



## newsletter for nurturing support groups

September-October, 1982  
Volume 4, Number 1

**Welcome** to the 19th issue of **WE**, a newsletter for and about groups of people who get together for the purpose of giving each other personal support. This issue includes opening and closing activities and a discussion of the "right to pass" ground rule by Margie Black. Deane Gradous lists "Ways To Lead a Good Meeting," and there is a change in the suggested format for Support Group meetings.

In previous issues we have talked about differences in adult's learning styles. Some people prefer to hear, to learn from auditory messages. Some prefer to see, to learn from visual stimuli, and others prefer to learn kinesthetically, to learn by doing. In this issue, Marilyn Grevstad reports on differing learning styles of children with information from the book, **Teaching Students Through Their Individual Learning Styles**, by Rita and Kenneth Dunn, published by Reston Publishing Co., Inc., 11480 Sunset Hills Rd., Reston, Va., 22090; \$16.95 (1978).

In addition, there are two exercises that are designed to help us think about an age-old human activity, FUSSING.

A special welcome to new readers. Please feel free to write **WE** about how you use the material and what you want included in future issues.

Jean Illsley Clarke

*Jean Illsley Clarke*  
Editor

## GROUND RULES POWER in PASSING by Margie Black



As a participant in the June, 1982 facilitators workshop led by Jean Clarke, I encountered the ground rules:

1. All beliefs are honored
2. Everyone participates in their heads
3. Everyone has the right to pass on any exercise or activity
4. No gossip
5. Leader stays in position of respect for others and self

Throughout the week, as we examined the benefits of various ground rules, I avoided any praise of the **RIGHT TO PASS**. It is my personal rule that I must fulfill every request, so I never intended to allow myself to pass.

My first Support Group meeting was in July and I attended feeling relaxed and pleased that someone else was responsible for the meeting. When I arrived Donna Rock, the leader for that meeting, asked if I would lead the opening exercise. Totally unprepared, I sat stunned, searching for a response. What a great relief it was when someone reminded me that I had the right to pass. Hooray! I ignored my personal rule and passed. Another person lead the opening exercise and, using the "teachable moment," asked that each of us list three reasons why passing is powerful. Here are sample responses:

Passing is powerful because...

- It invites me to think instead of just being adaptive.
- It reminds me of my responsibility to myself.
- It helps me to know that I have my own space.
- It keeps me from rescuing others and then resenting them.
- It helps me to get my needs met.
- It allows me to be straight with myself and others.
- It is available to everyone.
- It means I don't have to "please" others at the expense of my needs.
- It helps me tune in to my own feelings.
- It is freeing.
- It allows me relief from over-responsibility.

Do you use the **RIGHT TO PASS** ground rule consistently in your Support Group? How is the **RIGHT TO PASS** powerful for you?

## Facilitators Training Workshop

February 7-11, 1983,  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

A week-long workshop for people who want to...

- Facilitate the **Self Esteem: A Family Affair** parenting model, or
- Improve group leadership skills for working with growth and education and support groups.
- Led by Jean Illsley Clarke

Write to **WE** for details.



# LEARNING STYLES

by Marilyn Grevstad

Why is it that one child comes happily to a story time and can listen for hours, while another child has to be dragged and doesn't last more than a minute?

Why is it that one child covers his ears when a pin drops while another could read surrounded by a brass band?

Why is it that one child is literally bouncing off the walls while another child would willingly stay glued to one spot all day?

It may be due to individual learning styles claim Rita and Kenneth Dunn, authors of, **Teaching Students Through Their Individual Learning**

**Styles.** They have identified the following learning styles:

**SOUND** — some learners need silence, some do quite well with noise, some need background noise to block out distractions.



