

MULTIPLE THERAPY WITH A COUPLE.

Dr. Carl Whitaker and Dr. Richard Felder in a demonstration of multiple therapy with a man and wife at a AAP Workshop. 1966

Whitaker: I had a strange experience of contrast between the tremendous restraint you brought to our meetings when we said hello and your statement now that you want very much to have it therapeutic.

Wife: Yeh.

Whitaker: It's as though you talked in two voices, and I wasn't sure which one.

Wife: Well, I talk in two voices. I seem to have two selves, I don't know. I don't seem to always be genuine or really very real.

Whitaker: My way of putting it together was that you wanted it to be therapeutic; but you want it to be therapeutic because we made it that way, without your having to get your feet wet as it were.

Wife: I guess I would like it to be easy.

Whitaker: I was also intrigued by your husband's idea that it was an affair.

Wife: Affair?

Whitaker: He said he wanted the whole affair.

Wife: I don't know.

Whitaker: Maybe he's using it in the broad sense.

Wife: So was I, only I wasn't having a specific broad in mind; and I guess I really thought you did too.

Husband: I didn't at the time, but I do now.

Whitaker: Do you have times when you want to give her away?

Husband: In efforts to be as honest as possible, I'll say yes; but they usually don't last very long.

Whitaker: Don't you think it would be quite a gift?

Husband: I think so, but she's not up for grabs; she's spoken for though I don't think the occasion for making quite a gift would come up. I think she's already --

Whitaker: Strange feeling that you were avoiding saying, "She's mine."

Husband: Not consciously, but perhaps subconsciously, I don't know.

Whitaker: Do you feel sometimes that she's not really yours, that you really haven't made it?

Husband: I guess it means maybe I do, but it doesn't --



Wife: I wonder if it means, if it's a matter of not lasting longer, you don't think as long.

Husband: Well, that's what I mean, the feeling that eventually came out.

Whitaker: How do you feel about him?

Wife: I don't know.

Felder: Get no credit for that.

Wife: Well, I'd like to think that I love him very much and all that and I can't seem to live without him, but I don't know what to tell you how I feel about him. I suppose I do feel --

Whitaker: Don't seem to get any answer on that.

Husband: Can I ask for elaboration on that?

Wife: No, you can't because I can't.

Whitaker: No, you're just the other patient; you don't get to be therapist here.

Felder: Is it really OK? 'Cause I had sort of the feeling that you were going to have to be therapist or you'd be crushed. Why is that funny? Do you have the same trouble with him?

Wife: Yeh, how did you know.?

Felder: Just crazy.

Wife: I don't get the same response though.

Whitaker: He doesn't seem crazy to you.

Wife: No, what I mean to say is that he wouldn't just smile and hug his pipe; instead he would say something else maybe as if it really isn't so, and he'd want to deny it 'cause I said it; But because of the situation we're in right now and the role structure, he won't do that. It's polite not to.

Whitaker: What happened just then?

Wife: Well, I suddenly noticed that I was sitting here grinning, and laughing, and looking at the three of you; and I decided, well, that maybe I should stop that.

Whitaker: Why?

Wife: I don't know, maybe -- (garbled)

Felder: I was waiting for your words to sink in on him; that's what I was waiting for, but I guess they didn't.



(From now on, the following symbols will represent the speakers:

W=Whitaker

Wife

H=husband

F=Felder)

Wife: Well, it was polite not to let them sink in, not to let them cause any response right now for him.

W: You mean he has the same kind of bland blankness that you do?

Wife: Perhaps, I don't know, I'm not a psychiatrist. I don't know. I kinda feel that, but I don't know. I don't know that that's true.

W: Do you think of this as your way of protecting yourself against him?

Wife: Protecting myself against him or myself?

W: Both maybe.

Wife: I don't know.

W: I wish you could get over that "I don't know". It makes me back away from you, and I don't like that.

Wife: Oh, I'll take off my shoes and you'll feel more comfortable with me. Uh, I just don't know what to say; maybe it's my inability to express myself or to really let you know how I feel, but I --

F: Maybe it's of your fear. I see your heart is beating very fast,

Wife: It beats like that all the time. I'm quite tense all the time, usually, and I seem to be unable to relax, so usually.

F: Does it beat faster than that?

