



the last word

Do you watch Big Brother? And possibly more to the point, do you admit that you watch it? Whatever your feelings about its value or lack thereof, you have to admit it causes more polarisation than almost anything outside the rightfulness of invading Iraq. Actually, Celebrity Big Brother last January, with its racial tension and bullying theme, probably moved its controversy rating up and over the Iraq war.

I'm sure there are a few people who are honestly neutral, but typically there seem to be four groups in the opinion stakes: those who watch it openly and with huge enjoyment; those who watch it 'professionally', as in 'I'm interested in the dynamics between people even though I dislike the whole premise'; those who watch it secretly (for either of the above reasons); and those who wouldn't watch it if it were the only programme on all channels.

If an excuse for watching is needed, then I think counsellors and psychotherapists – along with psychologists and others in the same general professional arena – probably have the best one. You can see first hand how stress brings out the best or the worst (and often not in the people you might have predicted) and you can learn some useful things about relationships from the phalanx of mind-professionals falling over themselves to air their views on screen and in print. I have a family systems/TA therapist colleague in the States who actually uses videos of the US version to demonstrate hierarchies, crossed transactions, hidden agendas, etc – though never to those clients who fall into the 'I-wouldn't-be-caught-dead-watching-it' group.

Do I watch it? Not telling – I wish to keep the respect of watchers and non-watchers, lovers and despisers, and everyone else in between.

One way or another, please keep in touch.

Margaret Akmakjian-Pitz
Editor

Contributions are welcome – book reviews, quotations, poems, cartoons, supervision issues, member news, difficulties facing the independent practitioner, 'thorny' issues of the moment and letters.

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AIP mission statement

AIP is the division of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) that supports members who are primarily in, or about to embark upon, counselling or psychotherapy independently, including those who work in voluntary agencies.

The division has the following goals:

- to minimise the distortion of professional benchmarks arising from working in isolation
- to provide a supportive, encouraging and integrative network with opportunities to exchange ideas, work ethics, methods, and styles
- to alleviate the loneliness of the independent practitioner by disseminating relevant information, providing tips and techniques and revitalisation
- to develop a comprehensive, appropriate and professional training programme primarily for those working independently

- to engage in and encourage constructive dialogue about the profession of counselling and psychotherapy, including explanation and discussion of BACP developments
- to offer therapists an opportunity to interact with the wider world of counselling and psychotherapy
- to protect clients by promoting BACP standards and ethics.

The division provides a supportive network as well as training with an emphasis on maintaining clear boundaries and having sufficient support and supervision.

AIP provides an interactive sense of professional belonging for all members of our multicultural therapeutic community. Equal opportunities are an integral part of this division's philosophy.