



Information on AVP-USA Meeting Inside!

Alternatives to Violence Project Newsletter

the Transformer

for AVP Workshop Leaders
Spring 1995

WHAT'S NEW IN AVP

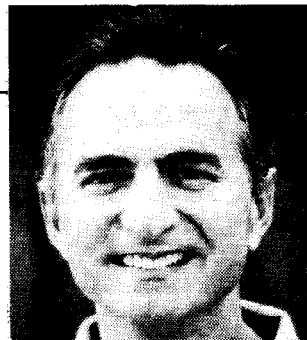
Bo Lozoff Talks About Meditation and Changing the Prison System

by Jeffrey C. Menohar

The connection between AVP and Bo Lozoff go back a long way. About the time that Larry Apsey and Lee Stern were doing the first prison workshops and organizing AVP, another former civil rights worker, Bo Lozoff, began to lead meditation groups in prison and organized his Prison Ashram Project. Bo Lozoff and Larry Apsey consulted each other for ideas and advice on the early years of both projects, and Bo has kept in touch with the AVP program over the years.

The goal of the Prison Ashram Project, Led by Bo and his wife Sita, has been to promote spiritual development among incarcerated people. Bo has led meditation workshops in over 400 prisons and his program has spread throughout the USA and around the world. By his estimate, the program has helped more than ten thousand people reclaim control of their lives.

In a recent trip to New York, Bo spoke to the inside facilitators at Sing Sing and led a meditation program for the group. At Sing Sing, Bo shared his life journey.



He started out as a civil rights worker in the Deep South in the '60s. He was often jailed and abused. There was a climate of violence on both sides and he was often tempted to retaliate with weapons. Martin Luther King, Jr. convinced him of a nonviolent approach to resolving conflict. Ram Das convinced him that meditation was the path to inner growth. In the words of Tich Nat Han, "We must practice deep listening."

As a student of the world's religions, he has read all their scriptures. Bo found that they all seemed to express the same truths. He sees that all religions have two things in common: Community and Communion. Community deals with how we relate to our fellow human beings and all living things. Communion deals with how we relate to ourselves and the Inner Light or God within. He teaches meditation as a path to reaching community and communion.

The next day, Bo Lozoff spoke at a meeting of Quakers in Westchester County, NY and spent an hour and a half expressing his concern about changing the prison system in this country. *continued next page*

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Bo Lozoff

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Bo Lozoff's message was a mixture of concern and hope. He makes two significant observations regarding modern American culture:

First: The American people are fundamentally unhappy in comparison with a number of cultures around the world. This is the root cause for the tendency of the American people to self-medicate with drugs and alcohol. Until the root unhappiness is addressed, there will be no solution to the drug problem. The deep crisis in this culture is a spiritual one.

Second: Our culture sanctions hatred; which is an old problem. Over the years, it is possible to trace cultural progress in this country by counting the groups whose hatred is no longer publicly sanctioned. In the 1950's, this country overcame sanctioned hatred of the Communists, in the 1960's we overcame the sanctioned hatred of the blacks. Now, a prevalent problem is sanctioned hatred of criminals; who are referred to as animals. Lozoff notes that all sanctioned hatred causes serious problems and cannot be tolerated in a peaceful society.

The American people are building a network of prisons so vast that it dwarfs anything dreamt of by Stalin or Hitler. We now imprison more people than any other country in the world.

Politicians, playing on public fears and anxious to present an appearance of being "tough on crime", are pushing for more mandatory sentences of longer duration, and are promising aggressive programs to build more prisons. For the politicians, the strategy is working. The "get tough" mes-

sage is drawing votes.

By Bo Lozoff's estimate, about eighty percent of the prison population is composed of non-violent people convicted of drug related crimes. These people, he states, should not be in prison at all. If non-violent offenders were not imprisoned, there would be no need to build more prisons.

People who were non-violent upon entry to prison do not remain so; because they are forced to share space with inmates who are violent and aggressive. Inmates who are physically small in stature are likely to be raped and/or bartered like slaves within the prison community.

Lozoff notes that some officials currently in positions of power, particularly the attorney general, are already aware that the "war on drugs" is not working. However they are actively discouraged from proposing alternative programs for fear of adverse political reaction. Lozoff urges us to write to politicians and express our support for progressive programs.

