

HOW DID I GET INTO THIS???

The AJPT Interview: Otto Kroeger

Otto Kroeger and Janet Thuesen have been significant supporters of the development of the AAPT and type in Australia in general, having visited here a number of times and made various contributions. Peter Geyer, having spent three months in the USA with Otto and Janet, interviewed Otto about his Australian involvement and his involvement with type in general in Melbourne in September 1995. Some of the responses have been edited for clarity.

This is the fifth time you have been to Australia.

It is, as a matter of fact.

How did you originally get invited to Australia?

I'm not sure, except it had to do with Bronte [MBTI Conference September 1991] and I think it was ITD and Mary [McGuinness] that invited us to speak at the Bronte conference. But I don't know who put the bug in Mary's ear, how that all happened. I don't have a sense of that. I don't know if Janet does. I don't know how that happened.

But you have spent a lot of time here and you seem to enjoy....

Oh Yeah. Bronte went well and so then because of Bronte or whatever, so then we got invited back to the next year at Maroochydore [AAPT 1/Twin Waters] and the Conference. That went well and then at Maroochydore we also did some negotiating with Mary about doing the advanced workshop and some of that the next year. And, you know, it was at Maroochydore that we gave that contribution to AAPT and all that, so the next year Mary arranged some advanced workshops and that's the year I got to Melbourne and met you, did a thing here - a couple of things here in Melbourne and did some in Sydney. That was the year I was here alone.

Yes, that's right, it was a year and a half ago.

Then the next year was the Conference in Melbourne [AAPT 2] and this year has been the advanced workshops and conference workshops... and our new association with ACER. Well, I mean, that's all part of it.

In a lot of senses, people know you and know you and Janet as people who are involved in Type now, but they don't seem to know much about how you got there. I'm going to focus on you as an individual and your involvement in Type, just so people may get some sort of idea as to where you're coming from and get some sort of idea of the

breadth of your experience. So the first thing I want to ask - and you can be as brief as you like - is about your earlier life and your experience and your choice of career, your initial choice of career.

Type - the good news about the Type is it allowed me to focus on one career. Prior to that, I had had three concurrent careers, each of them about 20 years - 20 years in the Lutheran ministry concurrently with 20 years in private practice as a counsellor and 20 years as an OD consultant, behavioural scientist, with the National Training Laboratories, (NTL), Institute of Applied Behavioural Sciences. It was through NTL that I got exposed to great mental systems as well as ... current OD/management/educational technology and theory, and at the same time great names. That's where Abe Maslow and I became very good friends. That's where Ken Benne, who was one of the original founders of NTL, with Lee Bradford and those people, became very, very dear friends. That's where I met Charlie Seashore, who wrote the preface to *Type Talk*. All of those people come out on the NTL experience, each of them carving their own niches, so that was good experience.

I'm interested as to how you did three things at once. What was your initial aim in terms of career or did things just happen in college or somewhere like that?

Yes, it was a happening. I came to college to be a Minister and got to college and fell in love with psychology, so I majored in psychology, did advanced degree work in psychology, went the psychology route and felt that if I didn't honour this commitment to theology, I wouldn't be satisfying something. You know, I don't know if you want to be mystical and call it a call or whatever or just local church back in Buffalo, New York: that set me off to save the world for God and country. But all of that, I think, was involved in it. So my first love became psychology but I had this call/commitment/experience that I had to respond to. So I pursued the ministry primarily and finished that and went into the parish, but immediately - immediately - got into the sensitivity training, laboratory method of learning model for the church.

How did you do that? What happened to give you that connection?

Well, with most of my life it's a matter of standing in the universe at the right time and knowing an opportunity. In 1959, three other fellows and I were picked to be an experiment in laboratory education T-Group theory, to see if there was something that our geographic - what you would call a diocese in the Catholic church or a synod in the Lutheran church - to see if that geographic group could benefit from that model of education. So they paid full expenses to send us to Green Lake, Wisconsin, to get trained as an experiment. And there I met really "big names" in the late '50s in the T-Group theory model, because the National Council of Churches in the United States hired NTL. So that included just names - today they're dead - but it included Ron Lippitt and his brother Gordon Lippitt and that's where I met them and that's where we linked up, and Jack Glidewell and Ed Mow from Michigan and

Bill McKeechie who, the year I worked with him as a colleague, was president of the American Psychological Association. All of these people were hired by the Council of Churches to work this T-Group theory for the Council of Churches, separately but it was an NTL contract.

That's where I met Edie Seashore, that's where I met Dick Beckhard, that's where I first met and then began a long-term lifetime relationship or mentorship with Ken Benne, who was one of the granddaddies of the whole thing - Benne and Bradford and Warren Bennis, all big names in early T-Group theory. All those guys were hired by the career council to do things and I encountered them and became friends with many of them.

So it obviously was a good deal. We came back and said to the church, "Good deal, you have got to send us back again next year for advanced training," and they did. And we said, "That's all churchy stuff. You also ought to send us to Bethel so we get a non-church approach in this whole thing," and they did. So my first Bethel, Maine, experience was in 1960 and there I met friends and I have been coming back to Bethel since - did advanced work, did internship work, did mentorship work. By the way, all the time I was still a pastor of a local Lutheran church, but whatever - they either liked me enough or liked me away enough, they were glad that I was gone - that they gave me time to travel and pursue it, which I did at the church's expense.

So for the first, you know, whatever, 10 years of the 20 years in the field, I was giving back a lot of that to the church, meaning I was bringing them indeed published names in the field, we were doing some very dynamic and creative front-edge psychology and religion work in the whole synod or diocese: way ahead of many other denominations.

It just seems to be really unusual. We actually spoke about this in May, but you, Harold Bridger and Gordon Lawrence [note: not the MBTI GL] were involved in Tavistock-oriented things. When did you actually get involved in that?