**DESIGN** — some learners do better on a floor, bed or couch than at a desk. It's an individual matter.

**MOTIVATION** — some learners plunge into everything they can, others need to be enticed but not coerced.

**LIGHT** — some learners can only concentrate under bright lights, some with dim.

**TEMPERATURE** — learners may need warm or cold work areas to do well.

**PERSISTENCE** — some will work forever at a task, others need encouragement to finish short easy tasks.

**RESPONSIBILITY** — this is similar to persistence, some need to have tasks kept simple with liberal encouragement.

**STRUCTURE** — some learners love to follow directions, others rebel and need lots of choices.

**PEER ORIENTED** — many learners learn best from and with others their own age.

**SELF ORIENTED** — self learners want to learn in their own way not necessarily yours.

**PAIR ORIENTED** — learning with a friend (any age) is most effective for these people.



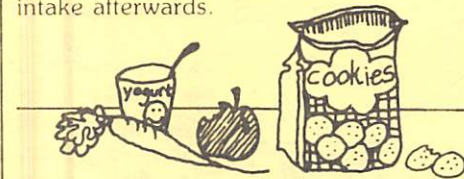
**TEAM ORIENTED** — some need to work with a team, some can't.

**ADULT ORIENTED** — some young learners simply do not learn well from adults and should have other options, some thrive on it.

**VARIED** — some lucky learners work very well with almost anyone. Others are resource oriented and do best with things.

**PERCEPTUAL STRENGTHS** — auditory, visual, kinesthetic or tactile is the predominant learning style for many and if their style is not addressed they learn very little. Young children are most often kinesthetic and tactile learners.

**INTAKE** — Many learners need to snack or drink while concentrating, others need intake afterwards.



**TIME** — often learners have the most learning-energy at one time of day: morning, evening, mid-day etc.



**MOBILITY** — many learners cannot sit still and do not learn well if they have to. They need the freedom to move about.

The child or adult who likes to do his homework sprawled on a bed, with a window open, a radio blaring, and lots of food close at hand is telling us something important about his learning style. We can help people learn best by respecting their needs.



To identify a child's learning style or your own, you may obtain the Learning Styles Inventory (LSI for students in grades 3-12) or the Productivity Environmental Preference Survey (PEPS for adults) by writing to Price Systems, Box 3271, Lawrence, Kansas 66044. For \$1.50 for each individual (prepaid by check or money order) you will receive the instrument(s) you request, answer sheet(s) and after you have returned the answer sheets for scoring, a computerized analysis of each individual's style and an explanation of how to interpret the findings. (Note: Rita and Kenneth Dunn are working on an inventory for students K-2 grade which may be done by this printing.)

## Opening Activity that Offers Everyone A Positive Personal Message

Choose a partner. Make a name tag for him and ask him to tell you about one thing he would love to know how to do if he could learn how by magic — no time, no cost, no energy.

Introduce your partner and tell the group what he would like to learn by magic if he is willing to share that information with the group.



## Closing Activity that Offers Everyone A Positive Personal Message

Stand in a circle. Ask if anyone has any resentments about the meeting. Accept resentments. You do not necessarily have to do anything about them. Ask for appreciations.

Place a poster on the wall that says: "It is okay for me to learn easily and quickly and I will use my own favorite learning styles to help myself learn easily." Read the poster aloud together.

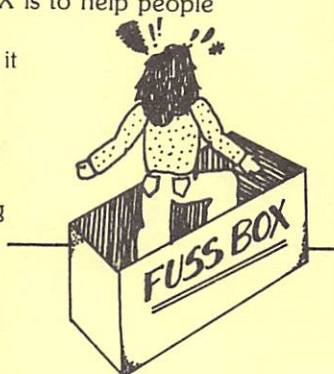




Several of you who have seen me use the FUSS BOX in Couples Workshops or Anger Workshops have asked me to write about it in **WE**. The background on the FUSS BOX is that I have observed that some people fuss a lot, some fuss less, some people show their anger in loud ways and some act quiet or tight or seem to want to hiss steam out of their ears. However they do it, other people know that they are angry and often wish they would do something to get over their anger and get on with the rest of life.

