saw in that room and you, you knew, I mean people like Roberta, with whom I did not have any direct- in fact, she, she got my office, after I left, but her book I think, is so good, *Connecting With Our Children*, because she has Dr. Bowen's things, she connects what I did, so I could be, and I am like really pleased that you all of you went on to do more. And I mentioned the other night that part of that, of course, was equipment; I want to talk about that in a minute.

The technology, but I also said to you, "Without theory, that technology by itself isn't going to do anything."

You can have all kinds of technology, but nothing to do. But I think that my dad actually prepared me, so I never felt like, "Oh, these people, they were in my lab-clinic and now they're doing other things, and bigger things." You know, I was proud of

you. I am. Just like, "Oh good, life is good." You know. "I'm alive at 78, I can see what's going on, and I can see all of your successes,

Friesen: Yeah. [Laughter] Mmhmm.

ROSENBAUM: yours and you know, others, (Bonnie's), other people, that last. So, that's evolution. And so, it fit really, really, well, and I don't know if you wanna stop me, cause I have more to say, but

Friesen: Well, I-I was just gonna put a couple facts in, just for the tape purposes. So, You had a social work degree?

ROSENBAUM: Not yet.

Friesen: When you met- Okay, so you

ROSENBAUM: No, not yet.

Friesen: When did-

ROSENBAUM: I went to get that later, I got that, my graduate degree, was in '70. And I've been- see, my work with Dr. Bowen, it was interesting, because of course, the Rosenbaums get challenged. And he had- I actually asked Ruth to remind me of the chronology, because I know she knows everything about that, and she did. Ruth reminded me, I'm reading from the notes she gave me, that the-we, I mean the Family Center, we're not really called the Family Center until it moved off campus. It was called the Family Program. And I was already involved with that before it was even the Family Center, before

Friesen: When did you get involved with that?

ROSENBAUM: You know, I'm 78, I'm not giving you the exact, I'm just giving you in general here.

Friesen: That's what you- it's hard to remember. Okay. Before the Bow- the Family Center, itself.

ROSENBAUM: Yes, I was with the Family Program before it became the Family Center. I was in the beginning. [Laughter]

Friesen: Yeah, kay.

ROSENBAUM: The Bible says "In the beginning..."

Friesen: Yeah, yeah.

ROSENBAUM: Okay. So the first year of the post-grad program, was in '69 and '70, Dr. Bowen appointed to the faculty, was appointed, back (inaudible) in '69. Before the post-graduate program began, there was a symposium, first symposium, 1963, so this is the 50th Anniversary.

Friesen: Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: I'm glad I'm alive for that! And Dr. Bowen had the Thursday lecture, which of course was in the afternoon, blah blah, etcetera, fast-forward to me, he started in 1963 a multiple family research project, in....'66, the multiple family research project, I wanted to bring that in-up, for only because one of the things that I did, to challenge, was those of us who Dr. Bowen invited, to observe him, if you remember multiple family meant three or four families, couples, at the same time. M'kay.

He started in Richmond. And he would do that and kinda like the ticket, if you will, was that any one of us who wanted to observe, he invite- first you had to be invited, and then you had to have, like, a research project you wanted to do.

So, I did. I'm going to, I want to say one-I'll go back to that in a minute. Many years later, after the post-graduate program, one year, he's talking about it, the way he did, and I was there before Mike, I mean I supervised- Mike was in one of my groups one year, and, post grad. And Murray says to me, "You're (in the Advanced Training Program." And I said, "Thank you." Politely. And I said, "Who's going to be faculty?" Thinking he would be. And he looked at me the way he did, when he's like, "What don't you get about this." "You, Lil." [Laughter]

Friesen: [Laughter]

ROSENBAUM: Oh, okay! I would have gone, and not, just sat there and not know that I was The Faculty for The First Year Advanced Postgrad.

Friesen: Okay.

ROSENBAUM: So that was, that was kinda h- you know, that's why I have trouble answering the date, because I didn't know, he was going to...[Laughter]

Friesen: [Laughter]

ROSENBAUM: Fine, you know. He's just like...So, but, on the post-graduate, I wanted to mention that really quickly, because the family on the multiple family research project I ended up doing a study, which actually did get published, in Family Process in 1971. I mean you know, it takes a couple years to get anything, so, I was, I was right in there early.

Friesen: Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: And, the study, let's see- tell you the title of that, because (someone else'll) tell you what I did with that. Cause I want to go back to the biography, but the study was The Qualified Pronoun Count.

Friesen: Yes! Okay.

ROSENBAUM: And the interesting thing about that, he, he you know, I- what did I do? I observed people, I observed their change in differentiation, and I did notice, and as the process of differentiation went on, instead of starting sentences with 'you,' you know,

between the spouses. "You didn't tell me blah blah blah blah," or "Your mother, blah blah," But people started to do more "I positions." I think that trying this, with "our kid" whatever, but I noticed that. And it got published.

Friesen: Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: Now, in 1971 it got published in Family Process. When I was reviewing, recently, in the last few years, I actually probably shredded all of them; I may have only one of those papers. because I thought "what if one of my basic science grandkids" finds this! What are they going to think, this is research? This is ridiculous! [Laughter] Looking at pronouns? But it's directly related to psychophysiology,

The pronoun research was about differentiation, and reactivity. It was in the press in 1971, it got published. But I thought, "There's got to be a better way." Give me a break. There's gotta be a better way. And I went into thinking about reactivity, and limbic system, thanks to Dr. MacLean, who I also visited at the NIH, and differentiation, and, so it-it wasn't disconnected. I mean I did other papers, I'll mention them really quickly here. I did "Ongoing Assessment of Experience" in the University Biofeedback Clinic, my Program that was '81. In '83, I published the other one, on insulin, as, you know, as it decreased. And of course I published my book in 1989, which I was looking at it, you know, recently, and all of this was what is now called integrative medicine, and it's kind of interesting, because that was before NCCIH National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, 1998, formerly Office of Alternative Medicine, OAM, 1991 and I established the Biofeedback Program in the early 1970's

Friesen: It was before what? NCAP?

