

## **Coming Home Again**

### **A LIOS instructor pens a book detailing the rewards of revisiting familial relationships with honesty and a courageous spirit of learning**

If the thought of sitting across from your parents or siblings and candidly discussing your true feelings about them makes you break out in a cold sweat, then *Coming Home Again: A Family of Origin Work for Health and Leadership* (Brunner Routledge, New York) may be the book for you.

Co-authored by Timothy Weber, PhD, a clinical psychologist and director of the counseling program at Leadership Institute of Seattle (LIOS)—an academic arm of Bastyr University—*Coming Home Again* follows the experiences of one family joining together for group family-of-origin counseling. Dr. Weber knows very well the angst associated with confronting entrenched family dynamics in an effort to bring insight and healing. It's *his* family featured in the book. And that process, at times painful and at other times joyful, is central to *Coming Home Again*.

“The initial inspiration for the book was the death of my mother in 1978,” says Weber, “and the enormous sense of regret I felt at not coming together as a family before or at that time to engage in real conversations of love and truth.” Nearly a decade passed before Weber and his original family (his “family of origin”) reunited for a series of family counseling sessions. “Family of origin consultations accent the importance and power of directly addressing original family members,” says Weber. “Under the guidance of a counselor, problems and unfinished stories are taken back to where they began. It’s an opportunity to clarify misunderstandings, explore new possibilities and build lively relationships for the future.”

Weber found the sessions so life-changing, he wanted to share his family’s experience. “I wanted to encourage other families to utilize the rich resources of family life that are often shut away or neglected as people go about their ordinary business of life.” Together with his family’s counselor, the late Jim Framo, and Framo’s psychotherapist wife, Felise Levine, Weber pulled together transcripts, behind-the-scenes happenings, family members’ thoughts and therapists’ insights to weave a candid, compelling story.

“We started the book in ’88 and finished it in 2002,” says Weber. “It was challenging to write a book with multiple voices. It’s like a five-track recording.” The result is a work for both professional therapists and lay people that incorporates elements of a novel, with individual characters changing and growing over time, and dramatic developments that draw the reader in.

In addition to its many different points of view, the book is unique, according to Weber, because it’s rare to find literature in the psychotherapy field that follows a family over time in a “longitudinal case study.” Weber points out that, while *Coming Home Again* relates the experience of a “normal” family that speaks on an emotional level to every

reader, it's also a scholarly commentary on the art and science of family-of-origin consultations—a therapy approach taught to counseling students in the LIOS program.

When asked what he wants people to gain by reading *Coming Home Again*, Weber replies in the poetic-tinged language that peppers his writing: “I hope each reader will gain more faith, hope and courage in being able to explore their own family, recognizing there the rich rewards for learning and growth. I hope they will discover more drama, more possibility, more stories and creativity within the family organization just waiting to be uncovered. I hope that, as they engage with the unfolding story, it ignites flames within the reader’s own personal history.”