

Interview with Bennet Tittler
Conducted by Andrea Schara

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Schara: So Ben Tittler. Good morning. Here is April- what's today, the

Tittler: Yeah, yes.

Tittler: What are you talking about, today?

Schara: Yeah.

Tittler: Today is May 7th,

Schara: Oh, it's not even April! Kay.

Tittler: [laughter]

Schara: Crept into May before I could do anything about it.

Tittler: See, even I got that.

Schara: Okay, well that's good. I like it. So, I'm going to just humor aside, let you start, and the first question [phone dial tone] -whoops, are you still there?

Tittler: Yeah.

Schara: Okay. Alright. So, just who you are, and how you met Dr. Bowen, and what interested you about his theory, or the way he interacted with you.

Tittler: Okay, so I'm going to kind of review what I wrote to you, I essentially got introduced to him and all of family therapy by spending a year in Carl Whittaker's seminar, up in Wisconsin. On a post-doc fellowship there. Am I coming through okay?

Schara: You sure are. Did you know anything about Carl Whittaker, before you went there, or was it your choice, or just random?

Tittler: Ah, I well, I had seen a tape of his, or something about him, and I understood him more as an existentialist, than a family therapist.

Schara: What do you mean by that?

Tittler: Well, that was a kind of school of thought back then, and I was kind of interested in it. So, I think, and he and a few colleagues, who would have identified themselves in the same way, so I thought I was going up there to work with some existential therapists.

Schara: [laughter]

Tittler: You know, some of them had studied the German existentialists, and the French existentialists, and it also was known as humanistic psychology, back then.

Schara: Okay.

Tittler: And it was a kind of a bit of a way to critique analytic theory. It was kind of a departure from that.

Schara: So was it- would it be something like Maslow's work, that kind of humanistic,

Tittler: Yeah. That's right, yeah.

Schara: To- to be a little more positive and get away from the diagnostic?
Would it go that far, or?

Tittler: That's right, it would sort of emphasize that you're the creator of your own fate, to some extent, and you've got to kind of deal with anxiety, in order to make anything of yourself, and it takes some courage.

Schara: So that sounds like it's going more or less in a direction that Bowen himself might have gone in, in terms of not focusing on symptomatology.

Tittler: Yeah, that's right. I think it would go more for sort of a person's approach to their whole life, and trying to kind of design their life, or take some responsibility for their life- I think responsibility was a big word in, in that approach.

Schara: Alright, so you're up there with Carl, and what did you make of him?

Tittler: Oh, he was- I once gave a talk on (him) and said, "He was one in a million, he really stood out." And, a little bit, he took- he kind of was a pied piper, he kind of took everybody away from the other faculty, so that was a little bit of a problem for him, I think. He was a- he just had a twinkle in his eye, and a -he was interested in what he was doing, and he you know, kind of took it seriously, but with a sense of humor, and- and you know, he was out of the ordinary.

Schara: And- and did you guys watch him work with clients, and what have you?

Tittler: Ah, yeah, in fact I at one point, I invited him to co-therapy with me, he would do that occasionally.

Schara: Yeah.

Tittler: So, that was a good way to get a close-up experience with him. And yeah, he did therapy he did what Murray had done earlier, he was seeing whole families in the hospital.

Schara: Okay.

Tittler: And he was occasionally seeing the students. If they would bring a spouse in. And, some of the old barriers were down with him. But he was respectful, and you know, and very thoughtful.

Schara: So how did he- I know you-

Tittler: So, he was really good.

Schara: he somehow introduced you to Bowen, I don't know if it was a trick, or a- what was it? That he- he got you to read one of his papers, as I recall, something like that?

Tittler: Yeah, it was kind of later in the year, the trick came when he brought Jay Haley out there. And we all had dinner with Jay Haley, and, there was a point at which everyone knew that dinner was over, but no one could get up until Jay did something, and then everybody could get up, so that was the trick. Jay had hypnotized the whole table! [laughter]

Schara: [laughter]

Tittler: So, that was our introduction to family therapy. And then later in the year, I came in late, to his seminar, he kind of ran a seminar where everybody every trainee was there, in a big

room, and he just kind of walked up to me, and handed me the Anonymous Paper, and said, "I think you'll be interested in this."