ROSENBAUM: the National Institute of Complementary Medicine, came into being. Because that came into being. It was established in 1998.

For all the talking about it, it was established then.

So, backtracking a little bit on the history, want to link it to the (alpha theta) and stop then, you can ask me some things, because I have more things I can say. As I started to look at biofeedback, as I thought, "There's gotta be a better way than pronouns."

And my grandsons were not the young scientists, young men they are now. 25, and 21. I mean, they were kids. I'm nuts about them, they're nuts about me, what am I thinking And the- I remembered the other day, is more detail after I listened to your present- excellent presentation, alpha theta, although I had it in the lab, as you know, I with the little meter that I kinda made. A bit of light fun the other day, because of the technology what it was the time, but it was the most advanced available.

Friesen: Mmhmm.

ROSENBAUM: But I ki- in my head, I didn't go around giving talks about it, I thought "This isn't gonna work, for looking at reactivity, and differentiation. It's not going to happen. That link isn't going to happen." And it was that, that prompted me to look more at the autonomic, because that, I knew, could be understandable. Not that the other wasn't, but it was a greater leap and the- and the equipment was so primitive! I mean, you have fabulous stuff here, but anyway.

And, one of the things that I remember after I heard you talk the other day, actually, was that I actually went to visit- there was no training program, so there was no clinic program when I started the one at Georgetown.

And it was not only the first at Georgetown University Medical Center, cause it was part of that as well, it was the first in the metropolitan Washington area. And one of my colleagues reminded me the other day, she believes it was the first clinical program, nationally. Because all the other programs that early on, were research.

And there wasn't a training program. So I didn't go to a training program, but I did go visit the research programs so I could understand what was going on, and take from that, and combine it with Dr. Bowen's theory, and all that.

And one of the people- of course, I went to go visit Dr. Budzynski in Colorado and I actually did go to Menninger, Kansas, I had some contact, and I went to see Dr. Barbara Brown, who was at the Veterans' Administration and, uh, I have the exact name, in California. And she- I had read something that she had published, that was very interesting, she said that, I believe she had published it, and possibly she told me, but either way, that she noticed, when she was doing EEGs, standard EEG, at the (inaudible), that if people looked at the results as they were coming out, it affected the EEG. And what is that? Biofeedback, right? It's feedback. And she went into, you know, the brain stuff, but anyway.

I think it's- so, I won't say more about that, but it was my effort, to have the opportunity to link it with Dr. Bowen's theory, and I went to him, and I told him kinda what I had in mind, and what I wanted to do, and he said, "Okay, Lil, but you'll hafta speak with Dr. Steinbach," who was then the head of Psychiatry, because I didn't want just like a little nothing, in my office, and as I think you know, probably ended up seeing,

that was for a few years, three thousand people, and I had medical students, and post-graduate students, and professionals from other places, so I went to see Dr. Steinbach, and explained, and biofeedback was "bio-what??" at the time, it was like

"What is this?"

And I must have talked with him, maybe, I don't know, twenty minutes, and, because he wanted to know what I was going to do. And then, he kinda listened very carefully, and at the end of that, he said, "Lil, I won't get in your way." And for a moment, I thought, "Aww. That's it. That's what I'm getting? Quote, 'support'?"

And then I (inaudible) thought, "This is great! You're not going to be in my way? This is perfect!" Cause I knew that the clinic could support itself.

I knew that you know, that would happen. And I knew what I wanted to do, so.

So that was really great, but it did have, so to speak, the blessings of, of not only the department, but of the university, the medical center. Let me stop for a second, and let you ask me something.

Friesen: Well, let me- let me pull Dr. Bowen into this a little bit more, so yeah, so we'll

ROSENBAUM: Because, yeah, I want to do that, yeah.

Friesen: But I-I was thinking back, when did you- when do you remember first meeting him?

ROSENBAUM: I was about, you fig- you do the math, I was 28 or a little bit younger, I'm 78 and this was more than fifty years ago. That's when I first met him.

Friesen: And you met him, at his- at a meeting, or?

ROSENBAUM: I don't know, (where, the) (inaudible) and then came. Very early, because he was he was in his own, he was making his own changes.

FRIESEN: So you met him, early, and professionally. So this would be, fifty years ago.

ROSENBAUM: He, he, he got appointed to the faculty, let me look at these notes again, I think I said fifty...nine.

FRIESEN: Yeah. So, you're talking-

ROSENBAUM: (inaudible) And, so, he had been at the NIH, I had a friend who was at the NIH, but not in mental health, basic science,

And I thought about Dr. Bowen, I haven't talked about him right now, but I thought about that a lot. It was at the same time Dr. Paul McLean was at the NIH.

FRIESEN: At the (NIMH).

ROSENBAUM: Yes. So those two, knew each other. I mean, talked with each other.

And I think that's really essential in terms of Dr. Bowen's theory, I mean I think that's-

it was, what, in German? It's called Zeitgeist; it was a sign of the time.

