

However highly individuated, a culture of awakening can never be a private affair. Such a culture is always an expression of a community... A culture of awakening simply cannot occur without being rooted in a coherent vital sense of community.

- Stephen Batchelor

Dear AABCAP Family,

Congratulations AABCAP on achieving your 10th birthday.

What an incredible achievement! It is so exciting that we continue to break new ground in the integration of Buddhism and Psychotherapy, 10 years on, even with the explosion of Buddhism and Psychotherapy around the world.

Congratulations and thank you, to those who had the vision and determination to turn AABCAP into a realisation. For your foresight and tenacity I am grateful and am proud to have participated on the journey for 8 of the 10 years.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity, at this time to join in on the reflection of AABCAP and its achievements. It has been an integral part of my human and professional development and I agree with the importance of providing some reflections at this milestone.

Before I begin my thoughts I want to stop and thank Chrissie Koltai for courageously ("with heart") taking on the role of President for AABCAP and its community, and congratulate her for her achievements this year. Colleagues and friends for 17 years (we trained in Self Psychology together) I know she has brought her big heart, an infectious sense of humour and deep humility to the role.

And I would also like to thank Nicholas Tabley for his tireless and ongoing support to myself and I know to Chrissie this year and his enormous commitment to AABCAP as the education coordinator and so much more.

As I write to you, I am in Cusco, Peru, at the heart of the Inca kingdom which is not I believe an un-meaningful coincidence.

Joining AABCAP was the most important decision I made for my life. It was a place where I learned more about Buddhism, its philosophy and its practices and where I was nurtured both as a human being and a therapist.

As therapists we spend our life sitting alongside human beings who are suffering. It is vital that we proceed with a clear sense of our purpose for doing so. After 15 years as a therapist I felt I needed to clarify this purpose, I felt I needed something that would hold the work in a larger more meaningful container.

Through my years with AABCAP and in particular the 2- year training I learned ways in which to keep the work hopeful, joyful, and provide me with a strong ethical framework, within which to understand the skills I had learned as a therapist as well as to develop new skills for strengthening empathy and compassion for myself and others.

What do I see as the strengths of AABCAP as well some of its weaknesses?

The AABCAP Training provides a very strong professional rigor. Its extremely talented Director

of Training, Louise Fisher, along with Jitindriya (Lorraine Keats), Francine Bartlett, and other teachers, and supervisors, produces in every graduating class some of the finest Buddhist Psychotherapists in Australia and I would say among the best in the world.

One of the things that we Australians are not good at is recognizing our strengths. I think that AABCAP and its members need to recognize that our course is a *one of a kind*; that our teachers are among the finest in the world, keeping up with the theories and practices in Buddhism and Psychotherapy from around the world, as well as develop their unique voices.

One of the weaknesses of our association is how little time members have to give back to AABCAP and I don't know how to remedy this. My whole life I thought someone else, more talented than myself would step up and do the things that I thought I was not capable of doing, but I have learned that if I believe in something strongly enough, that someone has to be me.

My hope for AABCAP is that more of our very capable members, when recognizing the wonderful support that AABCAP has given them, find the courage in themselves to give back to our AABCAP by stepping up and spending some time in a leadership role. I have no doubt that you will find it incredibly rewarding, and that other members, like me, will be incredibly grateful.

During my time in AABCAP I have worked alongside and learned from some of the most compassionate and committed people I have ever met in my life. As we tune into the world as it is today with all its uncertainty we come to appreciate how important this is. There are those spiritual practices that we develop day by day, on the cushion, or in our rooms with patients. And then there are the ones that we develop with and in the communities who support us.

Thank you to AABCAP for being my Sangha.

Genevieve