Schara: [laughter] How did he know that?

Tittler: Well, I don't- I mean, he was giving it out to others, but somehow there was a personal touch to that. And then, you know, and I was pretty impressed, and then, you know, when I left Wisconsin, about a year later, I ended up at a conference in Long Island, and I was doing some family therapy, and at that point, and the conference as on family therapy, and the four speakers were: Whittaker, Bowen, and two other guys, Lyman Wynne or some other guys, but so Whittaker had just written his piece on the psychotherapy of the absurd, which is really a nice article he did for *Family Process* around early 70s.

And he gave a great talk on it, and then Bowen gave a talk on juvenile delinquency, and -and societal regression, and you know, it was fascinating. And as I went up to Whittaker, I didn't know Bowen, but I went up to Whittaker at the break, and he said, "People say that Bowen is boring, but every time I hear him, he just knocks me off my feet." And I, you know, I really, it kind of, it jived with me, I said, "Yeah, I had that same experience." So that was the second experience with him, and I ended up teaching, in Tennessee, I was teaching family therapy, what's that?

Schara: Yeah, I'm here.

Tittler: And, and I needed to get some research going, and I said, "I'm going to try to do something on differentiation of self." So I wrote Dr. Bowen, and he wrote me back, you know, a page and a half letter, saying "Well, there's no one scale, it's you know, you've got to get at it from several different angles, it's not a not a just a paper and pencil kind of thing," and somewhere in the letter, he said, I don't know how he got into it, but he said something about Carl Whittaker.

He didn't know I had him, I didn't introduce myself through Carl Whittaker, but somehow the connection was Whittaker was there as well. So, I don't, he just threw it in, sort of randomly, something about Carl Whittaker, so that was sort of the way I got to Bowen, was somehow through Whittaker.

Schara: [laughter] The absurdity of it all.

Tittler: For some [laughter] hard to define, and seeing that the- and by then, I yeah, I was teaching several different approaches to family therapy, I was sort of doing a survey of it. And I tried to bring in people who knew something about it, guest speakers. o I knew Pat Papero, cause she was one of my doctoral students, and I knew about Dan. So I knew Dan had just gone

down to take some courses at Georgetown with Bowen, so I asked Dan to come in and give a lecture, give a you know, one lecture on Bowen. And, after that he somehow got me to go down to Ortho to hear Bowen talk that spring, down in Atlanta, and I think by the end of the year, I had joined up the program, that you knew about.

Schara: Yes.

Tittler: And I think I travelled down and I think there was a, sort of a June meeting, that summer, and I travelled down with Dan, and got started in it. So that, that was how I got into the program, and you know, I met Dr. Bowen in person, and-

Schara: And how did you think about the theory versus humanistic. Were you trying to put them together? Were you seeing them as separate? Or-

Tittler: Well, see, this goes way back for me. I pretty soon got caught up in his interest in science, I had a couple years of engineering, early on, and my high school thesis was something about the bridging the gap between science and humanities, I'd always been interested in that. And I really, I think I must have picked up pretty quickly, that Bowen was into that. Was trying to get science into the non-scientific world. So I think that -I think I leapt beyond existentialism at that point, and just said, "Well, this is more than existentialism, it's about putting together two realms of wisdom, and try to figure out how they link. So I think that was the catch. Pretty quickly. But I was also just trying to teach in the field, so -well, and of course the other thing was, I always said to myself, "I'm not going to get myself into a tricky therapy, because of just being a trickster, I wouldn't, you know, I would only get into a therapy if it was something that I could be in therapy with, and it was clear that's you know, he-he took it seriously enough, that he-he was applying it to himself, and all his students, and so it that also struck me as right, was that as this approached, everybody would apply to themselves, not just try to trick other people into doing better. So, several catches for me, that got me into it.

Schara: Yeah, so one of the main things, was that you had this interest in science, and then when you get to around Dr. Bowen, you see that he's got a profound interest in science, and I remember Bateson being upset too, about that you're just going to use this knowledge to help people get better, and maybe he called that controlling others, or something like that. He didn't like it and after the double-blind thing, he gave up on that and went to work with dolphins. So to learn about meta-learning, which may be something

Tittler: Now who, who's this? Oh, Bateson.

