

## 4) SAFER PSYCHIATRY

### *a guided tour of the human mind*

I cannot read your mind. No psychiatrist can, nor ever will. I can't even look into it very well. What I can do is invite you to look into it for me. And this is the key not only to a safer psychiatry, but to a saner world, and indeed to something we all crave beyond anything else – peace of mind.

These two factors need always to be born in mind – if they are minimised or overlooked, then progress in exploring the mind will be hampered or impossible. Your mind is your own, no one can read it, nor even control it very well – you are what matters when it comes to minds, in particular to your mind. That's the first thing. The second is that you can share your mental furniture, if and only if you wish, or decide to do so. The benefit of sharing your thoughts and feelings is that you have them validated. And without validation our mental stability first wobbles, then bits start to fall off, which threatens our social cohesion, thence jeopardising our very survival.

I am happy to offer a guided tour of the human mind – I have been conducting a really long expedition into mental territory most of my life, some 70 years now. But the first thing to do is to insist on the things you not bring with you. Just as when visiting the world's finest works of art, you are now likely to be frisked for possible destructive packages – so when exploring what is undoubtedly the most brilliant, delightful, fascinating entity on earth – there are one or two items which you would be better off without, and whose absence will make my task on this guided tour that much easier.

So don't bring any dogma. No, not even one small dogma sitting quietly in the corner. No dogmas allowed. It is easy to see why.