Looking around the meeting room filled with Quakers, Lozoff stated that the Quakers were largely responsible for creating the judicial and penal systems which operate in the United States today. Quakers must also take a big role in cleaning up the mess... and the mess is big!

Bo Lozoff is the author of books on meditation and spiritual renewal. One of his most popular books, "We're All Doing Time," teaches meditation methods and is available free to inmates. For further information write to:

Bo Lozoff, Human Kindness Foundation
Route 1, Box 201-N, Durham, NC 27705

WHAT'S NEW IN AVP

Marking 20 years of AVP

AVP-USA 1995 Annual Meeting

by Candace Mayer

The next annual meeting of AVP-USA has been set for September 1 through 4 in Ohio at Antioch University's Glen Helen Outdoor Education Center. The meeting is going to be particularly exciting for two reasons. First of all, the meeting will be focused on youth activities from around the nation. Second, this marks the 20th anniversary of AVP and we will find some creative, AVP ways to mark that celebration.

People who wish to attend should mark their calendars now, and it may not be too early to start getting those great plane fares. A registration form will be in the mail in the early part of the summer. Participants should preferably fly into Dayton's airport, with Columbus and Cincinnati as second and third choices. Because Dayton is about 25 miles from the site and the other two are over an hour's drive each way, people who fly into Dayton can expect a much simpler ride and people who fly into Columbus or Cincinnati may have to wait a significant amount of time before their ride arrives.

National committees will meet during the day on September 2, there will be a National Board meeting on September 3, and the formal Annual Meeting will take place on the 4th. Annual Meetings including the Board Meeting and committee meetings are the time we are about the business of AVP. We appoint our officers, we evaluate how our committee work is proceeding and, true to AVP format, we look at the future and how we can improve our work.

Program time will be interspersed throughout the weekend with several workshops on youth work, time for networking and a "threshing session" on the subject of accepting funding from the Department of Corrections, along with several other items of interest. Supplements to the Basic and Advanced manuals will be on sale at this meeting. Youth work will focus on sharing of ideas, and there will be opportunities to learn what is being done around the nation.

We promise that this meeting will not be all work. Entertainment will be provided on the evening of the 2nd, and along with the enjoyment of meeting AVP people from all over the country, should provide an opportunity for us to follow the often added AVP ground rule of "We have fun!"

Organizing Kits Available

Do you need help starting up a new AVP Group? The new AVP organizing kit can be your guide. The new organizing kit is available from the AVP-USA office for \$10.00.

Overview and Background Packet Available

How do you explain the AVP program to new people? John Shuford has put together a background packet to introduce AVP. You may order the packet from the AVP-USA office for \$2.00 each.

AROUND AVP

From the AVP-USA Board Meeting **National Policies for AVP**

by Candace Mayer

In the January meeting of the AVP-USA Board of Directors a new policy was adopted regarding the formation of new groups. the policy is a formalization of what has generally been normal practice in AVP and it states:

"Any new AVP group that is formed will have a mentor (individual(s) or group) designated from an established AVP group to give support and guidance to that process."

The Outreach Committee will be developing guidelines for the mentoring process in the meantime. If you are involved in forming a new group or know of one that is in the planning stages, please contact Helen Crisp at the New Foundations office, 303 861-5303m or call the AVP-USA office at 315 453-7311.

Guidelines have also been established which relate to financial issues. A set of guidelines now exist for local and regional AVP chapters wishing to be covered under the tax exempt 501(c)3 status of the National Organization. If your chapter desires tax exempt status, contact the national office to receive a letter explaining the process and a copy of the necessary IRS form. Additionally, the board set a policy on providing funding for trainers who travel abroad for the purpose of conducting AVP workshops. A very limited amount of funding will be made available to experienced trainers for transportation. The guidelines for

applications for such funds are available from the National Office.

The AVP-USA Board has adopted a number of policies which are included in the national policy statement. The policy statement was widely distributed in draft form, allowing for maximum input from all over the US, and it is currently available in the final form from your regional representative or by calling the National Office. However, it does seem that it would be useful to print some of the most significant policies which have been adopted and which are required of AVP groups.

For instance, AVP-USA adopted a mission statement in January of 1994 which reads:

The mission of the Alternatives to Violence Project is to empower people to lead nonviolent lives through affirmation, respect for all, community building, cooperation and trust.

Founded and developed from the real life experience of prisoners and others, and building on a spiritual base, AVP encourages every person's innate power to positively transform themselves and the world.

