

Perseverance 23, Rejection 7

As a few of you know, I was AWOL from the most recent ATTACH in San Francisco. Prior to this, I have made every conference, dating back to 1999 in Alexandria, Virginia—the date that I joined our august organization.

Much to my initial chagrin, the seminar proposal from yours truly for San Francisco was not accepted this year.

Shot down by the *Baron von Selection Committee*.

The grief reaction was keen. I upped my erstwhile thrice weekly psychotherapy sessions to a daily regimen, replete with much gnashing of teeth. I'm pretty sure that, at one point, I even spit on the floor. My therapist, Dr. Quackamola—with a great deal of clinical acumen at his disposal—even suggested that a good mantra for me was: "I am not bitter..."

Rejection is never a great deal of fun for anyone. For me, the experience conjured up **way** too many toxic recollections of high school/college female socialization experiences gone south. Although a dubious distinction, I still hold the single-season-consecutive-rejection record—established in 1971 at Baylor University—for attempted procurement of a homecoming date. Having gone down in flames after **twenty-two** attempts, I finally hit pay-dirt on Girl #23, one Rebecca Narramore of Greenville, Texas. (Should you ever meet Rebecca, please don't tell her that she was the 23rd person that I called.)

Well, enough about rejection. What about **perseverance**. Although I have never been accused of being the most desirable bagel in the bakery, or the brightest bulb in the incandescant, perseverance has generally served me well over the years, no doubt owing to some strategically placed micro-lesions diabolically dispersed among my already suspect pre-frontal lobes. But we'll save this for the good Dr. Quackamola to ponder.

Anyway, in lieu of attending this year's ATTACH, I had the opportunity to participate in a symposium at the annual American Psychological Association (APA) in August out in beautiful San Diego. There were five of us on the panel, comprised of two colleagues from the Colorado School of Professional Psychology/University of the Rockies, along with two additional professors from Saybrook Institute located in the San Francisco Bay Area. The title of the symposium was: *Existential Psychotherapy and Neuropsychology*. Here, the goal was to 'think outside the box' (see the previous ATTACH Graymatters column).

Within this symposium (which may have also included some wanton jocularly along the way), it was the presenters' goal to explore how existential thought and neuropsychology might find avenues of collaboration—all in the name of reducing human suffering. My piece of the pie was to examine the implications of early developmental trauma and how such might affect the classic existential tenet of *teleology* (life purpose/calling). In all candor, I'm not sure how much practicality emerged in this regard; however, the symposium did begin a much needed amicable dialogue between two psychological disciplines (existentialism and neuropsychology) which have never been known for their mutual desire to work and play well together.

When we as presenters initially proposed this idea, we were all braced for the probabilistic likelihood that our five-person panel would outnumber the APA attendees for the symposium in

question. And believe me: this is no false modesty. We had **serious** reservations about the number of people who would show. To our surprise, the 125-seat auditorium overflowed with standing room only. Even better, I was able to get in several allusions to the virtues of ATTACH and its mission. (The APA is not exactly awash in awareness of our fine organization.)

Perseverance ‘R Us.

Additionally, by the time you read this, I will have taken the message of ATTACH to the annual National Academy of Neuropsychology (NAN) conference in Vancouver, British Columbia (this past month). Here again, NAN is another important professional organization lacking cognizance of ATTACH and the important work that all of you parents and clinicians do.

So, as Providence would have it, even **had** ATTACH selected my seminar proposal, I would not have been able to afford travels to three important national conferences in such close temporal proximity this summer and fall.

Thus, despite earthly **r-e-j-e-c-t-i-o-n**, it’s never a bad thing to just persevere—all the while staying open to what other opportunities the Almighty might conjure up. Hmm... I wonder if this frame of mind might apply to you, our courageous ATTACH parents out there—when **daily** rejections from your kiddoos are coming fast and furious, and it appears certain your home will implode any moment.

This just in: Perseverance 23, Rejection 7.