The purpose of the FUSS BOX is to help people

1. claim their anger
2. claim their right to express it
3. claim responsibility for it
4. have a way to express it without hurting themselves or other people, and without other people interfering with it or trying to "fix" it.
5. have a way to clear out the anger and get on with solutions to the problems



**How do you make a FUSS BOX?** Find a sturdy box big enough to stand in with a bit of space to move around. I get paper towel cartons from the grocery store

Using a magic marker, write FUSS BOX in bold letters on all sides of the box so anyone entering the room while you are fussing will be reminded that you are to be left alone because you are in the FUSS BOX. How long does a box last? Depends. Some people fuss more with their feet than others.

**How do you use the FUSS BOX?** First you let everyone in your family group, or wherever you use the box, know what the box is for and how you plan to use it. Be sure that they know the purpose of the box (five items listed above) and the rules for using it.

## FUSS BOX RULES

1. **Select with care the place** where you will use the box.  
Only use it in a place where people care about you, such as your family or your support group.
2. **Stand in the box** while you are fussing.
3. **Say anything you want to.** The box is a place to let out all the unreasonable, unwarranted, unfair and maybe not even true feelings and thoughts you may have. It is a place to express your frustrations.
4. **Other people are to stay out of it.**
  - a. They can sympathize if they want to.
  - b. They are not to argue with you or tell you to "be reasonable."
  - c. They may NOT try to fix you, console you, or change you.
  - d. They are not to take anything personally or to hold what you say against you. FUSS BOX time is "free" time for you to fuss.
  - e. They are to leave the room if they are at all tempted to get hooked or to take any responsibility for your feelings.
5. **Fuss** as vigorously as you want to **until you feel your energy switch.** The amount of time for this varies with the person and the size of the frustration. Sometimes 30 seconds is enough, sometimes a big resentment will take 4 to 6 minutes. When you feel the switch, when you start to feel calm or perhaps chuckle at yourself, say, "I feel better now," and **step outside the box.**
6. Stand beside the FUSS BOX and **decide** at least one thing that you will do to make the situation better and **do it.**

**CAUTION:** Do not get outside the box and continue to fuss. If you do that, get back into the box and finish your fuss there, otherwise you can encourage yourself to continue fussing instead of solving problems.

**CAUTION:** Use a real box, not a pretend box. Someone who says they are using a pretend box can use that as an excuse for irresponsibility. Consider Amy. She carelessly says something caustic to Marty. Marty is hurt and objects. Amy says, "Oh, you shouldn't take that seriously, I was pretending I was in the FUSS BOX. Couldn't you tell?" No way!! That is unfair! Amy is using the FUSS BOX idea as a way to shift responsibility for her own actions onto Marty and as a way to try to get Marty to take responsibility for what Amy said.

**CAUTION:** Do not use the FUSS BOX just to vent anger and/or frustration and then not do something about the situation. That would be using the box to encourage your frustration and to make life worse instead of better.

**How do people use the box?** Many ways. Knowing that it is there helps Mary deal with frustrating situations. She said, "If Jason is still sick on Friday I am going to get in the FUSS BOX."

Joan uses it to let her irritation out before she decides what to do about it. This lets her 14 year old twins know that she is responsible for taking care of her own irritations. It also shows them that they can be responsible for theirs.

Brad sometimes uses the FUSS BOX to complain about a part of his job that is unpleasant, then switches energy, gets out of the box and decides that since that part cannot be changed he will concentrate on the many parts he likes. This helps him deal with his stress. It also shows his children that jobs have both pleasant and unpleasant aspects, and one way to cope with that reality.



**At what age can people start to use the box?** Stella started at 56 and said she liked it a lot. Ron and Diane started at 32 and 35. One of the unspoken agreements in their marriage was that Ron would express anger and Diane would be calm and sweet. That had worked well for several years, but was becoming a burden because Diane had stored up so much anger and Ron was tired of having to get angry about things that Diane didn't like. When they started using the FUSS BOX, Diane was scared Ron wouldn't like her if he heard some of her feelings, so she did not use it when he was home until she got confident with it. When she used it in front of Ron, he was scared that Diane was mad because he was not a good husband. He had to leave the room until he figured out that Diane's anger belonged to her and that she would not take it out on him. Later he learned to use the box to lessen some of his anger.