Not only that, Dr. Bowen was thinking about the brain in different ways, and its consequences.

Here was Dr. McLean completely, I mean, Dr. McLean was not in mental health, he was a physician and neuroscientist. I'm looking at what I have here.

He does brain research through his work at Yale Medical School. And the NIMH. He, by the way, died in '94. And- that's another thing I was looking at, in preparing for you, today.

How- Ruth, I think, you gotta credit Ruth for all that information, but you know, all the photos of family people, in the hallway, in the Bowen Center. And I just walked by them, [Laughter]

FRIESEN: We all did.

ROSENBAUM: But I was thinking about it a little bit more, preparing for this, and you know, there's Whittaker, there's Haley, there's Ackerman. Framo, Minuchin. Don Jackson, who, by the way, suicided at age 48, a family therapist (who) And (Nagy), he died at 86. He, I think, was very interesting, because his work actually, might have some of the- because all these other people, I think, in my humble opinion, for the most part they're looking at techniques. And what Dr. Bowen did,

say, "Ok, let's think about this." And he formulated theories, and listed them, and you know, gave people more to think about than

the how-to kinda techniques. But, I thought it was interesting, because Dr. (Nagy), who died at 86 in 2007, he brought-this is I copied some of these things, and this one happens to be from the New York Times, he brought patients' grandparents and children. Into therapy session. So it wasn't only Dr. Bowen that did multi-generation. It was in the air. And so (that's as I said), it's called Zeitgeist.

Dr. Nagy (Dr. Boszormenyi-Nagy was born in 1920 in Budapest into a family of prominent judges. One of two brothers, and spent many afternoons with cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. Blah blah blah. [Laughter] Which has something to do with his extended family thinking in family psychotherapy. So,

FRIESEN: Mmhmm.

ROSENBAUM: I-I I think Dr. Bowen, like all of us, in part is part of a time, but was uniquely special in formulating, you know, formulating theory, which, as far as I know, he is the only one that formulated, and formulated, as much as he did and as carefully as he did.

And while I'm on Zeitgeist, and the time, and I've mentioned a little bit about equipment I want to say this, and then I'll be (being asked) the questions and it'll be a little easier for me, but one of the things that I think is kind of missing, in Dr. Bowen's theory, is the idea of genetic transmission.

I think that too is part of its Zeitgeist. I know, for sure, although I didn't look at his curriculum, of course, he must have had something about genes in medical school, you know, I didn't have one paragraph about genes in social work school 1966-68. Nothing? Nothing.

I don't remember reading the word 'genes.' And I think it's the same kind of thing, and I do know that, when I brought it up, is I thought that different things, um, my observation was that Murray would like, discount that as almost, like, "That's a cop-out!" Although he didn't use that language. And I think it's missing in the theory, because of the time, that he was developing his theory.

FRIESEN: Then. Mmhmm.

ROSENBAUM: I don't know that he would do the same now, or ten years from now, I sort of think he wouldn't, because he was so smart. But-

FRIESEN: Particularly with, like a meeting yesterday, with all that, the genetics, the facts are there.

ROSENBAUM: Yeah. But, you know, I take responsibility for my part, I mean, I didn't come to him and say "Well, you know, I found this paper, and blah, blah, blah." I didn't do that either! But I think that too, was part of the Zeitgeist, and I think

it'd be impossible to think about almost anything that has to do with health, with human

anything, without looking at that. Whether it's you know, the National Geographic did that huge study, or I just went to Grand Rounds. I don't go very much anymore, I figure I already heard that, but I did go this week, and I was waiting to hear something about that, you know, it's just- in relation to medications and stuff.

I was- not relevant to this topic right here, but so I... [Silence]

FRIESEN: So, if you think back to your- in more, in terms of your relationship with him, you were a initially a student, a faculty member, a colleague, a

ROSENBAUM: I became, I was like, I was always a student. [Laughter] once asked him, he had a compass on his desk, did you ever see it?

FRIESEN: I-I don't remember that.

ROSENBAUM: He had a compass on his desk. And I thought about it, and one day I asked him, cause my son was young, he wasn't in the Boy Scouts yet, so I had

FRIESEN: [Laughter]

ROSENBAUM: no reason to think about compass. And I asked him, what that was about, and he said, "Lil, you gotta know one thing. You gotta know what's north." And I remember that so well, because it's part of his theory. Like if you know where you're going, if you knew where you're headed, what direction,

you know?

FRIESEN: Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: It just seemed like so smart, and such an incredibly- I mean, he didn't put in there, for any one of us, he had it there. But I did ask.

FRIESEN: Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: So I was like a student, observer, blah blah, whatever, and then as I say, [Laughter], when I became faculty and then when he assigned me to be the one that was gonna supervised the Advanced, but that was the way it went with Bowen. I didn't go to him and say, "Can I hang around and learn?" I mean, that would not have worked. I don't think. So [silence]

FRIESEN: So you hung around and learned, and he- he understood your capabilities,

and kinda became

ROSENBAUM: Yeah!

FRIESEN: a part of his program,

ROSENBAUM: Yeah. I mean, I was there before Ruth was, he says to me, "You know, we're gonna need some- I'm gonna," he didn't say 'we,' "I'm gonna need someone who does all the paperwork." Like, I wasn't doing paperwork, he was very clear! [Laughter] I had two kids at home, I was gonna have two more, it's like, I'm "Hey, you're in for this."