Wife: With you? I don't know, I guess it beats probably just as fast as all the other times I've been with psychiatrists or social workers, psychologists.

F: SO it sounds like you've been with thousands of them.

Wife: Well, I feel like it! That's why I wanted this to be therapeutic, but I don't think it's possible with just one session. But I don't know, I kinda want to be optimistic.

W: Some good may come of it for you.

H: I hope so. I think the important thing for us is perhaps to improve our relationship with each other rather than just stick to our own ways as far as outlook is concerned because our problems are very much bound up with each other.



W: Is she therapist to you too?

H: Well, in some ways, at times when I'm, when I come in the door all tired and worn out after a rough days at rackets, or something, she senses it. It has a therapeutic effect on me, she cheers me up very much, she's really great. If I'm home first, I hope to have such an effect on her when she comes home.

W: Are there times when you get past this role-playing business with each other?

Wife: This business of wanting to master one, the other, what?

W: be helpful.

Wife: Be helpful, needing each other and trying to --

H: Well, at the time it doesn't seem artificial, it's just the natural thing to do. I didn't mean to say that we consciously set out to be therapeutic or that she consciously sets out to be therapeutic.

Wife: I think it is important to me that I am therapeutic to him, or that I cause some great response in him that is very positive, and that he needs this very much. It's very important to me; somehow I seem to need that kind of thing.

H: I suppose that I need also to feel that way about myself, but at the time I'm with Dora, depends on circumstances, but much of the time it isn't something I'm consciously thinking about at the time. I just sort of naturally proceed, and I sorta have enough faith in myself to feel that as I naturally proceed with things I will be pleasant with Dora also. It hasn't always been the case. Actually, I've been taking some Dexamyls lately, and I've noticed that now that I'm taking them, I have much more faith in my ability to cope with the situation, and I'm much less inclined to be consciously thinking about the effect of my words on Dora as such. Yet it is better, I should say, than before because I'm able to take things in stride in a normal fashion. My natural unstudied response is in fact a more positive response, and I, it's more conducive to getting along.

W: You must have scared the hell out of him.

Wife: He said a mouthful, didn't he?

H: I don't think so.

Wife: He talks like that all the time though; this is something, for someone who doesn't know him, maybe it would appear that way at first. But after living with him, and knowing him for some time, it is something that you more or less get adjusted to as it goes on and on. He doesn't have any idea at all that it is a mouthful, or an awful lot, you know. And he doesn't like for me to say that it is. For instance, we'll go to a picnic -- we went to a picnic a couple weeks ago -- and there was this linguist there, and he's very much interested in linguistics. And here was this king of the crop linguist. and he really had a



H: Well, the thing that Dora is trying to say is that it often seems to her that I talk too much.

Wife: Yes! (laugh)

W: That sounds fair 'cause that's what I'd just gotten through saying before she said it. She was just agreeing with me.

H: She's saying that...However, there is a distinction here. You're speaking of a particular instance, and she was referring to my general behavior on many occasions. Her comment on your remark was that my behavior a moment ago was quite typical of my behavior in general, that I usually talk too much.

F: There were some things you said that I paid any attention to, that seemed to make sense to me. You said her name, and at that point I began to relax a little, and I thought of her tension. Maybe her tension is like mine with you. But when you get personal for a moment, then the tension begins to be gone; but when you stay away, the tension increases. The other thing you mentioned was coping with the situation, and I wanted to ask you what situation you mean.

H: Well, the context in which I said that was I was referring to being on Dexamy; and when I said that I was able more to cope with the situation, I meant that really in two different ways, one very broad and the other very specific. The broad sense in which I meant it, I meant that really in almost every respect I am able to cope with life better on Dexamy than without it; but the specific sense was that we have the problem that we frequently get on each other's nerves, and I feel that I was able to, in the course of proceeding naturally, to not get on her nerves in the way that I habitually had in the past; and that this came in the natural course of things, without any special conscious effort in that direction, that just proceeding naturally, I didn't get on her nerves nearly as much as I did before.

F: Put me to sleep.

W: Me too!

H: Sorry.

W: And your wife, she disappeared into the ceiling there.

Wife: I usually do. I wish that I could be just as talkative and interested in every word he's saying, but on the contrary I'm not, and that's unfortunate.

W: Why, don't you think he says it so you'd be disinterested?