Indeed. Well, see, Bridger still comes to Bethel every summer. In fact when we were there, didn't we miss him by a week?

He had just been there, yes.

It's very common for him to be there the same week with us. He often stays at Seashore's, so that means at least one dinner each time with Harold and Edie and Charlie and getting on board with one another, and that's probably been, I don't know, 7, 10 years with that kind of off-again, on-again reconnection - "How are things going?" Yeah, and that's often true with a lot of those people, for me.

Yes, so you tend to meet or you didn't meet, but that's the place to do it. When did you really encounter Type? I'm really after a date and an experience.

Well, I had taken the Myers-Briggs in '70 and in '72 and, you know, thought it was pretty limited, as I thought that about most instruments - Firo B, any of them with which I was... "It's okay to get a little information," but I didn't see anything earth-shattering in the Myers-Briggs, so I took it, put it on hold.

In the meantime by '73 or '74 I was really busy consulting - I was consulting with the Department of Education and a number of other clients and they were using the Myers-Briggs, so I got more and more exposure to it. Alan Brownsword was significant at that time. He was working for the Department of Education. Anyway we connected through that and he was using it more than I wanted to use it. I remember telling him he was too hooked on it, that it probably had its limits. And that was okay, he was using it so I used it and we worked together about three years on it, and then I began to get more and more immersed in it.

Then an interesting thing happened again in the Universe. AMSFA, the American Medical Student Foundation Association, cancelled or gave up or ran out of money anyways and dropped a big contract they had with CAPT to study medical students. And CAPT was at a crossroad: "Do we go out of business altogether or do we reorganise as a non-profit organisation?" They reorganised as a non-profit organisation and I was on its forming board of directors, and that was very significant in terms of getting more and more immersed in it.

At the same time, one of my other clients, a personal client of mine, the US army chaplains, said they wanted to do Lifo (?), which is another management tool, and I said, as independent consultants always say, "Well, I can do that," because I did have friends that I could subhire to do that. I said, "I can do that, but one thing you might want to consider is the Myers-Briggs," to which the command chaplain, an ENTP, said, "What's that all about?" I said, "Well, you like possibilities and I think we could probably do something if we blocked out three days of and did something with it".

And to my absolute amazement, he blocked out three days and we took his entire staff off-site and mucked around with the Myers-Briggs in every way imaginable - experimented with things, tried exercises, gained insights, and he as, boy, only an ENTP can do, saw 80 million possibilities. That was in May - I know the dates clearly - that was in early May of 1976 - I'm not sure, it might have been '77, but the point is Al Ledebuhr, who is since deceased - but Al became excited about this, he fell in love with it and from May till the new fiscal year in October he freed up exorbitant amounts of money to make the Myers-Briggs available to all of his chaplains, 625 of them, and it was a mandate, as the army can do.

So the first thing Al and I and Alan did was fly to Florida and spend time with Mary [McCaulley] and CAPT and a whole bunch of things. Then we got fattened up in that thing and I'm so glad I did, because that's when I began to keep data. So I went from October by the end of April. So in essence, if you look at it in a calendar year from May to May, I went from medium use of the Myers-Briggs with one client, the Department of Education, to immersion in the Myers-Briggs and overnight in that 12 months ended up with a data base of not only almost 700 chaplains, but as only Al could do it, he hustled every single general in the command to go through Myers-Briggs training, so all 18 posts under his commanders: the chaplains - you know what I mean, the chaplain works for a general, but the chaplains - anyway it's a long story short - we did a one-day thing with 22 - 18 of the commanding generals and there were four or five other related generals. So I mean literally in 12 months here's all these chaplains (inaudible) and his general officers - the likes of Colin Powell, today in other scenes, took the Myers-Briggs from me as the Vietnam War was winding down. Well, it was over, but I mean, the military was highly mobile at that point.

I have got data on SPs, I've got data on SPs who left after the excitement stopped - they took their retirement and ran with it. And then again, the universe falls together, so one of the chaplains - one of the posts under this chaplain was Carlisle [Pennsylvania] where the senior service Army War College is. So I go to Carlisle to do the chaplains on the post. In the meantime, located on that post is the prestigious Army War College and they have a leadership and management part of their faculty, and the faculty knows me and they hear I'm on the post visiting with the local post personnel, and they say, "Well, Otto's always lost on some new thoughts. Let's go over and see what he's got to do."

So they sat in on my three days with the local chaplains and fell in love with what we did and said, "We've got to get him to talk to the faculty in the War College," and the rest is history. We said, "Let's try an experiment." The next entering class at the War College which we did - the class at that time took 10 entry instruments - you know what I mean, everything imaginable - and we made the Myers-Briggs voluntary and 70 or 80 voluntarily took the Myers-Briggs and was part of my schtick with that. They said, "Don't drop any of the instruments, but if you're going to drop any of them, the one you can't drop but you have got to make mandatory is the Myers-Briggs."

Then that fanned me out to the National War College, to the Industrial College, to the Air War College, to the Naval War College, to the Department of Defence. It just began to snowball all over the place and at the same time as I was making "friends" with these generals, as they retired and got grabbed up by industry, they would come in and say - that happened repeatedly - "I got this out. I'm going to become vice-president for marketing of General Dynamics. I want the group to do some team building with Otto and the Myers-Briggs."

So the next thing I know, I'm in McDonnell Douglas, I'm in General Dynamics, I'm in Lockheed, I'm in colleges and universities where generals got gobbled up to be president of some college - "Well, bring him in to work with the -" I mean, it was just a snowball for five years there. About then we were up to about '80 and Janet's coming out of the White House and '81 when she and I meet and she sees what I'm doing and sees that, you know, there's a potential here to do training. So long before qualifying/accrediting training was in, I was training people to use the Myers-Briggs.

That's obviously not the five-day program you have now?

No.

What was it like?

