



IN MEMORIAM

Adam Blatner

Adam Blatner, MD, "floated to the finish" (in his own words) in October. Inspired as a child by his primary physician's kindness, Dr. Blatner declared his intention to become a doctor even before elementary school, saying "I want to help other little children, like you do." Graduating from the University of California, Berkeley, where he was awarded Phi Beta Kappa in his junior year, he continued his education at San Francisco University Medical School, receiving his MD and entering psychiatric residency at Stanford University Medical School. He was double board certified in adult and child/adolescent psychiatry and was a Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association.

Dr. Blatner's sub-specialty interest led to his certification as a Trainer, Educator, and Practitioner of Psychodrama (TEP). He was a lifetime member and supporter of ASGPP which honored him with several awards: Fellow, David A. Kipper Scholar's Award (1995), J.L. Moreno Award (1999), and the President's Award in 2018.

He is the author of the primary textbook in that field, *Acting-In: Practical Applications of Psychodramatic Methods* which has been translated into every major language. A prolific writer, he authored several other books: *Foundations of Psychodrama*; *The Art of Play: Helping Adults Reclaim Imagination and Spontaneity*; *Interactive and Improvisational Drama: Varieties of Applied Theatre and Performance*, and Adam's *Marvelous Mandalas* (Coloring Books). His last book, *Action Explorations – Using Psychodramatic Methods in Non-Therapeutic Settings*, featured 25 different authors. It highlights Adam's wide range lens of thinking and his constant encouraging generosity to colleagues around him. Adam also wrote many articles and chapters in textbooks about drama in education, playback theatre, warm-ups, and the expressive arts.

He was an active proponent of psychological literacy, critical thinking, and mental flexibility. As a clinician, he helped patients discover areas of health and joy in their lives. Dr. Blatner wrote and taught about the prima-



ry values of imagination, intuition, playfulness, improvisation, physical vitality, expressiveness, and spiritual inspiration as ways to foster a higher level of social and emotional skills in the human population

Teaching has been a constant focus of Dr. Blatner's professional and avocational endeavors. He was an associate professor at the University of Louisville School of Medicine and Texas A&M Medical School. In retirement, he and several other teachers started a Senior Learning For Fun program.

A passionate reader and polymath from his early childhood, Dr. Blatner borrowed from local lending libraries and purchased thousands of books — reading them all! One of his greatest joys with the Senior Learning program was the chance to teach classes on a wide variety of subjects from Shakespeare, world writing systems, microbiology, process philosophy, history of medicine, history of comic books, etc.

He was an outstanding dancer, embracing international, folk and ballroom dance as a teenager, adding square and round dancing, and advanced his skill in those areas into his later life. During retirement, he sang in a choral group and participated in community theatre productions. Always a lover of the tradition of campfire song fests, he compiled an extensive songbook, and actively held small and larger group sing-a-longs wherever he lived.

After Dr. Blatner — a lifelong clinician, academic, theorist, internationally respected author and educator — learned that he was experiencing symptoms of dementia, he declared his intention to calmly "float to the finish." Which he did, surrounded by his devoted family. He is survived by his wife of almost 50 years, Allee; ex-wife, Barbara; son David and wife Debbie and their sons Gabriel and Daniel; daughter Alisa and husband Paul and their daughters Camille and Zoe; brother Irwin, two beloved nieces, and numerous cousins. His uplifting smile and *joie de vivre* will be deeply missed by his family, colleagues, and friends. He often insisted that his greatest accomplishment was: "I got to help."



WE REMEMBER ADAM

♥ Regina Sewell

Adam Blatner touched many of our lives, through his books, through his workshops, through his frequent postings on the previous version of the listserve and on the group talk listserve, through the singalongs at the conference at which he was a key organizer, and through his nudging to publish research and other things we have done. The ASGPP will be hosting a virtual memorial service soon, but in the meantime, I thought it would be nice to share a few memories about our connections to Adam and what he meant to us on a personal level.

Since I'm the one posting, I'll start.... I first met Adam through his book, "Foundations of Psychodrama." It was my introduction to psychodrama and it made my world make sense. I didn't meet him in person until a few years later, at the first ASGPP conference that I attended. I'm not a great singer, but he was part of the group that welcomed me in. He worked so hard over the years to keep all of us connected, via the listserves, and through personal emails. His fading out has left a hole.

♥ Mario Cossa

People remember Adam in many ways and for many things. One thing I remember about him is that he was a wonderful ballroom dancer. At one of the ASGPP conferences of yesteryear, he and I danced a tango together. He is one of very few men who were strong enough dancers to lead me on the dance floor. Dance with the angels, Adam. There will always be a place for you on my dance card. Blessings from Bali.