Wife: That's true, he feels I'll be disinterested; but his argument in defense about it is that intelligent people, people with very high IQ's, don't lose interest; they have a very long attention span (laugh) and my attention span isn't very long and that I get bored very quickly. Do you understand?



W: I appreciate your defending him.

Wife: No, not defending him, I'm just simply relating to you what I've been told.

H: I confess having made such remarks.

Wife: Yes, I feel quite inferior at times because I don't know what my IQ is, and I couldn't give a damn less actually; but to him it's very important that I be quite bright, and that I have, oh, a very long attention span, etc.

H: I think she is quite bright, but --

Wife: But I just don't have a very long attention span. (Laugh)

F: Are these the two minds you have?

Wife: Beg your pardon?

F: Are these the two minds you spoke of?

Wife: No.

F: Your own and the one you try to have like he wants you to have?

Wife: No, I don't worry about that so much. I worry about it; it is a problem with me, I won't deny that. On the other hand, that isn't it. I seem to be somewhat aloof on one hand, and on the other very seldomly that I'm able to really sense very much about what's going on around me and to really care and to really be involved in it totally. Usually, it's between an aloof feeling and then being there, you know, actually being on the scene and sensing and knowing what's going on, then somehow not really caring about it. And it's very unusual that I really am able to sense it totally and to be completely involved. This is indicated in many ways: I've been able to see this in myself in many ways. For instance, in sex, I can't really relax enough or to be totally involved. I don't know, I think about a thousand other things, or it's completely hazy in a way. I don't know that I can really express this feeling or this difference.

W: You mean you're afraid to disregard the other person?

Wife: I'm not afraid of disregarding the other person; I actually do at times.

W: Why do you object to it?

Wife: Because I don't get anything out of it, period. I don't reach an orgasm. I don't...nothing! I know the difference. I was, at one time, able to be this complete self and to really be involved with it, and so on, and to really reach an orgasm. I know the difference. But, I haven't been able to for some time.



H: She doesn't mean just in this specific context, this sex bit.  
I think --

W: Here we go again! Are you her father or her husband?

H: Husband.

W: You sound like her old man. Let her talk for herself.

Wife: God, I worry about that very much, and that actually, well, actually the truth is when I first started speaking desperately, psychotherapy or any kind of help with this problem, it was because I was very dissatisfied. I had been quite promiscuous, and I enjoyed sex very much, and when it got to the point where I wasn't having an orgasm, I kinda wondered what was going on, and that was the real reason that I actually started to look around for psychotherapy and so on. But there have been other reasons that I've learned about or that I've come to conclusions as being why I was looking for a psychotherapist or someone who could help me or to help myself, or whatever you say.

F: What else?

Wife: Nothing else!

F: What other reasons?

Wife: Oh, well, this business of not really feeling and being able to be involved. I can remember before I was married, my father was quite ill, and my mother was crying because she thought he was going to die: he was a heart patient. Everybody in the house was quite upset, but I just couldn't give a damn. I just didn't care, and I really felt that way, didn't matter to me at all. Everyone else was very concerned and crying, and they thought I was something terrible because I wasn't, and I wasn't about to do so. I seem to have no feeling or a very negativistic feeling about everything that many people are very concerned about.

W: Why should they be concerned about it?

Wife: Beg your pardon?

W: Why should they be concerned about it?

Wife: Because it's very important to them, that this whatever it is goes the way they want it to go. Sometimes I feel as if my marriage, I don't seem to think anything is supreme or anything is very important or anything is important at all. The only thing that is important is what I want and that's it, and what I want for that moment, if I want to eat watermelons, and that's fine, and that's the supreme thing at the time; or if I want to be illicit then that's important. Everything else is behind me, and the only thing that's important is what I'm thinking about, what I'm about to do at the time, and then I'm not altogether involved in it at times.



W: No, you certainly aren't.

H: Let me give you an example of the situation she mentioned with the watermelon because that's an example that --

W: Why don't you really talk about you?

F: Aren't you going to let her talk for herself?

H: At the same time I will talk about me, if I may. Not all of our problems, but many of them, hinge with one or the other of us becoming annoyed over very minor things. I'm reminded of an example of the husband and wife who were in philosophy and held opposing views in their field and where each subscribed to the antithesis of the other person's views, and devoted their life to promoting their own view; in this respect their marriage failed, but not because of that, but because the one became very annoyed at the way the other squeezed a tube of toothpaste. In many respects, our problems tend to be like that.

