

On the Issue of Accepting Gifts in a Cultural Context

After the BC-ABA conference, Bobbi Hoadley and Pat Mirenda continued to interact with both Dr. Bailey and Dr. Carr by email on the issue of multiple relationships and gift-giving that was raised in the final ethics session. They were both very willing to engage with us and were most accommodating. Bobbi and I were able to explain the cultural situation(s) we face as BCBAs and BCaBAs in Canada in detail during that exchange. In his response, Dr. Carr referred to the May, 2015 BACB newsletter, which addressed this issue in detail. Specifically, he referred to a section on page 3 of the newsletter that offered some questions that should/would be asked when determining whether accepting a gift is in violation of the Code:

"2. Was the gift evidence of a multiple relationship and conflict of interest?

3. What was the intention of the gift?

- a. Are there any cultural influences that would refute the multiple relationship inference?
- b. Was any effort made to make the gift less personal to the recipient and, thus, less likely to influence the professional relationship?"

In a subsequent email exchange, Dr. Bailey commented: "I believe this is the answer to your question about refusing tea if it is offered. You can answer, "No, there was no intention to establish a multiple relationship and yes there is a very strong cultural influence as part of the offer." He further clarified: "I would be happy for you to share the explanation...with the caveat that "intention" is undefined and perhaps even undefinable. Skinner took a shot at it in *Verbal Behavior* (p. 41) which bears close reading and analysis since he refers to intention as a kind of mand. Presumably one would have to keep close tabs on the subsequent occurrences of related mands before determining if this is the beginning of a slippery slope or not."

With Dr. Bailey's permission, Bobbi and Pat are pleased to share this clarification with the BC-ABA membership.

(written by Pat Mirenda)