AVP-USA is an association of community based groups and prison based groups offering experiential workshops in personal growth and creative conflict management, the national organization provides support for the work of these local groups. *continued next page*

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This mission statement can be adapted for use by any local state or regional group, or a group may have their own mission statement as long as it does not compete with the national mission. However, if you change the mission statement, you should make it clear in your publicity that you are speaking for your local group rather than all of AVP. For example, the mission of (group name) AVP is...

A number of policies reflect a formalization of long established practice; for example:

- the requirement that AVP has a spiritual base but promotes no religious doctrine
- that workshops are conducted following the manuals
- that participation is voluntary
- that the concept of Transforming Power is to be communicated in every workshop.
- that workshops require more than one facilitator
- that prison workshops must have at least one outside facilitator
- that every workshop must have at least one experienced facilitator, normally designated as a lead facilitator
- that all AVP workshops are conducted under the authorization of an AVP Local Group and
- that facilitators must work with a Local Group when setting up and/or conducting AVP workshops leading to a certificate
- that we do not accept funds from Departments of Corrections with the exceptions of meals and certain supplies during workshops.

This last policy, while widely practiced and long considered to be a vital part of our program, has also been open to some

variety of interpretation. At the annual meeting in September there will be a series of discussions on the acceptance of "certain supplies", and under what circumstances is material support from DOC acceptable.

In other cases the national policies offer clarification or actually change the established practice to allow for adaptations which are widely requested from AVP local groups across the country – examples are:

- **Lead facilitator minimum qualifications:** that a lead facilitator will have, at a minimum, completed all three levels of workshops, apprenticed as a facilitator, and been recommended by other lead facilitators and approved by the local group for qualification as lead facilitator.
 - **Abbreviation of the apprenticeship process in new groups:** that the apprenticeship process may be abbreviated in programs beginning in new areas, with the approval of the sponsoring program.
 - **Consensus decision making alternatives:** that consensus is the recommended process for making decisions and that AVP organizations (both local and regional) will endeavor to develop the community necessary to make this a viable way to govern themselves. If an AVP Organization fails to reach consensus after persistent efforts, a modified process is outlined in the AVP-USA bylaws.
 - **Minimum length of AVP workshops:** that a workshop leading to a certificate is a minimum of 22 program hours, and that in unusual circumstances and after consideration, a local group may reduce the
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time to no fewer than 18 program hours.

- **Payment of facilitators:** that prison facilitators are not paid for their work — AVP may reimburse any expenses incurred in conducting a workshop. Local groups may decide whether or not to pay facilitators a modest amount for conducting community workshops. Local

groups may also decide whether or not AVP paid staff may conduct workshops from time to time as part of their job.

If you have any questions about any of these policies, or would like the board to consider changes in the future, please feel free to call the National Office.

Training for Trainers held in Southeastern USA

On February 3 to 5, the Southeast Region saw a Training for Trainers which truly helped to "jumpstart" the region. There have recently been trainings in Florida and Tennessee, but if you have a map handy and take a look at it, you will see that there remained a large portion of the region which remained unserved. The February training was held in North Carolina and included people from across the state of North Carolina as well as Georgia, Alabama and West Virginia. Combined with the existing programs in Tennessee and Florida, I think

we can expect to hear great things from the Southeast region in the years to come.

Judy Conrad and Judy Scheckel have spend several years working to make this training happen. they have worked with a coalition of local activists and corrections people to develop a core group of organizers in the Central North Carolina area. Because they has sent their dates to the National Office several months in advance of the workshop, it was possible to include people from nearby states who were seeking to receive training and start local programs too.

Attention AVP Coordinators

If you are coordinating an AVP program at a prison or in a community we need to receive copies of your statistics. Please send the following to the national office this month:

The correct address and phone number for your local program's contact person, dates and levels of upcoming community workshops, and locations where you do workshops (both in prisons and the community). Information on upcoming community workshops is especially important because

the AVP-USA office has a constant influx of calls and letters from people all over the US seeking information about trainings.

You will receive a report form in the near future to send information on the numbers and levels of workshops your group has completed in the past. This statistical information on workshops completed is important when talking to donors, funding agencies or groups seeking to get new programs started.

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Are you ready to be a Lead Trainer?
Team Leader Training

With Elaine Dyer of New Zealand

If you are ready to become a lead trainer or if you are a lead facilitator that would like more training, this workshop is for you. The workshop will be held Purchase, New York on July 7 to 9, 1995.