W: Are you the toothpaste (garbled)--

H: We both do our share of minor things that annoy the other, and if I may --

F: You are, you sure sound like a philosopher.

W: Leave him alone, for God's sake. Like you were up there looking at the two of you.

H: It's true that I tend to frequently to do things almost that way.

W: Don't mix me up in it; I don't like it.

H: Well, in describing, in conveying our situation as it is I'm afraid it's necessary to convey that rather large part of myself that perhaps does take perhaps this unfortunately detached view of things. Perhaps that's an important part of the situation as it is, and it must be dealt with.

W: I didn't think of you as being detached. I think of you as trying to gimmick us by detaching yourself.

H: No, it isn't just you. I gimmick myself perhaps.

W: You keep her from getting any psychotherapy.

H: I'd like both of us to be getting psychotherapy; and I am, and she soon will be, she has in the past and soon will be again.

Wife: I really haven't had any psychotherapy. Most of the people I've seen claim that they can't give me any psychotherapy, that they can't administer any psychotherapy to me because of this business of being detached. I don't know if it's any excuse or



what, but unfortunately, the people I've seen have been students or something like this, psychiatric students. Some of them haven't been, I don't feel, very objective on one part and another is that I think they are just damned inexperienced; and I regret it because I think I have wasted a hell of a lot of time, you know, by going to them. It's quite frustrating, but then I guess you might say, "Well, if you want it to work, pay for it!"

H: Well, if I could get back to the thing that I started to mention, an example of the kind --

W: You want to keep her from being any further involved.

Wife: Well, from cursing --

H: No, go ahead if you want, if you'd rather she proceed, go ahead.

Wife: Well, there is nothing more to say for now.

W: Don't you think it was sweet of him to give you permission to go ahead though.

Wife: Very just.

H: The thing I was starting to say earlier was the example --

F: Did you have a dream or something?

H: As a matter of fact I did, that was in fact what I was going to come to.

W: Well, why don't you start right out with it, but don't let it get too involved.

H: My dream concerned my wife and some children we were to have in the future and the watermelon she mentioned.

Wife: You won't believe it!

H: It was a nightmare. I dreamed that we had children, and we were all in the kitchen, and there was some watermelon, enough watermelon to last, I don't usually eat much watermelon, enough watermelon to last my wife and the children for two or three days. Then Dora proceeded to sit down with the whole watermelon and eat it all at once.

Wife: The stereotype was plaguing him.

H: If she had enough watermelon to last her two or three days, she does sit down and eat it all at once; and I dreamed she was doing this in front of the children and setting what seemed like a most horrible example. This greatly disturbed me, and I woke up. This is, in a way, very typical of the kinds of little things, insignificant in themselves, that cause us to get on each other's nerves.



W: You mean that you can't enjoy watermelon?

H: No, that, well, if she would take half a watermelon --

F: Your wife should dare to be hungry?

H: Well, it isn't really that. If she knows that we're not going to have any more watermelon for a few days, perhaps because we are momentarily impecunious, and we're just not going to be able to get any more for two or three days, and she knows that she likes to have watermelon every morning for breakfast, she'll sit down and eat it all at a sitting anyway and realize that she just won't have it in the future. This is a very small thing to be annoyed about, but it is something that annoyed me at the time, and it is, in a way, typical of the kind of little things that --

W: How many children were there?

H: Just a couple.

W: Boys? Girls?

H: Boy and girl.

W: How old were they?

H: Oh. I don't know exactly. They were small. I suppose they were six or seven.

W: Both the same age?

H: The boy was older. I suppose that was patterned after my sister and I. I'm three years older than she is.

W: Were they both colored?

H: Yes, but light, lighter than Dora.

W: But colored, most of them eat watermelon? (Wife laughs) Well, I certainly think you shouldn't eat any watermelon. Well, I think you've done all you need to do for the relief of the guilt of the white race by marrying her, you don't have to eat watermelon. (Wife laughs)

F: Did your dream go along with his?

