

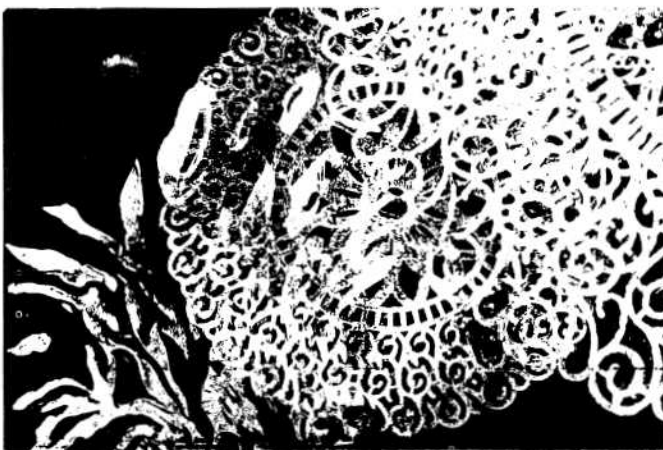
What Can a Portapak Do?

ly and consciously regulate and arrange for our interpersonal relationships with others and our changing reactions to ourselves.

It is necessary to review and consider revision of theories of self which see man from a rigid viewpoint. Although there is continuity in the structural core of each person, self is not a concrete self. A maturing person is composed of many coexisting selves or self-aspects, changing and in flux from moment to moment yet always having a unifying matrix of physical body mass, name, gender, life history, incorporated cultural time-binding practices, language, values and emotional reaction patterns. Each person is unique in his process of creatively synthesizing these past and present introjected and identified-with images as they amalgamate into his own growing self.

This condensed manuscript was prepared for the presentation on Video as an Adjunct in the Growth of Self at the October 25, 1972 scientific meeting of the Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis, Carnegie International Center, New York City.

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We received a grant from NIMH to train employed mental health paraprofessionals in the use of videotape recording techniques. To do this, we used one portapak, some tape, and set up a once-a-week, five-hour class structure at a community mental health center. The class was open to Antioch students, interested paraprofessionals and therapists at the mental health center.

Our goals were to acquaint everyone with the hardware--to begin to understand it, demystify it; and develop a class process that would maximize the benefits we felt videotape could bring to a group. We knew that many community mental health centers had videotape equipment, but to our knowledge, it wasn't being used to the potential we felt video could have for bringing people together.

Another goal was to bring the community and the institution together. As Stelios is the director of a mental health center and has an interest in video, and as Alan is professor of communications at Antioch College and is interested in mental health, we felt that this project could work to bring students and the community together.

We realized that we couldn't develop our theories in the abstract, so our class became a human laboratory where we explored on ourselves the effects of videotape on a group. We were trying, week-by-week, to develop concrete uses of video that would facilitate therapy and/or group interaction.

During the class meetings, we found that the video process began to take on an identity of its own, and that that process shaped the character of what went on. No matter how clear our initial goals were, when the video equipment was on, the process became uncertain. We found ourselves unable to predict what would happen next.

One important thing that we learned was that one cannot maintain traditional roles while working with video. Video in playback doesn't show roles, it only shows people. The reality of this fact precipitated a crisis in our group when the students, tapists, teachers, paraprofessionals and therapists all had to begin reassessing and redefining their roles. We found that video had forced us to face