Schara: Bateson. Gregory Bateson. Yeah.

Tittler: Oh, okay.

Schara: Gregory Bateson also saw therapy as a way to manipulate or control people, I mean, Whittaker, I think Whittaker had a more profound understanding of the emotional process, say, than Jay Haley, maybe. But he because he saw it as somehow, you had to get into that stream, or you were dragged into the stream, when you talked to somebody who was schizophrenic, [laughter] and then, to get yourself out of the stream, you had to trick them. But anyway, there was quite a split off there, between people who saw therapy as controlling at that time. Controlling others. Like structural and strategic and all of this. And then, people who were interested like Bateson, maybe, in learning, and then Bowen, who wanted, probably the only one, who wanted to make it a science of human behavior, at that time. Yeah.

Tittler: Yeah, no one else was talking science. That's right. I mean Carl was, frankly, taking his sources from literature and from philosophy. But-

Schara: That's I guess, where you see the emotional system, maybe, I don't know, at its most raw.

Tittler: But the thing that he did, that Murray did, was he took it very personally, and he applied it to himself.

Schara: Yeah.

Tittler: And he would do things like, he would say to people, "I'm in this for me." [laughter] "If you're not- if you don't interest me," he would fall asleep in the middle of a session. And say, "You weren't very interesting. And let me tell you what my dreams were." In other words, he would say "This is- I'm into this. This is me. I'm getting something, I'm trying to get something out of this. And, hopefully it's a mutual thing." Now, you know, that's not quite -certainly that's not what Murray would do, but there was that sort of like, "I'm taking this seriously, and I'm-"

Schara: "-And it's not about fixing you."

Tittler: Yeah, right, it's not about fixing you! That's true, it's about, we're going to have a creative experience, but he did have a kind of a model that was what I first learned. He had this kind of time series model of what a therapy should be, and it was a developmental model, in terms of the stages of therapy. And it would start out with - let me see, how it would go. It would start out with the therapist would need to introduce himself and his values, and state that out front. And then the onus and the work had to go to the patient, and the patient would do the greater proportion of the work.

And, you'd always start out with family, and then after a while, you've got a picture of the family, you can break it into individual people, who really wanted to do the work. But he had a-

he had a whole scheme, and it was very different than traditional therapy. And, so in his own kind of idiosyncratic way, he had a very worked out scheme for how he wanted to proceed. And it, you know, was scientific like, or engineering-like, he had stages, and who did what, and he was thoughtful. And, and, and, and careful. It wasn't- it wasn't just you know, ab- it wasn't you know, just -you know, what am I thinking? Oh, super abstract. He got quite detailed. And, it just, you know, like I said it just made sense to him. But you know, he was definitely marching to a different drummer than others were. He was sort of free to think for himself, put it-

Schara: So I remember, I guess maybe Sullivan, was the first person to use this word participant-observer, or the kind of, you could be a scientist as a participant, when you were focusing more on observing. And, that this was a very different way, Bowen had from - different from Sullivan or anybody's - a way of kind of describing how people functioned in relationship to each other. And asking questions, around all the stories, that they tell. "Well, how does this behavior function for you?" That's what I got out of it, that he was sort of looking to understand more, about how the relationship system pinned people up and down, and what happened when you were too distant, or too conflictual, or not conflictual enough, or-

Tittler: But you know, another thought occurs, Andrea. Of similarity, would be how they each handled their own role in the therapy, and the transference, and the you know, Bowen worked hard at pulling himself somewhat out of it, so that it became more of an objective undertaking. And what Whittaker'd do, is he would keep making you responsible for you. He'd keep saying, "This is who I am, now who are you?" So he was, he was doing the same, in that sense. And they- and again, it was from an existential point of view, I guess. It was, you know, "What are you responsible for?" And you know, "You're responsible for getting yourself better," so you know, and "I'm responsible for being interested, and trying to make sense of this," but he'd continually define what the responsibilities would be in the interaction.

