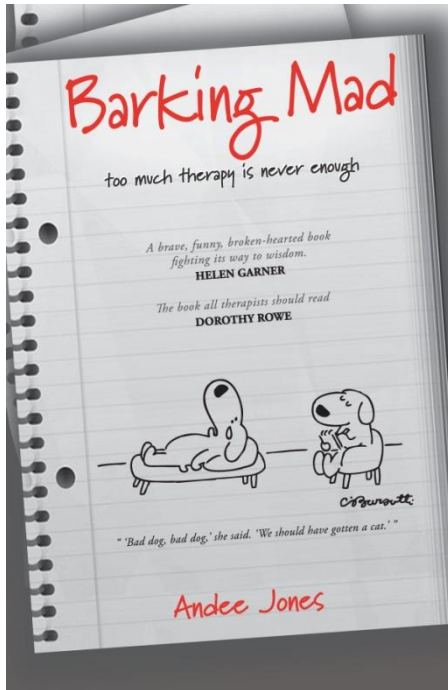


Barking Mad

Too much therapy is never enough

Humane, good-humoured and immensely helpful. To turn this book's pages is far, far better than popping pills
—PHILLIP ADAMS



A brave, funny, broken-hearted book that fights its way to wisdom—HELEN GARNER

In 1969, the author was a teenage mother looking for help to sort herself out. *Barking Mad* is her story about trying to get a grip, losing it, trying, losing ... and so on throughout forty years of therapy, a dozen therapists and a ton of trouble. *Barking Mad* explores problems of groupthink in therapy, orthodox Freudian method and Therapists Who Know Best.

This book highlights the hottest political topic of the moment—mental illness—and its most controversial aspect: how much choice should consumers have in the type of professionals they consult to deal with their condition?
—BARBARA BIGGS

Consumer Advocate, Mental Health Council of Australia

Why the huge disparity in funding between clients of psychiatrists and psychologists—now roughly five funded sessions to one? Is it because the psychiatric profession sees this as a turf war? Why not 'to each his own', you might ask, 'horses for courses'? No way. Too many people, it seems, are making a habit of seeking help from psychologists rather than psychiatrists. I'm one of them.

Why is this book important?

Barking Mad is about CLIENTS' RIGHT TO CHOOSE between different types of funded mental-health care, a choice virtually scuttled by recent Medicare cuts to psychology services.

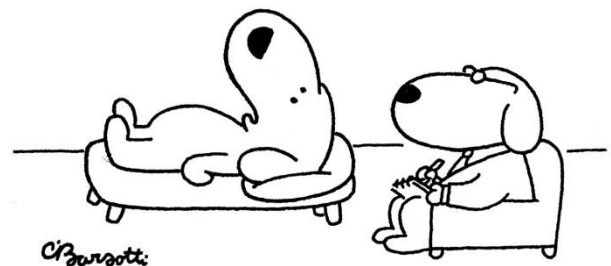


What marks the book out in part is Jones's political awareness: mental illness, for her, is the child of patriarchy, and the sickness of our society makes itself felt in the sufferings of individuals. She is acute on the politics and ethics of therapy and her vignettes pay close attention to the atmospherics and theatre of therapy, the non-scientific everydayness of the transaction ...

Orthodox Freudianism turned out to be just another power game, and no small part of the intelligence of this book is in reminding those who want help not to cede too much autonomy to their therapists.

From *THE AGE* 'Off the shelf' review 22/10/2011

Andee Jones has written the book that all therapists and would-be therapists should read—DOROTHY ROWE



I do what they tell me, I eat what they give me. How do I know they're not a cult?

The author is a psychologist and long-term client of therapy. *Barking Mad* is her second book. Her 2010 memoir *Kissing Frogs* has been adapted as 'RU4Me', the one-woman hit show starring AFI-award-winner Annie Byron. Extracts from both books have won literary commendation.

For more info visit www.publishinink.com.au

Extract from *Barking Mad*

Andee Jones © 2011



OMG! DO WHAT HE SAYS
OR WE'RE GONNA DIE!!

Your psychiatrist [Fritz] may be bananas, but questioning his behaviour merely illustrates to him how unwell you still are, how far short of earning his blessing to fly his nest. But in 1989, what with the collapse of world communism and the rotten-tomatoes incident at Fritz's, things really come to a head.

