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Listening for Fulfillment  
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# FOREWORD

MELINDA VOSS, EDITOR

*This year’s conference theme, “**Listening for Fulfillment,**” can be seen from many different prisms put forth by the authors in this journal. Most likely, their writings will inspire you, challenge your thinking and open new inquiries and possibilities. A few may even mystify or delight you. Some may require deep thinking on your part. Some may stimulate you to launch your own inquiries, such as: What does it take to listen for fulfillment? What’s the experience of listening for fulfillment? Is this listening simply allowing something to be said, a place to come from or a practice to develop? What is it for you?*

We start with Nathalie Concepcion, who looks at six discoveries she made on this journey and offers what it takes to listen. Jill Rickards explores anxiety, which often gets in the way of listening and relates what she discovered about using anxiety as a lens for listening. Rosy Navarro describes how she listened for fulfillment through her father’s wise words and by asking herself, “Do I really want to learn English? Am I willing to pay the price for it?”

Shifting to global transformation, Sophia Olivas distinguishes some types of poverty often hidden from our view and ponders: Is poverty solvable? What listening would it take to solve it? What would happen if we solved poverty? For Katharina Wuppinger, it was her Landmark training that served her when she was drawn – almost unwillingly – into the 2014 Ebola epidemic in Sierra Leone.

Using a wider lens, Tony Graddon builds on his

study of global economics from last year by examining why wealth inequality is growing. He poses a key question: Is listening for fulfillment for Self or society? The next two papers address issues related to girls and women. Sara Safari describes her quest – with its life-threatening moments – to empower girls in Nepal, and Marilyn Skelton details a wrenching personal story that led to her project for eliminating intimate partner violence in Australia.

From there, three papers focus on our use of resources and the role that community plays in creating workability. Tom Braford lays out how he has been listening for fulfillment of his life’s longing for the past 40 years or so as a professional community builder. His main work has been to create sustainable communities in St. Louis, Missouri and beyond. Karl Zeller and Ned Nikolov weave together the process of how they discovered something they believe breaks new ground and listened to each other and the

reaction of the scientific community when their findings disrupted some long-standing thinking about climate change. Fred Moss challenges our thinking once again by looking at global madness and what it will take for humanity to unite.

The hot writers' group, which includes Toby Goldberg, Melissa Gold, Carol Mark and Lorraine "Rain" Warren, presents a joyful collection of haikus and thoughts about working together on writing since last year's Conference for Global Transformation.

The next two authors confront being viewed as the "other" or "less than." What's incorporated into each of these narratives – through the breakdowns and breakthroughs – is the discovery and practice of being cause in the matter of one's life. As a lesbian mother living in Virginia, Cheryl Fox found one day in 1997 that her former husband had up and moved with their two children to California without telling her. What followed led to a life focused on transforming not just her extended family but many troubled families in Ventura, California. Lorraine "Rain" Warren experienced transformation after transformation via her participation in Landmark courses. Each time, she invented possibilities that broadened views of her childhood, a grade school teacher, white and black people and her ability to make a global impact with children and adults who have experienced trauma.

Finally, John Robert Niec and Wayne Davis write inspired accounts involving life and death. Niec evokes a tenderness and loving support for his aging parents in their last days. Prompted by the diagnosis of a progressive brain disorder, Davis recounts how his life, through many circumstances and tribulations, transformed and has left him asking, "What do I want to accomplish in the time I have left?" That's a powerful inquiry for any of us. I invite you to take it on.

# THREE CHOICE PAPERS

MELINDA VOSS, EDITOR

*Choosing the top three papers is never easy. Though reviewers had differing opinions on their favorite, they mostly agreed on the top three papers. In thinking about the conference theme, "Listening for Fulfillment," the reviewers considered what moved and inspired them as well as how the theme was exemplified in the papers. Such reflection raises the questions: Were these papers about how the authors' lives were fulfilled or how the authors listened for fulfillment in their lives and their commitments for the world? Each author of the top three choice papers writes about topics most of us would rather avoid – aging and death, confronting views about one's self, particularly in respect to racism, and what we call mental illness.*

John Robert Niec writes an engaging narrative of dealing with aging parents and his role in their care. Many of us have faced, or will face, a similar situation. He explains how he interrupted a perfectly fine life in California to move cross-country and care for his parents in their final days. He did not put his life on hold but immediately began building a new life in New Jersey by listening for what would fulfill him and others. What comes across in the paper is a remarkable love,

compassion and willingness to create his parents' last days as full, pleasurable and complete as possible. See if his willingness to redesign his life will inspire you to do the same no matter what circumstances you encounter.

Lorraine "Rain" Warren covers a wide range of her life and views on it. She methodically engages in listening for fulfillment by reviewing the impact that various Landmark courses have had on who she has become in life and the mark she has already made on the world. Her poignant retelling of transforming her childhood from "terrible" to "many wonderful moments" offers each of us an opportunity to revisit parts of life that we haven't yet transformed. In writing the paper, she also found the compassion and wisdom to forgive a grade school teacher for a limiting remark and reach another fulfillment – her relationship with white and black people. Her exploration of issues surrounding race continues for her, which all of us could do too through the transformation lens.

Fred Moss tackles mental illness – another tricky subject often fraught with emotions, feelings, judgments, points of view, ambiguity and mystery. He clearly brings in the distinction "alien" from the Partnership Explorations course and cleverly considers the advantages that individuals, who have mental illness or are disenfranchised, have even while they're ostracized or ignored by society. However, this paper is not simply about mental illness but the pervasive – and possibly intrinsic – wiring that humans seem to rely on in repeatedly creating an "us vs. them" mentality. He invites – or, dare I say, implores – us to "to overlook our apparent differences and martial the unique strengths and qualifications of different factions and eliminate the imminent destruction of our planet Earth." Be sure to read his Report from the Field, which describes the bold path he has chosen.

# LEARNING TO LISTEN: DISCOVERIES AND PRACTICES

D. NATHALIE CONCEPCION

## Abstract

*In our relationships, are we really listening? If we are, are we listening for fulfillment? If we are not, do we have the courage to upgrade our listening and ourselves? My long-term effort to answer these questions resulted in a new level of personal and professional awareness. I also became clear that levels of improvement never end.*

## WHERE I STARTED

The first time I stepped into a therapist's office, I was the client. It was the fall of 1996 and next to me was my now ex-husband. Seven years into our marriage, he had been unfaithful and I was there to save my marriage.<sup>1</sup> I was committed to that end; well, more like fixated on that goal. Did you know that a state of fixation comes with symptoms of blindness, deafness and insistence, even desperation, of seeing a mission through? I didn't know that at the time. There was much I did not know but would soon learn through personal discomfort and professional pursuit.

I do not remember what anyone said during our eight-month engagement with that therapist. All I know is that nothing anyone said mattered if it did not assist my goal—I was not listening. Even worse, I did not want to.

These many years later, I am the couple's therapist. The transition from business school to clinical social work was inevitable. The shift created by the change in my marriage propelled me into a soul search that in my opinion required academic commitment. So, I studied as a matter of survival. This benefited my marriage,

which made it to its 25th anniversary. The shift also benefited hundreds of people who have sought my counsel, some with similar issues and most with identical goals, "Help me 'save'\* my marriage." For years, I sought to assist them, [a worthy goal] but an impossible one without a commitment to individuals first.

The following exploration is not a faultfinding mission. It is a statement of personal discoveries made along the way. These are not new principles but observations discussed through time by philosophers and modern clinical researchers alike. From Aristotle (384-322 BC) to Brene Brown, a research professor at the University of Houston in Texas, many have proposed the points I bring up. The biggest distinction is that theory, principles, insight or research are all useless until we own their impact and make alterations to our life. It is in these alterations that we find purpose, direction and the ability to feel joy no matter what circumstances befall us.

## FIRST DISCOVERY—PEOPLE FIRST

Marriages, partnerships and intimate relationships of any kind are important to our emotional well-being but they are things, situations and titles



of little worth if the people in them are not well. Simple fact? Not really. We tend to define ourselves by our roles—wife, husband, therapist, etc. We invest money and time into becoming one thing or another and when the thing that defines us is challenged, we lose our footing in the world. In fact, the world, as we know it, shifts, and our first reaction is to restore what shifted. In the effort to restore, we tend to forget others and ourselves. In doing so, even if “the thing” is restored, our ability to maintain it is limited at best. So, I no longer focus on restoring relationships. My personal goal and professional outlook is to build people—myself included. This realization has helped me to articulate my Impossible Promise, or, rather, my life’s commitment: to contribute to the possibility of a world where people go in and out of intimate relationships whole, capable and complete.

#### **SECOND DISCOVERY— LISTEN TO PERSONAL TRUTH**

Listening to self is not the same as paying attention to our internal monologue (that nag that sounds like our voice but derails more often than builds), which is not recommended. Listening to self requires that we discern our monologue as such and practice courage to see, hear and speak what is left. I call this our truth. In the presence of said truth, courage then assists us to share it. Sharing our truth is full expression at its best and how we are impacted in the world.

How to know we are in the presence of our truth can be tricky, but there are measures that help us know if we are in or near its vicinity. For example, when in the space of truth, our truth, there is no need to claim it or cling to it. There is a calm assurance that directs emotion and behavior. Usually included is the acceptance that if we have a truth, then others must have theirs, too. With this realization, we open ourselves to unlimited curiosity for others and a desire that they, too, find and express their personal truth. Finally, our truth does not include impulses of destruction or disregard. It includes an exquisite mixture of self-respect and concern for others that allows for a self-assured stance without demands.

When we are fully expressed, others perceive us as present and able to hold a space for them

to be self-expressed. The dance that ensues includes soft melodies and heavy metal noise. But, when individuals listen together in this way, they transform and so does their world.

#### **THIRD DISCOVERY— PERSONAL TRUTHS CHANGE**

Even though human beings are organisms working to “arrive at” locations, situations and stages, we tend to perceive ourselves as fixed. “This is how I am” or “this is how you are” are common refrains. This misconception forces us to forget that we are all in a constant process of changing and becoming.

This point is relevant in that the truth that is yours or mine today may morph into something different tomorrow. I hear people say: “We grew apart.” A more powerful way to say this is that “we stopped sharing and listening from a space of personal truth. I settled into my understanding of you and you stopped seeing me as anything but what you knew.” Everyone missed out on a world of possibilities by not seeking, listening and being fully expressed.

What a wonderful thing it is to know that we can be a source of constant discovery for each other. What a gift to know that by opening to being surprised by our life partners, we can keep relationships vibrant, interesting and exciting.

#### **FOURTH DISCOVERY—HOW TO LISTEN**

The listening referred to here goes beyond hearing or understanding expressed in words. It goes to the curiosity placed and the interest paid to another’s full expression or whatever degree of expression they are able to share with us. To listen to another, we must learn to suspend our thinking, practice pausing and be willing to experience self-denial.

The idea of suspending our thoughts in order to listen requires that we believe what is being said is new and interesting. This involves giving up the impulse to connect the information being shared to that which we already know. When we can suspend our attachment to what we know, magic happens. Evidence of that magic is, among other things, curiosity, inquiry and wonder.

Curiosity expands our interest to the space outside ourselves. It makes possible what is otherwise imperceptible, unthinkable and even improbable. Curiosity then gives way to inquiry from open spaces. Those open spaces allow for asking questions we do not have an answer to and to receiving answers anew. Wonder—a deep awe at the recognition that all is constantly new—causes us to pay attention as a constant practice. When curiosity, inquiry and wonder are palpable, self-expression is a natural by-product instead of a forced or artificial stance.

Pausing is distinguished as the ability to make time to integrate or internalize what is being shared before offering a response. When we pause with this purpose, we enter the presence of respect and mutual concern, which are fertile ground for connection and growth.

Self-denial is the ability to make every effort to understand the other person, even when they are saying things we have already heard or do not want to hear. Have you noticed when we give and receive difficult information, we get to upgrade our relationships and ourselves?

#### **FIFTH DISCOVERY—UPGRADING IS NOT THE SAME AS IMPROVING**

All too often, our change-averse brain insists on maintaining the status quo. But, sometimes, upgrading a relationship means dissolving it. I missed that possibility all those many years ago. My focus was on preserving titles, agreements, religious commitments, labels and reputations. In that pursuit, I missed understanding that the unintended consequence was the immediate and eventual destruction of people—a more valuable and irreplaceable commodity.

My understanding of upgrading has transformed. It is no longer predetermined by external forces, beliefs, dogma or norms. It is now an opportunity to be determined moment to moment with myself and others as equally important beneficiaries of the upgrade.

#### **SIXTH DISCOVERY—LISTENING TO LEARN, NOT TO WIN**

It is odd, even uncomfortable to recognize how intent we are on feeling as though we are winning,

on top or in control. It is a subtle thing really and hard for us to admit when we do it. But, listening to win is the first culprit when it comes to an inability to communicate from our personal truth and in a fully expressed fashion. Giving up our need to win requires a commitment to personal growth (ours and theirs). In my experience, most people are not willing to put their need to win on the line. It seems to indicate a sense of disappearing or of not mattering. A strange conclusion when the reality is we are most able to make an impact when we are open to learning and sharing from a space of mutual gain.

Listening to learn requires all the tools mentioned above with the addition of an obstinate disposition that there is more than what we already know. Obstinate? Indeed, since our first impulse is to buy into the idea that what we know is all there is to know. This impulse will be ever-present, so we have to be stubborn and insist, even to ourselves that there may be something else to learn or find out. This small switch in perception allows us to listen without agenda and reply in unpredictable ways. This makes every conversation new and every argument an opportunity to learn.

Another listening tool is listening to contribute and be contributed to; this stance can be difficult to sustain. Part of the difficulty of listening to contribute and being contributed to stems from the weight we give to our words in conversations and our tendency to diminish the words said by others. Adding to the difficulty is that we forget that words mean different things to different people. Matters get further complicated when we say words and expect them to be heard and remembered as we meant them. An illustration I often use in large groups is to say the word “orange” and ask a few people to say out loud what they thought of, or focused on, at the uttering of the word. Everything from a fruit to a sunset to pointing at someone wearing orange is brought to light. There is richness to our communication when we take time to say what we mean and ask what is meant.

In my process of discovery, I have learned that to be of contribution requires a commitment to leave people better than we found them. To receive contribution requires that we admit

they are capable of upgrading us in some way. To listen to contribute and be contributed to, humility and vulnerability are necessary practices. As with any good clinician, I've come up with my own definition for those words:

- **Humility in relationships**—the willingness to let go of the need to win with the hope that I might, through an interaction, learn something new or become something better.
- **Vulnerability in relationships**—the capacity to show up and come from spaces I am not comfortable in and be in an interaction as a flawed human, scared yet willing to be seen.

What results from these ways of being is an ability to teach and learn openly. To encourage such a stand, all of us need to remember that to learn from another we must give up knowing.

## CONCLUSION

To recap, my commitment is to contribute to the possibility of a world where people move in and out of intimate relationships whole, capable and complete. Whole as in accepting all that we are and all that has made us the way we are. Capable as in confident that we can withstand the challenges that will inevitably come our way, and, furthermore, trusting those challenges will serve to assist our growth. Complete as in satisfied with the unfinished nature of life and willing to live it fully just as it is for us.

My discoveries and commitment would be of little use if we were unable to measure where we are in the scales of whole, capable and complete. Arguably, each one of us would need to bring our own measuring sticks. But, while we develop our own way to measure progress (because that is all we can aspire to), may I suggest the following for your consideration: If an individual works to know their personal truth while strengthening their courage quotient, that individual will share that truth openly and curiously.

In doing so, that person reaches the first mark on the proposed measuring stick (an open and curious stance). Armed with said open and curious disposition will make it possible to perceive or attempt to perceive what the experience looks like for others. Finding in that

effort a sense of integrity, the second mark on said measuring stick. I define integrity as a continuous effort to abide by the same rules we impose on others and be guided by equanimity.

To reach the next mark on the stick, the same individual would learn to listen to another, finding themselves in community, people who support and feel supported by us. Add to the same person an interest to contribute and to be contributed to and now they have reached the marks of purpose and satisfaction also experienced as direction and grounding.

Lastly, if this same person finds a way to be a space where others find themselves, that person has reached relevance and a piece of eternal; relevance as in being of consequence in their community and eternal as in being part of something bigger than themselves. In my opinion, that's the highest measure or evidence of being whole, capable and complete.

### \*NOTE:

"Saving" is not a word I would use or a capacity I would claim to have. The word expresses the way I felt in the therapist's office and how most people verbalize their intention in coming for couple's treatment. By nature, writing precludes interaction. This report is a personal journey and not intended as final or finalized. As time passes, I expect to continue to grow and change my mind about this and many other things.

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# USING ANXIETY FOR PURPOSE

JILL RICKARDS

"If man were a beast or an angel, he would not be able to be in anxiety. Since he is both beast and angel, he can be in anxiety, and the greater the anxiety, the greater the man."

— Soren Kierkegaard

## Abstract

*The author explores the value of anxiety, how she is using anxiety to transition to a new profession and how individuals can own their anxiety rather than be owned by it.*

## INTRODUCTION

I have been in the accounting industry for 40 years owning my own accounting firm. Two years ago, I declared that I wanted to do something different and sold my practice. I was complete with practicing accounting.

Did I stop working when I sold my practice? No, I kept a few of my favorite clients and continued to do the work I enjoy. Since then, I have been anxious, maybe even terrified, by the prospect that I will not be doing what I have always known to do. I am not ready to "retire" and want to remain relevant in the world.

My daughter tells me, "You can't go to second base unless you get your foot off first." So, I have declared a new profession – executive coaching –

but have not been in full throttle actions because it would take getting out of my comfort zone even though it would free up space to work at something new that is inspiring and I would find fulfilling at this point in my life. This is why I am interested in using anxiety for a useful purpose.

In this paper, I am not going to address pathological, recurrent or debilitating anxieties. However, I recognize what seems to be an epidemic of what is called anxiety disorders. Often, when we hear or speak about anxiety, these disorders are at the forefront of our everyday meaning that most of us live with. Clearly, anxiety disorders are a serious problem. As reported by the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the United States, affecting 40 million adults age 18 and older, or 18.1 percent of the population every year.<sup>1</sup> On a global scale, the World Health Organization reports anxiety disorders are the most common mental disorders.<sup>2</sup>

## ANXIETY AS A NORMAL CONSTRUCTIVE PART OF LIFE

Instead, my exploration will be in the realm of philosophical anxiety, which is more about freedom and responsibility of choice. A more unorthodox notion that anxiety may in fact be a positive, life-affirming phenomenon has been

espoused by Martin Heidegger, a German philosopher who viewed anxiety as the mark of “authentic existence.”<sup>3</sup>

Change, after all, is something we can count on each day whether we like it or not. Ongoing circumstances, actions and possibilities come at us with great velocity as we move through life. However, change produces what Heidegger called “unsettlement” and anxiety in our bodies, such as sensations of excitement, alarm, fear and anticipation. By and large, the mood of unsettlement is always there in and around us to some degree. In particular, we might notice the unsettledness when something important to us is changing or we sense something is about to change.

Unsettlement is usually subtle and precedes anxiety. It most often shows up as a vague feeling or discomfort, something barely noticeable in our space.

As humans, it is normal to want to manage, mitigate, control and contain this unsettledness about change. After all, we can easily get caught up in the desire for certainty. But, I contend that in today’s fast-changing environment particularly, certainty is an illusion. To deal with unsettlement or anxiety effectively, consider giving up the notion that there is certainty in life, death and taxes aside.

In looking at another dimension of anxiety, we may even be brave enough to ask how we might proactively introduce changes to move our lives in the direction we want them to go.

One of the most common anxiety producers is the fear of change. Fear is one of the most common reasons for resistance to change because it stops you from taking action.

For those of us on a developmental path, when we come upon a practice or change we would like to bring forth for ourselves, we have learned to name such confronting aspects of our lives as an opportunity to discover new possibilities available. What I’ve discovered is that to improve our capacity to design our lives, it is crucial to understand what is going on with the unsettledness that we call anxiety.

## **NORMAL ANXIETY**

Heidegger made a big contribution when he termed anxiety as a particular way of being in the world. The meanings and functions of anxiety that are so familiar in everyday life do not simply disappear. In fact, by becoming a problem for us, they strike one with unusual force.

Anxiety shows up in an evolutionary pragmatic way when we experience a real or perceived threat as “fear” in response to a specific danger. When you get rid of the danger, fear begins to fade. This is what many would call normal. However, where we more often and more fundamentally find anxiety is in the background (where unexamined everyday moods lurk), ready to be triggered in the face of uncertain concerns surrounding of what we care about.

It is this kind of anxiety that I will name “normal anxiety.” This normal anxiety is found in our everydayness of living fears and worries that may or may not be real. The fear I am referring to is the fear of losing something that is important to you. For example, having money is important to me and I have a fear that I will not have enough money or lose the money I have. So, when the credit card bill is high for the month, or the stock market falls, or my husband wants me to spend my money, I experience a body sensation in that particular moment. My mood changes and I experience it as real even though there is no evidence that we will not have enough money through the end of our lives.

As an accountant and entrepreneur, I know that I am in the 95th percentile of earnings and savings. Solid financial modeling shows that I will have enough money. We all live in our own reality and for some money isn’t a concern at all. I have learned to interpret fear appearing in this kind of situation as revealing an anxiety about life. The fear of not having enough money is a “cover” for the anxiety born in those deeper concerns.

From here, I start to interact with the anxiety itself. Once I recognize this pattern, I stop arguing with my husband about not having any money, I no longer call my broker in a panic asking whether I should sell or not or contemplate using savings to meet expenses if need be.

Irrational fears are part of our everydayness of living in the world. Some of us fear foreigners, opposing political parties, technology taking over human connection and the effects of climate change to mention a few.

Using one of these examples: For me, when the stock market falls, the fear starts and I discovered that even though that fear is grounded (factual), it is exaggerated and has been shaped by our friend, normal anxiety. A deeper historical concern I discovered is that this concern comes from growing up in a time where there simply wasn’t enough money in my family. We are historical beings and we come from our traditions, experiences and the historical nature of our environment and the conversations that came before. In this way, our anxiety is historical. I do not want to discount people who are dealing with real-life situations that are based in reality. For example, your house and community are destroyed by fire or earthquakes. You wake or find you no longer have a job because the place where you work has been shut down or your pension has been drastically reduced. These situations in life can cause great anxiety for those who are dealing with them. But, even these situations are still in the realm of normal anxiety, and we always have a choice.

## **PATHWAY TO AN EFFECTIVE USE OF ANXIETY**

Before I move into effective ways to use anxiety, I will introduce one of the speech acts: assessments.<sup>5</sup>

The design of a human being is to make assessments, such as: Is this good or bad, right or wrong? An effective way to look at our assessments is to ask yourself: Is this assessment grounded or ungrounded? An assessment is grounded if there is some kind of evidence or third-party verification.

In my work as a certified public accountant, I prepare income tax returns and at the end of the year I have had people sitting in my office being anxious over the tax liability they think they might have and possibly be much more than they have saved. This is when I go to work on calculating their estimated liability to ground their assessment and it becomes either true or false. The tax liability

is either less than they expected or more.

An example of ungrounded assessment would be, “I do not have enough time in the day to get what I want to get done.” This comment is neither true or false. To ground that assessment, you might say, “I have every working hour scheduled today with meetings and there is no available time.” This comment is grounded because you could look at your calendar and, yes, there are scheduled appointments filling your time. Or, you could say, “This room seems cold,” which by itself can be true or false. To ground the assessment, you could go to the thermostat and look at the temperature and see that it reads 65 degrees.

An ungrounded anxiety offers two paths to the future. Anxiety can become a source of suffering in which we are swept into automatic or habitual reactions in an effort to eliminate or hide from the suffering it provokes.

Alternatively, anxiety can be an announcement of our freedom as human beings and we can disrupt the internal dialogue in our heads. Experiencing and acting in the face of anxiety is an expression of courage and brings to the foreground freedom we have to choose. In this approach, when a concern shows up, anxiety follows naturally and shows itself as an opportunity or invitation for us to design how we will live our lives.

A practice would be when you start to recognize anxiety (e.g., in body sensations, moods and emotions, or the inability to take a right action) ask yourself, “Is my anxiety grounded?”

In writing this paper, I was enthusiastic when I submitted the first draft. The paper was provisionally accepted based on reviewers’ recommendations. Then, anxiety crept in. “It’s going to be too hard. I will do all this work and then there will more suggestions and ultimately the paper will not be accepted,” said my internal dialogue.

Then it said: “I am not a writer. Why do I think I can write a paper?” I could feel the resignation in my body, and every time I looked at working on my paper, my mood was one of resignation. As the clock kept ticking toward the deadline, I realized that I could reinterpret my story to one of a great opportunity for learning.



My internal dialogue shifted. "When do you have the opportunity to get feedback from people who are trained in writing?" I said to myself. I looked at my assessment that led to my resignation and realized it was ungrounded. Maybe, with practice, I could become a writer, which is something I have longed to be. With this interpretation, I was able to be in action and send my revised paper back.

Imagine that you have been dating someone for a while and it's time to meet the person's family. You really care about this person and you want to make a good impression. You start to feel a tightness in your chest. Your mood becomes one of apprehension, and you keep putting off the invitation to meet the family. The concern in the background is: "What if they like or don't like me?" You can recognize anxiety when there is something that is about to change in your life in an area that is important to you.

Although it may feel like reality, take the time to discover the historical nature of where your anxiety is coming from. In short, uncover the story behind it. As we confront a situation in which there can be no true path, no absolute right way, we each have the opportunity to take responsibility for how we live.

The Danish philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard, summed up the opportunity as follows: "Learning to know anxiety is an adventure, which every man has to affront if he would not go to perdition either by not having known anxiety or by sinking under it. He therefore who has learned rightly to be in anxiety has learned to the most important thing."<sup>6</sup>

#### FROM ANXIETY TO ACTION

Having somewhat untangled the negativity and reactive emotional mess in which we are accustomed to when we interact with anxiety, we can now say something simple about it. Anxiety triggers us to wake up, to pay attention. That's the opportunity of it, the invitation of it. Wake up! Take a look! Make an empowering interpretation!

As we undertake to understand and make changes in our lives and circumstances, then anxiety becomes an important diagnostic "device." The topic of the 2019 Conference on Global Transformation is Listening for Fulfillment. I'm suggesting that you can listen for fulfillment

through using your anxiety. I must add that when you develop your own capacity to be with, embrace and examine your anxiety, you will then have a new capacity to be with the anxieties of others. You will not have to take on their anxiety, but you can engage with others in a way that begins to give them some power over their own anxieties.

I urge you to become aware of the distinctions that will allow you to observe hidden emotional structures and patterns underlying the ambitions, reservations and resignations of the people with whom you interact about any change. The distinction can be a powerful change agent for any group in which you participate in life.

#### HERE'S MY CHECKLIST:

##### Anxiety - listening for fulfillment

1. Take a look "listen" to your anxiety and notice your body reaction and conversations.
2. Make an assessment and ground it from your historical roots.
3. Create an empowering interpretation.
4. Surrender to anxiety and embrace it.
5. Invent a future in the midst of the anxiety.
6. Act on your future design and choose the adventure.

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# SMALL CHANGES PRODUCE GREAT TRANSFORMATIONS

ROSY NAVARRO

#### Abstract

*What will bring you fulfillment in life? That question was in my mind, and in order to answer it, I started to ask people. I received different answers that led me to the next question: How to fulfill my life? Thinking about this question, I realized my life is fulfilled and I didn't notice it.*

#### EVERYBODY WANTS FULFILLMENT IN LIFE

Here I am, sitting down in front of my computer, not knowing what to write about and really wanting to express myself. I know I am a contribution to humanity, and, again, I'm here telling myself, "I don't know what to talk about," which is a lie, because I do know what I want to talk about. What's really happening is that I do not want to take the time and effort to take action.

I want to share how people occur for me (including myself) when we say things such as: "I want to lose weight," "I want to have more money," "I want to go on vacation," "I want to learn English," "I want to learn Spanish," etc., but we put little effort into achieving what is truly important to us.

We are stuck in these words that I call "I used to..." and you fill the blank with the words be or have. "I used to be thin," "I used to be the manager of..." or "I used to have my own company," "I

used to have my house," etc. Those things and situations belong in the past and we are so attached to them, it's difficult to let them go.

#### THE WORLD WAS MINE

Leaving my Mexican culture behind to embrace the American culture to transform my life was not easy, yet not impossible. I was born and raised in Guadalajara, Mexico. I had the privilege to go to the Universidad de Guadalajara. I say I had the privilege because my parents set that goal for me and my siblings. Some of them could not, or did not, continue their studies. But, as the youngest of the girls and number eight in a family of nine, I grew up believing that my parents expected me to achieve this goal.

After I finished my studies in 1985, I looked for a job in Guadalajara. I received many offers in different fields, but I wanted to work in a bank specifically. I applied to different institutions and some of them called me for an interview. I went to all of them even though I was interested in only one.

I remember having a conversation with my dad. I asked him, "What if I accept a job in the bank I do not really want to work for and later on the bank I am interested in calls me? I will be stuck working in a bank I really don't want." He looked at me and said, "Well, when they call you from the bank you want, you simply present your letter of resignation. You acknowledge them and say thank you very much for the opportunity they gave you, and you let them know that you got a better job offer." He also reminded me of one of his favorite quotes: "No hay peor lucha, que la que no se hace." ("There is no worse attempt than the one that is not done.")

Those words are still with me every time I look for work. So, I took a job with a bank that offered me one, and sure enough the bank I wanted to work for called me. I worked at my preferred bank from the end of 1985 to 1987. This was a great experience because I could be completely responsible for myself. I felt the freedom that comes with it, even when I was still living at my parents' house. Also, I started to learn that everything has a price, whether it's time, money or effort.

Those were the most magical years of my adult life. I wanted to learn English, so I looked for a private school. Of course, I had to pay for my schooling, and my salary as a bank teller was not that great. I asked myself: "Do I really want to learn English?" "Am I willing to pay the price for it?" By price, I mean the money, time and effort. I answered yes.

Once I registered myself, classes began in downtown Guadalajara. This required waking up every morning about 6 a.m. to take the bus, even during the cold winter, so I could be at school at 7 a.m. I would leave school at 8 a.m., take another bus to arrive at the bank between 8:30 and 8:45 a.m. and start work at 9 a.m. On some occasions during the winter, I remember my feet would be frozen and the pain slowed me down. In the end, I accomplished my goal.

#### **MY NEXT STEP AND NEW LIFE**

After working at the bank for two and a half years, I couldn't see any more growth and development there for me, so I came to the United States. My plan was to go back to Mexico City after a year to become a flight attendant. When I came to the U.S., I left behind everything and everybody – my bed, perfume, parents' house, parents, siblings, friends and community. In short, my Mexican life.

Arriving in Los Angeles, I was so afraid but I was committed to my goals. I enrolled myself in a public adult school. At first, the principal told me that there was no space for more students. I told him that I wanted to learn English and asked him to let me be in the class even if I didn't receive any credits. I just wanted to learn and use all my time wisely. He told me to come back one week after classes began because some people, who register and attend classes, drop

out after the first week. So, I did it and I spent the next two years attending classes during the regular school year and summer vacations.

After two years, I was speaking and understanding English. But, it took something to follow through on my goal. During the day, I worked in a clothes factory from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. On school days, I had classes from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. I didn't have a car, so my transportation was the public bus or a ride from coworkers and classmates. Remember, this is my second culture, and it took something out of me. First, I was homesick missing all my family and friends terribly. Second, I was living at my Aunt Bertha's house and I had to help with the chores even if I didn't want to or felt sick. Third, I had to study instead of going out with my cousins. Again, I asked myself the question, "Are you willing to pay the price for it?," and again my answer was yes. So, I persevered.

Many times, I wanted to quit and stay in my comfort zone. But, another quote kept me going that I picked up from the actor Anthony Quinn in a television commercial: "Si las cosas que realmente valen la pena se hicieran fácilmente, cualquiera las haría." ("If the things that are really worthwhile were easily done, anyone would do them.")

#### **I SAY HOW MY LIFE GOES**

Recently, when I have been applying little changes in my life, I found that I could bring about transformation. For example, I wanted to lose weight and keep it off, so I started by asking for help. I went to the doctor. She recommended cutting carbohydrates and walking 15 minutes every day. I told her, "I don't have time." She replied, "Ok, so from now on every time you go to an appointment, park your car three blocks away from the building. And instead of taking the elevator, use the stairs as much as possible." These small changes have been impacting my life ever since. In two months, I have lost weight. I feel more flexible and sexy.

What I discovered is that life is going to come at you the way it comes, and it is up to you to choose what kind of life you want to live. In other words, "You say how your life goes."

Also, I discovered that I have been listening for

fulfillment for myself. I have accomplished a lot of things that I never thought were possible. I studied a lot of topics and took many classes. I have worked in many fields, but the most rewarding title I have is the title of "being a contribution."

#### **INQUIRY**

I invite you to answer these questions to discover what is important to you in your life and cause a great transformation in you.

1. What is important for you and your life?
2. Do you really want it?
3. What do you want to have one year from now?
4. What price are you willing to pay?
  - a) Time?
  - b) Money?
  - c) Effort?
5. Are you open to new possibilities?
6. Are you willing to be coachable?
7. Do you have a guide or map of how to do it?
8. Are you willing to accept help from other people?

#### **CONCLUSION**

If you truly want to do something in your life and want to obtain a different outcome, take the next step. Keep moving. Don't wait for it to come to you. I took risks. I took actions. I am writing these memories in English. This was not going to happen by itself. There is a price for everything. Are you willing to pay the price to have a fulfilled life?

# POVERTY: IS IT SOLVABLE?

SOPHIA OLIVAS

## Abstract

*Humankind has global problems that have persisted through generations and others that are situational. This paper examines categories of poverty and the difference between generational and situational poverty. It acknowledges a current reactive stance while demonstrating how identifying and working at the root cause or the "source" can provide leverage to effectively alleviate poverty in our lifetime. Is poverty solvable? What would it take to solve it? What could happen if we solved poverty?*

## INTRODUCTION

At 18 years of age, I grabbed a passport and my backpack, and, for more than 20 years, I have traveled solo through more than 30 countries, picking up languages and friends. I have seen polar bears in Alaska all the way down to mesmerizing blue ice amongst the stark isolation of Antarctica. I take the roads less travelled. Many times, I was the first solo American

woman to come through villages. I stayed with families, most of the time out of necessity for lack of any formal lodging. I volunteered along the way, intent on leaving every person and place I came across better than I found it. I have been inside war zones and refugee camps.

I have walked upon pyramids of life jackets left along the sandy beaches by refugees whose unseaworthy boats paused long enough to deposit their passengers just shy of the shore. I have witnessed firsthand many of humanity's challenges. For many, untrained in the power of hope in action, these challenges appear systemic and unsolvable. To those who remain defeated, these challenges have always been this way and will continue to be this way.

On one trip, I found myself walking the waterfront of Victoria, British Columbia, alongside an 85-year-old man. He was born in 1933 and recalled the mannerisms of his parents and other adults who lived through the Great Depression. Things back then were valued, repaired and reused. He readily recalled World War II and how all his uncles went off to war. Despite what he has witnessed in his tender years on our planet, he ended our conversation with how much hope he has for humanity. As he was nearing his time on our beautiful planet, he lavishly praised humanity for its growth in evolving. He stated his deep faith in what humanity will do in the near future and how it will be done. He believed, as I do, that humanity will come together, evolve and survive this technological age with the leverage from identifying and working at the "source,"

or root cause, of our current challenges.

In the midst of a calamity, humanity's tendency is that of a reactive stance. Consider the approach by the medical community. Shortsightedness and desire for immediate results lead us to treat symptoms. When something occurs as irresolvable, humanity's tendency is that of apathy and/or mitigation. What could come about if we viewed every challenge as solvable within our lifetime?

## HUMANITY'S GLOBAL CONCERNS

Many of the global challenges facing humanity are systemic and because they are generational, they also occur as irresolvable. During the research for this paper, I found that most all human challenges can be placed into three categories: poverty, mental health and violence. This paper will take a look at the poverty category while the other two categories are also being introduced because they play a role in poverty.

Many people are a single hospital stay away from homelessness. Poverty is defined as the state of being extremely poor. Poverty in the United States is a state of deprivation, lacking the usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions. The most common measure of poverty in the U.S. is the "poverty threshold" set by the U.S. government. A poverty threshold is a specified dollar amount considered to be the minimum level of resources necessary to meet the basic needs of a family unit. In 2016, the federal poverty level income for a family of four was \$24,300 and \$11,880 for a single household. The U.S. Census Bureau defines "deep poverty" as living in a household with a total cash income below 50 percent of its poverty threshold. According to the Census Bureau, in 2016 18.5 million people lived in deep poverty. Absolute poverty, extreme poverty or destitution refers to the complete lack of the means necessary to meet basic personal needs such as food, clothing and shelter. The threshold, at which absolute poverty is defined, is considered to be about the same, independent of the person's permanent location.

Yet, if poverty means lacking nutritious food, adequate warm housing and clothing for a family, relatively few of the more than 30 million

people identified as being "in poverty" by the Census Bureau could be characterized as poor. In these cases, being poor does not necessarily mean you are impoverished. Making less than your expenses, regardless of your income, can mean you are poor, but not impoverished.

## POVERTY CATEGORIES

There are six main types of poverty, according to Eric Jensen's "Teaching with Poverty in Mind." They are: situational, generational, absolute, relative, urban and rural. While this paper will focus on situational and generational poverty, breaking down the types will allow you to see the complexity of poverty. Here's a brief description of each type of poverty:

**1. Situational:** This particular type of poverty is usually temporary as it involves a crisis or loss occurring. Events connected with situational poverty include environmental disasters, divorce, death, job loss or severe health problems. A good example of situational poverty caused by an environmental disaster would be the destruction of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Many people were homeless, lost their jobs and had nothing to their name. The fall of the economy can also be considered an event that could cause situational poverty, such as in the most recent U.S. recession.

**2. Generational:** This type of poverty involves the birth of two generations into poverty. Since they were born into this situation, subsequent generations usually don't have the tools to help get them out of it.

**3. Absolute:** This particular type of poverty is actually rare in the modern nations. People in absolute poverty don't even have basic necessities like a roof over their head, food and water. Their only focus is on surviving each day as it comes. The standards set for absolute poverty are the same across countries. When it was established in 1990, the World Bank set the global absolute poverty line as living on less than \$1 a day.

**4. Relative:** This type of poverty is known as relative because it is relative to the average standard of living in that person's society. What is considered high income in one country

could be considered middle or low income in another. If a family's income isn't enough to meet the average standard of living, they are considered to be in relative poverty.

**5. Urban:** This particular type of poverty is only for metropolitan areas with populations over 50,000. Overcrowding, violence, noise and poor community-help programs make it even more difficult for people suffering of this type of poverty to get out of it.

**6. Rural:** Like urban poverty above, rural poverty occurs only in specific types of areas. These areas are nonmetropolitan with populations below 50,000. The low population limits services available for people struggling financially, and a lack of job opportunities only compounds the problem.

#### THE KEY TO POVERTY CYCLE

Hopelessness is the key factor in creating the poverty cycle—one generation to the next. Without hope and the belief that life can be better, the motivation and energy needed to break the cycle are very low.

While poverty is a human challenge on a global scale, I am going to focus on statistics for the United States to provide perspective. In 2017, as cited in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, New York City's homeless population was 76,502, Los Angeles was 55,188 and Seattle with 11,643.

While Seattle is third, its homeless population has created highly visible tent cities all throughout downtown and around the city. I had an opportunity to venture into these tent cities and sit with some of its inhabitants. Excluding those with mental health challenges and experiencing situational or generational poverty, I surprisingly learned that many were choosing to live outside the mainstream of materialism that is eagerly building up around them. Seattle is the sixth most expensive city to live in (Inc. Magazine, April 5, 2018). While renting is often better than buying in the Seattle area, it isn't necessarily cheap. According to [www.myapartmentmap.com](http://www.myapartmentmap.com), the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Seattle is \$2,109. That is nearly 80 percent higher than the national average.

Poverty is also defined as the state of being inferior in quality or insufficient in amount. It is in this portion of the definition that we find poverty as the following categories: climate change, clean water, food, spiritual, educational, parental and opportunities, resources and employment.

**Climate Change Poverty:** Around the world, people are experiencing both the subtle and stark effects of climate change. Increasingly, unpredictable weather patterns, shifting seasons and natural disasters disproportionately threaten these populations, increasing their risk and dependency on humanitarian aid. Three out of four people living in poverty rely on agriculture and natural resources to survive.

During my last backpacking trip, I volunteered in a refugee camp in Italy where I encountered my first climate refugees. They were from various African countries. In 2016, there were 24.2 million new internal displacements due to disasters, which accounted for nearly 80 percent of all new displacements for the year. As sea levels continue to rise, those living near the ocean — about 40 percent of the world's population — will be left with no choice but to move inland and even out of their home country. Almost all of these displacements are occurring in developing countries, where people have fewer resources on hand to cope with progressive shifts or sudden disasters.

Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to kill an additional 250,000 people each year from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea and heat stress, while continuing to jeopardize clean air, safe drinking water and sufficient food supply.

By 2050, climate change has the potential to increase the number of people at risk of hunger by as much as 20 percent. The majority of those at risk live in Africa.

Tens of millions of people are expected to be forced from their homes in the next decade as a result of climate change. This would be the biggest refugee crisis the world has ever seen. Climate change is not the source of poverty. The practices, mentality and resistance to combat climate change will be the source of poverty stemming from climate change.

**Clean Water Poverty:** An estimated 844 million people live without access to safe water while 2.3 billion live without improved sanitation. Said another way, one in nine people lack access to safe water; one in three people lack access to a toilet. More people have a mobile phone than a toilet. Poverty in Africa is often caused by a lack of access to clean, safe water and proper sanitation. Women and girls spend 266 million hours every day finding a place to get water and 200 million hours every day collecting water. Women bear the heaviest burden when there is no safe water and sanitation. In most places that lack these resources, women and children are responsible for retrieving water for their families, often spending several hours each day traveling and waiting at a water point. This takes time away from work, school and caring for family. Lack of water and sanitation lock women in a cycle of poverty. Every two minutes, a child dies from a water-related disease. One million people are killed by water, sanitation and hygiene-related disease each year. Access to clean water is likely to become even more limited. One-third of all schools lack access to basic water and sanitation.

**Food Poverty:** Famine, the extreme scarcity of food, is being experienced worldwide. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's estimate that about 815 million of the 7.6 billion people in the world, or 10.7 percent, were suffering from chronic undernourishment, consuming less than the recommended 2,100 calories a day, in 2016. Nearly 98 percent of worldwide hunger exists in underdeveloped countries. About 526 million hungry people live in Asia and more than a quarter of the world's undernourished people live in sub-Saharan Africa. Almost one in four people in this region is chronically hungry. Though the world produces enough food to feed all seven billion people, those who go hungry either do not have land to grow food or money to purchase it. When a mother is undernourished during pregnancy, the baby is often born undernourished, too. Every year, 17 million children are born this way due to a mother's lack of nutrition before, and during, pregnancy. Poverty is the principal cause of hunger.

**Spiritual Poverty:** A lack of God or a divine

source giving one a sense of self, purpose or meaning in life can give way to apathy and despair. Disease, mental health and poverty are impacted negatively by spiritual poverty, with hopelessness being a source.

**Educational Poverty:** This is the level of education that falls below a threshold being defined as a minimum in a given society. The evidence shows that poor children arrive at school at a cognitive and behavioral disadvantage. About 30 percent of children raised in poverty do not finish high school. People, who do not earn a high school diploma by age 20, are seven times more likely to be persistently poor between the ages of 25 and 30. Children, who grow up impoverished, complete fewer years of schooling and earn much lower income than people who did not grow up poor. Children, who grow up poor in the U.S., also are more likely to be in poor health. Educational poverty can lead to generational poverty.

**Parental Poverty:** As Child Trends notes, 20 percent of U.S. children lived in poverty in 2015, including 43 percent of those living in single-mother households but only 10 percent of those in married-couple households. Even in Europe, kids in single-mother households usually have more than double the poverty rate of those in married-couple households. Single-parent families and their children totaled almost 14 million people, roughly a third of all people in poverty. Single-parent households have less money and time for children. Studies tell us "that children raised by single parents are significantly more likely to have children young, to drop out of high school and to work less as young adults," writes sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox of the University of Virginia and Isabel Sawhill of the Brookings Institution.

In 2010, 72 percent of black births were to unmarried women, up from 38 percent in 1970; for Hispanics, that rate was 53 percent in 2010, up from 37 percent in 1990; for whites, 36 percent in 2010, up from six percent in 1970.

**Opportunities, Resources and Employment Poverty:** Where you are born weighs heavily in factoring your financial likelihood. Race, sex, education and social status also factor in. In many developed countries, such as the U.S., possessing one, or even all, of these statistical challenges

does not necessarily deem one to a fate of poverty. In underdeveloped countries, possessing even one of these factors, such as being born in a low position within a caste system, leads one to ongoing generational poverty. The link between unemployment and suicide finds that the suicide rate from 1928 to 2007 has risen and fallen in tandem with the unemployment cycle.

The cumulative effect of these different forms of poverty sometimes creates the most damaging outcome of generational poverty—the constant presence of hopelessness.

#### **MENTAL HEALTH AS SOURCE**

Mental health can be the source of both generational and situational poverty. One in four people in the world will be affected by a mental or a neurological disorder at some point in their lives. Around 450 million people currently suffer from such conditions, placing mental disorders among the leading causes of ill-health and disability worldwide. Consider that about 400 doctors are lost to suicide annually. 29 percent of young doctors suffer from depression. Of all occupations and professions, the medical profession consistently hovers near the top of occupations with the highest risk of death by suicide.

A million people will commit suicide this year; that's one every 40 seconds. A leading cause of death among new mothers in the first year after childbirth is suicide. Almost one-fourth of all deaths between the ages of 15-25 die of suicide. 90 percent of people, who die by suicide, have a diagnosable and treatable mental illness at the time of their death. Depression is the most common type of mental illness, affecting more than 26 percent of the U.S. adult population. It has been estimated that, by the year 2020, depression will be the second leading cause of disability throughout the world, trailing only heart disease. Yet, despite these facts, the number of beds at mental health hospitals and treatment facilities is lower in the United States today than it was in 1850.

There is a higher rate of untreated mental illness that is in populations struggling with poverty compared to wealthier populations. Los Angeles' Skid Row grew by the hundreds when the burst of the housing bubble of the mid-2000s

happened to coincide with a hideous practice among several private hospitals. They were found depositing impoverished, mentally ill patients on the doorstep of the Union Rescue Mission in 2005. One especially determined hospital spent five years busing nearly 500 patients to Skid Row from Las Vegas. Poor mental health can cause poverty and it can also be caused by poverty.

What sets Skid Row apart is the extreme density. According to a report released by the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, the 0.4 square mile that forms the boundaries of Skid Row houses more than 2,521 homeless persons, meaning that "roughly three percent of the country's entire homeless population resides within an area that comprises only .0001 percent of the country's total land area."

#### **VIOLENCE AS SOURCE**

Violence in the form of abuse, war or trauma is closely found within poverty.

When the standard of living is depressed, the individuals living in poverty see the benefits of committing a crime to meet their basic needs being worth the risk of getting caught. When severe poverty is considered, there is a direct correlation to a rise in violent crime.

As an example, during war and recession, survival becomes the focus and people's normal behavior is seen to change. Crime and abuse (sexual, mental, verbal, physical) increase as people justify their actions.

#### **REACTIVE STANCE**

It is easier and more readily quantifiable to react to something vs. prevent something. In reacting, you can get more immediate results and you get to stroke the ego more readily than you would if you were looking to the future through the lens of prevention. Solving poverty can also be described as preventing poverty. In the medical field, doctors treat symptoms with therapy, drugs and surgery. The same happens with poverty, which has been treated with government aid, food and shelter. While these items are necessary, they merely treat the symptoms.

The food aid crisis is another great example. First

world countries provide an abundance of food assistance to developing countries, with well-meaning intentions. The unintended consequence, as seen in Africa, is the dependency on this aid such that newer generations no longer know how, nor desire, to generate food for themselves.

Earlier, I restated statistics on the impact of lack of clean water, especially on women. Government and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) stepped in. They raised funds for numerous wells and pipelines to port the water to various villages and kept getting sabotaged. Pipes were found broken and wells were being polluted on purpose. Later, it was discovered that the women were the cause. In many cases, women in these areas are in abusive marriages or they are accosted in the villages. The hours spent locating and gathering water were the only time women had to themselves and so they kept sabotaging the projects. This is a great example of reaction vs. identifying and working at the source.

Here are some current reactive solutions as suggested by [www.talkpoverty.org](http://www.talkpoverty.org):

- Create jobs
- Raise the minimum wage
- Increase the earned income tax credit for childless workers
- Ensure pay equity
- Provide paid leave and sick days
- Establish work schedules that work
- Invest in affordable, high-quality child care and early education
- Expand Medicaid
- Reform the criminal justice system and enact policies that support successful reentry

#### **IDENTIFYING AND WORKING AT SOURCE**

How do you open a heavy door without a key? Locate and use the appropriate leverage on the hinges. There is a famous scene in the movie, "Pirates of the Caribbean," where Jack Sparrow is freed from his prison door using this tactic and it holds true in life.

Hopelessness sources many mental illnesses, specifically depression which can cause suicide. Depressed individuals display bias toward associating the future with happiness. The hopelessness theory argues that the tendency to make stable, global and internal attributions about unpleasant events should lead to pessimism about the future, which serves as a diathesis for depression.

What's interesting is that CEOs and heads of projects are often changed out during a challenge. Quite often, the reasoning is to acquire "a fresh pair of eyes." Technology is quickly providing that fresh pair of eyes in numerous areas. While technology is developing, we can buck our tendencies, hold off instant gratification that comes with the reactionary stance and choose to come at these challenges with fresh perspective. One way to do that is to identify what created these challenges and develop actions that solve and work at these points.

A first step in doing this is having the people directly affected by the problems or issues of poverty in the community be actively and authentically participating in fighting poverty. This means that the affected people themselves will be the major participants of the intervention to fight poverty. Formal leaders need to be consulted as well as the affected themselves. Their worldview and situation should be taken into consideration and through facilitation they become part of the process of addressing and resolving their problems.

Second, create an organized group within the community to help many people rather than working with a few individuals. Rather than working with individuals, it is more effective to facilitate collective and organized actions to strengthen and empower people in poverty through an organization. This means that it is not enough to provide assistance to individually-affected persons alone, but, through a collective organization, each individual is developed and steps are taken to address their problems and other problems in the future.

Third, the people affected need to identify the issues. It is more effective when issues and problems are identified by the people. They then

begin to gain self-confidence and acquire capabilities in working together on simple issues and problems. This means that their initial efforts and experiences can be used toward addressing more complex problems and issues. It is in identifying and acting on their initial simple issues or problems that the affected people gain their self-confidence and capability to identify other issues or problems which need to be addressed. Though externally, well-thought projects can help fight poverty, such projects will most likely not be sustained without the affected people's active involvement in linking the projects with their situations, issues and problems.

Fourth, people in poverty need to be empowered to understand that they can often address and solve their own issues. The affected people going through the process of fighting poverty should have a raised level of consciousness about their situation and capabilities in order to sustain their collective efforts and also to address other issues and problems.

An example of working at source was seen in a crime-ridden neighborhood that repainted and added numerous street lamps and saw a significant reduction in crime. It's a similar reason why many cities that experience problems with tagging allow artists to create beautiful murals and instantly tagging ceases, along with loitering and other drug- and crime-related events, as well. Lack of pride was at the source.

Empowering women is critical to solving the water crisis. When women have access to safe water, they can pursue skills outside of their traditional roles and experience greater autonomy and independence.

Reducing poverty is a key element in a policy for food security because poor people spend such a large share of their incomes on food, leaving them vulnerable to high food prices. Many poor people obtain much of their income from farming, leaving them vulnerable to declines in agricultural output.

Nine countries that have achieved the greatest success in reducing the total number of hungry people in proportion to their national population are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Cuba, Georgia, Ghana, Kuwait, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Thailand.

Education reduces poverty, boosts economic growth and increases income. It increases a person's chances of having a healthy life, reduces maternal deaths and combats diseases, such as HIV and AIDS. Education can promote gender equality, reduce child marriage and promote peace.

Hopelessness is the key factor in creating the cycle—one generation to the next. Without hope and the belief that life can be better, the motivation and energy needed to break the cycle are very low.

## CONCLUSION

Humans share common global concerns, especially in the area of poverty, regardless of locale. Poverty can be generational, stemming from one generation to the next or situational, due to an outside factor, such as job loss. Poverty has been combated through reactionary methods and remains. Fighting poverty takes time. The process of fighting poverty is not a simple and short-termed process, especially if we want a deep transformation to take place to those affected. It takes time to enable and facilitate the affected people so that they can break the "culture of silence" and become actors of their own development. If we were to direct our resources to locating the root cause of poverty and work at the source, we can solve poverty in our lifetime.

Eradicating poverty frees up resources that can be used to better serve humanity's evolution. Let's get the job done.

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# GETTING TO ZERO DURING THE 2014 EBOLA OUTBREAK

KATHARINA WUPPINGER

## Abstract

*If you had asked me to join the emergency response in Sierra Leone during the Ebola crisis in 2014, I would have declined the offer. If you would have asked me to ensure that 1.8 million children are safe in school while the outbreak was still ongoing, I would not have accepted this responsibility. But, my love for, and commitment to, the people of Sierra Leone put me right into the biggest Ebola epidemic the world has ever seen from the beginning until the end.*

In August 2014, I found myself in a situation that I had never imagined. I had just canceled my flight to Austria at the end of my contract with the European Union Delegation to Sierra Leone when I was sitting in my apartment watching people passing by with their suitcases rushing to the airport. Not one, but two, three, four.... At some point, I stopped counting. The compound was soon empty. The day before, I had a small birthday party with friends. Some of them came only to tell me that they could not stay long; they had been able to get a plane ticket out of the country and they were going to leave the next day. When I went to the supermarket, strangers were questioning me why I was still here. When I asked them, "Why not?," their answer was simply, "Because everyone else is leaving."

I had never been in an emergency, and when I asked colleagues or friends for advice, their answer was just, "Get the hell out." I felt stuck. No, it wasn't just a feeling. I was indeed stuck. There were no flights for the next three weeks and

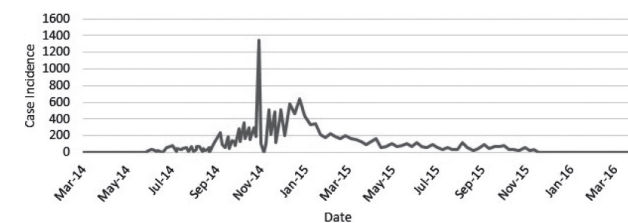
I had just canceled mine. I wasn't sure by that time there would still be flights coming into the country because every day another airline decided to stop operations. You might think, in the worst case, I am leaving the country by land. But, all borders to the neighboring countries had already been closed for the same reason. Like I said, stuck.

In March 2014, the first Ebola case was reported in the rural region of southeastern Guinea. The first Ebola outbreak ever in West Africa. Ebola wasn't new. Previous outbreaks had occurred in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda, but not in West Africa. The outbreaks were usually limited to remote, rural areas. All I heard from colleagues was that the virus can easily be contained. Nothing to worry about. But, within a few months, the virus had spread to the neighboring countries of Liberia and Sierra Leone. At that time, nobody had ever imagined that this was going to be the biggest Ebola epidemic in history with more than 28,600 suspected, probable and confirmed cases and

11,325 deaths in these three countries (Sierra Leone: 14,124 cases and 3,956 deaths).<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of August, we had recorded a few hundred cases of Ebola, mostly in the eastern part of Sierra Leone – so, still far away from Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, I thought. I was waiting for my contract as project manager with UNICEF, but wasn't sure whether the education project was still going ahead in the face of the emergency. I was not sure what to do. I was terrified – not from the Ebola cases in the country, but from people around me panicking and being worried.

What was I supposed to do? I needed to talk to somebody; to my buddy from the Introduction Leaders Program, but our weekly calls had stopped shortly after I arrived in Sierra Leone due to the poor Internet connection. I remember desperately calling another friend, also a Wisdom Unlimited course graduate. I cannot recall the exact conversation anymore, but I do remember when she asked me the question about the reasons why I would want to stay in the country, my answer was very clear: love. Love to the people of Sierra Leone. My commitment to make a difference in the world. How could I leave this country when I am most needed and when my presence was giving hope to people in this uncertain and frightening circumstance. It would feel like betrayal to the people and the country I came to serve. So, I decided to stay.



The Frequency of New Cases in Sierra Leone during the Ebola Outbreak from March 25, 2014 to April 13, 2016.

Ebola had gotten very close to us now. Quarantined houses were no longer on television. They were next door. Sirens became background noise in a neighborhood that seldom saw an ambulance before this. Schools were closed for months and children were losing out on their education. My project had come to a complete standstill. I wondered: "What is the purpose of me being here if I can't actually do anything?"

The opportunity costs for everyone had become quite high, including me. All airlines except two had stopped their flights to Sierra Leone, and more and more countries across the world were banning us from entering. Every time I left the country and entered one of those that still "welcomed" us, I had to fill out endless forms and go through lengthy health checks and interviews. The day I went home to have a few days of rest and to see my newborn niece, I was not allowed to touch her. Friends would not respond to my calls or cancel appointments out of fear that I would be carrying the Ebola virus and pose a risk to them.

While others would blame, defend, explain or make others wrong, I recognized that there was nobody to blame, thanks to my training at Landmark. People in the rest of the world depended on the media reporting about the epidemic. Having traveled to different countries during that time, I can say that the level of fear was very much linked to how the media was reporting about the crisis in that specific country. I had to learn not to put any meaning into the rejection of people and appreciated all those who trusted me despite the fear they might have had in those moments but never expressed them openly. In those difficult moments, I found comfort with colleagues who shared the same experience, but also by looking at all the Sierra Leonean health workers, nurses and burial teams, who not only risked their lives, but also accepted the stigmatization they faced from their families and communities because they were involved in the emergency response.

Under these worsened circumstances and with the risk that things could finally spiral out of control, I made the conscious decision of remaining in the country for a second time. The motivation was still the same as in August. So, I joined the School Reopening Working Group, which was led by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with UNICEF and support from nongovernmental and community-based organizations, to start preparing for the day when schools would reopen as they were still closed in November. With Ebola cases skyrocketing at that time, this day seemed still far away. Consequently, the development of our action plan and school safety guidelines was dragging on. We could not

even get anyone from the Ministry of Health to commit to our meetings to guide us on the guidelines. I mean, it was a health emergency.

To our surprise and earlier than expected, the presidents of the neighboring countries announced the planned reopening of schools in the first quarter of 2015, and this was followed shortly by a similar announcement for Sierra Leone. Even though we always believed that schools were a safer place for children to be during this epidemic, the question remained: "How do we keep 1.8 million children safe?" We had to put measures in place where children were screened for fever at the beginning of each school day and washed their hands to reduce the risk of spreading possible infections.

Furthermore, it was important to have measures in place with regards to what needed to be done in case a child got sick in school. The latter was expected as children in Sierra Leone regularly got sick with malaria, diarrhea and other common illnesses. Even though most cases would be harmless, if a child was diagnosed with Ebola, a vast number of persons who had come in contact with that child would have to be quarantined for 21 days. Such a case would have far-reaching consequences. We had three months to prepare over 9,000 schools for a safe re-opening. I literally panicked knowing how little we were prepared.

If you had asked me to join the emergency response in Sierra Leone during the Ebola crisis in 2014, I would have declined the offer. If you would have asked me to ensure that 1.8 million children are safe in school while the outbreak was still ongoing, I would not have accepted this responsibility. But, here I was, during the biggest Ebola epidemic, not listening to my inner voice "that I was not experienced enough," but stepping forward to take leadership in this emergency response by now coleading the working group. As a colead, I faced immense pressure from all sides (internally and externally), worked endless hours, including nights and weekends, and, at times, I even forgot to eat. There were days when I felt close to a physical, and also mental, breakdown. We were running against time. Time was running out.

I had to take responsibility and be cause in the

matter to ensure all the necessary preparations were completed. To achieve this, I used my skills from the Introduction Leaders Program in enrolling people in this goal. For example, I enrolled management in the need to declare the safe re-opening of schools as an office-wide goal so the education team could get full support from other departments. I also enrolled our health department to make funding available to train health workers on the school safety guidelines to ensure a child-friendly response in case of an emergency in a school. But, it also meant being unstoppable in the face of no agreement when no action was taken or agreement found at the higher levels, but we still needed to move things on the ground.

On April 15, 2015, the majority of the 9,000 schools in Sierra Leone re-opened even though active transmission of the Ebola virus was still ongoing. Teachers and parents were skeptical at the beginning, but soon some sort of normalcy returned to the country. I had managed to have 9,000 teachers (one from each school) trained on the prevention of Ebola, the school safety guidelines and the provision of psycho-social support to children before this date. However, this seemed not enough. Just one teacher not following the procedure would put everybody in the school at risk. Additionally, every single school faced its own challenges, be it that they did not have water for handwashing or any safe space to keep children if they were sick until health personnel would attend to them.

I thought it was, therefore, important to go to each school to engage with the school administration, teachers and communities on how to address these challenges to ensure their children were safe. This seemed a huge and quite impossible task to do within four weekends. However, I was determined. Despite all concerns from different stakeholders at national and local levels, including my own colleagues, I was able to enroll them in this possibility and we trained more than 60,000 teachers and 10,000 school management committee members (community representatives) on the school safety guidelines and supported them to find solutions.

During the months following the safe re-opening of schools, the number of new confirmed Ebola

cases started to slow down. Despite all our coordination weaknesses at the beginning of the emergency, this was the result of coordinated efforts and interventions of all stakeholders involved in the fight against Ebola. It was not about personal or organizations' priorities anymore, but about achieving one goal – "getting to zero" – together. Only together, as a country, we would be able to achieve this goal. No matter how one felt, how sleep deprived and exhausted one was, how hopeless the situation sometimes seemed or whatever breakdowns we encountered, there was always this spirit that we had to keep going, and everyone did.

On November 7, 2015, Sierra Leone was finally declared Ebola-free. I was standing on my balcony during the announcement. From afar, I could hear the joy and jubilation from the various parts of Freetown. I saw children and people dancing. My eyes filled with tears of joy. The long-awaited day has come. Our common efforts have paid off. Since the Ebola crisis, seeing children on their way to school and hearing their songs at 8 a.m. in the morning has become a sign of fulfillment for me. It was a wonderful sign of normalcy. Having consciously chosen to stay from the beginning to the end of the Ebola crisis and having been able to contribute to making sure 1.8 million children were safe in school was indeed one of my greatest accomplishments and fulfillments in my life to date. However, this is not the end of the story as the crisis had an enormous impact, particularly on adolescent girls. They had not just missed nine months of their education, but more than 18,000 had gotten pregnant during this period and were now banned from attending school and sitting exams. My leadership was, thus, still required and I remained in Sierra Leone throughout the recovery period and beyond until 2018 to support pregnant girls and adolescent mothers to continue their education.

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## ENDNOTES

- 1 [www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/history/2014-2016-outbreak/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/history/2014-2016-outbreak/index.html).
- 2 [www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/history/2014-2016-outbreak/cumulative-cases-graphs.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/history/2014-2016-outbreak/cumulative-cases-graphs.html).



# FULFILLMENT AND DOMINATION

TONY GRADDON

## Abstract

*People, corporations and governments all have duties and missions they want to fulfill. Some of these missions are being fulfilled on a global scale and they are transforming our world. As examples, I have chosen the Internet, five-year plans and neoliberalism. I believe in equal opportunity and I oppose slavery, racism and oppression. Doesn't everyone? Apparently not. Economics, law and government policy in many nations are supporting the interests of a small minority.*

## INTRODUCTION

I am looking for opportunities to contribute to society that will keep me busy for the last third of my life. Equity and fairness are important for me, and I believe that societies and nations will thrive when people have the opportunity to contribute and fulfill their potential.

I first attended the Conference for Global Transformation in 2016 and noticed that discussion of economic policy seemed to be missing. Economic policy is an essential factor in global transformation and deserves our attention.

In 2018, I started to look at the global measures of inequality and was surprised. On a global scale, inequality has decreased dramatically in the last 30 years.<sup>1</sup> This paper is about my inquiry into the

fulfillment of missions that are driving equality and inequality.

## THE INTERNET AND MOBILE PHONES

These technologies and missions are enabling equal opportunity on a global scale. People in developing countries can now communicate and make transactions in minutes instead of walking for hours or days. Productivity, enterprise and access to knowledge are being transformed.

The Internet Society was founded in 1992 with the mission "... to promote the open development, evolution and use of the Internet for the benefit of all people throughout the world."<sup>2</sup>

The "all people" part of the mission is now more than halfway to being fulfilled – "but a

nearly equal number remain unconnected. This gap denies people opportunity and fails to develop a large amount of human potential."<sup>3</sup>

People, who have Internet access, are empowered.<sup>4,5</sup> Some governments apply censorship and surveillance on their citizens' use of the Internet, and, even in countries with censorship, the Internet is enabling global transformation with benefits for community and business.

Internet traffic increased by a factor of 2,000 during 1993, and Jeff Bezos saw an opportunity.<sup>6</sup> Since then, his company has changed the global business model for retailing and delivery. In one sense of the word, Amazon has transformed fulfillment.

How can I reconcile my admiration of entrepreneurs (capitalism) with my belief that governments should provide the basic needs for their people (socialism)? I want both.

## MEASURES OF EQUALITY

Equal opportunity is closely related to economic equality, so my inquiry led me to explore the measures of economic equality used by World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Central Intelligence Agency and other organizations.

*"Never before in history has the economic well-being of so many people improved so radically in such a short time. 600 million people have moved up to join the ranks of the global wealth middle class in the last two decades. 2.5 billion people own financial assets of at least EUR 3,000 after deduction of debts – more than 10 times more than at the turn of the millennium."<sup>7,8</sup>*

Billions of people have moved above the international poverty line for the first time.<sup>9</sup> Can we believe this when the world seems preoccupied with the rise of inequality?<sup>10, 11</sup>

The most widely used measure of economic inequality is the Gini coefficient, which is a number between zero and one. Zero indicates perfect equality.

South Africa and other African nations have the highest levels of income inequality.<sup>12</sup>

United States and South Africa have the highest wealth inequality in the world.<sup>13, 14</sup>

Inequality of wealth in the United States has continued to increase, which is causing concern among scholars<sup>15</sup> ...

