I always delight in learning about our wonderful members/colleagues, folks I see only once a year, in passing fleeting moments at our conference. Each is a rich treasure chest full of seen and hidden gemstones and crystals with many dimensions and facets. Today, I would like to introduce you to Saphira… like her name, which has its roots in Hebrew mystical teachings of the Kabbalah, meaning: inner planes of light and the Greek or English which means “jewel or gem.” Her uniqueness is true and rare.

Saphira Linden embodies “modesty” – the quality of being unassuming in the estimation of yourself or your abilities. Saphira Linden has taken on and walks the brave Transpersonal path of blending the Theater Arts of Drama Therapy, Psychodrama, and Transformational Theater guided by her heart and soul as an experienced Sufi meditation practitioner and spiritual guide.

Saphira is Co-Founder (with Penny Lewis) and Director of the “Omega Theater’s Transpersonal Drama Therapy Certification Program and Professional Psychodrama Training Institute, which is now in its 19th year. She is Artistic Director of Omega Theater, an experimental theater, creating original plays, education programs, arts festivals etc., now in its 50th Anniversary Year. Saphira majored in theater with education and psychology as minor studies. Saphira is trained in Experimental Theater, which means you develop your own forms that are grounded in the theater classics (Shakespeare, Elizabethan & Greek/Roman drama). First you learn the basic foundational tools in both experimental theater and in creative arts therapies and then you learn to trust your intuition, which gives you the permission to experiment and be there for your client in a way that is just right for them.

Saphira started in Psychodrama with Ildri Ginn (Norway), ending up in the same classroom at Boston State Hospital. They shared an experiential approach in their work with the severely mentally ill and cognitively challenged adolescents at Boston State Hospital. They both “hugged” clients and made due with no books or supplies to support them, so they did a lot of their work with embodied, creative, cognitive exercises. They both recognized they needed something else, and somehow got to “Moreno” in Beacon, becoming good friends. In their time at Beacon, Moreno asked both Ildri and Saphira to be his protégés. After these early years studying psychodrama, the Professional Creative Arts Therapies & Organizations of – art, music, dance, and poetry therapy evolved. It was after this, in the 1980’s, that Drama Therapy was born. Saphira was a pioneer in Drama Therapy. In the curriculum at Omega, Penny and Saphira added more Psychodrama to their curriculum because they realized it needed more time to learn than the 3 credit course requirement of NADTA provided.

Saphira reconnected with Zerka when she was the keynote speaker at a Drama Therapy Conference in New York. In her talk, Zerka encouraged all the Creative Arts Therapies to come together (Psychodrama, Drama Therapy, Art, Dance, Music and Poetry). Zerka and Saphira began correspondence and discussions. Zerka encouraged Saphira to become Certified as a CP/TEP. As she was such an experienced director and used Psychodrama so comfortably and frequently, Saphira didn’t feel any need for these credentials. It was because of Zerka’s influence that Saphira got these additional certifications of CP and TEP.

One of Saphira’s most meaningful exchanges with Zerka came during the time Zerka was beginning to write her memoir. Many have commented that Zerka had the ability to see people at the level of "essence." In communicating with Zerka, Saphira commented that she saw Zerka not just as an incredible teacher/psychotherapist; but also as a profound Spiritual Guide. Throughout all this time, Saphira always felt supported by Zerka – a wonderful quality that Zerka generously gave to many.

Saphira has always felt that one of her missions is to articulate and integrate the relationship between Drama Therapy and Psychodrama – which are not the same. However, they greatly enhance and support one another. She sees Moreno as the Father of the Creative Arts therapies and has seen it as an important mission to nurture and grow these healing arts. To this end Saphira created/writes about the Twelve Principles of Transpersonal Approaches to Psychodrama and Drama Therapy in her book, The Heart and Soul of Psychotherapy.

Saphira and Dan Weiner have presented at both the Drama Therapy and Psychodrama Conferences for years, role modeling the easy collaboration between the two fields and our reciprocal needs that would enhance both areas of practice. Saphira notes that Drama Therapy Practitioners know much more about Psychodrama than we do about Drama Therapy, since Drama Therapy requires the study of Psychodrama, but not the reverse. When asked what challenges/obstacles have impeded the two areas from having more overt/advantageous connec-

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