Elaine Dyer is an outstanding trainer and Fred Feucht found "Doing a workshop with Elaine was a real breakthrough in improving my skills. I just learned so much!" Another trainer who has worked with Elaine, Debby Wood says "Do not miss this opportunity."

Each Local AVP Chapter or Area Council is asked to name one experienced facilitator and an alternate to attend this weekend.

The size of the workshop is limited to 14 participants. Select someone who is close to being ready to become a lead facilitator or a lead facilitator who feels he or she could use more training.

The workshop will begin at 7:00PM on Friday, July 7 and end on Sunday evening, July 9. The registration fee is \$50.00 and some scholarship help is available. AVP groups are encouraged to provide financial assistance to their delegates. To register for the workshop, send in the enclosed form. For information, call Debby Wood at 914 747-0245.

Registration Form

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Alternate Name _____

Phone _____

- Registration fee \$50.00
- Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ *
- I need a scholarship aid
- I need overnight hospitality
Fri. ___ Sat. ___ Sun. ___
- I will arrive by car, send directions
- I will arrive by ___ plane** or ___ train
- Meet me at _____
TIME _____
PLACE _____

* Make out your check to "Alternatives to Violence Project" and mail to: Deborah Wood, 291 Bear Ridge Road, Pleasantville, NY 10570.

** White Plains Airport is five minutes from Purchase Meetinghouse. It is served by USAir, United, Delta and other airlines.

AVP FORUM

Handling Negative Feedback Tennessee Transformation

by Hazel Tulecke, AVP Ohio

The evaluations in the first workshop in Oakridge, Tennessee had been almost boringly similar: "The whole thing was good! The light and livelies were great! I liked it all!" etc. But the one at the end of the second day was different.

As a lead trainer from Ohio, I had been invited to help the newly-formed Tennessee group. This was the first prison workshop in Anderson County Jail. This was a rather unusual workshop since both male and female inmates were included. I was to do the debriefing of the first role play. When the group I was working with said they weren't ready, we went on with another group. But one group in the audience continued talking among themselves rather than watching the role plays.

Since I had been brought in as the "experienced" leader and felt responsible for leading a "good" workshop, I wanted to be able to model good debriefing of group two. I was very much distracted by the talking. I asked group one to listen, and reminded them of their agreement to the guidelines. When they continued and it was clear they were discussing their role play, I told them that they would have more time to prepare later but they should listen now — all to no avail. I felt impatient and my attitude was that I was right and I felt increasing annoyance with them which I hoped I succeeded in covering up.

But when, at the end-of-session evaluation, one of the inmates from group one asked,

"Well, may we say something about staff?" I knew she meant me. As I responded, words I hadn't planned came out of my mouth with a calmness I didn't expect, "Yes, we really need to hear your honest thoughts. That's how we improve... etc."

What followed was a critique of my behavior by group one members — that I had thought they were "being bad" when they were just working out their role play, that it was obvious that I "know a lot" but hadn't given enough respect to my teammates.

Somehow, (and maybe that's where Transforming Power lies — in the "somehow"), although I didn't agree with everything that was said, I could hear sincerity and helpfulness — and truth — in their words.

Across the gap of our backgrounds (many of the inmates were school dropouts whereas I have spent a major part of my life as a successful student and an often-critical teacher) I heard them. I told them specifically that I have a problem with impatience, and that when I feel responsible and insecure I tend to take over more. Instead, I could have turned to others for help as I might have to the other team-members (by clinicing).

Some participants said they thought the group shouldn't have continued talking — and I agreed. But I thanked the inmates for their evaluation, and it was sincere.

For me this was a real turning point in the workshop. The whole group seemed more unified, there was more *continued next page*

AVP FORUM

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laughter and better focus. A number of inmates gave me specific appreciations and I felt more relaxed with them. And somehow, I perceived the team as much more capable.

By the end of the workshop I noticed I wasn't stressed-out and exhausted as I often am after a workshop. I could really be present to the goodbyes with the participants and the very special new AVP facilitators in Tennessee as I took off for the plane home.

It was wonderful carrying with me in my minds eye, before and after pictures of the group of inmates. In the first picture they seemed mostly fearful and taciturn and separate — but making occasional sexual remarks to each other. (This was a mixed gender group from different units in the same facility). In the after picture, there was animation, laughter, smiles and general relaxation and friendliness.