It was first a two-day and then a three-day and they kept saying they want more, and so we were then up to four days and by that time Kathy Myers and Margaret Hartzler, in an effort to you know APT starting up with their program, they ran in with an early cut. See, Gary Hartzler and I were in business together. Alan [Brownsword] was on the side of that - meaning he didn't want to get involved, as a government employee, with private contractors. That was always the clean thing to do. So Gary and I had a year in business together and then there's that point, different directions, then Janet came into my life and Margaret and Kathy came in with theirs. In the meantime I'm a member of APT and I'm consulting with APT about developing their program and suddenly qualifying is the thing, and I have been helping APT set up - we have been doing that for three years, two years. It started in '85, we did from late '82.

It says, actually, late '81 on your stuff, yes.

Does it? Okay. No, that's when we started copyrighting the material, you're right - it's true that in '81 we were using some of those as handouts, but we didn't put it together as a course till about '82. So we keep that copyright because that's when we went to work with it. So in a sense we were way ahead of the truth but we were last to get approved, but Jack Black [Founder of CPP], through my association with Isabel before she died, my association with the Myers family and my association with CAPT on the founding board of directors - Jack said, "It's a good program. Give him standard (inaudible)."

So suddenly there were none, now there's - I really want to say within a few months, but that's hazy to me, the actual history of that. I don't know if it was a year, but it seemed like within a matter of a few months there were no programs and then there were three programs."

You mentioned your association with Isabel. I suppose the important thing for people to know is where and when did you meet Isabel and why, and what sort of association?

The association was really secondary through the CAPT board. It's funny, I chaired a meeting over the AMSTRA issue at Dallas Airport, where Isabel and the Centre for Creative Leadership president and a whole bunch of people were present, around the future of the Myers-Briggs, and that was a fascinating meeting to be chair of because there was a lot of intense arguing, debating, you know, the future of the Indicator - future of a whole bunch of things, so it was a fairly powerful kind of a meeting.

Then on a couple of other occasions I had been with her in meetings and met her and talked to her, picked her up at the airport one day, so I've got tons of quotes from the airport to the meeting in the car as we engaged in conversation. It was that sort of thing.

Then - and this is all in about a three-year period when she really is in the last part of things with her cancer - I mean, still vital, still carrying on like crazy but also not moving with the pace she had been. Then in the meantime Kathy and Peter [Myers] and I got to be very good friends and went through a whole host of different turmoils - but we had positive moments because by that time ... there was a period in my life when I had time and Kathy and Peter had time, so we spent many hours together about all kinds of things.

This period is really from the mid-'70s to the late '70s?

Probably from about - I'm not sure, but if I had to put dates on it, I would say it was from '77 to '80. She died 5 May 1980. That's when Isabel died. So it was from about mid-'77 if I had to put a date. I don't think it was '76, I think it was '77 to '80.

Other people have actually got a list of people here that seem to be involved in Type either at that time or relatively early or whatever, and you mention Alan Brownsword, you mention Gary and Margaret Hartzler - people like Cecil Williams, Naomi Quenk, Susan Brock who is coming here, and Sandra Hirsh. Where do they fit in for you?

Right. The only one that I didn't know involved in Type, of the names you have named, was Naomi. I have no idea where Naomi came from, other than that she was good friends with Kathy and/or Peter etc. But in terms of the Type community, I do not remember her in any of the pre - see, Ed Golden was the conference chairperson of the first organising conference, which was part of Isabel's birthday in October in Philadelphia '79, and was part of - and that's where APT was organised, 1979 in Philly. See, the first conference ever was '75 in Gainesville, the second one was '77 in Michigan, the next one was '79 in Philadelphia, and if Naomi was at the '77 one in Michigan, I missed her. I don't know that. If she was at the '79 one - and she may have been - I have no recollection of her. I remember presentations there, I knew Cecil Williams from there, I knew the Goldenes from there. Margaret Hartzler was not on the scene then, only Gary. They met in California in '81, that's where they first met, so if

Margaret was on the scene, I didn't know it. I think she was doing her research and finishing off her degree, I think, under Mary's tutelage, Mary McCaulley, but I don't know any of that.

That's to the best of your knowledge.

Yes, no Naomi, but Cecil I knew well and in Philadelphia - I want to say Philly is where I met Susan Brock and then Susan went on to be president in '81, I think it was, because in '83 Gordon Lawrence I think became president and I the only one I missed was the Gainesville one, the first one, '75. I've been at every other. Sandra Hirsh, I can't tell you when I met her by date, other than ever since our first meeting it's just been instant admiration and respect and genuine affection. I think she's absolutely first-class. I want to say it was '79, but I honestly don't know. And that was true of Cecil in terms of, you know, other than you relate him to Michigan, he and I kicked around enough that I don't honestly know where we first kicked around.

Can you say something about the founding of APT in either what you thought happened and/or your involvement and that sort of thing?

I can't, in the sense I don't. There was this birthday party set-up in the best sense of a set-up - you know, here's a chance to honour Isabel and let's get together and do that, and Ed Golden had this long-term relationship with Peter and the family and lived in Morristown New Jersey, which was not far from Philly. Isabel was in Swarthmore so it was a golden opportunity to bring everybody together, so we met in Florida to plan that - David Keirse and a whole bunch of people were a part of that. In fact it was Alan Brownsword who pushed, because there was some tension between the Keirse frames of reference and the Myers-Briggs frames of reference, so it was Alan who pushed to have David be the speaker at the banquet as part of her birthday honorance and David did indeed do that, and it was a neat event.

So here's a whole bunch of folks coming together for a conference and to spearhead her birthday and to say it's time we got organised about all of this, and I want to - yes, Kathy Myers emerged in Philadelphia as the first president. Isn't that true?

Yes, that's true.