And that, in some ways, is similar to Bowen's emphasis on trying to keep the transference from taking over, and keeping a fairly clean dish, that's your dish, that you could study. What was going on. So, anyway, yeah, that just occurred to me as you were talking, that another, kind of, similarity. That's how do you stay objective unless you can kind of keep clarifying I'm me and you're you?

Schara: Yeah. I think that's one way. I think that the other way, that he, he sometimes said that the only way to differentiate that -I can find the page for this- is in a triangle. That's how you- so that by putting people back with their own family, all the time, he was sort of detriangling out of the transference.

Tittler: I see.

Schara: And, I remember one story he told, which he was introducing this young guy back to his family again, say the guy was in his thirties, or late twenties, and hadn't seen his parents for, maybe ten years. They'd been in this hospital. And they were walking across this quadrangle, and the guy pulls out this thing that looks like a cigar, but it's not a cigar, and he says he has a gift for Bowen. And Bowen looks at it, and says, "You know, I think that's for your mom and dad." [laughter] And that was kind of one of the beginnings of family therapy, you know. [laughter] In which the stuff goes back to the family if the person can stay detriangled.

Tittler: Yeah.

Schara: Out of the moves the other one makes to get into the transference with them. And he-

Tittler: Yeah, I can recall what a couple of moves, you know, comments, similar to that, like, you know, "Bring that back to you."

Schara: And, I know you saw him once, you said, or-

Tittler: "Pick 'em up." Yeah.

Schara: Did you see him, yourself, or-

Tittler: Say it again, now?

Schara: Early on, for a coaching thing, or no?

Tittler: Early on, you mean? With Dr. Bowen? Not really.

Schara: Yeah. So you just-- no,

Tittler: No, no, no, I did not.

Schara: you just- interacted with him at the classes, the conferences, and stuff like that?

Tittler: That's right. Yes, yeah. Yeah, just kind of random memories, about that. But I remember I went up to him and said, I think I might have asked his reference to get into AFTA, and I went up to say, "Dr. Bowen, I just got accepted to AFTA," and he said, [laughter] "Well, see if you can straighten those guys out. I'm through with em."

Schara: Yeah.

Tittler: He had just pulled out of it, I guess. So, and-

Schara: So there were some things where you saw him dealing with other people and the audience, and when he- that would kind of fit under the detriangling thing too, that "Good luck to you, with AFTA, buddy." You know, it's "I'm not going to help. I'm not going to be there to help you out," or something like that! [laughter]

Tittler: Yeah, no. It was, you know, it was not scornful at all, it was just "Well, maybe you can help them folks out!" I guess I realize that at that time he had pulled out of it. So, you know, I think he meant it! "Maybe you can do something with that." I remember, when got there, I remember sitting with Paulina, and sort of, kind of hung out with her a little bit, spent a meeting or two at AFTA, but we were trying to keep a little of Bowen thinking going on there but not much.

Schara: Yeah. And so the other researcher that you mentioned, that was somewhat like Bowen was Bowlby, in your-

Tittler: I don't know anything about Bowlby, really. I just threw that in, because it occurs to me that Murray was probably formulating his ideas back in Menninger's in the late 40s, which was when Bowlby published his stuff, it somehow strikes me that they emerged at a similar time, and really addressing some of the same, you know, their focus is on some of the same phenomena, but looking at it very differently. So I just thought there was a kind of interesting historical juxtaposition there.

Schara: Yeah, I don't think, from what you've said so far that any of these people had any idea about triangles and getting outside the triangle, in trying to be a participant-observer. And, I don't know Bowlby ever thought he wanted to do a science, but he wanted to include evolution, I think, in the understanding of the human. I don't know if he wanted to make a science of human behavior. Do you have any thoughts on that?

Tittler: Well, the people who followed up, in America, did somewhat scientific work on development, early childhood, you know, child-mother interactions, and you know, I think it opened up some scientific work, Margaret Mahler's one name that comes to mind, so there's this sort of school in psychology, actually, it gave birth I think to what they call experimental psychopathology. But it had to do with the first two years of life, and the study of the infant and the mother, and so it just elaborated on Bowlby, and different styles of attachment, and non-attachment. Or you would call disturbed attachment, I guess.

Schara: Yeah, so I think you were kind of saying that Bowen was looking at the big picture, and that when Bowlby gets down, to the two-person thing, that's not really the big picture.