*"... unequal societies tend to have poorer health, while more equal societies have higher life expectancies, trust and a willingness to help others."*

*"We could be concerned in the United States, that if Ginis get too high, we could be inviting revolution, or we could be inviting state collapse."*

Average life expectancy in the United States is now declining, partly due to self-harm.<sup>16</sup> Please refer to the Appendix for more details and references.

## FIVE-YEAR PLANS

The two countries that are driving global economic equality are China and India and they are achieving this by growing their national wealth. China and India manage their development via five-year planning cycles. India started in 1951 and China started in 1953.<sup>17, 18</sup> Their governments actively manage and fund economic development. Five-year plans are developed, published and monitored.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the standard measure for economic progress. By 2030, the combined GDP of China and India is on track to exceed the combined GDP of the United States and the European Union. As a percentage of global GDP, the share generated by the United States peaked at 40 percent in 1960 and is now about 22 percent.<sup>19</sup> We are witnessing fulfillment of missions and transformation on a global scale and much of the change can be attributed to government control and intervention.

This brings us to consider the economic paradigms chosen by different nations.

## ECONOMIC PARADIGMS

In Australia, the prevailing paradigm is that the free market is the most efficient driver of economic progress. The role of government is to deliver legislation to enable the free market to operate freely and privatize the services formerly

provided by government, including utility services, such as power, water and related infrastructure.

The main outcomes have been to increase wealth inequality and reduce equal opportunity. When I was a college student in the 1970s, university was free and housing was affordable. Now, we have student debts, unaffordable housing and expensive electricity – and Australia is one of the wealthiest nations on earth.

In 2017, my investigation of economics was in the area of property taxes, land value and the 18-year real estate cycle that drives the securities market. The next big crash is due in 2027, according to Phillip Anderson, the director of an economic forecasting service operating out of London and Melbourne.

In 2018, the most important book I read was “Democracy in Chains,” by Nancy MacLean, a professor of history and public policy at Duke University. It allowed me to understand for the first time that wealth inequality is growing as the result of a long-term plan to undermine the role of government and change the teaching of economic policy.

Now that’s interesting. It is the second time in two years that I have read about deliberate long-term plans to change the curriculum for teaching economic theory. Both of the books are very detailed with many references – not easily refuted.

#### MY HISTORY OF ECONOMICS IN 100 WORDS

Classical economics in the 19th century recognized three elements of the economy – land, capital and labor. In the “The Corruption of Economics,” Mason Gaffney and Fred Harrison describe how neoclassical economics has become the dominant framework for economic policy around the world. The authors claim that the teaching of economics was deliberately changed with the intention that land would be treated as just another capital asset and wealthy landowners would pay less property tax.

Does the merging of capital and land explain why economists failed to predict the global financial crisis of 2008 and seem unaware of the 18-year real estate cycle? In “Democracy in Chains – The

Deep History of the Radical Right’s Stealth Plan for America,” Nancy MacLean describes how neoliberalism has become the dominant framework for economic policy in the United States.

Does neoliberalism explain why economists talk about the benefits of “trickle down” economics while wealth inequality and poverty are rising in the United States? Will the wealth released by recent corporate tax cuts in the United States trickle down into China and India?

#### IMPACTS OF ECONOMIC PARADIGMS

In “The Silver Bullet – There’s Only One Way to Kill Poverty,” Fred Harrison describes how neoclassical economics has promoted the privatization of land and essential services enabling people and corporations to profit at the expense of society and causing poverty to persist.

Proposition 13 was passed into law in California in 1978, essentially as a rebellion against high rates of property taxes, which used to be around 2.5 percent per year. The effective rate of property tax in California is now about 0.6 percent per year. Forty years after Proposition 13, California has a housing affordability crisis and the highest rate of poverty in the United States. The state’s K-12 education ranking has fallen from being in the top fifth to 44th<sup>20</sup> Mission fulfilled.

“Make America Great Again.” Yes please! But, it cannot happen while the economic paradigm favors self ahead of state. It could happen under true capitalism.

Trump would like to spend \$1.5 billion on infrastructure, but neoliberalism makes this impossible.<sup>21</sup> The only infrastructure of interest to the free market is infrastructure that will generate tangible profits, which will necessarily increase inequality in the society. By comparison, China will build another 2,000 miles of high-speed rail in 2019<sup>22</sup> and is building infrastructure in Africa and Asia through its One Belt, One Road initiative.<sup>23</sup>

From now on, when I see “neo,” in relation to economics, I will read it as never enough oligarchy. It seems to me that economics is out of touch with reality and driving inequality because it has been adapted to serve the interests of the already wealthy.

#### LISTENING FOR FULFILLMENT

When I listen for fulfillment, I consider whether the fulfillment is for self or society. Is my government acting in the interests of all the people or fostering inequality? Who actually benefits when we allow poverty to persist in our wealthy nations?

I have some concern that this article will occur as a socialist rant, and yet I do believe in capitalism – true capitalism – as distinct from wealth gained from unearned income, government-granted monopolies and effective lobbying (or corruption).

I urge you to read “Democracy in Chains” and join the debate about the economic paradigm that is shaping our future. After two years of study, it is very clear to me that the frameworks for equal opportunity and fulfillment are set by government policy and, therefore, they can be changed.

As a result, I am becoming politically active for the first time in my life. I have joined my local GetUp Action Group<sup>24</sup> and meeting with politicians and contributing to the debate in the Future to Fight For platform.<sup>25</sup> Most people do not know about the 18-year real estate cycle and that is a contribution I can make.

The world is about to enter a new phase of development through artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, faster computers and inexpensive energy. New technology will enable breakthroughs in productivity and will change the nature of employment again.

Government policies will determine how that new wealth will be distributed. If you care about the future for yourself and your children, read about economics. Let’s have a raging debate at the conference. I leave you with this thought from the great Stephen Hawking:

*“If machines produce everything we need, the outcome will depend on how things are distributed. Everyone can enjoy a life of luxurious leisure if the machine-produced wealth is shared, or most people can end up miserably poor if the machine-owners successfully lobby against wealth redistribution. So far, the trend seems to be toward the second option, with technology driving ever-increasing inequality.”*  
– Stephen Hawking (2016)

#### APPENDIX

This section provides more details about the use of Gini coefficients to measure inequality. It contains links to my favorite charts and maps.

In the last 30 years, global income inequality has decreased from 0.67 to 0.57. This has been driven by increased incomes in developing countries – primarily China and India.<sup>26</sup> There is a wonderful chart that shows this change and the same website offers a range of maps and diagrams that depict other aspects of global economic progress.<sup>32, 27</sup> Income inequality Gini coefficients for different nations are visualized on this map.<sup>28</sup>

The Gini coefficient is normally applied to measure inequality of income, but has also been used to measure inequality of wealth (assets). The distinction between wealth and income is significant.

South Africa and other African nations have the highest levels of income inequality (Gini index above 0.6).<sup>29</sup> United States and South Africa have the highest wealth inequality in the world (Gini index exceeding 0.80).<sup>30, 31</sup>

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# LEADING CHANGE: EMPOWERING NEPALI GIRLS

SARA SAFARI

## Abstract

*This paper explores the work of Empower Nepali Girls (ENG), a nonprofit organization that provides education to marginalized girls in Nepal. The first section reviews the literature of women's empowerment and the second part discusses qualitative, descriptive research on what the group has done to empower young women. The research examined ways these young women exercised and contested power within a traditional patriarchal culture, predicated on core religious teachings that profess egalitarianism yet situated within the highly contextualized space of Kathmandu, Nepal.*

## INTRODUCTION

Four years ago, I decided to reach the summit of Mount Everest to plant the flag of ENG at the top of the world. I promised to raise \$1 per foot of Everest for scholarship girls. Now I am a board member of this nonprofit organization.

Most of the 280 girls in our program are the first in their villages to attend higher education. They have never before met women with professional careers or women who attempt such male-dominated sports as mountaineering. The girls look up to me as a professor, an engineer and a woman of color like them, who has overcome such challenges in the male-dominated world of the Middle East. It inspires them and gives them faith. It shows them what is possible for their own lives. I had vowed to raise \$1 for each foot of Everest (29,028 feet) to help the girls, and was successful in more than doubling that goal.

On April 25, 2015, when I was finally climbing

Everest, an earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale of magnitude struck Nepal and killed more than 10,000 people. I was on a ladder, climbing an ice wall on Everest at 6,000 meters when the earthquake struck. Suddenly, the wall started shaking left and right. I was terrified. A huge chunk of ice, the size of a car, tumbled down on my left. It roared like a rocket taking off. The air was filled with snow and I was suffocating. I couldn't see anything and couldn't breathe. I climbed up the edge and I clipped myself to the anchor. I thought this was the end. I thought I would be buried alive under the avalanche. There was nothing I could do about it except to hold on. I thought about the sadness my family would feel. Strangely, I felt at peace and accepted that this was how my life would end.

Miraculously, I survived the avalanche. After the earthquake, I started hearing about the extent of the devastation throughout Nepal. More than 100,000 children were left homeless.

Thousands were buried under rubble in Kathmandu and whole villages were wiped out.

My team and I were spared. We were rescued by helicopter the next week. All I could think about were all the girls we were supporting in this region. I had raised money for them to continue their education, but now it seemed that everything was lost, including all my dreams for the children. I had worked so hard and for so long to bring attention to the plight of our children in Nepal, many of whom would likely become victims of human trafficking and give up their education. All those dreams may very well have been crushed by the earthquake. So many of them would lose their homes, their schools and all their hope.<sup>1</sup>

Growing up in Iran, another patriarchal culture, I experienced firsthand the oppressive, restrictive environment that makes gender discrimination possible. I think one of the reasons Nepali girls connected with me so quickly is because they know that I come from a place that has so many similar restrictions on what girls are allowed to do.

#### EMPOWER NEPALI GIRLS FOUNDATION

Our mission is to empower and support neglected, marginalized and at-risk girls and young women in Nepal, especially those who are at greatest risk to be forced into early marriage, sold into sex slavery or abandoned as orphans. We provide scholarships, mentoring, career guidance and subsistence for children who would not have the opportunity to attend school and pursue future careers in medicine, engineering, business, teaching and other professions.

#### WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment has been described as the expansion of people's ability to make wise and strategic choices in their lives, especially when these options have been previously denied to them.<sup>2</sup> Naila Kabeer, a scholar and feminist, talks about three levels of empowerment: deep, intermediate and immediate level, which are structural relations, awareness of institutional rules and individual resources.

Nelly Stromquist, professor of international development at University of Southern California, believes the four dimensions of women's

empowerment are: economic dimension, political dimension, knowledge dimension and psychological dimension. In developing nations, women's economic and legal rights are often curtailed in such a way that it's far more difficult for them to own property, pursue professions or even have access to bank accounts. This not only makes it difficult for them to become independent and self-supporting, but reduces their status and makes them more vulnerable to health problems and violence.<sup>3</sup>

In a country like Nepal, such restrictions make the country one of the few in the world in which women have a lower life expectancy than men because of maternal mortality and lack of healthcare available to them. From the political lens, women, who are elected as political representatives, give them a voice that can be used for their advancement and the improvement of gender relations in society. "The gender gap in ownership and control of property is the single most critical contributor to the gender gap in economic well-being, social status and empowerment," according to "Capabilities, Freedom and Equality: Amartya Sen's Work from a Gender Perspective."<sup>4</sup>

Women everywhere in the world perform work in the household for which they are rarely compensated. Their caregiving is undervalued and sense of identity and well-being are compromised. It is no wonder that a sense of powerlessness results, limiting even the dreams of an alternative reality. That's one reason why providing only funding for these causes, without accompanying mentoring and modeling, is often inefficient. Most of the girls we've worked with in Nepal simply had no way to even conceptualize options for themselves since they had never met women who held professional positions. All those they'd ever been exposed to in films didn't really look like them.

I learned not only from the leadership literature, but from personal experience, that empowerment comes from providing safe spaces for exploration, discussion, reflection and mutual support. Women need opportunities to share their stories with one another, especially when they have been subjected to abuse and neglect outside the safe space of their group.<sup>5</sup>

Martha Nussbaum, a professor of law and ethics at University of Chicago, approaches the topic by introducing the term "creating capabilities."<sup>6</sup> The capabilities approach is about basic social justice and focuses on choice or freedom. At ENG, all the girls have equal access to funds to continue their education in any major that they choose – from science to dance or cooking – after participating in career conference. As mentioned earlier, a corrupt Nepali government does not create context for choice for women to educate and nourish the development of their powers of mind. This reminds me of the stories that I have heard from young Nepali women who have been forced to get married or trafficked due to poverty and lack of resources. She elaborates on 10 capabilities, such as life, health, senses, thoughts and bodily integrity that governments have to deliver to their citizens which is a necessary condition of social justice.<sup>6</sup>

#### FOCUS GROUP EXPERIMENT

In 2018, I had the opportunity to have several meetings with our college-level scholarship girls to talk about leadership. In our first two-hour session in the lobby of the hotel, I asked the participants, all college-level students, to consider several core questions:

- What does leadership mean to you?
- What do you think are the most important leadership skills for women in Nepal?
- What are some of your doubts and concerns about not being able to use leadership?
- Who are some of the bad or good leaders you know? Why do you call them bad or good?

These young women were being supported by scholarships from ENG. We had personally recruited, mentored and supported them throughout their adolescence. We visited their homes. We knew their families and friends. I had read their stories as children sitting on my lap, played games with them and shared meals with their neighbors. As they grew older, I had tutored them in their math and science assignments, reviewed their homework and shared stories about their lives.



Prakriti (first left sitting), Anja (on my right) and me (green shirt, standing in the middle)

I looked around the circle flooded with memories about each of the girls. Anja had grown so much. Three years ago when she was showing us how her house had been reduced to rubble, she had been tiny in comparison to the young woman she was growing into. She had been so dispirited and talked about giving up her dream of an education. Now, she seemed so confident in her studies and determined to earn a position in the business world.

Prakriti was pouring juice for each of us, always such a giving, generous person. When I first met her, she was so shy, she would never even make eye contact. I could barely get her to say a word. Now, she was studying computer science but, even more remarkable, she is the third-ranked martial artist in her country. That confidence has spilled over in so many ways, like the time last year that she gave a 20-minute speech on stage about women's empowerment.

Each of these girls, because of their remarkable achievements, had earned admittance to higher education, in some cases the first in their villages to ever do so. They were studying finance, management, social work and nursing. I had gathered them together to talk about leadership and the future roles they might play

within their communities and nation. In a country where girls were so marginalized and at-risk for exploitation, and women had so little power, we hoped that they might become the future politicians, physicians and business executives.

Prakriti, Anja and a bunch of the other girls had begun to seek leadership positions in the community. They started a fund-raising campaign for victims of the recent floods, raising thousands of dollars from tourists. They organized a woman-only hiking group and traveled to remote areas of the mountains by themselves. They collected thousands of signatures on a petition to change the laws that required women in some areas to remain in a hut with the animals during menstruation.

This group was just one of many ways that we have attempted to increase a sense of empowerment through shared social networks, providing women, who have previously been silenced, to have a voice, one that is heard, understood and acknowledged. It is so important that they don't feel alone. It is so critical that they are given opportunities to take on leadership roles, or perhaps not so much "given" to them as taken for themselves. As they begin to view leadership as possible and desirable, their own self-images are transformed. "When they see the value of the impact they can make as leaders to be more important than the personal losses they believe they would suffer if they chose to be leaders, only then will women's aspirations for leadership increase."<sup>7</sup>

These questions about leadership generated a robust and long discussion. We were searching to design an intervention to develop their leadership skills. We looked at different leadership trainings and competencies that would empower the students to work in a society in which they can sense gender discrimination everywhere. The text from the discussion was analyzed to consolidate and identify themes.

This analysis was presented to the board for additional feedback. Based on input from the team, seven topics were finalized. The topics are similar to the values in the social change model: consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility and citizenship.<sup>8</sup> With

the identification of the topics, we determined seven workshops would be needed and each workshop would cover one of the seven topics.

### LEADERSHIP IN SMALL STEPS

One of our main goals in Nepal is training our girls to be role models for the younger generation who will join the scholarship program in the future, that is, recruit them as active partners in the process. This means not only soliciting their input and listening to their suggestions, but turning over responsibilities for them to implement their own plans. This isn't as risky as it sounds to delegate these roles to inexperienced and untrained young women when you consider how many errors in judgment we've made over the years because of cultural ignorance. More than anything else, it is trust that we are selling; trust in us, but also trust in themselves.

One example of this in action is that we asked the older high school girls in the program to develop and implement their own service project. We provided them with a budget and told them to come up with some plan that would best help their community. Although they asked us for advice about what to do, we declined to provide input other than our confidence that they could manage this themselves.

After some discussion and preliminary research, the girls decided to purchase 100 water tanks for a village with about the same number of families, none of which had access to clean water. This was quite a departure from the organization's previous focus only on providing scholarships for needy girls and assistance after the earthquakes. This showed both proactive and innovative thinking that we would not have considered.

Once they purchased the water tanks, they had exhausted their budget but still needed a way to transport the equipment to the remote village which was more than 12 hours away. Rather than asking for additional funding from us, they chose instead to donate some of their own scholarship money to pay for the shipping, saying that this was a more important cause than their own educational needs.

I remember never having been so moved and inspired in my life when I heard that. I had never

felt more proud and never more certain that these were young women who would do amazing things for their country with their proactive spirits. Whatever little they had for themselves, they were perfectly willing to give a portion of that away to others who were even more desperate.

It may seem unduly optimistic, if not naïve, but one popular model of leadership proposes that human beings quite naturally want to serve and care for others. There are many examples of servant leaders in the history throughout the globe, such as Jesus, Buddha, Gandhi, Mother Teresa and many more.<sup>9</sup> It was also no less than Aristotle who remarked that the essence of all lives is "to serve others and do good."

Loving and helping others give people a profound sense of meaning and purpose that can lead to a deeper sense of well-being. It turns out that so-called happiness is somewhat unrelated to the things we may think matter most – wealth or even health. Once you have enough money to live on and have paid off debts, it is intimate relationships and meaningful work that best predict life satisfaction.<sup>10</sup>

### ETHICAL DILEMMAS

We had to consider several ethical dilemmas. One is the language and cultural differences between the board members and the scholarship girls in Nepal. We conduct more programs in English which marginalizes the girls who have less access to English classes in secluded villages. We usually provide more services to the scholarship girls who live in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. The majority of the girls in other remote towns (who need help even more) don't receive the training, due to their location and lack of access to technology.

We always want to keep the costs low so, as a result, if they miss the one scheduled training offered in their own village, they have less options to make up for it. As the result of this marginalization, not all the girls could benefit from the trainings. In an attempt to mitigate this, we discussed working with other local organizations to offer educational trainings. We continue to work with community organizations to explore sponsorship opportunities that would allow these offerings. We also asked the college girls

in Kathmandu to go back to their villages at the end of the training and teach what they have learned to the rest of the young women who couldn't afford traveling. Also, in future programs, we decided to translate all the texts to Nepali language to provide equal opportunities for all the students to participate in the programs if they wish.

### FUTURE PLANS

Due to poverty, weak school curriculums, cultural barriers and uneducated families in Nepal, college students do not have access to the many resources, tools and techniques that can help them to live a more effective life and make better life decisions, both socially and professionally. In many cases, I have observed recently how the lack of critical and creative thinking, self-motivation, goal setting, multitasking, negotiating and team building skills have had a negative impact on their performance and happiness at work and school. This led me to design a leadership workshop for the girls.

Designing the leadership workshop includes many critical steps but, for the start, I'm planning to do my Ph.D. on different mentorship styles that would promote women's empowerment in developing countries. Now, we are using the social change model to create a program for college-level students.<sup>8</sup> We are planning to develop partnerships with other colleges that have done this kind of training before to learn from their experience and increase credibility. We are fundraising for future workshops to gain financial support for the leadership program.

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS

I believe women, as a group negatively affected by the status quo, must assume a key role in advancing gender equality. Women's empowerment is part of gender equality, which is one of the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015. Each goal had specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years. For goals to be reached, everyone needs to do their part, including government, the private sector, civil society and people like us. Gender equality, which is goal number five, is the one I chose to fight for. Working with ENG is just the first step toward this goal. I imagine women taking more leadership positions in different sectors to be a worthy initiative from which to start.



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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# BEYOND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE: THE FULFILLMENT OF LOVE, RESPECT AND CONNECTION IN AUSTRALIA

MERILYN SKELTON

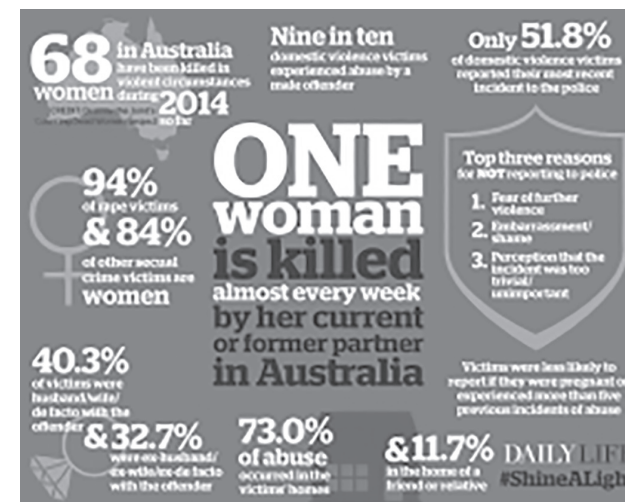


Figure 1.

## Abstract

*This paper explores the beginning stages of a project I'm developing to cause the fulfillment of love, respect and connection between men and women in Australia. To develop this project, I am researching organizations, groups and individuals, which are already in the conversation for causing the fulfillment of love and respect across Australia for all people. My interest is a result of personally experiencing intimate partner violence. Furthermore, within my immediate circle of family and friends, I know at least 10 women who have experienced similarly toxic relationships with intimate male partners. At least two of them had also been physically assaulted, including being nearly strangled. Unfortunately, my story is too many women's story in Australia.*

## INTRODUCTION

I had a relationship with a man for around 10 years, which began as casual sex and developed into business partners and more. He was a few years older than me, charismatic, charming, powerful and controlling, as well as being a Landmark Forum graduate. Over time and without me realizing it, he belittled, put me down, isolated me from friends and family, continually told me that I had no proper friends, financially manipulated me and told me not to take particular jobs, until eventually he shoved, kicked and hit me before it culminated with him raping me. As I came out of this abusive relationship and dealt with being raped by him, I was able to slowly get my power back. I used the distinction "act" from the Advanced Course to distinguish that "I'm a victim and I'm not good enough" was having me stay in this toxic relationship.

Nevertheless, the toxic relationship had lasting impacts. Since my early 30s, I've yet to cause an incredible intimate, loving, respectful partnership and relationship with a man that is perfect for me and for whom I am perfect. Immediately after leaving the relationship, my life was thrown into a tailspin. I became unwell, gained weight, was effectively made homeless, had no money or job and I felt so empty and numb inside, I considered myself not worthy of any man treating me with love and respect either in or out of the bedroom. I also considered suicide at that time. In essence, I had lost all my self-respect and self-love from

being in that abusive relationship. My whole experience of life was to try to empower myself from "being a victim and not being good enough."

After almost 10 years of healing and personal development work, I am finally at a place where I can not only write about it, but explore a project beyond what is already being fulfilled in Australia to ensure that abusive relationships do not happen to other Australian women. Also, I'm now finally happy enough within myself to consider a relationship with a loving, respectful man when it shows up.

## THE SCOPE OF THE ISSUE

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a worldwide issue and is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as any behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship.<sup>1,2</sup>

WHO cites these behaviors, which include:

- Acts of physical violence, such as slapping, hitting, kicking and beating.
- Sexual violence, including forced sexual intercourse and other forms of sexual coercion.
- Emotional (psychological) abuse, such as insults, belittling, constant humiliation, intimidation (e.g., destroying things), threats of harm and threats to take away children.<sup>3</sup>

In 2018 alone, 78 Australian women were

murdered by an intimate male partner, according to The Red Heart Campaign, a nonprofit organization that compiles statistics on IPV in the country.<sup>4</sup> That's not just a one-year number. That's the average number of women who are murdered by intimate partners year upon year. I find this number alarming. Thus, IPV is an ongoing national issue that continues to get far less airtime from our media and politicians than news about one man being bitten by a shark when he is swimming in the ocean.

To show the impact of IPV, Figure 1 (above) gives a brief snapshot of the direct impact on the lives of Australian women.

## MY POSSIBILITY AND PROMISE FOR AUSTRALIA

My promise and commitment is that all IPV in Australia is eliminated by 2030. Zero IPV by 2030 would look like this. To make progress, the number of Australian women facing this fate would need to go steadily down.

In listening for the fulfillment of this promise, what I see is that all people:

- Feel able to speak up when they see violence occurring between people.
- Speak up to assist those who have been directly impacted by violence.

For the fulfillment of my promise for Australia, love, respect and connection must be

available in all relationships for all people. My definition of love is when two people feel connected, supported, have affinity and feel heard and respected when they interact.

My definition of respect is that between two people when someone says something to the other, it gets heard. Each person holds a place where the other person can be who they are without judgment and their wishes and boundaries are heard and maintained in that relationship. When someone says to the other person that they don't want something done/said/acted upon, the request is honored.

My definition of connection is when an individual feels able to safely communicate his or her needs, desires, boundaries and wants to another person. Connection means that all parties in a relationship feel heard, loved, respected and supported.

To fulfill on these definitions of love, respect and connection, my inquiry continues.

#### THE VALUE OF A COMMITTED LISTENER

I have a committed listener to the development of this project and promise who has been pivotal in moving this conversation from monologue to dialogue. She has been a listening for fulfillment of my promise. I met her at a workshop for empowering women at the 2018 Conference for Global Transformation. A group of women connected after the workshop to deal with some of the current issues across the globe that impact women. I requested initially that we communicate so I could stay up to speed with the women from the workshop and because I was unable to remain connected with the group. I wanted to stay in touch to hear about how these women are dealing and managing the conversations for transformation in America.

The conversations with my committed listener have been rich and supportive and provided much food for thought in my research and development of the project for Australia. My committed listener highlighted important things to consider, such as how to language love and respect in a way that speaks to all people. Her experience and expertise in her field gave me a sounding board and pointed me in directions

that I would not have known on my own.

She introduced me to YouTube videos, including, "The Mask You Live In," which highlighted the many issues of toxic masculinity. She has provided another much needed, thorough and valuable perspective. Through our conversations, I have been able to tease out my vision into something that now has a clear intention. As a result of our conversations, I now have a draft version of the project to set my intention on in the fulfillment of love, respect and connection for all people in Australia. Conversing with my committed listener has had me start a blueprint for the national project.

My exploration of the fulfillment of love, respect and connection in Australia has led me to conclude that the following steps are necessary to ensure that zero women are killed by IPV by 2030. The first step is a proper account and quantifiable longitudinal cost to the GDP for Australian society and the Australian taxpayer that includes all industries directly and indirectly affected. The second step is a finished white paper that outlines laws, ramifications and solutions that deal with the root cause of IPV in Australia. The third step is causing cross-collaboration between the major stakeholders who are directly impacted. The fourth step is pulling it all together into a project that includes all stakeholders and directly impacts the Australian population.

#### FULFILLMENT OF LOVE AND RESPECT IN ALL RELATIONSHIPS IN AUSTRALIA

As the project is in the development phase, I'm exploring how to make my promise a reality in Australia. My inquiry has led me to research, explore, plan and begin to connect with some of the organizations, groups and people who already seek to fulfill on this.

Out of my inquiry, my vision fulfilled is that key national leaders and stakeholders move from working in silos to collaborating. By partnering, these organizations can have a much more powerful, collective impact. Their voices will be heard much louder in both state and federal parliaments and laws will be changed far quicker to protect the victims and other parties impacted by IPV.

In looking at another aspect of IPV, I can see



Figure 2

another listening: the economic cost. The cost of domestic violence in the Australian economy was \$21.7 billion in 2014-2015, according to a report prepared for Our Watch, a domestic prevention agency.<sup>5</sup> On inquiry into the true cost of IPV, I have yet to find a conclusive long-range cost to the national economy that includes all the industries directly and indirectly impacted. To date, PricewaterhouseCoopers November 2015 report called "A high price to pay, the economic case for preventing violence against women" has been the only source of quantifying cost to the national economy. Figure 2 (above) shows the breakdown of financial resources that the Australian government has promised to put towards the prevention of violence against women.

My plan is to pull in the collective knowledge and quantify the revised longitudinal cost into a white paper that can transform the laws, resources and the direction of how the federal government manages the impact of IPV in everyday

Australian life. The white paper will provide an access for the federal government to see how existing laws, government departments and commissioners keep IPV in place in our culture.

The white paper will offer access to new conversations where IPV in Australian culture goes from being acceptable, expected and a nonissue to one where IPV becomes totally unacceptable, frowned upon and there are adequate consequences to ensure the pattern does not keep repeating for the victims of IPV. The white paper will set up a conversation to deal with the root causes of IPV instead of Australian taxpayers footing the bill for current strategies that are not working to stop murdering of women at the hands of intimate partners. I envision that through the strategies, tools and solutions, it will provide the key to stamping out any and all IPV in Australian culture. The white paper for Parliament cannot be written without the partnership of key stakeholders impacted by IPV across Australia.



There are various key organizations I want to contact and cause cross-collaboration to quantify longitudinal costs and provide new strategies, acts and resources for the white paper. These organizations include the Red Heart Campaign, Our Watch, Department of Justice and White Ribbon Foundation. These organizations support women and men dealing with the direct impact of IPV. Each of these organizations manages different parts of the IPV spectrum. Our Watch is a government-funded organization providing educational tools to stamp out violence in our culture. It also provides resources for victims of IPV. The White Ribbon Foundation is a national campaign to bring awareness once a year to the female victims of violence in Australian culture. Although there are many other organizations seeking to interrupt IPV, I see these organizations as the primary stakeholders in causing a shift in Australian culture where IPV is acceptable to where love and respect are always present.

Out of my promise, I have initially connected with Sherele Moody, who runs the Red Heart Campaign on Facebook and LinkedIn. The Red Heart Campaign tracks and maps the murders of women and children from IPV. With quite a following on Facebook, the Red Heart Campaign page regularly documents and updates the names of women, children and men and when they were murdered from IPV. A journalist, Moody runs the Red Heart Campaign to bring light to the issue. By collaborating with her, I will be able to bring teamwork and start to eliminate the silos within the key organizations to reach the outcome of zero women killed by IPV by 2030.

## CONCLUSION

IPV is a challenging topic and impacts many people. To fulfill on love, respect and connection for all people in Australia, it will take a stand, cross-collaboration and a generational culture shift to no longer accept violence in any form. There are already organizations that have been working towards this end for a number of years and the shift can occur quickly, provided that every person in Australia has this at stake. This is a multigenerational project that will require commitment, tenacity, time, persistence and resilience for the ultimate end goal of love, respect and connection for all people in Australia.

## ENDNOTES

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# LISTENING TO LIFE'S LONGING FOR ITSELF

TOM BRAFORD

## Abstract

*In the past, while participating in various Landmark Wisdom Course Area programs, many people, including me, have taken on what is sometimes referred to as a promise for the world. I find that one advantage of this is that it gives me a framework to inquire into what it might take to fulfill on this, or any, promise. When I repeat it, it reminds me what is most important to me, and it is an easy way to share with others what I am up to.*

My promise is that human beings are safe and secure from all alarm and on our way to being ubiquitous in the far-flung universe by 2035 and living in beloved community now. Yes, I think that human beings could be capable of establishing settlements on other planets in the not-too-distant future. My promise is more about not being stopped by the potentially alarming bumps in the road that currently stand in the way of it being fulfilled, such as global warming, social

fragmentation, resource depletion and economic uncertainty. Instead, it has me think about what might be possible if we created workability on this planet soon. My strong intuition is that this workability must start with community.

This paper is the story of my awakening to life's longing for itself and a life lived in service to the fulfillment of that longing, both now and always, for all people, for all time.

## OPERATING AS AN INDIVIDUAL

As a small child, I remember listening to a radio program every Sunday as we got ready for church. It always ended with, "I am come that you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly." Over the years, I often wondered what that meant. Then one summer day, I lay down in the wheat field on our farm in Michigan. I was immediately greeted by a cacophony of insect sounds, the smell of ripe earth and drying wheat, the warmth of the sun on my face, wispy pink clouds in an azure sky and in the distance a cow mooing. In that moment, I entered the world of abundant life where all is well. I knew then that it was my particular joy in life to bring that world to others and others to that world.

That led me to focus my life on building housing communities which bring people together to form a sense of community, where everyone's voice is heard and people cooperate to share resources and live sustainably. This effort started in the 1990s when I took actions as an individual to form

a cohousing community in St. Louis, Missouri.

Cohousing is defined by the Cohousing Association of the United States as “a community of private homes clustered around shared space. Each attached or single family home has traditional amenities, including a private kitchen. Shared spaces typically feature a common house, which may include a large kitchen and dining area, laundry and recreational spaces. Shared outdoor space may include parking, walkways, open space and gardens. Neighbors also share resources, like tools and lawnmowers.”

It originated in Denmark and was imported to the United States in the late 1980s by Charles Durrett and Kathryn McCamant, founders of the Cohousing Company. The four principles for a successful community are: design for community, scale for community, governance for community and resident participation in planning, design and budgeting for community before move-in and management going forward (see *Creating Cohousing: Building Sustainable Communities*). By now, there are more than 160 cohousing communities in the U.S.

My initial success was limited to introducing a number of people in the region to the concept of cohousing. My intention started to take actual form when I participated in the Team Management and Leadership Program in the late 1990s and enrolled my wife, Carol, and others as my full partners over time. The program required participants to take on a project that needs a team approach because it is too big to accomplish on your own. Fulfilling this intention really started to take off a year later when I was a coach in the program and became accountable for others' success.

I started with a conference call of about 10 people who were living in, or creating, cohousing communities. The U.S. cohousing movement was just completing its first decade. The call focused on what was most wanted, and needed, in the movement. The consensus of the people on the call was that more cohousing development companies were needed to assist in forming core groups of potential residents and in developing communities. Plus, new communities needed support after move-in.

### **MOVING FROM “I” TO “WE”**

In the 1970s, I read a pamphlet entitled “Cooperative Communities: How to Start Them and Why,” by Swami Kriyananda (Ananda Publications, 1970). Soon afterwards, I enrolled several people to join me to create Whole Wheat House, a communal living project in the Souldard neighborhood in St. Louis. This had a very successful 10-year run. During this period, I was identified by city officials as an “indigenous community leader” and invited to participate in planning for the restoration of the entire neighborhood. This had me thinking about the larger context of what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. referred to as “beloved community” where all people are loved and nurtured. The work soon led me to the nascent U.S. cohousing movement. In retrospect, I can see that I was still trying to accomplish what I could on my own rather than enrolling others in fulfilling the possibility in the world.

I participated in, and was trained to lead, *Be Yourself Boldly*, a program created by Bob Branscom, who stood for everyone being fully self-expressed and empowered to make a difference. I then did *The Landmark Forum*, followed quickly by the *Advanced Course*. As a result, I decided to run three times in as many years for citywide public office on a broad platform that included cohousing, home rule for neighborhoods and regional federation. I say I ran successfully without actually winning because I have never stopped working to fulfill on my campaign promises. When the press asked me to comment on other candidates, I always said, “I am not running against anyone; I'm running for a Greater St. Louis.” As a result, I have had strong support from the community-at-large and a broad spectrum of the political leadership in St. Louis for my community-building activities, and the city even adopted cohousing as an official part of their affordable housing and neighborhood stabilization strategy.

### **FULFILLING IMPOSSIBLE OUTCOMES**

It wasn't until I did the *Wisdom Unlimited* course that I learned I could actually listen for where life itself is calling to me to make a difference. It was the listening of the highly trained *Wisdom*

consultants at the 2016 vacation course in Hawaii that empowered me to let the possibility of comprehensive community unfold at its own speed and scale as a possibility for all of us together. Since then, I have had less attention on my personal concerns and have focused more on causing a future for all of humanity.

In preparing for a Conference for Global Transformation climate breakout session a few years ago, our team took on adapting Werner Erhard's 1977 *Hunger Project* source document to address the challenge of climate change.

Initially, I thought, “How valuable can a 30-year-old document be in addressing what we are confronting in the world now?” What I soon discovered was that it is the source document, not just for the *Hunger Project*, but for “having the world work for everyone with no one left out and no offense to nature,” as one of Werner's friends, Buckminster Fuller, used to say. We were reminded that the context is decisive, only whole context solutions that address all of it are effective. Anything less is just gesturing to make ourselves feel good about something we are resigned about.

We later applied the distinctions of that paper to what we called our *ecovillage* project and looked to see how we could bring a whole context solution to that. We found the beginnings of an answer in the book, “*Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming*,” edited by Paul Hawken. In his final essay, Hawken asserts that community is the missing link. Ironically, community was not listed in the top 80 solutions, because there are no real measures for how community impacts global warming.

### **LIVING AS A CLEARING FOR A WORLD NOT YET REALIZED**

We set out to draw the link between living in community and the possibility of expanding and deepening the implementation of *Drawdown* as a whole context solution. We did a poster illustrating the link between community and *Drawdown* and distributed small versions of it to attendees at the *Drawdown* breakout session at the 2018 conference.

The *Drawdown* book is the result of two years of research conducted by 75 experts, facilitated

by Hawken. It documented and reported on 80 of the top 100 solutions for reversing global warming that have verifiable data. “The list is comprised primarily of ‘no regrets’ solutions—actions that make sense to take regardless of their climate impact since they have intrinsic benefits to communities and economies. These initiatives improve lives, create jobs, restore the environment, enhance security, generate resilience and advance human health.”

It was significant to read the essay by Hawken that speculated the thing that was most missing was community even though there are no current measurable data to confirm what impact that could have. As a professional community builder, that caught my attention as an example of where life's longing for itself was speaking to me directly. I immediately went through the list of 80 strategies in reverse order noting all those we were already including, or could include, in what I call current and future “irresistible *ecovillage* solutions communities.”

I was surprised and delighted to see that they all could be included. That meant that all the *Drawdown* strategies could be achieved more broadly and quickly if added to *ecovillages* that are made up of multiple cohousing communities. To accomplish this, we would have to invent tip-up freighter and barge *ecovillages* on the high seas. This was a prominent feature of my *Rise Up in Community and Drawdown Abundance* poster at last year's conference.

As a result of listening to life's longing for itself on the *Measures* calls, one of the *Inquiries of the Social Commons*, I recently calculated the impact of *Drawdown* *ecovillage* development going to scale over 30 years, which is how the other strategies were measured. I figured the total gigatons of carbon dioxide avoided and sequestered, based on an average 200-person *Drawdown* *ecovillage*, lowered its carbon footprint to sub-zero. I discovered that, depending on how fast this strategy scaled, it would fall in the range of the top 75 to 80 *Drawdown* strategies.

At that point, I noticed something even more amazing, which was that of the 80 strategies listed in *Drawdown*, only seven were economically net positive. My calculations, based on current

conservative profitability estimates, show that if Drawdown ecovillage development were added as a Drawdown strategy, it would come in at number four of eight profitable strategies.

Since then, we have assembled a Drawdown ecovillage team that includes Erika Boeing, one of the Drawdown fellows who did the research for Drawdown and wrote the piece in the book on small wind generators. We plan to include her company's initial designs in our prototype Drawdown community, as well as many other Drawdown strategies. Our team has presented at OneSTL, an initiative of the East-West Gateway Council of Governments, a planning authority for the St. Louis region. We have let Hawken and the Drawdown team know what we are up to and are pursuing collaborations that would support our mutual goals.

Our more recent, preliminary estimates of shifting our economic model to long-term, more resilient returns to investors would make Drawdown ecovillages the most profitable way to reverse global warming by a long shot. We are not even in it for the money. It turns out that bringing life and bringing it more abundantly is good for business. Imagine that!

This approach is suggested in the new book, "A Finer Future: Creating an Economy in Service to Life," by Hunter Lovins and others. The authors reiterate the need for whole context solutions and initiating a total pivot toward the kind of regenerative culture and economy that restores the integrity of our natural systems. The book envisions creating an economy with the same methods we are using in our ecovillage initiative. It also uses the same Club of Rome reports and Human and Nature DYNamics (HANDY) study predictions from 1972 of total societal and economic collapse as my 2014 poster, "Only Butterflies Can Say How Caterpillars Came to Fly."

The book also uses a butterfly as the symbol of the total pivots now needed. My poster for this year, "Pivot Toward Life by 2020," will show how trim tabs can reverse the first stage of collapse, the die-off of the commoners. The book confirms that this actually started with the decline of average life expectancy in the U.S. in recent years. I say that regenerative trim tabs, including

international networks of Drawdown ecovillages by land and sea, can complete the pivot by 2030 and get us to prosperity for all by 2050.

### **BECOMING RELIABLE FOR A PROMISE FULFILLED**

How we have dealt with being at the effect of what we have seen or what happened for us in inquiry is to constantly remind ourselves and others that we always are at the source of that effect, so we can continually take responsibility for both what is working and what is not working

This came up recently in collaborating with unlikely allies who are used to status quo developments and have the bank connections and the borrowing ability we need for our ecovillage project. They were initially upset when we did not just step aside and let them dictate how the project was going to go.

Luckily, Carol discovered that she could resolve their upsets, as well as our own, by apologizing and taking responsibility for their upsets, while also creating the possibility with them of transparency and clarity. That let her work out an agreement that allows us to choose designers, methods and materials. Then I worked out an agreement with their general contractor that will let us subcontract a large portion of the construction and use a proprietary building system which we will manufacture on-site, install and finish. This will help us meet our Drawdown community goals of being net positive in food, power, water, employment and 100 percent renewably powered transportation with zero waste, while short cycling and permanently sequestering carbon.

It seems as though this vision both inspires and concerns the developers, investors and bankers, since they see both opportunity and risk in it. So, we just have to keep addressing their concerns and presenting the possibility of a Drawdown community breakthrough that will create an epidemic of sustainability and economic prosperity in our region, which has one of the highest carbon footprints on the planet at 23.6 metric tons of carbon per person, per year.

The concerns of developers, builders and bankers

mostly have to do with measures, primarily around how we plan to apply the practices of sociocracy, a form of dynamic governance, and the principles of cooperatively-owned businesses to prevent cost overruns and profitability slippage. So, for any number of people out there reading this, we could use all the help we can get measuring and tuning as we move into increased action and a rapidly expanding project very soon.

Our biggest challenge over the years has been, and continues to be, how we sustain our work. We are grateful for the support of friends, family and a group of social impact investors who believe in our work. We now have promises from a local development group for \$1 million in seed money and securing the first \$15 million in construction financing.

How we became reliable as a clearing for a future that includes a promise fulfilled was to continually give up our concern about looking good. We also had to give up the thought that it should not be this way, regarding our ability to sustain our work on the project financially. We have to be willing to make requests and get people's no's and yes's. So, when we make requests, we always present the possibility and invite others to share in making this project and others like it a reality sooner rather than later, reminding them that the project belongs to them and future generations.

We attended a presentation recently by a lawyer for a nonprofit environmental advocacy law firm entitled, "The State of Justice in Environmental Justice." He shared many statistics that show that the environmental movement, in general, is well-funded. The social and economic justice movements, however, are not so well-funded, although there is some improvement when environmental justice overlaps. It turns out that when measured in dollars and cents, it looks like, as a whole, we really do care more about trees and polar bears than people.

This is the space of overlap we are operating in, and it gets into those messy social commons areas of social, economic and environmental justice. Luckily, there are groups, like this environmental law firm, that see the link between environmental and social and economic justice. We have been able to call on them for support when status quo

groups have not been interested in talking. As our society becomes more and more retribalized, it would make a difference if we came up with more whole context solutions to bridge the funding gaps for a world that works for everyone with no one left out and no offense to nature.

### **FORGING NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR FULFILLMENT**

The Drawdown project and Citizens' Climate Lobby are both clear examples of where many of our climate change visions are already being fulfilled in the world.

When we recently met with representatives of our 85 percent coal-fired, investor-owned utility, we discovered new opportunities. In listening for what works and does not work for them, we began to explore possible collaborations with our Drawdown community initiative and with Citizens' Climate Lobby's carbon fee and dividend climate legislative initiative.

Going into this meeting, based on previous unfruitful interactions, I never would have imagined what I now see as possible. Our Citizens' Climate Lobby partners, who set up the meeting, insisted that there was an opening for action, so I joined them and brought that listening to the meeting. What emerged is the possibility of partnering with the utility on the energy conservation side of our Drawdown project. They explained that this is an area where they can generate guaranteed profits because of how they are structured.

I also now see an opportunity to work with Citizens' Climate Lobby and the utility on a state carbon fee and dividend initiative that might help compensate them for what they refer to as "stranded assets," if they were to retire coal-fired power plants early to speed up their move to renewables. This is because new state legislation allows them to make as much money on conservation as they do on selling electricity, even though they do not have to build any new capacity. They have already made a commitment to convert to renewable sources, but over a time frame that could still be more detrimental to St. Louis, civilization and the planet than it needs to be.

### **GOING FORWARD**

Right now, it is the economic piece that could use

some work. As I write this, our military industrial complex has the problem of figuring out how to spend \$111 billion in discretionary spending before the end of the year so that they do not lose it. At the same time, the British Broadcasting Corporation recently reported that spending has been cut for the organization that is charged with protecting the remaining virgin rainforest in Brazil and the indigenous people who live there. As a result, only three unarmed paid indigenous staff members stand between the destruction of the lungs of the planet and the last uncontacted human beings who have been living a Drawdown lifestyle for millennia. The money that it would take to fund a sustainable future is there and has even been appropriated.

What is missing is the political will and also the entrepreneurial will to put it to use where it is needed. I include entrepreneurial will because corporations are now more powerful and impactful than many governments, and the major economic pivot needed now is to shift from the short-term need for turning a profit every 90 days to being "long-term greedy," focused on creating regenerative economies that sustain life and assure well-being for all, while producing long-term, more reliable profits. As voting citizens, we can generate that will, but first the possibility at the emergent level may need to be funded directly by those who can hear whole context solutions as possibility. This would be an example of a pivot toward a regenerative economy in service to life and a miraculous example of living in beloved community now.

# CAN OUR CLIMATE CRISES BE INVESTIGATED BY LISTENING FOR FULFILLMENT?

KARL ZELLER AND NED NIKOLOV

## *Abstract*

*The science of climate change is considered settled. In this paper, we report on how listening for fulfillment and new possibilities have provided for a significant challenge to this "settled" claim. We describe our scientific journey that began in argument and inability to listen to each other and ended with a miraculous discovery. In the early 1500s, Copernicus broadened his perspective from viewing Earth outward to one of all planetary motions as a whole viewed from above. He discovered that we have a heliocentric solar system. We accidentally wound up taking a similar approach that included the Sun and some of the very same planets Copernicus studied.*

*A brief introduction and background review of climate is followed by a new discovery employing space exploratory atmospheric data from extraterrestrial celestial bodies from United States-based National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Implications are that Earth's climate is currently very stable. The valid concerns we have for life-changing climate change (warming or cooling) could come from changes in either our Sun's incoming energy or from changes in the amount of Earth's atmospheric mass as monitored by Earth's surface air pressure.*

## INTRODUCTION

This paper is about climate science. We are not asking the reader to be philosophically open to new ideas. Rather, we are asking you to consider and listen for new science. Stuart Firestein, in his 2012 book, "Ignorance: How It Drives Science," catalogs how scientists consciously or unconsciously use ignorance through a range of approaches that include searching for other research connections, revisiting seemingly settled questions, adapting little questions to open big

ones and just tackling problems out of curiosity.<sup>1</sup> This paper gives a smattering of all of these.

Our community's original contributor, Werner Erhard, has the unique ability to extract and make operational the contents of Heidegger's philosophic writings. In discussing Heidegger's ideas and writings, philosopher Richard Polt cites "... true objectivity involves a willingness to revise one's point of view in light of what one discovers." Also, "... in fact, interpretation is an open-ended, ongoing process which, as long as it continues, provides

more insight than any static system ever can.”<sup>2</sup> In light of Heidegger’s ideas we, the authors, have had to test our willingness and alter our listening to achieve even the beginning of fulfillment as we describe herein.

### CONSTRAINTS TO LISTENING

The greenhouse gases in Earth’s atmosphere are water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, ozone, chlorofluorocarbons, hydrofluorocarbons, etc. Carbon dioxide is considered by the current greenhouse-gas theory to be the most significant and controversial in terms of the possibility to control climate and thereby being able to mitigate global warming a/k/a climate change.

Up to early 2010, the authors had the conventional point of view that carbon dioxide and man’s contributions to our atmosphere’s carbon dioxide were, in fact, causing global warming. We had not only accepted that the claim “the science of greenhouse gas warming had been solved and, in fact, human-caused emissions are the cause of warming,” but we were tasked with using climate and climate predictions in our research to improve fire weather forecasts for the U.S. Forest Service.

Our possibilities for fulfillment as research scientists had been forged in our listening, reading, contemplating and studying the known and accepted climate science of our time. All that was left for us to do was to continue focusing our research toward further understanding the roles of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases and taking actions to reduce those gases and other human-caused carbon emissions.

The idea or even the suggestion that carbon dioxide was not a culprit in the cause of global warming was not in our thinking, not allowed at our workplace and would guarantee the loss of our funding dollars if we even suggested it. Our habitual scientific ways of being, thinking and actions were reflected in the talks we presented and the proposals we wrote. They were the complete whole of our belief in the current, fully accepted climate theory in place then and until now.

Then life happened: We were confronted by,

and became witnesses to, an unlikely “miracle” that forever altered our tenacious support and acceptance of that universally-accepted climate theory. The miracle, explained below, was a science-based discovery that proved the current greenhouse-gas theory was wrong. After that miracle, our listening for each other and the science of others endured many twists and turns that challenged and threatened our collegiality, friendships with others, including family, employment and acceptance within the science community.

But, proceeding in support of the existing greenhouse-gas theory became untenable for us and our commitment to science. At the same time, making our miracle known rendered us untenable to others. We lost friends, became known as “climate deniers” to traditional scientists and “absurd clowns” to the climate deniers a/k/a climate skeptics and climate realists. Hence, we existed in The Landmark Forum’s type “Y” break-in-being, as we “didn’t belong.”

### BACKGROUND

In November 2009, England’s University of East Anglia Climate Research Unit was hacked into, e-mails between scientists exposed and news of the event was covered in world headlines. That hacking started a heated scientific debate between this paper’s authors, resulting in late night argumentative phone calls, angry wives and challenges between us. We both had our positions and found it impossible to actually listen to the other. There was certainly no fulfillment, only angst and accusation. One of us maintained that the climate scientists were indeed “cooking the books” (i.e., altering the data) as the news and blogs were asserting and the other argued that the content of the hacked e-mails, such as one scientist e-mailing another to “use this trick” was not nefarious, but simply suggesting a new way to legitimately analyze the data. Such conflicts rooted in semantics were not unusual between us as Karl Zeller was born and raised in the United States while Ned Nikolov was born and raised in Bulgaria prior to becoming an American citizen. The word “trick,” neither good nor bad, had to be taken in context and the context was dominated by our individual listening. Such misunderstandings often impaired our listening to, and for, each other.

One statement or assertion, in reference to warm air, caused a pause in our bickering: “Is there something in the physics of warm ‘Chinook’ winds (Chinook is a Native American word for snow eater) we experience along the Colorado Front Range during the winter months that might be related to the overall global atmospheric warmth we humans enjoy?” Chinook winds result from: 1) moisture-laden air forced upward lowering pressure on the upwind side of a mountain causing clouds and rain (location of all rain forests), followed by 2) that same air cresting then descending the mountain’s downwind (leeward) side increasing pressure and becoming warmer than it was at the same elevation on the upwind side. It is warmer because the air no longer carried the water to convert latent heat back to vapor and thereby using up the extra energy of compression (pressure).

This snow-eating inquiry had nothing at all to do with the “hackings” or carbon dioxide, but it did put us on the new path of thinking outside the greenhouse gases box and allowed us to become friends again. “If air pressure were related to local warming, might it also be related to the overall temperature of our atmosphere? If that was so, how could we find the answer? We needed an atmosphere with no water. This quest led us to the startling, hard-to-believe, miracle discovery.

### A TROUBLING DISCOVERY

The occurrence of water on a planet like Venus was known to be nil. This turned our attention to our solar system’s extraterrestrial hard surface (including liquids), heavenly bodies. That search formed a question providing a hypothesis that could be tested:

Might the same physical principles determine the mean global surface temperatures of all planets and moons with atmospheres?

In other words, is Earth a special case, in terms of its climate, or is it part of a common family of atmospheres? Well, we all know intuitively that Earth, having water, a temperate climate, life and a unique mix of oxygen and nitrogen with a little bit of those trace greenhouse gases cannot possibly be described mathematically and physically the same as super-hot, runaway-

greenhouse planet Venus or super-cold-barely-any-atmosphere Mars. Anyone would have to be out of their minds to even pose such a question. Scientists, who attempt to run computer global climate models for other planets, will tell you that they have to tweak, tweak, tweak the models to even get them to run (not crash), then, once running, tweak them further to get close to reasonable results.

Such a “tweaked” global climate model, say for Mars, would never work for Venus, let alone back here on good ‘ole Earth. Even more troubling, current global climate models do not explain Earth’s past climate, according to paleoclimate researchers, such as A. M. Haywood and colleagues at the School of Earth and Environment, University of Leeds, UK.<sup>3</sup> Global model results for Earth have not matched past climate measurements. Hence, the common sense answer to this question of Earth being part of a larger interplanetary whole is a resounding no. Or is it?

Why not test it with real data since NASA has been collecting data from numerous celestial bodies for about 40 years now? One reason why not is because the science has been “settled” and we would be wasting our time. Why would anyone even be interested for these same reasons? Given that carbon dioxide is currently treated as a pollutant, it belongs to the same class of unhealthy air emissions as sulfur dioxide, particulates, nitrogen oxides, etc. Only someone, who supported dirty air, would be so misguided as to pursue such an endeavor. Good scientists, like us, are usually on the clean side. Given this state of affairs, we had to remember Martin Heidegger’s ideas previously stated.

Does this sound familiar? Wasn’t it once upon a time widely known and universally accepted that the heavens circled Earth before Copernicus proposed a revolutionary heliocentric model of the solar system based on reevaluated observations that were later mathematically proven by Johannes Kepler?

We were, and are, interested in having the human contribution portion of our current climate crises solved. We were able to gain a new sense of ease or fulfillment by being open and listening to what a new data-based perspective on climate was

telling us. We proceeded with new vigor.

### CURRENT SITUATION AND PROJECTIONS

Here, we quickly review the current status of global warming measurements and predictions. Trying to get unmanipulated (raw) data on global temperature is not easy these days as surface temperature averages involve combining data in a plethora of different ways. This has been an ongoing topic of many debates. The authors like to use low elevation satellite data because it averages larger spatial areas and comes from sensing Earth's lowest atmosphere adjacent to the ground, accurately representing ground temperatures, but not subject to point-by-point "adjustments" made by human experts.

A review of these satellite measurements that represent Earth's mean global monthly surface temperatures since 1979 obtained by the NASA TIROS-N satellite show the changing mean global temperature since 1979, the first year of satellite measurements.<sup>4</sup> These measurements verify our common knowledge that temperatures have been getting warmer, however, not at the steadily increasing rate we all assume. Interestingly after 1979, 1998 was the hottest year until 2016 that was only 0.3 Centigrade warmer (0.54 Fahrenheit; 1 C = 1.8 F) with 2017 and 2018 being cooler, but still warmer than the 1980s and early 1990s.

Global climate models are programmed to account for carbon dioxide concentrations based on laboratory experiments and on a correlation between warming and rising carbon dioxide concentrations between 1979 and 1998 (not before, not after). On average, these models project a +3.2-degree C per century increase in Earth's surface temperature, based on doubling carbon dioxide concentrations. A summary graph by John Christy of University of Alabama at Huntsville shows the difference between global climate model predictions and actual surface temperature measured after the 1998 predictions is +0.64 C higher than observed.<sup>5</sup> The bottom line is that we have experienced warming, the temperature rise since 1998 has noticeably slowed down and all global climate models predict more warming than later measured. The exaggerated predictions are significant and an indication that the climate models are missing something.

### A NEW HYPOTHESIS AND THE DATA

As time passed, we listened to each other, studied data and were able to form a very simple new hypothesis: Earth's atmosphere is part of a cosmic physical continuum.

This may sound new age to some readers, but, by cosmic physical continuum, we mean a "larger family of atmospheres with kind-of the same DNA." "Cosmic" means beyond, and including, Earth. "Physical" means all obeying the same laws of physics, and "continuum" means the physics explaining planetary temperatures is not disjointed or interrupted, i.e., one model or explanation works for all planets and moons. For instance, as discussed before, current global climate models once configured for one planet do not work on a different planet without reconfiguration. Hence, the models do not include Earth in a cosmic physical continuum as expressed in those models.

To test this hypothesis, we assembled all the relevant NASA planetary and moon surface data we could find. We validated the data and subjected it to the "dimensional analysis" engineering problem-solving approach that extracts data ratios. The data we used is given in our 2017 publication and by Volokin and ReLlez in their 2014 publication<sup>6,7</sup>

### THE DISCOVERY AND AUTHORS' FULFILLMENT

The golden nugget or miracle of the discovery that resulted from our research and analyses was a new data ratio heretofore unbeknown to climate science. That ratio between any planet's or moon's mean global air temperature and the mean global temperature that same planet or moon's surface would have without an atmosphere tells us the multiplying or enhancing power of any atmosphere. For Earth, that ratio is 1.46 or 46 percent enhancement. No theory, just data. Further, when we plotted the data ratios with a statistical regression verses the planet's or moon's surface pressure, we got a very tight relationship (e.g., data-to-regression fit.) Such tight data fits are very rare in science research and have provided for our fulfillment.

For verification, we have used the math from this discovery to predict Pluto's surface temperature

prior to the recent New Horizons spacecraft's encounter and to predict the temperature of Titan, a moon of Saturn. In both cases, the predicted temperatures were within 1.5 degrees of the actual observations. Full detail, equations, thermodynamic and physics explanations can be found in our 2017 peer-reviewed journal article.<sup>6</sup>

What does this hypothesis verification have to do with the fact that global warming is upon us and scheduled to negatively impact our lives forever? Everything, because its implications profoundly change what we think we know about climate change.

### DISTURBING IMPLICATIONS FOR SOME READERS

The planets and moons represented in the tight regression data fit: 1) are made up of varying atmospheric chemistry and 2) demonstrate that ultimate long-term mean planetary surface temperatures are controlled by only two variables: solar energy and surface pressure.<sup>6</sup>

The implication is that atmospheric chemistry is not a player in determining a planet's global mean surface temperature. This implication agrees with the gas laws some of us studied in high school (Charles, Boyles, Gay-Lussac's and the Ideal Gas Law)

as they were also all independent of the gas constituents. In light of these gas laws, our result might not be that surprising.

However, if you follow and believe in the current greenhouse gas theory, follow the news and are fearful about climate change, our results that imply carbon dioxide does not impact surface air temperature might occur as blasphemous. Rest assured, we are sympathetic, as we did not believe it either the first time we saw the results of our study. We have also rethought the term "greenhouse effect" by noting that carbon dioxide behaves differently in the outside open free air than it does when confined to a container for testing in laboratory experiments. This difference in behavior is also observed for oxygen and nitrogen in actual greenhouses since, without a glass greenhouse as the container, the greenhouse wouldn't work.

### MORE TO COME

More data is needed to further study the veracity and implications of our discovery. Earth's paleoclimate has provided opportunities to further apply our discovery. We do have proxy paleotemperature measurements that go back millions of years. Since we have the mathematical expression for surface temperature determined by pressure and solar energy based on data, we can invert that equation, and, if we assume that the Sun always stayed constant, we can predict what Earth's surface pressure might have been millions of years ago. Why do that? Everyone knows that Earth's atmosphere doesn't change and our surface pressure has always been constant. But, do we really?

There are the unanswered questions of how pterodactyls were able to fly, why subtropical fossils were found at 70-degree latitude north and south and how did the blood physiology of those dinosaurs with the long necks work. When we applied our inverted equation to calculate pressure from observed temperatures in the geological record, we discovered that Earth's surface pressure was much higher and, hence, had denser air. With denser air, pterodactyls can fly, blood gets to the dinosaur's heads and the weather changes making the poles much warmer allows for subtropical forests at 70 degrees north and south. These promising results are being prepared for publication, but have not been published to date.

### CONCLUSION

The authors are thankful for having learned to listen to each other. We also are thankful for the concerns of the peer reviewers of our journal article, which was an even more difficult listening process. Our greenhouse-gas context has changed and we are now fully engaged in our unfunded climate research and feel more and more fulfilled as we move ahead expanding and verifying our findings.

How many times have we heard "context is decisive?" As Landmark graduates, we are all very familiar with its power to alter lives, especially our own. Every day, we hear and read about how we humans are negatively impacting our own precious nests, ecosystems, polluting waters, soils and air. Recently, national and world politics

CURRENT GREENHOUSE THEORY ASSERTS:	NIKOLOV-ZELLER DISCOVERY IMPLIES:
Carbon dioxide and vapor water absorb and retains heat thereby warming Earth's atmosphere	All gases provide for warming Earth's atmosphere due to air pressure and Sun's energy passing through
Earth's surface temperature is a special case with no relation to other planets	Earth's surface temperature is part of a solar system continuum
Carbon dioxide is the control knob of Earth's climate for all time scales; higher carbon dioxide concentrations will cause warmer temperatures	Changes in air pressure and Sun energy are the long-term control knobs  Solar cycles with associated changes in global cloud cover are the short-term control knobs of Earth's air temperature
Surface temperatures have risen since 1979 and will continue to rise	Surface temperatures have risen since 1979 and have reached a plateau

Table 1.

have been successfully lowering environmental standards and regulations. There is worldwide environmental degradation to be alarmed about, to be actively working on to mitigate and contribute funds toward alleviating.

We have alluded to how difficult it has been, and still is, for us to communicate our climate-related discovery to the world. The current worldwide context for climate warming is that we humans are causing it and carbon dioxide is a major cause. The science is settled, climate skeptics admit you're evil, end of story. Yes, we humans are altering our local and regional climates and contributing to global soil, water and air pollution. However, one implication of our discovery is that carbon dioxide in the open atmosphere cannot cause any extra warming.

As long as the amount of Earth's atmosphere and the Sun's energy don't change, Earth's long-term mean global temperature will be bound within a two-degree Centigrade up-and-down variation. This is good news that further research could possibly uphold. Unfortunately, it seems that the world's context for considering, let alone allowing, funding of such research is not there yet. Here, we contrast and summarize the

implications of our discovery (see Table 1).

From our perspective, our results will someday positively affect the whole world. We also anticipate negatively impacting those entities currently profiting from the fears associated with climate change. On the political front, we are continually amazed that we get little or no interest in our findings from liberals or especially conservatives. We were once "enlightened" (actually dismayed) by a congressional staffer who told us his office "has no interest in solving the climate problem. We'd be losing a powerful effective talking point." Good grief! Scientifically, our hope is that climate modelers will someday use our findings to both improve their models and employ our results as effective boundary conditions for more accurate climate projections. For you, the reader, we hope we have given you a new listening for scientists who have controversial findings and that you may reevaluate your climate change context. Finally, thank you for reading to the end.

**DISCLAIMER**

Only personal funds were used for this research and writing this paper. Zeller is retired and Nikolov, who works for the U.S. Forest Service, has specific

written directions to not work on climate research that does not support the current theory during his official duty hours. He honors that directive.

For anyone who wants to see the tables and charts from our data or has questions, please e-mail Zeller at kzeller@colostate.edu.

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# GLOBAL MADNESS: WHAT MUST HAPPEN TO UNITE?

FRED MOSS

## Abstract

*Human beings appear hard-wired to notice differences between each other and then respond by separating and discriminating against each other. In this paper, we look at what could happen for us to unite together as one people on one planet by incorporating our differences to serve a greater good. This article references what my life is committed to in the future, directly taking these issues on, so that we all can take a giant step toward individual empowerment and global unity.*

## INTRODUCTION

As a physician with decades of experience working with the disenfranchised and mentally ill population, I sometimes find myself envious of their limitless lifestyle. While my work and personal life require me to stay within appropriate societal boundaries (or else face marginalization), their lives occasionally seem free and easy. They can be, and do, whatever they choose without concern of “falling off” of their mentally deranged label.

After all, if they act strange or the least bit unique, they never have to worry about losing their lofty role in society, i.e., “falling up” to normal. They have adhered to their diagnosed condition and, therefore, are starting off abnormal.

They are comparatively untethered. Anything goes. Free to be and act. It is truly enviable.

## COMPARING AND CONTRASTING ILLUSIONS

As a clinician, I have the power to diagnose and treat. The power is intoxicating. It is an illusion. The notion that I, as a physician, am relevant is supported by the general community and, therefore, my sense of self-worth is bolstered. Unlike my deranged brethren (those deemed mentally ill), they will likely be punished if they fall prey to their lofty illusions (e.g., “I could be president”). My illusions bring me a sense of self-worth and strength. However, their illusions might bring them a syringe full of powerful toxic chemicals, restraint and a short three-to-five-day vacation at an institution.

Ultimately, once they firmly agree that their illusions of power were just fleeting symptoms of their condition and could never actually materialize, then they will be able to leave the facility. Same illusions, different outcomes.

In the streets of all major cities worldwide, one cannot help but notice, and, maybe, even take exception to, the seemingly downtrodden population singing or dancing openly in broad daylight. Perhaps, they are even vocalizing their monologues (not far from the ones that we all experience, truth be told). Crazy, they must be, we are to believe.

We in the mainstream comfort ourselves knowing that we do not have a condition (as far as we know) that would allow for so much unbridled freedom—self-expression without societal limitations. While the marginalized may be ecstatic or distraught in their manners, I find myself impressed, and even jealous, of their sense of unruliness and wildness. When I walk by, hurriedly and warily, perhaps wearing a suit jacket and carrying my car and house keys close to me (for fear of having worldly possessions taken from my illusion of ownership), I notice this inner conflict. I waver between feeling sorrow for these folks and wishing that I could find the same latitude to simply say, be and act in the ways that naturally call to me. The disenfranchised seem to have the advantage of being free to be and act as a natural self-expression.