And that was at Philadelphia, and it was really kind of - I think there was a push under way to get an organisation going and in fact when everybody got there, it did happen. I mean, everything was in place for an organisation to get started. They were saying we're going to convene an organisation, as I recall, although it's very hazy to me, and we're all - you know, "Come to the conference, get on board," and tons of people did. Sally Golden was the first secretary - and they were very tight and had some proximity, although Kathy was at that time living in Bethesda, Maryland, but it was still, you know, a natural and the board followed -

you know, I mean there was a board but it was kind of loosely knit and I don't remember much beyond that except I ended up - not at that time, but when I say - that was '79 and somewhere, '81 - that even seems too soon, but I ended up on the north-east board chairmanship, yes, because Scott Golden was in there and there was somebody else in the north-east - north-east was the biggest block of people - and I followed Scott in the presidency and did two terms, and that's really why I was (my words) overly involved in APT.

Two things here - I will stick to the geographical question first - and I've got a note here - MBTI at some stage seemed to be predominantly an east coast, Washington thing. I mean, from looking at a map and you say, `Well, where do all these people live?' We're really talking about a specific area. Is that...

I think there's a couple of generalities and if you hear them as generalities, it's good to say it. The Myers-Briggs at some level, like it or not, is an INFP instrument and the more anyone, whatever their type, is in touch with INFP, the more they resonate to the Myers-Briggs. And when INFPs get excited about it, they do unbelievably dramatic, creative things with the Indicator. And since it was put together in that frame of reference, bar one, and since that frame of reference, i.e. Isabel, lived in Swarthmore and that's where still to this day - meaning the north-east corner - from Boston to Washington is where most of the life-blood of corporate financial organisational and even in some respects academic schtick, academic histories of each of those - financial histories. So even if they're no longer there, that's where they were born and you can't get away from it - Harvard, Yale, (Princeton???) the Ivy League.

Now, the Ivy may be dried up, but you can't say that it didn't exist. That's where the first women colleges were born and they have Vassar and all of those have their own rich history, whether they're still female - you know what I mean? So I don't think you can get away from that, and that's where the bulk - I mean, between - now with the exception, and clearly things are changing to California, you know, and Seattle and Portland and some day that may even take it up, but in terms of still population, I think between Boston and Washington you have got more people that you have got anywhere else in the United States.

It just sort of seems to me, in a cultural sense, that all these people are interested and perhaps it's because of the way the networks go.

Sure, and I think it's partly because Isabel was there and that's where it got its first roots. The first studies were Pennsylvania High School students and the first forming thing was around her birthday, which was Philadelphia.

I'm sort of wondering how David Kiersey fits in this and how he - well, in a lot of senses, how he got involved in this particular area.

Well, part of that is vague to me, meaning - because he was working his own thing on the west coast and I've heard a couple of different stories where he was aware of Isabel's configuration of EISNTFJP, which is her configuration, and picked it up, recognising that fit nicely some of the things he was doing. I have also heard that quite independently of them, he picked it up. But somewhere he still had to get those letters and that configuration. The only place you can get them is from Isabel Briggs-Myers or her work.

I'm sort of wondering how much he knew her personally?

Not at all initially. In fact I think it was a matter of - and I'm not sure where Alan Brownsword fits in this, but I think it's a matter of some folks like Alan and maybe even Dan Foster, but I'm not sure - who were in education, which is where David's primary work was - seeing the overlap and saying, "God, this is Myers-Briggs stuff, these letters. Does he know about the Myers-Briggs?" and the reply saying, "No," and so on, and folk saying some things ought to be pushed from that point. But that's a vague recollection in my head, you know. I wouldn't go to the wall about that and if you use any of it, don't use it as accurate. Maybe Dan can fill in some pieces of it, but it isn't quite - I just know David was doing things with educators that used the Myers-Briggs letters, but putting his own spin on it, when that was work was discovered by some other educators who also knew the Myers-Briggs.

Then, see, I met him and Alan and we made some effort to go meet him. We had a lot of fun in meeting him, spent some time with him - by the way, this is just a sidelight - at that point Please Understand Me was in draft form under the gaggamagga(?) title of "Living and Loving in Psychological Style". That was the first title. At any rate that's what he was working on.

So we met with him and got him more enthused about the Myers-Briggs. He was certainly very open to that kind of thing. By now he had his own following, so there were some differences and it was my own contention as well as Alan's - and some of us were working with both - that the two systems together are better than either system by itself, because each has some blind spots. So from the beginning we started working with that kind of thing and with the Myers-Briggs.

And that's really the reason why, I'm presuming, with your program today you actually did spend a bit of time on temperament?

Sure. Not only that - at the risk of claiming and giving credit where some credit is due, and there are people who may not agree with us and there are people who may not be pleased with it and not want to give credit, but I think in no small way for better or for worse, depending on your loyalties and where you are, Kiersey Temperaments and the Myers-Briggs are under the same tent, I think, because of some efforts of Alan Brownsword and of me. I think neither would be enjoying some of the widespread popularity as well as

widespread acceptance of both systems without some of the extraversion that I've brought to it. That's not to be taken overly-arrogant and I'm not making claims beyond - you know, so I'm in touch with reality, but I do think I have been significant in exposing [it] many, many, many thousands of people who are doing [the Myers-Briggs and Temperament]

Why did you found Otto Kroeger Associates, or was that originally your - you know, with the focus on type... I'm interested in the consulting and also the hundred percent focusing on type, which is something that you...

When I left the ministry, I organised Otto Kroeger Associates and incorporated it, and that was mid-'72, '73. I think the incorporation seal says now '77, but '72 or '73 I picked up the name and went to work on it. '72 I had my first collaborative item published in the University Associates' First Handbook with Brendan Reddy - he was the one who really pushed all that. He took my idea and published it collaboratively and I'm in his debt about that, but that's really where the emphasis was now beginning to close in, that is was time for me to get out of the church and move in OD. Things were beginning to happen, from collaborative publishings to articles to whatever.