The workshop had been a good one — mostly due to the skills of the new Tennessee group and the excellent preparation they had done. They had opened themselves up in very specific ways to make use of my experience — and to giving me careful hosting and support as well.

It leaves me with a final question. I wonder. How often does teaching the concept of Transforming Power involve the facilitators' experiencing a real transformation in themselves?

Editor's Note: When feedback is only positive, it is sometimes a sign of lack of trust. When the group has enough trust to give negative feedback, it is often a necessary step leading to building real community. When participants challenge the behavior of a trainer, the facilitator may have to choose between being defensive and "right" or being a good listener and leading a successful workshop.

AVP Note Cards

by Elaine Dyer, AVP Aotearoa

Making use of intricate Maori motifs and symbols, the inmates at Waileria Prison in New Zealand have created a remarkable painting expressing the meaning of AVP.

The colorful painting depicts the central heart and the spiritual energy of the program being supported by men facilitators (the two figures under the heart) and the women facilitators (the eyes above it). The two figures on each side represent the people from the four winds who come together to make up the family of AVP.



The intricate painting has been reproduced in rich color on a handsome, 6" x 8" note card. Cards of this type generally sell for \$1.50 each. The cards are available from AVP Aotearoa in packages of 10 for the cost of \$10.00 US. They could be used as fund raisers by local AVP groups. For information contact: AVP Aotearoa, P.O. Box 68111, Newton, Auckland, NZ.

AVP FORUM

From AVP Washington State

“Workshops from Hell”

by Beth Byers, *Peace Between People*

If you're lucky, you've never experienced one of the more challenging workshops. It has been said that “the AVP process works every time.” There are exceptions to this rule. Unfortunately (or fortunately?) most of us have had at least one. (See previous article “Tennessee Transformation”).

Washington State facilitators met recently to share experiences about “special” workshops and learn to decrease the frequency of them in the future. We began by sharing our hellish experiences and came up with the following list of common denominators:

Facilitator Factors:

- Poor formation of team
- Lead unable to set boundaries
- Dominating lead — no consensus
- Team member bring in their own emotional baggage
- Team members isolating from one another
- Lack of support from co-facilitators
- Breakdown or workshop pace and structure
- Not applying the ground rules
- Language barrier (street vs. joint language, English vs. Spanish etc.)

Participant Factors:

- Blatant racism, stereotyping
- Participants verbally abusive to one another (put downs)
- Couples or small groups with their own agenda

Controlling personality with his or her own agenda

Attempts to polarize the group

Destructive behavior, intimidation

Overly tired and/or stoned participants

Some participants required to attend

Other Factors:

Small number of participants (8 or less)

Uncooperative corrections officers and/or prison staff

In almost every difficult workshop challenges existed both among the facilitators and among the participants. While there is little we can do — or would want to do — to control the makeup of the group of participants who assemble, we have many options when it comes to putting together the facilitating team and creating partnerships with our co-facilitators.

There are few difficulties that a well designed team cannot overcome if they are working together. If there is a conflict among the participants, after all, AVP is a conflict resolution program and you may invite the participants to resolve this real conflict. The Fishbowl Exercise and Six Point Problem Solving may be helpful.

Other than outside factors, such as doing all we can to make sure that the workshop has a workable number of participants and that we have the support of the prison administration, the success of the workshop, is primarily up to the facilitators. We set the tone for the whole workshop.



Inside Partners

by Lynn Benefield, AVP Ark-La-Tex

It seems a common denominator which AVP prison facilitators like to share with each other is the special glow they feel as they witness the remarkable participation, communication and inspiration inmates feed back during and after workshops. They bring ideas to life in ways that amaze us.

In February 1994, at a Basic AVP Workshop for 15 men in protective custody at Wade Correctional Facility at Homer, Louisiana, we asked our usual question at the final session. Our "Where do we go from here?" was met with their "How can we help spread this?" and "How can we on the inside help you all on the outside?" A brainstorm resulted in a beginning discussion with five men who worked in the prison print shop. They discovered that we were in the process of contracting someone to screen print a T-shirt we wanted to sell to raise money to take AVP throughout our region. We discovered that they not only had the equipment but also the desire to be our partner! Warden Kelly Ward agreed that this was the perfect way for them to be important contributors to our AVP mission

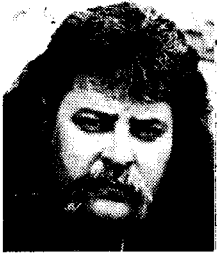
and he made arrangements for the logistics. These men, with their new found respect for AVP and themselves, took this partnership seriously.