♥ Connie Lawrence

I am so sorry to hear of his passing - a cheerleader and legend at the same time. My first memories of Adam are so welcoming - I felt like such a newbie-klutz-beginner at first and he was that kind person that took time out, took interest, and went out of his way to greet me and show interest in my baby steps. His presence was a big part of inclusion in the psychodrama community. He constantly cheered me to "write-write-write" and I can attribute my first pieces to the courage he gave me. Forever grateful -

♥ Joannes Ming Wai Lee

Very sad news. I met Adam Blatner when I attended the ASGPP conference

at Philadelphia around 10 years ago. Can't remember the exact year. I still remember him as a very kind and gentle person. We took a photo together. That was the first time that I attended a ASGPP conference, and knowing only a few persons. But Adam was very welcoming and made me feel as part of a very big family. Miss him.

♥ Linda Ciotola

I feel such gratitude for Adam Blatner and his profound and generous sharing of his brilliant gifts; his on-going generosity and encouragement; his memorable dancing, singing and creative playful spirit. He made the world a better place.

♥ Kate Hudgins

Like others, I am forever grateful for his support of my work and my writing. He took my first book around the world when he went to conferences and gave copies to all he met. He was kind, generous, dedicated to psychodrama and humanity. For Zerka's 80th birthday about 100 psychodramatists went on a cruise with her and Adam was there. He was protagonist in a session with her where he "officially came out".... As an elf!!! It was truly his authentic self and I always saw him that way ever after. I will miss him.

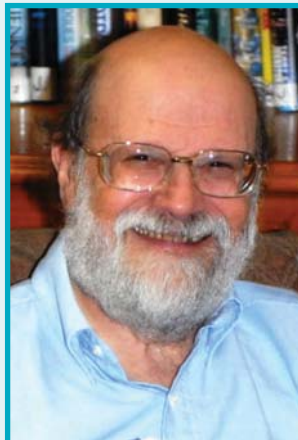
♥ Rhona Case

Adam seemed to keep up with everything going on in the ASGPP! He would reach out to me and Janell every year to ask if he could nominate us for an award. I would respond by telling him we don't do anything that special!!! He would disagree... and try us again the following year!!! We never accepted!

♥ Dan Wiener

Though Adam's contributions as probably the most prolific professional writer in the American psychodrama world were profound, I remember him best for the many, many ASGPP conferences at which he and Lorelei Goldman would hold evening open sing-alongs! On entry, participants would be handed a packet of song lyrics, ranging from popular classics to whimsical or even goofy ditties; most present would chime in, with Adam's bass voice booming the camaraderie with other singers! Thank you, Adam, for facilitating the warmth and belonging of these occasions!

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♥ **Carolina Becerril Maillefert**

I moved from Mexico to France. Being in France, Adam would always ask me about my news and developments in France on psychodrama. His interest to connect all communities was rich and helpful all the time and for many, many years. R.I.P.

♥ **Magdalene Jeyarathnam**

Thanks to dear Adam Blatner for helping with the development of psychodrama in India, beginning in 2008! After initial efforts to bring Dr Moreno to India. These sing-alongs were a welcome counterpoint to the heavy emotional and cognitive workouts of the conference workshops-- I always felt after Dag Blomkvist left India in the '90s, there were no trained psychodramatists working in India. In October 2008, we received an email from Adam Blatner who had just read an essay my husband Dr. Eric Miller had written in 1999, which was about an African style of storytelling that involves audience participation. The essay compared this style of storytelling to psychodrama, and cited Adam Blatner's book, "Acting-In: Practical Applications of Psychodramatic Methods" (1973). Adam's email to my husband asked if a psychodrama trainer might be wanted in India. My husband mentioned this to me, and we began a series of email exchanges with Adam which led in January 2009, only three months later, to my beginning my psychodrama training. The Indian Institute of Psychodrama was born in 2009 bringing certified psychodrama trainers from the USA and Australia to teach us in India. Eventually, in 2013, I registered the Indian Institute of Psychodrama as the first formal psychodrama training institute. I was certified as a Psychodramatist by the Australia-New Zealand Board of Psychodrama in 2016. I am the first Indian, living and working in India to be certified in psychodrama as a practitioner and later I became a trainer thanks to Adam's timely facilitation. The Indian Institute of Psychodrama and I have established an informal Board of Psychodrama here in India. This year we have signed an MOU to begin the first Master's degree in psychodrama in India. Thanks again to Adam Blatner for reaching out to us in India the way he did

♥ **Lorelei Goldman**

I first met Adam at a conference and he was moving around the conference room connecting with people and meeting up with folks. He would tell me time and time again, "Write, write, write it up, keep writing." Once he came over and sketched an elf on my program. I was thrilled. We were co-creators of the Songfest and would confer each conference year about songs

to suggest for our community. I will not forget that one Saturday night he told some grandfather-type stories and adult children would gather around him taking in his charm.