Tittler: Yeah, yeah, that's right. Gets sort of fine-grained there, but yeah, Bowen kept referring back to evolution, at least after a while he did, and-

Schara: Yeah. So that's what you liked, in his ideas about-

Tittler: that's the big picture.

Schara: science, was seemed like more the big picture, and I don't know, you did say that his ideas were testable, and I know you, you've thought that out, what were you thinking about?

Tittler: Yeah, that's right, I -that's good, good, question. I keep having the belief that his stuff is, is testable and verifiable, or my whole idea, over the last after I kind of got into it, was what's fun is and what would be useful to other people, would be to demonstrate the concepts, especially differentiation of self, in a way that I could understand it better, and therefore probably others could understand it better.

And that there might be lots of manifestations of it, that could be demonstrated, and in fairly objective form. And I think partly, it's a matter of looking at science that's already been done, and thinking of it through a Bowen theory lens. But what I try to do, what I was doing a program of research, was to keep Bowen always in mind, as I was studying families, and it was always there, I mean, just the emphasis on intensity, as a crucial variable, it was always a key variable of any data that you looked at. If you look for it. And it strikes me that if someone were systematic, about demonstrating it in a way that I don't know, my frame of reference in psychology, but in a way that psychologists could understand, it could be done.

And, if psychology got it, maybe other places would get it, too. But they don't but it just strikes me that could be done, that someone could put together a program of research, and then bring in research that's already done, and demonstrate this. A lot of evidence for number one, existence of differentiation of self, as a powerful variable. That could predict a whole lot of stuff. I mean, that's what psychology portends to do, is to be able to predict stuff. And it, I think it does. And so-

Schara: How would you do differentiation? I know people have tried various ways, of looking at emotional maturity, and have you got a thought in mind?

Tittler: Well, the other guys were not entirely wrong. We were able to demonstrate that the double-blind phenomenon is very demonstrable. You can- you can measure it. And it works. I mean, it predicted... We were working with a bunch of residential kids, and you could predict the ones who were getting better and the ones who weren't getting better, in terms of what were we looking at. I'm not pulling the data back right now, but-

Schara: But just the language, the way they talked about themselves and other people, or were they were anxious, or...

Tittler: Well, exactly. The way they talked, there was even an interesting case where, a family- a kid did better, when the family knew they weren't doing well and they allowed other people to take the kid on. As opposed to holding on to the kid. I mean, you could interpret, if you look at that population, you could interpret it from a Bowen perspective, and understand, and really get a lot of insight into what was going on. At least, that's sure the way it seemed, at that point.

Schara: Yeah, so that the person would have more confidence in the child's ability to manage themselves without the hovering mother, so to speak, or the angry parent, or whatever was going on.

Tittler: Yeah, yeah. Right, right.

Schara: So that there would be a way to measure the impact of respect for the other, despite the differences, or the conflicts, or something like that.

Tittler: There was a dissertation with learning-disabled kids. We'll use this- I suggested the student use this marbles test, that South American psychologists use, it's like a Chinese checkers board. And you could just see very graphically, the kids who did better, when you had the families put the marbles on the board, the kids who did better had -the kids' marbles were partly touching the parents' marbles and partly free to the larger environment. The kids who didn't get better, their marbles were either entirely surrounded by their parents' marbles, or they were nowhere near their parents' marbles, they were on the opposite side of the board.

Schara: Yeah.

Tittler: They were either extremely cutoff or extremely contained. And it was so visual, and so clear, yeah, you couldn't get a clearer picture, of differentiation and lack of differentiation. Than those, you know, and the simple West Virginia population of kids who were learning and who aren't learning. But isn't it so impressive? And so it seemed to me, when any of my students picked a population, they found a related phenomenon.

Schara: I remember Brodey, who worked with Bowen at NIMH, and Catherine Rakow interviewed him, and he was saying after working with the schizophrenic population, he began to work with a population of people who had children who were blind. And it was very clear that there were parents who could accept that their child was blind and go on with the reality of that situation. And there were others, who would act as if the child could see.

Tittler: My God.