So the company got organised, then I left the ministry in '77 and that's when I incorporated the business and it was just kind of hanging loose, and from '75 on it began more and more focus with the Myers-Briggs. And by '78 with this contract with the chaplains, it was now a hundred percent Myers-Briggs, and after I did a year or two of training of chaplains, really had a training program in place, you see what I mean?

Just through the practice and learning, yes.

Yes, just through my own working with it and modifying it and trying it on, so it suddenly was in place, so that's where I am by '78 or '79, having a good time, just doing training as groups wanted training in the Myers-Briggs. Many wanted it for their own staffs. Don't forget in the old days there was a lot of Loosey Goosey about purchasing it. You can't do psych by mail today. Every one of us in '75 did psych by mail, and I'm not defending that. I'm just saying times have changed. As the organisations come in place, we now have ethical standards that say that many things that a whole lot of us did to enthuse people about type, today we can't do to enthuse people about type.

That was even true of Isabel. If she could get a family - I mean, okay, she's talking to Peter [Geyer, for example] and if through Peter she could get five family members of yours to take to Myers-Briggs, she had ways to do that, and we all did, you know, and all of that today is...I'm not saying it shouldn't be normal, I'm just saying that was the way you spread the enthusiasm.

Yes, just a different way of looking at it, yes.

Sure. The joke is told but it's true, a lady on a Washington DC subway asked me if I had the time. That led to a conversation. The fact she didn't wear a watch, I hypothesised she was a P. Till she got off, I had given her an indicator booklet and answer sheet and my return address and I did reconnect with her and we had some and exchange of her type and the whole nine yards. Today you couldn't give her that and say, "Mail this back to me." But that was a regular occurrence; we all did it the way I said. That's how we got early databases. And again none of that's defending. I'm just saying that was the reality of the day.

Then the organisation came in place and so restrictions followed and things began to happen. And you suddenly have qualifying criteria, hence they're qualified for accrediting workshops and training groups. So our business was already in place. Janet came out of the Carter White House, she was unemployed. My business was doing well but totally disorganised - I mean, we're talking seriously disorganised - and I said to her in a lark, "If you can straighten out this mess, you can have it," and she accepted the challenge - (a) straightened it out and (b) today is the owner of the business.

Yes, so once again that's sort of a synchronistic move in that sense.

Clearly.

What about your MBTI materials? Obviously you had some together over time, but the things that you sell - you know, the T-shirts - how did they actually get developed? You seem to be more entrepreneurial or more sales-focused in those sorts of areas than in a lot of other groups on type.

Well, I think that's the synchronicity - see, both Janet and I grew up in family-owned businesses. Her mother and father owned a bakery, my mother and father owned a little grocery store, a delicatessen, and that's where we grew up. So part of an entrepreneurial nature and part of owning your own business is an integral part of our value system, lifestyle background. Now, having said that, we also are both idea people. So when you're sitting around, there was one thing, first her idea - "Yes, this is a good training program that you're just doing slipshod all over the place. We're going to the pack because people come to you for training instead of you going all over the country," and the idea was born.

The next thing you know, somebody said - as they say to you and others, I'm sure, "You ought to write a book." Somebody said, "Have you got this on tape?" and the next thing you know, we had tapes. By now the conferences were getting more sophisticated and taping every session. That wasn't done in '79 that I can remember.

Yes, that really dates from '81...

Yes, the '81 at Stanford, because it's the California group that does it.

Okay. I've got a tape of Mary McCaulley from that.

The Stanford one is the first time I remember audiotapes. But it was Janet's idea. She said, "If others can sell audiotapes of you, Otto, why can't we sell audiotapes of you?" And the taping group thought that was a great idea, "We'll give you a deal on it." And the next thing you know - then the next thing, somebody says, "Well, why can't you have 16 type tapes so we can listen to them in our car? We can use them in training." Janet said, "Good idea." The next thing you know, we had a professional writing the song for each of the tapes and producing them. Part of it was spearheaded - and this is still true in some way - by the every other year conference.

See, by '85 we're in business and the conference is regular. '83 we were integral in helping with that conference, so we're too damned busy with the conference to do any entrepreneuring. But now '85 it's in Illinois and that's where we introduced the 16 type tape series, and I think it was then we did T-shirts. If it wasn't, it was the next conference. But each conference now - and that's just part of our own entrepreneuring - synchronistic - "Let's come up with a new idea to keep us on a fresh edge," because we think that way.

There seems to be some ambivalence about that in the type community, just as an observation.

Sure, but the type community - there's two things going on that I think are less than constructive for the type community. One is, there's a whole cultism around Isabel, and the more something becomes a cult, the more it has a whole bunch of religiosity or values or pieties that smack in the face of other dimensions of life. So in that particular model, making money is bad, copyrighting is bad, and so on, ownership is bad - and they're out of touch from my bias with the real world.

That seems to be the paradox, though - we will stick to that for a minute - because the instrument is copyrighted in 1943 and a lot of the hassles that go on within the type committee in actual fact, from my observation, are about copyright - you know, you can't copy this - Linda Berens gets her stuff done in blue and she has a little note down the bottom that says, "If this is not in blue, the copyright has been violated," and there's - I mean, you've got to protect your work, but it seems to me that there's that "Well, we're not too keen on making money," but then sometimes the same people are talking about copyright and all that. It seems to be really confusing.

True, and in the days Isabel was alive, while it was copyrighted, she donated most of her time, effort and money to the development of the Indicator, committing it all to that. So for someone to come along and not commit all your time, effort, money and attention back into

the Indicator, but in fact to pocket some money for your work or to protect your own thoughts or to copyright - she didn't do it, and if it's a cult, if the god or goddess doesn't do it, how can the disciples do it?