He was a supportive and accepting friend. I miss him right now.

♥ **Sheila Katzman**

I had the privilege of attending two of his lectures at University and included his arguments in my thesis regarding the question of whether or not psychodrama/sociodrama should be included under the Applied Theatre umbrella. A giant has gone home.

♥ **Jacob Gershoni**

Adam was the most prolific writer in the field of psychodrama, and he ceaselessly encouraged others to write. Many times, after posting my series of open workshops he urged me to write about them. For a while then, he wrote about the open workshops as a unique phenomenon in the field of psychodrama. I yielded, and researched the historical roots of open workshops, dating back to Moreno's presentations in Vienna in 1921. The result was a paper that the British Psychodrama Association published. Prior to that I was honored when Adam agreed to write a chapter in my book "Psychodrama in the 21st Century: Clinical and Educational Applications." His chapter "Psychodrama in Everyday Life" was written when he was promoting the idea that this method is not only for therapy; it may be applied in many other settings.

♥ **Marcia Karp**

As a psychiatric resident, he came to a workshop, "What We Don't Know About Psychodrama."

He played a 13-year-old patient of his who stole cars. As he put the psychodramatic key into the ignition, as director I asked, "What are you feeling and thinking?" He looked at me and said, "How should I know what's going on in the mind of a 13-year-old car thief?" Adam always said that was his beginning.

He was a fine cartoonist during our training in 1963. Moreno saw some of his cartoons and laughed. He said, "He will be a scholar."

He changed his name from Howard to Adam during a warm-up with Zerka. She'd asked, "What name would you like to be called in this group?" It stuck. Yes, Adam Blatner liked to giggle.

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♥ **Dena Baumgartner**

I first met Adam and Allee at a Federation meeting in Tucson in 1980 when I was a grad student. Next in 1984 when I was at St. Elizabeths Hospital and then all the ASGPP conferences. As an intern I would label the bigwigs of psychodrama how they appeared to me, an example Leo Fine, a human teardrop; he was the best double I had witnessed. Adam a playful elf, running up to people with a curious twinkle in his eye, engaging and from my first encounter way back then he never changed. Adam's energy was always promoting and engaging with a push to write and an all-inclusion framework. I feel blessed for the many emails and pushes Adam has given me to even "Dena, we will get you a ghost writer." I found one of his drawings on a pamphlet he was promoting in 1985 before they all became his books (see page 16). It is so Adam! Giving you all a giggle and a hug to write of course.

♥ **Rebecca Walters**

I think the first time I met Adam was at the psychodrama conference in Burbank, California. I have two very vivid memories of that conference. We were told that the Saturday night dance was going to have a surprise and we should all come at 8 p.m. and wait outside the doors to the ballroom. When the time came, Rosalie Minkin came out and said come in, come in. She had arranged to rent the entire contents of a costume house. David Swink, then president of the ASGPP I think, wore a white wedding dress. Adam, picked up an empty chair, and proceeded to do the foxtrot or waltz, I don't remember which, with this chair for an entire dance. What an evening!

People have written beautiful things about Adam and the bright light he brought to us as a community, as a writer, connector and supporter. Everything you have written has been so true, for me, too. But my fondest memories of Adam are dancing with him at the Saturday night dances and singing with him at his song fests.

I have missed him these last few years. I got to visit him in California a few years ago. It was so bittersweet.

May his light live on in all of us.

♥ **Marilyn S, Reinstein**

I am saddened to hear of Adam's loss. I met him only a couple of years ago the annual ASGPP conference. Over lunch, we discussed a number of

things, including 1) his wish to broaden the use of psychodrama within the psychiatric community – my husband, a professor of psychiatry reached out to help him develop his wish – Adam was quite eager, yet due to his declining health, was unable to come and do Grand Rounds at the medical school – the beginning of additional training with the psych residents; 2) I had shared with Adam how I loved attending the conferences, and how I did my best over the years to adapt what I was learning from the group work to an individual basis, in a number of non-therapeutic settings. It was quite an honor to be invited to write a chapter – "Action Methods in Coaching" in Adam's final book, *Action Methods: Using Psychodramatic Methods in Non-Therapeutic Settings*. Adam, you have been and will be greatly missed,

♥ **David Moran**

I first met Adam through his book Nancy Willis gave to me in my field placement. I read it through Christmas break and never looked back. Adam later signed that book for me which I cherish, not just for the signature but for the spirit of the man. He "nudged" us to do, teach, write, get to know others, take pictures, sing, dance and interact with the international and non-therapeutic worlds. Adam as an individual was FUN, spontaneous and creative. He was as others stated welcoming. He knew your name before others and encouraged us all to join one another.