Schara: And treat them, as though they could see. You know, interact with them as "What's wrong with you, you can't see?" kind of a thing. And, so again, I think that's another one of those observations, that there's a very wide variation in how people deal with challenges in the family.

Tittler: Every one of those specific, concrete examples, teaches me more about what differentiation of self is. I mean, that's, that was my real drive, was to- for me to better understand how this works, in a way I could understand it. And every one of those concrete examples, to me, further develops your understanding of the phenomenon. It's not just proving it, it's learning about it. And, in a way that you can hold onto. I mean, you know, it's kind of abstract, when you're putting it into, in a, you know, in an essay. But when you actually see it, and you see it in a -in a context that you can appreciate and understand and you see in a variety of contexts, you really, you start to get it better. And I think that's what research could do, I mean it we would, you know, personally, I would better understand the concept, by seeing it in several different contexts like that.

Schara: Yeah, that would be a real contribution, I think, to-

Tittler: It would be a contribution. That's right, and-

Schara: to gathering up that research, which as you say is out there, showing - I'm not sure - I think it does connect to evolution, and I think you also put in your paper a lot about the density, and the increase in child focus, with the decrease in the numbers of children and the increase in, just the number, the population,

Tittler: Yeah, that was from a study of the thirteenth century, and we'll kind of apply it to now. That was Barbara Tuchman's piece, and yes, she said there was a- back then, the accounts, the historical accounts, there's no -they don't pay any attention to kids! And, how we're so focused on kids. I thought that must mean something.

Schara: Yeah, so that connects differentiation back in the over-involvement and the increasing sensitivity to children, where you have to cut off from them, or the child cuts off from the parent. You could challenge it, and say, "Look, people just weren't looking at that then," you know, there weren't talking about it, but it still happened. Or, has the number just so dramatically increased, as a function of the density, and the anxiety? I think that's a fascinating look at Bowen's theory's usefulness in understanding the evolution of the human, if there is such a thing. The culture of the family and the culture of the times, interact in some way or another, to-

Tittler: Yeah, and I'm thinking of it. It's not just culture, though culture's in it, it's sort of the demography, the numbers, the density of population, and, you know, which was a whole thesis about regression. But it's not just about regression. There's a liability for being too dense, and there's a liability for being too sparse. And when the bubonic plague was knocking out 50% of the population, there was a concern with enough people. And, enough people to get things done, and you know, so either end of that, represents a real crisis.

Schara: Yeah, I think you outlined a lot of really important variables in, in this paper, that you sent to me, along with this interview, where we're kind of going into maybe a little bit more detail about what you're thinking about in terms of the importance of Bowen Theory to, well, maybe enable psychology to really make a contribution to the science of human behavior, and that it really just needs somebody to pull these various strands together to demonstrate what the theory points toward. But that people have been doing experiments in psychology and not tying it into a science of human behavior, or anything close to it.

Tittler: Yeah, we've gotten away from theory, and in a sense then, we've gotten away from it. It was so interesting to me how Dr. Bowen thought about what science was. I mean, you know, and he's critiquing the so-called "scientific method," that science was not just you know, measuring and using numbers, it was somehow having a better understanding of what was.

And, that theory contributes to that, and psychology tends to get smaller and smaller, and less and less, I don't know, relevant, and careful at the same time. I mean, that's my bias, that it's kind of gone backwards, to some degree. And, but it had potential, has potential, and it's exciting when someone's really on the ball with it.

Schara: Well, I guess that's one of the things that has been your inheritance from Bowen, so to speak, is to try to make the theory more available and useful to people who are in psychology. And right now, they don't even know about him, he's-

Tittler: They don't even know about it, they don't- yeah.

Schara: They don't even know about it, and-

Tittler: They might know his name, but that's about it.

Schara: But I was thinking from, you know, what the work that you did, for this interview, you could probably pull together an overview paper of how psychology has contributed to- you could act as if it's already been done, that you know, psychology does contribute to a science of human behavior in the following ways. [laughter]

Tittler: Uh huh.

Schara: But, you know, I was in Chicago, and this guy who's done a lot of work on resiliency, who I mentioned earlier, was just saying, how difficult it is to think carefully about multiple variables in research. And so that if I was giving sort of the example of, that you know, for the leader- like in my family, which is symptomatic, my two brothers have been symptomatic, and for me to turn back around and take on some of that anxiety myself, and trying to alter the way I interact with them, using knowledge, that makes me more anxious, to do that.