FRIESEN: [Laughter]

ROSENBAUM: I know sometimes that's a good idea, but I didn't say I'm not gonna do it, I just wasn't doing it. So he says to me, "Seriously, I need someone to, like, do all this paperwork and administrator, and everything," And I said, "Yeah, it's a good idea." And he got Ruth. And of course, Ruth is a goldmine of a person, I mean, he couldn't have got a

FRIESEN: Yeah. Right.

ROSENBAUM: better human in the whole metropolitan area, or wherever.

FRIESEN: Right.

ROSENBAUM: But I was there that early, and as I say, with, as his ideas grew, and I, you know, he, I remember talking to a professor at GW, I was 8 months pregnant, taking a class and (deciding) which what grad school I was going to go to! And he, that professor was doing something very interesting that had to do with the brain. He had measured the brain waves for that like of like (Elmer Green), without contacting the scalp, it was like out here, I was like so interested! And he very politely looked at me, and he said, "You know, first get your union card. Then you can do whatever you're interested in doing." [Laughter] And so I was kinda like looking around, and of course Dr. Bowen didn't have like a formal program, you know, I w- you know, so I ended up at MSW-going the MSW (route) and you know the PhD later. But. Yeah.

FRIESEN: So did you-when did you get your social work degree then? When- was that in '70?

ROSENBAUM: Yeah, I was- It was in 197- [silence] I believe it was in '70. I could look it up, if that's important for the...

FRIESEN: And then you got your PhD?

ROSENBAUM: A couple years later.

FRIESEN: Okay.

ROSENBAUM: Oh actually? I got my- no, I got it in '68. That's what it was, '68. '68. And- yeah. That's what it was. I start- I started in '66, I got it in '68, and I got my PhD in '70. And in between I was having kids.

FRIESEN: I was- that's what I was tr- putting the dates! [Laughter]

ROSENBAUM: nuts. It was nuts. That was-It was -I mean- I had this thing, which was on the data family process, the oldest of three, and my mom was the youngest of three, somehow I decided, having at least one more than three children would be a good idea. Not because anything horrible, but just like, um, gonna do it different.

FRIESEN: [Laughter]

ROSENBAUM: So, I thought "Yeah, I love kids, so I'll do 4-6 kids." And when I think about it now, it's like [inhale].

FRIESEN: [Laughter]

ROSENBAUM: And then I was sufficiently sane, that at some point I just decided I would do four kids and two graduate degree. Two degrees. Two graduate degrees.

FRIESEN: [Laughter] There's some logic in there somewhere!

ROSENBAUM: And my son- my son, much later, asked me, "Mom, did you ever hear about overpopulation?" [Laughter] I said, "Yeah, which two of you should I not have had?" [Laughter]

FRIESEN: [Laughter]

ROSENBAUM: I hadn't really, figured it applied, in my own agenda.

FRIESEN: Well, I guess what I was thinking is you were really the most active female, in that group.

ROSENBAUM: Yes.

FRIESEN: Of young doctors and

ROSENBAUM: I was female, not MD, not Jesuit, at a Jesuit Medical university

FRIESEN: [Laughter] Right.

ROSENBAUM: and yeah. This is actually a very- that's a very correct observation. I did mention that one, when Tufts interviewed me. Because, that's why I was even so surprised, I mean, kinda like naive, when I said, to Dr Bowen, "Well, who's going to be faculty?" [Laughter] He looked at me, like "What don't you get about this?" You know, a little cartoon, that says "What part of 'no' is it you don't understand?" Because I had felt, humble, like there was a part of me that was, I was sure, this is like, good thinking, you know, back to the four year old child, with the family stuff, and then this and the evolution. But I was very humble. About, and very appreciative about the opportunity to kinda like hang around. You want to observe me? You can observe me. I was like, crazy to get babysitters and be there at whatever time, but

FRIESEN: Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: [silence] Um.

FRIESEN: So, what would you say, looking back on this, that was the most important thing about your relationship with Dr. Bowen?

ROSENBAUM: [silence] Well, you know, I think that [silence] I think that personally, and professionally, I probably use some of his contributions to humanity every day. I don't go around thinking, every morning, "Thank you, God, I woke up, and thank you for Dr. Bowen," I mean I'm not, you know, but I am very aware that his thinking you know, I mean, every single human I see, whether they're- whether it's for you know, biofeedback, or any kind of a consultation on anything, where do I start with? I start with a ten minute family diagram, and I can do them pretty fast,

to get, like what are you doing that for. I said, "Oh, well you know, I can't think without it." "Oh, okay, fine." And then it's done. And then the- over time, they see why I did that.

Or whatever. So, in my life, you know, I think that both personally and professionally, [silence]

I use what he developed and what I might have added to, and I- I heard, I think it was one of Andrea's, it may have been one of Andrea's, interviews, but I'm not 100% of what I'm

which one, or what it was, but apparently Dr. MacLean, said, to Murray, I mean, I can imag- when, he, I dunno at what point he said it, but that he, maybe the NIMH had not booted Dr. Bowen out ,

and maybe Dr. Bowen had evolved out, and of course that word is perfect for Dr. MacLean!

FRIESEN: Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: All about evolution and the triune brain! [Laughter] Of course. And I thought about that, and I think that there's a possibility that, in a way, I I'm just saying the same kinda thing happened to me, with the- what was then the Family Center. That it wasn't that it booted me out, but that I evolved out of it.

And I could look at that as "well, where's Bowen Theory then?" But you know what? That's part of it, because,

FRIESEN: Right. Mmm.

ROSENBAUM: I had a strong sense of self at that point. It was the year I became a grandmother for the first time. And- 1988, and I was being spoken to disrespectfully, and I wasn't being consulted about what would happen with my program, that I created.