Yes, and that sort of thing still seems to go on.

It plagues the community. Meantime the publishers come along and in a very businesslike way say, "We're claiming all of it." God help anybody that violates copyright now. Part of me is irritated with that and part of me says that's a legitimate business claim - a paradox.

And it's part of the paradox too, you can negotiate with them as to what that is.

Sure, and they're only doing what the law allows them to do.

In that sense and because there's a lot of things that are going on about qualifying programs - you know, the so-called common exam and all that - what do you think the future is of qualifying programs?

That's a good question and I have no idea, I really don't. Behind that question I think is a bigger question and I don't have an answer to it: What's the future of the Indicator. I think the future of the indicator is that it's always going to be around, but it is going to plateau. The only reason why it hasn't plateaued in popularity right now is because TQM, which is this decade's excitement, happens to be based on self-knowledge and the Myers-Briggs is a handy way to self-knowledge. And yet this decade has seen things give way to the colour wheel, to the self-scoring version of the Myers-Briggs, to a whole bunch of "get your self-knowledge quick" models, and the more those things are happening, the more any purity about the indicator is diluted and so I've said this to Peter Myers, I've said it to others - if we continue to use the self-scoring, which obviously is going to happen, somewhere in the next ten to twenty years there will be a data dry-up and good accurate data won't exist, and then who knows? So far more important than the qualifying program done on the MBTI is, what is the real future of the Indicator?

Yes, and how can we say something about populations of people and nations and (inaudible)

Sure, how can you, if they keep their own data?

I've actually had a couple of issues recently - as in the last couple of days - that have been related about that. One was someone who rang me up and said that he had done the quick version of MBTI. I thought what has he done? It was actually the Insight Game. The second was a woman who I qualified and she sends her data to me. She used predominantly the self-score, but she was dealing with a group of unemployed

people who got so paranoid about Big Brother sorts of things that she actually felt compelled to tear up their results. There's probably a way out of that if you don't use the self-score.

Exactly, and if you deal with a professional instrument professionally - you know, I'm twenty years in the business, I haven't found that to be a problem.

Yes, it's interesting, it seems to be a problem here and I don't know what other people have experienced, but...

... there is a problem, it's more the trainer or the - and I'm calling them a pseudo-professional because if they were professional they wouldn't have anxiety about confidentiality. They would have worked with that. So when folks are screaming about a confidentiality issue, methinks they protest too loudly. If the client isn't bothered about it, what the hell is going on with you?

It is a complex issue and I think that in some senses...the woman I was talking to, she was actually clearly nervous because she believed that people should give her the information. Perhaps she didn't understand their issue and I think in some sort of senses it was meeting with them and ...

Sure, but I'm saying if these are folks - like, they're out of a job, they're already stressed. Now, what are you conveying to them - confidence or your own nervousness? I'm not picking on the woman, I'm just saying - I have met this with Australian Tax Office. Confidentiality is an issue. Who makes it that? Do you know how many things employees fill out every day? Do you know how many times in the course of a day you give away whatever you have got here in this country equivalent to our social security number? It's in the computer and do you know how much they know about you? The computer hackers are already bringing to light - one touch of a key and they can find out every damn thing in the world about Peter Geyer.

So somebody is stressed about a confidentiality issue of the Myers-Briggs? Come on, get a life. They're stressed because the professional has set them up to be stressed, because it's the professional's issue. They have somehow got some high need to be super professional, so they open up something that doesn't exist in the client.

I take your point, because I think it's something - in particular now because our social security department like to use the MBTI - sometimes in too short a time-frame - with people in the sense that it's a self-awareness thing, yes.

Yes, and don't misunderstand me, I agree there are misuses of the Myers-Briggs and I think professionals and others are being less than professional about disclosing confidentiality. I

understand all that. I'm just saying, who starts the whole issue? Only once in 20 years was it a significant issue and it's not accidental that that issue was with professional army chaplains, who are already uptight themselves about confidentiality. That's the only group that has ever demanded to have their answer sheets back from me. Isn't that interesting? No other group has demanded it. Others say, "Can I have a copy of my results, the answer sheet?" No problem, but I tell them up-front, "I'm going to keep your answer sheets. I will never disclose your type to anyone. I will use your data for research," and no-one has ever, except this one group who is already uptight about violating confidentiality, the chaplain.

Yes, because it's the confessional

Isn't that interesting?

I hadn't ever actually thought of it that way. That's quite interesting. This is a related question: who do you think should be allowed to use the MBTI?

You mean use it as a trainer, use it as an intervener?

Yes. I mean, we have gone from - here we have qualifying programs in order to qualify people and there's an argument as to how qualified they should be, and it actually varies from country to country. So the first part of the question is about people who can use the MBTI without doing qualifying, but the second part of the question is a broad question - who should actually be able to use it?

Okay, and I guess there I would probably be of the opinion that - and I would struggle, because I go back to the days of Isabel, when there weren't any criteria about who should use it, and that's where many people got very excited and today are names we talked about earlier that got into it, taught themselves and have used it incredibly ethically and professionally, do you know what I mean, from the Cecil Williams to the - you name them, whomever. there was a police group, a Gestapo out there, and at the same time, because it wasn't a popular instrument then, there were less professional psychologists screwing it up, because there wasn't... so they had no need to use it. So it was left to people who knew the Myers-Briggs and/or knew something of Jung, and so they used it quite effectively.

Now it's the largest target in the world for everybody to shoot at. So if you want fame, you publish a defaming article on the Myers-Briggs and some journal will publish it, because it sells.

My experience and my research gave me the idea - here you have an instrument where Isabel, were she alive, wouldn't be able to purchase it. Generally people laugh at that when it's mentioned. I think it's a tragedy because it really says something about the system.

And what has happened as a result of its own growth.