Rather than to either you know, diagnose them and cut off from them or whatever you do, that to be able to see this shifting and flowing of anxiety, and how a more mature family, people can see, the kind of scapegoating process, and turn back around and do something about their part in that. And he said, "It's just so hard to think about how you would research the way anxiety runs in a family unit." So that some have more capacity than others. And I was trying to think about the research they did on siblings -the pecking order, that book by Dalton, in which he said, "You give me one sibling, and tell me their functional position, and I'll tell you the functional position of the other siblings."

Tittler: Oh, I don't know that one.

Schara: Because, yeah, without a doubt, there's this hierarchy in families. That emerges, a pecking order. So the book's called, *The Pecking Order*.

Tittler: Oh, I don't know about that one. It is a little bit parallel to, when one of my students did verify the double-blind, it was clear that the double-blind occurred between one parent, usually the mother, and one child, the symptomatic child. And in a typical population, it wouldn't be all the kids, it would be one kid who got it more than the others. And you could see it in a sibling, how they communicated with each other.

Schara: Yeah.

Tittler: So, it was striking to me back then, I think, "Wow, you know, boy, can really see the difference between the, you know, how the kids go, in a family." And you know, read double-blind as anxiety, I mean, and

Schara: Yeah, you're more anxious about one, and it may be because that one is born blind.

Tittler: At that particular moment- Yeah, yeah, yeah, sure.

Schara: Then you can't deal with the reality of the situation.

Tittler: Yeah, yeah.

Schara: I'm not sure, but I do think that evolution has, I think Laurie Lassiter's put out there pretty clearly, how evolution from the early, cellular origins, some cells focus on the other ones, to fix nitrogen for them. And those that fix nitrogen don't get to reproduce. And there's a time when those cells can refuse to accept that position, and try to get one of the other ones to take the position of fixing nitrogen [laughter] That's like 3.3 or 3.7 million years old, in terms of just how people function in the unit, to absorb or to do what needs to be done. And that people have absolutely no awareness of it. And when you bring it into awareness, there's a little bit that can be done to alleviate suffering. Because the ones who get focused on suffer. Tremendously. And, so anyway, that's one thought about it, that psychology itself may be suffering, because it doesn't see how it's contributing to the whole. And it does a lot of things that don't seem to make much sense, or get forgotten, or isolated, or lost, and that Bowen Theory could offer something to psychology, in giving it a way to put it together.

Tittler: Yeah, I think psychology has sort of tended towards figuring out problem areas in the society and just lending their name to, you know, helping immigrants, and helping handicapped people, and -and identifying the problem areas, but -but they're moving further and further away from understanding and from theory. So that they're kind of trying to be helpful by just trying to be helpful! But not through understanding! [laughter] You know, the instinct is right, but to me, understanding would, in the long run, be more helpful for more people than just sitting with people.

Schara: Yeah, I hear you. I think that's, you know, a gap that needs to be filled eventually. I think you and Laura Havstad, are two of the people who are the most responsible involved people, in psychology, that would like to be able to do something, that would enable people to see the big picture, and how the bits of research fit with the big picture.

Tittler: Yeah, part of my allegiance is to psychology and part of my allegiance is to myself and part of it is to the larger society. And I don't know quite where it all breaks down, but I do have some fantasy, about trying to put something together along those lines. I'm never quite clear on how to make that practical. But you're right, I do think about that.

Schara: Yeah, comes across very clearly in your essay, which is a real contribution I think. And-

Tittler: Andrea, I'm going to probably have to stop.

Schara: Time to end, okay, well if there are other things that you think about, we can always do another tape? It's you know, free and open discussion here.

Tittler: Alright.

Schara: And I appreciate your time.

Tittler: Okay. Well that's great, I'll look forward to, you know, seeing what you've collected at some point.

Schara: Okay. Excellent. Alright? Thank you.

Tittler: Yeah, alrighty. Talk to you soon.

Schara: Okay. Bye bye.

Tittler: Okay. Bye bye.