Is it the mainstream—us (dare I ask?)—that disenfranchises the outcasts? Do we set the outcasts aside? If so, what exactly is the baseline for the mainstream? Is it simply a matter of perspective? Or, is there an inherent distinction between us and them? When one sees oneself as an outcast, is a new mainstream immediately defined? From their perspective, does that person now see the mainstream as a group of outcasts? Is being an outcast simply an arbitrary misnomer? Is there such thing as a mainstream? In the end, are these two groups really that different?

Maybe the answers lie within what drives our self-expression. In agreeing to be part of the mainstream, what true freedoms must one relinquish? How much personal self-expression

is sacrificed? Within the definition of mainstream, clear rules must be followed to stay a member or else risk being unceremoniously tossed to the state of outcast. Outcasts can be reinstated if they can recover the mainstream’s illusions.

In a hypothetical world of outcasts, these definitions simply do not exist. Rules seem to be set by being fully self-expressed without care or concern of following any protocol. However, once there are members of an outcast group, has not a new mainstream emerged within their ranks?

One thing seems rather clear here. The inescapable outcome is the creation of an undeniable “us vs. them” mentality. An alien is defined, illegal or not. This seems inevitable, and, maybe, even necessary, a hard wire for humanity. Every society, or subset of society that I know of, evokes this “we and they” framework, intentionally or inadvertently, in an effort to accurately describe themselves as different from one another. Warring factions, or at least those that firmly disagree on what is normal, naturally arise. Thus, working together as one unit, to achieve a goal or outcome, with these separate ideologies or values, naturally becomes immediately and profoundly challenging.

## A “SOLUTION” TO THE DILEMMA?

So, I ponder: Given that this setup appears to be inherent in human nature, what sociological system could conceivably be employed to allow us to accept all our differences and work together while, at the same time, using the specific variances of our strengths to our benefit and not seeing our differences as a hindrance that needs to be overcome? It would need to be larger than the threats that we are now facing. Climate change is clearly not “loud” enough for us to transform our differences into strengths and unify humanity.

Here is what I have come up with as a far-fetched possibility, I hope, to suit those needs: an urgent global threat from a nonhuman entity. We can use the “us vs. them” mentality effectively, and creatively, to unite the planetary response required to sustain our earthly existence.

What might that look like? As an example, what if we knew that we had one year from today to prepare for the invasion of Martians intent



on destroying us all (really!) and a global effort would be required to address it effectively? Would that be enough impetus—enough of a calling—to overlook our apparent differences and martial the unique strengths and qualifications of different factions and eliminate the imminent destruction of our planet Earth?

I would hope so, but, unfortunately, I am not certain. Given that the “us vs. them” is hard-wired into our humanness, what seems promising in this scenario is that we still maintain our disenfranchising tendencies and outcast creations to address the destruction of our world. Our new outcasts or aliens would now be defined as those marauding Mars dwellers. A new baseline emerges of “human vs. non-human,” and, perhaps, our human variabilities would not be alienating enough to splinter us. The threat of a Martian invasion, therefore, could draw us together as one global team. One can only hope!

I truly pity the Martians who would have to take on a unified and organized group of 7.6 billion functional human beings called on to perform at an urgent level. As a reorganized and stratified true force to be reckoned with, we would be cooperatively and effectively intent to bring down the Martians’ ill-fated plan to annihilate us. The outcome would likely amount to a truly bad day for these unfortunate and misled warriors from Mars.

As people, we are, of course, much more similar than different on a global scale. When we describe ourselves as factions, whether it be nationalities, races or ideologies of some kind, we actually focus more on what it means not to belong, rather than to belong. This is no less true when we speak of the mentally ill. We do not have a workable definition of non-mental illness. Or, said another way, what it is to be normal. Belonging to the normal group is based on specific, arbitrary and culturally determined parameters. As what is abnormal in one contextual setting is seen as grossly abnormal in another. From this perspective, mental illness can easily be seen as simply a conversation. It is subject to transformation rather instantaneously, and, in fact, has no global meaning.

## WELCOME TO HUMANITY

Welcome to Humanity™ has become my professional brand and clinical identity. As such, I am of the notion that all people are whole, complete and perfect. In fact, there is not a circumstance, behavior, discomfort or experience of any type, including confusion, pain, anger and hopelessness, for which simply saying, “welcome to humanity” is not a compassionate, resetting and accurate response for sending one in the direction of healing or comfort. Comfort and health are not synonyms by any stretch, and discomfort in its many manifestations is simply an obvious and truly inherent essential component of the daily human experience. Reorganizing, reconfiguring and transforming the conversation about mental illness is the mission, vision and purpose of Welcome to Humanity™. Those who are ready to look at the human experience from a new empowering perspective, inquiring together into all the many facets of what it means to be human, are invited to join us in this journey.

## GLOBAL MADNESS

I have also assembled a group of interested and extremely dedicated individuals to create a breakthrough new documentary series that explores the global state of mental health with a mission to discover new ways of talking about, diagnosing and treating mental illness through authentic and inspirational storytelling. Our goal is to create an entirely new paradigm, where mental health is discussed without stigma and fostered without harm.

Through “Global Madness,” we will explore global locations (Israel, Australia, Norway, China, Zimbabwe and Finland for starters) and their relevant mental health facilities. We will learn from impacted patients on the frontlines of mental health, supported by their caregivers, doctors, families and friends. We will meet mental health physicians, change-makers and innovators who are employing miraculous management techniques and using different forms of creativity and communication to heal. We will also facilitate transformational conversations that will shift the paradigm of mental illness.

These are difficult times, and, perhaps, even as Dickens suggested, the best and worst of times to be alive. We have the opportunity to redefine and transform what it means to be human. My Impossible Promise is that, by 2030, each and every person will know that their voice can be heard and that who they are and what they do matters. I am committed to continuing to explore this and have created a network of conversations that allows me to move in this direction, powerfully and intentionally, to make a difference with how the outcast and disenfranchised are seen and heard. I am also committed to making a difference in how the outcast and disenfranchised aspects of each of us can be embraced and reset, effectively and compassionately, so that our lives and purposes for being here can be discovered. Welcome to this extraordinary life that we all share.

Welcome to Humanity.

# HOT WRITERS' GROUP: LISTENING, COMMUNITY AND FULFILLMENT

TOBY GOLDBERG, MELISSA GOLD, CAROL MARK  
AND LORRAINE "RAIN" WARREN

## Abstract

*This article explores the journey of the "Hot Writers' Group" that began with a conversation in 2018 by some Wisdom Unlimited course graduates. As we committed to weekly calls inquiring into the possibility of our writing, one idea was to collaborate on an article for the Conference for Global Transformation's journal. By engaging the theme Listening for Fulfillment, our inquiry began. Five members of the group delved into the inquiry, sharing writing journeys, joys, challenges and life transformations, as well as hopes and fears about writing. As we danced and played inside of inquiry, our contribution to the journal emerged.*

## INTRODUCTION

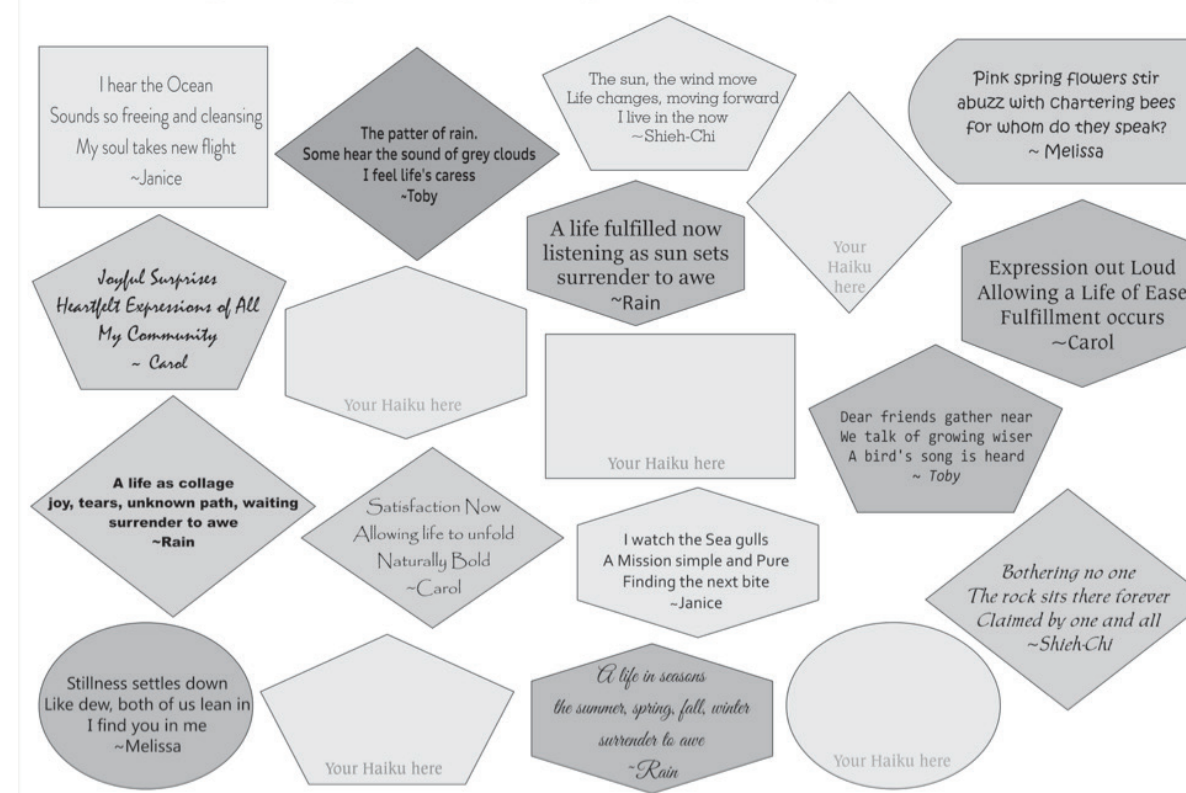
Our exploration began with a conversation between some Wisdom graduates and expanded over breakfast at the conference in 2018. We committed to weekly conference calls inquiring into the possibility of our writing and listening, sharing, encouraging and nurturing connection. Much opened up and unfolded, both individually and collectively.

After much dialogue and exploration, a few completed their participation in the journal aspect of the group after submitting some contributions. Five of us continued to explore and share our writing journeys allowing for the self-expression and fulfillment of ourselves as writers. Four of us have contributed to the final article.

We tried several ideas and concepts ranging from mind maps and poetry, even ontological vignettes, detailing our journey of exploration. Our inquiry sometimes included heavy and tense dialogue, other times pregnant silences. Sometimes, fun, play and ease emerged suddenly.

One result is a collection of haikus on the theme Listening for Fulfillment. Our haikus (see Figure 1: Haiku Collage) are preceded by brief comments from each writer. We invite you to listen to the unique soul and beauty of each contributor as we explore the theme through haiku.

## HAIKU: LISTENING FOR FULFILLMENT



Finally, as readers, you are invited to contribute your own haikus in the blank spaces of the haiku page and come see us at the Hot Writers' poster presentation. Happy writing.

## A NOTE ON HAIKU

Haiku is a form of poetry adapted from Japanese practice. English speakers traditionally think of these tiny poems as having three lines, containing five syllables in the first line, seven in the second line and five in the third line. However, haikus are also known by other characteristics, including a focus on, or setting in, nature, a "season" word (e.g., snow) and a closing that employs a different focus than the opening two lines ([www.creative-writing-now.com/how-to-write-a-haiku.html](http://www.creative-writing-now.com/how-to-write-a-haiku.html)). Some expert haiku writers have a different, more radical approach toward the strict number of syllables in English ([www.nahaiwrimo.com/home/why-no-5-7-5](http://www.nahaiwrimo.com/home/why-no-5-7-5)). Most of the haiku created in this project follow the traditional English language approach.

## Comments By Contributors

### LIVING, LISTENING AND WRITING, AS PRACTICE

TOBY GOLDBERG, Toronto

*I believe that we learn by practice. Whether it means to learn to dance by practicing dancing or to learn to live by practicing living, the principles are the same. In each, it is the performance of a dedicated precise set of acts, physical or intellectual, from which comes shape of achievement, a sense of one's being, a satisfaction of spirit. One becomes, in some area, an athlete of God. Practice means to perform, over and over again in the face of all obstacles, some act of vision, of faith, of desire. Practice is a means of inviting the perfection desired.<sup>1</sup>*

—Martha Graham

I joined the Hot Writers' Group with a purpose: to complete a writing project I had been harboring in my mind for many decades. I wasn't sharing

about my project. It was something I didn't know how to fulfill on and I had set aside. Through my participation in Wisdom 2018, the practice of listening generously (central to the course) gave me greater ease with my own self-expression. This opened up a space to look at my creative desires and start sharing about my writing project. Boom! The writers group showed up.

The project is a legacy piece about my father's life. By sharing about it in the writers' group, I've received ideas and support and a sense of being in a community of writers. We've had regular weekly calls and experimented with a variety of ways to prompt and practice writing. Out of this, I have had glimpses of seeing and knowing myself as a writer and I'm in action to complete the project.

At the time, the idea of writing an article for the conference journal was another opportunity to practice writing. At first, I didn't see that it would also provide an opportunity to experience what it takes to fulfill on a writing project. This lesson may be the most memorable part of the process for me. I noticed how much I was committed to getting the submission completed and final publication. I can see that this desire kept me in the game, even when obstacles got in the way. The practice of writing gave way to the practice of fulfillment.

#### **THE "I" DISAPPEARS AND THE "WE" EMERGES** *MELISSA GOLD, Toronto*

Over several months, several women took part in a weekly Zoom call to create a group writing project about listening for fulfillment for the conference. As one of the participants, I soon sensed that "stuff" was getting in my way of listening for it, as everyone had a different idea of what we were doing and how we would do it. My version of the "stuff" looked a lot like being a lone wolf and a lone wolf in a hurry, at that.

In my world, no one was listening to anyone, and I made the others wrong for that without noticing I was doing the same thing. The other partners in the group endeavor seemed to want to just sit and talk about what to do and how to do it rather than getting into action by trying a few different things to see what might arise from the efforts, even if they failed. Making that wrong,

too, I wanted us to try anything just to move the project along. Finally, I suggested a mind map, a visual display of how thoughts, feelings and ideas flow from, and are connected to, a central concept. From the mind map we could all draw from, we could write poems—as I've successfully done with other groups. This approach had some appeal, and someone suggested we each write one or more haiku in the form of the poems. Great, I thought, short and sweet. We collaged listening and fulfillment, then mind-mapped listening for fulfillment. So far, so good.

I realize now that, in my eagerness to get somewhere, I never did really listen enough. I didn't get present to what everyone's concerns and hesitation were actually about. Were they disempowered in some way? How were our respective visions of a group literary project actually different? Maybe the others felt insecure, even unsafe as artists? Why were we even attempting to do this? Gradually, I faced the fact that my rackets were getting in the way of exploring what could be possible.

Then, one day, I remembered that I had once created an Impossible Promise that, "Everyone manifests their intellectual and spiritual greatness through creativity and play." There was the empowering context, for me, anyway. I found that I was finally able to move from being attached to a certain way of proceeding to being committed we find what would allow everyone to be self-expressed. I made myself let others take over the "wheel." Only then did we start to get somewhere. In the end, haiku did prove most feasible, as we—still new to the whole listening and creating together process—could each follow our own vision for the project in a small way. When the haiku finally came together, they did mesh.

I had overlooked that listening isn't a one-time experience but a practice. Listening isn't something we do just to produce a product, but an activity to engage in regularly with a structure in place to see that we do it, like a regular weekly call.

But, now, what are we beholding, if not a result of the practice we engaged in? We have all written, and the pieces fit together like a puzzle we didn't know the appearance of beforehand.

We discovered that small is better, at least at first. Small forces us to economize our thoughts and discover the essence of what we want to make available in the world in concert with others. It might not be what I would do on my own, but it is what people do when playing with others. What I discovered is that our written words are not us but what we exchange with others, a melody that cannot come from a single throat.

Listening more would have made a difference. Still, eventually the "I" disappeared and the "we" emerged. We did get somewhere, even if it was somewhere we weren't expecting to go.

#### **DISCOVERING THE WRITER WITHIN, IN COMMUNITY** *CAROL MARK, Toronto*

When I heard about the creation of a writers' group, I thought that's great: they're creating structures to fulfill on their dreams. It didn't even cross my mind that it could include me.

Through my training as a facilitator, my listening of myself expanded, the possibility of myself as a writer emerged and I joined the group.

When the idea of writing came up, I said yes.

I struggled with my noise: I'm not enough. I don't know how. I can't do it. I need my hand held. I don't wanna. It's no fun. I suck at writing. No one is interested or wants to hear what I have to say. It's nothing new. It's (I'm) not special.

Haiku were new to me. I'd heard of them, but had no idea how to write them. I reached out to the community, wrote my first haiku and much to my delight and wonder, it was fun and easy.

Only in community can the writer within live and be expressed.

#### **LISTENING AND LOVING ON THE EDGES** *LORRAINE "RAIN" WARREN, Tallahassee, Florida*

My experience of connecting to the women of the Hot Writers' Group, as we inquired into the possibility of contributing an article to this journal, has been one of tension, intimacy and love.

Our contribution emerged out of our

engagement with each other over the course of several months. We delved into our knowing and not knowing, as our inquiry evolved.

We had many tense moments as we bumped up against possibilities that did not fit one or another's particular picture. Then, in another moment, ease and play emerged as we chose to dance with the word maps, collective poetry, thoughts and opinions, and the energy began to shift as we began to see a collective way versus individual positions.

At times, I felt our creation was a little on the edge and different, yet right in its wrongness. Individually, we moved in and out of the group, physically and emotionally, yet continued to show up and inquire. There were those who were consistent and held space, and those who peeped in and out curiously.

I chose to stay even though, at times, I wanted to run as far away as possible from what I perceived as noise, chatter and small talk, which would amount to little, if anything. Then, I began to listen deeper for possibility and contribution. I stood on my belief that life is asking all of us to listen, just a little deeper.

As we challenged each other to dance outside the box, play and listen for possibility, excitement sprang forth in the form of haiku as a form we could collectively draw from. Its elegance and simplicity were attractive and allowed us to take a deeper breath and listen for what wanted to be created.

Still, we were not fully settled. Just like the conversation about haiku in the world from those who felt we should stay with some traditional form to those who welcomed the opportunity to embrace whatever form showed up. We acknowledged the voices that said, "Stay with the rules" and those that said, "No rules." As a result, together, we produced a thing of beauty. I was left with more questions to play with and inquire into.

Where do we each find fulfillment?  
Is there a middle ground?  
Must there be one?

Can we be comfortable dancing on the edge of things?

Or, can we learn to be with being uncomfortable?  
What are we listening for?  
What fulfills?

After reading each person's haiku,  
I loved the way I felt,  
like seeing a rainbow after an impossible storm.  
I loved the way our words looked collectively on  
the page.  
I loved the shades of gray and the empty  
spaces around and between the words

and

the space between my eyes and the printed page.  
I loved the bits and pieces of our lives  
expressed in this way and the serendipitous  
path that brought us here.

I discovered what is possible when I stay, even  
when it may be uncomfortable to do so. I  
discovered my love for each of these women  
and their diverse expressions and all of the  
conversations that seemed not to relate to  
anything essential, yet provided a way to see into  
each person's humanity. It no longer mattered  
if we fulfilled on writing an article or failed to do  
so. What mattered the most was the willingness  
to engage, challenge, inquire and risk expressing  
oneself authentically and loving all of it.

For me, this is what life asks of each of us:  
to show up, engage, inquire and explore,  
and risk the possibility of falling in love with  
life the way it is and the way it is not.

As we wrote our individual haiku, we engaged the  
theme of Listening for Fulfillment and the results  
were as diverse and surprisingly delightful as  
each of us. May all who read our words listen for  
a life of fulfillment no matter how it shows up.

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#### ENDNOTES

1 [www.goodreads.com/quotes/33542](http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/33542).

# TRANSFORMING FAMILIES – LEADERSHIP AND FULFILLMENT IN A CHALLENGING AND FORMIDABLE WORLD

CHERYL FOX

## *Abstract*

*In 2008, after completing The Landmark Forum, I discovered during a seminar series that what really mattered to me was transformation for families. Since then, I've been standing in – or one could say, listening for – the possibility of empowering families, whether my own or others'. This paper explores what led me to that possibility, what's occurred over 22 years and what has opened up with my family and the families, leadership teams and agencies I serve in my work. On a broader level, I've been inquiring this past year into the value of being fulfilled as we dedicate our lives to the empowerment and fulfillment of others.*

## INTRODUCTION

In 1997, I arrived in California, alone and exhausted. It was an unexpected move. What was so? My former husband, with our two young daughters, then six and eight years old, had moved from Virginia to California without informing me of the move.

Just months earlier, I had shown up to find our previously shared condominium in Virginia Beach, Virginia, vacated. I had recently completed my master's degree in social work, and, on that same day, I had completed my first week as a clinical social worker in an intensive in-home therapy program. I was shocked, panicked and felt totally empty. I had asked for a divorce after recognizing

my attraction to women that showed up as a "crush." I felt totally vulnerable emotionally and regarding the kids, and was advised to not share my "reason" for ending our marriage. The courts were ruling it was "illegal" for a lesbian mom to have custody of her children in Virginia.

I had remained silent to hide part of who I am, and that did not work. I was overwhelmed, feeling vulnerable and ashamed. I was a mom without the most cherished part of life, my children. I went home, called my mom, sharing my shock, feelings of devastation and overwhelm. She listened attentively, as I said, "Life is not even worth living without them." She again listened, recreating how much I love the girls and courageously asserted, "Is that the legacy you want to leave

the girls, that life is not worth living?" In that moment, I got my love for them and moved into action, planning my move to California.

Fast-forward to 2012 during my poster session on "Transforming Families" at the Conference for Global Transformation I began to invite dialogue and have participants share their experiences. Listening, I was profoundly moved. The very first person, who approached my poster, grabbed me, hugged me and said, "This is exactly what I needed!" Shaking her phone, she continued, "I just got a call that my brother killed himself." As she stared at my poster, she said, "I have no idea what to do." Present to our humanity and to our connection, I stood, holding the space. She shared her shock and disbelief and then shifted to her vision for her family. She was now on the unexpected journey as a survivor of a brother who killed himself. Tears welled in her eyes. Again, grabbing her phone, she said, "I know what I have to do, I have to support his wife and the kids. They need to know they can get through this." As my poster session continued, I was moved multiple times beyond words by the vulnerability and strength. I listened as people shared their family's challenges, traumas and triumphs.

As I reflect on my growth and development, I've realized it wasn't until completing the Curriculum for Living that I began to speak with intention and be accountable for creating the space for others' best selves to show up. Empowering families, our community connection and leadership, I declared in their listening, the space of full self-expression and love and the possibility of transformation for families.

This has empowered me to speak authentically about my experiences and embrace them as a source of empowerment. The ability to be with what is so, to choose it as it is and being willing to be accountable and powerful in my leadership continues to expand.

Standing in partnership with others in the midst of inherent complexities of county government and working tirelessly to align stakeholders and create a space for miracles to arise for colleagues, clients and in my own family is rigorous. As a wife, mother, social worker, coach and leader, it is, at times, daunting. Staying empowered is easier said

than done. One very real epidemic that presents itself regularly to our mental health teams and in the world is depression, isolation, suicidal ideation and suicide. In the United States today, suicide is one of the leading causes of death. As of 2016, suicide was the second leading cause of death for persons between the ages of 10 and 54 years old.

In my career as a licensed clinical social worker and behavioral health manager and leader, I strive to expand my capacity in making powerful requests, creating openings that have never happened before. This has been especially powerful in my career to address the daily challenges of the mental health system and the treatment of youth and their families. In an environment where there is constant pressure to provide more services with fewer resources, the practice of listening for people's commitments in the world opens up new and powerful avenues to create. My willingness to be vulnerable and authentic and to lead with courage and focus on connection with my staff, colleagues and management teams have continued to create unexpected results and miracles. In one case, this stand had a surprisingly powerful impact on an employee with poor job performance.

Inquiring with her about her commitment for her job performance, she was able to articulate that she was not committed to successful performance of her prescribed job. She then chose to leave the agency and pursue her career elsewhere, more in line with her overall commitments. This shift with one employee further transformed the listening I had of myself and the listening others had of me. I was breathing new life into my connection with colleagues across the agency, with my family and community, embarking on discovering and inventing new worlds.

#### **LEADERSHIP WITH PLAY, FUN AND EASE**

This continued growth and expansion and the subsequent challenge to continue to develop was present as my 2011 Wisdom Unlimited course began. I felt anxious, gripped with fear of not "doing it right," and operated on a daily basis of "being careful." This constrained my ability to freely share my love and commitment to others. The theme of my life seemed to be frantically doing it right, working hard in service

of others to prove my worth, yet discounting the abundance of support, love and resources in my life. I often felt exhausted and alone.

Weekend one of the Wisdom course got right to the heart of my fears and constraints. After the "tip song," Lily Starr, the course leader, had me come up on stage to demonstrate my fear. Symbolically and structurally, I crawled into a ball to hide. Present to my "young conversations," I went to work on my autobiography with a vengeance. Reviewing events with both my mother and father led to listening for fulfillment. My parents had divorced when I was five years old. I began to newly appreciate my fear, sadness and vulnerability in a whole new way. During my very next trip back to Virginia and North Carolina, I shared my autobiography in its entirety with my parents, siblings, nieces and nephews again opening up new realms of conversation for all of us.

I even shared my completed autobiography at work. Sharing myself authentically led to being fully self-expressed and generated a whole new experience at work. It was hysterical to review the page for 1993 when my youngest sister was married that included a picture of me in a flowing floral dress. My co-workers' experience of me was so profoundly different. "I cannot believe you are in a dress," said one co-worker. It was an opportunity to laugh at our pasts and acknowledge that we all get to create our life the way that works for each of us. This connection led to ongoing conversations about what each team member loved about their life. Connecting with staff about what was important to them empowered them to take on their dreams, supporting each other and having people express love for their job. A set of pictures even arose, people began sharing pictures of their "loves," whether it was a new baby, an adventure in Hawaii or a new puppy. There is now a bulletin board in the break room full of love and inspiration. Seemingly simultaneously, a wave of pregnancies began. Our team became a phenomenon for the whole department. It was so evident, even one of the executive managers commented, "Your team is a real gem. It all goes so smoothly over there." My stand for life was showing up – at home, work and community.

#### **EMPOWERMENT**

By weekend four of my Wisdom course, I was again wrestling with how I was going to sustain this expansion. I was struck by the sharing about a distinction in the Partnership Explorations course, "Individual is bankrupt." I saw the possibility of partnership. This was also the year my wife, Roxy, and I sold our home. Roxy quit her six-figure IT job and started nursing school, all a result of the Wisdom course. A few years later, she was recognized at her nursing school graduation and pinning for her status as an Army veteran, and for her outstanding leadership and commitment. Her distinguished student award highlighted service to her patients, fellow students, the nursing school and instructors. In her third career, she is an exemplary example of pursuing a life of fulfillment.

#### **TRANSFORMING FAMILY**

The Partnership course prompted a whole new level of inquiry, exploration of relationships and empowerment of my leadership. The series of interviews I did with the most important people in my life as part of my coursework was nothing short of life changing. Out of my interview with my father, I got totally related to him. As a naval officer, he had been deployed up to six months at a time during my childhood. In the interview consisting of three simple questions, he acknowledged "the mistakes" he had made. He got to say that he did not want to hear about "the gory details" of my life, he just wants to know we kids and our families are ok.

Also, he let me know he was "passing the baton" of the family to me. It was a 25-minute conversation on my lunch break. He shared that he was afraid he was going to die back in 2005 of prostate cancer when he was first diagnosed. He had never let on to that, and even when asked at the time, he adamantly denied that fear until this conversation many years later. As we became even more connected, I had the courage to ask him if I could join him on his planned cross-county trip from North Carolina to Santa Cruz, California, in his recreational vehicle, or RV. We traveled together across country to attend my youngest daughter's college graduation ceremony.

The trip was miraculous. We arrived after

spending 10 days together driving and talking, ending each day at a new campsite 300 to 400 miles closer to California. Once we arrived in Santa Cruz, he proudly bragged, "We didn't even need to turn on the radio." That was the theme of our 10 days, listening for fulfillment.

After the graduation ceremony, we celebrated this milestone with a family-and-friends barbecue. It was filled with acknowledgment and laughter. My parents, divorced more than 40 years earlier, were both there. So was my stepmother of over 35 years. My wife, Roxy, her extended family and my former husband and his parents were all part of this extended family circle. I began to realize and acknowledge the power of transformation of family as many parts of life converged that weekend. A playful nerf gun shootout emerged between previously-married couples. This visual will live inevitably as part of our graduation memory. It was also a time of acknowledgment and acceptance. Several elders in attendance were dealing with chronic pain, mobility issues and debilitating life-threatening illness. Together, we faced grieving what we wished had been and accepting what is so. Through it all, being present, listening with generosity and love, we listened for fulfillment.

Once home from the RV trip and graduation in Santa Cruz, I shared about my trip with my division chief. Later, she commented that she was so moved by what I had shared that when I applied for a promotion, she knew I was the one for the job. Being a stand for empowerment, personally and professionally, was clearly making a difference in fulfillment of transformation for families.

### **TRANSFORMING LEADERSHIP**

As the summer of 2013 ended, the Central Coast Landmark community was set to have its own Introduction Leaders Program (ILP) classroom. I was a "hell no" so, of course, I knew it was time to apply for the program. At weekend one of the ILP, there I was, at the front of the room expressing my stand and commitment. I was crying in frustration. It seemed symbolic of my life. I was standing for the seemingly impossible, facing failure at every turn. I got that I am a leader, not only when I want to be and not only if I feel like it. I was filled with angst, anxiety, and

at times, rage in relating to failure. This was, and continues to be, a giant opening. I had had the experience of feeling like a constant failure, even when I wasn't. It was great practice at allowing my identity to be confronted over and over. Often, guests were wrestling with their own version of identity and looking for the first time at transformation. Listening for fulfillment in their lives inspired me to lead, despite the ongoing assault to my identity. I am grateful to have been an introduction leader. Upon completion in 2016, I shifted my focus to my connection with family living on the East Coast. I recognized that I had not spent a Mother's Day with my mom since I had moved to California almost 20 years ago.

### **LEADERSHIP AND FULFILLMENT**

Earlier, in 2015, my manager and mentor of 12 years announced her retirement. I was excited to have the opportunity to apply for the next-level leadership position. As I took over the position held by my mentor as the behavioral health manager, it was another opportunity emerging to disrupt my identity and create possibility. I was assigned to oversee the Ventura region as she had been, and also became the manager for the juvenile justice mental health services team as my division chief knew it was an area of expertise. In some ways, I had come full circle from when I had started my career in Ventura County working in the juvenile facility. It had not been my favorite work environment. Every day was stressful. I worked in a locked facility with youth engaging in high-risk behavior. During that time, I had thought of quitting my job to preserve my well-being. Now, 18 years later, I went back to support a team of mental health clinicians in that environment. But now, I had the tools of transformation at my command. I could be present to the power of identifying incompletions, thus it was an opportunity to listen for fulfillment, first for myself as a leader, and, most important, for the staff, our probation partners and the youth and families receiving services. During my first few meetings, many folks remembered me fondly. I was immensely grateful that I had not vomited my internal state of the earlier era all over them.

Also, I still needed to find the successor to my previous position at the Ventura youth and

family clinic. Listening for partnership, leadership and fun, we stepped into the next chapter of the youth and family team. Standing for the possibility of fulfillment, I interviewed several candidates. With incredible clarity, I identified the licensed clinical social worker who would be the team's next clinic administrator.

Meanwhile, the juvenile justice team was tired and angry. For more than two years, the clinic administrator, a friend and running buddy of mine, had been the sole champion of the work with the juvenile justice facility for behavioral health. She was burned out. The daily grind maneuvering the probation landscape can be daunting. This proved a whole new learning experience for me. The distinctions of the Partnership course proved key. Listening for fulfillment, it wasn't long into my tenure that the clinic administrator recognized her need to relocate out of state, closer to her family. Standing in all is well and continuing to listen for fulfillment, we interviewed her successor together. On her last day of work, and, ironically, on my first day of being a global co-leader on the Partnership team, I left the interview having found the clear choice for her successor. I was totally blown away by the possibilities created as the departing professional and her family moved toward their dream and, simultaneously, the incoming professional moved closer to hers.

### **LEGACY AND TRANSFORMATION**

Just a few months later in 2016, nearing weekend three of Partnership, I was eager to fulfill my role as global co-leader. But, my father became terminally ill, and I felt an urgent pull to go to North Carolina instead. I was there for six weeks. It was a rollercoaster of love, acceptance, grief, sadness, anger, trust, forgiveness and peace.

Earlier that summer, I had spent a week with Dad and my stepmom, Marty, in Emerald Isle as they began to work with a contractor to ready the home they had bought 14 months earlier. At that time, Dad had been given a clean bill of health as he had survived pancreatic cancer, including surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy. They were working to get the house ready to move in. Ironically, that trip to Emerald Isle was by far the most relaxing and enjoyable I had ever experienced. My daughters

were grown. I had no spouse to engage and no responsibilities whatsoever that week. I actually had reflected on the flight home that it was, in fact, the most restful week of my adult life. In the realm of a life of fulfillment, this was it. I got the power of rest, relaxation, time in nature, time for reflection and gratitude are essential to support who I am in the world.

The trip in October 2016 was no beach vacation. Dad was home on hospice care. Despite the circumstances, I loved being at their house. There was always a peacefulness and predictability for me when I was with them. Marty and I partnered to care for Dad and each other. We made a pact to get out of the house for at least an hour a day to get some physical exercise. The grief, sadness and despair felt as though I was carrying a ton of bricks on those runs. I would then cool down with a walk and get into dialogue with friends and loved ones as a bridge to fulfillment.

My family and community lifeline provided a powerful listening for what was needed and wanted. I could then, in turn, be present and be a listening for what was needed for Dad and the rest of the family. I had also missed session #1 of my next Landmark seminar. I was grateful to participate in the recreation session via phone. Sitting next to Dad during the call, I shared, "I am here with my father in North Carolina. What's so is he is at home on hospice. I am here to support him to have what he needs and to have a say in how he wants the rest of his life to go. I want him to know how much he is loved and will always be loved."

As I stopped talking, Dad squeezed my hand, staring right ahead at the TV. Halloween was approaching. Both of my sisters, nephew and my wife were in town to be with us. Dad and Marty had never participated in Halloween in their neighborhood, a community they had lived in almost 25 years. They would turn off all the lights and hide in the upstairs bedroom. Instead, we dressed up, gave out candy and drank champagne. The neighbors had a chance to come by and ask about Dad. They all spoke fondly of him to us and wished us well. That was four weeks into this part of the journey for Dad. We could see his energy was waning.

This was the last evening that his three daughters were with him. Together, we shared with Dad that we wanted him to go in whatever way worked for him and we recognized that this was not the type of life he wanted to live. We reminded him of how much he is loved and that we will always carry him with us. Dad wanted us to know that he did the best he could to fight the cancer and he was very proud of us. He considered us his greatest accomplishments.

Today, as I reflect, I hear fulfillment. We embraced and cried together as we surrounded Dad on the couch. The next nine days were intense, quietly reflective and peaceful. Dad passed away while no one was in the room with him, in his own time, in his own way. He donated his body to science, wanting to help others who might be spared his experiences of cancer. We had a small gathering of family and friends at the house that weekend. Almost a year later, he was buried at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, DC. The time between his death and Arlington was truly a gift. We reflected on his life, mourned our loss and celebrated his life of service to his country, fellow sailors and family.

#### A LIFE OF FULFILLMENT

Dad's contributions continue to live with me. He was a man of his word. Coming across country in the RV and listening to what was important to him, I discovered his relationships were a source of fulfillment. He was still receiving "get well cards" from high school friends. He had also stayed in touch with his naval buddies by phone, attending funerals and assuring visits to grieving wives to remind them of their husbands' contributions.

I remember some years earlier when my mother, his ex-wife, was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Dad drove five hours out of his way on a Thanksgiving weekend to take her flowers and say he was sorry to hear the news. It was during our cross-country trip together that it came together for me. We had a most startling conversation. He said to me, "You know what the most devastating thing in my life was?" I listened intently, not knowing what I might hear. Here was a Vietnam veteran who was sent to Yankee Station to look for survivors of the U.S.S. Forrester fire that claimed 134 lives in a horrific naval accident due to expired

ammunitions exploding. He said, "It was getting the divorce from your mother." After a long pause, I said, "You know Dad, that was probably one of the most devastating events in my life, too." After nodding in agreement, we rode together in silence.

#### FULFILLMENT

Listening for fulfillment has been especially empowering. My priorities and experience of life have profoundly shifted in the two years since Dad's death. He did not ever make it to their retirement home on Emerald Isle. The legacy of the "beach week" that Dad organized has been an integral part of connecting with who we are for ourselves, our family and in the world. That time is an opportunity to listen for dreams, possibilities, contributions, accomplishments and fulfillment. Developing myself as someone who listens for fulfillment, I am gaining a further appreciation for my dad, others and myself. What's present now is the courage to continue to expand and share who I am and what I am committed to in a whole new way. Listening for what matters to others and allowing that to align at home, professionally, in community and in the world is transformative and fulfilling.

Professionally, being a behavioral health manager has had its challenges and opportunities. In December 2017, Ventura County experienced one of the largest wildfires in California, the Thomas Fire. More than 440 square miles burned from December 4, 2017 until containment on January 12, 2018. The fire destroyed more than 1,000 structures, including 500 homes in the city of Ventura. It was a disaster that called for more than 4,000 mental health staff contacts in the community during the disaster response which lasted well into 2018.

Several staff, who work for our department, lost their homes. A significant increase in physical health issues, including several secondary complications due to the toxins, fumes and smoke and the impact of such a disaster added overall stress for the community. My team's job was to assure staff were scheduled, deployed for community outreach and debriefed upon return from the west side of Ventura County. More than a year later, including the most recent fires and the mass shooting in Ventura County, we

continue to rebuild, and our teams, holding the hope, listen for fulfillment of what is possible.

Also, in late 2017, just prior to the Thomas Fire, I was asked to add the responsibility of operations manager for the Primary Care Integration Program that provides mental health services in eight ambulatory care clinics. Then, in early 2018, my accountability expanded again as I was asked to oversee two more youth and family clinics in an underserved area of the county. This expansion called for unprecedented levels of partnership. Again, listening for fulfillment for our executive leadership team, staff and inter-agency and community partners continues to motivate and empower me in the transformation for families.

Meanwhile, transformation in my family continues. This year, we have welcomed our first granddaughter from our youngest daughter and her husband. She is a chiropractor in Portland, Oregon. Our eldest was promoted at work this year and she and her husband are welcoming their third child. My family coaching business will be launching, and my wife is exploring her next career steps in the nursing field and is a powerful contribution to the Partnership course team. Furthermore, Roxy and I will be celebrating our 19th wedding anniversary just as we head to this year's conference.

#### CONCLUSION

Taking on listening for fulfillment, I have had the privilege to continue expanding my leadership capacities. To fulfill on the matters that are most important requires willingness, inquiry and exploration.

I see that being a powerful leader by standing for the empowerment of others provides access to fulfillment. It requires listening for the said and the unsaid. Empowerment of others allows for transformation in ways that seem miraculous. Though not about results, I see my clearing empowers results by exploring partnership and creating beyond what I know. Whether it is family, career or community, it requires willingness and exploration. Living a life of fulfillment is about vulnerable and courageous expression, a willingness to take action and show up in the fabric of community and beyond.

What will you create as you dedicate your life to fulfillment? What is the powerful expression the world is waiting for that is uniquely you?

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#### ENDNOTES

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# LISTENING FOR FULFILLMENT: IN THE MOMENT, BACK AND FORWARD

LORRAINE "RAIN" WARREN

## *Abstract*

*As I engaged in the inquiry of listening for fulfillment, I found myself revisiting parts of my life and relistening to conversations from the past as the person I am today. As I listen in this moment to different aspects of my life, I see a life of fulfillment and aspects even fulfilled in the act of completing this writing.*

## INTRODUCTION

Listening for fulfillment happens in each moment whether I am listening now, back or forward. As I engaged in the inquiry of listening for fulfillment, I found myself revisiting parts of my life and relistening to past conversations as the person I am in this moment. As I listen in this moment to different parts of my life, I see a life of fulfillment, including some aspects which were fulfilled in the act of engaging the inquiry from the perspective of the person that I am now.

I realize that I began this engagement at the 2018 Conference for Global Transformation (this was the first time I attended the conference). As I walked up the steps to attend the keynote address, I was greeted by my center manager. I had not seen him in years. He is a person who knew me when I was fresh out of The Landmark Forum in 1991. I was immediately present to a love and affinity for him. I became present, also, to who I was then and who I am now. I became present to my life and accomplishments influenced by my participation in Landmark programs. In this article,

I track my participation in Landmark and the contributions the programs have made in my life.

A flood of memories rolled across my mind from moments in The Landmark Forum, Advanced Course, several seminars and the Forum in Action series, as well as the Introduction Leaders Program and Wisdom Unlimited course. It was in these courses that I laughed, cried, argued my position, surrendered and gained some sense of my being in the world.

I recall several encounters with the center manager and staff. After completing a few of the programs, I marched into the center manager's office and declared, "I am a stand to be on staff!" He paused as if in deep thought, then looked me straight in the eyes and said, "Are you complete with all of the work you are doing in the world for children?" I stopped dead in my tracks. I paused, taking his question into consideration. As I reviewed in my mind's eye all the work I was doing in training and developing youth leaders at the time, I answered with a simple, yet definitive, "No." From that time forward, I

began to approach my work through a different lens. In that moment, what had been for me a job that I was passionate about became a vocation, a calling, my "work in the world."

This brief conversation with my center manager led to my being consciously accountable and responsible for my work in the world. I began to own that work and, in doing so, created and accepted opportunities to expand my work with children and youth, nationally and internationally.

I worked with children, who had experienced trauma in the forms of abuse, negotiating life in urban environments often violent and resource deficient, as well as those impacted by war, genocide and natural disasters. My focus was empowering children and youth and providing them with tools, such as conflict transformation, communication skills (which included lots of learning to listen), community building and leadership development. The message was that no matter what circumstance you live with, you matter and you can make a difference in your life and community. My collective work had me impact thousands of young people and the adults who live and work with them.

I worked with several organizations, including Unlocking Futures a/k/a New York Youth at Risk, Legacy International Global Youth Village, American Jewish Committee, The Anti-Defamation League, World Horizons International and Operation Crossroads Africa. In 2017, I was acknowledged by Legacy International, which works in partnership with the United States Department of State and embassies worldwide, with its Humanitarian Award for having directly impacted the lives of more than 34,000 youth, many of whom returned to their countries to implement community projects and serve in leadership capacities. I received the 2018 Josephine "Scout" Wollman Fuller Award from the Psychologists for Social Responsibility for my work on behalf of peace and social justice.

My work was deeply grounded in my participation in Landmark programs. My center manager listened to me and had me begin to listen to myself, in a moment, creating a future that I now stand in as fulfilled.

Another critical moment that impacted my life as a graduate was in the Advanced Course. I came to the course very certain that I had a terrible childhood, which was forever lost and taken away from me. It seemed as if, because of this childhood, I was doomed to a limited life, given the self-defeating thoughts I had about myself. Then there was that moment when we were asked to choose an incident in our lives and track it in as much detail as possible. Where did it take place? What time of the day or night? How many minutes or hours did it last? I really got into the exercise and tracked every second of my trauma. Then in some moment, I calculated that I made up a story that my entire childhood had been terrible because of a collection of really horrible incidents which lasted collectively less than one hour. I realized that these incidents were over, and, yet, I had continuously lived them over and over again, subconsciously and consciously. As a result of this revelation, I began to ask myself, "What was the rest of my childhood like?" I started to remember many wonderful moments.

I remember waking up in the early mornings and going to the family garden with my Dad. He taught me how to plant vegetables and cultivated in me a deep appreciation for nature. I remember after turning the deep brown soil for planting, preparing it, I would follow in my Dad's footsteps as he poked holes in the ground. It was my job to carefully place a small white seed in the hole and then cover it with earth. I would then wake up early each morning at sunrise and run outside to the garden. I wanted to see if even a little speck of green had emerged.

Day after day after day, I tended that garden by watering it and waiting. Sometimes, I would lie down on the ground with my hands holding my head up, looking at a certain spot where a seed was planted, hoping and praying I could catch the exact moment that something green would appear. Sometimes, I would go outside at dusk to check and even fall asleep on the ground, as I watched and waited. Mom would wake me up, "Rain, get in this house!" Then on one fateful morning, a small beginning! A seed grew and grew into a big plant and then food for the table, shared and exchanged with neighbors and friends. It was these moments that moved



me, and many like them, such as sitting for hours with the huge sunflower that grew in my neighbor's yard communing with it, rolling my small body across the dew-moistened grass, talking to the blue jays and robins that landed on our fence or lying on my back staring up at the sun, moon or stars. All of these resulted in me asking, "What are the people on the other side of the sun, moon and stars doing? What are they eating? Is it night or daytime for them? Are these people, right now, wondering about me, too?" Little did I know at the time that my life and work would take me around the world, discovering some of the answers to those questions.

As I look back, that simple, yet intense, exercise in the Advanced Course shifted my listening to my childhood such that I now stand for all children and me living in a world of joy and wonder.

My life and what is possible was even more expanded as I entered the seminar program, which focused on specific areas of my life, such as relationship, money, integrity and the Forum in Action series. There was one seminar leader, in particular, who greatly impacted my life. He inspires me even today to not play small, not play it safe and to dance outside the box. He challenged me to speak up even if I was afraid or uncertain about the response. He wanted to hear my opinion and unique perspective even if it caused upset. I learned, often, the conversations that could have remained unspoken were the ones which had the most impact. I remember this seminar leader flying from Europe to the United States once a week to lead our seminar. He would take a red-eye on Wednesday, lead the seminar, then fly out the following day. He said, "I don't have breakdowns or emergencies on Thursdays!"

I have often adopted that stance in my own life. When the opportunity to travel back and forth from Florida to California once a month to engage in my graduate work became reality, I thought about my seminar leader. I thought, if he can travel from Europe to the United States once a week, I can go from one end of the country to the other once a month. I have taken that journey two and then three years in a row, often not knowing where the funding would come from. I simply stood that this shall be fulfilled and

recalled the Goethe quote my seminar leader often mentioned: "Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of creation and initiative, there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves, too."

This brings me to another breakthrough inside of fulfillment. When someone described the Wisdom course as "fun, play, ease and loving life," I was an instant "Yes!" I loved everything about my Wisdom course. I loved the course leader. I loved our discourses, inquiries and exercises.

One day, I was sitting in the Wisdom course. We were engaged in one of those intense and deep discourses and most people were confused, questioning the course leader and not getting it. I, on the other hand, was sitting in the back row in total bliss and flow with the dialogue. I vaguely remember getting up and having the entire room get it. In that moment, I listened to myself as smart, intelligent, even wise. I realized there had been a story operating in the background of my life that said I was not smart enough.

I adopted this story in grade school, at about nine or 10 years of age, when the teacher asked each student to stand up and share what they wanted to be when they grew up. Each student stood and said things, such as teacher, fireman, nurse and a lot of secretaries. Well, when it was my turn, I stood up and said, "I want to be a doctor." In front of the entire class, the teacher said, "Ms. Warren, you could never be a doctor. You must choose something else. To be a doctor you must study hard, it is too hard and cost lots of money. You would make a good secretary." I sank. I don't much remember anything that happened after that, except that I held her words as truth and can remember repeating them later when opportunities to pursue doctoral degrees presented themselves to me. I would respond either out loud or in my mind, "Being a doctor is too hard and costs too much." One of the main outcomes of my Wisdom course was a shift in believing myself to be not good enough to believing that I am smart and intelligent. So, years later, when the opportunity presented

itself for me to pursue a doctorate, I was a yes.

Although elements of fear and uncertainty about funding remained, these did not stop me from going for it. Although pursuing my degree took five years of hard work, traveling back and forth from Florida to California once a month and was very expensive, I am now Lorraine Warren, Ph.D., or "Dr. Rain!"

In writing this article, I now release the judgments I had about my grade school teacher. Perhaps, she did not say what she did because she saw me as a poor black child with limited possibilities for the future. Maybe, she herself, wanted to be a doctor at some point and someone told her it would be too hard and expensive. Maybe, she would have had a different conversation if she had the opportunity to complete The Landmark Forum. I am present to my capacity to have compassion and empathy for others. I believe that Landmark programs cultivate the capacity for participants to be more empathetic.

That brings me to another fulfillment: my relationship with white people and racism. I was that person in the Forum who challenged the Forum leader beginning at 9 a.m. on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and, then, Tuesday evening. Well, actually, I had a shift on Sunday evening. I was exhausted and worn out mentally and physically from fussing with that Forum leader. In some moment, I remember deciding to close my eyes and just listen. As people shared and shared and shared, I began to hear something that I had never heard before. I began laughing. I could hardly contain myself. I wanted to run from the room in hysterics. I remember the encouragement to not leave the room. There it was again, an opportunity to listen more deeply to the conversations running me about myself and other people. Up until that moment of laughter, I believed "white people have it easy and black people have it hard." As I listened, I realized that white people were struggling with some of the same issues and concerns as black people.

The shield that I held in front of me when dealing with white people began to be cleared. It was, and is still, there, in some instances, and I continue to explore and learn about issues of race, privilege and injustice. Yet, what I became present to in

the Forum that continues to inform my life today is our common humanity. We all have hopes, dreams and feel pain and disappointment when those hopes and dreams are not fulfilled. I began to embrace my humanity and that of others in a different way. I became present to the profound love I have for all people. I realized that that little girl looking up at the sun, moon and stars was being with her love for people and the possibility of who all people could be for and with each other.

There are times when I have thought about the people I have placed limitations on, with regard to relationships, because they were white people. In those moments, I think about some of the friends I now have who include nearly every race on the planet and realize what I would have missed had I stayed in that small world of prejudice. In some of those moments, I have cried and cried tears of regret and remorse at all of the wonderful people and experiences I might have missed.

There is also another side to the story: black people. My relationship with black people. I have learned that one cannot have a disdain for the other without some disdain for oneself. I recall many of my friends literally begged me to do the Forum after I repeatedly said "No!," accompanied by the question, "Why would I want to sit in a room for three days and an evening with a bunch of white people?" It was only when one person for whom I had deep respect, when I asked if this was something I should do, said, "Yes," that I agreed and signed up for the Forum.

Well, after I completed the Forum, my friends and fellow graduates invited me to attend the International Black Summit in Highland Park, Michigan. I responded, "Why would I want to sit in a room the entire weekend with a bunch of black people?" "No," I said. I even threatened that if they continued to ask (harass) me, our friendship was over. There were a couple of friends who kept asking. One particular friend continued to call and ask me to come to the Summit. He called just a day before a bus was leaving for the Summit and asked me one more time. I said, "No, don't call me again!" Then a crazy thing happened. The moment he hung up, I experienced a deep sadness and an overwhelming sorrow. I remember thinking that I can't call him back after

such a strong no. So, I set a strong intention, and prayed for him to call me back and ask me one more time. The phone rang and he asked again. I said in a nonchalant manner, "Well, okay."

The International Black Summit was initiated by a group of graduates who had attended a Wisdom Course Area course called Productivity, Service and Well-Being. They began to inquire into the possibility of bringing a conversation about transformation to the black community.

During my first three days of the Forum, I had challenged the Forum leader. During the three days of the Summit, I cried. I cried in the morning, afternoon and night. I cried myself to sleep. From the moment I stepped into the room of nearly 300 graduates of the Landmark Forum (this was the prerequisite to the Summit at the time), I began to cry at the beauty I saw and the profound love I had for all people.

Since then, I have taken on many leadership roles throughout my participation in the Summit, and now the Summit's conversation is on the eve of celebrating 30 years of existence, generated completely by volunteers. The conversation has been held in countries all over the world, impacting people of black African descent and realizing the possibility of Summit's purpose is "to provide an opportunity for participants to bring into being their visions for the black community and the world."

It was in my Facilitated Wisdom course that I learned about the conference and was encouraged to go. In fact, one participant in the course was so adamant that I attend, he created a GoFundMe campaign to fund my participation. I entered the Wisdom course during a very challenging time of my life. I had just completed my doctoral degree in California and came home to Florida thinking I would spend a few weeks with my family and then travel to a couple countries outside the United States to take a break.

When I went home, I discovered my younger sister was in her last stages of life as a result of cancer. My mom was going through a very challenging time, and another family member was in crisis. I chose to stay in Florida and tend to these family matters. It was challenging, yet I felt clear that

this was what I was called to do. Then another friend called me and insisted that I enroll in the Facilitated Wisdom course. I told her that I did not have to be convinced because I loved the Wisdom course. I ended up traveling six hours to and six hours back once a month to complete the Wisdom course. When the first course was complete, I made that same journey, taking on the role of facilitator for the Atlanta group even though I lived in Florida. This course took me out of the stress of everything that was happening in my family and reignited my vision for impacting the world through listening. I am now working on my first book, which is influenced by my work in Rwanda, interviewing survivors of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. I am developing a campaign called "Creating a World that Listens," which I presented as a poster at my first conference. My poster won the first runner-up award.

#### CONCLUSION

In this moment, in this now, as I listen to my life, I am present to a life of fulfillment. I am present to the many moments as I participated in Landmark programs in which a simple conversation or distinction took me on an unknown path to fulfillment. My participation in Landmark has impacted every aspect of my life. I now ask myself, given all that has been fulfilled in my life up to this moment, as I listen for fulfillment, what is available to me and the world as I now listen forward?

I continue to listen for, and create, a life of fulfillment.

# THE LAST KISS GOODBYE

JOHN ROBERT NIEC

## *Abstract*

*In 2016, the author moved in with his 80-something parents to become their caretaker. Ten months later, both parents entered hospice care and passed away shortly afterwards. These reflections illustrate what being a witness to the end of someone's life contributes to listening for, and living, a fulfilled life.*

"I think Dad wants Mom to die at home," I said to my two brothers, Rick and Gary. It was the fall of 2015, Mom was 84 and had been in declining health for years. At 86, Dad was better able to care for himself, but we still worried about him.

In January 2016, the three of us were preparing for our weekly family call with Mom and Dad. I told my brothers: "He says he'll sell the farm, but then he won't talk to a realtor. He says he'll consider going to a retirement community, but then he won't schedule a visit. I think he's stalling. We should stop pushing because he just digs in his heels."

For years, we had been prodding Dad to sell the farm and move to assisted living. Decades earlier, Mom and Dad had retired to a small farm in Stillwater, New Jersey, among deep woodlands, winding creeks, colonial water wheels, crumbling stone grist mills and white-fenced horse farms, close to the Delaware Water Gap, a hamlet too small for its own traffic light or zip code.

The farm was a seven-acre homestead. It included a barn with seven horse stalls and a four-car garage with a huge hay loft above. Several large rusted pieces of farm equipment were scattered around the property, reminders of mowing, raking and baling hay. At one time, Dad had raised a few cattle. This was his retirement dream that they had moved to in the 1980s. But, by 2015, he couldn't even tend to a small vegetable garden. Lyme disease had whacked his body a few years earlier and he had never fully recovered.

Mom had a degenerative brain disorder that diminished her speaking and walking. Dad called it Alzheimer's, but it wasn't. My brothers and I referred to it as her "condition." She wasn't senile or demented. She knew what was going on around her. She would laugh at a joke, often tell Dad no when he was wrong, but full sentences eluded her. She could muster yes if asked simple binary questions, and she always knew who I was.

My oldest brother, Rick, was married and lived northwest of Los Angeles in the valley. My middle brother, Gary, also married, lived in our hometown of Union, New Jersey. I was single and the youngest at 55, living on the island city of Alameda in the San Francisco Bay Area. Gary was the only one within driving distance though it was not close enough in case of emergency.

The five of us had been on an hour-long weekly family call for seven years, ever since Mom had a seizure in 2009. She and Dad were getting ready to go to a family reunion. Rick was visiting. She was sitting quietly on the sofa. Her eyes went vacant. Spittle drooled from her mouth. Dad and Rick laid her down on the sofa. Dad didn't want to call 911. Instead, they waited to see if she would regain consciousness. A few minutes

passed and she seemed to recover, but Rick was concerned, "What are we going to do?"

The spell prompted my brothers and I to stay in touch with Mom, Dad and each other on a weekly basis. I had discovered that my iPhone could make conference calls without any special service, so I suggested we try a weekly call and all agreed. By default, I became the family call administrator. These calls continued consistently with only minor interruptions.

It was sometime in 2015 when I theorized "Dad wants Mom to die at home" to my brothers. We had been frustrated with Dad's broken promises: "I'll call the realtor" or "I'll wear the Life Alert." We had fears that he'd be out cutting the fields and get maimed by the blades of the mower or have a heart attack and be lying outside unable to move. Mom can't use the phone. How many days could pass before someone noticed?

Every year since Mom's decline, I had travelled from California to New Jersey to help with Thanksgiving dinner. I was the youngest and the only one to get cooking lessons in her kitchen. I knew Mom's recipe for turkey stuffing by heart. One year, I brined the turkey overnight and cooked it in a Reynold's turkey-sized oven roasting bag (not her recipe). During dinner, Gary proclaimed that, henceforth, I was to make the turkey.

In 2011, during a Thanksgiving visit, Dad cornered me and said, "If something happens to me, you have to come home and take care of your mother." Startling. He had never talked about a future without him. I wasn't ready to confront his mortality. Perhaps by "something happens" he meant incapacitated. "Okay," I replied, and I started listening for a sign that would require a cross-country move and total upheaval of my life.

The living area of their farmhouse was small: a master bedroom, a tiny bathroom, an office, a joined living and dining room and a "two's a crowd" galley kitchen. This was not a wheelchair-friendly home. Given Mom's inability to walk unassisted, he bought a four-wheel rolling walker with a folding seat and back support at Walmart for \$54.47.

By this time, trying to have Mom use the toilet in

the bathroom proved unworkable. He would slide her from the bed into the walker, navigate to the bathroom door, deadlift her from the doorway, around the door and onto the toilet. She couldn't offer help. Their bathroom dance all depended on his 80-something, Lyme-weary muscles managing this twice or more daily routine. A bedside commode solved this eventually, though at first, he resisted. The commode represented giving in to the fate of her condition. It was a hard sell.

On our weekly calls, my brothers and I started listening for falls. For elders, falls can be life-threatening. My paternal grandfather died from a heart attack after he fell and broke his hip. Dad started reporting Mom's fall record for the week as "Mom was a good girl this week" or "she was a bad girl this week." I bristled at his use of "good" or "bad" as if she was a willful toddler. When he unfolded the facts, usually he had been trying to move her when he lost his grip and she went down. Somehow, he made this her fault.

"She's got a bruise the size of a grapefruit."

We'd groan. "What happened?"

"She got away from me and she hit her hip on the coffee table."

"Did you call an ambulance?"

"What for?"

I couldn't tell which he hated more: hospitals or hospital bills.

I told myself, "Not yet. This is not the sign."

Months passed. Since we had abandoned the mission to get them off the farm, we frequently talked about the weather or dinner during our family calls. Weather conversations were important. In 2012, Hurricane Sandy knocked out their power for 10 days. Their water was from a well. No power means no pump, which means no water. Sandy caught Dad unprepared. He had to drive to town and load his red Ford Ranger with buckets of water so he could make coffee and flush the toilet. After Sandy, Dad became a water hoarder. He had gallons of jugs stockpiled in the bathroom, barn and cellar.

Snow was worrisome. Dad kept his white Dodge Caravan parked outside in the driveway. Getting to the van when snow and ice covered the steps and driveway was challenging. To go to a doctor or dentist appointment during the winter, he had to negotiate Mom from the stoop to the van. He would hold onto her with one hand with the other hand on the railing, and walk her down the steps backwards, while trying to find a foothold and avoid the slippery parts. Better he should wait for spring.

Conversations about dinner were important, too. For the first 60 years of marriage, Mom ruled the kitchen. She was an amazing cook. She had several of her recipes published in the Stillwater Presbyterian Church Cookbook (pot roast, spaetzles and mystery bars). My love of cooking comes from her.

Palsy ended Mom's reign as a chef. Dad had taken over kitchen duties, and he was a hack. His menu options were limited, and he didn't use the oven. He could manage eggs and toast, but bacon was too greasy. If Dad was going to have meat with breakfast, it was fried bologna or brown-and-serve sausage. He complained about how hard it was cooking, cleaning and taking care of Mom. We suggested Meals-On-Wheels and he tried it for a few months. Three dollars for a hot and fresh dinner delivered to the door. He complained that they asked for donations. He cancelled.

Then Dad discovered shelf-safe, pre-packaged, microwavable meals, the kind that can be kept at room temperature for years. His favorite was Hormel's Compleats. Two dollars for a factory-processed, plastic-plated, preservative-laden meal. Two dollars is better than three and Hormel doesn't ask for donations. Compleats, from the people who brought you SPAM.

This was what the five of us talked about for months, perhaps years, while I waited for the sign. He bought a generator. That's good. He ran extension cords around the house. That's bad. (More things to trip over). Other conversations went like this:

"Sally (the dog) is sick. She hasn't eaten in three days."

"Did you take her to the vet?"

"No. I'll take her Monday."

A week passed.

"Sally died." Dad was crying. "The vet said she had Lyme disease. If I had brought her in last week, she could have made it," he lamented.

I had grown fond of Sally. I had taken her on walks and tried Caesar (The Dog Whisperer) Millan's training techniques on her. When we met for the first time, she was aggressive, baring teeth and growling, but with a couple of Caesar's tips, we got past that. We became pals. I was sad and pissed.

Why did Dad wait so long to take his dog to the vet? The vet said if she had been treated earlier, the treatment could have worked. The man, who is the primary caregiver for my mother, negligently allowed his dog's death.

Finally, I knew the sign was coming soon. I knew I had to get ready. I had put my career on hold. I would have to leave my friends of 30 years and my apartment on the lagoon. I would have to sell or give away my possessions. I would have to drive from California to New Jersey with three cats in the car. I had been working this out in my mind for years.

Then I heard the sign. "I dropped your mother and I couldn't pick her up. I had to call Jack (the neighbor) to help me lift her."

Clearly, my Dad was no longer able to manage on his own and he needed help. It was time. I first discussed it with my brothers. They seemed relieved. Yes, if I moved in, they didn't have to worry. They could sleep.

We talked about it on the next family call. "That would be ok," Dad said without much hesitation. Until that point, he had contested and countered every suggestion we made for their care. But to this, he made no objection.

I began planning the move, announcing it to friends and deciding what I could live without and what I couldn't. I scheduled a goodbye dinner at Otaez, a favorite Mexican restaurant in Alameda. My friend, Scott, had lost both of his parents over the previous couple of years. He said, "Don't be surprised if things go really fast." At the time, I thought he was referring to the move to New Jersey.

I divested of personal things on Craigslist and garage sales. What I couldn't sell, I gifted or dumped. Things to be kept were boxed, shrink-wrapped and put on a pallet. Then they were to be stored until I was ready to have them sent.

On July 13, 2016, I left Alameda. I drove through the Altamont Pass windmill farm with melancholy, thinking I would never see the windmills' slow-turning dances again. The trek from Alameda to Stillwater took 10 days. I stayed with brother, Rick, in Los Angeles and dear friend, Cynthia, in Phoenix. Everywhere else, I stayed at an Airbnb, first having asked permission to have three cats with me. My clowder of cats hated the long days in the car. By day five, all three were catatonic.

I didn't do much sightseeing, but I did take a selfie of my index finger holding up the Gateway Arch in St. Louis. I ate like a tourist. I had ribs in St. Louis, and goetta, a type of scrapple popular in Cincinnati. In Pittsburgh, I demolished a Primanti Brothers submarine sandwich with the fries on the inside. That was the last stop before the final sprint to the farm, five hours from Pittsburgh to Stillwater. On Saturday afternoon, July 23rd, I arrived. Dad was outside.

"You brought the cats," Dad said annoyingly. "You can't bring them in the house," he continued. I was triggered before I'm even in the door. I'm five years old and pouty. "But you knew..."

The cats would have to stay in the barn. So pouty, five-year-old me would stay in the barn with them. The July heat, spiders, mice and snakes drove me into the house. The "kids" were on their own and they thrived—so many little things to play with...and eat.

My first weeks were spent getting the basics settled, unpacking clothes, eating and sleeping. I watched Dad's routine and helped when I could. I joined the YMCA. I started swimming and doing Tai Chi. Dad showed me the fallen trees from Sandy that he wanted for firewood. He no longer had the stamina to use the chainsaw, let alone chop wood. I learned how to split wood with a maul and turn a fallen tree into a wood pile.

In August 2016, I started teaching a nine-week meditation class at the Unitarian Church in Morristown. The enrollment was 25, surprisingly

more than I expected from the Meetup responses. Discussions were lively and playful. People wanted to learn how to sit quietly. I opened up two more classes in two other locations. This gave me a sense of normalcy and I felt as though I had a community.

Dr. Grote, my parents' primary care physician, put a name to Mom's condition during an office visit with them: progressive supranuclear palsy. It is a rare brain disorder that affected walking and balance, speech, swallowing, vision, mood, behavior and thinking. It is so named because it weakens the body. Caused by damage to the supranuclear part of the brain, it worsens over time.

Over the next months I watched Mom's abilities deteriorate. When I arrived, she said hi and she would call John when she needed something from me, but month-by-month she spoke less and less. I made a surprising discovery, though. While Mom had stopped speaking, she still had control of blinking and could respond to yes/no questions with one or two blinks. A whole world opened up.

"Do you want to watch the View?"

Blink-blink.

"Do you want to listen to music?"

Blink.

"Frank Sinatra?"

Blink.

As I settled into life on the farm, I took over planning and making dinner. Dad was ok making breakfast and lunch. Inside a cupboard door, he posted a weekly schedule of breakfasts: Monday, oatmeal; Tuesday, cold cereal; Wednesday, scrambled eggs; Thursday, Cream of Rice; Friday, fried eggs; Saturday, cold cereal and Sunday, danish. Lunches most days were sandwiches with some fruit. Dinners were more random, except fish was always served on Fridays.

I wouldn't have served them TV dinners but Dad liked them, so I couldn't eliminate them. I augmented with home-cooked meals as much as I could. He would then sit with Mom and watch Seinfeld while I got things ready.

"What do you want for dinner?"

My question was difficult for him.

"Something good."