Wife: What dream? I only have one dream, I always have one dream usually. I very seldom dream about anything else. I dreamed about an apartment one night; I'm sick of the apartment we have. It's really a very small apartment, and the rent is very high, and I've been wanting to get another apartment, but I know I can't have it for another couple months, and I dreamed once that I had a very spacious apartment. But other than that, I very seldom deviate from this one dream I have, and I've had



it since I was about eight, maybe seven or eight. And it has always been that of my mother dying, and that dream has always bothered me, I've always had it. I guess you might call it a nightmare.

F: How about last night?

Wife: No, I haven't had it now. Unless I forget the dreams, I usually don't recall any other dreams, and this dream usually wakes me up. On the other hand, I can remember my mother having a heart attack not so long ago, or having some difficulty with her heart. She has a very bad heart, and I was quite aloof. I didn't really care if she died or lived. On the other hand, I go to bed, dream this dream, and get very worried and stuff. (To Felder): You have the ability to sit there and just look at me, and I hate that.

W: Afraid you're going to get too involved?

Wife: No, I just wonder what he's thinking about.

F: I'll tell you what I was thinking about. I was thinking if you could be healthy in your sleep, why, I don't see why you shouldn't be healthy awake.

Wife: Well, I'm not so sure my sleep is healthy. Sometimes I have a difficulty getting to sleep, and I have to take some drug, I seem to have to take a drug to stay asleep, to go to sleep, and then have a drug to wake up. And that's unfortunate.

W: Which one would you use Dr. Felder for, the one to put you to sleep, or the one to wake you up?

Wife: I haven't really come to the conclusion that it's good to use those drugs. I don't know. Probably I'd need something to stimulate me 'cause I think he would depress me if he stared at me much longer. That is, you are Dr. Felder, right? Right. I'd have to have something to stimulate me 'cause I think for someone to stare at me, it makes me very mad. I don't like being stared at, and I don't like the idea of not knowing what other people think. Somehow, usually I can pretty much take for granted what one's thinking, but somehow for him, I haven't known him long enough, or else I'm just not so sure about him, I'm rather insecure about him, and therefore he bothers me.

W: Maybe you're afraid if he stares at you long enough, it would be stimulating.

Wife: Perhaps. I don't know.

F: Might even get in your dreams.

Wife: Get in my dreams, no.

W: He might even like watermelon. Then what would you do?



Wife: Oh, I don't know. I'd probably go out and buy all of it that I could. I wouldn't want him to eat them all up from me. I love watermelon. Actually, if I thought I could see him twice a week, or once every week, it wouldn't matter so much. I'd figure, well, I'll go watch this man stare at me for a half an hour or an hour twice a week and that will stimulate me and provoke me, and so on, and maybe I'll be better, and I might figure it was worth it in the long run.

W: I had a strange feeling a few minutes ago when you were talking that I felt you were getting more and more involved, and then all of a sudden you turned yourself off.

Wife: Well, I don't know. This is what I've been told I do. One of the students I saw told me that when things got too painful for me, and I didn't feel any pain physically, but that I would turn myself off, and that this was what I was doing, and this was why he couldn't administer psychotherapy to me. This is his excuse.

W: Do you think it's possible that you could keep from turning yourself off just like you do it?

Wife: Possibly, but I think it is very important for me to be able to feel some hope, or to have some hope that I am OK, and somehow looking at myself, I get more and more convinced that I'm not, and so I think it is very painful for me, and I couldn't go on doing it, and not for any great length of time. Perhaps I shouldn't seek psychotherapy because of that, I don't know.

W: You seem pretty real to me.

Wife: Somehow, I don't know. Sometimes I think it isn't a matter of just wanting to go to talk to somebody for an hour or two about my situation, but more or less wanting to ask questions and to get answers so as to soothe me and make me feel better and someone to say, "You're OK", and that would make me feel very good, and then I would go out with a very positive feeling about myself. Somehow I feel very negativistic about myself.

F: That's what I told you.

Wife: What did you tell me?

F: That you're OK.

Wife: Oh, but somehow you didn't say it right. You said it as if you had to say it, as if, well, I don't know, I don't think you'd do anything because you had to do it.

F: I said if you could be healthy in your dreams, you could be healthy awake.

Wife: Yeh, but then you haven't said what would make me happy, uh, healthy in my dreams.



F: You are healthy in your dreams.

Wife: Because I don't dream very much, or because I have just that one dream?

F: Just a minute! Because you have feelings in your dreams.