One Friday I arrive at dusk for the usual session and find the house silent, unlit, the front door locked. No-one answers my calls. Our newest group member—a med student—arrives and we do a recce down the sideway. Fritz's back yard, once a paradise of Zen harmony, is strewn with rubbish—broken glass, plastic bags, polystyrene trays of rotten tomatoes. The maples are dying, the japonica and peonies dead. Shrivelled waterlilies and skeletal remains are etched into the dried mud on the pond floor.

Through the glass doors we see shoulder-high stacks of newspapers and broken-down boxes of paper. More stacks and rubbish on the kitchen table and scattered across the floor. Has there been a break-in, vandalism?

Later I call Ilsa the sculptor to ask what she knows. She didn't get there and doesn't know.

Next session I'm late in. Fritz has already apologised for missing last session—kept away by an emergency.

There's silence when I walk in. Ilsa speaks first. 'I've just been telling the group you were worried about Fritz last week.'

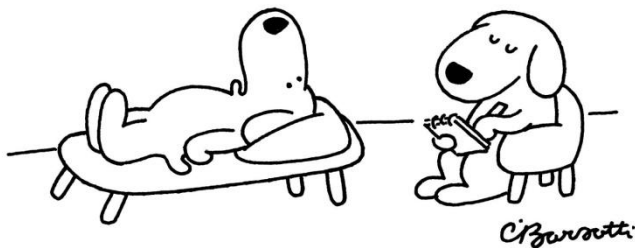
I nod.

Ilsa lunges, drags me to the village square, forces my head and arms onto the stocks and sets its ton-weight plank across my neck.

'I thought the house might've been vandalised,' I say, 'or maybe Fritz was ill'.

'You're the one who's ill,' snarls Fritz. 'You're bent on destroying your own doctor. You're completely paranoid. You want to get rid of me and take over the group.'

Ilsa turns the key and the lock shoots home.



"I bark at everything. Can't go wrong that way."

Next session it's a full house. It's also a silent one apart from Fritz's gentle snores. No-one's spoken for fifteen minutes. Fritz opens one eye, scans the room and fixes on John. The air crackles with relief and tension.

'You're off.'

Silence.

'What are you doing?'

John looks down at his palms, interlaces his fingers, turns his hands inside and out. 'I've been having thoughts.'

'What sort of thoughts?' barking now. 'How long has this been going on? How dare you not tell me! You're breaking your contract!' Fritz is turning purple.

John is crying soundlessly, tears dripping into his hands.

'Have you been thinking of harming someone?'

'I've been thinking about death a lot.' John is drowning in tears and snot, no longer stifling his sobs. His head sinks toward his hands, his shoulders heaving, legs trembling.

The grilling goes on for two hours.

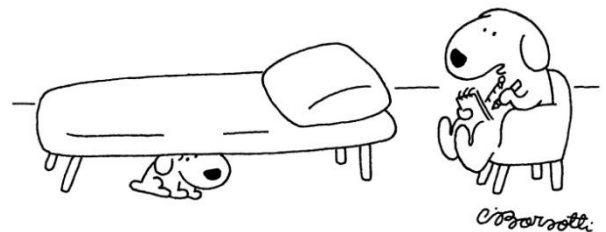
'I'm calling your GP,' says Fritz. 'When he arrives, we'll talk about whether to hospitalise you.'

It takes two medicos to sign the papers.

We wait an hour for John's GP to arrive and another while he and Fritz confer outside the closed door.

It's after midnight when Fritz comes back in.

John's GP has gone and we're allowed to go home. I have no idea what transpired between Fritz and John after we left. Next session, John turns up and things are as usual.



"And what do you think will happen if you do get on the couch?"

Fritz's threats against less favoured members become more wounding.

'What are you doing?' snaps Fritz at our soon-to-graduate medico as she comes in and sits down.

Silence.

'Don't play games with *me*. What are you doing?'

A strange greenish-pink stain creeps up Fritz's face. His hands are quivering.

'You must know I can stop you practising if you keep carrying on like that.'

The medico is weeping. Fritz rises and leaves the room. Invisible chains—'mind-forged manacles'—lock us into our seats. No-one speaks. Fritz returns with his black bag and extracts the leather case housing the ink blots.

We watch as Fritz, cold as ice, plies the trembling medico with the blots to gauge how *far* off she is and in which direction.

Nineteen *New Yorker* cartoons in *Barking Mad* are reproduced by kind permission of Conde Nast.

All profits from sales of the book are going to suicide-prevention work.