As a member of the ASGPP and the world of psychodrama he was a psychodramatic star, in that he attracted people and stirred our spontaneity. He was full of ideas that the Executive Council had a hard time keeping up with. One of the presidents assigned a liaison to coordinate his ideas and suggestions. Wish I had thought of that.

We have many memories of him and his family for he would send holiday summaries of his family to us. At one conference as the keynote he led us in the singing of "It's a Small World After All." Brought tears to my eyes in reflection of who he was and who we are.

Thank you Adam for making that big scary world small in your shadow. We can honor you by emulating the spirit that you are!

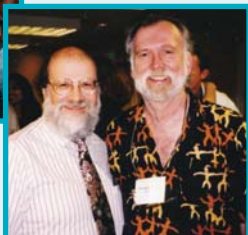
♥ **Joe Moreno**

See his tribute on Facebook: www.facebook.com/joseph.moreno.180410

♥ **Jennie Kristel**

I also met Adam through his book "Acting In." I so appreciated his interest

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in Playback Theatre and his strong encouragement of me and my work. I feel so lucky and grateful to have had the chance to know Adam and connect with him through his workshops and trainings.

Adam Blatner was deeply connected with many drama methods and circles around the world including being the first to really start psychodrama trainings in India. He deeply cared about the world and was committed to psychodrama being a key way to social justice- encouraging us to use the tools we have every day. His book was one of my first when I was a psychodrama student and continues to be one I use in my teaching and work.

While I met him in the psychodrama circle (dancing away at many a ASGPP conference – being his exuberant loving curious, and thoughtful self), he was deeply in awe of Playback Theatre and not only supported me but deeply encouraged me to write about my experiences. He and I had lovely email chats around Playback Theatre and the world. Adam not wanting to stop just at psychodrama but to support all action methods. His gentle and insistent nudging helped in my writing and ways I think about what I do. He was wonderfully generous with his time and energy, and I will miss his presence greatly. My deepest condolences to Allee and their family. May Adam's memory forever be a blessing and be blessed.

♥ **Carole Oliver**

Adam was truly an old soul even when he was young. I met him through the years at almost all the conferences. We would talk about psychodrama, and about life. About relationships, love, etc. I remember that I had asked him, What's your secret to being happily married, and he said it's very simple. When I wake up in the morning I asked myself: what can I do today to make Allee happier than she was the day before? I remember thinking to myself no wonder he's such a Mensch. We talked about many things through the years. He would dance with Allie like no one was watching. He would dance the samba when others were dancing to the music of a foxtrot. Sometimes he and Allee would tai chi at the dance. He was so honest and genuine. He wasn't doing it to show off he was just doing it because he wanted to. He was such a pioneer in many, many ways. But mostly for me I was enamored about how much he accepted himself as a human being. And that he followed his truth his whole life.

♥ **Marjut Partanen-Hertell**

Thank you for this opportunity to tell about the great help that Adam has given me. Adam was attending about 20 years ago the Oxford British Psychodrama Association Congress. I like all Finnish psychodramatists had

already read his book *Acting In*, published in Finnish by Riitta and Ilpo Vuorinen. Adam was so warm and curious that I immediately found myself welcoming. I danced with him shortly and he supported strongly my wish to lead workshops and write articles in English that was my weak fourth language. He also gave me some interesting psychodrama journals in German.

So, later I have had several sociodrama workshops in International congresses and also written some articles like "Sociodrama in Finland - an Environmental Context" in the book *Sociodrama in a Changing World*. I have found very interesting all the material in Adam's rich web pages that have been a treasure for all of us.

Remembering Adam warmly,
Marjut Partanen-Hertell, Helsinki, Finland

♥ **Karen Carnabucci**

Adam Blatner has been one of my most favorite people in the psychodrama world. He has been a constant encourager and mentor of younger trainees and practitioners and has always nudged us (including me!) to write and publish.

Years ago, I signed up for the now legendary Zerka Moreno 80th birthday cruise to Bermuda along with about 100 other psychodramatists, and Adam was sailing along. When he found out that I had brought my Tarot cards with me, we had a great conversation about the Tarot – and he immediately insisted that I must present a Tarot and psychodrama workshop on the cruise boat, saying that people would just love the topic. I reluctantly agreed – I wasn't even a Certified Practitioner yet! – and went to the room the next day which he had reserved for the workshop. To my surprise, the room was crowded – I suspect that Adam had something to do with that too – and there in a front row seat was Adam!

Despite my stage fright at presenting in front of The Great Adam Blatner, the workshop was warmly received, and I had to admit that Adam was right, and I should pay more attention to what he was saying.

♥ **Mary Bellofatto**

Adam was the neighborhood welcome wagon. He was always curious about my work in Africa and encouraged me to write about trauma recovery using psychodrama. I loved his sense of humor and his love of dancing. Great to read how he influenced people around the world. Thanks Adam for your living sociometry, and all your contributions to the field.