At first, I thought this was humor, but I soon realized Dad was having difficulty. After several weeks of trying to get him to participate in the decision-making process, I found that it was easier to give him simple choices.

"Chicken or beef?"

"Chicken."

"Roasted or pan fried?"

"Roasted."

"With rice or potatoes?"

"Rice."

Binary decisions were not taxing like open-ended questions. As I became more familiar with Dad's tastes, I didn't even ask. Although no longer Catholic, he wanted fish on Fridays. It was the first day of the week when I removed the choice. He had a standard. I would simply announce, "We're having salmon" or "Tonight, it's shrimp."

My parents always had bread with supper and rye bread was Dad's favorite, but one Friday I surprised them with hush puppies to complement the fried fish.

"I haven't had these since Florida," Dad said. (In the 1950s, he had been stationed there in the Air Force.)

"Are they good?"

"Out of this world."

On another Friday night, I cooked shrimp scampi. Both of them loved garlic. There was never too much garlic. No white wine. I improvise. Served with basmati rice, it was perfect. After the meal, my mother steeled herself to say, "Delicious." Though she had to make a Herculean effort, she could summon the strength, if necessary.

After I had removed the decision process for Fridays, I applied the method to the rest of the week, as well.

"Tonight, we're having hamburgers."

"I'd like mine with mushrooms and onions."

"Of course, Dad, just as you like it. Do you want the onions grilled or raw?" "Both."

"Okay, already working."

Roasted chicken with rice became the Sunday standard. I started creating a weekly dinner calendar. Wednesday was beef, which still allowed for variety: steak, stew, roast, meatloaf or hamburger.

Once I served them a Cobb salad.

"What's this?"

"A Cobb salad."

"It's too much food."

"There's a lot of air in a salad."

"It's still too much."

"Just eat as much as you like."

"We can't eat all this."

Dad pushed back on portion size, but never on what was being served. "You missed your calling, you should have been a chef," he said.

"I am."

Thursday was Dad's day for errands in Newton. He had hired a sitter, Suzanne, from the local grocery store bulletin board to stay with Mom while he stepped out. For several years, she would come on Thursday afternoon and do Mom's hair and nails, feed her lunch and keep her company while Dad shopped, banked and dined at McDonald's. He looked forward to getting out of the house and into town. Sometimes, I would go with him just so I could watch him.

Dad was fond of one of the bankers who favored Mom when she was in her 40s. He'd stop in her office and chat after his business with a teller. Dad brought her vegetables when he kept a garden. One time, he walked into the employee break room unannounced just to say hello.

Dad started his route by dropping the laundry at the laundromat. He decided that washing and

folding clothes, particularly the folding, wasn't worth doing when he could pay someone else to do it for him. The laundromat was worn and needed paint. The front entrance reeked of cigarette butts crushed in the ashtray by the smokers' bench. The staff was friendly and familiar, always happy to see my dad.

Since the McDonald's in Newton served breakfast all day long, Dad's regular Thursday lunch was a sausage egg McMuffin with cheese and a coffee with cream, two sugars and two ice cubes. Not three, not four. Two.

There also was food shopping and the occasional wandering through Home Depot. Shopping could be taxing for Dad. He'd get overwhelmed at the variety of spices or salad dressings and was not able to make any decision. One time, I observed him comparing two different shakers of garlic salt, reading the ingredients and trying to pick one. He got frustrated and put them both back. It was painful to watch.

On a clear Thursday afternoon in October 2016, Dad was driving from the bank to Home Depot. I was riding shotgun. We came to an intersection with a stop sign across from the Home Depot entrance. The perpendicular street was busier and didn't have a stop sign. He approached the intersection without slowing down. I hadn't been paying full attention; otherwise, I would have warned him or yelled at him. We were already in the Home Depot parking lot.

"Dad, you missed a stop sign."

"There weren't any cars coming."

"But, you didn't even slow down."

"It's more like a suggestion."

I realized that talking to Dad about obeying the rules of the road was impossible. When we left the Home Depot, I said, "I'll drive," and took his keys. That was the last time he drove. Ever. I became the chauffeur and went with him everywhere.

In March 2017, Dad caught a cold with a cough. While the cold improved over a few weeks, the cough remained. By April, I started to worry and talk to him about going to the

doctor. It took weeks before he relented. I called and made the appointment. They asked us to get a chest X-ray before we came in.

"There's fluid in your dad's lungs and I'm concerned that it might be pneumonia," the doctor said. "I want you to take him to the emergency room in Newton," he continued.

"I'm not going," Dad said.

I ignored him. We were in the car and I was driving Dad to the emergency room. I let him vent, but we were still going. By the time we arrived, he had calmed down and was willing to be checked. "We want to X-ray your dad's chest."

"But, we just had an X-ray done," I complained.

"We need to do our own."

Hours passed. "We saw some things that are troublesome and we want to keep your dad overnight." Overnight turned into a week.

"I'm not staying," Dad complained.

Dad did. The challenge for me now was to go to the hospital as needed and have coverage at home for Mom. I called my brothers. Rick asked if he should come from Los Angeles. I said I wasn't sure.

I called hospice care and arranged for an intake evaluation for Mom. They would provide two hours of daily in-home care. That would allow me to spend time at the hospital with Dad.

On Wednesday, May 17, 2017, nurse Amy arrived from Karen Ann Quinlan Hospice to do the evaluation. While she was still there, I got a call from the hospital.

"Your dad has congestive heart failure, which has been causing the fluid on the lungs. Now, his kidneys are failing and we're recommending dialysis, but he's refusing."

I hung up the phone and relayed the situation to Amy.

"John, dialysis is not for people in their 80s. It takes a toll on the system. It's hard for them to recover. If he is refusing, you

should just bring him home," Amy said.

By Thursday, May 18, 2017, Rick arrived. My two brothers and I met at the hospital to discuss the prognosis. They wanted to talk him into dialysis. Mom and Dad's lawyer had previously prepared advance directives for them. I pushed for in-home hospice care. Eventually, we agreed on hospice care. Mom and Dad had made their wishes clear and committed them to a legal document.

I made a phone call to one of the men in Dad's men's group at the church.

"I need some help moving furniture."

"What's going on?"

"Dad's coming home and we need to clear the living room so that we can set up two hospital beds."

The same afternoon, 10 men and two teenagers showed up in four trucks. They jumped into action, packing boxes and making space in the garage. They wrangled the sofa bed out the narrow front door. In two hours, the living room was empty.

The next morning, hospital beds and an oxygen tank arrived. The beds were positioned on opposite walls with room to walk in between.

Dad was scheduled to come home later in the day and nurse Amy came so she could get him settled. His ambulance arrived in the afternoon.

"John, he doesn't look good," Amy said as they brought him into the house. "This might be very soon," she continued. I remembered Scott's prediction.

Dad was happy to be home and he rallied. He wanted to eat. Dad had failed the swallow test at the hospital and they stopped feeding him. He was hungry. I made him an egg sandwich.

On the weekend, we had some local visitors. Gary and his wife, Georgia, came. Rick's son Ryan arrived from Phoenix. Dad was sleeping a lot, but he would wake up and talk to his friends and church buddies. Each night, I would push Mom and Dad's beds together so they could be close and touch.

"Goodnight mama," he said, as he placed his hand on her head and kissed her.

On Monday, we Skyped with his sister, my aunt Phyllis, but he couldn't wake up.

He slept the whole day on Tuesday and Wednesday. In the evening, I went to meditate with my friends, Mark and David. During the meditation, although the room was cool, I sweated as if I were in a sauna. My whole body wept. I went home to find Rick reading to Mom. Dad was still. I put my hand on his head. Cold.

"I think he's gone," I said.

"Yeah."

I called Amy. Forty-five minutes later, she arrived and made the pronouncement. She called the funeral parlor. They arrived about an hour later.



Mom got agitated. She caught Amy's attention. "I'm trying to say goodbye," my mother said with great effort, much to Amy's astonishment. Amy looked at me wide-eyed. She hadn't heard my mother speak. "John, why don't you put your mom next to your dad," Amy said. Carefully, I moved her

to his bed. "Goodbye. I love you," Mom whispered as she kissed him. Only Rick and I were there. What could I say to the rest of the family about this moment? I needed to capture this for them. I took a picture with my phone. "Mom, you stay here as long as you want," I said. The funeral parlor could wait. After about 30 minutes, I moved her back to her bed and the process of wrapping and moving my Dad's body began. They were intentional, gentle and respectful. They seemed like attendants in an ancient burial ritual. Dad was honored in their care. I took photos.

Mom died a week later without another word.

Rick had left to go back to California the morning before Mom passed. I sent an e-mail to my meditation students requesting that they come and sit with me and my mom on what seemed to be her last night. Five of them joined me as we sat in silence at her side, listening to her rattle, the last sounds of someone dying.

I went to sleep after they left. A cold breeze woke me, even though the air was still. I checked on her. I called Amy.

"You need to come."

"Okay."

#### DEATH IN THE CONTEXT OF A FULFILLED LIFE

There are a variety of cultural rituals and conversations about aging and death. One of the five Buddhist remembrances is "I am not free from death I will die." "Memento Mori" is a medieval Christian practice to detach from the transient nature of life. In Imperial Rome, a slave would stand behind a triumphant general as they were being deified and whisper, "Remember your death." In the 1987 movie, "Moonstruck," Olympia Dukakis' character, Rose, says to her philandering husband, "Cosmo, I just want you to know, no matter what you do, you're going to die."

There were two principles in caregiving for my parents. Keep them comfortable and keep them safe. I don't think I ever spoke those words aloud as a possibility, but on reflection I could see that they guided my actions. After my work was done, I saw that I had fulfilled that intention. But, what I hadn't seen in advance was that I would

become intimate with dying and death.

When I've spoken about it to acquaintances and friends, I've watched their reactions intently to my account. Often, I can see from the listener's face if he has the stomach for it. Has he sat with someone dying and moved through it, or is he holding fast to something impossible? If he ignores it, he is convinced it will go away.

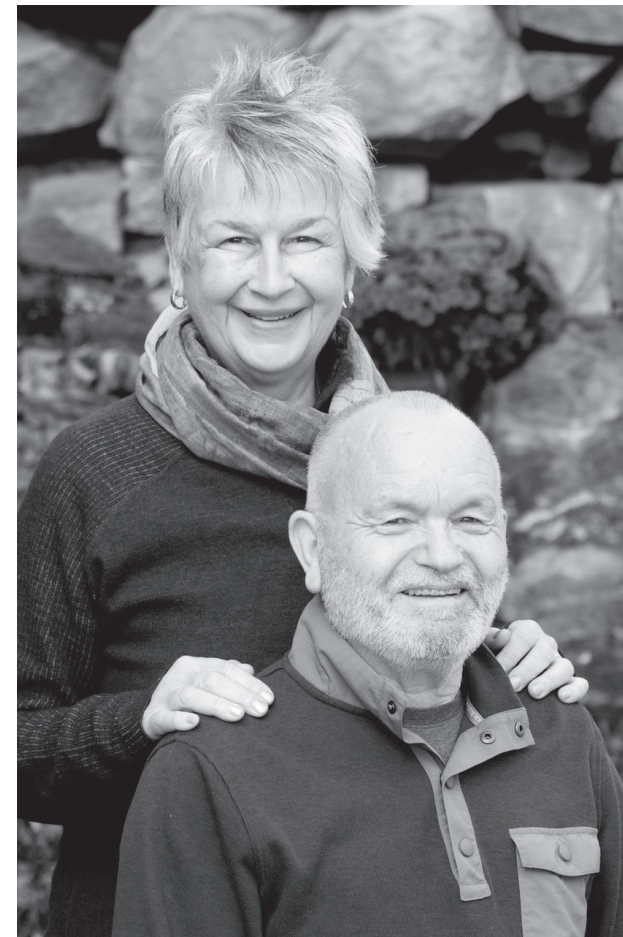
A year ago, a family friend lost her husband in his 50s. I can see she has not "worked" her grief. It reveals itself as a quiver around her eyes, as diverted glances, as awkward or tightly bound postures. If I've shared more than she can hold, her body betrays her discomfort. I've learned to test my words in small doses before I stun someone with the last photos. "Wow." Tears.

No matter your accomplishments, no matter your acquisitions, no matter the difference you have made for others, you will die. Resisting it is futile.

Death is fundamental. We die. If we don't accept that inevitability, we cannot ultimately have fulfillment in life. Only when we can allow death to be, will we be free.

# IN SEARCH OF LIFE-DEFINING MOMENTS

WAYNE DAVIS<sup>1</sup>



#### INTRODUCTION

This document identifies key moments in my life that collectively shaped who I am today. In every example, something critical shifted for me that altered my future. I went from "not knowing" to "knowing" something, even if I didn't fully realize the change until years later. In fact, the very process of documenting this collection of moments has brought many of these critical shifts to my active awareness.

Last year, I was diagnosed with Lewy body dementia, a progressive brain disorder in which abnormal proteins build up in areas of the brain that regulate behavior, cognition and movement.<sup>2</sup> My most significant symptoms were depression, anxiety, difficulty walking, slowed cognitive processing and sleep dysfunction. Thanks to my remarkable wife, Christine Merchant, I saw excellent doctors. I started taking medications to manage my symptoms and began therapies to strengthen my body and mind. I also learned that despite this support, there was no cure for my disease. The average life expectancy after diagnosis is five-to-seven years.

The diagnosis created an urgency to finalize the business of my life: estate planning, establishing power of attorney and so on. But, there was the emotional side to explore, as well. What relationships were struggling? What conversations needed to be resolved? Most importantly: What do I want to accomplish in the time I have left?

I didn't yet know the answer, but documenting parts of my life felt important. I began making notes of remembered experiences, writing out the stories I tell people over and over again. Conversations with family members added depth

and texture to the memories. I allowed others to ask me questions I'd never thought to ask myself. The "why" questions were particularly challenging, but I made an effort to figure out the answers. Then I noticed that many of the narratives contained moments that altered the course of my life, defining the person I would become.

It was as if my subconscious mind had been pressing me to retell these stories for decades, but I hadn't stopped to ask why. In finally listening deeply to myself, I discovered that these life-defining moments indicated areas where a greater level of completion was still needed. There were bad habits that I needed to set free. There were incredible achievements that I needed to share. There were people whose contributions I needed to fully acknowledge.

I initially set out to record the people, relationships and events that defined my life. But, unbelievably, these moments are turning out to be guideposts on my path to fulfillment.



## EARLY LIFE

### 1947: MY MOTHER

A strange experience occurred in the summer of 1947 when I was about four years old. I heard a siren outside our apartment in San Francisco. I found my three sisters looking out a window at some flashing lights and I asked them what was happening. They didn't answer or turn around. Without warning I felt invisible, and I sensed that something was wrong. What I couldn't remember is the reason for the commotion—noise and arguing—around the apartment. It wasn't until much later, when I was in seventh grade, that I learned what happened: the sirens and flashing lights were an ambulance that was there to

take my mother to the hospital. She had tried to take her life. Although she was unsuccessful, she subsequently left the family and went on to remarry. I don't think that I ever saw her again.

Shortly thereafter, my sisters and I were dispersed by my father to various relatives on the West Coast, disconnected and only minimally supported in almost every way possible.

### 1947-57: FOSTER CARE IN RENTON, WASHINGTON

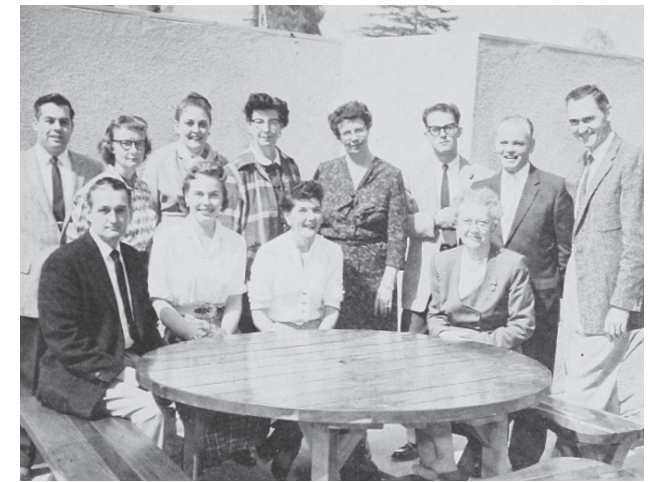
After my mother left, my twin sister and I were put on a bus to Oakland, California and then on a train to Renton, Washington. Our only adult accompaniment took the form of a pinned-on note stating our final destination. On the train platform, I remember looking down at my feet and thinking, "I must have done something bad to be taken from my older sisters. I don't know what I did, but I'd better not do it again." For me, that translated into being careful, nice and hiding my mistakes.

In Washington, my sister and I lived with my paternal uncle, his wife and their two sons. I have no memories of my uncle except for the fact that he molested me and sometimes chased me around the house with a broom. We were both abused until my sister was sent to another aunt, who treated her even worse than my uncle did. What hurt me most was that I couldn't protect her from what was happening to us.

My uncle died when I was 13, and I was returned to my father to live with him and his new wife. My stepmother took me around the house, grabbing my shirt and saying, "Don't go into this room. Don't sit in that chair," and so on. I was always trying to get it right. About a year later, my stepmother told my father that I had stolen money from him—which was untrue—and I had to leave. "Sorry, you're on your own," my father said, as he went along with it. I have no memory of leaving their house, but a friend's father helped me out until I found a job as a commercial spray painter after school.

### 1957: MRS. ALICE RYDEEN

My high school English teacher, Mrs. Alice Rydeen, somehow found out I was homeless and forging parental signatures. She took an interest in engaging me in the academic material, helping to



guide my future. She did everything that she could to keep me from quitting school. I perceived her to be a mean old bat. I have no idea how, but her stubbornly consistent demands and unwavering encouragement set me on a path to graduate. I ended up going on to earn an associate's degree in engineering, a bachelor of science degree in zoology, a Master of Science in invertebrate biology, a Ph.D. in marine ecology and a postdoctoral in fluid mechanics. I supported myself as a firefighter and professor of zoology, and I began my employment with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in the field of marine ecology.

Many years later, after doing a workshop with Landmark, I finally realized everything she had done to encourage me to pursue higher education. I sought her out to thank her, only to be told by the teachers' retirement office that she no longer received a retirement check.

It was shocking and painful to learn that I couldn't acknowledge her before her death. If I could speak with her now, I would want to share the difference she had made in my life. I'd simply say, "Lady, you made it all possible for me, and I just need to thank you." It would bring her to tears to know this, as I think all teachers want to know, but rarely ever hear about the impact they've made.

Now, I make every effort to tell the people who have lifted me up along the road because no one really knows when that road will come to an end. Then I have the remarkable opportunity of

seeing how my acknowledgement of someone's contribution inspires even greater contributions to others.

### LOOKING BACK AND LEARNING

Through these arduous childhood experiences, I developed a surprising capacity to "not have problems," or, more accurately, it appeared to others that I didn't have problems, as if I were unaffected by my history. One could psychologize about this being a survival strategy, and, perhaps, it was. Regardless, this manifested in a lot of different ways, the most obvious way being my tendency to lie about everything. Many of the falsehoods were about manipulating others to help meet my basic needs. I forged parental signatures on school documents. I pretended to be different things to various people to secure a place to live, food to eat, clothes to wear and so on. Other lies revolved around meeting higher-level needs. I cried to gain attention and sympathy. I experimented with being different types of people (e.g., a bully) to make friends. I pretended my history was different from what it was, lying even to myself to put some distance between me and my pain and suffering.

Unfortunately, this habit of lying to myself continued well into my adult life. Without realizing it, I believed that all of the good work I'd done—as a man, father or professional—was driven by my need to prove something to the people around me. I was committed to the belief that they wouldn't, or couldn't, trust me, that I wasn't any good. I earned a master's degree, but it wasn't enough. I completed a Ph.D., but that wasn't enough. I was a scientist who was devoted to resolving global problems. I became a Landmark course leader. But, none of it was ever enough. The thing is, you will never get enough of that which you don't really need. You'll just behave as if you could.

I became really good at doing these "right" things, but for the wrong reasons. I needed to hide that I was a fraud in pretending otherwise. Furthermore, despite all of this hard work proving that I was okay for others, I couldn't prove it to myself. I believed my three daughters thought I was a bad father. I was not only a willing participant in that story, I was its author. In my mind, I was a bad

father. Whenever something good happened that undermined that self-belief, I couldn't see it as being true. Even last year, as one of my daughters was trying to acknowledge me for a contribution that I'd made to who she'd become, I couldn't help dodging her acknowledgement.

I still don't want to see it, but I have earned the right to forgive myself. How dare I resist believing the acknowledgement of others? I have the capacity to honor my wife and others in my life and let them honor me in return.

### PROFESSIONAL BREAKTHROUGHS

Due in large part to Mrs. Rydeen's support, I discovered that I could be successful in the educational environment. This was the first place I started seeing things change for myself. My surviving was becoming thriving, and I found that this success transferred into professional employment. My master's degree advisor at California State University introduced me to the director of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Marine Laboratories in Narragansett, Rhode Island. He offered me a short-term job, which led to a full-time position in South Carolina. I was excited about the work I was being asked to do: determine the national standards for minimal and optimal levels of dissolved oxygen in marine estuaries. After a few years, I was transferred back to Rhode Island, where I spent the rest of my professional career.

### 1982: A SHIFT IN FOCUS

Nearly a decade later, I gradually experienced a rising dissatisfaction and decline in productivity. I was a senior marine ecologist at the National Marine Laboratories in Narragansett. The EPA was aggressively trying to understand what was happening at contaminated dump sites across the country. I was investigating oxygen levels in national coastal areas where summer warming reduced dissolved oxygen to a dangerous degree. My focus was toxicology and pathology.

In plain words, I was unhappy with my work and it was hurting my reputation. Whatever was going on affected my home life, three young daughters and marriage. I registered for a three-day Landmark seminar recommended by a friend. On the third day, I realized something that shocked me. I



recalled a vivid memory of visiting the Steinhart Marine Aquarium as a teenager. During a time when relationships were anything but amiable, I clearly remember experiencing the creatures there as my friends.

I realized that my entire career in marine biology was in pursuit of "thanking marine life for being my friends" at that challenging time in my young life. But, that motivation was in direct conflict with what toxicologists/pathologists do every day. The following morning, I sat down with my supervisor, Dr. Don Miller, and shared my epiphany with him. I was researching "the effect of pollution on marine life," when I really wanted to explore "the effect of marine life on pollution."

Luckily, Dr. Miller saw the importance of supporting this shift. He knew that if I was happy, I would do better work. Thus, I no longer killed marine life in my research. Instead, I worked to demonstrate the positive effects of ecological

processes on contaminated environments.

### 1983: HONORING MY MARINE FRIENDS

Not long after my shift in professional focus, I began studying the polychaete worms that feed on sediment in the oil-contaminated New Bedford Harbor.<sup>3</sup> I constructed "ant farms" with sliding glass walls, filled the farms with marine mud and worms and then submersed it all in flowing sea water. I became known to my colleagues as "Dr. Mud." What pure joy it was to sit there watching those worms burrow!

I collected and analyzed the sediment (i.e., worm food) and the worms' feces for oil concentrations, determining that the digested material showed a 24-29 percent reduction of several toxic compounds. For the first time in a controlled research environment, I had demonstrated biological remediation.

Finally, I was able to honor my marine-life friends, and I ended up publishing several ground-breaking articles on the subject.



### A FAMILY OF MY OWN

The interesting thing about a moment is that it can be experienced from different perspectives. I can be the object, or recipient, of someone else's actions, and later consider how that person altered my future. Or, I can be the initiator of an action, making a choice to do or say something that changed the future for someone else.

Many of my childhood moments are of the first type. Conversely, the stories that define my role as



a parent are almost all of the second type. They are equally impactful, but lighter in tone. These are moments I am proud of, I feel tickled by or I just don't want to forget for various reasons. It's a wonderful thing to think about how I may have impacted my daughters in positive, potentially life-changing ways. It's equally wonderful that those impacts have altered me in positive, life-changing ways in return.

#### 1981: A MOMENT OF PARENTING GROWTH

When my daughter Shana was about four years old, I was convinced that I was not a good father. My children were awesome in many ways, but I spent a lot of time at sea, in the lab and on business trips abroad. I simply assumed that my wife Barbara was a world-class mother. I remember standing there in the hallway of our Rhode Island home, watching Shana on the floor drawing a picture. I wondered to myself, "Do I know her? Perhaps, I don't really know her; I just know many things about her." Who she was for me was nothing more than a mosaic of past events. I saw, in a moment, that there was much more going on than I realized. It was my job as a parent to get to know her.

The reality was that there would always be something new to learn about my children. If I wanted to invest the energy, I could ongoingly create new versions of knowing them. That manifested simply: I thought about the girls more frequently and cared to find out what was going on in their lives. When someone was struggling, I tried to help. It sounds painfully obvious, but these truly basic ideas were never a part of my own childhood experience.

That moment shaped my fathering which, in turn, shaped the futures of my daughters. But, it was only recently that I put it all together. The very act of writing this narrative allowed me to see the true impact of this moment. In the context of feeling like a bad father, the realization that I needed to work to know my daughters was what drove me to shift my actions.

#### 1982: SHE'S MINE!

One Sunday morning, my daughter Sara crawled into our bed and snuggled up

under the covers. Without thinking about it, I pretended to be a sleeping bear, gradually waking up. I grabbed her, pulled her to me and growled, "She's mine!" My wife Barbara responded with a louder growl, "She's mine!" This escalated until we all broke down laughing and a new family tradition was born.

This is a wonderful memory that I love to share with others. But, it took my experience writing this article, nearly 40 years later, to understand what makes it so remarkable. The "She's Mine!" game is about connection and love, about a child being so wanted by both parents that a silly argument breaks out over who gets to hug her.

As a child, I had caretakers but not caregivers. That attachment of a child to a parent—feeling loved, cared for and safe—simply never occurred. In this moment, I was actively learning to change that story for my own family. I was giving language and experience to that which securely attached children take for granted. It is my greatest hope that my daughters will never doubt that they are loved, valued and supported in whatever it is they choose to do. For me, learning to provide that for them is one of my greatest accomplishments.

#### 1987: BREAKFAST WITH DAD

I took my daughters out for breakfast one Sunday morning at the Islander Cafe. After pouring a third plastic cup of creamer into my coffee, I asked the girls if they wanted a taste. "Yes," they responded, and I filled up three creamer cups with coffee for them. This started the tradition of drinking coffee together, me with my beige ceramic mug and the girls, pinkies in the air, feeling very grown-up with their tiny cups. In that moment, I had the rare gift of being the center of their universe.

After breakfast, we walked back home. Along the way, my daughter Lara asked me, "Dad, is it okay if we go out again, but just one of us at a time?" "Sure," I said, without much thought. It made sense that she wanted my individual attention. When there are three daughters in a family, it's infrequent that one child gets all of the attention to herself. What was interesting was that Lara, then eight years old, had the emotional awareness to recognize what she needed and ask for my support.

I have been hard of hearing my entire life. That handicap, along with my complicated family history, has often kept me from being present and listening to others in a mindful way. My comfort zone of connecting was in coaching or teaching. In generating all of the language myself, I completely avoided the embarrassment of being caught not hearing, understanding or listening.

This moment's true significance was that I broke a personal pattern of behavior. I was somehow able to listen to Lara and hear what she was asking. I didn't cast the request aside, as I did with many of the trivial requests that the girls made of me. The following weekend, I took her out to breakfast all by herself. We toasted with our grown-up and tiny coffee cups, and we talked about her life. There was no competing for attention. It was just a nice, quiet time between father and daughter, during which I felt profoundly present. That, I'm starting to believe, is the true definition of intimacy.

#### CONCLUSION

By early 2017, it felt as if life was spinning out of control. My anxiety was becoming increasingly debilitating and sleep issues were undermining my nighttime outlet for recovery. I had lost the ability to participate in my regular physical activities. My response to stress was much as it had been for years: I would shut down and walk away from whatever situation was causing it. But, little things often triggered me, so I could be irritable and reactive. Family members were constantly dancing around me, trying not to cause upset. I had even developed a mild obsession with being elderly. I was "going downhill," or so I said, and I couldn't see a way to redirect the inevitable decline.

The diagnosis of Lewy body dementia brought new medications that calmed my frantic mind. I became more peaceful and contemplative. A support group helped me to understand the predictable course of my disease. I faced a choice, to withdraw and surrender my life or open up in a new way. The diagnosis was shocking news, but within it I found a unique gift. I actually had time left to resolve the outstanding issues in my life. I could have conversations, complete relationships and continue to make contributions to the world. My dementia had become a catalyst for resolution.

In working to document these stories, I forged new connections with my daughters. The project became an excuse to reinvent our old conversational patterns. I publicly explored the biggest challenges in my life to uncover the moments that defined me. My daughters learned of past difficulties that I was struggling to overcome, which helped them to understand who I was in my parenting. Furthermore, my admissions of weakness unintentionally gave them the space to share their struggles with me, and they did just that. Our conversations slowly shifted from being about me to more about them. We started calling each other more frequently and appreciating the moments of connection that resulted.

I have often thought of this work as being a legacy to my daughters. It was my chance to say all the things I wanted to say to them, to express what a gift they are to my life. The reality is that the true legacy is the ongoing development of connection within our relationships.

Now, I can give them the gift of my time and attention, simply bearing witness to their lives. I can express and receive love without subtly feeling the need to distance myself from it. I can listen without trying to coach or fix any of it. My presence is enough.

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#### ENDNOTES

- 1 I acknowledge my stepdaughter, Anahita Pajuhesh, for transcribing my stories into writing, and my daughter, Shana Barnes, for editing the stories into this condensed article.
- 2 Lewy Body Dementia Association: [www.lbda.org/](http://www.lbda.org/).
- 3 Davis, W.R., "Feeding & irrigation of *Nephtys incisa*," *Wastes in the Ocean*, Vol. II. (John Wiley & Sons, 1983).

# DISCOVERIES FROM THE INQUIRIES



I'm a big fan of "Star Trek – the Next Generation," the television series that first aired in 1987 about some humans and a synthetic life form named Data, who was often perplexed by human behavior. Set far in the future, the science fiction series relates the voyages of the starship Enterprise and "its continuing mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no one has gone before." Whether the crew, led by Captain Jean-Luc Picard, encounters strange new beings or confronts life aboard ship, each episode slyly makes a point about human beings. That is the essence of inquiry for me. What is it to be human? It leads to the "Discoveries from the Inquiries" section of the journal.

This is the third year we have had this section. As the previous journal editor, the late and beloved Phyllis E. Bowen, put it last year: "We anticipate that in future years this section may become the philosophical edge of the Wisdom inquiry." Most of this year's contributors have been involved with the Inquiries of the Social Commons or the first-ever Inquiry Subscription Program, or both. Thus, their inquiries begin from various places that include the inquiry calls on Contribution, Discourses, Living as a Created Self, Measures, Public Persona or the Social Commons.

Delving into how these inquiries are unfolding in their lives, the contributors traverse realms as diverse as how one discovers the nature of forgiveness, a world with infinite resources, what's available from assisting, leading an inquiry, leadership in Africa and how anything is possible. We look forward to more contributions next year as we continue building this section.

In addition, we offer several provocative papers from contributors who have been engaged in years-long inquiries involving some of the philosophical underpinnings of Landmark's work. For some, the papers by Ed Stroupe, Mike Ginn and Brian McFadin may generate a deeper understanding of the forebearers' thinking. For all, I assert these papers explore new territories in inquiry and discourse.

For those who venture into this philosophical terrain, consider what it will take to create the most value as you read them. For me, it required a willingness to upend my thinking and give up that I had to fully grasp every idea as if it made sense. While this may seem illogical at first, one has to recognize many things in life don't always make sense. For example, does love always make sense? From this vantage point, the articles offer what occurs for me as mind-bending and miraculous. What discoveries are available for you? I invite you to inquire and follow Captain Picard's oft-quoted directive: "Make it so."

— Melinda Voss, Editor

## HOW DO I DISCOVER?

SUSIE FRASER

It seems that I was born curious. I poked into things and I asked why, why, why and it didn't matter how often they told me "curiosity killed the cat!" When I discovered the retort, "information brought it back," I was very happy and I didn't have to say that many times before they stopped telling me about the fate of that curious cat.

I was in a meeting recently when the group leader asked us, "How do you discover?" An obvious answer is when I am listening to another speaking. Sometimes, they say the exact thing I discover; sometimes, I see something in response to what they said, which is not the exact thing they said, and, of course, I stop listening as I am seeing this, so I miss the next bit.

Sometimes, I discover things while I am speaking and one or more others are listening. I can discover what it is I want to say or share in my speaking of it. Some discoveries are discovered without language, and then the language needs to be added to share them. Sometimes, it seems difficult to find that language because the share isn't the thing itself.

Something I've noticed recently regarding choosing the language to use is that I have a choice when I can try to find a way to language something so they can hear it or I can try to train them into my preferred language. The first alternative is more effective if I get off my idea that the language I chose is perfect.

I discover things with my senses – how something feels, smells, tastes, sounds and looks. Hearing new music and tasting new dishes are examples. Again, if I want to bring these discoveries to a conversation, I have to find language for a non-language experience. Tasting something is different from describing how something tastes. There's how it feels in my mouth, how chewing it sounds in my head, how it smelled, or didn't before I put it in my mouth, and how it looks. A friend of mine had an accident and lost his sense of smell. He says everything tastes

different from how he remembers things tasted.

I live in a bushy area, next to a vacant block of woodland that I walk past every day – usually twice – with the dogs. Sometimes, I will see a tree that it seems I never saw before, even though I have been walking past that tree for 40 years. Maybe, it's the light that day or the angle of my gaze, but it's like, "Wow, look at that tree!" as though I am seeing it for the first time.

I see a couple of things from this. First, I can't remember everything, and this may not be the first time I have "discovered" that same tree. But, if I did, the earlier discovery is not remembered now. Secondly, as I walk along, I don't see the detail of everything. I'm gazing out, waiting for something untoward to capture my attention, perhaps something dangerous.

Driving is similar, kind of like "Ok – ok – ok – ok – what's that?!"

Said another way, what I notice seems to be selected by me sometimes, and, at other times, it seems more as though it selects me.

I discover things from what I hear, read and watch – from the Internet, television, theater, movies, concerts, radio, books and media. Just recently, I discovered that there are starfish under Antarctica that don't have brains, but, nevertheless, seek out food and consume it. Or, there's slime mold, where individuals seem to be able to learn from each other without being together.

It seems to me there is a state, or way of being, or context, or listening, or being available, when I am present enough to notice and inquire. It seems to be a state I can generate. You know, life is much more fun and interesting. It's a way to have a life of delight, I reckon.

For now, I'm calling that state "available to discover and inquire."

## FROM WHAT FIELD AM I REPORTING?

J. BELLE BELL

*"Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing  
and right doing there is a field.  
I'll meet you there.  
When the soul lies down in that grass  
the world is too full to talk about."  
– Rumi, 13th century*

### RUMI, 13TH CENTURY

My first "Report from the Field" looks into the possibility of "not knowing" as a powerful place to hang out in which I first encountered in Partnership Explorations in the mid-1990s. Imagine, I am sitting down to pen a Report from the Field and actually not knowing what field I am reporting from! Is this discovery?

Here, at the end of 2018 – when some say "the veil is very thin" between this world and other worlds – occurs like a field. This time is called by some holy, sacred and transformational. Celebrated by many traditions in different ways, it includes solstice where the tipping point between half-light and half-dark shifts once again. We are players in a much bigger orchestra than we, as human beings, remember most of the time. Are we sacred beings having a human experience or human beings with an occasional sacred experience? We get to choose.

*"To learn to listen to the symphony  
of the cosmos,  
To recognize it  
And tune to it with one's own song:  
That is the human assignment  
~ that is holy art ~ 'ars sacra.'  
– Rumi, 13th century*

Nearly two decades ago, I created a place to stand in Power and Contribution and considered at that time having my life given by that commitment. Mostly, I forgot. Here is what I created in my speaking ... all people being their aliveness, magnificence and passionate self-expressions by\_\_\_\_. I don't remember putting a "by when" on it. I have had a chance to look at the outcome or lack of outcome when left without that quality.

Tip #1: Consider "by whens" serve a purpose. They notify "the field" of the universe that you are serious about what you are creating in your speaking.

You see my life has been relatively good. No, honestly, it has been really good! There have been, of course, some definite ups and downs on the roller coaster having me be sometimes in the car and, other times, on the tracks (I think Werner said that), yet, nonetheless, adventurous and rich. Sprinkled with plenty of self-created drama disguised as my truth and story, there have been occasional doses of false evidence appearing real and then I entered The Landmark Forum in 1992. Then add in everything else I could get my hands on in the world of personal transformation for the next 10 years and I was home. Like the airplane/face mask analogy, I have spent a lot of the last 30-plus years receiving oxygen first into my own system before getting prepared to offer it to any others around me on this wild plane ride called life. What was I waiting for?

I appear to have gotten older ... or have I? All my cells have continued to die and be born anew in every part of my body over and over and yet they come back having me look much the same. Does that mean my default thinking or my beliefs (thoughts we keep having over and over, according to the powerful distinctions of Esther Hicks, an inspirational speaker and author) keep creating me looking and feeling somewhat

the same with the same body, incompletions, belly fat and the same old same old?

In 2016, when I was turning 70, I created an adventure in my life as I had known it and decided to walk one of the several Camino de Compostelas to Santiago, Spain. A voice inside said ... make a pilgrimage into yourself. Again, not knowing what that meant, it took months of training to become a 12-mile-a-day walker. My intention for the trip, while training, borrowed from a friend who had walked the Camino the year earlier, created a deliberate interruption in my life as I had known it. A good life, yes, and, now, a line drawn in the sand. When complete, I was up to consciously and deliberately creating the rest of my life powerfully, however long it would be.

Now here is the rub. I didn't say "by when" the interruption would be complete (like the end of the 150-mile walk from Porto, Portugal to Santiago, Spain). No, I did not let the field of universe know my "interruption" had a beginning and an end. As a result, two years later, I am finally able to declare the interruption is nearly complete. It has been quite a ride.

I have spent more than the last two years in somewhat of a cocoon-like state where neither the caterpillar of the past nor the butterfly of an imaginal future has been able to dominate the primordial soup I seem to have turned into out of the walk; where I had – even though I didn't know it – set myself up to be willing to be "nothing for a while."

So, how did life occur when I returned home in November 2016? Very gray. My energy level was low and I mostly crawled in between the covers and vegged out in ways I had never known possible. I had no inclination or apparent energy to return to my dance practice, nor to return to Mexico where I had been "wintering" for more than 13 years. No interest in painting or tending to the organization of my artist's studio, no fizz, no pizzazz ... just flat. My body felt more than tired and less than well, and so full of sensations. I decided to sit in a 10-day silent meditation in mid-2017 as I had done several times between 22 and 30 years earlier and get experientially, once again, that a law of the universe is "everything changes" and maybe reexperience how to

observe what was going on in my body, mind and spirit and not make it mean anything; to be all right with being "nothing for a while."

Then there was how to be with all of the above and more ... all "stuff" (figuratively and literally) that I had accumulated in my life with none of the apparent energy or inclination needed to handle it and let it go. I had all kinds of visitors for months in my Rumi Guest House door-sweeping me clean whether I liked it or not.<sup>1</sup> I somehow reencountered the work of Abraham-Hicks' Law of Attraction group of non-physical beings, which now I use as a practice to remind me on 15-minute YouTube offerings that it is all about frequency and my vibrational reality that delivers on what I want for myself and what I give energy to for myself, others or the world! They say, as the consultants, that I need to sit 20 minutes every day "for no reason at all" to be ready ... to be ready ... to be ready to receive. Everything is there waiting to be delivered on. I started practicing.

Tip #2: Sitting every day is an essential practice for delivering on what I am out to deliver on and deliberate creation out of nothing.

In the fall of 2017, it was The Landmark Forum for the eighth time in 25 years and Advanced Course. I highly recommend taking this on with whatever you are up to in the world no matter how many times you have experienced it. It is especially new right now. You will be amazed at what you will discover about yourself. Do them both! In the Advanced Course, I felt myself coming on fire in holy new ways and began to take on standing for this transformational work being a catalyst for awakening our passionate selves!

In southern Oregon where I live, I hosted three community introductions totaling more than 60 guests in 2018. Add in the Creativity seminar, two-and-a-half hours away in Eugene and renewing the Wisdom Unlimited course in San Francisco, holy cow, I was creating a brand spanking newly-refurbished, added to and re-remembered tool bag for ongoing consciousness creating moment-by-moment. Utilizing distinctions from here and there such as: All is well. This is what life looks like when it's working. The "is" world is just my default "occurring world." Everything is always working out for me. This is it, and I

am satisfied. Empty and meaningless and it's empty and meaningless that it's empty and meaningless. Gratefulness. Deliciousness.

Do you know the word "abracadabra?" It's probably from the Aramaic phrase avra keh-dabra, meaning "I will create as I speak." Although a word we commonly associate with magical thinking and fantasia, I now get more than ever that we all will really get, without doubt, first what we think and then what we say. Each of our lives is a word-world match and mostly we don't recognize that.

Add in meeting Yury Krohn for only an hour and a half and having my world rocked in September of last year. He's the 82-year-old head of a team of 10 Russian physicists in southern Oregon who immigrated to America 30 years ago and settled near where I live in order to deepen their research in the field of subtle energy. Their work is mind-boggling, amazing and complimenting, and amplifies all these other facets of the gem we each are as unlimited beings and what we can make possible. Really inside the world, 96 percent of the universe – including us – is subtle energy. We, as humanoids, make the rest of the four percent mean so much in our limited 3D reality vibrations where we do most of our business from.

So, can you tell? My lights are back on as never before, connecting dots around who and what I am creating. Getting myself gently and lovingly out of my way has brought to the beginning of the completion of this rather naively created two-year interruption and a nine-day vision quest in August of this year will ceremonially complete it. Being cause in the matter (out of the 2018 Year-end Vacation course) wherever I have been a complaint or upset has me putting my house on the market and not needing to know what field I am to go to next. It is noticing when I am on it and seeing how fast I can get off it. Someday, we all (all humanity) will really get that we create a reality moment by moment, thought by thought, then word by word and then action by action that we then have to live out of. It possibly all comes from a field of emptying what's already there into "nothing" and getting beyond right and wrong and playing in the subtle energy field of ... anything is possible. What do I want to think and say next?

This year when someone asks me, "How are you Belle?," I choose to respond: "I am grateful and satisfied and eager for more ..."

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> [www.gratefulness.org/resource/guest-house-rumi/](http://www.gratefulness.org/resource/guest-house-rumi/).

# FORGIVENESS AS A WAY OF LIFE

JANE GRANDBOUCHE AND JOHN CORBIERE

Three years ago, we started a weekly call on forgiveness. Every week, we took on the practice of sharing and looking at areas where there was something to forgive. Something we discovered was that there is always something to forgive. Whether it is in relationship with the people around us now or in the past, or with what is happening around us in the world, there is always something to forgive. Life has a way of bringing up all that, and, at times, it looks as though there is something wrong here.

For the past few years, we have done a breakout room at the Conference for Global Transformation on Forgiveness as a Way of Life. We use Father Gerry's forgiveness process as the foundation of all that we have done in this realm of inquiry. There are four questions.

1. Are you willing to forgive? Forgiveness is an act of will, not a product of your emotions, feelings and thoughts.
2. Are you willing to forgive totally? Forgiveness is not about forgetting but about being about remembering without resentment or undue regret.
3. Are you willing to forgive absolutely? It is, as if it is frozen in time in a very rigid form. This is when you start to loosen, unfetter and absolve what has been unforgiven.
4. Are you willing to forgive unconditionally? You forgive as an act of will for yourself as there is no "reason," "condition" or "because" that needs to be met in order to forgive. This is where any hurt begins to heal and you can see whatever or whoever as a blessing or benefit. This is the miracle and possibility of forgiveness.

Here is what we discovered for ourselves:

1. There is always something to forgive. As human beings, part of our nature is to make something wrong here and given that in reality, life is happening perfectly, we always have the opportunity to forgive that which we profess as "wrong" or "it shouldn't be this way."
2. A life of forgiveness is a willingness to complete life as it is happening. It becomes natural as the practice of forgiveness becomes more of who we are.
3. Outcome of forgiveness is gratitude ... love ... humility ... self-expression ... compassion ... surrender, among other things.
4. Forgiveness makes available new possibilities.
5. Consider that anywhere in your life that you're making something wrong, you have not forgiven.
6. Forgiveness gives us access to being with what is so and being cause in the matter. Responsibility is an outcome of forgiveness.
7. Forgiveness has us often giving up making ourselves wrong.
8. Forgiveness is an accomplishment.
9. Forgiveness brings wonderment into the realm of possibility.
10. Forgiveness brings new expressions of integrity, authenticity and accomplishment. It brings a new awareness to forgiveness; not from the past but from a new awareness; a new story so to speak. It is internal states – feelings, emotions, anxiety, fear, past impressions. There are

hundreds of things, stories we can say about any situation, an incompleteness.

11. Not forgiving is very personal.
12. Forgiveness leaves us "out here" with people and life and not in our heads.
13. You have to be vulnerable to forgive. Not forgiving keeps us disconnected. Everybody is a part of all of it and not forgiving has us be separate, alone and righteous.
14. What we get when we don't forgive is being right.
15. Forgiveness begins with you and in many ways is for you.
16. When we forgive, what is available are love, gratitude and appreciation.
17. Forgiveness brings healing to Self in new ways.
18. Areas in which to forgive yourself:
  - Your body
  - Your family, sisters, brothers, parents, children, relatives, whether they're alive or dead
  - Your finances
  - Your health
  - Your career
  - Your environment
  - Your friends, your neighbors
  - Your hatreds, anger, resentments, righteousness, etc.
19. Look in your life and what have you not forgiven? People, government, environment, family, etc.
20. Listening from forgiveness impacts every area of life and gives rise to living a fulfilled life of accomplishment, success and fulfillment.
21. Forgiveness is one of our greatest tools. If you want to be healed, you will practice forgiveness. Forgiveness takes us out of the individual and into the world.
22. Forgiveness is an act of will. Forgiveness

takes away all your excuses.

## "A BUDDHIST PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS"

*If I harmed anyone in any way  
Either knowingly or unknowingly  
Through my own confusions  
I ask forgiveness*

*If anyone has harmed me in any way  
Either knowingly or unknowingly  
Through their own confusions  
I forgive them*

*And if there is a situation that I am not ready  
to forgive  
I forgive myself for all the ways  
I have harmed myself,*

*Negate, doubt, belittle myself  
Judge or be unkind to myself  
Through my own confusions*

*I forgive myself*

# INQUIRY: LOVING THE JOURNEY OF LIFE

SARAH THOMAS

*My Report from the Field is sharing an update of a promise to transform leadership in Africa. It began in 2015 by sponsoring four women from Kenya to create equality for women in making government decisions affecting their lives and the lives of their communities. They are being cause in the matter of something bigger than themselves, "The Kenya We Want."*

Now, after four years, I faced the overwhelming success of having 200 graduate leaders from the 2016 and 2018 Being a Leader and the Effective Exercise of Leadership courses in Nairobi. I was totally unprepared to lead the design of a sustainable structure for ongoing growth and development and meet the growing demands for leadership transformation in Kenya, Ghana and South Africa, and, for that matter, the continent of Africa, whether realized yet or not.

It seemed that each step I considered taking was preceded by my identity and doubt. "It's not possible, you're not prepared," my identity told me and then continued, "Are you serious? Transform? What's that? Who do you think you are? No one listens and they won't believe you." When my promise was "impossible," I could be fine with that but when the promise was being fulfilled, it became a problem my ego couldn't handle.

With great expectation and hope, I registered in the Inquiry Subscription Program at the 2018 Conference for Global Transformation. With that very act, I gave up my usual desire for answers, strategy and solutions for the opportunity to discover something new with people in the commons who share the practice of authentic inquiry: "Radical open listening, being for something bigger than ourselves, authentically share our listening and how the matters we are dealing with look 'in the world' for ourselves and others."

Quotes were inspired from my discoveries in an inquiry.

"Exploring what artists say about the nature of reality that cannot be said in representational language." Art served as the wisdom and universal thinking and the artists saying what couldn't be said. I invite you to inquire along with us and see what you see for yourself in the concerns you are engaged with.

I chose to participate in the weekly Discourse and Social Commons inquiries. There were three practices from the wisdom of artists I found useful.

*"Your path is at your feet whether you realize it or not. That is the most important thing I will say but I will not enlarge upon it." Agnes Martin*

*"If you use as I do, chance operations, you don't have control except in the way of designing the questions which you ask. That You Can Control." John Cage*

*"Try to put well in practice what you already know; and in so doing you will, in good time, discover the hidden things which you now inquire about." Rembrandt*

This year's conference theme "Listening for Fulfillment" has given me the context for this report.

Inquiring of discourse directed me to inquire into listening. The work of the musician John Cage set me on the course of distinguishing "hearing" and "listening." Listening to his composition, 14'3", I discovered how I normally hear is that the sounds are already associated with something. The sound reminds me automatically of other sounds then something else that's repeated each time I hear it. Such as with the first few notes of the Star Spangled Banner or Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. So, how do we hear or listen silence? Scientists learned that hearing is the earliest developed sense. All animals hear. So, why would there be no animal born deaf? Umm. So, do human beings hear sounds or do human beings listen? This may shed some light on "already always" listening.

"Find your eyes," Alec Soth says. By listening? How can that be? On "60 Minutes," there was a story about an architect who lost his sight following surgery. Even though blind a week later, he was back to work. Now, he reports being more capable than before to view and design structures with his newly developed capacity for listening. This seems more extraordinary that he would be more fulfilled and not desire to give up his blindness. He can identify who is walking down the hallway by the sounds of their steps. He is joyful and satisfied with his life, living and accomplishments.

Maybe, we can learn something from his experience. So, here's a practice: "For the next week, try the best you can to pay attention to sounds. You will start hearing all these sounds coming in." Robert Irwin

Listening in the Discourse inquiry was particularly powerful for me and African women leaders. The first women participating in 2015 were committed to "Women's Equality" elected in government. Releasing my deeply ingrained listening to fight "inequality," I could look and "come to terms with injustice and human rights the way they were" (an inquiry opened in the Developmental Service & Contribution course). I had been living from "something is wrong here and must be fixed" for "the world to work for everyone." It didn't work for women and girls. I knew the facts and it was the truth!

Once I was able to distinguish the way things are and wound up being that way, I could look and listen to the discourse as the "building blocks of meaning." The imbedded narrative of what it means to be a woman and leader. The discourse needed a victim and dominator.

"The 'one' that I am is composed of narratives that overlap, run parallel to and often contradict one another." Glenn Ligone

Transforming who we are for ourselves, we are free to be and free to be for all women and girls.

*"You may be a woman and you may be an artist; but the one is a given and the other is you." Dorothea Tanning*

I had a new practice to both look and listen what's so, recognizing in myself they could be like the front of the hand and back of the hand.

Most puzzling to me was the Social Commons inquiry. It had been a struggle to "get it" since I first heard the words. I could get the part about belonging and everyone has a contribution to make, but I still didn't experience any power from the inquiry. There were no answers and only mystery creating more questions. Gradually, I began to be patient and just keep inquiring, trusting the future of my promise for the world. Surprisingly, I noticed that I love the people in our group and began having fun being myself as a self-expression. That was a start. But, the challenge was my constraint to create a space for a leader in the social commons. How could that work? You see it was "up to me," and I didn't know what to do.

An opportunity fell in my lap, a donation of an online collaborative platform enabling us to design an African leaders' collaborative fulfilling our intention to develop ongoing growth and development for leaders. As a huge weight was lifted from my shoulders, I could see it was "my I" that was the constraint all on "my I" shoulders. Finally! There was the space for everyone to participate together and contribute to fulfilling our common interests. The future shifted from "me" to "we." Now, more and more people want to participate in the design.

*"Good collaboration produces universal thinking." Robert Rauschenberg*

*"I want to make work so people can be moved by a sense of the possible." Zhang Huan*

Now, miracles are happening. Daniel Kamanga, a director with years of experience in development and a graduate of the Abu Dhabi Being a Leader course, and I are partners. He is committed to work full-time in 2019. Participants in the first inquiry for a specific sector will explore a new model of leadership to transform Africa's agriculture by transforming its leaders, co-hosted by one of the leading agriculture and technology universities in Kenya. Preparation is underway by graduates of the Nairobi Being a Leader courses to extend the leadership course from Kenya to South Africa and Ghana. All is being fulfilled inside the creation of the Africa Leadership Transformation Foundation promising one million leaders in 10 African countries in 10 years.

My Impossible Promise for the world is:  
"Everyone a leader honoring the dignity and concerns for everyone and everything."

Thank you for listening. "It is 'us' doing it together." Gilbert and George

I love you!

Note: All the quotes are from "Art is the Highest Form of Hope, and Other Quotes by Artists," a book created and edited by the editors at Phaidon, a publishing house.

## DISCOVERIES FROM THE INQUIRIES

# SPAGHETTI AND WAFFLES

## ALISA REYNOLDS

I have a favorite Buckminster Fuller quote that I have been considering and applying to different organizational situations for the last 10 years. It's likely been the quote which has had the most influence on my leadership style and belief system.

It goes: "You can pay a person for their back and their hands but not for their mind and their heart. Those are volunteered."

It pulls up an inquiry for me: Under what circumstances will a person volunteer their mind and their heart? I've had the opportunity over the years, through many different leadership and management roles, to apply the inquiry. Two phrases come up as possible answers over and over again.

The first phrase is: People will volunteer their hearts and their minds when they have the experience of being safe. Volunteerism has a certain spirit to it. In my work life, I have had the opportunity to observe the difference it makes when I go beyond doing just what I am paid to do and I dig deep, so to speak, to find that essential ingredient that only I can give.

Finding the space to give it without regard for what I will receive in return has been the kind of exceptional experience that has the quality of making life worth living for me. To find the ways and means to volunteer my heart and mind in contribution to things that are important to me. To allow the deepest realms of caring within me to awaken and speak. To count on myself to be the adult who holds the safe space for the expression of my heart and mind. To be the back and hands that generate the custody of the space I can volunteer in.

The second phrase is: People will volunteer their hearts and their minds when they have the experience of being valued. The experience of being valued is somewhere near the realm of experiencing being safe but then a bit beyond. To experience being safe to volunteer mind and heart is different than experiencing the volunteered contents of mind and heart being valued. There may be no better feeling than volunteering what feels like my truest expression as an expression of work. It's one thing to feel safe and it is another thing to risk authenticity and experience being valued.

I sometimes think that I need to sit down and try to figure out which of these phrases answers the question best. Under what circumstances will a person volunteer their mind and their heart? Is it the experience of being safe or is it the experience of being valued? It's possible that these are like levels or layers that build on each other. First, I dip my toe into the environment to see if it's safe; then I may risk being known. There may be no greater use for a group than this.

In 2018, I've had the opportunity to apply this inquiry to my first year as a program leader for Landmark. In the role of custodian for the Inquiries of the Social Commons and participating in the 2018 Inquiry Subscription Program, I have observed members of our social commons publicly experiment with saying what they are committed to and I have observed many people being there to receive it. Other members of our social commons, the Listener Team, staff members and the custodians have been there to receive the volunteered expression of heart and mind... of caring for things together.

So far, I have discovered that even in our really highly trained space, it doesn't always feel safe

to care...but I have been unable to prove that it isn't safe. I keep doing it and it keeps working out okay. I care. I care about my Self, family, friends, community and nature, at large. I care about our social commons of transformation and the spaces we occupy together. So far, even as it has felt like risk, it has worked out. It's the stuff that arises in all of this that leads me to what I could call my "core commitment" to quote an Inquiry Subscription Program participant, Anita.

This last year has been an incredible journey exploring safety and value in the realms and fields of our work of transformation. My 2019 inquiry about volunteerism is now deeply rooted in what happens if people have the experience of risking being valued? What gets generated by the Listener Team, the custodians for the Inquiries of the Social Commons, our various assisting teams and program participants seems to have something to do with our willingness to freely give one of our most valuable resources – time and attention – to each other. What is the nature and quality of volunteered time and attention vs. purchased time and attention? Can or do they accomplish the same things? To quote any custodian, "Maybe that's a great inquiry."

To be clear, I am not wondering about whether paid "back and hand" time has more or less value than volunteered heart and mind time. I'm curious about how they complement each other. I'm curious about the types and qualities of each and how they work together. I'm curious about how one person may excel in both ways.

I use the term "spaghetti and waffles" as a mental stage prop. My friend, Troy Beckwith, created photographs during his most recent Wisdom course. He and I enjoyed some conflict as people who assisted together during the 2018 Conference for Global Transformation. We are great thought partners and before long were present to what the contribution of the conflict experience was. I enjoy playing hard sometimes. So does Troy. He is a big vision guy. So am I. He wants to do great work everywhere he goes and so do I. He's a second-grade teacher. I'm an artist. We met in the Partnership Explorations course. Troy would say he is like a waffle and I would say I am like spaghetti. These loosely describe something like

our current designs for relating to the world. A waffle is a very organized practice or process way of being. Spaghetti represents bits of information connecting to other bits of information randomly. Somehow, is the brain capable of both? I can see spaghetti in the wiring of the brain. Where is the waffle? Are we each capable of both?

Since the 2018 conference, we've been unpacking our spaghetti-waffle-ness during a weekly call. Assisting is such a great experience. Holding the space together. Caring together – developing shared visions for what our assisting work can accomplish together. I look at our work next to the work of people who assist in the center's division (admittedly it's been a while since I've done assisting work in a center). I see some waffle and spaghetti natures there. Different types of value. Both very important. Likely complementary. What if we apply the safety and value inquiry to this relationship ... who knows what is possible?

## DISCOVERIES FROM THE INQUIRIES

# BEING MYSELF FROM COMPASSION AND LOVE

SUSANNE MÄHLER

### *Abstract*

*This Report from the Field tells the story of my experience of the transformation that can take place in meetings in schools between students and students, students and teachers and teachers and parents.*

For the most part, we really do need to do something about the social environment in schools. Everyone – students, teachers and parents – needs to feel safe in the school environment, and everybody needs to be treated in a good way in the school environment. Who is responsible for that?

What I heard from:

Teachers: They don't listen to me.  
They don't respect me, I quit.

Students: I don't want to be here anymore.  
They don't see me, like me or need me here.

Parents: There is nothing wrong with my child.  
Why don't they do something to help him?

When I meet teachers and parents who feel frustrated, stressed and dejected, I see clearly that they are responding to each other by

being judgmental and critical, blaming each other and making one another wrong. This leads to people being disconnected and can even have an effect on their health.

### **TRANSFORMATION**

When I am committed to compassion, I give more energy to trusting. I am more "present" and can act as a leader from love instead of fear and can communicate with more confidence.

When I am aware of how I am communicating, I can concentrate on communicating from a position of human compassion and being connected, thus creating a sense of well-being. I can choose different glasses between seeing the situation from the point of view of fear and make wrong, or seeing it from love. I can react by feeling inadequate and held back, which results in making myself and others wrong, or I can react from a feeling of "I am good enough," which results in being connected to myself and others.

When I am present to compassion, I create the possibility of being a leader and being an inspiration. I then introduce teachers, parents and students to transforming the old structures of communication with their judgments and criticisms to the "next generation of compassionate communication" with being connected and a sense of belonging and feeling of well-being.

When I focus on social interactions in schools, we create a sense of well-being together with compassion and love in our communications.



In other words, we need to be aware of our thoughts, attitudes and the languages we use of who we're being and the world we're creating.

When I practice and raise myself with ease and joy to a level of confidence, I have the quality of life that results in this human communication and connection we all desire. This is possible if we trust our ability and practice to be aware of ourselves in our relationships, listening, dialogue and integrity.

When I'm willing to create really good human connections, when I'm really "present" and aware of why and when I focus on how I interact socially and understand the impact I have in creating well-being in my relationships, I can be connected with people without judgment or criticism.

When I accept myself and that we are different, I can communicate more from compassion. We all have different talents and may be able to complement each other's well-being. When we combine all our talents together with compassionate communication, we create a world that works for everyone. How would we react and act if we are more aware of our impact on the next generation?

In their teacher training in Sweden today, teachers are not taught to generate leadership in their communication. What would be possible in the future if training in self-generated leadership was something every teacher got to take part in their students' education?

My experience from schools has led me to create a four-leaf clover that helps teachers build self-awareness and self-confidence in their communication. The four leaves represent being present to listening and simply being present, creating relationship and dialogue and being in integrity. This training develops teachers' abilities in communication.

I really feel fulfilled when I know that I have had an impact on thousands of people. These are people that I provide a service for. This service is to build a bridge between the old structure of communication and the next generation of compassionate communication.

Yes, I am willing to have my commitment fulfilled

in the world. So, I am a stand for serving schools throughout the world with compassion in human connectedness. For that to be possible, I have to stand there and be present to that myself.

## DISCOVERIES FROM THE INQUIRIES

# ON THE ROAD TO LISTENING: WHAT IF I'M A VERB, NOT A NOUN?

CHRIS KIRTZ

Being a custodian of the "Living as a Created Self: Carving out New Pathways for Life" Inquiry of the Social Commons is the best assisting post ever in 44 years of assisting!

I'm a lifer, having done the first-ever est Training in Washington, DC, in April 1975. We didn't have a center then, and all assistants were graduates who'd done the "training" elsewhere.

Immediately after the training, I began assisting. Since then, I've held virtually every assisting position and participated in virtually every course and program. Currently, I have what I consider to be the best Landmark assisting post ever.

Being a custodian of the "Living as a Created Self: Carving out New Pathways for Life" inquiry has been the greatest transformational opportunity of my graduate life.

As I explain in more detail below, it, and the inquiry itself, are the practices which enable me to "invent/create/constitute myself, listening as the social commons of transformation," virtually at will. That transformation allows me to live in the moment, much as an ongoing "ing" verb form and continuously invent empowering contexts.

The full descriptor of "Living as a Created Self: Carving out New Pathways for Life" states, "Could it be that when we are living our dream, a dance of the finite and infinite occurs? Could carving out new pathways be an access for discovering yourself and others newly – bringing new love, freedom, joy and unpredictable results?"

The metaphor of "dance" is of particular

importance for me, as I met my wonderful wife, Terry, the best thing that ever happened to me, on the dance floor some 20-plus years ago.

At any moment on the dance floor, as in life, one is in a particular configuration. One can pause, shift weight, change position – go forward or back, side-to-side or turn clockwise or counter-clockwise. Any and all movement – including no movement at all – is available.

Hosting an inquiry, I began to recognize, was also a dance – one involving language rather than footwork but a dance nonetheless. Just as a tango and waltz – though both ballroom dances – differ from each other—so, too, does the linguistic dance "inquiry" differ from the linguistic dance "sharing."

As a custodian, I discovered that I could be present in every moment as a nonjudgmental open listening and dance to the tune a participant was proffering and the overall music of the call itself.

According to Brian Regnier, inquiry is: "An access to the immediate transformation of reality." It involves momentarily "parking" or "bracketing" what we know or think we know and getting present to the distinction, and then building the muscle of "looking."

In other words, we discover how to examine/ explore what might be considered known terrain with new eyes, ears and senses, being open to being surprised and delighted. We practice parking the belief systems of our "internal state,"

being “out here” and exploring. Developing the capacity to do something as routine and automatic as opening the icebox door and seeing “the Grand Canyon” or something else totally unexpected instead of leftovers.

During my Landmark journey, I’d always been a student of communication, seeking to improve mine whenever I could. Wanting to improve my ability to communicate, which I was certain meant speaking more clearly and concisely, I signed up for the Communication Program as soon as it was announced.

I was first in the room and sat eagerly in the frontmost aisle seat awaiting speaking/language tips. Imagine my surprise as I realized the critical element of effective communication was “listening.” Thus, I started my road to “listening.” I began noticing my own and others’ listening. I registered the impact when I experienced being truly listened by another and the impact when others experienced being truly listened to or “heard” by me.

Sherlock Holmes following a clue, or a bloodhound on the scent had nothing on me – I was consumed!

I did my best to notice my own and others’ listening. Mostly what I observed, to my dismay, was that I hardly ever listened. (Others weren’t much better and they didn’t even appear to notice.) I also noticed that I was almost exclusively in my “internal state.”

Though I had been sometimes aware I was “out here” with others and sometimes not, it was pretty much a random phenomenon. I didn’t know how to be “out here” with others reliably and consistently though it was my desire.

After attending numerous consultants’ “practices” during and after the Developmental Consultants Training Program, I built the capacity to choose and be “out here” at will.

From there, I started to explore “me/I” and listening in the “internal state” and from “out here” to learn if and how it differed.

I started by exploring what I was listening “for” and “to.” At first, all I could notice was listening “for” others so they could “get” their greatness.

Then, listening “to,” something I hadn’t been aware I’d been doing emerged. I noticed mostly what I listened “to” was the “little voice” inside my head. It was mostly critical, occasionally supportive and often had completely contradictory opinions regarding the same event.

Then the social commons inquiry of the Inquiries of the Social Commons called to me. Part of its fuller description includes: “What if I see myself as a person of the social commons?”

That opened the door to listening as a member “of” a community or group including others.

Reflecting, dwelling, pondering and listening “... as a person ‘of’” led me to my current “... listening ‘as’ the social commons of transformation.”

This is not some mere phrase of passing interest or mantra I chant from time to time. It is a listening which uses me and calls me to be. Quite literally, I don’t have it, it has me!

More and more often now, especially when things seem to be going amiss, I get present to my listening. When that happens, I notice that I am in my “internal state.” I am neither “out here” nor “listening” as the social commons of transformation. When aware of that, I then have the power to immediately declare/constitute/invent myself as such.

When I do, a sense of community immediately emerges where the “I” is “context” and the experience is of being part of an interrelated larger whole where all is well and everything and everyone are whole and complete. There’s nothing to “do” or “fix.”

A remarkably calm and peaceful space emerges, yet one of tingling aliveness all at once.

Am I a human being – you bet! Do I often forget I am the author of my life and become a bit player in whatever tableau I am acting out at that moment – absolutely!

Mercifully though, my molecules have somehow altered so that no thinking or effort is involved. Something has evolved such that if I notice being cranky, annoyed, bored or negatively opinionated with someone or

what they are saying, something within me says, “Wait, where are you listening from?”

It always turns out I’m listening from some triggered internal state. Then the choice to listen “... as the social commons of transformation” emerges and the world instantly transforms.

Now one might easily say, “... why bother with inquiry? I know what I’m doing, I have all the answers I need, and am doing just fine, thank you very much.”