And made well-known. I thought mmm, no. I'm a grandmother. No one's going to talk to me that way. It's kind of, you know. But I wasn't upset, it's just like among other things, besides finding my office, and renting it, and all that. The first thing I did, that very same year, is I went to Galapagos.

Get in touch with nature and evolution [Laughter].

FRIESEN: [Laughter]

ROSENBAUM: Let me see my reptile brain, over there, and guess what? All the reptiles really do face one way. And they don't play with their young, and I'm looking at them, and the sea lions?

They're playing with their young and they're nursing their young. Have you been there?

FRIESEN: And they'll play with you.

ROSENBAUM: And they'll play with me. I didn't- I didn't

FRIESEN: When you swim. Yeah.[Laughter] Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: The sea lions, yes I did, but not there, at Galapagos I didn't because I went- '88, and it was before tourists went, you know, and I was very

FRIESEN: Yeah. Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: I always go by the rules, you know, and- but I did see, "Oh, okay, so that's the limbic system..."

FRIESEN: [Laughter]

ROSENBAUM: Yeah. Reptiles don't have it. [Laughter] So, um

FRIESEN: Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: Yeah. So the-the question is, what did Dr. Bowen contribute? He contributed to me personally, and I still use it personally, and professionally. I mean, sometimes- I was just explaining to one of my grandkids, cause as you know, I was in Boston, I wa- this week. Yeah, this week. I came earlier, for, to listen to you but, I was explaining the triune brain, and [Laughter] of course, I put in some of Dr. Bowen's stuff, without mentioning

FRIESEN: Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: I'll say, "One of my me-," I'll say "my mentor," or something. I don't necessarily advertise, not necessarily, but so, yeah. My life, my life you know, it, I don't want to say it's permeated with that, but it's probably a good word, because in some ways it is.

FRIESEN: Right.

ROSENBAUM: I mean, the fact that I was able to do even the program that I did, set up at Georgetown, and the way I did it. [silence] I doubt that if I had not had enough clarity of my Self, with a capital 'S' to have done that, I would have, have been a good student, I would have got my graduate degrees, whatever, I would have gotten the 'A's I always got. But really go out there on a limb,

FRIESEN: Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: and establish something that was like completely different and new, and be certain to the extent it's possible to be certain, that this was useful, yeah.

FRIESEN: Lil, what would you say, taking that, picking up on that, what would you say are the ideas that you've developed that would extend or refine the history? Err, refine the theory.

ROSENBAUM: Theory? [silence] I've thought about- I've thought about that. But um, [silence] I think I made- I think my contribution, in terms of my work, was establishing the program, getting it recognized (by the) medical students there, let them ask questions, I-I-I think that reactivity, differentiation, all these kinda seemingly vague things became a little more real, having, you know, my contribution, in terms of the autonomic activity I mentioned the other day, you know, you can train monkeys to lower their blood pressure, but, I don't know whether that does anything for their differentiation. [Laughter] But this was a package.

FRIESEN: Mmhmm.

ROSENBAUM: I mean, if anyone bumped into me, they were never the same. [Laughter] Because I wasn't just going to be

about reactivity, but I think having something better than recording words and counting pronouns, and all of that, I think that's probably a contribution.

I think that it's not a contribution to the- the second thing I'm thinking, is- not that it's a contribution to the theory, but at the time it was a contribution to the program, and maybe didn't... you know, because I- it, the fact that I always made it clear, whether I was consulting with someone in the hospital, or a professor, a physician, or a quote 'patient.' What my theoretical position was, and understanding was, and so that may have, I mean, there was a time when I had the program, that, my program would get the calls with referrals.

The rest of the Family Center was, you know, wasn't getting the calls. From the hospital, and stuff. Is that a contribution to theory? Not really, I think- I think Murray Bowen did what he did with his theory, and I don't know that- like, I can't say, "Well, you know, this is concept number 12," or 13. Thirteen's available.

"Here it is," you know. "Add it." I don't think I can say that, I think- I think I said already, what I think is missing, but it's not because Dr. Bowen was missing anything, it was the Zeitgeist, it was the times. I do think that something that is- that is, you know, could be and probably would be, worthwhile to address. Somewhere along the line.

FRIESEN: Do you think that your understanding of family contributed to the world of biofeedback? Cause you were very involved with that, in the national biofeedback society.

ROSENBAUM: Yes. And people- and people knew what I

FRIESEN: They identified you with that.

ROSENBAUM: Yes. And I made it very clear, in- I was reading- I was looking at [notes being shuffled] I was looking at my book, [Laughter] cause I'd forgotten what I said, and then I'm looking at the article that was printed in the Journal of Orthopsychiatry, I actually don't know what's happened to Orthopsychiatry, that was 1977, the first little blurb in the abstract I say, "The importance of theory in the use of biofeedback." And anyone who knew me for more than three minutes probably knew what I meant!

FRIESEN: (Know it). [Laughter]

ROSENBAUM: But I was also careful, there, and elsewhere, to say that it was important to have "A Theory", I never proselytized! Or tried not to, my enthusiasm was clear.

FRIESEN: Right.

ROSENBAUM: I have- I wrote here, this is the Orthopsychiatry one, "that is not to say that there is only one, quote, 'correct', theory, one way of using biofeedback." But I- I always made it clear that it was important to have a theory, and I- I quoted some of the work of, you know, other people in other parts of the country, who had never heard of Dr. Bowen, and they were doing very good work.

