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Canada

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To whom it may concern:

I work as a Family Counsellor in the Family Counselling Department of the Family and Children's Services of the Niagara Region. I have worked there since 1972, right after I earned an M.S.W. at the University of Toronto. I am a clinical member of both the AAMFT (American Association for Marital and Family Therapy) and the OAPSW (Ontario Association of Professional Social Workers). For the past two years I have supervised a student intern from the Graduate School Department of Social Work at the State University of New York at Buffalo, as part of my professional duties.

In addition, I was a co-founder and am presently president of the Family Education Centre of the Niagara Region, an organization which trains and organizes lay parents to teach parenting skills in a manner that is non-threatening to parents, and thereby does a great deal of preventive work. This organization has been recognized by the Federal Government as a demonstration project (with a two-year grant to go with the recognition.) The organization is presently funded by United Way. Its work is highly regarded by government social service agencies and school boards, who delegate members to serve on our board.

I also serve as an adviser to a Federal Government funded project called Design For a New Tomorrow, which provides counselling to people who are being or have been subjected to physical or psychological abuse.

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I have exposed myself to a great deal of skill and personal development in the field of human relations, both at recognized professional conferences and in specialized fields (e.g., two years of Gestalt training, training in Neuro-Linguistic Programming, and training in Adlerian psychology). As a result, I have been exposed to many forms of education in group and experiential as well as lecture formats.

I have come to know of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh and his work through several avenues -- books, taped discourses, music, talks with his Sannyasins, attendance at the Second Annual World Festival at Rajneeshpuram and at a workshop there afterwards, and observations of changes in people exposed to Rajneesh workshops, education, and living.

My initial reaction to Rajneeshies was very skeptical - I thought they were weird and cult-like because of the way they dressed and some of the things they said. As I was also intrigued and curious, I got to know them better. I have, in time, come to view Rajneesh and his work with an extremely high regard. I have seen people at the Toronto Centre and at the Oregon workshop grow in ways that I see growth in my own work - but there is an added dimension of healing, as well as group support for this individual growth. The workshop at Rajneeshpuram that I took was up to the highest of professional standards -- the leaders were skillful, perceptive, focussed on the participants' needs, and able to create a very healing atmosphere. The impact on many people (including myself) was, I thought, unusually powerful. The content of the workshop was inspired by his teachings.

I consider his work to be an unusual, original, creative and highly effective combination.

*Janice Berkowitz*