This whole inquiry business of “not knowing,” exploring questions and looking into what seems a possible abyss, is neither fun nor comfortable. This “thinking” business is hard work. It gives me a headache and seems like a waste of time. Fair enough.

For, after all, we got our jobs and educations and funds for our Landmark participation, including this conference, by having the most “right answers.” The quicker, the better!

For me though, notwithstanding, inquiry is an opportunity to experience aliveness and creativity. The muscle of “looking” opens up the possibility of discovering new ways to “be” and “act.”

Whether we like it or not, we are always in a “dance” with our occurring world. Inquiry opens up the possibility of freedom on the dance floor of life to have all moves – including staying exactly where we are – from choice rather than from effect. It provides the opportunity to develop the capacity to be in the “now,” “verb-like,” with the distinction and muscle to choose life and live authentically and fully self-expressed. Werner Erhard put what I am attempting to say beautifully when he said, “I am interested in providing an opportunity for people to experience mastery in the matter of their own lives and the experience of satisfaction, fulfillment and aliveness. These are a function of the Self as context rather than thing, the Self as space rather than location, the Self as cause rather than Self at effect.”

Inquiry as a practice provides an access to that and I am forever grateful for the opportunity to be a custodian of the Inquiries of the Social Commons. I invite you to join me in this or any of the other Inquiries of the

Social Commons for the ride of your life.

All you have to lose are fixed ways of being which constrain your ability to manifest your commitments in the world. All you have to gain is the ability to invent new possibilities and develop the capacities to bring them into existence.

In the “assisting program,” we promise to get more than we give. For me, being a custodian of the “Living as a Created Self: Carving out New Pathways for Life” Inquiry of the Social Commons, promise kept!

# A WORLD VIBRATING WITH INFINITE RESOURCES FULFILLED

INA R. AMES

The truth is that we already have all the resources we need so each man, woman and child can experience being well-fed, well-clothed, well-housed, well-loved and nurtured. If that is the truth, then why isn't it, in fact, our current reality? I remember in 1981 sitting in the first meeting of the Hunger Project in Boston in the Hotel Bradford ballroom. We were told that the first step in ending hunger and starvation on the planet was going to be to get people to sign postcards declaring that we can end hunger and starvation on the planet.

As a communication professor, I know that step one in persuasion is to have someone take an action. It confirms the belief as theirs. Ending hunger and starvation? A reality? Preposterous! I imagined my mother and stepfather looking at me as if I were from Mars. I imagined my father telling me, "Sure honey, I'll sign your postcard, but you'll never see it happen." I imagined my friends asking me what drugs I was taking. I doubted if I could get one person besides my dad and me to sign the card. I imagined the skeptical looks of my friends and colleagues. I took a deep breath and large packet of postcards to get signed. I was not armed with a lot of knowledge, but I was armed with a commitment to end hunger and starvation on the planet. I kept sharing my commitment with a complete lack of knowledge and started to research the probability. I'm afraid that back then most of my research proved my commitment was to an idea that could never happen. I kept handing out postcards and getting them signed. I kept getting more postcards and then getting them signed. I could hardly believe that the me who was a personable, but particularly shy, person back

then was going up to strangers with my only tool being an insane commitment to something the authorities said could not happen. People kept signing them. It altered me. I talked to strangers!

Soon, there were events held called "The Ending Hunger Briefings" where people would go out and deliver presentations to audiences about ending hunger and starvation. Well, I knew I could present. I also had a particular niche and credibility – a college professor whose reputation and credibility were well-established. I spent most of that first year of the ending hunger briefings presenting to local eastern Massachusetts colleges and universities. My credibility got my foot in the door as only an academic could.

The Hunger Project has moved through many stages since the postcards and the ending hunger briefings. However, the system of creating results is indelibly engraved in my head. The fact that I could – through my commitment – break through my natural shyness to talk to strangers was an amazing and compelling reason for me to continue taking courses with est and then the other iterations until Landmark.

In the Power and Contribution course, I took on an Impossible Promise for the world that declared, "By 2026, a world vibrating with infinite resources." It upset a lot of people. Infinite resources? Preposterous! Hmm. Where have I heard this before? However, I had enough experience through the Hunger Project to know that if I'm committed, it will be.

This year, I participated in the Introduction to

Inquiry course as well as the Sharing Course with Brian Regnier and am still participating in both Monday night Social Commons inquiry calls. What I got from participating in these programs and calls is that we already have all the resources we need to have everyone fed, clothed, educated, housed and nurtured.

If you look at the area that we call energy, you can see this demonstrated. If you focus on fossil fuel as the only source of energy to support seven billion-plus people, we are screwed. You are looking at one resource for energy as the totality. If instead you look at all the resources, including those which are, and not yet, efficient, you will see that with solar power, wind power, water power, etc., we have all the energy we need for everyone on the planet. We already have all the resources we need to provide energy for everyone on the planet. We only need to step out of the box in order to find the infinite resources that are already available or create new ones.

We can have a world vibrating with infinite resource because we already do. All we need to do is to get people with expertise in all the areas of resources thinking along the lines of "how can we" instead of "it's impossible." Sound familiar?

I have no answers for how we will create a world vibrating with infinite resources fulfilled. Alone, I can't do it. It will only take a small group enrolling the world that we can uncover the infinite resources of the planet without stripping our planet. It will take groups of people who are interested in all the areas needed to discover the infinite resources for every man, woman and

child to be fed, clothed, educated, housed and nurtured (including medical) to make this a reality.

In 1981, when I started leading the ending hunger briefings, 45,000 people were dying of hunger and starvation every day. The world population was 4,458,411,534. This year, 2019, there are still 45,000 people dying of hunger and starvation every day, but the world population is 7,714,576,923 so the number of people dying from hunger and starvation has massively decreased as a percentage of population.

This year, I discovered a shift in my promise. I learned that a world vibrating with infinite resources isn't a goal, it's a current reality unfulfilled. Please join me in my commitment. How? Well, we don't do postcards anymore. However, if you find one area you can improve so that we can generate a world with everyone fed, clothed, housed, educated and nurtured, then you're on my team and I'm on yours. You probably already have a promise for the world from being in the Wisdom Course Area. Your steps to fulfilling your promise for the world will create a world vibrating with infinite resources fulfilled. My grandchildren, their grandchildren and I thank you in advance for having infinite resources fulfilled.

# INQUIRY: WHEN STRUCTURE BECOMES UNSTRUCTURED

LARRY BERNARD

The opportunity to participate in the Inquiry Subscription Program with Brian Regnier and everyone else has been a truly rewarding experience. My general relation to inquiry has been: "What? You mean no plan, no definite outcome, no structure? I teach mathematics. Structure is at the heart of what I do and the way I view the world!"

As it turns out, my mathematics teaching in the fall semester of 2018 at City College of San Francisco, concurrent with the above-mentioned inquiry course, has been one of the most unstructured, or, more accurately, constantly varying-structure experiences in which I have ever engaged.

My Impossible Promise for the world is that "mathematics will be viewed as the inspirational and fun subject it is rather than how it too-often occurs to students (and lots of other people): boring, rote and rigid." Keeping that promise (from Power and Contribution) in mind, along with my purpose in life to make a difference in other people's lives (from the Living Passionately seminar), was important in the adventure of last semester.

I returned to teaching five-and-a-half years ago when I was hired part-time (called "adjunct" in the trade) to teach mathematics, specializing in teaching adults the basics (called "pre-algebra" in the trade). Since then, I have been refining the way I teach, attempting new approaches and engaging with other teachers in the Community of Practices Committee at the college. The fall 2018 semester has been the most challenging of all, and has required me to abandon, or at least to continually modify structure, to the greatest extent ever.

In the beginning of the semester, I attempted to take a slower pace than I had before for the basic operations with whole numbers. For the past decade or two, most of us do the addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of whole numbers (or any other numbers, for that matter) with calculators, now commonly available on smartphones or as premiums for looking at an insurance policy offer.

Calculators are not allowed in the course I teach (in an effort, I believe, to get students to get more of a "feel" for numbers and their manipulation), and usually about one-fourth to one-third of the students have very little experience with the basic algorithms: addition, subtraction, multiplication and especially with long division. I thought that I would spend the time necessary to teach the subject as thoroughly as possible so that their success would be more assured, particularly when we move into the next phases where these algorithms become essential for solving exercises on tests and homework.

Initially, success was ours! The first test, which includes all the operations with whole numbers and usually results in one-fourth to one-third of the students doing very poorly, had a much higher rate of success, with less than one-fifth doing poorly and even those showing a better understanding.

My report of this successful breakthrough to the Community of Practices Committee was premature. Although the next test showed continued high achievement, the third test revealed a marked drop in comprehension for over one-third of the students. I believe that this came about because we had to "pick up the

pace," as I told my students, since there was a lot more to do before the semester was over, and we could not continue at the rate we had been going without missing a lot of the content that would prepare them for their next course. They did not adapt well to this increased workload.

Well, I thought, we can continue moving anyway. I could provide help as needed before class (I am there a half-hour early every session) and encourage visits to our excellent math lab. Indeed, things started to improve. The next test results were markedly better. Along came November and the devastating Camp Fire with other Northern California wildfires the like of which have not been seen in recorded memory. Air quality designation dropped from "hazardous," which kept many students home with respiration and general health issues to "dangerous," which closed the school for the better part of two weeks. What to do? No way to give tests, lots less time for teaching. Of course, there are expectations that there will be learning of the subject, and there is the necessity of giving grades—based on what? New plan! Tests now optional(!): "Chapter scores" are what replaced them, based on either optional tests or online homework scores. So, teaching was then taking place with no supervised assessment. However, test-taking was very unpopular. Homework was not so well received either.

New new plan: Final grade based on final exam with upgrading available via homework and previous test scores. I tell the students, with each change of plan, the effort is to "maximize learning and increase the opportunity for a better grade." Then it came down to submitting the grades after grading the final exams. There wasn't much to go on. A lot of the final's scores were below previous

achievement levels. There were large gaps in the "chapter scores" for almost all students. Six of 27 students did not show for the final. The one, who wrote me that she was ill, had not done well at all through the semester. I wrote back and told her that I can offer an "Incomplete" grade that must be made up by taking the final before the end of the next semester. She responded positively. I made my last new new new plan: All students, who missed the final, get an incomplete grade rather than an F, as is usual for no-shows without notice to me of a verifiable emergency. There will be an e-mail from me explaining their opportunity to avoid a failing grade. All students, who took the final, get that test grade, or higher, as a final grade. No one, who took the final, gets an F grade. If that is the grade of their test, I find a way to justify a higher grade.

All students, who get a D instead of an F, receive an e-mail from me explaining my policy. So, there was structure after all—constantly shifting, adapting to continually changing circumstances. Yet, without the Inquiry Subscription Program and all of its intentional and purposeful uncertainty, I do not believe that I would have had the courage or the inclination to shift, adapt and "maximize learning and increase opportunity for a better grade." Flexibility is certainly of high value. So is keeping an eye on my promise of having mathematics be seen as the inspirational and fun subject it is, and especially my purpose: to make a difference in other people's lives!

# SOCIAL COMMONS: THE MEMORY YOU FORGOT

CHRIS DOONAN

*This is a report from my participation in the Inquiries of the Social Commons. When I started with the inquiry calls almost a year ago, I did not see myself as a person of the social commons at all. We then started to engage in the question, "What if I see myself as a person of the social commons?"*

I started to participate and work with the Pachamama Alliance at the same time as starting the inquiry calls. The Pachamama Alliance, founded by Bill and Lynne Twist who also partnered with Werner Erhard to create The Hunger Project, is committed to bringing forth an environmentally sustainable, socially just, spiritually fulfilling human presence on the planet.

While participating in their entry program "Awakening the Dreamer," I had an experience of what they describe as being in a trance in relation to the state of the world. As I participated further through an eight-week program called the Game Changer Intensive, I began to deepen my awareness of these important issues.

As I was engaging in this work with the Pachamama community, we were inquiring in the social commons calls with questions, such as "Who is part of the social commons?" and "Does the social commons include everybody and everything?" I found myself being more and more interested in participating in both the Pachamama community and Wisdom Course Area.

In the inquiry calls, we shared our commitments for the world. We listened and shared and discovered a place to be in dialogue and experiment with speaking and listening.

Through the Game Changer Intensive, I hosted a series of inquiries with groups of people around the world and participated in a community of around 600 people in dialogue over many weeks to explore the issues that we were concerned about. I started practicing listening to others as a contribution to whatever they were up to and whoever they were being.

A few questions began to emerge. How can I listen to others with whom I disagree so I can hear them as a valid and valuable contribution? Could it be that they are the access to having the world work in ways that I hadn't seen before? What would a world that works for everyone (and everything) look like anyway? Different to what I currently imagine I'm sure.

The questions of whose voices matter and what they are saying are also important in this inquiry and I am expanding my own understanding and experience of creating spaces for different voices to be heard by training to be a custodian of the Inquiries of the Social Commons.

Perhaps, coming from "all is well" and creating spaces for different voices to be heard and honored is where the future we are calling forth will emerge.

# ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE

ANDY GONZALEZ

I get that anything is possible. That anything is possible is just that all there is is now and now is all possibility. I get that the only reason it seems as though I cannot have what I want, let alone anything, is because I am really creating exactly what I want even though I say I don't want what I am getting. When I say (even subconsciously) I don't want X in the moment of now I am creating X. The only way to stop creating X is to disappear it (never think it, believe it or say it even subconsciously). Luckily for us, we have collaging to disappear things even from our subconscious so that X disappears forever. Once X disappears, the space for possibilities, i.e., anything, opens up.

One very innocuous way we create X even though we may or may not want X is by making X "wrong" or "bad." Making something "right" or "good" (together, "RWGB") is just as young, disempowering and limiting. This way of being (thought, belief or saying) locks us into one way of being which locks us into creating one thing X over and over. Why? Well, because, once we declare something is RWGB, we pretend that we can stop being responsible for X. In other words, we pretend that we did not create what we got. The declaration that things just "are" RWGB instead of that's what I said and in doing so created X is what keeps us from saying something new and creating something else. Once we give up RWGB, we can be with (be responsible for) what we got, X. Once we are responsible for what we got in the next moment, we can create something new.

We are creating anything moment by moment. The reason it does not look like anything is being

created is because we keep thinking, believing and saying the same things over and over. Everything we think, believe or say is a seeming. It's a seeming because as soon as we say it, believe it or think it, it disappears and then anything is possible once again. It looks like anything is not possible (even though it just is right now) because we don't really get who we are. We are gods.

We are not gods in any religious sense, but in a creation sense. Once we can be responsible for that, anything is possible.

# SAYING, SHOWING AND LISTENING – AN EXPLORATION OF LISTENING IN DISCOURSING

ED STROUPE

*Much has man experienced,  
Named many of the heavenly ones;  
Since we have been a conversation  
And able to hear from one another!*

--Friedrich Hölderlin

## Abstract

*For the past three years, a group of us has been engaging in an inquiry entitled, "Discourse as Access." In the 2017 and 2018 journals, we contributed papers—the first recounting the story of the path we had begun and the second a first cut of a white paper on discourse. In this paper, I am using this past year's continued inquiry to build upon the previous white paper as well as to share discoveries I have made for myself within this year's theme of Listening for Fulfillment. I dedicate this paper to Karen Sweetland, a founding member of our inquiry, who died in April 2018.*

## INTRODUCTION

The past year has been an exciting and illuminating one for me. I have found myself living inside the openings and discoveries created by the generous listening of the extraordinary people who have played with me in our Discourse as Access inquiry. Not a day has gone by in which I haven't been present to the magical question of discourse and discoursing. While this paper will present some interpretations of discourse, and especially listening, that are fully my own—and I own them as my interpretations—I cannot pretend that they belong to me. They belong to all of us. I think this is a fundamental characteristic of both the social commons and the nature of inquiry.

I realize that many of you have not read the previous papers mentioned in the abstract above. If you are so inclined, you can find them in the past two journals, or you can e-mail me and I will gladly send them to you.<sup>2</sup> While I will do my best to make any technical aspects of this paper accessible to those of you who have not read the other papers, I cannot promise that. What I will promise is to give you the best recap I can of our journey over these three years, share what I have gotten and provide references for those of you who want to explore more deeply.

Much of what I talk about here came straight out of the work of the philosopher Martin Heidegger, augmented by my years of explorations with Landmark<sup>3</sup>. However, it is important for me to say that this inquiry has not been about Heidegger or his work. It has been about discourse. During the course of our play together, we "discoursers"

(as we have come to call ourselves from time to time) have read and discussed quotes from many other thinkers and poets, including Plato, Parmenides, Michel Foucault, Hans-Georg Gadamer, The Heart Sutra, Joseph Campbell, Chief Seattle, Yuval Noah Harari, Buckminster Fuller, Werner Erhard, Friedrich Hölderlin, Stefan George and others. Heidegger has been a central and recurring figure for two reasons: (1) his depth of contribution to the distinctions surrounding discourse and language and (2) I happen to have personally fallen in love with his thinking.

When we first began designing our inquiry series, Tobin White warned us not to make it all about Heidegger<sup>4</sup>. That notwithstanding, there have been times I couldn't help myself. During the process of working on our inquiry, I found myself returning again and again to Heidegger's works. As a personal accomplishment and fulfillment, I have now read about 60 of his books, lecture series and essays that have been translated into English. I have found myself learning to think with him, rather than just try to "know" about him, at least some of the time. This past September, I was overjoyed to write a paper on his concept of discourse and make a presentation to the Santa Fe Philosophical Society. This was a breakthrough for me. My life has come alive in new ways and for that I will be forever grateful to Landmark, Tobin, the Wisdom community and especially my friends in the Discourse as Access game.

I will begin this paper by sharing some of the accomplishments of our inquiry group.

## REPORT FROM THE PLAYGROUND

At the time of this paper's publication, our group of discoursers will have completed six sets of series in our inquiry. Each series has had a distinct subtheme within the overarching theme of Discourse as Access, and each 10-session series has lasted several months. I will briefly lay out some of the ground we have covered or at least the waters we have dived into.

- "From Habit to Practice." We explored some aspects of the nature of practice, practices and practicing, and how practices and discourse might be related to each other. One of the interesting discoveries we made

in this series was the power of looking at discourse from the perspective of a human practice. In the process, we found ourselves reorienting ourselves toward discourse (and transformation, incidentally) as a verb—living in the realm of action—versus a noun or a thing. Ever since this first series, we have continued to turn our attention to "discoursing" more than "discourses" as such. This orientation brought the phenomenon close to home, rather than being something "out there," separate from us. I found myself no longer feeling like a victim of some "things" called "discourses." Mike Ginn and I wrote about this in our 2017 journal paper. It also led naturally to the next series.

- "A Phenomenological Exploration of Discourse." In this series, we turned our attention directly to discoursing as a phenomenon, and in so doing spent a lot of time focusing on the method of inquiring. What does it mean to look at a phenomenon, rather than theorize about it from the perspective of knowledge? We tried an experiment of emptying out all that we know or think we know about discourse. In this, we met with limited success at first. I found that it is way too easy to think "about" discourse instead of looking at it. Besides, how can one look at discourse? In the latter part of this series, we studied together a lengthy quote from Heidegger in which he distinguished four "structural moments" of discourse. This quote opened up some amazing conversations and I wrote at length about this in the 2018 paper.
- "Freedom to Swim in the Sea of Opinions." Inspired in part for me by the type of speaking we encountered in the second series, we delved deeply into one particular type or form of discoursing that we commonly call "opinionating." This exploration took us back in time to the ancient Greek philosophy of Socrates and Plato. Much to our group's delight, we found that Plato had explored the topic of opinion in many of his dialogues from a number of angles. Such questions as "Is true opinion as good as, or even the same as, knowledge?" and others opened us up to discovering how ubiquitous opinions

are in all of our lives. I discovered for myself how opinion gets lodged in positionality much of the time, and I wrote about this in the 2018 paper. My fellow discourses and I reported how freed up we had become in the area, how attuned we had become to opinions—in ourselves and in others—and how we could allow for opinions around us without resisting or becoming disempowered.

- “What’s Your Story? The Role of Myth and History in Discourse.” This was an ambitious title. Having discovered how powerful it had been exploring one particular form of discourse (opinion), we thought it natural to locate others. This led us to look at storytelling, and so we plunged together into those waters. You and I have done a lot of work looking at our stories in The Landmark Forum, Advanced Course and seminars. But, most of us probably had not looked from the standpoint of myth or history. This turned out to be a rich place to explore. As we looked together, the theme became dominated by uncovering mythological speaking. Not only do we have cultural myths, we found that we had personal ones, as well, and, perhaps, these were even more prevalent than our opinions, though hidden from view as such. I began to see how mythologizing seems to be a major way that we human beings organize ourselves. We played with the question by writing our own myths and inventing myths from an ancient Egyptian painting. Pretty soon, it became clear that not only is storytelling ubiquitous, but significant storytelling, in the form of mythology and history, are forms of discoursing in which we create who we are for ourselves, families and communities.

- “The Creation of Listening.” After exploring several forms of speaking, it occurred to us that it might be time to look at discoursing from the perspective of listening. As tricky as the other topics had sometimes been, given our endless propensity to try to understand and our need to “know,” listening turned out for me to be the most challenging so far. First, all of us in the inquiry series had been highly trained in listening. In addition, we all (at least

speaking for myself) think we know how to listen. We know all about the already-always listening, about listening for people’s greatness, for example, about committed listening, about re-creation (listening in a way that allows what is being communicated to disappear or become less significant), etc. In a way, these could be grouped under a category such as, “the art of listening.” But, had we ever “looked” at listening as a phenomenon, in particular in relation to discourse? This inquiry took us deeper into Heidegger’s later works on language and turned on many lightbulbs for me on the nature of discourse. As a pleasant surprise, the conversation also brought us through listening into the realm of poetry.

- “Poetizing.” As of this writing, we are about to step deeper into exploring the realm of discourse embodied by poetry, and, perhaps, including other modes of creative expression, such as art, drama and comedy. As always, the direction that this inquiry will take is unpredictable. I can say no more of this yet. Everything could change on a dime, as it has many times along the way. Regardless of where the conversation goes next, I intend to share about it in next year’s journal.

So far, these topics have been our playground together in the Discourse as Access inquiry. What is beautiful about this story to me is that none of us could have predicted where the path would take us. In the rest of this paper, I now want to move into sharing discoveries that have unfolded for me.

#### A GIFT FROM A FRIEND

*Let me give a little hint on how to listen. The point is not to listen to a set of propositions, but rather to follow the movement of the showing.*<sup>5</sup> —Martin Heidegger

I am going to speak now to the nature of listening. That is to say, I am going to attempt to lay out a thesis or two on listening as a phenomenon. Initially, I will speak of listening in the context of discoursing. Then, I will talk about what is showing up for me about listening as a phenomenon. This might sound like I think I know something about listening.

And, I do—think I know something, that is.

To get there, I first want to draw some pieces from the paper that I wrote last summer for the Santa Fe Philosophical Society on Martin Heidegger’s concept of discourse. I invite you first to come with me for a few minutes and dwell in one of Heidegger’s footsteps, one which came to me like a gift from a good friend. It’s a quote that we engaged with in our series on listening.

In 1959, Heidegger published a series of essays entitled, “On the Way to Language.” This work represents to me a culmination of more than five decades of exploration that included, among many other questions, the question of the essence of language. In his essay, “The Way to Language,” he touches on listening within the context of a larger question of language. He introduces this topic with the statement, “The essential being of language is Saying as Showing.”<sup>6</sup> He then proceeds to a discussion of language, speaking and listening. The passage in which I want us to dwell reads as follows:

“Only when we give thought to our human saying in this light, only then do we arrive at an adequate definition of what is essentially present in all speaking. Speaking is known as the articulated vocalization of thought by means of the organs of speech. But speaking is at the same time also listening. It is the custom to put speaking and listening in opposition: one man speaks, the other listens. But listening accompanies and surrounds not only speaking such as takes place in conversation. The simultaneousness of speaking and listening has a larger meaning. Speaking is of itself a listening. Speaking is listening to the language which we speak. Thus, it is a listening not while but before we are speaking. This listening to language comes before all other kinds of listening that we know, in a most inconspicuous manner. We do not merely speak the language—we speak by way of it. We can do so solely because we always have already listened to the language. What do we hear there? We hear language speaking....”

“Language first of all and inherently obeys the essential nature of speaking: it says. Language speaks by saying, that is, by showing.... Language speaks in that it, as showing, reaching into all regions of presences, summons from them

whatever is present to appear and to fade. We, accordingly, listen to language in this way, that we let it say its Saying to us. No matter in what way we may listen besides, whenever we are listening to something, we are letting something be said to us, and all perception and conception is already contained in that act....”

“If Speaking, as the listening to language, lets Saying be said to it, this letting can obtain only in so far—and so near—as our own nature has been admitted and entered into Saying. We hear Saying only because we belong within it.”

For me, this quote evoked an entire world. Heidegger wrote it in the context of his exploration into the phenomenon of language. Our group engaged with it from within the context of the question of listening as a phenomenon of discourse. I will take a few minutes here to expand, elucidate and interpret.

To what light is Heidegger referring when he says “in this light” in the first line of this passage? He is talking about the distinctive nature of “saying as showing.” In my 2018 journal paper “Foundations of Discourse” (see endnote 2), I discussed what he had distinguished more than 30 years earlier as “four structural moments” of discourse and language: “1) the about-which talked over, 2) the discursive what [the said as such], 3) the communication and 4) the manifestation.”<sup>8</sup>

When he talks in this passage about “the showing,” he is talking about the things that show up, those which become disclosed when we speak—their manifestation. Things manifest, or show up for us and for others, when we talk about them. They become actively present, even if they are not physically present. For example, if I say something to you about New York City, an image of some kind shows up for you, regardless of whether you have ever been to New York. The manifestation, or what he is now calling in his later terminology the “showing,” is one of the fundamental characteristics he had earlier identified as a fundamental, “structural moment” of discourse (and language).

In the lecture containing the above passage, Heidegger earlier draws a distinction between saying and speaking: “To say and to speak are

not identical. A man may speak, speak endlessly, and all the time say nothing. Another man may remain silent, not speak at all and yet, without speaking, say a great deal.”<sup>9</sup> In the passage we are examining, he addresses speaking further when he points out that what we normally call “speaking” is a particular kind of vocal articulation, using the organs of speech. What we refer to “speaking” we often call “talking.” While Heidegger here refers to speaking in the context of vocal utterances, in reference to discourse, he also considers elsewhere the written word to be a form of speaking.

Saying, on the other hand, takes place in many forms. It can take place in complete silence. You and I have all had the common experience of communication in which we recognize something being said that is not explicitly being spoken in the articulated words. This might be a feeling or emotion, an insinuation, an intonation that indicates a question, a statement of reserve in one’s body language or some other subliminal signal. Heidegger is pointing out here that saying is a broader phenomenon than purely speaking. It is a phenomenon that encompasses the act of speaking.

I will interject at this point that Heidegger’s observations probably seem obvious to you. I say they should seem obvious. Heidegger is not presenting some theory about speaking and listening. He is simply looking at the phenomena themselves. He is looking from inside the sphere of phenomenological inquiry.<sup>10</sup>

Those of us, who have been trained as Landmark leaders, have likely learned to listen well to “the unsaid”—in other words, to what another is saying but not speaking out loud. We sometimes talk about “listening to the listening.” In fact, we often do this in all areas of life when interacting with people around us. You recognize when your spouse, the boss or your childhood friend is saying something beyond the words she is uttering (speaking). The “unsaid” can also appear in written form when we refer to reading “between the lines.” Communication is far more a function of saying than it is of the spoken or written words.

“But speaking is at the same time also listening.” Here is where the passage gets

juicy for me. Speaking itself is not just a vocal articulation of words. The act of speaking always accompanies another act—listening. We commonly think of the two as separate acts, especially when having a conversation with one another. We regard conversation as a back-and-forth kind of operation, with the participants taking turns speaking and then listening, listening and then speaking.

Heidegger’s point is that listening is always an equiprimordial act, surrounding and encompassing the act of speaking. The two apparent acts are inseparable and simultaneous. This is true even when not conducting a conversation with another person. It is happening, for example, when we are thinking (or talking) to ourselves. Thinking is itself a speaking; listening is taking place when thinking. In fact, he says that listening is taking place not only while we speak, but before we speak.

What are we listening to? We are listening to language. How can we listen to language itself? We listen to language itself because language speaks to us. How does it speak to us? Language speaks to us by virtue of the essential fact that language says. Language is that which says, and in its saying, it shows. It is by way of language itself that saying occurs as showing. “Language speaks in that it, as showing, reaching into all regions of presences, summons from them whatever is present to appear and to fade.” Heidegger asserts it is by way of our listening that we allow language to speak to us, to “say its saying” to us. In so allowing, we see the showing that is now revealed. This happens, it occurs, not only in listening to the words that others may be speaking, but in listening to what language has to say to us in the acts of cognition and perception.

We are always listening to the saying of language, and, in so listening, we discover our own speaking. We can hearken to language’s saying because, ever since that moment in time early in our lives, that language descended upon us—that moment when we were “admitted” into its saying—we have “belonged” to the saying of language and we continue always to belong to it.

These words speak to me of the essential heart of discourse and discoursing. As I interpret

from within the context of discourse, Heidegger is saying that discourse lives in the saying of language. Discoursing is listening to the saying of language and allowing the showing of the saying to arise and make present to us the being of phenomena as they show themselves to us. In other words, discoursing is our fundamental way of engaging both with things in the world and other human beings. It is through discoursing—language-saying-listening-speaking—that the things in our world become meaningfully present. Just as important, we discover and create who we are for ourselves and each other.

The topper, it seems, is that discourse all starts with listening. For me, the question that came out of engaging with this passage was, “Just what is this phenomenon we call listening, really?”

### THE OPENING OF LISTENING

One of the things I took on for a while over the past year was learning a new language. This was something new to me. I had studied Latin and a bit of French in high school as well as a year of German in college. However, I never learned to converse in any language other than English. My wife, Mary, and I live in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She became passionate about learning Spanish. I wanted to learn German, thinking in terms of learning to read Heidegger and German philosophy (an outrageously ambitious idea for a 67-year-old, I discovered). Each of us engaged the professional services of Ruth B. Shields, who is a long-time friend we have known through Landmark and an expert in the field of linguistics and teaching language.

It was a lot of fun working with Ruth and I learned a lot about language itself. I’ll say more about that in a minute. Even though I stopped way short of becoming a speaker of German, it has been particularly fun watching Mary learn Spanish. Whenever we go to a restaurant, she takes the opportunity to talk with the waitstaff in Spanish. I have watched with pleasure as she has become more and more conversant. For her, when she listens to them, she has begun to learn to understand what they are saying. She has shared with me on occasion about discovering, much to her surprise, thinking and responding directly in Spanish. This is at least

a beginning of what people call “fluency.”

For me, when Mary is talking with people in Spanish, I hear what I know are words—I hear them speaking—but I don’t understand what they are saying. I have also gotten from this and our inquiry that there is a big difference between hearing and listening. It’s analogous to the difference between seeing and looking. I even think it’s akin to the difference between saying and speaking.

As a quick side note, Ruth turned me on to a book entitled, “Imprisoned in English.” One of the things I learned is that linguists have found only around 65 words or word concepts that can be universally translated across the majority of the 6,000 or so languages.<sup>11</sup> A few of these “semantic primes” include “say,” “hear” and “see.”<sup>12</sup> Every language in the world has words that mean to say, hear and see. However, what you and I (probably) are not aware of is that most of the everyday words and expressions are not directly translatable into all languages. For example, the words for fear and anger are not completely translatable into German.<sup>13</sup> As we in our group learned in the first series on practices, translation always involves interpretation.<sup>14</sup> The words we hear, even when talking with someone in our own language, are openings for listening to the meaning of the saying—what is being said.

It is clear to me that listening is often related to hearing, but not always. For example, one of the participants in our group talked about taking Tai Chi. In one of his group’s practices, the teacher spoke about listening through the fingers. “Hearing” connotes sensing through the ears, although we sometimes use the word to refer to a kind of cognitive act of understanding that takes place after hearing something. For example, we might say something like, “I hear what you are saying” to acknowledge that we have been listening. I have personally had experiences where I considered myself to be listening through or with my whole body. I am quite certain that all of us at some point have heard an inner voice speaking, and it takes a lot from us sometimes not to listen to that voice.

Listening seems to fall somewhere in the domain of paying attention or attending to things. There



is an intentionality involved, whereas hearing occurs as something that just happens. Referring back to the quote above, Heidegger speaks of listening to the saying of language. We hear the words; we listen to what they are saying. Listening also seems to me to have something about it that lives beyond the realm of the senses or across the boundaries of sensation and what we call “cognition” or “understanding.”

For example, I have on a number of occasions during my life had an experience of realization about something that I was wondering about. As I ponder something, such as trying to solve a problem, I am listening to my thoughts about it. Suddenly, in a flash, a solution comes. The answer takes its shape in language—some kind of saying in language, in fact. But, something else often happens, as well. I experience a sense of illumination. We’ve all heard the expression, “It’s like a lightbulb went off.” There may or may not be visual components to the realization, but there is often for me a sense of illumination. With listening, just like the act of seeing, we often associate light.

I now want to put forward, to my best ability at this time, a thesis about listening. It has to do with the idea that we call being. In particular, it has to do with the kind of being we refer to around Landmark as the “being of human being.” Heidegger characterized the being of the human being using the German word that literally translated means “being-there,” or, alternatively, “being-here.”<sup>15</sup> Stanford Professor Thomas Sheehan and others have talked about a twofold nature of being-there: *being*-there and *being-there*.<sup>16</sup> We are always and only being in a world. In our experience of being-in-the-world, we are out here/out there. We tend to oscillate between our sense of being and out there/here.

It’s way beyond the scope of this paper to delve into more detail about the being of human being or being-there. Heidegger spent a lifetime and more than 100 volumes on the topic. However, I do want to mention one facet of Heidegger’s thesis: the human being as a clearing. Heidegger variously characterized humans as being a “thrown-open clearing,” or as “throwing-open the clearing,” in which life shows up. In the clearing, things appear and things happen. The world

occurs inside the clearing that we are. At the same time, “we” appear for ourselves in that clearing.

What I am proposing as a thesis, which I can’t prove or even assert with evidence that would be scientifically compelling, is that listening is the throwing-open of the clearing. It is as listening that you and I open up and create the opening (clearing) in which our world shows up or occurs for us. The shape of that world, if you will, is created and formed by and inside of language. Yet the clearing, created out of listening itself, is what lights up all that shows up—the showing.

I am very clear that there is more to listening than listening to language. (Heidegger acknowledges this in the referenced quote.) After all, animals clearly listen attentively all the time, and they probably don’t have language. Listening isn’t all about hearing and sound. Recalling the famous story of Helen Keller, who spent her life deaf and blind from the age of 19 months, here was a person who clearly listened to the saying of language without sound or light, having only feeling, vibration and touch.<sup>17</sup> I think that listening lies at the heart of being, by virtue of creating the clearing in which all illumination, sensation, cognition, experience and creation shows up. Call it the true act of creation where we create life for ourselves.

Finally, listening, if you will, is a verb rather than a noun. Being-there, throwing open the clearing, is as much an active event on our part as a passive receiving. As Buckminster Fuller so beautifully put it,

“I live on Earth at present,  
and I don’t know what I am.  
I know that I am not a category.  
I am not a thing--a noun.  
I seem to be a verb,  
an evolutionary process—  
an integral function of the universe.”<sup>18</sup>

#### AFTERWORD

In writing this paper, things were made present for me that were not present before. In reading this paper—in listening to its saying—you have made things present for yourself. In our speaking and listening inside these sayings of language,

you and I have partaken of some of these things together. We have shared together in what opened up in this discoursing. Showing has occurred.

At the same time, what each of us made present was not necessarily the same. To draw an analogy from brain science, each of our brains is unique and generates its views of the world from its patterns of neural networks, and no two views could possibly be identical. To use another analogy in terms of complexity theory, each of us operates as an agent within the complex adaptive system of discourse (I consider discourse to be a complex adaptive system), and each of us responds appropriately to the situation as it occurs for us, given from where we stand in that world.

Standing together inside an inquiry, is it possible that our entire world truly occurs in language? Is it possible that the clearing of being occurs out of listening? Does “world” open up inside, through and out of our discoursing? Is listening to the saying of language the medium or constitution of our “worlding?” Right now, I find myself inclined to see these things as being so. You may or may not be so inclined. Either way, however, this is not a question abstract of knowledge, but looking and listening.

By way of completion, I invite you to entertain a phenomenology experiment. Take a few minutes to recall the beginning of the world—the beginning of your experience of being in the world. In other words, I invite you to bring to recollection for yourself your first memory in life. (It doesn’t have to be the right memory. If you have more than one, pick one. I recommend you pick one that you feel good about.)

While you are standing inside of whatever memory you have present, I invite you to listen, look and see:

- Where are you?
- Who is present?
- What is being said?
- Who is speaking?
- Who is listening?
- What was the saying of language in this event and in whose voice?

- What was the showing that manifested itself as being present?
- What was the opening in that moment for you to show up as you?
- Just listen. That is, follow the movement of the showing.

Interesting, isn’t it! Thank you.

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## ENDNOTES

- 1 Friedrich Hölderlin was a German poet around the turn of the 19th century. This poetic fragment was quoted by Heidegger in his series of essays, "Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry," p. 56.
- 2 "On the Way to Discourse" from the journal of the 2017 Conference for Global Transformation and "Foundations of Discourse" from the journal of the 2018 conference. Both are available on request from Ed Stroupe at edstro1212@gmail.com. Please use the phrase "discourse paper request" in the subject line of an e-mail request.
- 3 Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) was a 20th century German philosopher whose work has been influential on the body of distinctions with which we have engaged at Landmark. In particular, the Landmark program designers, going back to Werner Erhard, have adopted much of Heidegger's terminology.
- 4 Tobin White is the Landmark consultant in charge of the Wisdom programs and program design within that area. It was at his behest that a number of us took on this now-three-year endeavor called "Discourse as Access."
- 5 Heidegger, "On Time and Being," p. 2.
- 6 Heidegger, "On the Way to Language," p. 123. Note that in the German language, all nouns are capitalized. In this case, the translator chose to interpret Heidegger's use of the participial words "saying" and "showing" as if they were proper nouns in English. I am simply recreating his decision for the use of capitalizations in the quotes here.
- 7 Ibid., pp. 123-124
- 8 Heidegger, "History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena," p. 263.
- 9 Heidegger, "On the Way to Language," p. 122.
- 10 Phenomenology is a technical philosophical term referring to a particular method of inquiring into the nature of phenomena. Heidegger adapted the term from his mentor and teacher Edmund Husserl and expanded it to mean a way of looking at things directly in a pre-theoretical or theoretical manner. Whereas scientific inquiry typically attempts to arrive at a theoretical understanding of a subject or domain and scientists put forth theories to explain things, phenomenological inquiry makes an attempt to step back from theoretical knowing and arrive at a direct cognition or understanding. Excellent discussions of phenomenology can be found in Heidegger's "History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena" and "Being and Time," and von Herrmann's "Hermeneutics and Reflection" (see references above).
- 11 Wierzbicka, "Imprisoned in English," pp. 31-39.
- 12 Ibid., p. 35. (Interestingly, the words "speak," "listen" and "look" do not appear on that list of universal words!)
- 13 Ibid., see chapter 6.
- 14 See our 2017 paper. You can also contact me for specific references.
- 15 The word he used was *dasein*, which, in general speech, has the English meaning "existence." *Da* usually means "there" and sometimes "here," both in the sense of physical space, and *sein* means "being" or "to be." His most famous work, "Being and Time" (see references above) focused largely on what he called a phenomenological "analytic" of *dasein*.
- 16 Sheehan, "Making Sense of Heidegger."
- 17 Wikipedia article on Helen Keller.
- 18 Fuller, "I Seem to Be a Verb," front page

## DISCOVERIES FROM THE INQUIRIES

# IS THERE A POSSIBILITY OF UNITY IN YOUR PROMISE?

MIKE GINN

### *Abstract*

*My intention in writing this paper is to open up or continue an inquiry. I attempt to follow and further Martin Heidegger's use of conversation to illuminate a possible unity that would forward anyone's promise. I've tried to make things clear while staying faithful to the structure that led Heidegger to his experience of a unity. My hope is that this paper will also make that experience itself available to readers.*

### HEIDEGGER'S EASTER GREETING

A German philosopher, Martin Heidegger, was a seminal thinker and lived from 1889 to 1976. Here's an excerpt from a letter from Heidegger to his wife on March 23, 1945, less than one month before Germany's surrender in World War II.

"This Easter greeting is full of sorrow. And yet we mustn't yield to it. The fate of the fatherland is so mysterious in the midst of everything else that is happening that it must harbor within it something that towers far beyond our knowledge. From this painful secret comes wonderful strength. Even

though my condition is still physically delicate, in the past few days I've gained such remarkable momentum that I'm almost completely oblivious to food or sleep. I suddenly found a form of saying that I never would have dared used, if only because of the danger of outwardly imitating the Platonic dialogues. I'm working on a 'conversation;' in fact I have the 'inspiration' – I really have to call it this – to do several at once. In this way, poetizing & thinking saying have attained a primordial unity, & everything flows along easily and freely."

### A CONVERSATION, AN INQUIRY, A PRACTICE

Mike: What is poetizing? What does poetizing have to do with listening?

Editor: This is one way of proposing or starting an inquiry.

Mike: One type of listening is a "now" phenomenon. It doesn't exist in time. It deserves equal footing with our most frequent listening or what we can call our common listening. Common listening describes and contrasts, recounts from memory and looks for a someone doing something to some object.

Editor: Good job describing our common listening. I imagine it goes along with our common language. Describe that.

Mike: The Journal of the Conference for Global Transformation and our day-to-day lives are set up to speak in common language. Our thinking follows the structure of our language as the path of least resistance. Whatever you are thinking about this paragraph or paper right now is likely an example. This isn't bad or wrong, simply

incomplete and incomplete in an important way.

Editor: I was about to say that it sounds like you are making common language wrong.

Mike: Common doesn't mean insignificant. Mastering the world of common language is required to make a difference for ourselves and others. Our conference and its journal rightfully support the further development of common language and listening competencies in ways that support what I am up to. I can describe how I came to listen powerfully for fulfillment and reflect back on how that made me feel and the difference it made. What commitments have I made and how has my relationship to them changed? What does the world look like now that they are fully mine?

Editor: I would like you to do just that, give examples from your own life.

Mike: Beyond what is already being provided, what is missing that would make a difference?

Editor: Sigh. Or I guess you could just continue to ask questions.

Mike: It is not simply having more listening as a now phenomenon, although sitting is a great practice for that. It is closer to listening to the togetherness of the two: thinking and poetizing. Then asking: Who or what is listening for that togetherness?

Editor: You're starting to lose me. Give me something concrete that I can do.

Mike: If I were to guess, I would say the best practice to move the inquiry forward now is, "to live completely that every interaction matters a lot." This is also an inquiry itself: What is it like to live completely that every interaction matters a lot?

Editor: Now that wasn't so hard, was it? Thank you.

Mike: Good. Thank you.

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## DISCOVERIES FROM THE INQUIRIES

# THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE INTEGRAL ARTS OF HUMAN THRIVING

BRIAN MCFADIN

*Note to the reader: In this article, I will be introducing subjects in a few short pages that, to be properly treated, would require hundreds of pages. I am attempting the impossible in discussing these subjects in such a short form because I believe that they are important for human well-being, and quite under-appreciated. I will be saying things that some may think are unsupported, or even unsupportable, by the facts. Much of what I write is based in fact. Some of what I write is closer in spirit to poetry. Taken altogether, it is art. It is a creation. My goal is to contribute to the conversation for human creativity.*

*This article is about human consciousness. I will be using terms such as "growth," "evolution," "levels," "stages of consciousness" and "altitudes of human development" somewhat interchangeably, depending on context. They all refer to the phenomenon of stage development of consciousness in humans. Since the scope of the subject matter, human consciousness, is so wide, I will be painting in broad strokes so that a glimmering of the basic ideas, which have been developed by hundreds of theorists over many years, might shine through in these few short pages.*

### Abstract

*People have been interested in where we came from, what we are and where we might be going for a long time. We have been observing our environments for ages in order to survive. We have been investigating our inner landscapes in all sorts of ways, including art, ritual, meditation and religious practices for a long time. But, only recently, have we become aware that humanity, as a whole, has developed in emergent stages of consciousness, and individuals all develop through the same stages as they grow. The very nature of consciousness is that it operates on itself (the ability to be aware of being aware). Consciousness requires that we awaken to our own consciousness, participate in our own growth and become responsible for developing and expanding our consciousness in order for it to fulfill itself.*

Consciousness has two aspects, emptiness (sacred ground) and the search for truth (science). Wisdom is synthesizing these two in our life. Knowledge of the stages of development is now

central to understanding almost everything about human relationships and destiny. Lack of this understanding leaves our relationships, projects and problem-solving partial, ineffective and lacking in integrity. Now human consciousness is so great that we are creating massive possibilities we can't fulfill and problems we can't solve without awakening to, and understanding, the stages of our own conscious development as an integral part of what it means to be human going forward.

None of our problems are what we think they are. Our greatest problems are strictly problems of consciousness. Lack of this knowledge leaves us with false, inaccurate and unhelpful maps of reality, working on the wrong things and doomed to fail. Incorporating knowledge of our own consciousness into our understanding can help us to see how we might better approach our problems, which are now pressing. Since all of the stages of human development are necessary for any of us to exist at all, we now, for the first time in history, have a way to value human diversity and a framework from which to include everyone and create better solutions and possibilities.

We will look at one important and influential map, including a brief introduction to what new potentialities awaken in us at each stage of our development. This investigation is risky because it broaches the human taboo against knowing ourselves and it forces us to discuss people's relative and absolute worth, which is fraught with challenges for the inquirer. Wisdom demands we proceed with humility, compassion and care.

As consciousness develops, taking the perspectives of others increases, and the power to choose increases, potentially improving life for all. As we develop along the path of awakening consciousness, opening to, and caring for, the entire human family is the only way to full well-being as an individual and species.

#### **EMERGENT LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN HUMAN INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETIES**

*"Yes, a key can lie forever in the place where the locksmith left it, and never be used to open the lock the master forged it for." –Ludwig Wittgenstein*

Probably the single most important area of knowledge to emerge from science in the past

century is the evolution of consciousness. We now know that consciousness evolved in stages in humanity at large throughout history and pre-history. It recapitulates that evolution, in precisely the same stage order, as it unfolds in the development of individuals in their lifetime. In biology, this is called ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny: the development of the individual recaps the evolutionary development of the "family," the species.

For anyone interested in understanding the evolution of human consciousness, human nature and ourselves, this is an exciting and unparalleled breakthrough in our understanding. When we see clearly how the evolution of consciousness and culture works, we are empowered to see the long view and take the high road. Historically, the insight that there are levels of individual and socio-cultural development is a very new one. Life on earth is almost four billion years old. Human beings, depending on how you frame it, are anywhere from 100,000 to 2.5 million years old. History is 5,000 years old.

Only in the past 125 years or so has the knowledge of stages of development of human beings emerged. No one had ever seen the levels of socio-cultural development before that. No one, ever. No one had written about it. No one had thought about or studied it. No one had taken it into account when thinking about policy, education, justice, communications, ethics, parenting, civic planning, international relations or anything else. No religion or government incorporated its insights until beginning around 125 years ago.

This new awareness offers us a major step forward in our understanding of ourselves and each other. We first began to get a glimpse into the phenomenon of stages of development in the wake of Darwin's radical insights into history, biology and nature in the second half of the 19th century. Only in the past 100 years, most prominently with the pioneering work of the psychologist Clare Graves in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s (standing on the shoulders of the earliest theorists working in the context of evolution) have we begun to see into the phenomenon with any clarity.<sup>1</sup>

Scores of theorists, including virtually all who

specialize in psychology and human development, agree that all people belong to meta socio-cultural groups which invariably go through predictable stages of development. These stages have constitutive values (aesthetics, what matters, who's in or out), ethics and morality (rules and right/wrong) and ways of being (relationships, practices and modes of integrity). This has been studied in societies around in the world from remote South-Asian islanders to Europeans to Africans to Inuit to Brazilian nearly stone-age indigenous tribes. No exceptions have been observed.

Prior to the emergence of the awareness of stages of development, people have tended to relate to each other as though "others" were essentially different and that the difference was wrong. This way of relating to other cultures persists in most societies today. "They are doing it wrong. We are doing it right." All cultures have gone through the same socio-cultural developmental stages, but some have developed only so far and some have developed further. Just as individuals develop differing capacities in verbal, athletic, mathematical or musical ability, we grow and develop in generally recognizable, but also widely varying, ways. The variation and diversity that results are key to our biological and cultural success.

After existence itself (survival and procreation), biological diversity and variation is the thing most promoted by nature: It is a value of the highest order and proliferates along with evolution. Diversity allows life to thrive under all sorts of conditions. If you have multiple types of strengths in a human group, different people will be better than the average at important skills.

One person may be physically strong and good at working or fighting, while another may be relatively weak, but good at relating to people. One person may be better at staying calm or calming others down to avoid conflict, while someone else may be better at risking their life when the time comes. One person may have better eyesight, while someone else with poor eyesight may have excellent intuition about where to gather healthful and delicious mushrooms or fruit. If everyone were the same, the community would be considerably weaker.

All of life is at varying stages of evolutionary development, and so are all people. This is our greatest strength. People's beliefs, knowledge and wisdom develop inside the stage-dependent perspectives and paradigms of their society and culture. For most of history, we have been blind to this. Not blind in a bad way, we just didn't see it, couldn't see it. We now have models of human development that show us the human family is made up of developmentally diverse people, cultures and societies. One of the most important aspects of our diversity is our difference in terms of our stage of socio-cultural growth and development, our current "altitude," so to speak. Our most important similarity is that we share all of the same stages that have come before and the ones to come.

We're all at different stages, but the stages themselves are the same for all of us, which means we share way, way, more similarity than differences. In this shared space of human development, there is great possibility for listening, witnessing, understanding, sharing, cooperation, creation and celebration.

#### **THE DAWNING OF SELF-AWARENESS**

Over the past century or so, theorists in the fields of biology, anthropology, psychology and sociology have observed that just as there are stages through which an individual develops throughout life (as seen in models of human growth and development by theorists such as Kohlberg, Erikson, Maslow, Piaget, Gilligan, Loevinger and Kegan), there are also stages through which groups, tribes, cultures and societies evolve, develop and grow. Every individual and society of our species travels the broad pathway through these same levels of consciousness in the same order of development.

In our families, neighborhoods, organizations and institutions the world over, people are at vastly differing stages of development morally, cognitively, socially and culturally. Externally, we live together in neighborhoods, cities, countries and the planet. Internally, in terms of consciousness, we live inside of differing personal, social and cultural realities or "worlds"; realities predominantly shaped by our social and cultural growth and development. It is

these levels of consciousness, as they unfold in developmental stages, more than anything else, which determine how human affairs work.

We now confront a whole new situation as a species: a totally shared world where no one and nothing can any longer be meaningfully separated out from the rest. Any global projects or solutions for global problems that don't fully take into account all the levels of human consciousness are inherently partial, lack integrity and are, therefore, insufficient to fulfilling the tasks at hand. Without weaving our best knowledge about stages of human development into our solutions, they will continue to be unworkable, broken and partial.

#### BECOMING AWARE THAT SOMETHING IS MISSING

You may well have the clear intuition that something is missing from life today. But what? We have succeeded in creating awesome technologies for resource extraction, food production, harnessing energy, individual health, machine-making, transportation, computation and information infrastructure. The bottleneck now is all us. The bottleneck is consciousness and the presence or absence of its highest product – wisdom.

Our job now, should we choose to accept it, is to align with what human beings (as a whole) want – without accidentally putting an end to the conditions for organized human society first. To accomplish this, we must invent and bring into being new arts for human communication, sharing and cooperation. We must create new arts of human thriving.

This will require us to choose: Summon the willingness to put at stake everything we've got for the possibility of a future of human flourishing (a significant risk) or resign ourselves to a downward spiral of the erosion and loss of what is most dear to us (an even greater risk). Above all, it will require that we take responsibility. It will not likely come as a happy coincidental by-product of simply continuing our current activities and hoping for the best. No, it is likely we will have to apply our consciousness to transforming ourselves and the realities in which we live since all our greatest problems now are created by "us."

#### A MODEL OF STAGES OF INDIVIDUAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

In order to get an overview of the stages of human development, below (Figure 1) is a model by Ken Wilber, influenced by the work of Clare Graves and Don Beck.<sup>2,3</sup> The color scheme is given as a shortcut for naming the stages (following the colors of the spectrum/ rainbow) along with a current best estimation of the approximate time of the first significant emergence of each in the human population.

Each stage emerged as a new wave of human consciousness in particular eras of human history, first in a small number of people, then spreading to become prevalent levels of social influence, meaning and cultural practice. Interestingly, each new stage has come more quickly than the one before with the recent appearance of newer stages speeding up exponentially as we have developed scientific, religious, philosophical and psychological technologies and as the sharing of learning and knowledge has proliferated globally.

Keep in mind that models are maps and not the things they purport to map. Therefore, these stages could be held in any number of different ways. This is only one way to think of them. The first six stages (both for individuals and societies) are what Graves calls subsistence stages, marked by "first-tier thinking." Then, there is a radical shift in consciousness as the second tier, which is commonly referred to as integral, emerges.

Second tier is the first "being" level, according to Graves. We could say the first tier is essentially about survival and the second tier is essentially about being. (Alternative or more detailed maps can be easily found online, one might try "maps of human development" or "altitudes of development." These can be very helpful as they can convey a lot of information visually that we don't have space for here.)

First-tier stages all share a way of seeing the world marked by the unexamined belief that its level has unique access to the truth, which is the only truth, and that all other ways are wrong. "People, who are not like me, are wrong and, therefore, less valid, less important than me and my correct beliefs and ways." Even when we

KEN WILBUR'S FIRST- AND SECOND-TIER STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT	
ALTITUDES OF DEVELOPMENT: FIRST-TIER STAGES	
<b>1. Survival/Archaic (Infrared – emerging 250,000 years ago).</b>	Dawning self-awareness. Survives on instinct, intuition and banding with others.
<b>2. Tribal/Magical (Magenta – emerging 50-70,000 years ago).</b>	Sees enchanted world. Values rituals and deep community. Individuals subordinate to group.
<b>3. Warrior/Mythic Spirits (Red – emerging 15,000 years ago).</b>	Egocentric, vigilant and ruthless. Courageous, determined and powerful.
<b>4. Traditional (Amber – emerging 5,000 years ago).</b>	Ethnocentric, national-centric. Values rules, roles and discipline. Faith in a transcendent god or order.
<b>5. Modern (Orange – emerging 350 years ago).</b>	Values rationality and science. Individualism and democracy. Capitalism and materialism. Risk-taking and self-reliance.
<b>6. Postmodern (Green – emerging 150 years ago).</b>	Values pluralism and equality. Relativistic and sensitive. Civil rights and environmentalism. World centric.
ALTITUDES OF DEVELOPMENT: SECOND-TIER STAGES	
<b>7. Integral (Teal – emerging 50 years ago).</b>	Sees natural hierarchy and systems of systems. Holds multiple perspectives. Flexible, creative and effective.
<b>8. Integral (Turquoise – emerging now).</b>	Sees the world as alive and evolving. Holistic and kosmocentric. Lives from both individual Self and transpersonal Self.

Figure 1

think we're not like this, in the first tier, we are.

The second tier is characterized by an important new feature of human consciousness. People at second tier, for the first time at any stage of human development, hold that all people and all stages are valuable and necessary under all circumstances. At second tier (Integral), people begin to attempt to consciously take the perspective of other people and cultures for reasons other than mere survival, and bring greater flexibility and new ways of relating to differing groups and individuals and the second tier is essentially about being.

According to this model, most people on earth, about 67 percent of the population, fit solidly into the first three developmental stages. They belong to societies, which also are growing through stages. Taken together, the first three stages have a collective consciousness which has strong tendencies to be variously egocentric, ethnocentric, racist, aggressive, magical/mythical thinking, nonrational, lack any real world-centric

perspective and relate to its environment like a soulless "resource" ATM from which it is entitled to make unlimited withdrawals.

Stages other than our current stage, which are the ones we are usually making wrong, are necessary for our own existence. Each stage casts a different light on what it means to succeed as a human being and what it is to be a person of integrity. The demands for integrity that people respond to in their own lives are the demands of their stage of development and not the demands that we put on them when we assess them or make them wrong.

When people perceive that we are making them wrong in the absence of enough friendship and trust, we become either irrelevant or an obstacle to their progress, thus complicating and slowing their development and ours. All of our relationships, including our global citizenship, are grounded in trust and virtually nothing else, and are best when informed by spiritual connection, granting being, invitation and leadership, all bathed in sharing and inspiration.

Here's the thing: Every stage is required and how we grow is through transcending and including. All through our life, at least until we stop growing, we continue to transcend (go beyond) and include (the lessons, tools and modes of earlier stages are internalized and remain available to us) as we grow into the next wider and deeper stage. This means you can't do without any of the stages. They are all 100 percent necessary. In terms of who we see as our friends and enemies, as well as our greatest global challenges, most of the mischief lies in whatever we deny, ignore, avoid or make wrong.

Most of what we make wrong are people who are at other stages, which stages we ourselves either went through or will go through if we keep growing, and are not only necessary, but inevitable. We must begin to appreciate this if we are to meet our greatest challenges with peace, clarity and power.

#### **THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN-CREATED PROBLEMS**

At this moment, humanity faces some wicked problems, and our problems always give us our arts. A very short list might include our vulnerability to devastating nuclear war, the unregulated development of artificial intelligence and robots and catastrophic climate change. What do all of these problems have in common? They are problems created by certain kinds of human consciousness. None of them are problems for which there is no solution due to the laws of physics or our lack of knowledge of the technologies involved. They are strictly problems of human consciousness, nothing more and nothing less.

Yet, our collective understanding of developmental stages – how they unfold, what capacities they disclose and how they can shape our actions and creativity in response to the existential threats we are creating for ourselves – is almost nil. As a whole, humanity is clueless about the stages of development of its own consciousness. Therefore, we are presently saddled with broken ideas, individuals, relations, results and societies, instead of the fulfillment of the human spirit.

It is not yet too late, for sure. But, we also aren't yet tracking with reality in workable

ways. Today, the population of the world is 7.8 billion. Just 60 years ago, it was 2.9 billion. This is an unpredictable moment not only in human history, but in the life of the earth. What's happening on Earth today has no precedent. Human beings have evolved to the point that collectively we are transforming our planet in a way that some theorists have noted is equaled in geological and biological significance only by the formation of the oceans nearly four billion years ago except it's happening in a flash of time. It took millions and millions of years for the oceans to form. Now, we're transforming the surface of Earth in no time flat.

Once structures of consciousness have been observed, they become self-evident, even obvious, to the observer. What we fail to see, however, is that we're living out an experiment in consciousness with ramifications for all of life on Earth. We have evolved through stages until today; we have the ability to create technology and cooperate in complex and powerful ways. Now, we aren't evolving slowly over long periods of time, but extemporaneously and explosively.

#### **BAD MAPS AND FALSE DICHOTOMIES**

Our collective ability to solve our shared urgent problems at this moment in history is a function of how we construe the underlying issues. Our misunderstandings are based on our lack of knowledge of the foundational structures of consciousness from which the problems have arisen. We frame the issues in false dichotomies and this disallows direct and effective action. The environment vs. economic progress, war vs. peace, men vs. women, technology vs. tradition, lazy vs. industrious, good vs. evil and rich vs. poor – these are all largely false polarities.

Our continued success as a species will be determined by our understanding that they are all problems created by human consciousness at predictable stages of development. Their solutions are to be found only in ourselves, individually and collectively. As we evolve, develop and grow, we keep solving more and more of our previous problems at each new higher level of consciousness. More and more of what we truly want becomes available and possible for more people. This is the way evolution moves.

The outcomes we yearn for will come from leadership that understands this: All solutions to the central problems we face that don't take levels of human consciousness fully into account will not work and are doomed to failure.

When we see into the nature of human development not only at the level of the individual, but also at the level of culture and society, then understanding, compassion, effective communication and collaborative creativity become less a matter of being "good" and more a matter of working consistent with what is plain to see, what is obvious and what is inevitable. Resistance drops away. When we see clearly for ourselves how the evolution of consciousness works, we will naturally give up trying to take unworkable shortcuts and get to work right where we're at, with others right where they're at. Sharing and enabling consciousness is our new imperative. Evangelizing for what's possible is the central integral art.

Once we are integrally informed in this way, we may be able to succeed at fulfilling more of our goals. Every major problem being worked on today, virtually without exception, is stalled by lack of good maps and understanding about the stages of development of human consciousness and the accompanying lack of practices and structures that support us in implementing them.

Feminism is an important topic, which is interwoven with any possibility for long-term human success. But, feminism is currently stuck in a false polarity between men and women. That polarity is almost irrelevant and, at best, secondary. The real issue is stages of development of consciousness. People (men and women) at lower stages of consciousness are the problem, not men or women. (That's the first part).

The second part is that the people who are at higher stages and can see the problem with the lower stages creating lack of opportunity, oppression and suffering for women have no penetrating understanding of human developmental stages and are ineffective at dealing with the people involved, and, therefore, they are unable to get a handle on the problem.

Imagine waging the most important battle in the history of the world and finding out the theater

of operations you are sending troops into isn't where the fight is. That's what it's like to work from bad maps. You want to find out where the battle is actually taking place. Collectively, we are sending the troops to fight the wrong fights. The central way in which we are lost is that we think we can solve our problems (or we're resigned that we can't) without deeply incorporating the most important factor in everything we care about: developmental stages of consciousness and the precious awareness of its inextricable role in our well-being.

The climate is changing in ways science informs us are likely to be unwanted, to put it mildly. Without addressing the meteorological and physical science, suffice it to say that our species is collectively failing to respond to what can be clearly seen by the highest levels of human consciousness and failing to do what it can clearly see needs to be done. Again, we are in thrall to a false dichotomy. One iteration of this false polarity is between some version of "the greedy corporations and evil governments" vs. some version of "the innocent masses." This polarity may sound likely, but, in reality, is almost completely wrong.

Another iteration – "environmentalists" vs. "regular people trying to get by and feed their families" – is an equally false polarity. The real issue is stages of human development. The problem is not corporations, governments, environmentalists or regular people. Rather, the problem is corporations and governments run by people at lower levels of human consciousness, and environmentalists and regular people who do not understand levels of development and are, therefore, ineffective at communicating and cooperating to create their desired outcomes.

A good map would be helpful. To paraphrase the linguist, philosopher and author Steven Pinker, the best way for human beings to proceed into the future is to decide what we want to accomplish, map out the most promising way forward, including the risks, dangers and pitfalls along with our goals and then work from (and on) our maps using reason and knowledge. (From a 2016 podcast interview with Sam Harris on his book "The Better Angels of Our Nature.")

## AS CONSCIOUSNESS DEVELOPS, OUR PERSPECTIVE-TAKING SUPERPOWER GROWS

Taking the perspective of another is one of the most advanced things our body/mind can do. When we engage in the work of attempting to look from another's view, it is generally very positive for all concerned. I can see more of the truth as I add others' perspectives to my own. It becomes more and more integral, fuller, richer, more complex and less partial.

Taking another's perspective is hard, really hard, and fraught with delusions, illusions, quirks, wrong turns and unforeseen subtleties. This is understandable, since it calls on us to think from viewpoints that aren't familiar to us, aren't our own. It calls on us to imagine how others see and experience things, how it is for them. As animals, we've been developing the beginnings of this power for ages: What in biology is called theory of mind, the ability of advanced animals to think about other animals, imagine what is shaping their behavior and what they might be experiencing or intending.

Each higher step of evolution brings with it the ability to identify others' perspectives with greater accuracy. Each stage of human development, from birth to maturity to old age, can bring greater capacity for perspective-taking. This is related to the increase in moral inclusion of others, compassion and loving embrace of all of life as the evolution of consciousness unfolds.

However, our view of their view is inherently imperfect, and our conclusions usually leave a lot to be desired. If we wish to solve our pressing problems, then individually and collectively we need to become aware of our permanent inability to fully see things from other people's viewpoints.

No matter how hard I try, I'll never be able to know what it's like for a girl to grow into a woman, to have girlfriends, to fall in love as a woman, to navigate procreation, work as a woman, to dream as a woman and to have a mother as a girl or woman. I'll never know what it is to be a native of Indonesia, a monarch of a small European country, someone born without hands, my sister, the object of my desire, a shy person, someone born 1,000 years ago or my neighbor.

My best attempts at perspective-taking are never going to get me actually having the perspective of another. The best I could ever do is to be interested, listen and observe, maybe study and recognize that the gap in my understanding will always be deep, wide and without closure.

Taking another's perspective is important, but it's only partially doable. In most cases, more partial than doable. On the other hand, our successes in listening, creating and sharing perspectives with each other that bring us together, aligning our bodies, minds and souls (including the best aspects of technology, art, sport, government, education, healing, science, religion and entertainment) are almost unbelievably great. So, surely, there is reason for hope and continuing in our passion for doing the hard work of perspective-taking.

As we develop in our ability to practice taking the perspective of others, so does our embrace and inclusion of more kinds of "others." This means that each stage expands its inclusion and care for a bigger slice of life, a greater and growing percentage of the wholeness of life.

### A RISKY INQUIRY

Looking into these matters is a risk for us for four reasons that have kept us from exploring them further in public discourse until now.

First, because we haven't known about or understood the stages of development well enough to get started. Since they are new to us, we aren't used to thinking or talking about them.

Second, because it can seem like a dry subject (even though it might be the greatest story ever told), and we'd rather be associated with something that seems cool than with something that seems nerdy or boring.

Third, because some of the initial conclusions people tend to reach in this particular conversation are at best partial and oversimplified, and, at worst, counterproductive or even tragic (egocentric, ethnocentric, nation-centric, fundamentalist, racist, sexist, etc.) and we'd prefer to stick to safer topics where we're likely to be well-received and garner people's agreement.

Fourth, because this is precisely the kind of map that, as we encounter its depth, actually explains a lot and, therefore, risks giving us the illusion that our understanding is greater than it is. Although we naturally operate as if we know more than we don't know, this is patently absurd. We understand very little in relation to the fullness of reality (of most any subject). But, this doesn't mean that what we do know is unimportant – it's very important. Going beyond what we know is also important and tricky. We can't really give up what we know, what shapes our perspectives and convictions, until we first take it seriously, which usually means being sure enough about it at least to think we're right.