And I- I thought it was important, that, you know, I thought it was important, but it, but people did know me, I am the person who I was active, in the national scene, with the biofeedback society, now called AAPB, I was the one who, even with social work, you know, when there was (an) idea about who was going to be BCIA, who was going to be getting that credential, and physical therapists, and MDs, et cetera et cetera, and social work wasn't mentioned, and I said, "What about social work?" And, "Well, there's nobody here." And I said, "Yes, there is, I am."

FRIESEN: [Laughter]

ROSENBAUM: And I stood up. And it was like that, for a lot of things, so, and people knew, that I used Dr. Bowen. I didn't always have to say it. Because people knew that. I said it enough, I mean I did say it, but I didn't always say it.

FRIESEN: Right, right.

ROSENBAUM: So I think that- [long silence] I think some people actually wanted to learn, Dr. Bowen's theory.

They (came for the biofeedback) but I think they really did want to learn some more. They-they- and I know, not just I think, that I would be asked, about it. And

[silence] I think it's because... I don't know, I'm just thinking about that right now. I think it's because-[noise of tape changing over] 45 minutes.

FRIESEN: We're gonna turn this over. [noise of tape changing over]

ROSENBAUM: I think that I was, on some ways casual and in some ways very enthusiastic, and thanks to Dr. Bowen, I knew which way was north. I didn't always know how to get there, but I had a sense of direction about what I was doing. And I would not have had that, I would not have had that sense of direction, without the theory. And so, I could be light about it, because the world of biofeedback at the time, actually was pretty boring. [Laughter]

FRIESEN: [Laughter]

ROSENBAUM: Really, you know.

FRIESEN: Tedious. Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: Yeah. It was all research, and it was all about conditioned response, and 'Is it this kind of conditioned response, or is it this other kind?' And, you know, it was a little bit of work with humans, but more with animals of course,

and, in my book I have- I was just looking at that, I have 343 references? That's a lot of wri-

FRIESEN: For- for every kind of neuro- biofeedback in the world, almost!

ROSENBAUM: All kinds of stuff! And I did the, you know, I did the new stuff in terms of, working the children, and athletic peak performance, I combined all that, but the early, early stuff, when I get into it, Serman, you know, all that, it was- all very, very specific, and frankly I'm glad that it was, because it established a, a way to look at the brain, and other

functions. But I didn't see that it had any way to go,

ROSENBAUM: You know? It's like the compass was missing.

FRIESEN: Right, that's interesting.

ROSENBAUM: Like, okay. Okay. So that (went all that) Yeah. say. [Laughter]

FRIESEN: You know, what I thought you contributed, what I saw you contribute, to the field of biofeedback, was certainly, a substantial application that was much more substantive, than the kind of just making your hands warm kinda think. What was the context in which that- The thing I think you brought to the Bowen Theory, was the notion of self-regulation, that is now a given, but it was not a given back then, cause it was called a technique.

ROSENBAUM: Yes. Absolutely.

FRIESEN: And that's not what it's thought of- how it's thought of now.

ROSENBAUM: You're 100% right. I-I completely agree. It was not part of what was, at

FRIESEN: Right.

ROSENBAUM: the Family Center, later Bowen Center, or the thinking about it. And self-regulation, I think the reason it quote "took," is because it made sense, not because I was so smart. [Laughter] You know?

FRIESEN: It's such a basic part of regulation, (regulation automatic)

ROSENBAUM: And-and if you're gonna try to do anything? Whether it's with your body, or your brain, or your self, or your family, or your work, in differentiation? What is it? Well, it's self-regulation. If you can't regulate your self, what have you got? Not a whole lot.

FRIESEN: Mmhmm.

ROSENBAUM: So, yeah, I think it's taken, and it's a really good question, because I think it's taken on so well because it's kinda like, it's not it's kinda like obvious, because Newton would have said, "Of course it's gravity! The apple fell down, it didn't fall up." [Laughter]

FRIESEN: [Laughter]

ROSENBAUM: It's like, "Okay, we get that!" I-I think it's that kind of sort of obvious, but yes, I think the term self-regulation is helpful, and it's actually, I use it now, still.

FRIESEN: Mmhmm. I think it's actually used more now, with the brain studies, cause it's a part of how they think about differences between people. It's that capacity.

ROSENBAUM: Yes. Right. And when I say "still," I mean even to introduce the idea of what somebody might do, and

FRIESEN: Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: sometimes I used that term without anything to do with biofeedback.

FRIESEN: Mmhmm.

ROSENBAUM: You know? Like a challenge. "So, would you like to regulate a little better, and what you say? Or how you think? Or what you can do with your husband or your kids or your graduate school?" Or, whatever.

FRIESEN: Right, right.

ROSENBAUM: It-it-it's a term, that I think is, and it did come straight out of physiology.

FRIESEN: You know, I have one other question for you Lil. One of the- the things that was the tension that I noticed,

ROSENBAUM: Yeah.

FRIESEN: earlier on, that I've kinda been trying to figure out the language and stuff,

ROSENBAUM: Yeah.

FRIESEN: is this whole thing, about how it was, that the biofeedback became a, kind of slotted as a technique, rather than seeing, really

ROSENBAUM: Yes.

FRIESEN: as a context in which you, clearly, put it into, and I'm wondering what you-how do you think that happened?

ROSENBAUM: Well, [Laughter], okay. I have obviously thought about it a lot,

FRIESEN: Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: I think that, I'm smiling, as I said when I came in, "It's a spring day, it's a beautiful day, I'm alive! Life's good!" [Laughter] Um, I think that people, even in the Family Center-slash, later-Bowen Center, are still people. And I think that one of the things that happened, is that in this- and remember Murray's "Citadel of Differentiation", I think there was a lot of undifferentiation. A lot.

