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## Editorial

There was a point during the NZAP conference in Auckland earlier this year when we had a mirror held up to us by the guest presenter Jessica Benjamin. It occurred when we had all come together to consider the processes of a preceding timeslot. Her mirror was a comment to the effect that in her estimation the NY psychotherapy community would not have come together in the way in which we were doing. What was striking and unfamiliar to her was that we were sufficiently willing to come together, despite difference and in spite of similarity, to connect in this whole conference mode, and to deal with the process this may have engendered. This, she asserted, took considerable professional courage.

The reflection makes an interesting statement on a number of levels. It is also an affirming one, given the amused observation of one of our most senior practitioners that any attempt to deal with our Association processes in such forums was essentially absurd – but that this should not deter us from such activity.

I appreciate the heart and the humour of the observation. If we are not to be deterred, what may be gained from engaging a whole conference process in the ways that we do? I suggest one response to this question arises from considering the philosophical frame of our profession. By this frame we can conceive of the practice of psychotherapy as weaving three distinct strands over time. The first is the strand of psychotherapy as treatment option undertaken within a reparative relationship. The second is of psychotherapy as moral and ethical conversation giving consideration to the enfolded networks of community relationships. The third is of psychotherapy as psychospiritual process involving participatory knowing of all levels of experience of being human.

While the first and second strands may be more overtly recognisable in the constituents of the scientific programme of a conference, the third strand is experienced when we engage participatory knowing of ourselves as an Association in the whole conference forums. Not to engage that form of experience denies the process of participatory knowing. We should not allow ourselves to be deterred from such activity. If we were to enter the whole conference forums holding clear understanding that we were engaging in unfolding the process of participatory knowing, that would make a significant difference to the individual and collective experience of the Association. The context would be clear.

This edition of Forum is the tenth. The papers and reviews that have appeared over the ten editions are another way in which we as an Association hold a mirror up to ourselves. Writing can be as daunting a process for some as being visible in whole conference forums is for others. Yet we still engage them. We do so because it is axiomatic for us as a profession that it is better to be able to chose to be visible and connected, than not to have such choice. When we connect and are visible as a professional community, then the heart of our community can be revealed.

**Peter Hubbard**  
**Anne Spiers**  
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