Yes, and my argument is that the instrument has actually been captured by a professional body that actually doesn't want to use it. So, you know, here we are, "I'm a psychologist and, for example, I can purchase the MBTI. I don't know anything about it, I know even less about Jung, but I'm going to use it" You run into that every day.

And they screw it up. So for me, I would - like, if somebody calls in and has the degrees, who claims they're qualified to purchase, I would make them take this supposed universal test. So you know how to take the qualifying course? Show up on the last day of the test. If you can't pass the test, you can't purchase it.

That's the normal exam that you

Yes, "So if you say you are so smart, you're a KIA, know it all, all right? Good. You do not have to take the qualifying but you must pass the qualifying test. It's now worldwide, universal." Now, that may not happen.

That's presuming you want it.

Yes, because if it comes that way, then if that is indeed true, then it is one test which I think is absurd in terms of believing in differences, but let's just pretend for a minute we're going to be absurd, because we have a history of that - if that's the case, then if it's one test for all the world qualifying programs, then everybody in the world who wants to work with the Myers-Briggs, I don't give a damn on your productions; you must pass the test or you can't purchase it, pure and simple.

Yes, that at least makes sense.

I think it is absolutely personally absurd to punish the people who want to be responsible. So here comes Sam or Sally, whether they're qualified by their degrees to purchase or not, here comes Sam and Sally - whatever their background is, they are interested people - and they're saying, "Before we work with this instrument, we want to be trained in it." So what do we do? We punish them. We charge them a fee to get trained and then we put them under all sorts of tension about passing a test. If you don't pass the test and you're demoralised and lose your self-esteem, then we say you've got to do make-ups and be back to being a little child again until you can - and they start out being responsible.

Yes, different to what we were talking about before. A person says, "I don't need to do this."

Yes, "I don't need it. I know more than God knows. Give me the instrument."

Yes, or, "It's irrelevant to know."

"It's irrelevant to know," right. We don't punish that person. We sell it to that person. But the person that wants to be conscientious, we're going to reduce them to rubble - and I know that goes on. The qualifying workshop for many of the people is not adult education; it is reducing them to the student as nigger again, and it is not an enabling program for many people. It puts them under tension and cuts their self-esteem.

You spoke with a woman from California, right - the ENFJ Jewish woman, I've forgotten her name again, it will come back to me - you did know she had flunked the APT training.

That's right, Wendy, yes.

Wendy, and as she's facing taking it over, to do the make-up, she decided to take it over with us. And there was a lifeblood experience. I wouldn't quote that, you don't need to say it that way because I don't want to compare it. I'm just saying the whole dynamic of test and test anxiety - and most of them are didactic, not experiential, most don't credit the person with coming with any sense of maturity, adulthood and contribution to the learning experience, but instead reduces you to the other side of the coin. And yet people still go through all that to try and be responsible, but that's what we do with the person who wants to be responsible, and the other person who says they know it all or don't need to know more than they know, we give them a licence.

Yes, I actually wonder about my role in that. How did you and Janet start writing books?

For years everyone had been saying, "You've got to write a book, you've got to write a book," and I really thought I was going to. Then it got so stressful, I got to a point of literally just thanking them for the nice stroke, but I remember saying one day, "Thank you very much, that's a nice stroke, but I have put that out of my mind. I am not going to write a book. I can't somehow seem to get it together." And we went to lunch - I remember the group, it was with Fannie May, that's a financial group of federal moneys for students. Sally May is for students, Fannie May is for housing loans or something, and this was their staff. I had done some training with them and we went to lunch, and at lunch this lady says this - it's back to being in time and listening to the universe - she said, "This may be your day." I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "Well, I'm so committed that you ought to write a book. I'm dating a guy right now who writes books for people, and let's get you and Janet and him together."

She pushed that and the four of us got to dinner one night - I can't remember at her house or Joel Makower's - for dinner, and Joel and Janet and Otto just fell in love with each other. It really was synchronicity. We just clicked. So he came over and gave me his three basic criteria you have got to have before you can write a book: you have got to have something to say, you have got to have an audience - meaning some folks have got to know you or know your content or want to buy your book - and I forget what the third one was, but it was most helpful.

So then he came and heard one of my lectures at one of the colleges in the area and loved the lecture, loved my style, loved the content and knew my 20 years in the field and other things published, that I had an audience, so he took on the project of trying to get the book out of our heads, which was, by the way, a four-year project. It was not easy. The typed draft took about four years from our first meeting, dinner with Joel, to the book in the Doubleday bookstore on Fifth Avenue. Janet went into hyperventilation on Fifth Avenue when she left. She said it's just like having a baby - my God, there is four years of our work and it's on Fifth Avenue, New York City, in the bookstore window. What a sense of accomplishment. It was a thrilling - but that was a four-year struggle.

It seems in a lot of senses that sort of impacted on your business as a whole. You know, I mean, I have a bias towards books, but seeing that if you put the book out and obviously if it's successful, there's pressure for another book. But then people recognise who you are and all that.

When *Type Talk* came out, Pat Hutson, who is our operations manager - we were sitting there doing something, the three of us, just talking, something about the business, and she said, "Our lives will never be the same when this book takes off." She didn't say if; she said "when it takes off." We said, "What do you mean?" She said, "Everything is going to turn upside down, the business and everything else." I don't know where Pat got that, but she clearly was right. I think I have shared this with you, but for what it's worth, 90 per cent of every book published is out of print in 12 months, gone, off the marketplace - 90 per cent. Think about that. So only 10 per cent of the books survive.

Type Talk came out in 1988 and this is what, seven years later, and it's still selling over 3000 copies a month, so Doubleday is out of their mind with ecstasy. By the end of the four-year struggle we were so out of our mind, we were saying there's no way we're going to do another book, and Doubleday came to us and said, "You don't have a choice. You've got to do another book. The public wants it." Then they said, "We want one on relationships," and now they're pushing again.