When the team returned wearing their newly designed "Create Community — Not Conflict" T-shirts to conduct the Advanced Workshop several months later, four of the men who had personally worked on the first phase of the 124 shirts were absolutely beaming. We heard comments like "I was the one who washed the shirts" and "I did the Silk Screening" and "I ironed and folded all of them!" We only wished that they were allowed to feel the pride we do in wearing them as we tell the community that our AVP partners at Wade made these for us. If you'd also like to enjoy the message CREATE COMMUNITY — NOT CONFLICT in your community, you may order T-Shirts from Ark-La-Tex AVP, P.O. Box 4223, Shreveport, LA 71134-0223. The cost of the T-shirts is \$12.00 each (except for XX Large). We are now in our second printing and if your group would like to raise money in this way, please write for bulk rate discounts.

AVP in Writing

In March, a successful ten week pilot program was completed at Sing Sing Prison in New York. The program focused on improving writing skills and reinforcing the concepts learned in the Basic and Advanced

Workshops. Participants wrote a series essays based on the AVP exercises. If you would like copies of the 11 AVP in Writing Exercises, please write to: Rudy Cypser, 101 Young Road, Katonah, NY 10536.



AVP FORUM

From AVP Colorado

My Experience with AVP

by Norman Pacheco

None of us are born into this world as violent people. as we grow and develop we witness a variety of violence, and for whatever the reason might be it has the alarming potential to affect our lives in a negative manner. Understanding and dealing with such problems is where AVP is of utmost importance.

I have participated in many workshops. Each group develops a sense of community which often lasts far after the exercise is over. We do have the ability of changing attitudes we have harbored for most of our lives.

I came to prison for first degree murder and first degree assault — two of the most violent crimes in the nation. For most of my life I have felt violent in nature and, while my actions weren't necessarily violent, with each step I took, my attitude was. Prison is, and can be, a very violent place for those who live and work there. I have witnessed from both ends of the spectrum of how the principles of AVP work. Not everyone is always willing to accept an attitude of change, and so the problems continue for those individuals.

Alternatives to violence. The concept is simple. Seeking and finding solutions to life's pressing problems through understanding. If there are peaceful times present, all conflicts are probably headed for acceptable resolutions. When I participate in life, I find that joy is present. When I run away from life's fears, then I find disruption. There is always an opportunity to

be violent. I never lose sight of that scary aspect of the human nature we all possess. Today, because I chose to incorporate the AVP ideals into my personal life, I try vigorously to deal with negative situations with restraint and maturity.

Self-control, transforming power, or whatever principle I chose to use as I make my choices for non-violence has made a difference in my life.

In this program I have developed many friendships, friendships with people both here in prison as well as out in the free world. I would recommend this program highly to anyone seeking alternatives to violence. Everyone has the inner power to be non-violent. We have to learn to keep this channel-of-awareness to our non-violent attitude open, and learn to live with this social strength at all times. If we are afraid to negotiate with the structured program offered us through AVP, we won't.

I remain a member of the program because AVP is about a group of neat people looking for resolutions of violent behavior. If you have the opportunity to become involved, please don't hesitate to make a commitment in your personal life to do so. Please join us. It will give you a gift — a gift beyond compare, daily. I hope to see you...

Editors note: AVP inside trainer Norman Pacheco goes way back to almost the very beginning of AVP in Colorado. Norm has seen lots of changes — in the program, in himself, in the world around him.

AROUND AVP

An International AVP Team Power for Peace... A new Project is Born

A letter from AVP/PAG Germany

One year ago Enthusiastic Ellen involved us with a new idea. First we have been very skeptical (a typical German manner) about the project. But after a while we discovered the immense values and opportunities to participate in a brand new terrific conception about possible ways of conflict resolution.

We start with POWER for PEACE in April 1995 with our first workshop in a Bavarian prison and we are very excited about it.

We would appreciate to have the support of our famous model in the States "AVP" and we would like very much to get some American facilitators over to Germany one day in order to do some workshops with us.

Our plan is to connect international projects with each other. We already have found a suitable partner in Israel and we are looking for further contacts in Europe.

