TAKING LICENSING TO NEW HORIZONS

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My family was in show business and, years ago, they took me to a Broadway musical in which the lyrics of the show-stopping song went something like this, "I am what I am. I bang my own drum. Some call it noise. I call it music." I recall these lyrics because anyone who knows me describes me as a person who bangs her own drum and, sometimes, I can be noisy. I question authority, especially when I feel it does not seem valuable or necessary.

This brings me to the much discussed questions these days of licensing and designated standards. It may seem odd that I, who believe so much in independent thinking, feel that licensing for therapeutic programs is both valuable and necessary. Let me explain.

I believe that being a former student of Rocky Mountain Academy, an emotional growth school, has been the biggest gift of my life. Rocky Mountain Academy (which is now closed) was formed and run by some wonderful, creative and "outside the box" thinkers. These people were visionaries looking for alternative ways for kids to grow and learn. It was a program with strict rules and regulations. I fought a great many of them, but when I was there, I knew that the people into whose care I was placed deeply cared about me and my growth. Fifteen years later, I found myself in the same industry that I, as a teen, fought tooth and nail not to be part of.

Now, older and somewhat wiser, I myself am running an outdoor emotional growth therapy program. It is called "New Horizons for Young Women." It is small in size, but large in commitment and integrity – a nine week program, only for girls age 13 to 18. We have 31 employees. It is not a boot camp nor a punishment program, but rather a structured environment in which young girls can grow in self esteem and responsibility. We have licensed therapists as well as wilderness instructors who believe in emotional growth. In short, I wanted to have, what I call, a therapy meets emotional growth environment. Some people had an issue with this philosophy because they felt one couldn't combine "regulated" professional therapists with "out of the

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