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## **A Short Response to John Salinsky 'Do We Still Need an Analyst for a Leader?' (1989)**

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Even though written in 1989, this paper is relevant to Balint groups and, as John puts it, 'Balint influenced training' today.

He describes the listening required of the clinician and the similar task of the leader. Both are stated with the admirable simplicity and brevity born of long thoughtful experience. He pinpoints accurately that it is this listening to the language of the unconscious and saying enough to open up something potentially new that is important. It is not interpreting or translating, on the part of the analyst/Balint leader, into clever interventions or phrases that is essential, but more an openness to not teach or suggest, to wonder about something that strikes them in the emotional atmosphere of the case and the doctor patient relationship, and the way the story is told and received by the group.

He is kind and, I think, respectful of the fact that analysts are trained to especially listen for and to the unconscious but also clear that it isn't a preserve of psychoanalysts. In Balint groups, it is something one can develop and refine with the help of properly trained leaders and contacts with interested psychoanalysts.

Today there are a number of psychoanalysts involved with the society and trained as Balint leaders, so we are once more in a position where a new fruitful dialogue about listening might take place. This time I think it might be with psychiatrists in the main and their clinical work though hopefully more GPs will re-find Balint.

This paper would be helpful to the many people who lead Balint groups who have not had much contact with trained leaders as it gives them a clue as to why it's important to maintain the links with psychoanalysis and the language of the unconscious.

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