If we want to look productively at the matter of where we might be on the map of development, we must proceed with patience, humility and an awareness that this very act could stir up judgments and hurts (others' and our own) about how we're doing, how others are doing and what it might mean. We will have to learn to share as we proceed. This involves some risk.

In the pursuit of knowledge, there is a balance to be struck between abstraction and categorization on the one hand, and the particular, unique and all that is beyond categorization on the other. If we go too far in either direction, we lose wisdom. If we are afraid of venturing out in either direction, we also lose wisdom. Models tend to lean in the direction of abstraction and categorization. But, without models, we are unable to use our most advanced skills for thinking, planning and contemplation.

### EARLIER STAGES ARE MORE NECESSARY, LATER STAGES ARE MORE WANTED AND NEEDED

Each stage of human development has priceless gifts for humanity as well as wicked shortcomings. The stages that have emerged earlier are more necessary and not less important than the stage that is emerging now. The newer stages are especially wanted and needed at this time and embrace wider and deeper possibility, caring, choice, perspectives and ethics, but the earlier stages are totally necessary for us to exist at all.

These "lower" structures of consciousness (individual and cultural) are what our own lives

are actually made out of, and, if they went away, we would perish at the very same time. In the same way that if we did away with atoms, all molecules would disappear at the same moment.

The stages of human development lead inexorably toward what Abrahamic religions label as "the call to the life of a prophet," and Buddhists call the Bodhisattva path. The basic insight of these paths is that other people are as important or more important than we are. As humanity has become more and more successful evolutionarily, it has become clear that while each stage gives us new powers and freedoms, it also gives us new problems and responsibilities.

If we wish to pass the human project on to ensuing generations as an embodiment of well-being, then we must give ourselves the responsibility for all that has come before us, nurturing and caring for all stages in the present and in our planning for the future. Each stage is a treasure trove of good things we all need, and that needs to be valued if we are to transcend and include them. It's all sacred.

**Archaic** gives us our very existence, a feat that required four billion years of biological creativity on Earth.

**Tribal** gives us enchantment, aliveness and the fulfilling nature of our relations in our families and groups.

**Warrior** gives us a sense of our personal power, pageantry, worth and agency.

**Traditional** gives us higher orders of group organization, predictability and group cooperation.

**Modern** gives us our first world centric view, rational thought, science, new possibilities for discovery, enterprise, achievement and fulfillment.

**Postmodern** gives us the aspiration to embrace and witness the world from a place of belonging, compassion, inclusion and fairness.

**Integral** gives us the ability to embrace wholeness as a daily reality, the depth to see multidimensionally and take other perspectives, see the subtleties of systems (and systems of systems) and natural hierarchies

(what Arthur Koestler called holarchies) and experience the world as alive and existing as a sacred and wonderful expression of evolution (science) and god (poetry).

If ever we must choose between our own further development and caring for everyone else, we can now see that while caring for ourselves is always the first order of business, caring for everyone else is of the highest importance for our long-term well-being. The truth is that we don't always know how to care for everyone. However, it seems likely that this kind of action will give birth to new human growth in ways we want – ways that are healthy and functional, instead of broken and unworkable.

If we recoil from the responsibility to care for the well-being of the whole human family and all that has come before, and to participate creatively and proactively in its growth and development, we will be like a newly rich man dying of terminal cancer, eternally unable to enjoy the spoils he has accumulated.

Each stage has its gifts as well as its “shadow” to borrow from Carl Jung. Each stage has its possibilities for joy and well-being and for madness and dysfunction. Since we are largely stuck with our viewpoint, while reality has no viewpoint, we inevitably make everything wrong in one way or another. As human beings, it doesn't seem too likely that any of us will stop making things wrong altogether. Rather, what we make wrong changes as we grow and develop. Therefore, best to make friends with what is wrong and inquire into its movement within our experience of life.

#### **BEING INTEGRALLY INTERRELATED WITH ALL PEOPLE AS WE GROW AND DEVELOP**

What does it mean to be “integrally interrelated?” One thing it could be said to mean is that we have the potential to recognize our growth as well as the growth of others. It means we have the potential to see places in life where we are not growing and places where we could grow. It means the ability to appreciate our skills and accomplishments as well as the skills and accomplishments of others. It means that we're free to learn from anyone and teach anyone.

It means making friends with our resistance, blindness, foolishness and prejudice. It means taking the perspectives of others without being limited to seeing them as right or wrong. It means owning what we know to be true. It means being able to say that something is wrong right. It means taking our own perspectives and judgments seriously as well as the ability to take them lightly when the time is right. As we go along the path of inquiry – being a person of the social commons of humanity – we won't always know where we are or what the things we are finding will eventually mean to us. Just yearning for the new thing (even though we can barely behold it or think it, let alone create it) can begin to transform things.

Even then, we will not like everything along the way. Upset guards the boundary between our fantasies about life and life itself. What's most important is to let the spirit of inquiry dislodge us from our stuck survival grooves, get swept away by reality and face what we most want, but least want to confront. This is a dance of order and chaos, the basic ingredients in creativity.

Trusting ourselves can feel very vulnerable, and it is. Life offers us many and ever-increasing ways to sell out on our Self. When we can exercise our voice to authentically disagree or agree, to say no or yes, then we can go anywhere and engage fully in lively conversation and in life. When we lose this voice, we are likely to lose our way and we may lose our soul.

#### **INTEGRAL ARTS**

The very nature of consciousness is that it gives us the responsibility and the agency to awaken in order to fulfill its possibilities. Without awakening and wielding our own consciousness, it cannot fulfill its being. Whereas most of the results we produce come from using our awareness to operate on external objects, wisdom is uniquely the result of consciousness operating on itself.

Awakening (and wielding) consciousness is a question of art and of science, taken together, “arts.” If we wish to awaken, we must call forth new arts, born into the sacred marriage of truth and emptiness. The art of communication. The art of thriving organizations and institutions. The art of enjoyment. The art of well-being. The

art of transformation. The art of self-regulation. The art of cooperative visionary action. The art of the future of humanity. The art of education. The art of becoming. The arts of the arts: beauty and explorations in music, dance, poetry, architecture, literature, film, ritual and beyond.

These are the endeavors that our own awakening now calls out to us for: to invent these arts newly and begin to practice them. We will create them by including and incorporating every level of our consciousness and self-expression. We can no longer afford to take into account only what we want to. Integrity demands that we must take everything into account from here on. This is what is meant by integral: whole, all, everything. The integral arts of human thriving are self-consciously integral and integrating.

We will make new integral arts as the central and most essential activity of what it is to be human. We will create them in the sunshine of our daily lives and in the solitude of meditation upon the mind of god. We will likely have to let go of the familiarity of the old and embrace the emptiness and wonder of the new. In our quest to embody this kind of creativity, we must bow down together in awe at the feet of reality. We must make ourselves available for the fashioning of new integral arts of human becoming. Only then will we be able to fulfill our true purpose. Only in this way will we be able to fulfill on the flourishing future that wants us.

As pointed out by the physicist and philosopher David Deutsch, in terms of human progress, we are always at the beginning of infinity. This may be what is meant when the saints and sages speak to us of faith. Human affairs are wondrous, complex, terrific, beautiful and often vexing. But, the world seems to embrace the faithful and trustworthy like a flower embraces a bee. I'm placing my faith in me and you, and in the miracle of “us,” even when we may seem to be unsure or even lost; especially then.

We can have knowledge without creating anything useful with what we know. We can sometimes create beautifully without knowing. But, there are some things that we can only manifest when we both know and create from the (ultimately unknowable) primordial truth.

As Steve Jobs said, “You can't connect the dots going forward, you can only connect them looking back.” When standing at the edge of infinity, we shouldn't necessarily know exactly where we are; only that we are here and, maybe, where we'd like to go next. For as long as we're here, we're going to be landing upon new flowers, so we will have rich opportunities for faith and practice.

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# REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

By sheer number, this year's 48 Reports from the Field, including 14 in the Discoveries from the Inquiries section, demonstrate that Wisdom course graduates are out to make a difference all over the globe. Prepare to be touched by the poignancy, inspired by the courage and taken aback by the authenticity offered in these reports.

The authors discuss their work on many well-known issues, such as hunger, palliative care, sustainable living, the homeless, health care and mental health. Other topics – say, the role of meetings, the fate of two breeds of Spanish dogs, transformational travel, the teaching of mathematics and what it takes to learn to swim – are not necessarily considered front-burner issues. But, each report contains the world of transformation and an opportunity to glean a nugget of gold for your own life. Please, don't forget. You, too, can file a Report from the Field for next year's journal.

— Melinda Voss, Editor



# THE NOVA STORY

KRISHNA NAIR

In November 1997, my wife and I were expecting our third child, a girl. A few days before she was due to be born, she died. My wife had to give birth to our stillborn little girl, whom we had named Nova Tiera Surayna Nair.

We were devastated. After some months and with the support of our community, I reviewed The Landmark Forum and discovered a nature of love for which I still today have difficulty describing. With that breakthrough, my family moved on and we have continued to create our lives ever since.

However, every October and November, I experience a low-level sadness or melancholy. You might say I experience “upset.” It comes like clockwork. Then after November 9, the day she was stillborn, I get over it.

This fall, while being present to upsets in my life, during the Landmark “Be Here Now” seminar in Toronto, I had a strong reaction to something the seminar leader said about being responsible for the upsets we create, and I found myself even more angry, upset and resentful. I said some fairly bad things to my fellow seminarists and the seminar leader.

On our way home, my wife suggested I list all the upsetting events that I have associated with Nova and do a component of our seminar inquiry with this list – that is, who or what is involved, where did it happen, when did it happen and what happened. It was a long list.

Karen told me that the baby wasn’t kicking as we were sitting in the walk-in clinic for two hours waiting for a doctor. The doctor hears a heartbeat, but it turns out to just be Karen’s. The security guard won’t let me leave the car

at the front of the hospital so that I can go into the hospital with my wife. The doctors tell Karen that the baby is dead and I’m not in the room yet so she faces that alone. We must arrange for someone to look after the children while Karen delivers our little girl overnight. Going home to tell the children, I get angry with my then six-year-old daughter for not being more upset, with myself for wanting my children to just leave me alone, at my mother for trying to make me feel better, etc., etc.

It was a long list. But, it was also a finite list. In that process, I realized that I wanted to write a story about my little girl. I have told stories about so many other things, but I had never told a story for Nova. This is what I created. Some of this story is true and some of this story has yet to happen. All of it is an invention.

Once upon a time, a long time ago, there was a goddess who lived in the forests on the Himalaya mountains of India. Her name was Nova and she was the Goddess of Rainbows and Shadows ... Most people don’t know that you can’t have rainbows if you can’t have shadows.

One day, she was waking with her Father God, the God of Stupid Jokes, and he said to her “Jesus, Moses and an old man were playing golf ... ”

She interrupted him and said, “Father God, you’ve told me this joke at least a million times ... 1,023,512 times to be exact!”

“But, it is such a good joke!”

“It wasn’t even a good joke the first time you said it. Anyway, I just came to tell you that I have decided that I want to be an avatar

and be born on Earth as a person.”

The God of Stupid Jokes looked through the space-time continuum and said, “Look over there ... see those two people? The man has come home early from work. The kids are out with friends. The woman realizes that it is a nice warm day in late winter. They are about to have an ‘Oops.’ You can be their child ... You would have an older sister and brother. But, you better hurry!”

So Nova found herself floating down a fallopian tube in her new mother’s uterus, and in time as she grew, she could feel and hear her mother. She liked what she felt and she liked what she heard. Her mother was strong!

One day, she realized that her father was about to say something to her for the first time. He was bending over her mummy’s tummy and was about to speak. She was so excited ... What was he going to say? What expression of love would she hear? So she pressed her ear to the uterine wall and heard him say in a great big booming voice: “What’s the first derivative of sine theta?”

Huh? She was the Goddess of Rainbows and Shadows; she understood the complex mathematics of refraction, probability, optics and gravity. Did her new father think that she would be stumped by differential equations of simple trigonometric functions in a Euclidean space? She realized the absurdity of life and began to giggle while her father taught her basic math. She laughed so hard she gave herself hiccups.

Sometimes, though, when mummy was asleep, he also taught her Shakespeare and, sometimes, he just talked. He had some strange ideas about swimming that involved dribbling water in her face while her parents would bathe her. He told her how his own mother had done the same thing for him. He told her how he was sure that she would be perfect, since he now knew everything there was to know about being a father. He would make sure that when she was growing up, he wouldn’t make any mistakes. She found his optimism sort of childlike, but sort of sweet anyway. She liked the sound of his voice.

Then, she noticed that he was creating memories

of new realities that hadn’t even happened yet!

“Father God,” she called out. “Does he even know that he is doing this?”

The God of Stupid Jokes laughed and said, “Not really. Besides, humans do this all the time.”

Then, one day her Father God called her and said, “Goddess Nova, something has gone wrong with all the rainbows in heaven; also with the shadows. If we don’t have shadows, we don’t have love. (Note from the author: That’s a Godly thing that I don’t expect us humans to understand.) I am afraid that you have to come back.”

Nova was sad. “Mummy is strong and powerful ... she will cry but she will go on ... but I don’t think that dad can handle it! If we take away all those possible realities from dad and leave him only with the memories he has created, he will go crazy.”

“I’m not coming back,” and so she stayed.

One day, she was listening to her dad and all of sudden he said to someone, “Jesus, Moses and an old man are playing golf ... ”

Nova was stunned. She called out and said, “Father God, are you my dad, too?” The God of Stupid Jokes looked in on her and then looked at her dad and said with a smile, “Well he does seem to be an earlier version of me, doesn’t he?”

“Did you pick my parents on purpose?”

“I had to close a paradox loop in the space-time continuum and it seemed like a good way to do it.”

Then, she asked, “If I leave, will my dad ever forgive me?”

The God of Stupid Jokes remembered back and said sadly, “No, he never will. But, he won’t hold it against you either.”

Then, Nova said, “Well that’s just confusing!” The God of Stupid Jokes burst out laughing and said, “And that’s exactly what he will say about it for the rest of his life!”

Then, God said, “Don’t worry about him ... in a few days after you come back to us,

he is going to discover that he has been loved in so many ways by so many people. He won't know himself in the face of it."

"And then your sister will tell him a joke and get him back to laughter and sorrow at the exact same time.

"Then, in a few months, thanks to his own mother, he will unwittingly stumble over a fundamental truth of love that humanity isn't ready to understand. He will discover the love you have for him in a way that he won't ever get over and won't have words to describe though he will spend his life looking for them."

"Twenty years from now, your mother and father will have loved each other so well and so uniquely that your brother will create a distinction of love that will grow over the next 100 years ... the definition of a committed relationship will never be the same."

"And your father will remember a vision he had for the future when he was just 20 years old and too scared to give it a voice. It will take him some time, but, just before your 21st birthday, he will finally start speaking it and will keep speaking it for the next 30 years. And because of his voice and the voice of millions of others, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh will forgive each other."

"And one day, your father will listen to another person say that they can't bring fun, play or ease to a condition in their life that is so terrible and sorrowful that fun would just be wrong. And he will remember his own hate and his own love, he will remember his own rage and his own laughter ... he will be present to the paradox and say something both incredibly profound and also so incredibly stupid. And that person with whom he is talking will burst out laughing and crying. That person will change the world."

"Your father is not strong, but your mother is. And you know that she will never let him face this or anything else alone. He will break, and she will transform him."

"And all his days, even those days when he will forget his own name, he will never, ever, ever forget you, his little girl."

Nova said, "I am ready to come back now."  
As she passed on, she sang her parents a song:

Why are there so many

Songs about rainbows

And what's on the other side

Rainbows are visions

They're only illusions

And rainbows have nothing to hide

So we've been told and some  
choose to believe it

I know they're wrong, wait and see

Someday you'll find me

Your Rainbow Connection

The lovers, the dreamers and me.

The ... beginning.

Thanks to Paul Williams for the song, "Why are there so many songs about rainbows?"

A REPORT FROM THE FIELD

## VOICES FROM THE FIELD

SUSAN KATZ CLARK

*I didn't know when I created an Impossible Promise of health and well-being for all by 2046 that I'd be dealing with my own well-being!*

### INTRODUCTION

I am an almost 36-year graduate of Landmark's programs and those of its predecessor organizations, a former staff member, introduction leader, Self-Expression & Leadership Program coach, Wisdom City Team registration manager, source person for the Landmark Forum for Young People and recently returned seminar program participant. All of my participation has been in the Washington, DC center. I love this education and live its distinctions daily and have had the most important people in life participate in our programs. I did the Wisdom Unlimited course in 1998, followed by Partnership Explorations, Power and Contribution, and three other Wisdom Course Area programs, and I have attended all 18 Conferences for Global Transformation (2019 is my 19th!). After last year's conference, I completed the Introduction to Inquiry course led by Brian Regnier and Tobin White.

In this article, I will share with you my promise for the world, how I've been in action on it, what my structure of support has been, what I've learned and where I am now about it.

### MY PROMISE

In 2000, at the completion of my Power and Contribution course, I declared my Impossible Promise to be: a world of health and well-being for all by 2046.

### WHY I CHOSE THIS PROMISE AND DATE

Being healthy and well is my most important life commitment and the one with which I've achieved the most personal success. Being healthy and well has given me a life of joy, energy and satisfaction, and I'm committed that all people have that possibility available to them.

I chose 2046, as that's the year I'll turn 100, and I'm committed to live healthy to 100. I was 53 and healthy when I declared my promise; I'm 72 now, still healthy, yet with new compassion for myself and others and newfound peace in my life and in how I'm living my promise.

### TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT MY PROMISE

Though I'm empowered to live inside my commitment to the world, I've never worked on its fulfillment in the manner I was coached to in Power and Contribution and in the global conferences. Using the "My Contribution to a World Transformed: Self-Assessment Tool" distributed in the course and conferences, I've only fully accomplished the first step – being committed to transformation and having an understandable way to express it. I've never completed a game plan nor fully engaged people beyond my friends, family, business colleagues, personal coach and a few local wellness leaders. I don't have the kind of strategies outlined in the tool. In fact, at some point, I forgot that I even had this promise.

## **HOW WAS I BEING ABOUT MY PROMISE, AND WHAT HAS SHIFTED?**

I've made myself wrong about this on and off throughout the years. I've assessed myself as "not good enough," "not doing enough," "a fraud," "doing it wrong" and "embarrassed about it" – especially not as good as "they" – the speakers at the global conferences – are!

What I wasn't seeing was what I have been doing in fulfillment of my promise.

For the last 17 years, I've partnered as a wellness entrepreneur with a company committed to altering the health and well-being of the planet, introducing their life-affirming nutritional products to my originating circle and enrolling and registering team members who share the same commitment. I am known, recognized and acknowledged by many as a person committed to the well-being of myself, others and the planet.

I've kept going to the conferences each year to be empowered. Last year, I began viewing myself as a world leader committed to altering the health and well-being of the planet. In the Inquiry course in 2018, I was supported and listened to as someone with a promise for the world, and I got it!

I saw also that it doesn't really matter how I do this. As long as I am empowered to be my promise, I'll take whatever actions I do and I won't take whatever actions I don't. End of story.

## **WHAT WAS THE PERSONAL WELL-BEING MATTER?**

As a result of my extremely healthy lifestyle, my weight was good and my periodic blood work was excellent with just a few things to work on. I had plenty of energy. I wasn't on any medications, and I was feeling confident and on track to easily live healthy to 100. I'd had a few bouts of high blood pressure but I felt that was under control. I was, however, putting myself under a lot of stress regarding my business and relationship.

One day in July 2018, I learned that my blood pressure was once again high enough to cause me concern. There followed a couple of weeks of my being frantic about it, seeing doctors, checking it multiple times a day and being terrified that I would have a heart attack. I worried about what

was causing it, that I wouldn't be able to achieve my goal of healthy to 100 and I might not even make it to my 72nd birthday in November.

I also had a dilemma: I didn't like going to doctors and was very resistant to medication. Who I am is that the body is designed to operate maximally, repair, defend and heal itself if given the proper care and raw materials it needs. It wasn't within my view of myself as a naturally healthy aging person to even consider medication. I was afraid that, if I started medication, I'd be on a slippery slope to more of it and really off my course of wellness. I struggled with this, shared about it in the Inquiry course and had many bouts of sleeplessness and worry, especially that if I died soon, I would be to blame because I didn't take the medication. My family and friends were concerned about me.

To ease my angst, I finally went on a small dose of medication in mid-November, and since then have continued it, and I am doing quite well. I've had numerous tests on my heart and cardiovascular system, and all the results were good. I've increased my cardio workouts and decreased my stress. In my last visit with my cardiologist, my blood pressure was normal and I may be able to go off medication after three months. As you can imagine, I am greatly relieved.

## **WHAT DID I LEARN FROM THIS EXPERIENCE AND HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO MY PROMISE?**

I saw that I had an us/them relationship with Western medicine practitioners. I didn't trust doctors, due to various experiences from my past. I viewed them as the enemy. What I realized is that medical professionals choose that profession because they are committed to people being healthy, and, if I refuse to work with them, I am eliminating a very valuable part of my "team" of people causing the fulfillment of my promise.

I also learned that "all people being healthy and well" starts with me! I realized that the way I'd been living my life, running, running, running, like a hamster on a wheel, being so busy, trying to prove that I was okay on top of a fundamental belief that I'm not okay, was stressing me out and challenging my health. My personal coach had been telling me this for years. I just didn't get it.

Finally, I got it and I began living my life more

quietly and peacefully, choosing my commitments very carefully, allowing myself to slow down and not do everything. I gave myself permission to not work my business much last fall and just take care of myself. I worked things out with my boyfriend. I've taken responsibility for my well-being in a way I never did before. I'm living a life of balance and allowing myself to be supported in ways I never had before.

I've also been humbled to learn what it's like to not be well. In the past, I'd made sick people wrong. I've been arrogant about being well. I've blamed them for not living a healthy lifestyle and thus causing their disease. I can see that view is inconsistent with my commitment.

Further, I've expanded my definition of health and well-being to include not just physical well-being, but also people being at peace with their life, living the life they love.

## **WHAT'S NEXT? WHERE AM I COMING INTO THE 2019 CONFERENCE?**

Listening for fulfillment is the perfect space for me to be in. I'm listening for the fulfillment of my life and my promise. I'm listening for what others are seeking in the fulfillment of their lives. As I write this in January 2019, I'm at peace with how I'm living my life and my promise. I'm okay with not structuring and carrying out my promise the way it's "supposed" to be done. I'm being given by it and bringing it to each person with whom I interact. I am at peace. Namaste.

# LISTENING FOR FULFILLMENT AS A NONPROFIT FOUNDER

SUSAN HOSKINS

For me, when I hear listening for fulfillment, I see it from the point of view of a not-for-profit. I especially think of the client, participant or pupil. In this essay, I will be looking at it from the eyes of a founder of a nonprofit that worked in the Washington, DC area welfare community.

I believe that listening for fulfillment takes four things in a nonprofit:

1. A listening for yourself, the organization and the client.
2. Always being in an inquiry.
3. Standing for another's greatness.
4. Understanding clearly the difference between justice and equality.

## LISTENING

You start with the listening of yourself, then there is the listening of the organization and of the client. The three entities are necessary in the fulfillment. They are simultaneously contiguous and dancing with each other in an inquiry for fulfillment. That interplay is what makes for success.

Choose your intention, then move it into reality. You move it into reality by acting on the choice. Acting on a choice is decisive. Then you ask, "How do you impact that choice?" Go back and forth. Play with it. Continuously ask for what is missing. Always challenge yourself to look for new information.

One pitfall: People often choose an intention in an area in life where they want to make a difference. For me, it was poverty. The pitfall is

when no acting on the choice happens. It never moves into reality. Most people will play forever with the concept, and it remains as a concept. It moves back and forth in the inquiry of the concept and never moves into reality. What we mean here is to have the inquiry into people and the organization and an inquiry into the resources available, how to make an impact, how to move it forward and how to connect the resources. But you must take action!

## INQUIRY

What I mean by always being in an inquiry is that you are always looking for what is wanted and needed. That question never ends. You always want to be asking that question. I think the moment you stop asking the question, you stop moving forward and you stop the growth of the organization.

You are always looking for what is missing. To find out what is missing. Not from the standpoint that something is wrong, but you are looking for what resources are missing, where can you find them and connect them. This is what makes an effective business.

Always being in an inquiry allows for your client to feel included. "What did you accomplish this week?" "What is next for you?" "What are your goals?"

The quality of the questions is from the standpoint of genuine curiosity. Not from a place that the person is broken and not from a place of having all the answers like a teacher. Yes, there are times that you teach, but most of the time it comes in the form of an interested coach; coaching them to achieve their future goals. There is always a back and forth, playing in each moment.

## STANDING FOR PEOPLE'S GREATNESS

When you stand for someone's greatness, they leap tall buildings and knock your socks off. In order to do this, you need to make the choice ahead of time. It's a conscious decision that they are wonderful, they are worthy and there is a worthiness about them.

You also take a stand to elevate them and see their full potential that they are incredible, a fabulous human being; that they are valued, viewed as a valuable member of our society.

People need to know that they are known for who they are. They experience being known and that they are appreciated and experience being acknowledged.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary's definition of "stand" is as a position or opinion one is prepared to uphold.

Everyone, at all times, is seen. Inherently, there is human dignity in everyone. You are committed to their greatness. You stand for their future fulfilled in every transaction. All of these things being experienced contiguously breathes life into the human spirit.

## JUSTICE VS. EQUALITY

In addition to all of this, I feel it is important to address a subtle but important difference that impacts the experience of fulfillment overall. That is the difference between justice and equality.

In the simplest terms, the word equality, as defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, is the quality or state of being equal. Same value, measure, quantity, amount or number as another; identical in mathematical value or logical denotation and not showing variation in appearance.

Justice, on the other hand and in the simplest terms, is defined the same as equality with one addition. The administration of what is "just" especially by the impartial adjustment of conflicting claims or the assignment of merited rewards or punishments. It can give one the feeling of "exactng a pound of flesh." I assert that this does not bring the experience of fulfillment.

I end with this caution. In most cases, we mean equality. There are times to use the word justice, but let us not use the words interchangeably.

Ultimately, listening for fulfillment gives you the experience of fulfillment.

## JENNIFER'S DREAM FULFILLED

JENNIFER BROWN

I heard it said, and I probably said it, "I want to be a Wisdom course leader." And, then, right then, there was an offering, the Wisdom division leadership program, a training, it was said, that could develop me to lead introductions to the Wisdom course. So, I went to Los Angeles, with the best of the best, and learned to lead introductions to the Wisdom course. It was 2005. I also got a job and two pairs of gold slingback pumps to lead in.

Then, it was said, what's next for you is the Introduction Leaders Program. So, I did that, too, and became an introduction leader in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I was an introduction leader from 2006-2011. I led introductions to the Wisdom course from 2005-2016 in Detroit, Louisville, Kentucky, Grand Rapids, Michigan and New York City. I led over the phone most of the time and sometimes in person. I learned to be a Wisdom on the Web facilitator from 2011-2013 and then I came to New York to assist with the New York City Wisdom City Team. I led Wisdom introductions and learned how to be a New Yorker. I learned to participate in the Wisdom course and assist at the same time! I learned how to be a facilitator when the Facilitated Wisdom course started to be offered and facilitated the first-ever Wisdom course in Bay City, Michigan. I led introductions to the two-day pilot Facilitated Wisdom course led by Joyce Pike in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and we had the first Facilitated Wisdom course in Kalamazoo. It turns out I really like leading introductions to the Wisdom course and Facilitated Wisdom course.

The leading I do is actually about listening. It is about being willing to be enrolled in someone else, someone else's life and interests. It is listening for those interests being fulfilled. It's about helping someone see how they would

use the Wisdom course to fulfill their interests, maybe even their dreams, and standing there with them, standing for those dreams and interests to be fulfilled in the Wisdom course and forever. That's because I have it that once you are someone who has completed the Wisdom course, you can create your dreams and have them be fulfilled. I've been doing that, creating my dreams and watching them be fulfilled.

Sometimes, I wonder about why I didn't become a Wisdom course leader. I think the answer is that I really wanted to lead Wisdom introductions and keep creating and fulfilling my own dreams as well as helping other people learn how to fulfill theirs. I haven't as yet learned to lead the Wisdom course. I wonder if I just haven't yet created it as a dream to be fulfilled or if I have already fulfilled my dream of being a Wisdom course leader by leading conversations for the fulfillment of dreams.

## BEING THE SOURCE OF OUR WELL-BEING: TRANSFORMING "HEALTH CARE"

STUART APONY

What is it to be "well" anyway? We human beings have created language, or maybe language created us. We use the words to describe those things we see, hear and experience in our lives. So, let us look at how we define things in the area of "well-being" and "health." To start with, the word "wellness" is defined as "the state of being in good health, especially as an actively pursued goal." An example used in the Google dictionary is "measures of a patient's progress towards wellness."

"Health" is defined as "the overall mental and physical state of a person; the absence of disease..." Wellness, on the other hand, is about living a life full of personal responsibility and therefore taking proactive steps for one's entire well-being" (www.study.com, Health & Wellness: Definitions and Dimensions). The University of California, Davis defines wellness as "...an active process of becoming aware of and making choices toward a healthy and fulfilling life. Wellness is more than being free from illness, it is a dynamic process of change and growth...a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity."

Furthermore, well-being is defined as "the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy" (Google dictionary). Interestingly, much of our focus in the "health care" industry has been to rid oneself of "disease." As defined in Wikipedia, health care or healthcare is "...the maintenance or improvement of health via the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease, illness, injury and other physical and mental impairments in human beings."

The first question I would like to look at is what if

"disease" is a part of the solution, not the problem to one's well-being? What if "dis" "ease" is just a communication from our body, mind and or, spirit if you will, letting us know to make corrections to our course? I wonder if we – like an airplane that goes off course needs to make constant corrections, sometimes small and sometimes large – need to do the same. What if, for instance, our body's temperature is like a thermostat that goes up when we need warmth in our bodies? There are many examples, including my wife, who ended up in the hospital with over 2,000 ccs of fluid in the pleura (sac outside of her lungs). After extensive attempts at trying to find the cause, the diagnosis was "community-based pneumonia (distal cause) from an unknown source." What my wife determined was that she needed to make some changes in her lifestyle, and, regardless of the diagnosis, she took it as communication to make corrections to the "course of her life" (proximal cause). It was, of course, helpful, if not lifesaving, to have had the resources provided by the hospital to drain the fluid from her pleura and the rest she needed to make the changes in her life. Once she was sent home, it was essentially up to my wife to create her own "aftercare plan."

Given our perspective, she and I created a team of professional and natural supports to work with and use what happened as an opportunity for growth.

It has been apparent to me for about 40 years that our mainstream health care system works with people from a mechanistic perspective. This perspective is useful, as shown in the example above. The way we view health as the absence of disease has then led us to developing distinctions of the many kinds of physical and mental diseases. I have directly experienced

this occurrence working in the mental health field with the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). Although useful in distinguishing “mental illnesses,” it thereby focuses on the “disease” model as discussed earlier. What I am strongly suggesting is that this model lacks integrity as the whole is truly greater than the sum of its parts. What’s missing, I say, is a “system of care” that comes from a wellness perspective and treats the occurrences of disease as an opportunity for people taking responsibility for growth and taking action toward “a healthy and fulfilling life.”

Now these ideas are promoted in many holistic, preventative, natural health, integrative, lifestyle and healing modalities. It has also, thankfully, become appreciated in the mainstream to be important for people to make lifestyle changes and get support around their nutrition, mental health, relationships, career choices, physical activity, spirituality, finances and other aspects of our lives. People are often looking for ways to get support in one or more of these areas and there are numerous resources.

With the easy access to the Internet, one can find services in any area of life. The question becomes: What can you trust and what direction makes sense to go? Also, these services are often still from a model of getting answers “outside” of oneself as the “alternatives” to mainstream become the new “compartmentalization of solutions.” Now, it’s at least more holistic and integrative and, yet, the question is still: Who is the source of one’s well-being? Hippocrates, the Greek physician, considered to be the father of medicine, is quoted as saying, “The natural healing force within each of us is the greatest force in getting well.” (www.thefamouspeople.com). Another one from Albert Schweitzer, M.D.: “It’s supposed to be a secret, but I’ll tell you anyway. We doctors do nothing. We only help and encourage the doctors within.” (Institute for Integrative Nutrition). If these two renowned doctors are correct, how do we tap into the capacity to be the source of our well-being?

That brings me to my commitment or Impossible Promise to the world. It’s what I believe is my part to play. In fact, it’s not my part at all, it is just

what is wanted to exist and does not yet exist in the world: A comprehensive system of well-being care that empowers people to be responsible for their health and well-being. It’s a system that creates partnership through engaging people in an inquiry of what’s important to them: What’s working and what’s not working so well. From a background of “acceptance” we ask questions designed to assist people to look at and discover what is at the source of their well-being and what disempowering beliefs are hindering their growth and development. By listening generously, being open, present and compassionate, we create a trusting environment that allows for their life and ours to shift in positive ways.

It’s been an interesting journey over these many years of sharing this vision with hundreds, if not thousands of people. Most everyone “gets it” and some have put in time to working with me on bringing it to existence. Currently, I have two committed partners, and we have been working together to formulate our plan for over two years now. We have begun to develop a process in working with people through gathering comprehensive health information, structured inquiry, goal development consultation and coaching and measuring outcomes to assist and support people moving toward optimal well-being.

This process also allows us to get feedback and assist us in creating our “system of care” that can be scaled and become a model. Our intention is to create an opportunity for everyone to have access to this delivery system and collaborate with vetted practitioners and train all those interested in our model. We intend to create a way for people to receive the support they need that is affordable to everyone and have a way for people to contribute so this intention can be realized.

What has opened up recently is how I have been looking at things from my perspective and not realizing the possibility of what I am committed to is shared by others. I have spent years talking with hundreds of people and have engaged in countless hours with my partners to unfold “our vision.” Yet, I now see that I have been unwilling to be in the “unknown” and trust in this vision unfolding as it is designed to. In fact, I know there are things and imagine many

things I don’t know happening in the arena of “well-being” service delivery already. This paper allows me to put out into the world some of my thoughts which just might touch and inspire some people. I know of many services out there that embody a similar vision and are excited to explore possibilities to form collaborations.

In short, it is my contention that well-being is a perspective I believe allows for us to focus on the state of fullness of what’s in the glass. Doesn’t it make sense to see how much we have and build upon it? With this model, even if there is only a tiny amount of liquid in the glass, all there is to do is to create an environment for the glass to fill up. The empty space is not “wrong.” It’s just maybe in “dis-ease” and some assistance might be needed to create “ease.” As I have learned, when the body, mind and spirit are in a relaxed state, things function optimally. In the book, “The Rules of Parenting,” by Richard Templar, he came up with 110 rules for parents to follow. Rules on how to be rather than do. The first rule, which seems to be the first rule for most everything we do, is “relax.” He states, “Really good parents expect their children to be noisy, messy, bouncy, squabbly, whiny and covered in mud.” As with our well-being, it’s being stressed, uptight and worried that hinders our growth and those other people in our sphere of influence. The context of “fun, play and ease” from the Wisdom course has far-reaching implications. Let us learn to relax, even if we do not play so nice together in the sandbox.

# LISTENING FOR FULFILLMENT IN FAILURE: THAT BIG JOB I THOUGHT I HAD

HEATHER SHAPTER

AUGUST 4, 2018

"Heather, I have some disappointing news for you," said the CEO of the international, child-centered nongovernmental organization (NGO). For five months, I had been interviewing with this NGO for a new chief operating officer role. The CEO told me I had not gotten the job. I fought back tears and just tried to keep it together for the rest of the call. He said something about "They went for the other candidate who was more of an operations person." The CEO said something about still finding a way to work together. I was so in my head, I could barely register anything else but my monologue of, "Oh no! How could I have gotten this so wrong?"

The commitment I am in service of is the end of global poverty – women and children, who are living on the margins – that they thrive. That my children's children need to go to the Smithsonian museum to learn about poverty. It is parked next to the horse and buggy. That people get that the end of their poverty is possible through community.

I had really wanted that job – an expansion of my leadership with an organization that was up for bold leadership and new ways of operating to make possible a new future for the world's most vulnerable children. The doubling of my salary and a generous benefits package would also have been very welcome. I not only really wanted that job, but was sure I had it and I was counting on getting it. I was wrong.

What was there to learn?

A lot!

DIALOGUE OR NETFLIX?

I got into dialogue. After hearing the disappointing news, I turned to my schedule and saw I had promised to go to a Service and Contribution Community Saturday and a Wisdom course gathering the following day. I knew these would be great places to be, but I really just wanted to have a glass of wine, some chips and watch murder mysteries on Netflix. I was tired.

Word won out (this time) and I went. I got reconnected to "generative" language. What happened, happened. Now, what was I going to generate in my speaking. One of the things I saw was that I was helping create a new Global Youth Ambassador Program as a consultant for the same organization and this was an amazing opportunity to practice listening for what the organization needed in this area and how I might support them.

"Listening for Fulfillment" – thank goodness for the 2019 Conference for Global Transformation theme! I had already been practicing listening from here, but how could it apply to not getting this job that was such an expression of my commitment? I didn't know, but I could create it as an empowering context, even if I didn't quite know how not getting the job was a fulfillment of my commitment. This gave me peace and settled my stomach.

But, now what?

GETTING OFF IT ... THEN ON IT ... THEN OFF IT ...

I thought the job was mine. They told me they had created it with me in mind. So, I stopped actively pursuing other leadership roles. Not only

was this a breakdown against my commitment of ending poverty, but it also meant an uncertain future for my family's own income. I was being paid to assist this same organization to set up their first ever Global Youth Ambassador Program, but the intention was to transition this over to an internal program coordinator once the foundation was in place. I was worried. I was on it.

What to do? I got authentic with my originating circle. I used to say, "I am looking for my next leadership role in an ending-poverty organization." I wanted to sound important. Instead, I started to say, "I'm looking for a job!" My originating circle knows the leader I am and the commitment I serve. I could be straight and free.

I got off it and took lots of action. I reached out to many in my originating circle to explore opportunities and create partnership around job hunting inside of the bigger commitment to end poverty. I still got on it often. I found taking action while I was on it was, in fact, the best way to get off it.

Within my originating circle, I created games, promises and play not just around job hunting, but for paying down my credit card, losing weight, going to the gym, meditation, etc., and I practiced getting off it daily.

Things started to move.

1-2-3-4-5 ... THANK YOU

A friend recommended me for a consulting role to build diversity and leadership across the entire not-for-profit sector in Canada. When I met the CEO of the organization in question, she told me that she had decided to pivot from her successful environmental law career when her Stanford executive MBA professor told her, "If you're not out to change the world with your work, don't bother." It was a great fit and I signed a consulting contract with them while at the Year-end Vacation course in early December 2018.

Also, while at the Year-end, we did an exercise that the Wisdom area consultants include as one of their practices. A partner says something simple, like the numbers "1, 2, 3, 4, 5." I would say, "Pass or no pass," depending on whether or not the communication landed

with me or not. My partner then said, "Thank you." Then, we repeated this several times and discovered what there was to discover.

I saw that everything and everybody could be a contribution. I saw that I had been letting my judgments get in the way of receiving the gold nuggets offered me daily. "They don't have money. They're too fat. They drink too much. They're too young." This was the kind of monologue that I let get in the way.

What might open up when I put that monologue aside?

BEING A YES AND CAUSING BREAKDOWNS

Seeing everything as a contribution started to make life very interesting – not just in the area of ending poverty and having a leadership role in this domain. The "negative" parents I used to avoid at my son's hockey games were now a welcome sight. The "crusty" assistant coach I could now love for his crustiness and listen to the gems of wisdom he shared with the team of 10-year-olds.

As I became more open, opportunity poured in. My ex-husband offered me a job with his company. Another ending-poverty organization hired me to expand their operations in Canada. I took on being a yes, knowing that I could build a team to fulfill on all of the initiatives.

GETTING COMPLETE

By writing this Report from the Field, I saw that I never really wanted the chief operating officer role. What I really wanted was the CEO role for the organization. The hiring committee could perhaps see through my inauthenticity. In fact, when the executive search firm did the debrief with me, they told me the hiring committee said that I would make a great successor to the CEO. They knew!

So, it's the CEO position of an ending-poverty, child-centered organization that I am stepping into next. In the meantime, I currently am the CEO of my own ending-poverty company. I even updated my LinkedIn profile to say just that. So, it must be true.

Whatever the title I have, who I get to be is the biggest contribution possible to my commitment



of ending global poverty, children having new futures and people everywhere getting that anything is available in community.

Of this, I am proud. This is an inspired life I have the privilege of living.

Or in the words of the Wisdom and Partnership Explorations course leader, Angela Amado, "Maybe it's a great life because of its challenges."

A REPORT FROM THE FIELD

# A NEW MODEL OF CONNECTEDNESS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

DANICA LANI

## CONCEPTION

During my Leader of the Future program in January 2017, I created a project designed to address the rising phenomenon in everyday people's lives of being more and more online and yet experiencing more and more disconnection and loneliness. I called my project "Connect." I wanted to elevate quality of life through online presence by producing content that enlivens. I needed a new model to produce this result. I believe that human beings fundamentally want to experience being connected and thrive from being known and loved.

In a conversation with Marcus Bell in May 2017 at the Conference for Global Transformation, I told him, "I have these music tracks I want to share, but I haven't released them yet because I don't want them to just gather dust on some lost Internet shelf." Marcus said, "You are right not to release them yet. You need to build an audience. And Shelita Burke and I can show you how."



I wanted a platform to share my art as a dancer/choreographer and singer and to spread conversations that empower people.

## BEGINNINGS

So, I began on my mission in June 2017 with the Audience Academy: to create a network of conversations in which people experience being connected with other human beings online. My goal was to actively engage 100 new people on social media. My Twitter account was inactive aside from the occasional Instagram share. I didn't understand Twitter and in more than four years I'd gathered 89 followers. In just under two months, I grew to 3,523 followers. Within one more month, I grew to 5,120 followers. I found existing celebrities, like Ellen DeGeneres and Tegan and Sara, and found fun ways to engage with their content and their followers, copying followers and unfollowing those who weren't active. I started sharing inspiring quotes and experimenting with colors. Slowly, I started gaining some credibility. I developed into being a curator of articles on dance and art and interspersed my own dance videos from my YouTube channel.

As I traveled to new places (from Brooklyn to Melbourne to Sydney), I tweeted greetings from each place. I got my first request from a super fan. He asked for photos. So, I posted a photo with a shout-out to him.

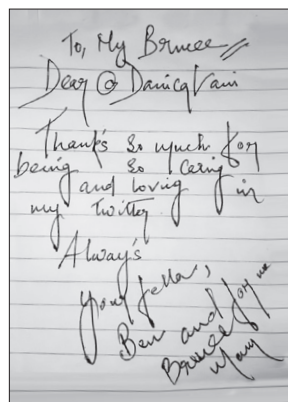
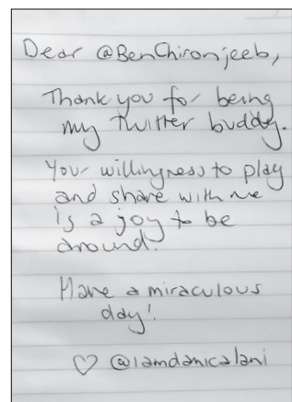
## DEVELOPMENT

After changing my bio to professional fun starter, dancer and choreographer and

sharing my pinned tweet, and my friends in the Audience Academy also sharing my pinned tweet of my dance collaboration, I gained some traction in being known as a dancer.

I gained more confidence in sharing my story with my followers. I leaned on their support as I went through the audition process for the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras After Party by live streaming before, and after, my audition. They were with me as I counted down the days to the announcement and when I was selected as one of the top 20 dancers!

I upgraded my quotes to include photos of me. People saw me as a dancer, yogi and person. My super fans started making requests. When I listened, I could give them what they wanted. Ben and I couldn't be more different. He's a gun-loving young man into MMA. I asked him what he liked about his life and he never got over that a stranger cared about him. He started asking for what he wanted. When I gave it to him, he was so touched. He told me he would keep my letter forever, and ... he wrote one back.



## GROWTH

Every day, no matter what was happening in my life – some incredible life challenges were happening – I religiously followed and unfollowed people on Twitter. I built on the shoulders of my peers and teachers in the Audience Academy.

By January 25, 2018, I hit 20,000 followers. I started being a stand for what matters to me and saying something about trending or important conversations such as #Metoo, #StandUp4HumanRights and #VoteYes.

By April 1, 2018, I hit 30,000 followers. My super fans included Sunbathing, the person in Japan who sends me photos of the flowers in their garden and Mama Cindy – Mau – who has me in her bio alongside her mom and Alicia Keys.

On April 13, 2018, I reviewed the Advanced Course and had a breakthrough in giving myself fully to life. My public authenticity went through the roof. I started talking about being part of the human family. It wasn't just the follower numbers that increased. My reach increased through impressions.

By May 14, I hit 40,000 followers. My super fans included @TwitchWasHere who hand-drew a picture of me and told me to "Hang in there"; @iamScottBlade tweeted, "I love who you are so much!" Now the conversation is coming back to me: Fred Chapman Music said, "I stole the phrase #HumanFamily from you!"

## OUTCOME

Inside of public authenticity, sharing and giving of myself, the world tipped from me being driven to give people the experience of connectedness, to me experiencing connectedness, love and support from my Twitter family.

## BEFORE THE AUDIENCE ACADEMY

I was stuck in the celebrity model. I wanted to be able to post things and just have people miraculously find me and like them. Lots of people. I would definitely only be following an elite circle of my top five percent and yet have masses and masses of followers myself. I wouldn't have to necessarily respond to them or message them. I was waiting for the day when I would go viral.

People in my life would say, I thought you were perfect and your life looks perfect on Facebook. They admitted to being intimidated by me. I wasn't accessible to people. I call this the celebrity model. It works for some people. Post content and people follow and like, and you become a YouTube star or a famous Instagrammer.

## IN THE AUDIENCE ACADEMY

I've discovered a new model. A model designed inside of connection – actually being connected to people. Real people. Finding the people who are

engaged and active and want to play vs. waiting to get a high stack of numbers on the board.

I got connected to more than 40,000 people in 12 months. Some of those people are what we call super fans. They love my content, they follow me, they retweet what I share and they send messages of care and support – they even check in on me. I think of us as "mutuals." We follow each other. We are connected to each other. We are engaged in conversations together.

I call this model being part of a family. The Twitter family. A global family. Being part of the human family. Inside this model, I can share my art. I can contribute conversations that empower people and spread those conversations. There were times in my life during the Audience Academy where this program and being connected to the people in it and the conversation each month was my lifeline.

## THE FUTURE

After weekend one of reviewing the Wisdom Unlimited course in May 2018, I had a breakthrough in structural language and started an idea I had for years. It's a practice I call #dancebreak. I put on a song and dance however I feel. I started live streaming it on Twitter and Instagram and it's now a world-famous viral phenomenon. After 100 dance breaks, over 4.2 million people have seen my videos. I now get requests from people around the globe to dance to a particular song and I bring fun, vitality, happiness and joy into people's lives.

There's so much more growth and development to go! I've only just started. The Audience Academy has given me a powerful platform, a foundation on which to carve out a presence and the contribution I am here to give to the world. This enables me to fulfill my purpose in life and give myself fully to all of life. That is a life worth living and a life of fulfillment.

# TRANSFORMATION: THE LAW OF UNINTENDED POSSIBILITIES

VIRGINIA BECK

Ever since I encountered Werner Erhard in September 1973, I have been traveling through life on an amazing journey of unintended consequences. Extraordinary events and outcomes have become a wonderful, mysterious unfoldment of the everyday mystery which opens itself to me.

Every day is a new day with unsolvable predicaments or, perhaps, unforeseen possibilities. I moved to a small remote island in 1971, because I could and to escape the psychodrama of a challenging family dynamic riddled with post-traumatic stress disorder, mental illness and depression. I moved on for the same reasons that most of us do, away from an old pattern, toward a more nurturing, stimulating and adventurous locale.

I was seeking to learn more about nature, more about myself and fleeing the American culture of 1968, 1969 and 1970. The civil rights battles, the Vietnam War, the assassinations and murders of presidents, political candidates and civil rights heroes, both the big names and the little. Our high school sweethearts slaughtered in a senseless war. Crazy politicians. The Cuban missile crisis. Now at 70, I am returned to the 1970s ... same bad corporate politics, worse misogyny, same military industrial complex and police brutality. (Remember Chicago??? Imagine?). But, the music was more melodic, more creative and had better lyrics. Watch "All Across the Universe," a masterful multimedia film by Julie Taymor.<sup>1</sup> (Thank you Joni Mitchell, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan and a panoply of others.) I moved with a simple mission, to escape the media and live a grounded life.

Taking responsibility for creating my life as an adventure, not a predicament. To live a life that made sense out of a violent world. To stay centered and grounded, a change from a life trailing after my father's prestigious career, like some perilous kite tail, soaring and dipping with the changing winds of fortune, countries, cultures and moving every year or two. I sought the deep continuity of the earth, eco-friendly, healthy and green. All I wanted was to raise a family, live a simple life and teach my children what it means being human. Kaua'i is so prehistoric, so beautiful, the waters were pure and clean and the air and soil were clean. After hiking a different place every weekend for a year, I knew I could live and die here.

I had found my dream. Now to live it. I fell into the drift of that created vision, a husband who was predictably irresponsible and unfailingly loving, if you could call it that. I was so ignorant, I believed everything. I was living the romantic fantasies, informed by my voracious reading. As a writer, I could invent rationales and plausible explanations. Unfortunately, I swallowed them totally when my husband presented them as an alternative to the seeming facts, such as his bankrupting business. Six months pregnant, in my last semester of nursing school, I woke up to find that my husband was absent at night, committed to selling drugs (marijuana, but who knows?) and I was not willing to live that future; clear that I was not here to live his life, but make my own and of our baby. My child was my highest priority and I knew that I could raise one on my own, not two. I walked down the muddy, steeply rutted winding dirt road in rubber slippers, carrying all my textbooks, a few clothes and a full belly. I could feel the power of my word, "I can

do this, I am a mother." Mother magic created the power to accept food stamps, government healthcare and complete my nursing education, in spite of a nearly lost pregnancy. I was a DES daughter, victim of the drugs given my mother to prevent her miscarriage with me. At that time, we didn't know the effects on the unborn children and their reproductive functions. My son was born with a number of anomalies, but his intellect was intact, and my nursing education helped us both down the bumpy road of medical interventions, almost all wonderful. As a result of my welfare healthcare and the awesome generosity of Shriners' Hospital of Honolulu, Caleb received amazing care. A family with regular healthcare would be severely impacted. The humiliation I felt at applying for food stamps and insurance during early pregnancy was a small price for the open-door healthcare he received. Another surprise possibility. Two weeks later, at his pediatrician's office, they told me his eye difficulties were the result of nerve paralysis, which accounted for his facial paralysis, as well. It was not at all a traumatic birth, challenging, but natural. They called it a brain lesion. Totally unexpected. I came home shocked and in tears. I wept mostly because I knew the kids would be mean to him in school, never mind all the rest. I sobbed over his cradle and then noticed him watching me serenely. Gazing into his beautiful wide hazel eyes, love was so present, I realized that nothing was wrong. We could still have a perfect relationship. He was totally present and this reality exploded into the understanding that his physicality was a stunning gift.

Out of the est Training, I saw that Caleb was not here to fulfill my pictures of a future. He was his own person and had his own destiny to fulfill, and I would have to become the mother who would empower his every gift. Laughing out loud, I wiped away tears and said, "Thank you, Caleb. We just saved 20 years. Most parents don't understand this until after their kids leave home. I got it! We will be fine, and we will have each other." He smiled sweetly, following my every word, his eyes tracking me perfectly. My little guru.

Following his needs, I moved to Honolulu to be near Shriners, and the possibility of a new career suddenly blossomed —working at a leading

hospital in the obstetrics and gynecology wing. Clearing new mother's confusion and angst about their process led me to become a childbirth educator. Caleb slowly grew more delightful and engaging, and he survived several surgeries from top surgeons thanks to Shriners'. We moved from weekly bilateral cast changes to less frequent visits with specialists, and I came to rely more on my own sense of what he needed. Any child, who can pick a hair up between thumb and forefinger at five months old, has fine motor skills and sufficient vision. Any child more interested in capturing the attention of a neurologist and five medical students by holding a penny over a Band-Aid tin until they all were watching, before he would drop it, has no problem with social skills. A 10-month-old who, when prompted to say goodbye to the babysitter, points to the air conditioner and says "machine" (startling us all), is on track to be able to communicate whatever he wants. This journey of unexpected consequences of single actions has shaped my life and his. The possibilities that showed up when based on vision and faith, and declaring it all possible, engendered so many new opportunities for us both.

When he had to undergo the first of many surgeries at eight months old, was it chance that had the admitting nurse say, "Hi, I'm Faith, I'm going to take care of you and Caleb." As if I might miss the point. The choices I made because I have the power and responsibility of my intentions have provided many more opportunities and possibilities that defy belief. Participating in conversations that create new possibilities is my passion. Since 1973, many courses and trainings have led me to a wonderful husband, higher education and a great life for Caleb in Silicon Valley. As Caleb told me when he was around six after the est Training for Young People with Phyllis Allen, "I thought my problems were worse than other people's problems. I learned I had a choice, I could either be right or be happy. I choose happy." My little guru!

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Recommended history of Julie Taymor includes The Lion King and a full listing of films and theatrical awards: [www.en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julie\\_Taymor](http://www.en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julie_Taymor).

# A NEW ECONOMIC PARADIGM

WENDELL FITZGERALD

My interest for many years has been the quality of life offered by our fundamental social institutions, capitalism and democracy. Along the way, I discovered and now stand for the possibility of a world that works really well for everyone. Despite clear benefits to humanity, the limitations and flaws of these institutions have resulted in the disparity of wealth, poverty amid plenty, the failure of progress to deliver on its promise to benefit everyone, unnecessary limitation of opportunities for people to provide for themselves and their families and the destruction of the environment.

The thing that has irked me the most is the blame assigned to the poor and those of limited means as if there wasn't a mechanism that siphoned the increasing wealth of human productivity upward to the middle class and the truly wealthy. Most of this is at the expense of the folks at the bottom of the economic heap and these days the percentage of people in that category is growing.

My favorite visionary of the possible is the 19th century American political economist, Henry George. In his book, "Progress and Poverty," he asks why there is so much poverty amid so much progress. He answered the question and suggested a solution to my satisfaction.

Suffice it to say that there is an economic mechanism that siphons unearned wealth upward to the middle class and, most of all, to the really wealthy. The middle class considers this mechanism and the unearned wealth it provides as essential to well-being, something to which they/we are entitled. It is something we do not question. The wealthy depend on the middle class to defend this mechanism. We have done a great job keeping this not so

pretty state of affairs secret from ourselves and out of the political conversation.

The layman's definition of unearned income is: The pocketing of income (and other forms of economic value) not created by the one pocketing the income/value. By this definition, slavery was an institution of 100 percent unearned income. The immorality and injustice of this feature of slavery is obvious, but we did not consciously fight the Civil War to end unearned income. That story is not told in our history books.

Legally acquired unearned income, in my opinion, is the root cause of the disparity of wealth and poverty amid plenty. It explains why masses of people are unable to provide for themselves. It is why most of us struggle unnecessarily with scarcity. It is why many of our children face a daunting economic future. It explains why progress fails to live up to its promise. Since it has to do with "ownership" and private control of the earth, this mechanism has everything to do with the destruction of the environment. The destruction of the environment is for profit, and that profit is unearned. The hard thing for my good-hearted, spiritually minded, liberal friends to grok is that all income from ownership of land is unearned even in their hands. Sorry. That may be bad news to some, but it is also the good news. It provides a way to economic justice.

George concluded that humanity could fund all of its communal needs by taxing unearned incomes while at the same time assuring individuals the opportunity to provide for themselves by untaxing/not taxing their earned incomes. He pointed out the possibility of a tax system that had no downside in the form of unexpected

consequences. All the consequences are positive. Can you imagine? Suffice it to say that the wealthy receivers of unearned incomes have exerted undue influence over the centuries to skew our economics, governments and especially tax systems away from taxing unearned income. A simple review of the history of taxation reveals that earned incomes bear the brunt of taxation.

The political right says that all taxation is bad. That is true of taxation of earned incomes and productive activities but not so of taxation of unearned incomes. This is why the conversation about taxation needs the distinction between earned and unearned income that Henry George kicked off in the 19th century.

My stand is to make obvious the possibility that we have a just source of financial resources with plenty to spare for all community needs. These include health care, education, environmental remediation and, of course, needed infrastructure. Heck, we can even have a beefy military if we must. At the same time, every individual could have an empowered economic/financial life. We can have an economic system that expands for the benefit of everyone, but does not expand at the expense of the environment. The political divide can be healed. Private individuals and the community of all people can work together with neither one encroaching on, or interfering with, the other. Game on.

# FROM STREET LIFE TO SWEET LIFE – AN EXPLORATION OF POSSIBILITY FOR SPANISH GALGOS AND PODENCOS

BERNIE BONAR

Galgos and podencos, two distinctive Spanish hounds bred to hunt, came to my attention three years ago while on pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago, a 900-year-old trek to the remains of Christ's apostle Saint James in Santiago de Compostela, Spain.

As an avid dog lover, I became known as "Dog Boy" among my fellow peregrinos due to my attempts to pet every dog I saw, as I missed my dogs at home. This is where I first learned of these noble creatures.

The Spanish greyhound or galgo español is an old breed and a part of the sighthound family. Despite being called a "greyhound," the Spanish galgo is not closely related to the English or Irish greyhound. Their lineage is distinctly different. Greyhounds and galgos do have a similar nature, however. Many are calm, gentle and quite laid back. Happy to sleep their day away, they are content with a couple of short walks per day. They can, however, also make excellent jogging companions unlike traditional greyhounds. Cats and other small animals can coexist with most galgos. They are very sweet dogs that can actually live in an apartment setting.

Podencos are also very much like greyhounds in their temperament. Athletic and active, these dogs can jump surprisingly large heights from a standing still position. A six-foot fence is a must! They will jump high in the air to spot their prey. They have been described as fun, inquisitive and having a great sense of humor. As a bonus, they have huge bat-like ears. They are absolutely adorable.



A Podenco

## TWO GALGOS

The issue: These two breeds of dogs are used by galgueros (hunters) to chase and capture hares over open fields for miles at a time or in lure course racing, a sport for dogs that involves chasing a mechanically operated lure. After only one or two seasons, it is estimated that approximately 50,000 to 100,000 are discarded. This may be by simply abandoning them in the wild, if they're lucky, or, in the most extreme cases, killed in often cruel ways. Any sane or compassionate person would have a simple question: Why? These dogs are considered tools in the culture of this group. The galgueros feel the need to find the perfect dog, the "ultimate champion." In this pursuit, if a dog does not show promise, it is expendable. With rampant overbreeding, the dogs can be replaced for a mere 10 Euros (\$11 US) and the owners will save the cost of feeding the dogs during the off-season.

My possibility: I am standing in the possibility of the demise of this sad and cruel practice and the embracing and adopting of these magnificent dogs in Spain and around the world.

From street life to sweet life! Through participation in the last three Facilitated Wisdom courses, I have challenged myself to make a difference in this reality. In our breakout sessions, we created opportunities to do this. I designed and made business cards with links to three prominent rescue groups to give out to any people I encounter encouraging them to support these worthwhile groups. I have posted videos and links for available dogs on social media weekly. In April, I will travel to Murcia, Spain to volunteer for a week at Galgos del Sol. This is an amazing facility that is involved in rescue, rehabilitation and rehoming. They provide education of the school-aged Spanish kids about the value of galgos, which helps to create a new awareness and, I hope, a shift in this culture. They also push for legislation to prevent these horrific practices. I am now exploring the logistics of becoming a "transporter," flying to Spain periodically to stay for a few days and flying back with six-to-10 dogs cleared for adoption. Becoming and/or developing a network of foster homes for these dogs is a need, as well. A challenge that I have faced in creating change is trying to walk a fine line between sharing too much about the abhorrent deaths that some galgos and podencos suffer and not being transparent enough to create an impetus for change. People have different capacities for facing brutal realities like this. Some rescuers in Spain believe focusing on the wonderful nature and other desirable qualities they possess is a better way to improve their situation.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO:

1. Become educated by visiting any of these websites ...  
[www.galgosdelsol.org/](http://www.galgosdelsol.org/)  
[www.galgopodencosupport.org/index/](http://www.galgopodencosupport.org/index/)  
[www.adoptagalgo.com/](http://www.adoptagalgo.com/)  
[www.sagehounds.com/](http://www.sagehounds.com/)  
[www.112carlotagalgos.com/en/](http://www.112carlotagalgos.com/en/)
2. Donate money to these groups. Many rescued dogs get injured in the wild or develop health issues

which must be addressed before they are cleared for adoption.

3. Adopt one of these lovable, easygoing dogs, or two. You will be making such a difference for these worthy beings, and they will make a huge difference in your life.

## FURTHER INQUIRY:

[www.mnn.com/family/pets/stories/galgos-galgopod-podenco-rescue](http://www.mnn.com/family/pets/stories/galgos-galgopod-podenco-rescue).

[www.news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/10/spanish-galgo-hunting-dog-killing-welfare/](http://www.news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/10/spanish-galgo-hunting-dog-killing-welfare/).

[www.galgopodencosupport.org/galgos-podencos/](http://www.galgopodencosupport.org/galgos-podencos/).

[www.thedodo.com/the-pain-in-spain-the-saving-of-the-galgos-1102421730.html](http://www.thedodo.com/the-pain-in-spain-the-saving-of-the-galgos-1102421730.html).

[www.kentgreyhoundrescue.com/dogs-adoption/galgos-and-podencos-as-pets](http://www.kentgreyhoundrescue.com/dogs-adoption/galgos-and-podencos-as-pets).

# MEASURES: PRACTICING THE ART OF COMPARISON

TOM BRAFORD

*My promise for the world is that human beings are safe and secure from all alarm and on our way to being ubiquitous in the far-flung universe by 2035 and living in beloved community now!*

My paper in the journal, "Listening to Life's Longing for Itself," goes into the first part of my promise, so you might want to read that, as well.

In this report, I focus on the "living in beloved community now" part and specifically on how I am bringing what I am learning from my participation in the Measures inquiry calls of the Social Commons to that commitment.

The description of the Measures inquiry call ends with, "Could developing mastery in measurement open new avenues to freedom, power and making a difference?"

As we design, develop and build the Arizmendi Ecovillage in St Louis, Missouri, we intend to find out. The first stage of design and construction will demonstrate that building communities that are net positive in food, power, water, transportation and employment is doable. As Einstein said, "If it exists, it is possible."

Without going into the whole backstory of how we got here, our commitment to mastery of measures is reflected in the following:

- **Total Pivot:** Moving away from all the status quo ways of doing development that are contributing to the risk of total societal and economic systems collapse. Instead, we will pivot toward a culture and economy

in service to life, as best described and documented in the recent book, "A Finer Future," by Hunter Lovins and others.

- **Drawdown:** Going beyond slowing down or limiting the damage of global warming to regenerate a sustainable climate by drawing down excess carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, utilizing strategies that are already, or soon will be, available. This is best explained in the book "Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming," edited by Paul Hawken.
- **Ecovillage:** A full-featured approach to authentic sustainable community development where people live in cooperation with their neighbors and in harmony with nature.
- **Cohousing:** The most effectively demonstrated way to live in cooperation with your neighbors.
- **Mondragon-style worker-owned co-ops:** The best current example of a regenerative economy in service to life.
- **Sociocracy:** The best model of dynamic self-governance that makes combining all these other models workable.

There is lots of information on this online if you want to learn more.

How, you might ask, do we propose to do all this? We plan to measure everything we can that is relevant. This includes simultaneously comparing what we are creating with both status quo community design development and construction in our immediate area, and, at the same time, against our goal of an affordable, sub-zero carbon footprint and the launch of both a cohesive social community and a generative hub economy in service to life.

We have already calculated that if our estimates for this first community and network are correct, then these total pivot communities would fall within the 75 to 80 range of most effective Drawdown solutions for reversing global warming and would be the fourth most profitable of known solutions.

That, of course, would open up new avenues in freedom, power and making a difference. The key point is that we will not know how much of a difference until our measurements on this first and future phases are complete. So, stay tuned for future reports. In the meantime, we plan to display a "Total Pivot" poster at the Citizens' Climate Lobby regional conference in February 2019 in Fort Smith, Arkansas, events at the ecovillage after that and this year's Conference for Global Transformation.

Our 3.5 story, 1,200-square-foot EcoHogan is part of our initial phase. It is designed to have a tiny house footprint that includes scaled-down versions of all the ecovillage circular resource-use systems. You could live in the EcoHogan within the ecovillage for half what it would cost you to build it yourself.

We expect that our attention to measures will demonstrate the very real capital savings as well as the social and ecosystem benefits of efficient synergistic community.

# THE PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS ROCKS

THE REV. EILEEN L. EPPERSON

All people have access to the eternal: Religions are experienced as healing and transformational.

November 1-8, 2018, 8,300 people gathered in Toronto, a remarkable international city whose citywide motto is "Strength in Diversity." It was the seventh convening of the Parliament of the World's Religions: 1893, 1993, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2015 and 2018 in Chicago twice, Cape Town, Barcelona, Melbourne, Salt Lake City and Toronto, respectively.

The overall parliament theme in Toronto was, "The Promise of Inclusion, the Power of Love." [www.parliamentofreligions.org](http://www.parliamentofreligions.org).

Subthemes were:

- End assaults on women's dignity and safety
- Embody solidarity with the indigenous peoples worldwide to protect and empower young persons around the world
- End hate speech and action
- Protect the earth's resources
- Uphold the global ethic

According to the Parliament, "more than 80 percent of the world's population adheres to some faith tradition." In Toronto, people from 81 nations and hundreds of spiritual and ethical backgrounds showed up. These are individuals and groups working in front and behind the scenes around the world "pursuing global understanding, reconciliation and change."

Some of the events I attended were:

## EARTH CHANGES & PROPHECY

**Plenary:** Faith and Interfaith:  
From Grassroots to Global

**Plenary:** The Women's Assembly

## THE ART OF CONNECTING WITH NATURE

Anatomy of a School Shooting (by the daughter of a school shooter in 1950s)

Women, Power and Peace

## RECLAIMING THE INDIGENOUS ETHNIC RELIGIONS OF EUROPE

**Plenary:** Climate Action Assembly

**Priestesses:** Reconvening,  
Remembering & Rejoicing

The atmosphere was open and friendly. You could smile at everyone. Anyone struck up a conversation with you. I was in ecstasy pretty much the entire time, heavenly.