What sort of thing are they actually after?

They don't care. They want one on parenting, Janet wants one on exercises, a workbook. I want time off. So I don't know what's going to happen.

You can put out a book with blank pages.

Yes. But that's really how it came. Without Joel, the books would not have happened. And I say this publicly - you've heard me say it - one of the things that amazes me is the books sound like Janet and I talk.

Yes, they do.

And we can't write that way. That is Joel's ENTP magic.

Yes, which makes it - there's also a number of languages that your books are in at the moment.

That's true, they're in five languages - Japanese, Korean, mainland China, Taiwan and Russian.

It's an interesting spread of languages. It's mostly Asian.

I know.

I was wondering - because you've had a lot of international experience and recently you've been to Switzerland, it doesn't seem as though type has actually resonated as much with Europeans.

Slow on coming, and yet the Indicator itself is translated there and they're doing, I think, some pretty good validation studies in the various countries - France, Germany and so on. But the supplemental books - I don't know what's going on. Bantam Doubleday Dell is owned by a German publishing house - Beidelmann I think is their name. Largest one in Germany. For some reason - and I don't think it's Beidelmann, they print books that sell, so I think it's somewhere in the German type community. Yet when I talk to people from Germany, when I talk to people from France - lesser Australia because it's English - they're saying, "We want books. How can we buy your books in France," in the native language, you know what I mean? I have got nothing to do with that.

That's interesting because when you study the history of psychology, you know that different countries have different ways of looking at the psyche and that's really one of the reasons why Jung - probably not keen on the MBTI, because as a Swiss, that's not the sort of thing that you do, but it is something that Americans do more particularly - I think in America more than any other culture. So perhaps that's something

I don't know what it's all about, but it's interesting, I agree with you.

What's the most important thing about type for you?

That's a good question and I don't know an answer to it right now. Only that I'm so spread out - I guess if I tried an answer for me, the most important thing in type for me right now is in terms of enthusiastically letting people see what a rich instrument or frame of reference - type of the Myers-Briggs - what a rich instrument or frame of reference it is for helping people manage themselves.

So that's the main focus in this for you

Yes, I think self-management is what it's all about.

Would you want to extend that? I mean - and this goes back to the religious aspect or evangelical aspect of MBTI and people say type can save the world or whatever it is - I mean, that seems to be...

The only thing that can save the world is people managing themselves more effectively when they're in pissing contests and when they're hurt, when they're playing out of negative archetypes, because it is a very natural thing to play out of - either our non-preferences or out of negative archetypes or seduce ourselves into thinking we can do all things etc. Any of those things are saying really how incapable we are or how immature we are or how little we know about our own selves. So when we have somebody who thinks they can conquer the world, when you have got a goddamn madman who wants to drop atomic bombs, somewhere we need to have some heightening self-awareness that says, "Even if I got that power, is that the individuated use of that power?"

Yes, "So is that what I would do," and you see Type in that context

Yes. So for me, the issue isn't any way, you know, world peace. The issue is teaching individuals to be more holistic, more healthy individuals, more constructive individuals.

Okay, so in a personal sense I suppose, how has Type impacted on you - you know, the benefits, pluses and minuses - and as a subtext to that, is it still fun?

Reverse order: you know it's still incredible fun. It really is. I think one of the joys of my life right now is I'm doing exactly what I want, where I want to, when I want to, and it just doesn't get any better than that. And I have some professional respect and collegiality around the world and I don't know what you could ask for - particularly for my type, by the way. For my type it's a perfect reinforcement of that. But even without that, if I was a different

type and had some of what I've got now and enjoyed it as much as I do now, it would be good. So yes, it is still fun in every way, shape and form, intellectually stimulating, personally satisfying, professionally challenging - all of the above. It is fun. And by the way, each of those words I just made up are what I would define fun as for a professional - being stimulated and challenged and confronting in a way that produces good growth, that's fun, for me.

I was wondering what you would be doing if you weren't involved in Type.

Who knows?

Yes, because I mean, that's really part of it. You say, "Here's my journey and I'm here," and you have spoken about that throughout the interview - part of the reason for asking the question of what you would be doing if you weren't doing this.

Yes, and I don't even know that you would want to put this in there, but this is a muse of Otto's, all right, that... having spent 25 years in religion, faith, church - in fact having spent some 40 years in that really, if you count my pre-formal years in it in terms of my growth and development - it is Jung who says the last half of your life is coming to grips with your spirituality.

I find myself frankly reversing that. There's nothing that's surer to me than my spirituality. Jung was asked sometime if he believed. "I don't need to. I know," was his answer. And that's so clear, that's where I am. I can't waste my time talking about the obvious, so I wouldn't even engage in a theological discussion about God, about theory, any of that stuff, because that's all it is for me. I know, and there's nothing more confident about it, so for me the last 10, 12 years of my life, the last part of my current move and where I am right now is coming to grips more with an integration of what has always been an integral part of me, the secular side of life, and what has always been a part of me, the divine part of my life.

They have never been separate for me, but it's only as where I am now that folks are beginning to really experience that; that they saw the profanity of me and thought I'm going to hell in a handbag and how can I be a minister and be so earthy and worldly. And now that I'm no different in either camp but I'm not carrying that halo problem, I'm experiencing myself just enjoying a whole lot more about my faith, about being who I am, about being the part of my belief system that I used to talk about. I'm now enjoying an integration that lets me live that. I think I have always lived it, but I think career and other things got in the way.

Okay, so you now feel. you're seeing yourself as more doing what you have already been doing, but being more aware...

Yes, and I think for me, if life continues to deal as positively with me as it has, yes, Janet and I somewhere are going to have some fun confronting people about their growth, and growth involves their election about their own spirituality or the neglect of that, the denial, both of which are part of their schtick, and that's okay, that's all growth. So I can't imagine I won't be doing that.