**Can the FUSS BOX be used with children?** Brad had used the FUSS BOX in front of his two year old son several times. I heard him tell his two year old at the breakfast table, "I am tired of hearing you fuss. I want to eat my breakfast in peace. Either stop fussing and stay at the table with us or take the FUSS BOX to your room and use it until you can come back and be pleasant." Son looked at Daddy steadily for a long minute, stopped fussing, picked up his fork and ate his scrambled eggs. There is no guarantee that all two year olds will do this. Some will use the box and some will continue fussing to find out if you mean what you say.

So, here it is, the FUSS BOX. Explain the purpose and the rules and practice using it in Support Group. Follow the rules. Use it to get beyond frustration to problem solving. Use it to help make your life and the life of your family better. Let **WE** know what you discover about it.





**Welcome** Quality Child Care, Inc. State Coordinators from North Dakota, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Illinois, Massachusetts and Connecticut. You are now part of the **WE** Network and we welcome you warm, caring, important people!

**Welcome** to the delightful people I met at a workshop in Calgary, from Alberta and British Columbia in Canada!

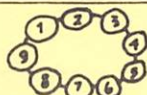
**Welcome** to you challenging people from Albuquerque and Denver and Miami and Springfield and New York and Minneapolis and St. Paul!

**Welcome**, also, to the exciting new group of people from the cool, green, beautiful Seattle, WA area and to another exciting group from the warm, sunny, beautiful Lafayette, CA area!

**Welcome** everyone!

Remember to request articles that will be helpful to you and to write articles you think will be helpful to others.

## Find A Way To Be Happy



Betsy Crary of Seattle, WA offered examples for The Behavior Change Chain described in the last issue. She says as part of **Link 4 – Offer To Help** she offers to facilitate problem solving. As part of **Link 8 – State An Expectation** she gives directions with the expectation that they will be followed. Sometimes the direction is "Find a way to be happy."



### suggested activity PICK A NUMBER

If your support group has been sitting for awhile and you want to raise the energy level of the group, or if there is some unconstructive competition going on and you want to switch to collaboration, try this exercise.

Say: Pick a number between seven and fourteen. Move about the room and, without talking, find the person who chose the same number or one closest to it. Wink at each other that number of times.

**For fifteen dollars,  
a rainbow in your mailbox  
six times a year!**



**yes, color my mailbox!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Send check to: WE, 16536 9th Avenue N.,  
Plymouth, MN 55447

## News From Support Groups About The Suggested Format

A Minneapolis group reports that they split **celebrating wins** and **sharing problems** and call the items **celebrating wins** and **asking for support**. That way a person who wants to share a problem and ask for support may do so and a person who does not wish to share a problem can say, "I want your support and I do not wish to talk about the reason."

Sounds like a very good idea. Thanks. I rewrote the Suggested Format to include this change. I invite other groups to try this new format and think about whether this helps your group be supportive more often.

— Jean Clarke

### suggested format for group meetings

place \_\_\_\_\_

date \_\_\_\_\_

time \_\_\_\_\_

person in charge \_\_\_\_\_

program:

- opening activity that offers everyone a positive personal message
- ground rules
- celebrating wins
- asking for support
- practice skills, new learnings, play
- suggestion circle
- plan the next meeting
- resentments and appreciation
- closing activity that offers everyone a positive personal message

## Ways To Lead a Good Meeting

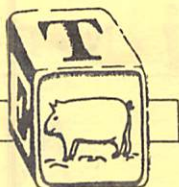
by Deane Gradous

1. Start and stop on time.
2. Be clear about whether the group activity is on clock time or task time. "Will you work at this for twenty minutes?" is clock time. "Will you complete this?" is task time.
3. Agree upon the use of ground rules that honor thoughts, feelings, wishes, ownership, extroverts and introverts.
4. Start with an opening that honors everyone.
5. Present the agenda before the meeting or at the beginning of the meeting. Avoid hidden items. Items posted on separate cards are easy to reorder.
6. Get closure on each item before going on to the next, if possible. Ex.: Who is responsible, for what, by when? Who did what, how that person is honored for doing that job, and what will be done with the results?
7. Close with a short activity that honors each person.
8. Use Resentments and Appreciations or some activity that allows for both positive and negative expressions.
9. Ask straight for what you want and respond with grace if you are turned down.