Wife: If we may talk about it, I don't know. There is something that bothers me very much, and that is this: I worry, you know, about this sexual thing, about not being able to reach an orgasm, and because I once did. Perhaps if I never did, I wouldn't know what I miss. You can't miss that which you never had. But I wonder, I'm looking at myself, as if -- is that me? Or is this me? You know. Am I a lesbian, or am I what? You know I have all these things that bother me constantly, they are constantly gnawing me, and I get very worried because somehow I just don't want to be anything like that, and I feel very insecure because I'm worried that I might be. There is no way that I can possibly think myself into thinking that I'm not any of these things. And it is very important to me that I'm not any of those things.

F: You didn't go through this in your adolescence, wondering whether you were a lesbian or not?

Wife: No.

F: Just now getting around to it?

Wife: Yes.

F: Anybody encouraged you?

Wife: Well, ah, no. I don't know, but I would think, somehow I feel that one can deviate just so much before he reaches no end to his deviation; and I am quite deviant in my sexual behavior. Therefore I feel there is no end to what I might do, and I'm fearful. There have been things that I've done that I've surprised my own self, and I more or less feel, what next?

H: Can I express a concern with her perhaps her worrying too much about --

W: No.

Wife: This is fun. (Laugh)

W: You can learn to do it yourself.

Wife: You written a book on -- ?

W: It might very well get you involved, you know; if you started shutting him up every time he began to sound like that.

Wife: It just wouldn't work. You see, he has on his Sunday-go-to-meeting behavior today. Mr. Hyde, is it, that isn't out. Dr. Jekyll isn't out today.



F: Mr. Hyde isn't out today; Dr. Jekyll is.

Wife: Right, right, right!

F: That is what she is trying to say? (laugh)

Wife: You see, I do need translators.

W: You could knock his pipe out of his mouth when he talks like that.

Wife: But I might get my hair pulled, and there is not much left.

W: Couldn't you pull his as hard as he pulls yours?

Wife: No, I just don't have the strength, and I somehow within the act, I somehow more or less become aloof, and I just don't care.

W: You don't pull hard enough.

Wife: Maybe not. But you see I can't concentrate.

W: You mean you won't.

Wife: Well, I haven't.

W: Good luck!

Wife: You gonna ring a bell?

F: That was just the first round.

Wife: Oh, I see. But when my husband speaks about not getting on my nerves prior to his taking Dexamyl, he did get on my nerves quite a bit prior to taking Dexamyl. He still does at times, but somehow it's not as bad as it used to be, and that's good.

W: Why is that good?

Wife: Because it was hell prior to his taking Dexamyl at times.

W: You want to have a marriage without hell?

Wife: Well, without so much hell.

F: I don't understand that either.

Wife: Well, the way he stated, asked, "Do you want to have a marriage without hell?", he more or less, or I more or less gathered that he meant that there was some hell in marriage, and since there has to be some hell in marriage, according to the way he asked the question, I more or less want to say, well, not so much hell, or not as much hell.

F: Now I understand it even less.



Wife: Well, I have nothing to say to help you understand it any further.

W: You were complaining a few minutes ago that you didn't have an heaven, and now you're complaining that you don't have any hell. Maybe they can both come together.

F: You can't have one without the other.

Wife: You can't? Are you saying that as a fact?

F: No, just suggesting a possibility.

Wife: I don't believe it.

F: I'm going to get slapped down again.

Wife: I don't believe it. I believe that married life can be very wonderful, and ours has at times been quite wonderful, and quite pleasant, and I enjoyed it very much. And then there have been times when there has been quite a bit of hell, and I've hated it very much. But I feel there should be a period of time whereby there are not the two extremes.

F: Why?

Wife: Or one of the two extremes. Because I feel that I'm not a person alone, as an individual, who has to go through life in one of two extremes.

W: Maybe our marriage just doesn't work right?

F: What did he say? You've been complaining that you don't have enough feelings.

Wife: Well, I keep thinking about this instance in intercourse, and so on; and I keep thinking about this business of not really caring about a hell of a lot of things, things just not mattering to me, and so on, and it bothers me 'cause I don't care, that it just doesn't matter to me, because I can't seem to get anything that would involve me completely, that I would feel free from head to toe or from finger to finger, or something. The only thing I seem to be able to feel completely is I can get involved in worry, I can worry better than anyone else I know.