[silence] And, I wouldn't compare it to like a family, and siblings and stuff, but there's some similarities, in that, and so the way that my program, which was the most successful aspect of that [Laughter] Center at the time, got, sort of interpreted, or incorporated, or not incorporated, was that it was 'over there.' And, of course, my office [Laughter] was at the other end of the hall, which made it perfect, geographically.

But, um, I think that it was an insecurity, I don't like to use those terms, but

[silence] I'm just trying to think just exactly how much I want to say on tape. It was an insecurity in the system, at large, and some important people, specifically.

And the only way they could deal with, frankly, my success, was to externalize it and me.

"Ah, it's another technique now. Whatever." [silence] Um... And, [silence] I-I... have to, in my [Laughter] When I kind of step out of it? I had to have to, but my best understanding is that it was the kind of thing that can happen in any system, in any family. And it didn't- it wasn't really about me, the only thing about me is that I was successful. And I'm not sorry.

[Laughter] I don't apologize for that. And I was much more successful than anybody ever thought. It could be.

Or it would be. Or the theory would be. Or the work would be. Because I was producing. And all of you who learned/worked with me were producing. You weren't just like, "Okay, Lilian, what do I do now?"

FRIESEN: Right.

ROSENBAUM: You were thinking.

FRIESEN: Right.

ROSENBAUM: So were, you know, a dozen other people. On the staff and whatever. So, um, I think it was running a little scared, I think Murray did fantastic, and I think, you know, he also was human, like I said in the beginning. Here was all these other family therapy

people, you know, and, and you know. One died of suicide, and you know, I mean, I remember, I remember, Framo's two of their children died. Of a heart attack. Did you know that?

FRIESEN: Mmmmm, no, (I didn't know that).

ROSENBAUM: Yeah, they came to me, they -oh, I went to a meeting. And they raised the question, "Do you know what it's like, when everyone you're coaching is doing better than you?"

FRIESEN: Wow.

ROSENBAUM: And then they told to story. Their two children, two separate children, died of a sudden, unexpected heart attack. One at age 9, and one at age something, yeah. One under the teacher's desk at school, and the other one,

the parents were about to pick that child up with a friend, in front of a movie and the child died. On the sidewalk. Yeah. I think they have four kids, that was two of them.

FRIESEN: Mmm. Mmm, wow.

ROSENBAUM: You know, I think things happen, and that my best- when I try to be really objective about what happened in the Family Center, it was just family stuff. It was just the dynamics.

If I hadn't been- my, if the program hadn't been so successful, and my thinking hadn't been clear, and my contribution hadn't been useful, it might not have happened. It happened because I worked.

FRIESEN: Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: So well. And when Dr. Bowen was dying, and I went to see him in his home, he said, "Lil, I had nothing to do with that faculty, they're no- dadidadida", he starts to tell me. I had already- yeah, I had my own office at the point.

But I think he knew in some way, but I think also the process had gotten bigger, and he was ill, he died of lung cancer, I mean look how much he was doing when he was already not well. But I was there-

FRIESEN: He died of emphysema.

ROSENBAUM: Emphysema? I-I'm thinking of Dr. Steinbach.

FRIESEN: Oh, you're talking about Steinbach? Oh, okay, I thought you. Yeah

ROSENBAUM: Dr Steinbach I-I, meant, yes, I said the wrong thing, but yes. Dr. Bowen died of emphysema but Dr. Steinbach.

FRIESEN: died- Yeah. And that was in there too. Mmm.

ROSENBAUM: died of lung cancer. And Dr. Steinbach, also respected me. He calls me, cups me on the back, of my shoulder, in Grand Round's one day and says, "Lil, can I talk with you? Outside?" And I'm like, "Sure, of course." He's the Chairman of Psychiatry. He says, "I've got this pain here, and they all think it's because of the surgery I had, and, and " So you know that story? And so, "Can you do biofeedback?" I-

FRIESEN: I don't know the details of it, I just know you-

ROSENBAUM: And I had others, and I don't want to be that specific, but I think Dr. Steinbach would be okay with that, where people were on the surface seemingly not so sure, and even critical, who would come to me quietly and ask me if I would see their family member.

FRIESEN: Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: Okay. So, Dr. Steinbach, and I'm standing in the hallway and we're outside of (Gorman), and I said, "Of course." And then I said, in the same sentence, "But you know what Dr. Steinbach. No, I cannot do less for you than I would do for somebody walking off the street." And he said, "What do you mean?" I said, "I have to have-" and he's an MD, the Chairman of my department, right, "I want an MD referral." I- he looked at me! He-he just looked at me, I don't think he knew it- what to say!

FRIESEN: [Laughter]

ROSENBAUM: So, he thought about it, and he said, "Okay."

FRIESEN: "Okay?"

ROSENBAUM: And do you know, that what the pain he had, and he had been told it was from the surgery, he'd been laying on the table in whatever way, for so many hours, he had lung cancer.

FRIESEN: Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: Can you imagine? I, Lilian Rosenbaum, worried about everything, how I would have done if I'd done biofeedback for pain, and the man turns out to have cancer and I didn't know? I did-work with him a little bit, and I did talk with him, blah blah blah, after, but you know? So I was just extraordinarily careful

FRIESEN: Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: and I think one of the good things for me, is when I look back I am not worried about anything I said or did, and I am not- I don't regret having been in the program, and I don't regret having, as Dr. McLean would have called it, evolved out of it.

