



# Burnaby Counselling Group

building and rebuilding lives...

## BCG Realization 2011: The Need to Develop Informed Instincts

By Carlene Van Tongeren

It was within sight, within reach, within the realm of possibility and on instinct I made a dash for the bus...splashing up the slushy snow with my gum boots and awkwardly holding onto my bags and umbrella while my pregnant belly protruded out of my once fitted pea coat. What a sight as I raced up alongside the bus waving my arms, only to have it pull away and leave me on the side of the road taking with it the anticipated possibility of entering gracefully into my workday with time to spare before my meetings began.

What I didn't realize in that moment was how my instincts (that were programmed from my many years of being a competitive athlete) were no longer fitting for my 8 months pregnant state and I ended up paying dearly for that mad dash...my movement was reduced to a humble, tentative waddle for days to come as my pulled ligaments healed.



It struck me that as we journey through the sanctification process in our lives, there is often a transformation that gradually takes place in which our past instincts need to become 'informed instincts'. That over time, we struggle to find a balance in approaching life that blends our human knee jerk reactions with



our learned cognitive theology so that we can draw from both our valuable 'gut instincts' and what God teaches us about living by His Spirit.

As I reflect on taking time away from being Executive Director at the Counselling Group to pour energy into motherhood, I'm thankful for the many opportunities to hone this skill of developing informed instincts. I have been challenged in this leadership role to learn about the timing of when more due diligence, deliberation, and prayer is required and when it is valuable to risk pursuing an idea with one's instinct leading the way!

We are grateful that in hiring our new Executive Director, Jana Minor, there was an instinctual 'yes, what a perfect fit for us in a time such as this' as well as informed confirmation through the interviewing process that she brings with her tremendous gifts and passion to her new role at the Counselling Group.

**604.430.1303**  
**counsellinggroup@telus.net**

We gratefully accept tax deductible donations for our ministry

## Welcome Jana Minor!

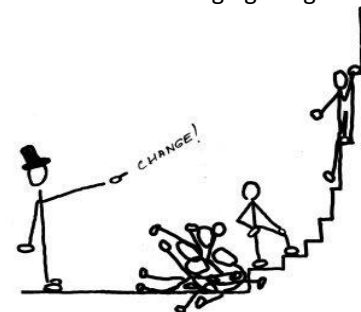
Jana Minor comes to the Counselling Group from Banff, Alberta. She is currently pursuing a Masters in Theology and the Arts at Regent College and brings with her a wealth of experience as former Executive Director of AIDS Bow Valley as well as Human Resources Manager and Training & Development Specialist with Delta Hotels.

## This Way to Grace and Acceptance

By Jana Minor

It seems very fitting to me that the theme of this month's newsletter is "Learning." The ironic timing is not lost on me as I find myself once again navigating those unfamiliar waters of a new job; 'learning the ropes' on this new ship.

Knowing I'm not the first person to experience anxiety, discomfort and insecurity in times of transition like this, I decided to do some research. Typing the phrase "learning curve" into Google returned this encouraging image:



Not quite the remedy I was going for. To be sure, I've certainly had my share of new workplace situations that left me feeling like that desperate figure scaling the wall, but I'm happy to report this time is different and for one prime reason:

**I'm surrounded by therapists!**



# Burnaby Counselling Group

building and rebuilding lives...

That might be an exercise in stating the obvious, but these new co-workers actually pause a moment and consider my mental health. On my first day I was invariably told to “*Be patient, it takes at least 3 months to adjust to any new job*” and “*Don’t worry, just be yourself.*” What common sense messaging you might say, but for me – more generally accustomed to the crush of corporate culture to prove myself before I even knew where the water cooler was – these were groundbreaking concepts! Oh that every newbie should be surrounded by such disproportionately intuitive colleagues as me!

So what have I learned then? To go easy on myself. To be kind to myself. To speak as nicely to myself internally as when I address others externally. Not to heap on unnecessary mental pressure during common times of change. It’s change – it’s *supposed* to feel uncomfortable! And to remember to *BE* myself. God is cheering for my progress and “His divine power has given us everything we need...” How can we expect to be accepting and forgiving of others if we’re not first in the habit of extending that same grace and kindness to ourselves?

## Lost Words

By Denise Caldwell

One of my least favourite experiences as a teacher is standing in front of a group of people, ready to express a deep and doubtlessly life-changing thought to a kind and receptive group of people, and not being able to think of the word I need. There *is* a word – I know that because I’ve been using it for years – and it has apparently evaporated from my mind. It is gone, possibly forever, but likely only until later in the week, when I no longer need it. This is an awkward moment for a

teacher who loves good words, because at that point, one is compelled to substitute three inadequate one-syllable words for the one eloquent and excellent word – an exercise in frustration if there ever was one.

Here’s an interesting excerpt from a book by Joan Chittister:

*We know now that **anomia**, the inability to remember names, is common to anyone over thirty. Likewise with names, and jokes, and spatial cues, and phone numbers. It seems that as the brain ages it begins to sort and discard information that is “emotionally neutral.” What doesn’t have personal meaning becomes less and less important to us as the years go by, less and less accessible, while matters of emotional impact become even fresher. ...We begin to notice other dimensions of the world, of people, of events, of ideas beyond data, and to absorb them into our answers. We bring experience to knowledge and then add wisdom to our results.*

It is not difficult to understand the temptation to passively submit and just let all that aging business happen as it will, once we recognize that some of these disheartening changes are happening, and they are happening *to us*. But the need to keep ourselves in relationships and situations in which ideas are flowing, ideas we can engage with, that have emotional value to us, seems to be pivotal. It is of less importance whether it is in the context of a small bible study or in the pursuit of a university degree, whether it is in becoming curious about the story of a new friend or finding a way to navigate in a new community – there are many factors that determine which directions are going to open in front of each of us, and which ones appeal to each of us,

and are therefore possible.

But to just wander through the last 20 or 30 years of life, winding down more and more, without engaging meaningfully in our own changing lives by *willing* ourselves to place the self we have become into challenging places, without insisting on using the experience and wisdom we have both acquired and been given... That would be a great loss, both to us personally and to the part of the world in which we have our being.

That would be... lamentable. Ah, the right word.

## Psycho-Educational Assessments

Is your child...

- Struggling in his/her school performance?
- Having difficulty focusing, concentrating on homework, or following through with tasks?
- Expressing difficulty in reading, writing, oral, or processing skills?
- Displaying unexplained behavioral problems or mood instability?

Dr. Karla Saruk’s Psycho-Educational Assessment will help you identify your child’s academic strengths and needs, and assist you in obtaining the support needed to enhance their academic performance and self-esteem. Karla Saruk provides assessments for 6-18 year olds.

To learn more about Psycho-Educational Assessments please visit Karla Saruk’s profile online at:

[www.counsellinggroup.org](http://www.counsellinggroup.org)

## Recommended Resources

- **The Gift of Years** by Joan Chittister