I gave a workshop on "The Art and Craft of Forgiveness" and appeared on an interfaith panel of women addressing, "Listening in Diverse Cultural Settings."

# A TOUCH OF TRANSFORMATION: GIVING MESSAGES TO PEOPLE LIVING WITH CANCER AND PALLIATIVE CARE

FRANÇOIS GUAY

What is the power of touch? How can touch be described in words?

I love listening. Listening to music, listening to the sound of the ocean, listening to my 94-year-old dad snoring, listening to an inspiring speaker, listening to silence, listening to fulfillment. As a massage therapist, I'm always listening. Listening to my patients telling me how he or she is feeling today, about their aches and pains, how they slept the night before, the symptoms they're going through whether its nausea, neuropathy, no appetite, being stuck in bed, not being able to work or wanting to die. Listening for their need, to their sadness, to their cries, to their joy when life is good today, to their vulnerability, to their openness. Listening as well to what is not spoken in words, listening to the body which speaks loudly without saying a word. Listening to the unknown, listening and discovering.

This listening often takes me in the world of I don't know that I don't know. Discovering constantly what the body is telling me, divulging its inner secrets. Listening to a surprise, to a moment of bliss, to ecstasy, to the child and the inner child. Listening to life and aliveness and listening to mortality and the end of life. This listening keeps me in the moment, in the present and creates connection. A connection stronger than any word and very powerful. Children are the best example of this. A child does not think of cancer when he's well one day. All she wants to do is draw or play with her doll. Massage then becomes a game.

What a privilege I have when I'm with a patient who is confiding very candidly his innermost feelings, or state of being like a never done before, and is very comfortable opening up to me even after our very first encounter. Whether it's a young man with a two-month-old baby afraid of not being able to see his child grow or a 91-year-old lady in palliative care telling me she'd rather die of cancer than lose her eyesight because she won't be able to draw anymore. These moments of intimacy are constant gifts that I get every day.

I remember a woman named Mary wanting to see me for a second time after she made a request for receiving medical aid in dying, telling me with a serene smile, "You know I'm going to heaven this afternoon!" I acknowledged her, yet I didn't know how to be with it. The only thing I could be was myself – a support bringing comfort through my hands. I was told later by the spiritual caregiver that the massage helped her in going to heaven. That was a very moving experience for me.

As an oncology massage therapist working in a hospital in Montreal and with a cancer foundation for children where parents and family are also entitled to a massage, I am privileged to be part of a team wanting to make a difference one human being at a time for people living with a condition often where life or death is at stake. Through this process, a partnership between the medical world and massage therapy was created with doctors, nurses, nutritionists, social workers, physiotherapists, spiritual caregivers and more,

and, I must add, that was a direct result coming from the Partnership Explorations course.

In the palliative care unit, doctors have always been open to alternative medicine since the objective is to provide comfort for the patient. As I am being seen regularly in the oncology, hematology and stem cell transplant units, the doctors refer patients to me and even ask for my opinion. Needless to say, for a massage therapist, this is very gratifying. This team bringing transformation, caring and being at service is another reason why I love what I do.

Finally, what I'm discovering through this extraordinary work is being able to be with all of it. All is well even when I'm saying goodbye to 23-year-old Jacqueline who is starting her life, yet destiny has chosen otherwise. All is well when 75-year-old Vasanthi in palliative care wants to die at home, yet she's brought back in emergency to complete her life in the palliative care unit. All is well when Josée, an eight-year-old little angel with a radiant and beautiful smile thanks me before passing a few days later. All is well as well when Simon, a 16-year-old boy, grows up to study medicine wanting to give back to the world. All is well in life and in death. I am constantly growing and developing and fulfilling a life of gratitude and living a life of discovery.

## A REPORT FROM THE FIELD

# EXPANDING THE CONVERSATION ABOUT HUNGER: FOOD INSECURITY IN NEW YORK

## LAWRENCE HUI

We think of hunger as a problem faced by poorer countries. But, while outright starvation may be (and is on the decline), lack of security, when it comes to basic needs such as food, is common even in wealthy areas of the United States. This is something I've observed from my experience as a longtime board member of a large food pantry in New York City.

Substantial numbers of New Yorkers are "food insecure." The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines this as a condition when at some point during a year, one or more household members had a reduced or disrupted eating pattern because of lack of financial or other resources for food or had limited and uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate food.<sup>1</sup> Currently, 1.2 million New Yorkers, including 340,000 children, live in food insecure households.<sup>2</sup> Contrary to popular stereotypes, a large percentage of food insecure New Yorkers work.<sup>3</sup>

Food insecurity among children is of special concern. Lack of adequate nutrition, among infants and toddlers, has lasting negative consequences on development.<sup>4</sup> Hunger also harms school performance.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the recovery, food insecurity has grown: 14 percent of New Yorkers live in food insecure households, as opposed to 12 percent prior to the recession.<sup>6</sup> The Hunger Free America survey of New York City food pantries for 2017 showed a six percent increase in demand over 2016 on top of substantial increases in prior years.<sup>7</sup>

Food insecurity in New York is being driven by a combination of low wages and high cost of living. Until the most recent increases in the New York minimum wage (it went up to \$15), a worker on minimum wage with dependents was living well below the poverty line. Moreover,

the federal poverty line grossly understates the actual income needed to make ends meet in an expensive urban area such as New York.<sup>8</sup> Housing costs in New York are such that 44 percent of New Yorkers are "rent burdened" (spend more than 30 percent of their income on rent).<sup>9</sup> From 2010 to 2017, median rent increased by 3.9 percent annually, but wages increased only 1.8 percent during that time.<sup>10</sup> This greatly reduces resources available for other necessities such as food. In New York City, food costs are higher than in other parts of the United States.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, 25 percent of New Yorkers eligible for SNAP benefits are not enrolled in the program.<sup>12</sup> This is probably due to a combination of a lack of awareness (many of those eligible lack a good grasp of English) and red tape involved in enrolling. Further contributing to food insecurity is the phenomenon of "food deserts," which are low-income areas of the city where fresh produce and other healthy eating options are hard to access.

Low-income New Yorkers rely on a combination of government and nongovernment programs. The most significant program is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP"), which used to be known as the food stamp program. Around 1.6 million New Yorkers receive benefits under this program.<sup>13</sup> This program provides recipients with debit cards where they can spend up to a monthly benefit at participating food stores. As of 2018, the average monthly benefit per person was \$126.<sup>14</sup> The Women, Infants and Children's nutrition program ("WIC") provides benefits to a substantial number of new mothers, infants and young children in New York. New York City children receive federal funding for school meal programs, as well as summer meal programs.

New York City food pantries and soup kitchens



# LISTENING FOR JOY – A CLEARING FOR COMMUNITY SELF-EXPRESSION

TERRENCE MCCLAIN

serve a large portion of New Yorkers. Many of these organizations also receive funding through government grants in addition to nonprofit funding and private donations. It should be noted that food pantries and soup kitchens, while important, only serve a fraction of the number of meals that are covered by government programs. Furthermore, these programs are unable to keep up with the growing need. Only a slight majority report that they are meeting demand.<sup>15</sup>

Like other aspects of poverty, food insecurity is a multifaceted social phenomenon; the budgets of low-income New York households are increasingly being squeezed by rising rents and food costs. The city's director of food policy has said that Mayor Bill de Blasio's administration's priority is to enlarge those very budgets. Rental vouchers and the availability of more affordable housing units would help ease the burden on low-income New Yorkers. So will the recent increases in the minimum wage. Better funding of the SNAP program and stronger enrollments would make a big difference. Reducing the red tape and better educating potential beneficiaries would help increase enrollments.

The recent implementation of free lunches for all New York City public school students also should assist low-income families.<sup>16</sup>

As discussed above, the problem of hunger is a social phenomenon that is inseparable from other poverty issues, such as low wages and the lack of affordable housing. As a result, the conversation around it needs to go beyond a conversation about individual empowerment and toward a bigger conversation about empowering support networks, both governmental and nongovernmental, and addressing structural issues, such as affordable housing and the availability of work that provides a living wage.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 See website for Feeding America, "What is Food Insecurity?"
- 2 Hunger Free America report "Working New York Still Hungry," November 2017.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 "In My Clinic I See How Hunger Damages Children," The Atlantic, November 2015.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Hunger Free America report.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 "Overworked and Undercounted" Report, Women's Center for Education and Career Advancement and United Way of New York, 2018.
- 9 Citizen's Budget Commission Report, "You Think Your Rent is High," October 11, 2018.
- 10 Zimmer, A., "NYC Rents Rising Twice as Fast as Wages," DNA Info website, August 16, 2017.
- 11 Quintana, M., "Just How Crazy is the Cost of Living in New York City," StreetEasy website, April 3, 2018.
- 12 See NYC Open Data website.
- 13 "A Quick Guide to SNAP Eligibility and Benefits," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, October 16, 2018.
- 14 "SNAP Declines Yet Hunger Persists," Joint Report of Hunger Free America and CUNY Urban Policy Institute, June 2018.
- 15 Hunger Free America report.
- 16 "New York City Offers Free Lunch to all Public School Students," New York Times, September 6, 2017.

*The following is a report on my ongoing inquiry, initiative and thoughts on joy.*

Living a life of joy is the ultimate state of freedom and satisfaction that can be experienced by human beings. Let's just say joy is what we all are striving to attain. To quote the popular Law of Attraction guru, Esther Hicks, "The basis of your life is freedom, the purpose of your life is joy."

But, what exactly is joy? By definition, joy is "a feeling of extreme happiness." However, as humans, we experience a myriad of societal pressures and individual life circumstances that leave us typically complaining and always reaching for something more, something better and something different.

What brings about joy in a person? Joy can be experienced in a variety of ways. Joy can be achieved by making a firm conscious choice. By consciously choosing joy as a lifestyle, you no longer depend on outer circumstances for happiness and contentment. You allow yourself to be inspired and excited about the good things you see. Being able to find some positive aspects to all situations including negative ones, there is always an opportunity for growth and to transform the issue at hand.

Joy is a positive mindset that a person commits to as much as possible although choosing this mindset is not always easy. This stand and practice can always be beneficial to a person as they navigate the ups and downs of life. Over time with discipline and self-control, you

will begin to trust in focusing on the good and being as positive as possible, which will bring about more goodness and joy in your life.

True joy is a function of a deep knowing of your authentic inner Self, and being persistent in knowing that joy is always available to you. When you have inner joy, it tends to spread to everyone around you.

Joy is listed as number one on the Emotional Guidance Scale and is an emotion that is definitely worth striving for.

Imagine a world where everyone listens for what brings them joy; a world where everyone gets to be self-expressed in what they naturally love to do. Another path to joy is for a person to have the opportunity to actively participate in the unique God-given talent or skill that we each possess. Everyone has a skill, knack, know-how or art form.

We each possess a gift that we just love to do without hesitation. That gift is our favorite form of self-expression. That gift, when we get to freely participate in it, is our joy. For example, an accountant or numbers person finds joy in playing with numbers. A carpenter finds joy in building things. A grandmother may find joy in knitting a blanket for a new grandbaby, as well as children finding joy in being innovative. Those in the performing arts, including dancers, actors, musicians, writers, artists and life coaches, all find joy when actively pursuing their passion, their art.

Sometimes due to societal expectations and pressures, people often get swayed away from

doing what brings them real happiness due to taking on other occupations that pay the bills. The 9-to-5 work grind often does not leave room for the creative spirit at the end of the day. An adult mother of two might have really enjoyed ballet in her teens, but, now as a parent, that joy of dancing might be forgotten or currently not available. A youth, who loves to draw, might not be encouraged to pursue art approaching adulthood and the activity that brings that person joy could be put away on a shelf and not be used for a lifetime.

Although the term joy is not a typical word used in most people's everyday vocabulary, the word joy is increasingly becoming more and more popular in today's culture. When people are prompted to think about what their joy is, the invitation is always welcomed and embraced by all.

I conducted a recent social media poll, which included a small sample of people who were asked to rate their level of joy using a scale from one to 10. The poll results revealed that most people rated their level of joy at an average of 8.35 on a scale of 10. Another recent poll using social media revealed that 88 percent of people sampled indicated that they felt joy when they were in "action" versus "doing nothing."

My ongoing commitment is to inspire my local and global community in continuing to choose joy in the face of circumstances, and to pursue their innate creative passions as an access to improving the quality of their lives and the lives of others.

My own personal passion and joy has always been to provide unique venues and creative spaces for the community to gather and be self-expressed. I feel that there will always be a need for events that bring the community together and provide opportunities for people to display their self-expression, shine and share their arts and talents with others.

My history of being a "joy fanatic" began in 2006 when I thought of the name and concept as my new DJ handle. Being a joy fanatic reflected what I was committed to, which was joy. Eventually, I began stating, "I'm a joy fanatic." I thought this statement would be a great motto and t-shirt logo that could inspire a community

movement toward choosing joy. Two artists in my community collaborated and designed a great colorful logo and some prototype t-shirts were made and given away as promotional items.

In 2012, I began to promote and brand creative art-filled events under the name joy fanatic to cater to my local communities' eagerness and need for self-expression.

In 2016, I formed the Joy Fanatic Foundation, a nonprofit charitable organization whose mission is to provide programs, events and mentors that will encourage and empower youth, adults and seniors to pursue and achieve joy by developing their artistry and creative gifts, and manifesting their entrepreneurial visions into reality.

Joy Fanatic Foundation hosts a series of yearly events designed to acknowledge, honor and light up the community's creative spirit. We encourage adults and children of all ages to allow themselves to experience the joy of creative self-expression.

Imagine a world empowered by joy fanatics! A world where your talent converts into resources, where creative gifts change hands in place of cash; a world where sharing art and cooperation are the primary marketplace currency.

Joy Fanatic Foundation's vision is to build a society of joyfully passionate youth and adults, fueled to grow, connect and network in their art forms, thus inspiring a new worldwide barter/trade renaissance.

We believe that passion plus self-expression equals joy.

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## A REPORT FROM THE FIELD

# I PROMISE TO TRANSFORM THE TEACHING OF MATHEMATICS WORLDWIDE

JOE OUSBY

*Since making this promise in 2017, I have been challenged with a number of questions. How will I tell when the teaching of mathematics has been transformed? What am I currently doing? What are others already doing? How do I maintain my enthusiasm for my promise? How will I measure progress? By when?*

## HOW WILL I TELL WHEN THE TEACHING OF MATHEMATICS HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED?

The teaching of mathematics transformed worldwide could look like:

- Students are challenged to deepen their understanding of mathematics and enjoy their time in mathematics classes everywhere.
- Mathematics teachers are inspired by what they are creating in their classrooms and communities and enriched by the process.
- Parents are trusting the teachers and schools and enjoy the mathematical banter at family and community gatherings.
- Humanity thrives as a result of the deeper understanding of mathematical processes.

## WHAT AM I CURRENTLY DOING?

I notice that I have been operating as an individual inside of my promise. I write mathematical birthday cards and send them to my broader family and Wisdom community. I write mathematical posters and share them with my work colleagues. I occasionally run workshops at state and national conferences of mathematics teachers and publish in mathematics teaching journals. I engage my mathematics-teaching

colleagues across Australia in discussion via an online discussion group and engage the locals in my overseas travels in conversations about how they use mathematics in their everyday lives. All of which, I am told, inspire others. However, it is clear to me that inspiring and interesting as it may be, my personal impact across Australia and New Zealand seems marginal at best and is virtually nonexistent outside of these two countries.

It is clear to me that mobilizing the transformation of the teaching of mathematics worldwide requires much more air time than it is currently getting.

## WHAT ARE OTHERS ALREADY DOING?

In the 2018 Australian of the Year Awards, a mathematics teacher, Eddy Woo, won Australia's Local Hero Award. The applicants for this award come from right across the Australian community and so Eddy's success highlights the big impact he is having in the teaching of mathematics in Australia.

Following that, Eddy went on to be named in the Top 10 finalists for the Global Teacher Prize.<sup>1</sup> This prize attracts applications from countries/communities worldwide. Their candidates are all "champions for change and inspiring students and communities around them."<sup>1</sup> Again, Eddy is recognized on the global stage as an

inspiring and effective mathematics educator.

These two awards not only show that Eddy is inspiring Australians and educators worldwide, but the awarders also value mathematics education.

Adam Spencer is a comedian and media personality in Australia with a bent toward science and mathematics. He shares his love for science and mathematics in his publications in recreational mathematics and involvement in Sydney University's Sleek Geeks Science Prize.

Writers, such as Dan Brown, author of "The Da Vinci Code," Mark Haddon, author of "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" and Dava Sobel, author of "Longitude," are bringing their love of mathematics and science to the English-speaking world through their innovative and engaging writing.

#### HOW DO I MAINTAIN MY ENTHUSIASM FOR MY PROMISE?

I am registered in the 2019 Wisdom Down Under course. I am on the registration team for Wisdom in Queensland, Australia. I participate in the Inquiries of the Social Commons calls and participated in the Introduction to Inquiry with Brian Regnier and discussion group of the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers.

#### HOW WILL I MEASURE PROGRESS?

This question is still a completely open question as is "by when?"

I have noticed in answering these questions that the biggest confrontation is that others are already engaged in what I am up to and are already making inroads. Who am I anyway to make such a promise? It is indeed possible and likely that credit will go to others. My attachment to credit is perhaps one of the biggest constraints on progress. The next steps that I see to take are in the areas of measuring progress, establishing a goal/end point and enrolling others in the possibility of it.

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#### A REPORT FROM THE FIELD

## PERFORMING MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY – FULFILLING ON A COMMITMENT TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT APARTHEID

### SUSIE MILES

I love storytelling. It was when I told stories at social gatherings and in lectures and tutorials in my university role that I was often asked: "When are you going to write your autobiography?" I often replied without any commitment, "One day, when I am retired perhaps."

On the day I joined the Team Management and Leadership Program (TMLP) in London, I took the opportunity to declare that I would write my autobiography. Here was a team of extraordinary people who would support me and hold me accountable. Within 12 hours of declaring this, I met a lecturer in autobiographical writing in the bed and breakfast where I was staying. When I asked her if she had written her autobiography, she said, "No, I performed mine." The word "perform" lit a spark in me. Of course! It is when I am performing my stories that people say I should write my autobiography. Maybe the power is in the live storytelling, not in the writing after all? But how could I do that? I had never acted, not even as a child.

On the eve of the fourth quarter of TMLP 1, during a powerful coaching session inviting me to give up playing small and be my word, I declared that I would perform my play within nine months by November 2017. It was a done deal, yet I had no idea how to start. I had no idea how to write an autobiographical play. I had never contemplated performing a one-woman show. I wasn't that sort of person.

I began by calling Catherine, the lecturer in autobiographical writing, and asked her to be on my team. My coach, Lorlett, was delighted to join,

as was my oldest friend, Helen, a trained actress, and Raleigh, an asylum seeker from Zimbabwe, who told me his family needed to hear my story of living and working in southern Africa for 12 years. Within a few days, I had a team of five.

My story began in a residential school for deaf children in Swaziland. I was a naïve young teacher committed to make a difference. I introduced hearing aids to the country for the first time, working in hospitals and clinics. Later, I became Save the Children's disability advisor covering seven countries. When based in Lesotho, I met and married the father of my two children. He had trained as a journalist in Cuba. He was head of news and current affairs in a military government in a country surrounded by South Africa. Our move to Mozambique just before the end of the Civil War coincided with the unravelling of our marriage. The pressures of racial segregation and discrimination were too much to bear and the power imbalance between us was too great.

In the 20 years or so since "running away" from Africa, I had told so many stories. They were etched in my memory. I had embellished and overdramatized them over the years – painting myself as victim and hero. In this new form of writing, I stripped the added meaning out of each scene and just presented the "what's so" – what people said and did – not the meanings I added to what they said and did. This made the writing quick and easy. Each scene depicted bizarre and shocking encounters with apartheid – in hospitals, airplanes and when travelling in mixed racial groups on long car journeys through

South Africa. I cried many tears during this process. Writing in the present tense brought back the body sensations. I relived some of the incidents until gradually they lost their power and happier moments began to surface.

Each time I had written a scene, I called a team meeting. The performance was created almost entirely by phone and Skype. The team gave me the courage to keep writing. "There is definitely something like a play emerging," they said. Miraculously, I was invited to attend a two-day Stanislavski acting course in London, which provided me with much needed acting training just in time. I booked a venue for October 7, 2017, in Manchester the week I completed TMLP. I had just four months to prepare. I had tried out a few scenes at yoga retreats in front of small "safe" audiences. The first time I did this, I was terrified. It felt like jumping off a cliff into the unknown. Yet each scene generated so many delightful conversations with the audiences. I had not imagined that there would be so much interest in my stories.

I began to spread the word among friends and family but still shied away from advertising the performance publicly, just sending WhatsApp messages to friends and family.

I invited an international audience of about 20 colleagues at the university to watch a preview a couple of days before "the real thing." It was in a small classroom with bright lights – not ideal. At the end, a colleague from Armenia was weeping. She said, "I had no idea about South Africa. You have taught me so much." A Kenyan man was quiet for a long time. Eventually, he said, "It brought back so many memories of my childhood." The five short scenes told my personal and political journey of crossing physical and metaphorical borders and of learning about race, power, privilege and motherhood. In just 45 minutes, I had taken the audience on a journey of their own. It had worked. I felt an immense sense of fulfillment.

The five prompt cards, one for each scene, were laid in front of me on the floor. The props were simple. I arrived and left the stage with my basket of memories to the sounds of 1950s South African jazz legend, Spokes Mashiyane's tin whistle

music, introduced to me by my husband. I used a series of African cloths to signal scene changes. The title is: "I am because you are." This is the rich African concept of Ubuntu – an important message about what it means to be human.

Helen, the drama coach from my team, flew from the Isle of Skye the night before the performance. She insisted that I do a dress rehearsal in the venue the night before. I did really well until the beginning of the final scene when I broke down and sobbed. Being with the injustice in the present tense enraged me. I had been afraid that I might cry mid-performance, but that hasn't happened. Another fear overcome.

I have now performed in front of three public audiences of up to 100 people in each in both Manchester and London and for several smaller audiences in Germany and Finland, raising money for charitable causes. In the question and answer sessions afterwards, new possibilities have emerged for expanding the script.

It was during the Wisdom Unlimited course in 2018 that I rescripted the whole performance. I extended it from five to nine scenes and from 45 minutes to a whole hour's performance. It was the process of writing all 60 of my autobiographical pages which helped me to reevaluate the events leading up to the decision to leave Africa with my young children and dare to speak from the point of view of my 36-year-old Self. I had avoided this before. It seemed a negative way to end the performance. The process of distinguishing young age conversations, such as "I don't understand," helped me to realize that it was my 11-year-old Self that was running me during those difficult years, and so I faced up to what had happened and found the courage to first write, then test, the last two scenes in front of a Wisdom audience in weekend five.

One of my greatest fears of "going public" was that I would meet resistance from South African people who may not accept that a privileged white woman had any right to speak about apartheid. Miraculously, in November 2018, days before the performance, a man raised an objection in an e-mail to the organizers about the posters in his street. He was angry about my use of the word "absurdity" to describe apartheid. He wanted to

know what authority I had to do this performance. He said Ubuntu was a precious concept and could not be watered down or westernized.

I e-mailed him and requested a conversation. We met in a café to discuss his concerns. We began by sharing stories of our respective experiences of apartheid. I could see the pain in his eyes when I told him about the small suitcase in which my husband's elderly uncle kept all his belongings above his single bed in a shared room in an all-male hostel for migrant workers in Langa Township, Cape Town. We laughed about the difficulty I had finding the bathroom and how unusual it probably was for him to meet his nephew's English wife and their small child in that environment not long after Mandela had left prison and before the apartheid laws had been repealed. Our conversation helped me to overcome my fear of being exposed as a fraud and imposter with no authority to speak about South Africa. How great that this man had challenged me. Now, there was nothing to be afraid of.

What have I learned? How has my commitment been fulfilled? I have learned that, yes, I am brave. How great it is to jump over the precipice of self-doubt to feel the fear and do it anyway. Stepping onto the stage has helped me to "step into" a whole new experience of myself – this is the real me. I am a performer! I can do it. Audiences are moved, touched and inspired. They are on the edge of their seats. I leave them wanting more. It is thrilling and deeply fulfilling. The beauty of an autobiographical performance is that I don't have to remember the exact words. Rehearsals are kept to a minimum. The script is all mine, and sometimes it changes unexpectedly. It is created newly in each performance.

My commitment has been fulfilled through telling funny, painful, educational and healing stories. More than 300 people have learned something that they didn't know before about the impact of apartheid on every human being. As part of my commitment to inform people about what life was like under apartheid, I have incorporated key facts about the segregation laws into the performance. The South African experience is so relevant to current efforts to segregate people. An audience member from Gaza said that my

experiences echoed those of men and women crossing checkpoints every day. Some audience members have begun to write their own stories.

I have learned that sharing my story is a huge contribution and I may never know how huge. I have learned that it is not necessary to be a trained actress to hold an audience on the edge of their seats for an hour – mine isn't a play because it has no official script. It is a performance. The greatest achievement has been to reduce the "story" to the "what's so." This has made it possible not to make myself or others wrong, but to open a conversation about what it means to be human.

One of the audience members wrote, "Thank you for the gift of being an audience."

# COLLECTING VINYL RECORDS AS AN ACCESS TO EXPANDING APPRECIATION OF ANYTHING AND LISTENING FOR FULFILLMENT (LITERALLY) THROUGH MUSIC

CHRIS DOONAN

Music, I have heard it said, stimulates more parts of the brain when listening and particularly when playing music than any other activity.

I love this statement although it doesn't give me direct access to music in itself. However, listening to, and participating in, music does, so this year I started to listen to music with a mission.

About two years ago, I was looking at my extensive CD collection and realized that I didn't really listen to many of them. I really wasn't interested anymore though I was someone who had always loved music. When I did listen, the music I listened to was in a particular genre or two, mainly the music of the 1960s and 1970s when I was a teenager. This was the music that I "liked."

I was participating in the Wisdom Unlimited course with my wife, who is 12 years younger than I am, and her favorite music was from the late 1970s and 1980s (when she was a teenager), so I decided to play a little. I had the thought, "I love music from my time and she loves music from her time. Why don't you start to listen to music from 'her time' and love it just like you do the music from 'my time?'" That's how I started.

First, I had to put aside my "already always" listening of the music that Angela loved and start to listen for what was great. I heard more and more distinctions in the sounds, the different tones of voices, harmonies and the sounds of the instruments. I literally started

to hear the music completely differently.

Obviously, the records were the same as before. It was my appreciation that had transformed and the joy and fulfillment I experienced was completely unrecognizable and created by my willingness to expand my appreciation.

I then started to build a collection of vinyl records. Vinyl picks up greater distinctions in the sounds than digital so there is more to listen for, and I have an emotional "immediate language" connection to vinyl from my youth.

Almost a year later, my collection has grown fast and my sense of appreciation and fulfillment is also expanding not only for the music. I find myself appreciating the people who made the music and perform the music – even music that I really don't like very much.

It seems I could go on forever listening for the beauty in the music everywhere.

# TRANSFORMATION: THE DANCE BETWEEN TIME, CONVERSATION AND BEING

VIRGINIA BECK

## PRESENT 1

The poet sees  
What can't be seen  
Behind the surface tension.

Objects appear or disappear  
Warped by view,  
A constant avalanche or empty void.

Each resonates with echoes  
Or tones of emptiness.

We bear the weight;  
Sight and impact.

Strike us with  
Resonance  
Emerging  
As the song  
Surging into  
The basket of ink  
Spilled upon the page.

## PRESENT 2

The stranger at the table.  
Always the stranger at the table,  
The new kid who doesn't know the game,  
Or the way to pass the food,  
Or even take from the bowl.  
(Is it permitted?)

Will my accent be taunted?  
Vocabulary too foreign?  
The wrong language for the wrong country?

Is there a passport for a child  
Uprooted in the night, taken by  
Strangers to another world?

Blazing lights, unknown sounds  
And people all different from me.  
I only know that silence,

Smiles,  
And deference  
Buy time.

To learn the new rhythms,  
New words.  
To listen so deeply that a new world  
Unfolds,  
And with it, a new way of seeing  
How similar we are.

## PRESENT 3

Dans la Musee

Surrounded by the dazed bodies  
Of tourists drifting over the marble floors.  
Their heads are bursting with avalanches of color  
Cascading from the walls.

Cerulean blue, ultramarine, peach, lime  
Nuage grey. Hills, streams, suns and shadows  
Traverse a hundred hearts and  
leave them blessed.

Luminous fields of grain  
Where faint, bowed figures labor  
Under the weight of the light.  
Then, a lowering sky cracks along the horizon,  
Leaking dull crimson over muted villages pierced  
with church steeples,  
And cows that wend their way  
Forever through the long shadowed  
greens of pastoral twilight.

The skies ring with impossible yellows, jaune

# FULFILLMENT THROUGH DIGNITY AND RESPECT

TRACY A. HUNT

And mauve, lilac, acid green—causing the suns to  
Gather light into a shimmering brilliance  
Radiating over dark swirling seas and rivers that  
boil with serpents;  
Or else flow, mirror slick, through  
A torpid summer scene where the light is pinned  
like butterflies  
To leaves ... a mosaic of trembling greens.

Thorns prick, storms drench.  
Children starve and die, or rise,  
Smiling to play—all at the artist's touch.

Women flush or blanch, cower or  
Spread their limbs in indolent,  
Sensual languor,  
Their forms less naked than the eye.

The men gaze sternly, hold swords  
Or spears, die gallantly or suffer  
Wicked deaths, depending on the tenor  
Of the time, and their patronage.

Within the ornate gilt frames,  
The hours of an artist's vision  
Light the canvases—living only  
In the brief moment of our passing  
Gaze, where centuries collide.

## PRESENT 4

Distances

What interests me is distances.  
The space in between—

The gap of air and light,  
Or time ...  
That determines size or shape  
Or relationship.

What fascinates,  
Is how distance can be overcome.

How it shrinks, or grows  
Depending  
On perspective.

In rooms, the most important furnishing  
Is the space between.

How it allows the light to enter,  
The air to move,  
Objects to align.

In geography, it's borders,  
"Historically determined by geologic structures."

Or the distances  
Between points of view.

What interests me is distance.  
How it's the glue  
Holding things just so—

How the tension in bridges  
Or conversations,  
Holds us in the gap  
Between here and there,  
Then ... and  
Now.

I'm mesmerized by what attracts.

How it's gravity that keeps things going—  
How standing still has momentum....

And how Grace  
Connects  
Us all.

Head down to the corner of 4th and Crocker  
in downtown Los Angeles just before 7 a.m. on  
any Thursday morning and you'll see an unusual  
sight. There, among the people waking up in  
their tents scattered along the sidewalk, is a  
group of men and women who've just finished  
running five miles. These are the members of the  
Skid Row Running Club. Founded in 2012 by Los  
Angeles Superior Court Judge Craig Mitchell, the  
club's intention is to empower residents of the  
Midnight Mission, a Skid Row service organization  
that assists people experiencing homelessness.  
To qualify for the running club, residents of  
the mission are required to participate in the  
mission's 12-step program. Since its inception,  
the running club has transformed hundreds  
of lives through the power of community,  
inspiration, support and well-being.

It has been nearly one year since I first learned  
of the running club and had the orienting arrow  
of my life aligned in a new direction. On June  
10, 2018, I attended a screening of an incredibly  
inspiring documentary, "Skid Row Marathon."  
The film impacted my life more than any movie  
I've ever seen and caused me to take immediate  
action in supporting the homeless, the formerly  
incarcerated and those in recovery from drug and  
alcohol addiction. I also started training to run a  
half marathon. As someone who never considered  
herself a runner – nor had any desire to run  
a half marathon – this, in itself, was a miracle.

The participants of the running club include  
residents of the Midnight Mission, as well as L.A.  
police officers, lawyers, business people and, of  
course, Judge Mitchell, who never misses a run.  
"The glorious thing about group running," Mitchell

says, "is that you pair up with somebody different  
every time. Running equalizes everyone in the  
group once they're out on the road." As a result  
of my time spent with the running club, I have  
a new community who are now like family to me.

I was born and raised on the westside of Los  
Angeles and cannot ever remember encountering  
a homeless person when I was young. My dad  
grew up in the San Fernando Valley during the  
Depression in the late 1920s and early 1930s,  
and a favorite story I loved to hear him tell was  
when a "hobo" would knock on the front door and  
ask for a job. My dad's mother, my grandmother,  
would always find something – chopping wood or  
cleaning up the yard – and would then prepare  
a tin pie plate of leftovers for the man, which  
he would eat on the back porch. Grandma never  
turned anyone away. My young mind considered  
this to be an act of selfless generosity.

I must have led a very sheltered life. I know my  
mom wanted to shield me from the "bad" things  
in life, so I grew up pretty oblivious to how things  
were in the rest of Los Angeles. Even when I  
began to realize that not everyone lived like I  
did, I still did not make a connection that I had  
the ability to do something to make an impact.

Fast-forward to today. Twenty-three years ago,  
I participated in a program called The Landmark  
Forum. From that time on, my view of the world  
was altered, and I had the experience that all  
people, regardless of income level, social stature,  
ethnicity, sexual orientation or religion, deserved  
to be respected and treated with dignity. In 2003,  
I created an Impossible Promise: "By 2030,  
all people will be honored and respected

as family." So, it's no surprise that I was deeply impacted by the people featured in "Skid Row Marathon," several of whom have transformed their lives. They include:

- Rebecca, a single mother with a young son, is now sober and works as a surgical technician at Swedish Hospital in Seattle.
- Rafael, incarcerated for nearly 30 years and currently employed with the City of Los Angeles, is a sought-after speaker who is committed to setting young people on the right path.
- David, homeless for 12 years, is a gifted painter who shares his art with the world and helps others with proceeds from the sale of his work.
- Ben, a professional musician who lost his career through drugs and alcohol, made his way back with help from the running club and was accepted at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music; he recently performed at The Messiah Project 2018 at Walt Disney Concert Hall.

The Skid Row Running Club started small with only three or four runners joining on a good day. But, the popularity rapidly swelled and now 30 people or more regularly take part. Since its inception, hundreds of people have been helped by joining the program. The theme of the running club is "Transforming lives one run at a time."

As the club grew, the members not only met for runs but started running races, including the 2013 L.A. Marathon. In September 2013, the Midnight Mission sent Judge Mitchell and four of his runners to Accra, Ghana for a marathon. That trip was such a success that in March 2014, a group of 26 runners – 10 of whom were part of the running club – ran the Rome Marathon. Judge Mitchell strongly believes that travel is one of the components of addiction recovery and it allows those whose lives, which have been very narrowly defined by drug addiction, homelessness or crime, to see the larger world and their relationship to it. Twenty-six members of the club ran the Da Nang International Marathon in Vietnam in 2016 and, in 2018,

Judge Mitchell took 45 people to Israel and Jordan to run the Jerusalem Marathon. He said the runners were moved to tears as they set their eyes on Wadi Musa, the Valley of Moses. The next trip will be to the Guayaquil, Ecuador Marathon in October 2019 and I plan to be there.

Judge Mitchell says, "First and foremost, [running] gives people in recovery, people who are homeless, a sense of community. Many of them have been estranged from their families for many, many years due to their drug use. This is a real opportunity to bond with a group of people that care about each other. That, I think, is the real draw."

I recently spoke with one of the stars of "Skid Row Marathon," Rafael, who regularly participates with the running club.

Tracy: Rafael, what's the most important thing people should know about the homeless?

Rafael: There's a misconception about people – don't just write homeless people off. Anyone can end up on Skid Row. I've seen people who were lawyers, one runner who had a problem with alcohol – they've lost everything now. Don't write people off because they're homeless or look disheveled. They're people like us. They all have family members, choices and they decided to live like that and be out there like that. Whether it's by their choice, a mental issue or addiction – whatever anybody can do can help. If you're doing something, you're not part of the problem, you're part of the solution. Let's not blame the people on the street. Don't blame. Find out what your niche is, how you can help.

Rafael has since completed the Curriculum for Living and shares about transformation with the other runners. By this writing, at least one other member of the running club has also completed the Forum.

I spend nearly every Thursday morning with the runners on Skid Row along with my two close Wisdom friends, Paula Bass and Myrna Nance. We're known as the "Skid Row Angels." We meet up with the runners at the end and give them hugs, high fives, water and oranges. Occasionally, we celebrate a birthday and

other successes. There really is a sense of community and empowerment in the group. I've seen runners stop to share their bottle of water with a homeless person and give away oranges to those lying in their tents.

Judge Mitchell's motto, "Finding dignity one step at a time," has allowed members of the Skid Row Running Club a chance to bring meaning to their lives and become productive members of society. The bottom line: Showing people dignity and respect goes a long way toward fulfilling my Impossible Promise.

# ANSWERING THE CALL: LEARNING TO TEACH AND TEACHING TO LEARN

RUTH B. SHIELDS

In October 2017, I attended the Language is Life conference. Nancy Steele (Karuk language), president of the board of the Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival, explicitly appealed for a new kind of linguist to step into current revitalization efforts worldwide in her “State of the World of California’s Indigenous Languages” address.

In the next 10-to-15 years, she said, first-language speakers of every California language will be gone, leaving behind a small number of second-language speakers of some of these languages, who range in fluency from a handful of near-native speakers to rank beginners. The biggest difference, she said, that can be made right now is in the number of second-language speakers who can get closer to near-native fluency before it’s “too late.”

Listening to Nancy that day, I recognized both the urgency of the call and the unique skill set I can bring to answer that call. I am a language learner and teacher with more than 30 years of experience experimenting on myself and others. Since 1989, I have developed my own language learning and teaching method based on a combination of distinctions from Role and Reference Grammar and Natural Semantic Metalanguage – an approach I call the “23 keys.” In fact, I have been teaching people languages I have not studied prior to working with them not only for the past six years as a solopreneur at Wannabe Bilingual, but for as long as I can remember back to my childhood. In addition, as a participant and person who has been assisting in transformational programs for 25 years, I am not easily daunted when someone tells me something is impossible.

That afternoon, I got out of my own way and answered the call. I found Leanne Hinton, a University of California Berkeley linguist and the linguistics advisor to the indigenous language survival group, and asked her to connect me with a language community seeking a linguist partner. She did, and, after several delays in funding, I was hired by the Xq’óí (Koi) Nation in Sonoma and Lake counties to conduct in-depth fieldwork with Loretta Kelsey, the last first-language speaker of their language Xáy Ts’nú (Southeastern Pomo).

My job is to describe the language more fully and turn around and begin teaching it and training others in the community to teach it. Ultimately, I hope to establish a template or replicable model for eliciting the “right” pieces of language from fieldwork that will most contribute to second-language speakers thriving in a language – both before and after the first-language speakers have passed on.

The first thing I did after the Language is Life workshop was to create and declare a brand new “Impossible Promise” – a promise that most people would consider impossible to accomplish: By 2030, I promise we live in a world of vibrant communities, connected and alive, where 1,000 or more endangered languages have been revitalized and are thriving.

To be clear, I am actually promising the world will transform in this fundamental and particular way. That this will happen. That its fulfillment will require all of us being and doing and acting in ways unrecognizable to ourselves. And that its fulfillment is a matter of my word.

My life and work are now in service of this promise, and my actions are aligning more and more with its fulfillment. Not only have I completed my first 150 hours of intensive fieldwork with Loretta, but I have also redesigned my entire language learning coaching business, so that I can get my materials and methods into the hands of the many rather than the few.

In addition, I am now learning to lead the transformational program I have loved the most – Landmark’s Facilitated Wisdom course. That training is forwarding what I’m up to with Loretta and while waiting for our first fieldwork sessions to be scheduled, I presented a two-hour poster session on my new promise at the 2018 Conference for Global Transformation.

That poster session – plus a request from a new client for individual coaching in learning Mandarin on her own – propelled me to redesign how I was working with all of my clients. I went looking for some way to encourage my clients to practice between sessions and become independent of me if they wanted to. I found a powerful flashcard application called Anki and Gabriel Wyner’s book “Fluent Forever” which utilizes that app. I was able to work out a way to blend Anki and Fluent Forever with my 23 keys approach in a way that supports getting my materials out to more people. This includes “tweaking” Wyner’s system and developing my own flashcard decks to piggyback on his, so that revitalization programs around the world can benefit the most. In a few short weeks, I started conducting a beta test of this hybridized system and have begun producing the first flashcard decks for Xáy Ts’nú. This has allowed me to put daily practice materials with audio clips and images directly into the hands (and handheld devices) of second-language speakers as I continue working with the Koi Nation on Xáy Ts’nú and with other clients on the many languages they have chosen to learn.

In the first week working with Loretta, I was able to elicit all of the basic vocabulary and grammar patterns that I use when putting together a language course for myself or my clients. Since then, I’ve been able to flesh out many of the grammar patterns that no one else had described before, so that now I am

looking forward to developing a full-blown course in Xáy Ts’nú and training interested tribal members to learn to teach it, too.

The efficacy of my approach to start learning Xáy Ts’nú paid off on the fourth day of elicitation when the tribal manager invited a documentary filmmaker and some tribal members to observe what was happening, and eight children showed up, too. I was asked to “include” the children and ended up teaching them three of the 23 keys, so that they could help me elicit sentences from Loretta. They caught on so quickly and enjoyed the process so much that the rest of the adults and I were moved to tears. At the end of the afternoon, 10-year-old Grace spinning around in her chair in front of me, suddenly leaned forward, caught me by my pants leg and pulled me down over her to ask loudly, “Are you teaching anyone to teach this yet?” To which, shaken, I replied, “I’m looking for people to teach. Would you like to be one of them?” Her beaming smile, eyes, eager nod and “Yes!” inspire me daily to continue answering this call.



# BECOMING A WISDOM FACILITATOR

DOUGLAS DUNN

It's 6 a.m. on July 27, 2018 and I am making a fire at a remote bush camp in Central Africa. I am about to have breakfast with Maike, a fellow volunteer, and start my first day at Thuma Elephant Reserve in Malawi. After breakfast, she said, "Remember to wear your walking boots today, Doug. We are going on a patrol. And take at least two water bottles."

A couple of hours later, we are walking in line through the sun-drenched bush led by Richard, a local reserve ranger. We are quiet and observant. Round the next bend could be an elephant, warthog, kudu, bushbuck or baboon. I am relieved that there are no lions or leopards in the reserve. As we walk along, we see colorful rollers and bee-eaters fly between trees. Suddenly, we stop and notice movement in the bushes. "Two bushbuck," whispers Richard as he records the data on his GPS device. As we walk on, I'm feeling excited by my next month of volunteering. When will I see my first elephant? I also wonder how I got to be in this place.

When I looked back at what took me to Africa, I saw that there were a number of steps. One was connecting with a Wisdom graduate, Paula Wyatt, and discovering that she flew to Malawi in December 2016 to support her elephant reserve director, Lynn Clifford. I was so excited by the thought of living out in Africa that she put me in touch with Lynn. Paula and I were both participants in the same Transforming Yesterday's Strategies course in Greece a few months before and in the same Wisdom Unlimited course. No wonder she connected me with her good friend.

Another step that took me to Malawi was the Conference for Global Transformation in 2017. I had written a Report from the Field and was excited about meeting experienced Wisdom graduates in Monterey. While attending a breakout session, "Living the Dream: Accomplishment as the Source," co-led by Australian tour leader Margaret Jones, I got in touch with my own dream of wanting to see wildlife in Africa. I remember her being inspired by the film "Born Free" and saying, "The only danger about visiting Africa is the fear of wanting to keep going back!" From that moment on, I became excited about my dream holiday.

So, what was the step that got me to the conference? I am clear now that it was training to be a Wisdom facilitator. Part of my training was attending the European Facilitated Wisdom course in 2016. With me in the sitting room in Glasgow, Scotland was Sandi Eaton Richards. I discovered much from her about conference papers and breakout sessions. She shared playfully and passionately about her vast experience of working with refugee migrants. Our facilitator, Rita Winters, was also passionate about the conference. She kindly loaned me her 2016 conference journal, which I read with great interest. The third participant at my Facilitated Wisdom course was Sheila McCubbi who was about to embark as a volunteer in South Africa. She definitely sparked my interest in volunteering.

Fast-forward to November 2018 and I am sitting in a room in Poole, Dorset, United Kingdom. This time I am a facilitator on the final weekend of the Europe Facilitated Wisdom

course. I look around and see all three of my participants getting so much value from the course. They are being playful and sharing freely. I see the facilitated format working well, causing growth and development both for the participants and the facilitators in Europe.

What I got from that final weekend was to bring fun, play and ease everywhere in my life and stop talking about what I want, but make it happen. I am increasingly connecting with people in my local community. Four people came to a Wisdom Community Saturday and, recently, I gave a short presentation entitled, "Life Experiences" to a group of people in a village hall.

I am so proud of becoming a Wisdom facilitator and have gained much throughout the training process. I have a strong sense of fulfillment and thoroughly recommend facilitating to Wisdom graduates. Becoming a Wisdom facilitator would not have happened without the support and training from senior facilitators Stefanie Rehr and Donna Mousley. They kept me in the game throughout the program. Also thank you Marjie Parrot for your stand for all the Wisdom facilitators in training.

# HOLLYWOOD IS LISTENING: SPIRITUAL DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION – THE FUTURE FULFILLED IN THE NOW

DEBORAH ROBIN MECH

“Addressing the matter of moving a promise or an intended outcome into performance, consistent with a future in which the promise of a possibility is realized.”

Timing is everything they say, and, while I wholeheartedly love synchronicities, I subscribe also to the theory of relativity in that time is malleable and transcendent. Coming from the place of completion, the finished product, the desired outcome, etc., and then working “backwards” to the starting point, I am allowing intuition and the essence of our spirit to guide and lead us in time.

Further building on the words of inquiry and guiding wisdom of Coral Crew-Noble in the inspiring Call for Papers, I believe that having the honor to be included in our beloved Journal of the Conference for Global Transformation has, is and will continue to serve as a structural commitment and call to the universe to keep my promise, project and purpose in front of me and all of us forever.

Forever, also, as in a legacy to the listening of the world by all those who may read my/our work in years to come, and also a present moment listening of the celestial, here in Hollywood, California, current star date May 2019.

I had been reflecting also on my first conference

encounters in 2017 and again in 2018, and thought that a timeline of the “Spiritual Diversity in Education” paradigm might best illustrate its growth and development and provide the parameters for me to make additional bold (bodacious?) claims of future fulfillment and vows.

## THE “SPIRITUAL DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION” TIMELINE

### 1994

San Diego Juvenile Court and Community Schools conversation among gang members and unincorporated youth about religion and spiritual beliefs. Heated conversation – two weeks long – narrowly avoided a spiritual gang war. Went home and wrote notes which became initial program. (See “TED-Talk”-style video on website: [www.spiritualdiversityineducation.com](http://www.spiritualdiversityineducation.com) for more of the story.)

### 1995-1998

Began teaching and writing more curriculum for the Spiritual Diversity in Education workshop in the courts and schools. Started to present at conferences and share during individual sessions.

### 1998

Integrated additional modalities, such as energy psychology, meditation/hypnotherapy and sound healing techniques. Started URU Alternative Educational Systems to bring

spiritual diversity in education into “form.”

This was when I did The Landmark Forum and the Curriculum for Living, which blew the doors of creative possibility wide open.

Also, I began to work with families and facilitated parent/child dialogue of spiritual and metacognitive/metaphysical nature to achieve restoration of relationship and foster resilience through communication skill building.

### 2001

“New Teachers” Workshops: Social Emotional Learning and Spiritual Diversity in Education, O’Farrell Community School, San Diego, California.

California’s Teacher’s Association Human Rights and Equity Conference, Santa Clara, California.

Coalition of Essential Schools Fall Forum, Seattle, Washington.

### 2005

Coalition of Essential Schools Fall Forum, San Francisco, California.

### 2007

California State University San Marcos Teacher Education Program, San Marcos, California.

### 2017

University of California San Diego North American Interfaith Network, La Jolla, California.

### 2017 and 2018

Conference for Global Transformation, Journal Entry and Three Best Papers Award, International Authors Speaker-Panel Breakout Session, Monterey, California.

### 2008 – Present (2019)

San Diego Unified School District, Professional Development and SEL, Health and Wellness/ Integrated Educational Services.

### 2019

Conference for Global Transformation, Report from the Field – “A Future Fulfilling Now,” Hollywood, California.

Resilient Spirits through Restorative Practices Program, San Diego County Office of Education, San Diego, California.

Continuing education credits established for teachers.

### 2020

Presenting Spiritual Diversity in Education nationally at colleges and universities.

### 2025

Presenting Spiritual Diversity in Education internationally, Inclusion in teacher credentialing programs, Ph.D. completed with workbook for schools.

So, out here in the future now, I am delighted to be working from the completed promise future, backwards in time, to the now ... “Back to the Future!”

Hollywood once again showing us the way.

# DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION – AS THE FULFILMENT OF THE ANALOGUE TRANSFORMATION INSIDE TIME, SPACE AND LEADERSHIP

MARTIN MICHAELIS

A few months ago, I went to Israel, Bethlehem in Palestine where Jesus was born, Jerusalem where he died and the Mount of Beatitudes on the side of the Sea of Galilee, where I took a bath and went on a day trip. I walked to the place where the sermons on the mount were spoken 2,000 years ago. We call this a pilgrimage. It took a week for the traveling, arrangements for transportation and accommodation to the place where Jesus did his most important work as a spiritual leader.

Back home in Germany, I looked on my new iPhone 7 – that I got together with an Apple Watch from my son after he bought the newest iPhone X – at a live video meditation with my spiritual master Sri Sri Ravi Shankar in India. A few thousand people come together all over the world to watch this at the same time – or did we have a digital time shift of some seconds? We didn't have to go to a mountain. When I want to go to a pilgrimage to this event again, where do I go? To the Internet. I cannot imagine how it must be when the thousands came to listen to Jesus, but I can replay the video anytime, anywhere.

Well, that is somehow the status quo in technique. What will come next? We have already transformed time and space. We have enough computer capacity to calculate and store what we want. The new Internet protocol known as IPv6 could provide each atom in the known universe its own Internet address. We

start to develop quantum computer. They are not only faster and more powerful, but they will calculate algorithms that have been so far only theoretical. My son is working on security encryption that is not only safe today, but also in the near future of quantum computing. Maybe, they will open up to calculate reality in real time. What do you think will come out of this?

Watson is IBM's deep learning artificial intelligence (AI) system. Well, you all know Siri. I have it now on my iPhone, and Siri knows where I want to go. When I open the maps, it most often shows me the right address where to go. Siri knows it from my calendar, e-mails and through AI. Nobody is programming Siri or Watson in their knowledge. They learn it themselves.

I saw a video on a dating service based on Watson. Normally, you describe yourself in a dating service as superman looking for superwoman. How does this work? Watson knows you and the partners. It knows how you reacted with those partners. My Apple Watch scans my pulse. My son's new iPhone can make an electrocardiogram. Watson could scan your emotions in detail by looking at a romantic movie. So, if you want, you can find a partner with the same emotional reactions in daily life. Once you found your partner with Watson, why stop Watson? You could live as a married couple supported by Watson. If you think now that is too much sci-fi, or how dreadful,

why did I go to the Mount of Beatitudes to listen to what another person says or why do you read the journal with the "Ten Things to Keep a Marriage Working." Would you like, because the watch transmits it already, to feel the pulse of your loved one on your arm instantly?

Teams could work together in real time. You need no to-do-list; you are remembered already. Your integrity is calculated in real time. My brother now goes to University of Bonn for three months on an AI project – computers interpreting pictures. That is what you need for self-driving cars. It is not to teach the computer how to recognize the street and a person. It is establishing a computer environment so the computer can learn it itself by trial and error. The computer is fast, very fast. My brother is working on giving the computer the right input, the pixels of the picture and the color gradient or complex texture information and rate the result. The interesting thing is nobody could follow-up how the computer works in between. It is just not linear, or you could say, thinkable.

In some time, my spiritual master could set up this computer for my spiritual benefit, meditation and insights, etc. He could give his information, knowledge and techniques as an input and we could check the results. Where is leadership, with my master, with AI?

# THE ROLE OF “MEETINGS” IN THE CREATION OF A WORLD THAT WORKS FOR EVERYONE

FIONA PELHAM

Every day people meet – business meetings, sport competitions, local festivals, etc., the list of places and ways (i.e., events) where we meet are endless.

Each event brings people together, which creates an opportunity for collaboration, creating something new and innovative. These are also the conditions required to meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – a roadmap to a world that works for everyone.

Since a very early age, I have loved being the “event organizer” of my global community. Birthday parties, group outings, Christmas gatherings, etc., etc. I would always raise my hand to lead the planning, organize the actions and make it happen. It was no surprise that early in my career I started my own event management company. I loved being the connector who could facilitate people meeting and creating unique experiences.

My background in being a girl guide/scout leader and living in places, such as Tokyo and Austin, which practiced care for their environment, started my exploration into how events could be the access to creating a world that works for everyone because they provide the opportunity for people to meet.

In 2005, I started a not-for-profit to provide education and collaboration opportunities to create a sustainable event industry. In other words, every sport, meeting or cultural event would have a positive impact on our planet and society

and create a world that works for everyone.

Less than a year into this adventure, I found myself drawing on a flip chart to make it clear to me what a sustainable event industry would look like in practice. In all colors of the rainbow, I listed what actions the industry would be taking (measuring their impact, asking the supply chain to address plastics, etc.), what leadership would be evident (the biggest events in the world from Olympics to the Oscars demonstrating best practice) and what processes would be being followed, such as the International Organization of Standards’ (ISO) and United Nations’ recognized reporting frameworks. I chose a date far away in the future (2020) as the time by when everything listed on the flip chart would be achieved and I hung that flip chart on the wall in the office. It was my roadmap to fulfillment, a sustainable event industry by 2020.

The event industry in the United States is estimated to be as large as the automobile sector; the event industry in the United Kingdom is estimated to be as large as the agriculture sector (data from one of the industry’s largest associations). In other words, its potential impact is significant. That also means its size is significant and, at times, this realization was overwhelming to a small team based in Manchester in the north of England.

During those times, the yellowing flip chart was our reminder of the actions to take to fulfill our commitment. All we needed to do was inspire the conversations and connections for the lists on

our flip chart to be fulfilled and an event industry with a positive impact on our planet and society would exist. Our small team in Manchester began to think of itself as a pebble in the ocean, tiny yet capable of ripples much greater than our size.

With 2020 on the horizon, this Report from the Field is an opportunity to recognize the success of the industry’s action so far and assess how much of the vision that has lived on the flip chart has been fulfilled.

Some of the highlights of achievement include:

- A global sustainability standard which major events implement.
- Industry campaigns to address plastic use and human trafficking.
- Education in place for event professionals to learn what sustainability means for them.
- The industry is talking more about its role in achieving the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals.

Writing this Report from the Field is also an opportunity to celebrate how much of my personal commitment and potential I have fulfilled upon. I have been courageous and stepped into new experiences, including chairing the global standard and being the youngest female to chair an ISO at the time. I have been collaborative in the launching of global campaigns to address plastic use, human rights and gender equality, which reach more than 1.6 million people annually and partnerships with various United Nations bodies. I have been empowering through the creation of a sustainability education certificate, gathering a community of more than 300 event professionals to put their voice behind change and facilitating an opportunity for more than 140 students a year to learn sustainable event skills.

Obviously, none of the above was achievable without collaboration and teamwork, and time and again the small but mighty team in Manchester demonstrated how one little pebble can make ripples that reach around the world and instigate change.

While the vision mapped out on my flip chart

for 2020 has not yet been completely fulfilled (and we are not at 2020 yet!), it is now a norm for event professionals to talk about the actions they take to be sustainable.

What I have learned over the last 14 years is that fulfillment starts with creating a vision.

The journey toward fulfillment is rewarding, challenging and never lonely. I’m not sure that fulfillment itself is ever reached because the vision I held of event professionals making a difference to the planet and its people has now expanded to a vision of an increase in the opportunities to meet in the world. My vision for 2021 is people around the world encouraging meetings so everyone has a way to achieve the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals and together we collaborate to create a world that works for everyone.

# TRANSFORMATIONAL TRAVEL

E. CHLOÉ LAUER

*My Impossible Promise is: "By 2030, all women, everywhere, will be fully self-expressed and empowered, living lives they love, dream and design."*

I woke up in the pitch black wee morning hours, rolled over and checked my phone for the time. My phone was dead from the previous day's overuse coupled with a freezing cold night. I figured it was perhaps 4 a.m., maybe 5 a.m. at the latest. Not too early to start packing up camp and getting on the road again. My second night of solo camping was in the books. I was still alive and the drive through the first moments of dawn along the stunning curvaceous roads of Big Sur was bound to be spectacular. Plus, this way, I would arrive fairly early to meet my cousin in San Luis Obispo, California, for coffee and I'd have more time to explore my final stop – Ojai – before sunset.

I decamped in complete darkness, walked the half-mile back to the car with the first load, returned for the second under a starlit sky and had just shut the trunk – hoping nothing was left behind – when the first glimmers of sunrise enveloped me. Huddled in the car with the heat on high and my tunes playing, I smiled with relief and satisfaction. I did it! I camped alone. Not one night, but two, in perhaps the most stunning campsite on the west coast – not 10 feet from a sheer cliff dropping into the Pacific Ocean at none other than Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park. I had practiced yoga on the soft bed of dirt, my entire back covered with leaves as I eased out of Urdhva Dhanurasana and rested for a moment in Savasana.

I had painted with water colors while drinking

red wine and eating dark chocolate as the sun set, waiting until the last moment to test my lantern, and I had snuggled up in my new sleeping bag way too early for bedtime, but uncertain of what else to do as the night came early without artificial lights. I was doing it! I was living my dream. This was it!

As I carved my way over the mountains and into the valley to the East, I gasped with nervous excitement at the hairpin turns and inhaled deeply to fully embody the moment. I took my time – at such an early hour, no cars were on the road wishing to pass; I had the whole road to myself as the unknown cross-country road trip unfolded minute by minute before me.

This year, I dove into the full expression of my Impossible Promise for myself. It has to start with me! So, I left the architectural and planning company where I had recently been offered partner after a 13-year tenure and leadership role as the director of strategy. I left my picturesque Russian Hill apartment with the crown moldings and the clawfoot tub, and the southern exposures and captivating views. I left my doting and generous boyfriend, and I even left my early morning yoga ritual – 6:45 a.m. class at the Bay Club where I'd practiced with the same group of people twice a week for the last 10 years. I packed up my things, moved them to a storage unit in Oakland, miraculously

manifested a 2007 Honda Civic at half of my budget allocation and quickly became a purposefully home-free, job-free road-trippin' gal.

While on the journey, I developed and delivered my first online program to a group of 10 women. "It's called The Transformational Travel Program, and it offers the spiritual, practical and emotional support to enable women to trust themselves as the experts in their lives and their travels; design, book, and experience the adventures of their dreams, and integrate the spiritual lessons along the way to create unforgettable transformations.

Through the design of my inquiry-based program and the conversations I facilitated with each of the women in the course, the results exceeded my expectations:

- "A" discovered a hidden anxiety about travel and an inherited belief that "they will rip me off." Bringing it to the light gave her a chance to let it go, and she went on to create incredible trips with her fiancé to eight countries in Europe, the Americas and Asia over the course of eight months – about 10 times more time abroad and 100 times more fun than her past Self would have allowed. She is more lit up each day and inspires others to live out their dreams through her heartfelt social media shares.
- "J" went from depressed and homebound to radiating aliveness during day trips, concerts, movies and musicals in her area, and, in spite of the need for a wheelchair, she forgot her "limitations" – that's how fully immersed in the joy of the moment she was. These local adventures catalyzed the end to two-and-a-half years of writer's block, providing a further avenue for self-expression. She even started an exercise program, giving her the energy she had been lacking for years. Talk about empowerment!
- "B" evolved from binary thinking living in the grey area, adding in time for her own adventures before, during and after a recent business trip. She discovered that online booking isn't so intimidating when she gives herself time to explore and allows her intuition to guide her. She found that

connecting with friends in new cities gives her a more personal experience and eases her fear of the unknown – the anchor of the familiar invites her to feel grounded and safe, giving her more latitude to expand beyond who she knows herself to be.

Recently, two women registered for the course, newly aware of their barriers to participation in life. They want to live fully, wildly and daringly. They recognize that travel is a ripe ground for experimentation, and they generously trust me to walk with them as they practice being courageous and tap into the source of adventure they are. I can't predict the beauty and wonder they will create and receive in the world as they step into fuller self-expression and empowerment, living lives they love, dream and design.

## POSTSCRIPT:

In September 2017, when I started developing this course, there was very little in the news about the concept of transformational travel. It appears I am on the leading edge of the development of this philosophy and approach that integrates personal growth with adventure. Now, in October 2018, there are many articles on the topic, it's been labeled the biggest current trend in the travel industry and a Transformational Travel Council has been formed. Others are realizing my promise for the world, too. It's alive and well beyond me!

# BECOMING THE ME I KNOW MYSELF TO BE

FRED MOSS

In April, my trip to Israel was winding down after excursions to Petra, Jordan and a day in a Bedouin camp behind me. I realized that it was time (again) for a very deep cleansing. Having done The Landmark Forum four times in the past, it now seemed that I was finally ready to do the Forum for real, as if it were truly my first time.

I signed up for the only one that fit my schedule, which was in Dallas, Texas, in May. My son lives there and I could visit him. Within a week, I had a deposition scheduled there for a case that I had been an expert witness on for the past couple years. Perfect timing, it seemed, but I had no idea how perfect it was.

Trevor was my Forum leader, and, although he looked as though he was not a day out of undergraduate school, he proved to be unbelievably present and powerful. He gained my confidence nearly immediately in his ability to handle the tough issues. At a break, I told him that I had some tough issues, and he reminded me that was just a story and he was ready for me to share from the front whenever I was ready to do so. All out, he said. Nothing to hide.

In my world, being a seasoned Land-Martian (as my partner affectionately calls us), I felt as though I had generally done all the work necessary to be impressively transformed, even nearly advanced at this transformation game. I was certainly aware of my inauthenticities and had confronted them, I thought, and was also aware of the notion of integrity and importance of word, restoring integrity whenever I could, as often as necessary, as a way of brandishing my expertise and graduate knowledge base. I thought that I was in integrity in mostly all my affairs except for the few that were lagging, and I was essentially

good to go. Was I in for a surprising awakening!

As I shared, I became very clear about a couple places where I was truly completely out of integrity, a “sham,” as Trevor so articulately labeled it. These were primarily in the areas of work and relationships.

1) Although, as a physician, I had been speaking out loud that medications were causing harm to my patients and I did not approve of them. In fact, I was making a handsome living prescribing them to people and remained extremely unhappy doing so.

2) Although I had said that I was interested in having a long-term intimate relationship that worked, I’ve had several short-term relationships that I chose to end before giving them a chance and was frequently not in integrity with my partners, in many ways that became even more clearer to me that day in the Forum.

## NOW WHAT?

Regarding my work, Trevor said, “So, what are you going to do?” (using some choice terms and in no uncertain way). I realized that although I was making excellent money, I could no longer work my job. So, I declared that I would now be quitting my positions and would find another line of work consistent with who I knew myself to be. That meant leaving thousands of dollars and lots of prestige behind in favor of being aligned with myself. It was not an easy pill (notice the pun) to swallow, but, in the end, it was a simple decision. He then came up to me, after I declared that I was, instead, to be a stand for taking people off harmful medicines when I could, and he approached me, asking, “Are you willing to die for that, Fred?” I found myself

saying out loud after little thought, “Yes, I am, Trevor.” So, my life changed from the roots.

My pathway for work had now taken a new turn. How I was going to proceed to get this done wasn’t clear, but that I was going to proceed was very clear. Thank you, Trevor. Being in integrity in this area has altered my life drastically as I am now focused on being the physician and healer I originally set out to be and have moved the basic duplicity of prescribing medicines which I did not think would help my patients in order to make a living out of my life entirely. I now am Dr. Fred, the nonmedicating psychiatrist. I am loving it and making a huge difference every day in transforming the conversation about mental illness in all of my conversations with people engaging with me on this topic. I am aligned with who I say I am and am no longer juggling the pain of living “two lives,” one where I knew that medications were not doing what they were marketed to do and prescribing them anyway, and the other where I really was aware that this was not who I knew myself to be. I am me now, acting, speaking and being that who I say I am in the world of mental health and enjoying my role in that position for the first time in my career. What a gift!

As for relationships, I had several partners before that time and, in fact, had been out of integrity in all my relationships up until that May weekend. Over the next several months, coming to grips with my duplicitous nature in the realm of relationship, I have now been able to shift again toward being in a relationship where I am what I say I am, and am doing that which I say I will do, for the great majority of the time. A new life has evolved in the months since then, and I am now being with my partner and allowing her to be with me in ways that I never could imagine. We are working with bringing all of ourselves to each other, including the uncomfortable parts, and trusting and loving each other for who we are and are not. This is not a panacea for pain relief, by any means, but again it allows me to live with myself and within the relationship without all the discomfort that my duplicitous nature had insidiously caused me in my prior relationship efforts.

I am living intentionally with my partner, and this is making a huge difference in the quality of both of our lives. New and real possibilities are emerging that make this aligned outcome far superior to the outcomes I was experiencing when I was living “two lives” in my previous relationships. I was blind to this duplicity until it was brought to my attention that weekend. As in the work realm, the effect of coming clean and getting complete with myself has led to extraordinary outcomes in the world of partnership and intimacy between my partner and myself.

I have not worked again as a conventional psychiatrist since June 15, 2018, after the 30-day notices at my jobs expired. I have been designing a new professional brand far more consistent with who I know myself to be. I am a nonmedicating psychiatrist now, and offer coaching to people who are not getting the results they would want in their relationship to mental illness using conventional interventions and medications utilized by their clinician. I am assisting them to reconfigure the conversation of mental illness from the ground up and integrate the healing tools of communication and creativity as the primary sources for healing.