W: Don't you get involved when he pulled your hair?

Wife: It hurt, and, ah--

W: But you don't want him to get involved, so you don't pull his?

Wife: Well, somehow I just don't feel it is important to pull his, or if I do it's only, it's very seldomly that I'm very, very, very, that I give a damn enough to pull his or to hit him, or anything like that. Very seldomly, and then somehow like in my, what did you say a few minutes ago, giving up, or going off, I go off there too. I stop it.



W: Well, I think this is your right.

Wife: My right? I'm sure it's my right, I do it. But the point is why do I do it? It bothers me that I don't care enough to go on, to be persistent in that way.

W: Maybe you just rather have it that way than to have heaven or hell?

Wife: Perhaps there is some need for me to do that, I don't know.

W: Has it ever occurred to you that maybe this is one of the things the two of you agree on? That he doesn't want any heaven or hell either?

Wife: No, it hasn't, because it appears that anything he does on a grand scale or anything he is really interested in is something that he...that indicates that he wants a heaven or that he wants peace, you see. He is a conscientious objector, he believes in disarmament; of course, this follows; and if I go to a grocery store, say, the clerk...There's one instance, we went to a restaurant together: it was the greasy spoon not far from where I work, and I hate to go to greasy spoons! This stupid waitress came over and she took a wet rag and plounced it down on the table, and she went across the table and the table was still wet, and she was going to serve me and I said, "Well, why don't you wipe that table up?" And so he says, "No, no, don't do that to her; it's OK, it's OK." And this peeved the hell out of me 'cause I thought that she should have done, should have wiped that table up, and had I been alone I'd have wiped that table up or I wouldn't have eaten there. But he on the other hand wanted to keep things as they were and not make any big point, you see. But I thought it was very stupid! As a matter of fact, on the way out he wanted to leave the girl a tip, and I didn't think she deserved a tip. I think you get tipped when you work or when you do something right or for the service you perform, and this stupid woman didn't do anything.

W: Why didn't you walk out?

Wife: Well, if I'd walked out, he'd have just made a bigger scene than the one he didn't want me to make.

W: You mean you want peace too?

Wife: Well, I want peace with him, but with that stupid waitress I didn't care if I ever had peace.

W: You mean with her you'd have hell?

Wife: And there's been so much hell with him in terms of these things that he thought were just terrible, maybe, it was as if I was a bogey or something, you know, or as if I was a witchwoman, that I just got damn tired and say, OK, if you want to eat here we will.



W: Did you ever think he was a prostitute?

Wife: Possibly.

W: You know, giving his heart away to everyone else except his wife.

Wife: Oh, I know that, that's beside the, it may not be beside the point, but it is something I have more or less taken for granted.

W: That's the way he gets his peace, and you get yours by looking at his face.

Wife: By what?

W: By looking at his face or getting mad at waitresses or something.

Wife: No, not necessarily. It's not a matter of getting my peace from that source. As far as peace is concerned, I think I've bargained, compromised on peace more since I've known him than ever before.

W: Think you'll ever get tired of it and give it up?

Wife: I hope not because I don't seem to be able to live without him, and I'm kinda nuts about him actually despite all his terrible faults, and mine too. And maybe I will, I don't know, I don't have any insurance that I won't, but it's a possibility, I don't know. I think that most anything is a possibility.

W: Except fighting it out with him?

Wife: Well, the trouble is that I wouldn't want to go out any more bald-headed, any more bald than I am, and I wouldn't like to have a terrible scar on my face, or something like that, and I wouldn't like to be maimed in any way.

W: Can I make another guess? That you're really afraid that you'll snatch him bald-headed.

Wife: Well, that's a possibility too. When I am angry, I do get plenty angry. I was afraid once I was going to kill him because he -- well, one morning I just had enough and I went at him with everything, just, just every part of me. That was one time I was completely involved, and I just went at him with everything else and somehow I just got tired.

W: And he gave up that time?

Wife: No, he didn't give up. He was still going.

H: Was this the morning you threw the oranges?

Wife: No, it wasn't the morning I throw the oranges at you; it was another morning.

H: I'm trying to think which morning it was.



W: You were probably scared to death too.

