

think we should be discussing instead?”; “Is there anything I should be doing differently?” The psychoanalytical treatment, as we learn from *The Therapist’s Notebook*, is a client-informed enterprise, a suggestive collaboration designed to soften hostility. Sometimes therapy is a matter of listening to clients express their ideas and emphasize their strengths.

Bertolino and Schultheis also explore alternatives if solutions are not available: “if we offer an exercise and a parent does not believe in going home and trying it, then we would shift our approach.” Family members may “have great ideas and we ought to attend to their voices whenever possible.” In formulating such approaches, the authors suggest that words as pervasive as “always,” “never,” “nobody,” or “all the time” imply that problems stay with us forever and give us little incentive to change negative behaviour. Focused qualifiers, such as “recently,” “in the last while,” and “in the past month,” however, suggest that problems are temporary. Thus, rather than fixing our attention on problems, the book cleverly refocuses on positive changes in our families. We learn to write down the various things that help us recharge our batteries, to notice when children engage in behaviours that meet our approval, and to acknowledge others’ points of view. Acknowledgement also means, as the authors suggest, that we pay attention to the words used by others to identify patterns that maintain problems. It is necessary to explore the patterns surrounding problems – a small change is often all that is needed to break unhelpful patterns. In fact, small changes are necessary, since these lead to further changes and solutions soon appear on the horizon. When they identify interim solutions, clients notice that they are making progress and further change occurs. This is an important therapeutic stage since often we become frustrated, anxious, or disinterested if we do not recognize progress.

The authors teach us to regard experiences as learning opportunities. If you knew that the world was to end tomorrow, what are three things you would do? What was the most meaningful thing you did in the past? What could you do in the nearest future that would move you toward becoming who you want to be? This is a change-promoting book: it helps identify the context of a problem and to sustain change once it has been achieved.

## **Psychological Trauma and the Developing Brain**

Phyllis T. Stein and Joshua Kendall  
Binghamton, NY: HMTP Press, 2004

### **Reviewed by Channa Verbian**

In *Psychological Trauma and the Developing Brain*, Phyllis Stein and Joshua Kendall study the intimate connection between experience and genetics in understanding and treating the effects of trauma on children. The authors

ground their study in new psychological models of child development and the neurobiology of attachment. They show how early relational trauma and disturbed attachment can alter brain development, disturb emotion regulation and cognitive processing, and cause relational difficulties. Through a three-phase model of intervention that addresses safety/stabilization, symptom reduction/memory work, and developmental skills, the authors offer an alternative to drug therapy for children who suffer from the complex effects of trauma, abuse, and neglect.

Stein and Kendall emphasize that troubled children must develop emotional intelligence and problem-solving skills as tools for coping with and overcoming the effects of trauma. They also discuss the need for adequate public health policies and resources that challenge mental health professionals to look beyond children and their families to find innovative solutions to the legacy of psychological trauma and childhood abuse.

*Psychological Trauma and the Developing Brain* is a useful resource for professionals working in the field of children's mental health.

## **I Writing: The Politics and Practice of Teaching First-Person Writing**

Karen Surman Paley  
Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 2001

### **Reviewed by Kate Connolly**

Certified to teach English, and having served as Director of Freshman English and Writing at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, Karen Surman Paley reports on an ethnographic study in the classrooms of two English composition professors. The author challenges the common perspective of “expressivist pedagogy as naïve, modernist, self-centered, apolitical and asocial” (139). Throughout Paley's book, the reader has the unique opportunity to “observe” two teachers assist students in their efforts to write personal narratives. Through transcripts of one-to-one student/teacher conferences, classroom discussions, and interviews with faculty and students, Paley demonstrates that personal narrative courses are much more complicated and politicized than they are typically understood to be.

Paley's main thesis is that students who are allowed to write about their lives make significant contributions to the culture of the academy. Through autobiographical narratives, persuasive discussions of social issues, and descriptive essays, private discourse can become public discourse. The key research question guiding Paley's ethnographic study is: how do faculty teach personal narrative without crossing the boundary into psychotherapy? In other words, how do writing teachers balance the “textual moment”—which *can* be assessed