



SPECIAL SECTION: IN MEMORY OF BENEDIKTE BARTH SCHEIBY

You Are The Music: The Music Therapy Spirit of Benedikte Scheiby

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Benedikte Barth Scheiby lived, breathed, ate, drank, and slept music therapy. Some people would call her a workaholic, but that assumes that music therapy was work for her, which it surely was not. It was something that she loved to do—perhaps as much as anything else in the world—whether it was clinical practice, supervision, teaching, lecturing, or just talking about the work. As her husband of 30 years, I can assure you that there was nothing that Benedikte liked to talk about more than her work. There was no greater fan and booster of music therapy than her.

Benedikte lived a terrifying childhood. She never knew her father, a medical doctor who took his own life when she was just three months old. And her mother was an alcoholic who repeatedly put the physical safety and lives of Benedikte and her older brother Johs. in danger in a variety of ways. As a result, she never experienced true parental love or the warm embrace of an immediate family.



Photo 1

This photo of our mailbox gives you an indication of her sentiments.



Photo 2

The pure joy in her face in this photo of her playing a Native American drum conveys all you need to know about her feelings about her work.



Photo 3

Benedikte with her brother, Johs.

I mention this history because it was truly remarkable to me in receiving hundreds of messages after Benedikte's passing that the most common message was this one: "Benedikte was like a mother to me." How was it possible for a woman who lived such an emotionally impoverished childhood to offer others what was denied to her?

One reason is that Benedikte went through life creating the family that was not given to her naturally. She found mentors and supporters along the way that nurtured her and enabled her to make remarkable achievements, personally and professionally. In her circle of friends, she created an extended family.

Benedikte knew more people than anyone I know—she had multiple address books that were crammed full of contact information, business cards, personal mementos, and the like. It was impossible for anyone else to find a person in her book because she had a personal organizational system that did not necessarily follow any kind of logic, such as using the person's last name. And when I say that she "knew" people I mean that she had substantial meaningful connections with people from all over the world; there was nothing superficial in any of Benedikte's relationships.

Benedikte had more of burning life spirit than anyone I've ever met. It was this inner flame that allowed her to create a beautiful, well-rounded life with a rich family, extended friends, and unique professional contributions. Among her important men-



Photo 4

Benedikte's life philosophy was captured in the phrase from one of Benedikte's refrigerator magnets: "Venner er familien, du selv vælger" (Friends are family that you choose yourself.)



Photo 5

Two of the people closest to her and part of her Intuitiv Music Group were Annelise Lund Sorensen (center) and Lene Ravn (right).



Photo 6

Benedikte with Olav Storm Jensen

tors were Mary Priestley, the founder of analytical music therapy (AMT) with whom Benedikte trained.

There was also Olav Storm Jensen, a bioenergetic body psychotherapist who was Benedikte's primary trainer in this method and her therapist.



Photo 7
Inger Biehe



Photo 8
Benedikte with Gritt

On a more personal level, there was a woman named Inger Biehe, someone who had known Benedikte's father and who provided what Benedikte called her "reserve mother" relationship, although in this term I think that Benedikte was doing a literal translation from the Danish and perhaps the term "surrogate mother" in English might better capture the nature of this relationship.

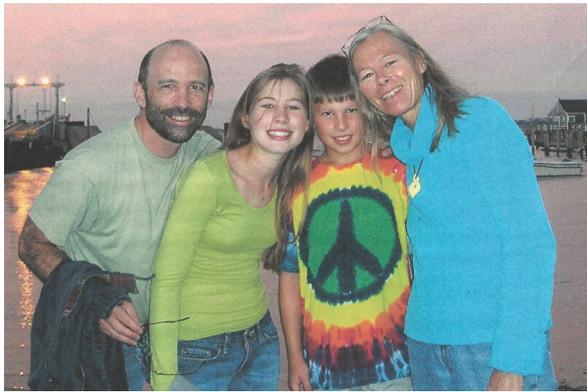
In addition, Benedikte provided her own maternal nurturance for her niece and nephew, Gritt & Teit Uldall-Jessen, the children of her brother Johs.

And although Benedikte did practice in the model of AMT she conceptualized her work in a very broad way and often described it as being music-centered as well. And I can verify that she was in love with the music of Paul Nordoff. She learned to play many of the songs he co-wrote with Clive Robbins, and she could easily be brought to tears by hearing Paul play and sing to his child clients. In him—and in his music—she felt the paternal attention and caring that she never experienced. Together with the child television host, Fred Rogers (or Mr. Rogers, as he was generally known)—someone who Benedikte also loved from a distance—Benedikte found in the world a way to experience paternal nurturance.

Benedikte and I started a family together relatively late in life. She was 39 when our daughter Sara was born and just a few weeks shy of her 43rd birthday when she gave birth to our son Daniel. And if I had been amenable to the idea, I'm sure that Benedikte would have kept on having children until it was no longer possible. That's how much she loved being a mom and being part of a complete, nurturing, family.



Photo 9
Benedikte with Teit



Photp 10
Ken, Sara, Daniel, and Benedikte on Nantucket Island



Photo 11
Portrait from Benedikte's Business Card

So, I guess that the answer to the question “How was it possible for a woman who lived such an emotionally impoverished childhood to offer to others what was denied to her?” is that she just refused to be a victim of her history. She engaged in her own therapy processes and she built the life around herself that she wanted. She was a living, shining example that no human beings have to be victims of their circumstances. Her clients, students, trainees, supervisees, colleagues, friends, and family members felt this in her and we all grew to love her deeply for it. This affection shines through in the words of the of the people on this tribute video. Jeg elsker dig, min kærste.

About the author

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