## Suggested Activity

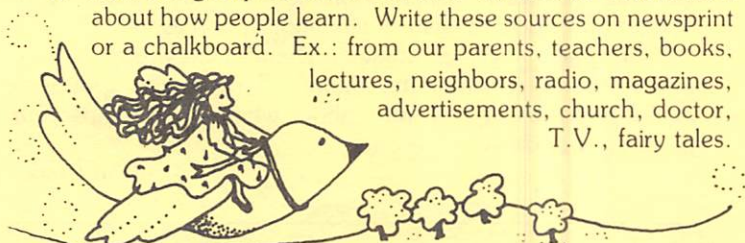
### Who Told Me How People Learn?



This activity will help people recognize where they go to get their information about how people learn, and will help them recognize whether the information is helpful. This activity is best done at two or three meetings.

#### First Meeting

1. Ask the group to list all of their sources of information about how people learn. Write these sources on newsprint or a chalkboard. Ex.: from our parents, teachers, books, lectures, neighbors, radio, magazines, advertisements, church, doctor, T.V., fairy tales.



2. Ask each person to choose one source and between now and the next meeting to record what messages about learning that source offers or offered. Ex.: What I gathered about how people learn from my grade school teachers will be done from memory. What I learn from TV can be observed now by watching TV and thinking about what the messages are.
3. Ask people after their messages are listed to put a plus by those ideas that seem true for them about their own learning style. Put a minus by those ideas that do not fit for them. Put a 0 by those ideas about which they don't have any strong feeling one way or another.
4. People may want to do a second rating for someone else. For example, an adult may watch one child carefully and do the plus, minus, 0 rating for that child. Or, if the child is old enough to answer, she can read the list to the child and ask if each item is true, not true or neutral for him or her.
5. Ask people to bring their lists to the next meeting.

#### Second Meeting

1. At the following meeting ask each person to share three or four items from her list.
2. Select five or six items from the lists and ask everyone in the group to indicate a plus, minus or 0 for each item. Ask people what they observe about learning styles. Ask for any other "I learned. . ." or "I think. . ." or "I wonder. . ." statements that people want to share.

## Suggestion Circle on Fussing



Remind people that the FUSS BOX is only one suggestion for handling fussing.

Ask people to do a Suggestion Circle on "How I Handle My Own Need To Fuss," and a second one on "Ways To Respond To Other People Who Are Fussing." Remember that in a Suggestion Circle each person gives his or her one best suggestion, no comparison is made of the suggestions and each person takes the suggestions home to make his own decisions about which to use.

3. Read aloud Marilyn Grevstad's article, "Learning Styles," and compare the information from that article with the observations that people made during this activity.
4. Hand out a list of the learning style aspects mentioned in the article and ask each person to write in his or her own learning style preference by each item.
5. Ask each person to take the list home and fill it out for another person — either from observation or by asking that person.
6. Ask each person to think how we can provide learning environments that accommodate different learning styles. Ex.: I like to read the newspaper where it is quiet. The other people in my family like to talk about what they read as they read it. How can we provide a way for me to have quiet time and for them to discuss as they read?
7. Ask people to bring these ideas to share at the next meeting.

#### Third Meeting

1. Ask people to share ways we can accommodate different learning styles in children and adults.

Edited by Jean Illsley Clarke Published by Marnie Lilja Baehr  
Layout Design by Marnie Lilja Baehr

\$15.00 per year (6 issues)

WE

16535 9th Avenue N.  
Plymouth, MN 55447

- Suggested activities
- Thoughts on theory and purpose of support groups
- News from other support groups

**newsletter for nurturing support groups**