Later on we will offer workshops for schools and the community as well.

This is about all for the beginning. Let's start with a big adventure and let's have fun, too. Please keep your fingers crossed!

Lots of regards from the POWER for PEACE team:

Vera F. Birkenbihl (German)
Kurt Daschner (German)
Michael Klett (German)
Elizabeth Leitner (Austrian)
Swen Scheffler (Swedish)

James Swift (British)
Monica Vibert (French)
Ellen M. Zitzmann (German)

Our contact address is: Ellen M. Zitzmann,
Romerstr. 67, 82205 Gilching, Germany –
Phone: *8105-23708 Fax: *8105-26452



**Message
from
Ellen
Zitzmann**

Dear friends, brothers and sisters!

AVP has brought some major changes into my life. I never thought I would succeed to found a charity in Germany. Now, that I have done so I am very proud of myself and also my friends in the States who backed me up even without knowing. I am glad that an invisible power connected me with AVP because I think it has something to do with myself and the meaning of life.

Thank you all!

Enthusiastic Ellen

AROUND AVP

Difficulties with the Adjective Name Game

Suggestion Box

In our last issue, there was an article describing resistance to the Adjective Name Game encountered in Germany, cultural differences and slowness of community building in workshops.

Dear Transformer Readers:

I am writing in response to Helen Crisp's Fall 94 article "Suggestions Anybody?" I first would like to address the question regarding connections between the Adjective Name Game, culture and pace of community building. I would expect that Helen is right about the importance of one's name to their identity and place in the community. However, people may have considerably different perceptions about how those names are used, even within one country. Although fun and well-meaning, the positive adjectives are not part of someone's usual name, and could be felt as detracting from name identity. Also, the use of the first name only can be a problem for some, as I am aware of a strong emphasis on father's names (often last names) among men's circles in a effort to face father-connections and honor the lineage aspect of identity. In many parts of Latin America it appears customary for a person to have four names, and to state all with dignity when appropriate.

As for the speed of building community, certainly learning names is important, but probably not an overriding factor. Each group will have a different pace, and I suspect there are some broad cultural differences at play also. When traveling

through Western Europe, I found a notable North-South in which people of the north tended to be more careful about initial openness around strangers, but perhaps more prone toward deep and lasting friendships once beyond the initial stages. I think there may be a similar North-South trend in my own country (USA)>

What can we do? Part of the answer may lie in some of AVP's great strengths: a sense of acceptance and an orientation toward offering challenge without coercion. If one group tosses out an exercise and moves slowly toward community, okay, lets try to meet them where they are. AVP has several name-learning games which can be quite effective with or without the adjectives or any other name combination. Some people prefer to learn one name at a time as they learn about that person, and we have one-on-one exercises for this, if we remember to include a step involving names. Sorry I don't have any wild new name exercise.

Timothy L. Olson
Denver, Colorado

Dear Transformer Readers:

In response to the article about difficulties with the Adjective Name Game, I suggest the following adaptation:

Return to the old folk tradition of developing last names based on life experience, like Smith or Shoemaker or Cartwright or Tanner, but instead let participants choose their own idealized last names, based on what they most love or

AROUND AVP

value of find most transforming, peaceful or healing in the world.

So that, keeping my own given first name, I might choose to be known as Bob Forest or Bob Music, instead of my adjective name like Brave Bob or Bountiful Bob.

These names should be approached seriously, with a respectful sense of appropriate (in your case, European) folk traditions, and not represent a frivolous attempt to "play Native American" by choosing names like Running Bear of Flying Eagle. In mixed-culture groups, each participant should be urged to try to ground themselves in recreating the best intentions from their own roots and naming traditions,

so the names participants choose for themselves reflect honestly where they are coming from as well as what both enlightens and grounds them in the present and guides them towards the future.

I hope this adaptation of the Adjective Name Game works.

Bob Seigetsu Avstria
Eastchester, New York

PS: "Seigetsu" was given to me by my teacher in the ancient Japanese tradition of shakuhachi (bamboo flute) known as Sui-Zen (blowing meditation). It embodies both what I bring to the tradition and my ideal self. "Sei" translates as calm, clear or peaceful and "Getsu" means moon.

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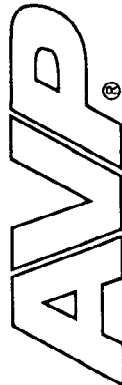
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