Wife: He was scared to death because he didn't have any clothes on, and I threw three oranges at him, and he couldn't run out in the hall after me, and I stood in the doorway throwing oranges.

W: That's wonderful!

Wife: I was fully clothed and ready to go to work --

W: It's like a normal marriage.

Wife: Really, so he didn't have any choice.

H: On one occasion I hadn't a, this was one of the few occasions where she was provoked to the point of violence, and I wasn't. I hadn't even gotten greatly perturbed, and I did walk over to the door to try to get us back together, to try to --

Wife: Kiss and make up.

HU: Kiss and make up, and she wasn't in the mood for kissing and making up.

Wife: I never am, in that way. I despise it. I've tried this tactic on men.

H: This is reverse English actually. This...one reason I had been in the hospital actually was that I was worried myself because I had several times, especially early in our marriage, even not terribly long ago, had lost my temper several times and hit her and pulled her hair, done one thing and another, and that bothered

W: In other words, the real problem is the marriage is so damned hot that you're both scared of it?

H: Well --

Wife: That could be a possibility too --

H: I'd say that the thing is we're, you see most of the time we get along pretty well together, we prize our marriage pretty highly, and I think when the slightest thing happens we feel greatly threatened that we'll break up, we feel greatly --

W: Doesn't sound like you're going to break up.

H: Well, I felt horribly desperate, I felt a desperate period that I was doing the wrong thing. We needed to make up, to save our marriage, and immediately after I do that, I try and kiss and make up, but she wouldn't have any part of it.

W: Maybe you didn't try hard enough?

H: I tried very hard, and I tried as hard as I could to kiss and make



extreme frustration even though it wasn't a surprising thing on her part because I had just hit her or something like that.

Wife: Yes, he just hit me.

H: And she and -- I'd become compulsive in my desire to make up but this compulsion --

F: Did she hit you when you tried to make up?

Wife: No, I'm not that cruel yet.

H: No, it wasn't that she hit me, it was just --

Wife: Just not want to be bothered.

H: She wouldn't be bothered.

W: No, I don't believe that. She was afraid to clobber him.

Wife: No, I don't think so.

H: She'd go in the other room, and if I'd go in with her, she'd try to keep her distance, and she wouldn't let me, she would be annoyed if I got close to her, and I'd tell her that I wanted to make up, that I was sorry, I apologized.

W: Oh, oh, so you ruined everything by apologizing!

H: And, uh --

Wife: Don't tell him that! Really!

H: The thing was --

W: Well, he's a big man and then make-believe he's a little boy! Pretty gruesome!

H: The thing was that when I would do this, I would feel a real compulsion to make up so that our marriage would hold together.

W: You mean, like she was your mother instead of your wife?

H: No, but her behavior in rejecting me, in rejecting my apologies and so on would cause my --

W: Why would she reject?

H: Well, she would reject them, and I would try to compulsively force these apologies on her practically; and these times I was really at my weakest.

W: I thought you said you got compulsive?

H: And then she would likely say something that would just infuriate me and I would --



W: You'd be a man again.

F: All this goes on in the bedroom?

Wife: No, in the living room.

F: I thought he said the bedroom.

H: Either in the bedroom or in the living room.

Wife: We have a very small apartment.

H: We have just the two rooms: the bedroom and the living room. The bathroom is opposite the bedroom, and the kitchen is part of the living room. The, uh --

Wife: That's Kansas housing.

H: The thing is, at these times I was --

W: I'm tired.

F: Yeh, I guess so.

Wife: (laughs) Oh, my--

H: I'm sorry. Could I try and make this point that --

W: You're not much help.

H: Let me try and make it anyway.

W: We'll have to eat though. (Wife laughs)

H: I think it's in the best interests to proceed, I'm not sure. I'm a little confused at this point.

W: What's the necessity?

H: The thing is -- No?

W: NO!

Wife: He has to talk; it's very important that he talks.

W: You let him take care of himself.

(Garbled)

W: You meant well. Goodbye.

H: Well, thank you anyway.

Wife: So funny!

F: (garbled) Nice to sympathize with you.



H: Thank you.

Wife: Aren't you going to stand up and say goodbye? I have a staff meeting to go to.

H: Is it really that late? What time?

W: He does look better when he stands up, doesn't he?

Wife: Yeh, but I'm taller.

W: So long.

Wife: See you.

(Couple leaves)