

Book Review

***Show and Tell Psychodrama: Skills for Therapists, Coaches, Leaders and Teachers.* By Karen Carnabucci, MSS, LCSW, TEP. Nusanto Publishing, 2016.**

Jacqueline Fowler, MA, CP

In the first chapter of Karen Carnabucci's 2016 book *Show and Tell Psychodrama: Skills for Therapists, Coaches, Leaders, and Teachers*, she shares the story of her introduction to psychodrama, up close and personal. As a reporter researching the emerging "Adult Children of Alcoholics Movement," she attended a 5-day residential program; about midway into the week, she was asked to play the protagonist Jerry's mother. Once she trained into the role, embodying it in action, she recounts, "Something very powerful happened, a kind of time shifting. I was no longer the young journalist, pretending to be a middle-aged mother in a therapy group in a treatment center somewhere in rural south-central Pennsylvania. I *became* Jerry's mother, and he seemed to know it." Carnabucci remembers, "When the drama concluded, it was clear that Jerry had changed in a deep way. His face seemed calm and more open. He was holding his body more loosely, and he was able to joke and talk more comfortably in our group. My encounter with Jerry—as well as my exposure to this different style of psychotherapy—led me to a journey that I still travel today" (pp. 3–4).

Carnabucci credits her "great good fortune" since that first moving encounter to have trained with Zerka Moreno, J. L. Moreno's partner in the development of his triadic system of sociometry, group psychotherapy, and psychodrama. With Zerka's passing in 2016 at the age of 99, it was especially poignant to read Carnabucci's collected excerpts of transcribed notes from her trainings with Zerka and others on her journey as a nationally certified trainer, educator, and practitioner (TEP). Carnabucci has purposely compiled these "bite sized articles"—building on an earlier self-published version, *Practical Psychodrama* (2005)—as teaching aids for trainers and coaches, supplemental to the traditional literature that's required reading for deep understanding of the Morenos' concepts.

The 60 article chapters are each about two pages in length, and written with the authority and specificity of an expert psychotherapist yet in a warm and encouraging voice. While there is a very loose organization to the chapters—indeed, my only major criticism of the work, which I'll address in a moment—

Carnabucci captures the primary theoretical concepts of psychodrama, sociometry, sociodrama, group process, and the many overlapping applications for a variety of contexts, mostly therapeutic but also some nonclinical settings.

Educators will find particular value in her thoughts on the Magic Shop technique (Chapter 38)—a favorite of practitioners to bring playfulness to the intrapersonal transformation process and lighten the group experience; working with trauma and when *not* to work with trauma (Chapters 40 and 41); the multitude of action interventions to support work with addiction in groups (Chapters 43 and 44); and addressing anger in groups, as well as dealing with feelings toward group leaders (Chapters 45–47).

Carnabucci is very generous in recognizing the work and contribution of numerous practitioners and trainers working around the world; she has included a comprehensive Resources and Reading List to inspire learners to deeper study.

Those interested in using Carnabucci's book as an adjunct to traditional literature would be better served if the material were more strategically organized by broader topics in the table of contents, or at least by a topical index at the end. While Moreno's theories and concepts are intrinsically interrelated and thus difficult to tease apart, as noted by the author, it would be a much more effective resource if the bite-sized pieces could be organizationally connected—making full “courses” of the concepts (metaphorical pun intended), rather than seemingly isolated samplings.

Similarly, it would be very helpful to have full citation information at hand for quoted material in the text, so readers can follow where their curiosity leads them. While Chapter 60 is a comprehensive reading list, it does not coincide with quotations in the text, nor does quoted material identify page numbers in its respective sources. A small detail perhaps, but educators in particular always want those academic breadcrumbs to support their students' learning.

Carnabucci is a gifted teacher and dedicated professional. She is a licensed clinical social worker and nationally board-certified trainer, educator, and practitioner in psychodrama, sociometry, and group psychotherapy, and a certified family constellation facilitator. She has coauthored two books, both of which have been reviewed by this publication: *Integrating Psychodrama and Systemic Constellation Work: New Directions for Action Methods, Mind-Body Therapies and Energy Healing* (2012), with Ron Anderson; and *Healing Eating Disorders with Psychodrama and Other Action Methods: Beyond the Silence and the Fury* (2013), with Linda Ciotola.