It was fine. It-it just I appreciated your invitation to talk about it, because that made me think about it again. But, I think, you know, I could call it ordinary things, like jealousy, or this or that, or the other, but it was ordinary things, like you know, money, you know it- "Lilian, if so many people are coming into the program, well, let's make all of them come to the family therapy training program first, and we'll make money on that..." And just, you know, it's just stuff that people do.

FRIESEN: Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: And I think, you know, I listened to some of the- it's a poor comparison, but I've started, so I'll -the charge, you know, there's people there too. The priests make mistakes. It's not okay, but I- it's part of the human phenomena.

FRIESEN: It is. Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: And that was one of Dr. Bowen's words I think, I don't think I made that word up.

Not the condition, but I think and I-I did use that word, for some other things, and you know. Part of the human phenomena, is that things don't always happen the way, you know. That would be my understanding and- it was, difficult, at the time, for me, yeah. It was- it was like, "Really?" [Laughter]

FRIESEN: Mhmm. Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: Because of the way it was done, but over time I've come to see that the way it was, quote, "done," was the only way they could do it. Cause I hadn't done anything

wrong. It wasn't anyway that someone could call me, and say, "You know what, we need to change this, because blahbittyblah, these four mistakes have happened." There's nothing that happened.

FRIESEN: Mmhmm. Right.

ROSENBAUM: So I do think it's part of human process, the human phenomenon, I do think that it's unrealistic to expect perfection, anywhere, whether it's in ones' kids, grandkids, or work system.

FRIESEN: Right, right.

ROSENBAUM: Or the, one of the greatest and possibly, Murray, minds. You know what? He's still not perfect.

FRIESEN: Human.

ROSENBAUM: It is human, yeah. And (inaudible) my list! [Laughter] (I'm not a perfect thing.)

FRIESEN: Yeah, right. Well, Lil, as we kinda wind down, here, do you have anything else that you want to put in? That we may not have covered?

Think you did a good job, with, uh, I just wanted to also clarify for the purpose of this tape, that the interviewer, Priscilla, worked with Lilian, closely, as her administrative assistant, initially, and is deeply indebted to the impact on her life.

ROSENBAUM: Well, I can add to that, that yes you were helpful as a, quote, "administrator," but you were also a star clinician. And you know the results of what you are, because you're sitting here in your learning space. And I-I grow, still, [Laughter] I tell my grandkids, that I'm a slow learner, but I'm still learning!

FRIESEN: [Laughter]

ROSENBAUM: And I grow from your growth and the other people in my program that grew there.

FRIESEN: Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: And I, you can see, from my face, I love it! [Laughter] You know, it's exciting, and it's fun.

FRIESEN: We should have that on the tape! [Laughter]

ROSENBAUM: Yeah, I-I think it's I think that the work you're doing, and possibly getting this to the National Archives, is, is important, it's a rounded picture, of so much work,

and so much dedication. You know, when I think about it, Dr. Bowen was doing all that he was doing and he's (churning) of his thinking, pretty remarkable. And he had

FRIESEN: Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: all of this huge, I know that he would probably not appreciate, but he has a huge family. Professional family. He had the ones that came a long time ago, like me, and he had the new ones, and he had the ones that got it, and he had the ones that didn't get it,

FRIESEN: [Laughter]

ROSENBAUM: and he had, you know, Georgetown to deal with, and all

FRIESEN: AFTA and the (inaudible) Family Therapy,

ROSENBAUM: all these other, yeah, he- he left some of that, but you know, he made such a point, which all of us I think, still, are like kids in that regard, he made such a point of people not talking to each other, but I think he had, he had a reason for that. He had a reason for that.

He-he wanted to try to keep things focused, you know, intellectually and conceptually,

FRIESEN: Yeah.

ROSENBAUM: and he did try, not to have the relationship process get in the way. It did get in the way. But he did his best! [Laughter]

FRIESEN: Right. Right.

Rosenbaum: Just checking

FRIESEN: Turned it over.

ROSENBAUM: (Yeah.).

FRIESEN: We're almost finished.

ROSENBAUM: (Okay.) I-I-I think if you wanna ask me something else, I, you know,

FRIESEN: I think I've- I'm pretty- I'm at the end of my list,

ROSENBAUM: Okay.

FRIESEN: I think you've done a beautiful job of talking about your professional life, that, and it's connection with Dr. Bowen, and I think the facts of your own professional accomplishments are very important in, how it wove through the impact with Dr. Bowen. It's very good.

ROSENBAUM: You know, Dr. Bowen had a (inaudible) just take this, and I, independently, from my background, had that also, as well. But it took more than that. It had to take more than that, to make that many levels for that many years.

Work out, and so, yeah, it'll be interesting to see what happens, and, you know, I'll be looking from, as I call it, in my family, we call it, "from the other side." Just [Laughter]

FRIESEN: [Laughter]

ROSENBAUM: at what everybody's doing, but [silence] I-I-I think the- I think what I said, is that I am grateful for having had the opportunity to be working with Dr. Bowen. And that I'm not sorry that I did. Which is very unusual for me, cause I can usually find, like something I'm sorry for, that I could have or should have done better, or different, or whatever.

FRIESEN: [Laughter] Yeah, yeah.

ROSENBAUM: And I think that's a good sign. Of things worked, okay.

FRIESEN: Yeah, yeah. Thank you, Lilian. That's a wonderful ending. A wonderful ending.

ROSENBAUM: Thank you. That was really good.

FRIESEN: ...find...off-button...is here.