

Reflections on the Sydney Conference

By **Adriano Bugliani** (Italy)

I joined IARPP very recently, not even two years ago, and have been curious about why I have been so actively attending every colloquium, most webinars, and each conference so far. Before the trip to Sydney, my longest flight had been 1.5 hours. I had never even been out of Europe. Part of why I decided to travel to this conference is that I have a great friend in Sydney, an IARPP mate I met in my first colloquium. So I had to meet her flesh and bones. But it's more than that.

I'm still wondering about the overall frame of my (our) job. My everyday practice with clients is an increasingly integrative craft accompanied by the constant feeling that I'm missing some comprehensive meaning. But I have the feeling that by meeting colleagues again and again I may somehow grasp the meaning of the therapeutic commitment.

In Sydney, although I valued attending the conference presentations, even more I still remember the powerful impression made on me by a little talk during a reception with many of you, or just sitting at the same table having dinner. A look, the tone of the voice, a little sentence someone spoke without paying much attention to it. Or maybe even a sentence one would never write in a paper. A hug. That's the way I learn. I need to match writings with real people.

So IARPP is a kind of huge patisserie—for my selfish hungry drive to understand by means of individuals. But of course meeting colleagues in person represents more than just chances for learning, as they are becoming friends. We make connections across the planet. Some pass through Italy and we meet again in person.

While I'm endlessly chasing the meaning of my work I'm having my community. What began as a self-serving desire is now giving me a sense of real community, one in which I'm less self-centered. It took me 50 years to find what feels like my first "real" community. Having the majority of friends amongst my colleagues feels like a hyper-therapeutic world. Yet these nonetheless are very real relationships—as with clients and family. The rest of the world feels much more conventional in comparison; I sometimes feel like I choke out there.

Given the prevailing email/Skype/chat nature of these relationships—however consistent and intense they are—I need the conferences.

A healthy addiction?