Welcome to Humanity™ is my brand name and associated social media hashtag, as nearly all experiences can be responded to – compassionately and with love – with this phrase, either out loud or as a way of being with it. We are all one and share so much with each other and each of us wants to be heard more than anything else. Using these tools and various means of full self-expression and deep listening as mechanisms for delivery reliably creates a decrease of uncomfortable symptoms when applied effectively. The level of health and empowerment that arises in the people I am working with is profound, swift and entirely rewarding for each of us. This is consistent with the healer I now know myself to be, and the more me that I am, the more effective the work I do is. What a beautiful concept.

In November, I tried to return to work in the state prison as my cash flow had dwindled. I could make lots of money, I thought, and all I would have to do is treat prisoners with the

medications that had already been prescribed for them to do so. I lasted literally one week at this job and, on Veterans Day, I quit, as this was not in line with who I now know myself to be.

Without integrity, nothing works. I learned this again. I was out of integrity at the prison and all my creativity was being sucked from my soul as a result. I was lying to myself and all the momentum I had begun to create in my professional life began to drift away. I was falling, and quickly. I could not continue and stay in integrity. So, I left and I am pursuing altering the conversation of mental illness on a global scale to allow for the obtainment of empowerment for my patients, often where there was none, and a new sense of freedom, where it was thought to be certainly lost to those people who are working with me.

All of this can now occur by living as the man I know myself to be. I have significantly altered who that is as a direct result of my work and declarations. Life has a new purpose and direction. Legitimacy is a good description. Power, freedom and self-expression are all present in levels that I could only previously dream of. I am making a difference in the world. Although I am not without pain, fear and misery, at times, the bulk of my life has taken a significant turn in my overall sense of satisfaction in nearly all areas. As I sometimes find myself saying to myself (only when alone, maybe) ... Welcome to Humanity, Fred. Enjoy the journey.

## A REPORT FROM THE FIELD

# BEHIND THE MASK

## EVA-RIVCA

About a year ago, my good friend, Judith, a social worker, suggested that I volunteer where she works with people living with Alzheimer's disease.

Little did I know that I was going to fall in love with each one of them. The great pianist, artist, seamstress, designer, doctor, psychiatrist and genius.

Doing volunteer work with people with Alzheimer's disease is a gift. Behind their smiles where there is no recollection for details, there is a story. Once the memory is gone, the dignity and goals hide behind the blurry veil of Alzheimer's; there are empty stares where there once were people with full lives. Someone, who once traveled the world, is now looking for his house after a walk.

What I saw is that behind this disease, there are human beings. Christine, the grand pianist, Ralph, the artist, and Simone, the seamstress, who designed outfits for Vogue magazine in New York. How can we make a difference when there seems to be no access? When you are connecting with the person and not the disease, they come to life.

Watching Judith get into their world and touch their humanness to the point of bringing sparks in their eyes is truly moving.

The following is a note Judith wrote from the perspective of a person with Alzheimer's disease.

### NOTE TO MY CARETAKER

*When I get up and walk aimlessly, do not try to stop me but ask me if you can accompany me. Hold my hand, reassure me, find me something to do that can distract me.*

*When my reactions are extreme, I seem agitated, I have mood swings or I appear aggressive, remain calm and give me attention. Do not try to reason or contradict me, but distract me and*

*the sweetness of your voice will calm me down.*

*Sometimes, at the end of the day, I feel disoriented. Maybe, I slept too much during the day, maybe I exercised too late or my dinner was too heavy. During these moments, remind me what time it is, comfort me, reassure me, keep on telling me that you will always be close to me. Close the curtains, turn on the lights and let's listen to relaxing music, read and play cards in a comfortable environment.*

*If I happen to follow you everywhere like your shadow and it bothers you, please, just understand that I'm afraid because what surrounds me is incomprehensible to me and you are my only pillar, my only point of reference. Reassure me. Repeat again and again that you love me and I am safe before finding an activity that I will enjoy.*

*Finally, when we are together and talking, do not ask me questions that can embarrass me, do not ask me to remember and, most importantly, no matter what I say, never say no, but accept my emotions with love, calm, joy and respect.*

Volunteering with people with Alzheimer's disease has given me a sense of awareness for elderly people and the importance of being sensitive to one another and our differences.

Fitting in with this year's conference theme "Listening for a Life of Fulfillment."

## FINDING A WAY TO WATER

PAOLO VISENTIN

What's it like to be captured, swept away, possessed, touched, moved, inspired or entangled with something?

In the summer of 2015, I endeavored to swim across a 25-acre pond (approximately 2,000 feet length-wise and 2,000 feet width-wise) in my parents' rural backyard.

I belong to a family of dedicated swimmers who have swum since they could walk, and I was not a swimmer. At first, what it looked like was my self-taught front crawl not taking me across the entire length of the pond.

I was red-faced, heart racing, gasping for air, stopping frequently. Large efforts, low reward.

Nevertheless, my interest grew. The little engine in me was growing and developing. I was now crossing the pond and swimming back and forth with more ease five days a week. With less attention on surviving, I began measuring my swim times and attended to being more effective in my strokes.

I was still red-faced, heart still racing, still gasping for air, stopping a little less frequently.

I was not alone. Also in the water next to me was a truly skilled and accomplished swimmer, my younger brother, David. My sister was texting and e-mailing me stroke tips. My parents would be on the house deck with binoculars watching to see if one of their kids needed fishing out, maybe a helicopter rescue.

In four-season Canada, we could only swim outside when the pond was warm enough, from late May until it got to brain-freezing cold in September. Then we stayed out of the water for seven months, starting the practice over again in the spring.

In the third year of swimming – to avoid the abject suffering of starting over – I searched for an indoor pool and found a 25-meter pool at Camp Borden, a military school, not 15 minutes from where I lived and worked. I began winter training, practicing my way up to 2,500 meters (100 lengths or 50 laps) in under 55 minutes. This was an unusually fulfilling accomplishment. To add the unusualness of it, I was invited to practice with a small informal group of local experienced swimmers.

I was now involved with a group of seasoned and skilled swimmers, benefiting from their dedication and enthusiasm. Their commitment stretched me and added structure. Others, who made a difference, were lifeguards, all the people who kept the gym and army base open and running and coaches I started working with.

Here are a few additional notes and observations. Before writing this, I read other past Reports from the Field and began writing. I found myself copying formats of others. Something similar happened in the water. I noticed that when I was swimming in a lane between two experienced swimmers, I would try to keep up with them. That led to soreness, tiredness and reduced enjoyment, which, yes, I could get used to. But, when the experienced swimmers noticed this, they said, "Stop that." I did and what followed was a more relaxing, enjoyable, sustainable and fulfilling swim training.

Looking at my involvement in swimming from the middle of it all which is where I am now, I cannot see any way to effectively edit, update or neatly summarize this report. But, I can see that from being involved, I have been quite captured, swept away, deeply possessed, entangled, fulfilled and thrilled to share this with you.

## FROM THE FIELD OF AGING

ALBERTA ROMAN

If, as a nine-year-old, I gave my Report from the Field, I would say in detail how excruciatingly boooooorrrrring and cold it was to be in the field wet with morning dew "bating cows."

So, in case you are not versed in the "bating cows" experience, let me clarify it for you. After dairy cows are relieved of their milk, their greatest pleasure is to head for the mowed field and munch on the new growth of alfalfa and clover. Of course, farm children are perfect for keeping these cows from wandering into the road or neighbor's field, in the opinion of the cows' owner who happened to be my father. I dreamed during those times of not being fully occupied, of all the things I could do and be.

After I passed this chore on to younger siblings, I went on to experience the field of mother's helper, my part-time job through high school. Then, there was the field of meat wrapper in the local grocery store, the experience of nursing student, graduate registered nurse in various jobs, first car owner, first shared apartment, first job, first marriage and the field of home ownership. Then, there was my experience in the field of wifehood and motherhood with grown children leaving home. Then, there is the field of midlife and feeling the need for more education and the field of "older student." Then, the field of "I achieved all this and I am not happy. I just wanna be happy." So, lots of fields and lots to report from all of them.

About that time, I discovered the field of growth and development during my experiences with Landmark. During the Advanced Course, I created a commitment to being healthy and happy for my life. That creation has made a huge difference in my relationships, my career,

basically my experience of life. I have had the experience of feeling powerful to create almost no matter what circumstance presented itself.

I was feeling very strong and energetic one Saturday in August as I was on my feet all day with a family reunion. The company was so enjoyable and the summer weather was perfect in a well-trimmed green county park. I was elated with the experience that day. With all this satisfaction and pleasure of a job well done, of course I topped the day off with ice cream at the river with my son and grandchildren.

So, there I was thinking I could walk on the river rocks one minute and the next thinking, "I have heard there is a strong current in this river. I'd better get out of here." You are right ... I slipped on the rocks, fell in the river and crawled out with a big bump on my right heel. The emergency room doctor gushed over my "tongue fracture," showed me the X-ray on his cell phone all smiles. Rare! Yes, the treatment is surgery with two months of no-weight bearing.

So, here is where there is plenty of room for not being happy or healthy. Due to my commitment during the Advanced Course, I knew that happy and healthy is a creation. One of the things I got over was the reluctance in asking for assistance, and many people showed up as I was not able to bear weight or drive. I cannot begin to relate the contributions people made to me ... big and small. As I write this, I am in my 20th week post-op with a metal plate and six screws healing my wound. People have easily acquiesced to my preference for calling my right leg my "injured" leg instead of my "bad" leg, which seemed to come out initially. My physical therapist says



I am slightly above where I should be in my healing. I feel happy and healthy even though my daily activities have changed dramatically from what I thought they would be at this time. I am still not driving. I still limp. I have discomfort in my heel and cannot raise my heel off the floor to bear weight on the ball of my foot.

So, I would say to my young Self, "Thank you" for being boooooored and dreaming. Who you were led me to learning a way of creating my experiences in my life regardless of circumstances.

A REPORT FROM THE FIELD

# THE HEALING POWER OF ART

DOROTHY WEINTRAUB

For 20 years, I worked as an art therapist in a mental health center. Suicidal people were very stressful. Now retired and age 90, I am an art mentor.

I have a studio in our garage, no cars. When I open the garage door, people come in to see my paintings. I have a sign on the door, "Dottie,

art mentor, Free!" Adults and children have come to paint. Children are the most fun. They love to paint and are very free.

My Impossible Promise for the world is that people with depression, fears, etc., are able to release these fears and become a new, confident and

free Self by painting these fears!

This is what I aim to do in my studio with both adults and children, giving them a space to express themselves.

# DON'T WAIT UNTIL YOU ARE ON YOUR DEATHBED: SAY IT NOW (WITH LOVE)!

JASON WINFREY

As a hospice nurse for many years, I've witnessed countless dying people, their physical bodies not craving any food or hydration for a week or more, still restless and agitated despite increasing amounts of comfort medications. At this point, I've learned to put on my detective hat, listening for, and discovering, what their spirit needs to let go and transition from their physical body.

I generally ask the family to consider:

- Is there someone they are waiting to see or hear from?
- Is there someone they need to forgive or ask for forgiveness?
- Is there someone they are worried about?

I encourage each family member and friend to spend time, one-on-one, with the dying person, speaking to them as if they were looking you in the eyes and nodding at what is being said by Skype, FaceTime or speaker phone, if they can't be there in person.

- Be generous. Share and acknowledge the gifts and blessings that they have given you or helped you discover for yourself, (i.e., for teaching me how to cook or grow a garden or giving me the confidence to do repairs on the car or the house).
- Share the fun memories and experiences that have made a lasting difference in your life. (Don't be afraid to laugh or cry).

- Forgive and ask for forgiveness. Now is the time to admit to breaking the cookie jar when you blamed it on the cat. This isn't the time to lay your burdens on the person. This is a time to open your heart, be compassionate and allow for completion. Completion, as in forgiveness, can bring upsets to an end and can let go of negative energy. Consider that true forgiveness is when you can say, "Thank you for-giving me this opportunity to learn and grow from this experience."

In my experience, when the spirit gets what it needs to be complete, a dying person is able to relax and let go.

I have heard amazing eulogies and acknowledgments and stories told at many funerals and celebrations of life. I wonder how many people actually heard these acknowledgments while they were still alive. What impact would that have made on their experience of life? Not everyone has the option or "blessing" of having time to get complete before their death.

Knowing this, would someone consider death by suicide if friends, family, coworkers or even perfect strangers regularly acknowledged the difference they are making in the lives of others?

Did you know...

- more people in the military and police force die of suicide than in active duty.

- more Americans die from suicide than from car accidents.
- suicide is the second leading cause of death for people ages 10-34 in 2016.
- the highest rate of suicide in 2017 was middle-aged people (ages 45-64), followed by seniors (ages 85+).
- the suicide rate in the United States in 2017 was 14.0 per 100,000. 47,173 Americans died by suicide in 2017. There were an estimated 1,300,000 suicide attempts in 2017.
- LGBT youth are twice as likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers.

There must be something we can say and do. We are each other's friends, family and coworkers. We are even the "perfect stranger" to say something that shifts everything for a stranger. You will never really know the real difference you make in another person's life and maybe now you can give someone a glimpse of the difference they are making in your life.

Here are some examples:

"I love your creative way of thinking."

"Your smile brightens the room when you walk in."

"I have always enjoyed your sense of style."

"You are so good with younger/older people."

"Thank you for your gift of..."

"Thank you for teaching me to..."

"Thank you for taking such good care of me."

We are creating the Say It Now with Love Movement.

Mission: By letting your light shine, all people will experience being loved, heard, valued and belonging.

Here's how it works: Pick three people in your life, acknowledge them for three ways that they impact you or make a difference in your life or the world. Encourage them to pick three people in their lives to acknowledge and repeat. Let's

start regularly acknowledging people in our lives (even perfect strangers) in the moment.

Say it! Say It Now (with love)!

What have I learned regarding my commitment for the world?

My commitment for the world is: The world will know peace through love and forgiveness.

My breakdown has been around expressing and launching the Say It Now Movement.

As a hyperactive child with challenges paying attention and often "bouncing off the walls," I was often told to sit still, pay attention, be quiet and many times given "the glare." I soon made that mean that I am a pest, an interruption and what I had to say was inappropriate or not important.

I've been wanting to share Say It Now on a more global scale for awhile now and I hear that all too familiar voice telling me to be careful. Stop seeking attention. Calm down. Be quiet. I actually laughed out loud when I realized that I was holding myself back from saying it now. I am discovering my own self-expression in writing and really get that this work can be, and is being, a huge contribution. Now the challenge is to get this movement going with velocity to make a greater impact in how the world is working.

# ANSWERING THE RIME MAGIC KNOCK

MEREDITH WILEY

My life commitment is to create a world where each child's unique potential is protected and nurtured from the beginning, and parents are honored and supported by their communities in succeeding. Focusing on issues relevant to children and families over many years, I have identified, designed, developed and implemented strategic initiatives and projects, taking an idea or issue from the conceptual stage to making it a reality in the world.

My last job prior to retiring in 2013 was as the state director of the New York State Office of Fight Crime: Invest In Kids ("FCIK"). FCIK is a national bipartisan, nonprofit anti-crime organization made up of police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors and victims of violence who work to build public and political support for evidence-based investments in children as a key crime prevention strategy. At FCIK, we developed and promoted a research-driven, four-part Youth and School Violence Prevention Plan and educated legislators and policy leaders on the crime prevention benefits of quality investments in children.

A key lesson I have learned over the years is the value of rigorously searching for what really works and then directing efforts and resources to systematically integrating that knowledge into public policy and budget decisions. How can we best use our scarce resources efficiently and effectively? I had an enormous boost in the development of these strategies from a chance encounter years ago at a Conference for Global Transformation with Laurie Ford (then co-chair of the conference).

We were discussing a particular project I was

working on at the time about breaking the cycle of child abuse by beginning during pregnancy with quality home visiting programs that have rigorous longitudinal research showing they work. Laurie looked at me and said, "What you are talking about here, Meredith, is a trim tab. There isn't anything more effective for you to discover and use to make a difference on an issue." At our Wisdom weekends, we often talk about "listening for the knock." Laurie's observation was a very loud knock. I listened and went home from the conference and read up on Buckminster Fuller's brilliant public policy concept of trim tab which he summarized many years ago in a Playboy interview.

"Something hit me very hard once, thinking about what one little man could do. Think of the Queen Mary – the whole ship goes by and then comes the rudder. And there's a tiny thing at the edge of the rudder called a trim tab. It's a miniature rudder. Just moving the little trim tab builds a low pressure that pulls the rudder around. It takes almost no effort at all. So, I said that the little individual can be a trim tab. Society thinks it's going right by you, that it's left you altogether. But, if you're doing dynamic things mentally, the fact is that you can just put your foot out like that and the whole big ship of state is going to go. So, I said, call me trim tab."

Buckminster Fuller, Playboy, February 1972

As applied to public policy and seemingly intransigent problems, a trim tab is a relatively small and strategic intervention that will cause large-scale and significant changes with relatively minimum effort and expenditure of resources.

One of the most powerful examples of a trim tab I have found is my discovery of a breakthrough instruction system for struggling readers known as Rime Magic. I was first introduced to Rime Magic just prior to my retirement in 2012 during the first weekend of the Developmental Course when Shay Zinke got up and shared about a brilliant set of instructional strategies she had developed over 40 years of teaching reading that help students develop word recognition skills.

Meeting Shay and learning about Rime Magic was another very loud knock. When we first met, she was in the final stages of completing a book, "The Decoding Solution: Rime Magic & Fast Success for Struggling Readers," which has been published by Scholastic Books. Rime Magic revolutionizes the traditional—and too often failing—realm of phonics.

Beginning in the earliest grades, many students struggle to acquire basic reading skills on time and adolescents, who have been struggling with reading for many years, face significant challenges in trying to master fundamental reading skills. While comprehension—understanding of content—is critical for reading success, many students struggle at a more basic level with the words themselves—understanding how letters translate into sounds and words, a process known as decoding. Children, who go beyond third grade without mastering the ability to decode new words in the text, are ultimately doomed to school failure and, subsequently, failure in life. When I listened to Shay, I knew from all my prior work that a breakthrough in preventing reading failure with early readers and effectively working with older struggling readers is definitely a trim tab.

So, Shay and I decided to team up combining her breakthrough instructional strategies and my long experience in making things happen to bring Rime Magic fully into the world of reading instruction. As I retired and moved back from New York to California in 2013, Shay and I began our journey together to transform reading instruction and help failing readers. I am happy to say that we have come a long way in our six-year partnership, but we have a long way to go.

Access to Wisdom's seven stages of a conversation has been invaluable to both of

us in developing our efforts, giving context to what we are doing and comforting when things seemed stalled or sometimes even dead in the water. It's really useful to know that failure at the beginning is inevitable—an unavoidable part of the developmental process. My biggest contribution was, and continues to be, helping Shay make the case and take it to the right people.

Taking the considerable information she had already collected on outcomes at a variety of settings, e.g., summer school instruction, and putting them together with research information on the importance of Rime Magic and the policy implications of what it can provide when fully implemented, I went several times to classrooms and observed Shay both while teaching kids and training teachers to get a grounding in what exactly is Rime Magic. To see the excitement on the little kids' faces when they inevitably had their decoding breakthrough is very inspiring and especially moving when it is the face of a 10- or 16-year-old child who has been failing reading for years.

Starting from scratch, we had lots to figure out and tried lots of things that failed, initially talking to business development experts exploring over a two-year period the idea of getting initial investment to fund a start-up corporation. After many hours, weeks and months of discussions and meetings with multiple people, we finally decided that a for-profit corporation was more than we were willing to take on. We went back to the drawing board to see what else might be possible, backing off the grander plan. We have since taken a more organic approach, building a core team and base in Fresno, where I currently live, and taking actions here to move it forward and see what shows up.

In order to do anything long-term, we needed impeccable outcome data. I took on the responsibility for seeing if we could get a rigorous study done. Again, there were lots of failures in trying to make this happen, but we just kept going, talking to people and looking to see what might be possible. I am happy to report that we have recently had a huge breakthrough in getting an evaluation underway with two pilots now completed in Fresno. Drawing on my law

enforcement connections established during my days at FCIK and a restorative justice initiative I have been involved with here in Fresno, we teamed up with the Fresno County Probation Department to do a pilot at their Juvenile Court School with six struggling readers.

We also got a second pilot underway at Fowler Unified School District that was just completed this spring at a grade school and middle school. We were fortunate to have several key partners join with us in creating and implementing the two pilots. Fresno's Cradle to Career Partnership ("C2C") took on the data collection, analysis and doing the report. C2C is well-established and a widely respected group of leaders in Fresno whose mission it is to provide the infrastructure for working across sectors to strategically inform, align and leverage resources throughout Fresno County in order to affect positive change. We also have the enthusiastic participation of our district attorney, education leaders and The Fresno Children's Movement network.

Both pilots produced remarkable outcomes. For example, the Juvenile Court School showed that students achieved improvement from five months to more than two years in word recognition in just 4.5 hours of instruction spread over two weeks. These types of outcomes are simply unheard of in educational circles for struggling readers. There were also huge breakthroughs for each juvenile participant in their attitude, confidence and enthusiasm for reading. Fowler also had very strong results. C2C did a 2.5-minute video at the end of the school year which incorporates comments from both children and staff on the value of their experience. Check it out at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOUn7J-MHK0&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOUn7J-MHK0&feature=youtu.be). Fowler is now moving to implement Rime Magic districtwide.

Shay and I are now looking at what is next. The biggest challenge we are currently working on is to take the preliminary pilot findings and get a rigorous evaluation funded and underway by an internationally recognized institution, such as Stanford or Harvard's School of Education or the Rand Corporation. We are also looking with our local partners on how to make further inroads underway. Shay is already working with

several smaller Central Valley school districts and is training the Fresno probation reading teachers to build Rime Magic into both the court and community schools that probation-involved kids attend. The goal here is to build Rime Magic into Fresno Unified School District's reading curriculum for beginning and remedial instruction. Then, we would like to eventually incorporate Rime Magic into the mainstream of reading curriculums wherever English is spoken and learned.

The full Cradle to Career Partnership report is available at: <http://rimemagic.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/FresnoRimeMagicReport-11-5-18->.

## A REPORT FROM THE FIELD

# FROM PARALYSIS TO MARATHON

KRISTIN TRACY

### JANUARY 2000, MAUI, HAWAII

It was my senior year of college. I was in Hawaii studying the migration pattern of humpback whales for three weeks. This course counted as my lab science credit, which I'm sure I would have failed otherwise. I had traveled there from frigid Pennsylvania with my sorority sister, Tara. Life was fun, easy and carefree to say the least. I passed that course with flying colors. An easy "A" as my college career wound down. I would never have thought that I'd be fighting for my life just a few weeks later.

### FEBRUARY 27, 2000, BOWLING GREEN, OHIO

I awoke with a start at 4 a.m. My head was pounding so hard, I could hardly think. Where am I?, I thought. Oh right. I'm interviewing with Bowling Green State University for a spot in their prestigious college student personnel master's degree program. Bowling Green was the school to attend if you wanted a career in higher education. They competed to be the number one student affairs program in the United States. This was the second day of on-campus interviews. If you wanted to work in Greek Affairs as I did, you specifically needed to interview with sorority and fraternity students for the role as their house director for the fall semester. If you didn't connect with a house, that meant you didn't have an assistantship and ultimately couldn't be admitted to the program.

A few hours later, I completed the interview process. As I sat on an airplane headed back to Pennsylvania, my head continued to throb. As we climbed higher and higher in the sky, my head hurt more and more. It was all I could do just to stay in my seat. Dear God in heaven, I prayed. If this is it and my life is going to end, please do it now.

I declare my life complete. I'm grateful for the life I've lived. I have everything I've ever wanted. It has been an amazing ride, but please take my life now and do not continue this pain. This is more than any person should have to bear. We continued flying into the night sky, and I couldn't believe I was still alive when the plane touched down.

### A FEW DAYS LATER ...

I had been admitted to the intensive care unit ("ICU") at St. Luke's Hospital in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. I couldn't talk, eat or swallow, and I was paralyzed on the right-hand side. Once I was released from the ICU and my medicine was stabilized, I was transferred to Good Shephard Rehabilitation Hospital in Allentown.

"You're never going to walk again," said the rehabilitation doctor.

"What?," exclaimed my mom. "But, she's already been accepted to grad school," mom added.

"She's never going to go. She'll live in an institution the rest of her life," the doctor stated sadly.

"You don't know Kris," mom skeptically said. "She does whatever she puts her mind to," mom continued.

As I sat in my hospital bed listening to this banter, I thought to myself, "Never going to walk, huh? I'll show them. I'm going to run a marathon." Thus, my story begins ...

I did walk again. I did attend grad school at Bowling Green. I did complete the program and obtained a job in higher education. I do live independently. I even went on to Hofstra University for a second master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. I merged the two

degrees and created a job in higher education working with students with disabilities. It is still on my agenda to run a marathon.

I don't begrudge fate. I don't try to pretend that having a massive stroke when I was 22 didn't change everything about my life and future. What's unique about me and my situation is that I embrace it as only a Landmark graduate can. I recall telling my parents, "If anyone's going to have a stroke, why couldn't it and shouldn't it be me? Who better to take it on?" The stage for my life was set long before when I was 12 years old and completed The Landmark Forum for the first time. I saw then, during another traumatic transitional period in my life, that the universe had my back and no matter what the circumstances, I was enough and someone who could make a difference for others. Really.

#### PRESENT DAY, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

I relocated to Boston a year ago because I discovered energy healing here. I continue to work with college students with disabilities at University of Massachusetts Boston. The students I see can have up to five overlapping diagnoses often needing conflicting accommodations. I've never seen anything quite like it. At my former job, I rarely saw a maximum of three diagnoses per student. I not only want to help these students with their academics, I also want to propel them on their healing journey.

I'm exploring the idea of obtaining a graduate certificate in the Gender, Leadership and Public Policy program. I'm creating workability to bring this "alternative" healing to the UMass Boston community. I'm taking on the task of researching different nontraditional modalities to measure and legitimize energy healing. My end-goal is to produce a published document validating energy healing and the impact it could have on society. After that, you may just find me in public office creating a new health care structure that includes mainstreaming various forms of energy healing.

My life and transition to Boston have been helped along the way by my different Wisdom communities, first in Philadelphia and then Boston, and my ongoing participation in numerous Landmark programs. I was supported immensely

in my journey from Philadelphia to Boston by the Facilitator Training Program. The other facilitators were with me week-in and week-out through the job application process, especially pushing me to make the bold request of Harvard University to schedule an interview while I would be in the area for a Boston Wisdom weekend. My request was greeted with, "You must be psychic. We were just about to call you!" My communities were also with me when my housing fell through a week prior to moving. With their steadfast support, I found a room within a Wisdom graduate's apartment, where I lived for six months.

The Boston Wisdom community picked up seamlessly from my Philadelphia crowd. Even before I moved, I created my Boston "family" at the 2017 Year-end Vacation course and they have been with me ever since. From fostering my cat to helping me find an apartment (which also fell through and ultimately had me sleeping on a Wisdom graduate's couch), they make it possible for me to go forth into the world, healing myself and taking energy healing to wider audiences.

I'm sure I keep things interesting for them and everyone whose life I have touched. I'm sure that I'll have quite a crowd supporting me when I finally run my marathon. The marathon used to be a persistent circular conversation in my head, "They said you'd never walk again. You have to prove them wrong." Thanks to the Wisdom Unlimited course, I've completed that conversation. Now it exists as a possibility to prove to myself that I can. I know now that I am already a marathoner without ever putting a foot on the pavement during a race.



# JOURNAL AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**TOM BRAFORD** is the co-founder of Irresistible Community Builders and has created Irresistible Ecovillage Solutions, a model for creating transformational settlements where people live and work cooperatively with their neighbors and in harmony with nature. He and his wife are creating a Drawdown ecovillage in St Louis, Missouri. Braford led several past conference sessions, wrote a field report and presented six posters. His promise for the world is: The possibility that human being is safe and secure from all alarm and on our way to being ubiquitous in the far-flung universe by 2035 and living in beloved community now.

**D. NATHALIE CONCEPCION** graduated from New York University with a master's degree in social work. She later attended University of Texas—Dallas where she completed a master's degree in business with an organizational behavior focus. She is the co-author of "The Hijacked Brain." To learn more about Concepcion, visit her website: [www.nathalieconcepcion.com](http://www.nathalieconcepcion.com).

**WAYNE DAVIS**, who holds a doctorate, is a marine biologist, educator, judicial mediator, firefighter, soccer referee, business owner, small-town hero and loving husband, father and grandfather. He is happiest when he is renovating a space that others have given up on, experimenting with ways to solve marine pollution problems or thinking about how and why the world is as it is. Above all else, Davis is passionate about engaging others in life-altering conversations.

**CHERYL FOX** is a licensed clinical social worker working with youth and families in mental health settings for nearly 30 years. As a behavioral health manager for the County of Ventura, she focuses on building inter-agency collaboration, empowering leaders and assuring quality, result-

oriented mental health programs. She oversees programs for at-risk youth, teens and adults in a variety of settings. Inspired by the growth and development of others, Fox has coached in the Self-Expression & Leadership Program, assisted on the Wisdom accomplishment team in Los Angeles and this is her third year as co-global Leader for Partnership Explorations.

**MIKE GINN** lives in Carmel, California with his wife Carol Tisson and cat Grayson. He has retired to focus on his well-being and expand the reach of his pro bono consulting.

**MELISSA GOLD** has been on the Conference for Global Transformation poster team since 2012 when she completed the Power and Contribution course, including being co-team leader for many years. Standing for everyone manifesting their intellectual and spiritual greatness through creativity and play, she also serves as the director of clergy education for Hellenion, an international polytheist organization of people practicing ancient Greek spirituality. Retired from education and IT, Gold also participates in charity bike rides and will take part in her 10th Ride to Conquer Cancer (220 km over two days) in June. Best of all, she's a grandmother.

**TOBY GOLDBERG** holds a Master of Business Administration degree and is a social entrepreneur who has brought fiscal expertise and innovation to roles in the public, private and nonprofit sectors over the past two decades. She has consulted on a variety of research and strategic planning projects on topics including women's poverty, social enterprise development and the establishment of women's employment centers in the Moscow region of Russia. Goldberg currently works in the Ontario (provincial) public service, where she has led the design, delivery and oversight

## JOURNAL AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES (continued)

of social programs related to accessibility, women's economic empowerment and refugee and vulnerable newcomer settlements.

**TONY GRADDON** who holds a Ph.D. in analytical chemistry, is a data analyst living in Hobart, Australia. He is passionate about equal opportunity and economic policy.

**CAROL MARK** is an entrepreneur in retail sales. A lifelong baker, Mark is at work on creating partnerships to fulfill on generating income making healthy delicious baked goods. She completed the Landmark Forum in 2002 and then the Curriculum for Living. From 2003 to 2006, she was an introduction leader and coach for the Introduction Leaders Program. After participating in Wisdom in 2005, she joined the Wisdom Toronto City Team and has assisted for over 10 years. She is currently a facilitator in training and her first course as a facilitator was where the hot writers' group emerged.

**BRIAN MCFADIN**, certified professional coactive coach, is a master-certified professional coach and business consultant, helping solopreneurs, executives and entrepreneurs to clarify the soul of their mission and accomplish it with passion, ease and joy. McFadin lives in Boise, Idaho.

**FRED MOSS, M.D.**, has been a student of human behavior for all 60 years of his life, and a professional for the last 39. His Impossible Promise is that, by 2030, each and every human will know that their voice is heard and who they are and what they do matters. Moss is embarking on a worldwide tour this year, aimed at exposing how mental illness and mental health are defined in culturally-specific areas and wonders if this might result in a finding that mental illness itself is a conversation which might indeed lend itself to global transformation, as self-expression and authentic listening become more an essential component of human consciousness.

**ROSY NAVARRO** studied social work in Mexico. Her passion is being with people so she now works as an interpreter/translator and actress. She is an introduction leader and interpreter for Landmark. Navarro's commitment in the world is that all people follow their passions and dreams, to unite families and cultures through language and love and end domestic violence and "machismo." Also, she has participated with Gahaw Tahir in the Greenland Foundation in Africa, Los Angeles and Sacramento along with the United Nations.

**JOHN ROBERT NIEC** led the Self-Expression & Leadership Program and was on staff at Landmark's San Francisco center. He obtained a Master of Arts degree in music and worked in human resources. In 2016, Niec moved in with his 80-something parents to provide care. In May of 2017, both of them entered hospice care, and subsequently died within a week of each other. He considers his time with his parents at the end of their life to be the hardest and most important work he has ever done. Niec is writing a book on dying, grief and transformation.

**NED NIKOLOV** is a physical scientist working for the United States Department of Agriculture's Forest Service. He received his Ph.D. from Colorado State University. His undergraduate work was done in tree science in Bulgaria at the Bulgarian Institute of Higher Forestry.

**SOPHIA OLIVAS** is the owner of GreyThorn Marketing, an Internet image company with a global portfolio. An adventurer, Olivas has backpacked in more than 30 countries. She is a United Nations Association member, author and global speaker. Olivas also founded the nonprofit Hope of Hope, focused on alleviating poverty, mental health and violence by working at source and empowering women through technology. She is also known as a butterfly chaser, tree climber and kite flyer that does cartwheels barefoot on soft grass with an infectious wanderlust glow.

**JILL RICKARDS** is an entrepreneur who holds the credential of certified public accountant. She has owned and operated accounting and business advising firms for more than 38 years. Although she claims that she is retiring from accounting, she has taken on consulting with a start-up company to develop a financial structure that will support exponential growth. Rickards is also developing herself as a coach for executives and teams to improve performance and others who desire personal change. As of late, she claims to be an “amateur philosopher” studying philosophers who have contributed to the study of ontology.

**SARA SAFARI** is an author, speaker, mountain climber, college professor, electrical engineer and advocate for women empowerment. Four years ago, she climbed Mount Everest to bring funds and awareness to the girls who become victims of human trafficking or are forced into early marriage. She received the Global Citizen award from the United Nations Association in 2015. Safari is a board member and director of development in the Empower Nepali Girls Foundation. She published her book “Follow My Footsteps” last year. She has also received an award from the International Leadership Association in 2017 and is working on a documentary film.

**MERILYN SKELTON** is a passionate advocate for human rights. Her particular interest is for those who are overlooked and disempowered. Skelton wants to see a world that includes everyone and where love is always present.

**ED STROUPE** spent 35 years as a software developer and designer. With his wife of 27 years, Mary, he co-founded Integritas, Inc. and led their development group to achieving five national certifications of their electronic medical record software. Since his retirement in 2013, he has devoted his time to a passionate study of philosophy, and, in 2017, published his first novel, “Signaling: A Message from the Future.” Stroupe sees the “Discourse as Access” inquiry

as a powerful way to forward transformation in the world. He and Mary live with her mother and their three cats in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

**MELINDA VOSS** was a 26-year staff writer for the Des Moines Register and Tribune, a co-founder and executive director of the Association of Health Care Journalists and the public relations director for the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. Her book, “From Mango Cuba to Prickly Pear America – An American’s Journey to Castro’s Cuba and Back,” was published in 2018. She holds a bachelor’s degree in journalism and a master’s degree in public health. A 2001 graduate of the Landmark Forum, Voss has taken many Landmark courses and assisted in various accountabilities. She became the journal editor in 2018.

**LORRAINE “RAIN” WARREN** is a facilitator, educator and deep listener. She holds a Ph.D. in depth psychology specializing in community, liberation and ecological psychologies from Pacifica Graduate Institute. Her research included interviews of genocide survivors in Rwanda, Central Africa. Warren is the recipient of the APA Psychologists for Social Responsibility 2018 Josephine “Scout” Wollman Fuller Award for her work in peace-building and social justice, the 2016 Legacy International Humanitarian Award for impacting the lives of more than 34,000 youth worldwide and the 2018 Conference for Global Transformation first runner-up award for her poster, “Creating a World that Listens.”

**KATHARINA WUPPINGER** resigned from her job in Austria to follow her dream to work in Africa after having completed the Introduction Leaders Program in 2011. Since then, she has been leading education and youth programs for nongovernmental organizations, the European Union and UNICEF in Ghana, Sierra Leone and currently Egypt. Wuppinger’s commitment for the world is to empower the most vulnerable and make their voices heard. Despite living in Africa, she has found a way of staying connected with the

transformational work of Landmark by completing the Wisdom Unlimited course and being the facilitator of the Landmark webinar in Cairo, Egypt.

**KARL ZELLER** taught the Being a Leader and the Effective Exercise of Leadership course as an experimental course at Colorado State University. He is also a science consultant working on climate research. Zeller spent 40 years working in the fields of meteorology and air pollution for the Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management, United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service and for private consulting firms. He was an Air Force reservist weather forecaster for 26 years and has a Ph.D. in boundary layer fluid mechanics from Colorado State University.

# KEYNOTE SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

**ANGELA AMADO, PH.D.**, has led transformational programs for 30 years and has been a Wisdom Course Area leader since 1994. She leads the Partnership Explorations course and heads training and development for the Wisdom Course Area. She has worked in the field of disability for more than 30 years in various capacities, including national research, international consulting and government policy. She has authored key books on inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities into the community and conducted training across the United States, Canada, the Netherlands and Israel.

**KHUSH COOPER, PH.D.**, is committed to a world where governments, organizations and communities support excellence and diversity for children and families. Following a successful career as a social worker and nonprofit executive, she began an entrepreneurial consulting practice which is committed to changing the human services landscape by providing innovations that cause organizations and communities to thrive. She teaches public policy and the Being a Leader and the Effective Exercise of Leadership course at University of California Los Angeles School of Public Affairs. She has been engaged in transformational work for 13 years and lives in Los Angeles.

**SEAMUS FORD**, Landmark's global Internet and social media manager, is accountable for creating a message to the world about Landmark's work and he is committed to Wisdom graduates raising their public persona online by expanding their listening of all people. Ford has been on staff at Landmark for 26 years. He served on the Chicago center staff from 1992 to 2001 during a period of unprecedented growth. In 2001, he became one of the founding team members of the Business Development and Marketing Department for Landmark.

**HELEN GILHOOLY** has developed and led Landmark courses since the 1970s and was the first Wisdom course leader in 1980. She has led many of the now-retired Consulting courses like Productivity, Service and Well-Being, Mastery of Well-Being, Nature of Reality, Power and Contribution, Creation of Freedom and Exploring the Fulfilled Life. Gilhooly now leads the Transforming Yesterday's Strategies vacation course. She will be retiring in January 2020.

**THE REV. SARAH LAMMERT** is a parish minister, published author and tireless advocate for the revitalization of professional religious leadership. Lammert recently completed a term as the first female chair of the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces, which represents more than 150 faith groups. Fulfilling her vocation as an executive in the Unitarian Universalist Association, she embodies an entrepreneurial spirit in ministry while empowering creativity and innovation in others.

**ROBIN QUIVERS**, co-host of the Howard Stern Show for more than three decades, has reinvented her life on many occasions, from a military nurse to arguably one of America's most popular female radio personalities; from taking up race car driving to creating a worldwide charitable foundation. She served as a nurse for two years in the United States Air Force and soared on to drive race cars, survive cancer and advocate for healthy eating with her book that won the NAACP Image Award.

**BRIAN REGNIER** has been working in the field of personal transformation since 1972. He is the creator of the Conference for Global Transformation and all the courses and programs of the Wisdom Course Area, a Landmark Forum leader and, now in his official retirement since January of 2019, continues to design special projects for Landmark.

# BREAKOUT SESSION PRESENTERS

**S'RA ALBION BLACK** loves the power of "dressing up" and has worn many different uniforms over the years. She holds a bachelor's degree in visual arts, has been on staff at Landmark, director of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, tantra yoga teacher, leather bar owner and all around badass who's as comfortable playing in heels and evening dresses as she is in motorcycle boots and jeans. Albion Black delights in bringing together the worlds of transformation, spirituality, sexuality and expression. Originally from Sydney, Australia, she now lives in California with her wife who she met at the 2016 Year-end Vacation course.

**LIZ ALLEN** is a hospital chaplain whose work facilitates spirit for patients, families and staff at turning points of life and death. Previously on the faculty of University of Wisconsin Occupational Therapy School, Allen is a certified leader and director of the CareGivers Renewal Course designed by Brian Regnier in 1989. She has presented workshops at the Conference for Global Transformation, including "Spirit: The 7th Vital Sign" in 2011 and "Spirituality and Well-Being: An Inquiry With Others" in 2016.

**OWEN ALLEN** is a physiotherapist with 36 years' experience living on the Atherton Tableland, Queensland, Australia. In 2010 (aged 51 years), he found a passion in inclusive collaborative community dance theatre and, since, a fabulous network of professional dancers in Australia and the United States. He has now designed a training course for inclusive community dance theatre facilitators. His productions and performances include: "The Forging of Men" (Atherton 2016); "Just One Man" (Bold Festival, Canberra, 2017); NRHC Welcome (Cairns 2017); "The Dream of Fishes" (Atherton Baha'i Bicentennial Event 2017); and "Stuck" (Yungaburra 2018). Allen envisions a world rich in embodied communication.

**INA R. AMES** is a semi-retired professor of communication studies and theory, mass media and drama with areas of concentration in listening, gender and interpersonal communication, film studies theory and media ethics. She was president of the Communication Association of Massachusetts and held two division chairs at the National Communication Association. She has been published and paneled statewide, regionally, nationally and internationally. She is the principal of [www.accentreductionprofessor.com](http://www.accentreductionprofessor.com) and [www.masteringhumancommunication.com](http://www.masteringhumancommunication.com). Ames has been participating in Landmark since 1980, having been an introduction leader, seminar leader and currently a facilitator for the Facilitated Wisdom course.

**LALITA AMOS** is an organizational consultant who works with leadership teams, executives and key contributors. As a coaching science researcher, Amos has developed executive coach training programs for New York University and top global coach development firms. Her doctorate is in the psychology of executive coaching, developing a theoretical model of how coaching helps leadership teams develop and strengthen their group identities, roles and inter-group relationships. She contributes to the education of young people through scholarship endowments at Purdue University and Tuskegee University. Her Tedx Talk, "Two Radical Ideas About Listening," can be found on YouTube.

For 10 years, **DREW AUKER** has owned one of San Diego's most successful real estate businesses, which is ranked in the top one percent in San Diego County. When he's not spending time building his business and making clients happy, Auker and his husband, Arlon, both lead the Self-Expression & Leadership Program and love traveling the world, entertaining friends in their home and spending time with their dog, the very handsome Sergeant Chocolate Chip. They also recently established the Crazy Pants Foundation with a commitment to bring awareness to mental health and its surrounding stigma.



## BREAKOUT SESSION PRESENTERS (CONTINUED)

As the oldest in the family, **CYNTHIA BARNETT** grew up thinking that one day she would care for her parents in one way or another. After several years of conversation, her parents, Allen and Diana, agreed to move from Texas to Nevada to live with Barnett and her husband, Blair. Unfortunately, after only eight months of living together, her father passed away. As they prepared for the funeral in Texas, her mother decided to move back to Texas to be closer to her friends. Caring for her mom now looks very different and nothing like what Barnett thought it would be.

**KATHLEEN BARRY, PH.D.**, has been an active graduate since completing the est Training in 1984. She is committed to a fair and just world that works for everyone regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, creed, political ideology or nationality. Barry is an unusual business hybrid combining a strong background in communications, organization development and depth psychotherapy to her life's work. She currently splits her time between the coastal town of Santa Barbara and the high deserts of Tucson. You can read her blog posts at [www.whispersofwisdom.com](http://www.whispersofwisdom.com).

**JOAN BORDOW** has lived well over 65 years on this planet. She led the Wisdom Unlimited course for more than 23 years, wrote eight books and worked for three difference-making nonprofit organizations. While Bordow wears well-loved sweats most of the time, she has an extensive and unique wardrobe for dressing up and going out. As a mother, she has three children and three grandchildren, and has been married for 46 years. She lives a blessed life, due to the generosity and brilliance of her community.

**CAROL BRAFORD** has participated in Landmark's programs for more than 28 years and has led seminars and the Self-Expression & Leadership Program. She studied finance and international business and is a certified public accountant. She designed and led several workshops for the Conference for Global Transformation, served on the board of the

Cohousing Association of the United States and is a regional coordinator with the Citizens' Climate Lobby. She and her husband are creating a Drawdown ecovillage in St Louis, Missouri. Her promise for the world is: By 2020, all children know that they are loved and nurtured.

**CHET BURGESS** uses a variety of communication technologies to support conversations that transform the quality of people's lives, giving them access to worlds beyond their own. He engages in inquiries whenever he can, and one of his joys is hosting inquiries into discourse and living as a created Self. He also brings the opportunity of inquiry to people as they develop themselves in being a leader as their natural self-expression. His commitment is that, "Everyone in the world be present to freedom and in touch with the joy and the miracle of life."

**BRUCE CAMPBELL** is an artist. He studied fine art in London, worked in private art galleries, managed an interior decorating shop and rebuilt a derelict farmhouse and olive grove in Tuscany. He did The Landmark Forum in 2002 and has assisted ever since. Campbell has in the past been a performance coach for Youth at Risk. He lives in South West England with his husband. "The Impossible Promise I serve: By 2031, all people live creative and fulfilling lives – people are lit up!"

An Omaha, Nebraska, native, **STAN CARPENTER** earned a university degree in cultural anthropology, ceramics and architecture. Carpenter participated in The Landmark Forum in 1994, opening him to new possibilities that included living and working in England. Since retiring in 2006, he has been working and assisting in the Wisdom Course Area and participating in numerous Landmark developmental programs. His commitments are most recently being expressed by joining the Wisdom Facilitator program, committed to being a senior facilitator, and in developing capacities for crafting conversation and conversational spaces where transformation may occur.

As a Landmark consultant, **OWEN COFFEY** is passionate about transforming life. He first became a Landmark staff member in 2005 and holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Columbia University. In his current position at Landmark, he is a personal coach, leads the Facilitated Wisdom course and advanced offerings of the Wisdom Course Area and is the source of the Facilitator Training Program. Owen and his wife, Rebecca, live with their three children in Dorset, Vermont.

**JOHN CORBIERE** has been participating at Landmark since 1975. He was an Episcopal priest for 33 years, graduating from Yale Divinity School and serving parishes and church schools up and down the East Coast. He is a past Landmark staff member. He participated extensively with The Hunger Project and the Mastery Foundation traveling to West Africa and Ireland in support of the transformational work of these organizations. He is presently part of the Listener Team in the Wisdom Course Area providing the Conversation for the Difference you Make. He resides in Salisbury, Connecticut.

**DONNA COSTELLO, PH.D.**, has been involved in transformational work since 1979. She is a semi-retired school psychologist with training in school neuropsychology, specializing in assessment and intervention of students with autism and mental health issues. Currently, Costello is working for Effective Action Consultants, co-leading the Being a Leader and the Effective Exercise of Leadership course. Her dream is that a version of this course become a requirement for high school graduation. Her promise to the world is that all people live with a zest and passion for life itself expecting miracles.

Participation in life is the theme for **IDA-MERI DEBLANC**. Participation in family, friendship and local community, professional endeavors in design, customer service and project management and being a longtime part of the Landmark Assisting Program, she's former staff and now currently employed by the Wisdom Course Area. Having lived most of her adult life in Philadelphia,

she is now in a very small Arizona town with her wonderful husband, Peter. Their two adult children travel the world, making a difference in their global communities.

**JULIA DEDERER'S** life is committed to transforming the quality of life for all people. For 28 years, she was a senior consultant and course leader with Landmark's Wisdom Course Area impacting the lives of thousands of people. Currently, in addition to working with leaders and professionals who are seeking to transition to powerful next chapters in their lives, she is committed to restoring the climate and serves as a strategic advisor for the Healthy Climate Alliance.

Senior coach **ARMAND DICARLO** works with executives, organizations, teams and individuals to produce breakthroughs in overall productivity and personal performance. In his coaching role, DiCarlo draws on 30 years of experience, designing and leading group programs and one-to-one coaching that empower people to produce unimaginable results in their lives. He was a senior Landmark program leader and led seminars for more than 35 years. Before coming to the Personal Coaching division, DiCarlo managed Landmark's New York operations. His rich background also includes experience as an entrepreneur, an educator in public schools, probation and parole officer and Peace Corps volunteer.

**DEBORAH DICKERSON** has been listening for miracles her entire life, but only realized this as part of assisting on the Miracle Registration Team with the Landmark Consultants. Her promise for the world is love fulfilled. Since creating this promise, she has begun to lead Christian contemplation retreats in her home region of Inland Northwest. She is also leading a transformational project at Spokane Fall Community College. Dickerson has a master's degree in business administration in sustainable business and lives in Sandpoint, Idaho.

## BREAKOUT SESSION PRESENTERS (CONTINUED)

**DIANE DICKEY'S** life is a continual inquiry into transformation, service and contribution. She creates worlds and spaces of beauty whether with art or in conversation. She loves her family and is a wife, mother and grandmother, and a native Texan. Her promise for the world is a world of unlimited growth and development by the year 2030, in service of the unlimited possibility of being for human beings. This is for everyone.

**THE REV. EILEEN EPPERSON** has been a Presbyterian minister for 29 years. She lives in northwest Connecticut and is director of pastoral care for an assisted living facility. She is a hospice chaplain and bereavement counselor and pastor of a church nearby. Epperson is a forgiveness coach and created The Forgiveness Process®. She leads forgiveness workshops and now her forgiveness coaching includes training people to speak with grace, respect and results in challenging moments. She has been a volunteer for the Parliament of the World's Religions for eight years and presented a program at the Toronto Parliament in November 2018.

**KATHY FEDORI** is a highly successful concept creator for television, photographer/journalist for media and a woman of power in the Alberta, Canada entertainment industry. Her established track record brings together the right creative teams as she manages productions, creates start-ups and builds brands and audiences. Her work has taken her around the world, from Canada and the United States to Myanmar, Brazil, South Africa and into the new worlds of digital media, robotics and transformation change. Fedori's goal is to listen for, and share, riveting, relevant and happy conversations so all can have a spectacular life to the last breath.

**DAN FIEKOWSKY** is a 30-year-old longtime Landmark graduate. He completed The Landmark Forum for Young People at eight years old. He graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 2011 with a Bachelor of Science degree in physics. He was also a course supervisor for Landmark for four years, and he's a software engineer by day. He is also newly married! His wife, Steph, is completing a Hospice and Palliative Care

Fellowship. Fiekowsky is stepping into his first Impossible Promise: Everyone experiences being heard and accepted. He's currently inquiring into what that could look like.

**PETER FIEKOWSKY** is an entrepreneur, Massachusetts Institute of Technology-educated physicist and founder of the Healthy Climate Alliance/ Foundation for Climate Restoration. These organizations are working to ensure that the required actions are taken to restore the climate by 2050. He has 30 years' experience as a citizen lobbyist for poverty and climate issues. He also serves on the board of RePower Capital, an innovative renewable financing company, and is president of a software company providing critical software for computer chip production. He holds 27 patents and lives in Los Altos, the heart of Silicon Valley.

**SHARON FIEKOWSKY** is a mom, as well as a nurse practitioner, chief operating officer of the Healthy Climate Alliance and an enthusiastic cook and baker. She's a former staff member for Werner Erhard and Associates and has participated in Landmark's work for more than 30 years. Her clinical nursing practice has ranged from intensive care to hospice. But of all her accomplishments, her proudest is being mother to Daniel and Erica who have surpassed her challah-making skills. She lives with her husband, Peter, her daughter and son-in-law (Erica and Jeff Dodds), and her 88-year-old mother, Helen Krauss.

**ANDREA FONOS** passion for life is expressed through laughter and art that is collected around the world. Her paintings represent an inquiry of "what love looks like." In 2008, she hosted Global Coloring: Painting for Peace in which more than 1,200 people from around Europe, Africa and Ecuador participated in a community art celebration. Fono and her husband, Frank, a native Fijian, have co-founded the "Fiji Reads Project," contributing art supplies and thousands of children's books to schools in Fiji. Her joy is mentoring artists' hearts. A television segment she produced on inspiration was nominated for an Emmy Award.

Since February 2016, **LARRY FRANTZ** has been the director of Landmark's Personal Coaching division and a personal performance coach since the division's founding in July 2011. He is passionate about working with people and is committed to their success in realizing what matters to them. He has led Landmark's programs since 2000, empowering graduates' leadership and commitment to contribute to others, and has trained thousands of people to fulfill their personal and leadership goals. He has founded successful businesses, been the director of training for a real estate company and real estate licensing program and a consultant for nonprofit organizations.

**SUSIE FRASER** has two principal global passions, transformation and stewardship. This is her 19th Conference for Global Transformation. She lives in Sydney, Australia, with Paddy Gaul and two small dogs, Zoe and Shell. She loves inquiry as practice, experimenting with generative speaking and listening in several inquiry conversations each week. Recently, in her global stewardship quest, focusing on legislation for managing greenhouse gas emissions, she has come to see political systems and politicians as resources – a radical transformation of her worldview that is proving valuable, fascinating and life-changing.

**BEN GABIN** is a global citizen. He attended Tufts University where he graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor's degree in international relations. Gabin has studied and lived abroad in Santiago, Chile, and has visited Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Uruguay, Easter Island, Ecuador, Los Galapagos Islands, Costa Rica, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Canada, Hawaii, Alaska, England, France and Italy. He's committed to the possibility of transformation on the planet. He has recently embarked on a new career path as a real estate investor.

**TOBY GOLDBERG** holds a master's degree in business administration and is a social entrepreneur who has brought fiscal expertise and innovation to roles in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. She has consulted to a variety

of research and strategic planning projects on topics including women's poverty, social enterprise development and the establishment of the first-ever women's employment centers in the Moscow region of Russia. Goldberg currently works in the largest provincial public service in Canada where she has led the design, delivery and oversight of social programs related to accessibility, women's economic empowerment and refugee and vulnerable newcomer settlement.

**JANE BEST GRANDBOUCHE** led courses and programs for Landmark for 25 years, including the Wisdom Unlimited course for 12 years. Her passions include the environment and yoga. She has planted more than 100,000 trees and has been a student of yoga and meditation for the past 45 years. Along with her husband, Brad, they have a wholesale book business and reside on 10 acres in Sarasota, Florida. She has two daughters and three grandchildren.

**JEREMY HELM** has led the Silicon Valley chapter of 2020 or Bust and is also formulating an Internet-based publishing and communication platform which incentivizes listening.

**PAT HENDERSON** has always been interested in how personal presentation can affect peoples' lives. She is committed to people freely expressing themselves through art and creativity. She has worked in fashion, art and theatre for more than 40 years. She is dedicated to people enjoying and enhancing their presentation and their lives in ways they may never have thought possible. Henderson now lives in the Santa Cruz Mountains with her prince, Reza Razeghi, and her grey tiger (cat) Kitty.

**ROLAND HENNES, M.D.,'S** Impossible Promise is: All human beings are responsible for their health; experts from the health sector work together to meet the needs of the people to operate in the context of humanity and peace. Hennes is a doctor for general and accident surgery and head of Heidelberg Port Center at University Heidelberg Hospital. With his expertise in the area of port surgery treatment, he is

internationally recognized as a resource for patients with cancer and nutritional issues. He is the editor of a holistic textbook and gives presentations and lectures worldwide. Hennes is father of three children.

**JOSÉ HERRERA** is the inventor of an architectural building blocks system and Digital Angels 2020 Project. Using augmented reality, he is creating a whole new way to exist in the world, virtual teleporting, live telepresence as a 3-D solid hologram anywhere in the world. Herrera has been an active Landmark Forum graduate since 1989, a successful introduction leader in Spanish and completed the Team Management and Leadership Program, the Curriculum for Living, Communications Program and Wisdom Unlimited course. He is a host and accomplishment person in Los Angeles and has published papers and exhibited posters at the Conference for Global Transformation.

**CURT HILL** is a longtime graduate and has done many of the programs in the Wisdom Course Area. He was a Landmark staff member for nine years, led introductions to The Landmark Forum to more than 15,000 people and was a seminar leader for 25 years, during which time he served as city coach on the Designation Team and as Designation Team chairperson. In partnership with his spouse Kirsten, he has raised two extraordinary children. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology.

**KIRSTEN HILL** is a longtime graduate who has participated in many of the programs in the Wisdom Course Area, has been on the Landmark staff and was a Self-Expression & Leadership Program leader for 11 years. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in child development and a master's degree in early childhood education. She has successfully raised two extraordinary children.

**DRÆYK HØRN** is a graduate in landscape conservation, a self-taught vegan chef and micro-farmer. Previously a restaurateur and community activist, he is co-founder of Incredible Edible Lambeth – a food network for a million people in

London and a start-up food network developer in the European Union and United States, working on slow food, eco-agriculture, common ground and transition movements. Now director of Beyond Sauce, a food start-up developing food initiative, he is currently writing a book on the Celtic tree alphabet and living with his husband in Dartmoor National Park, South West England.

**ED KENNEDY** is a personal development trainer who has led thousands of participants through transformational weekends, masterminds, and coaching sessions. He is a former Self-Expression & Leadership Program leader from Southern California. Kennedy is also a founder of the 350.org chapter in Orange County, California, and a contributing member of the Citizen Climate Lobby and the Pachamama Alliance. Recently, he has worked to deliver Drawdown.org workshops for community leaders in Southern California to reveal and explore the top 100 solutions to address climate change by 2020.

**HABIB KHALAFI** is an Iranian-American architect and principal at Robertson Khalafi and Associates Inc., an architectural firm specializing in healthcare architecture and planning. His firm's strategic vision is that healthcare projects be designed in such a way that considers dignity, integrity and respect for both patients and staff. He is one of the custodians of the Inquiries of the Social Commons online meetings.

**CHARLES (CHRIS) KIRTZ** did the first est Training in Washington, DC in April 1975. He calls himself a lifer, starting to assist immediately after the training – washing toilets as DC opened its first center. He has been assisting, taking and leading est/Landmark courses ever since. Most recently, he completed the Developmental Consultants Training Program in 2016, Mastering your Humanity in 2017 and Service and Contribution. Of his some 42 years with the enterprise, he counts being a custodian on the Living as a Created Self and Discourse Inquiries of the Social Commons as perhaps his proudest accomplishment.

## BREAKOUT SESSION PRESENTERS (CONTINUED)

Contribution, workability and listening are of interest to **TERRY KIRTZ**. From her 32-year career in public education to her current role as president of the Brain Injury Association of Maryland, she has been interested in promoting opportunities for others to contribute and be contributed to. She holds degrees from University of Pittsburgh, University of Maryland and George Washington University, and is certified in both general and special education. Kirtz is also a certified brain injury specialist. She lives in Maryland with her husband where she is an active member in a number of community organizations, both social and philanthropic.

**MARK KRAUSS** does business internationally as an engineer focused on the environmental, health and safety aspects of advanced technology. He's recently taken on the safety, monitoring and governance of planetary scale geoengineering projects for the Center for Climate Restoration. Married for 40 years, father of two adult children and committed to family, he and his wife are restoring a property and learning to "live organic" in Mariposa, California. Krauss' commitment to transformation is demonstrated in his engagements as an introduction leader for Landmark, his role as custodian of the social commons and in other ways he participates in empowering others.

**SUDHA KUMAR'S** passion lies in providing excellent care for patients. She works in the health care industry, earned a doctorate in clinical pharmacy, is board-certified in oncology pharmacy and a pharmacotherapy specialist. She trains and mentors clinicians in pursuing excellence in health care. She has been married for more than 30 years and has two daughters. Kumar has been participating in this work since 1996. She is one of the custodians of the Inquiries of the Social Commons online meetings.

**ELISABETH LEHMANN** completed her studies with a master's degree in mathematics and physics at University of Zurich. She worked as a teacher and a software developer and founded her own company, providing standard software

for banking transactions for 25 years. Three years ago, she sold the company and retired. Lehmann has been continuously engaged in personal transformation since 1982 and has been ontologically inquiring into all areas of her life ever since. She now spends her time researching unusual physics projects and is passionate about creating a breakthrough in science.

**JANET LESTER** is committed to all people being free and at peace. In 2010, she began the inquiry, "Who do we need to be to have a world transformed?" Always curious about art in science, she brought a different view and new practices as a combined physio/occupational therapist to her hospital patients, students and dragon boat team before retiring in 2006. Her joy now is to explore and discover with others the experience of how deeply interconnected we are. Having personal and professional experiences with hospice, Lester is grateful to be a contribution in this breakout session.

**SUSAN LIVERPOOL** is a published author, poet and songwriter. She was born and raised in Chicago. Liverpool is passionate about the arts and believes that the "arts are a ministry to the soul." She has published three books of poetry and two books: "The Little Liverpool Diaries" in 2010 and "The Lion and the Porcupine" in 2014. She also produced the companion compact disc for one of her books and wrote seven songs for the story. Liverpool has studied and performed improv for seven years. She is also a former Landmark program leader.

**LAVONNA LONGWELL** is currently retired. She has been doing Landmark seminars since 1974. Her intention for the world is that all people discover their unique voice, respect each other and are active partners in creating a world that works for everyone. She dove into her promise in 2017 by running for city council in her community and standing for all voices to be heard. Although Longwell lost the election by two votes, she continues to expand her network of conversations and discover new partnerships and possibilities in order to move her intention forward minute by minute, day by day.

## BREAKOUT SESSION PRESENTERS (CONTINUED)

**MARA MANN** has been participating with Landmark since 2006, has participated in programs in the Wisdom Course Area since 2012, and is currently leading the Self-Expression & Leadership Program. A certified public accountant who provides auditing services to nonprofit organizations throughout Arizona, Mann also teaches nonprofit financial management at Arizona State University. She sits on the board of directors for the Arizona Sustainability Alliance and is committed that sustainability practices be available to everyone.

**MARTIN MICHAELIS** began his transformational journey 30 years ago at age 25 in two areas: Landmark for transformation and transcendental meditation for holistic energy. Being an IT consultant, he loves any kind of supporting and teaching. With his spiritual master, he shares the main thing in life: "Have a smile on your face." He used the year between the Conferences for Global Transformation to prepare the breakout session together with Jon Wright, meeting him in London, Bethlehem and online. He inquires into parts of this session in any opportunity when he meets people.

**FRED MOSS, M.D.**, is a psychiatrist who has been interested in assisting people to optimize their lives using any means possible or available for nearly four decades. He is presently involved in a project called "Global Madness," looking at how mental illness and mental health are viewed in many areas in the world, comparing and contrasting culturally-specific definitions and treatment options. His Impossible Promise is: By 2030, each and every person will know that their voice is heard and that who they are and what they do matters.

**JOHN ROBERT NIEC** led the Self-Expression & Leadership Program and was on staff at Landmark's San Francisco center. He obtained a Master of Arts degree in music and worked in human resources. In 2016, Niec moved in with his 80-something parents to provide care. In May 2017, both of them entered hospice care, and subsequently died within a week of each other.

He considers his time with his parents at the end of their life to be the hardest and most important work he has ever done. Niec is writing a book on dying, grief and transformation.

After a 47-year career in nursing and management, **BARB ODIN** retired and felt a bit lost. She reviewed the Wisdom Unlimited course to handle the loss. She started her growth and development as an adult in 1976 with the est Training and has continued participating to this day. She says that she has had a great life! Her current involvement is reviewing Partnership Explorations, being involved in the Elders Inquiry and facilitating the Facilitated Wisdom Course for Elders. Her goal is to live the most vibrant and full life possible regardless of her chronological age, and to support others in the same.

**CYNDI ORTIZ** began her travels before she even reached her first birthday. As a child of a military family, you could say travel and adventure are in her blood. She has visited or lived in 26 countries, nine Canadian provinces and territories and all 50 states. Her career as a television/film/documentary producer and director has also helped feed her travel bug. For the last three years, she has traveled North America solo in her do-it-yourself built camper van, inspiring many other solo female travelers along the way.

**DICK OSGOOD** is a cognitive and computer scientist devoted to applying technology to human problems with special emphasis on improving human learning. He has held leadership positions in academic computing at Yale University, technology development and marketing at IBM and course development for Accenture and UNext, an online university. He is semi-retired but still provides strategy consulting and technology services. He holds multiple degrees from Yale University and a Ph.D. in artificial intelligence from Northwestern University. He has participated with Landmark for 13 years, completing the Curriculum for Living, Team Management and Leadership Program and Wisdom Unlimited course. He coaches in the Partnership Explorations course.

**FIONA PELHAM** is from a family who, for four generations, has lived in Manchester, United Kingdom. She spends 1/3 of the year in the UK, 1/3 of the year in Denmark and 1/3 of the year on global adventures. She is an award-winning chief executive officer of business that delivers positive social, economic and environmental returns. She describes herself as "a global citizen who doesn't have a job," and so far has visited 47 countries.

**JOYCE PIKE** is a senior Wisdom course leader, senior Wisdom facilitator, Wisdom vacation course leader and fulfillment manager. A long-time business owner, she works in the corporate setting, specializing in working with executives, high-performing teams and boards who are dealing with issues of getting along. Pike's passions include cooking, gardening, skiing, reading and volunteering in her communities.

**KARIM RAYMOND** is a speaker and expert in personal branding. She works with entrepreneurs and senior executives whose objective is to make visible their expertise and monetize their knowledge. Through her methodology, clients obtain a simple, practical and easy to implement map in harmony with their professional identity. She is an introduction leader in South America and has been the classroom leader for the Introduction Leaders Program in Brazil and Latin American ILP with people from five different countries. Raymond's life purpose is to have people create, share and promote others to share their own heroes' journey.

**REZA RAZEGHI**, executive of the Landmark Personal Performance Division, helps leaders clarify their vision and strategy for themselves and their organizations. His clients enhance their effectiveness, think more strategically, improve their communication skills, evolve how they think about leadership and understand how to optimize performance. Razeghi has been a coach and consultant, worked in research for a major oil company and as an information technology director in the semiconductor and computer industries. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in chemical engineering and master's degrees in computer science and organizational development.

**DAVID RITSCHER** is a senior consultant with a technology consulting firm, where he helps clients create new devices with a focus on the intersection of consumer health and medical devices. As a scientist and inventor, he holds 11 patents and has presented at numerous scientific conferences. Twice a graduate of Landmark's Consultant Training Program, he continues to take courses and has participated in the Consultant's developmental courses for several years. He assists Tobin White, Marci Feldman and Christine Arbor.

**ADAM SAMUELS** spent more than 15 years working in Silicon Valley at Apple, Intuit (and even Friendster) after being a staff member for Werner Erhard and Associates. He is a CrossFit Level 1 trainer. Samuels lives in Capitola, California.

**REINDER SCHONEWILLE** stands for a world in which all people work happily and inspired. In his view, work is a result of a person's passion and self-expression. In his projects, he also introduces music and play to generate workplaces where people become playful and express structurally what they stand for. His motto is "Enjoy yourself, inspire others."

**STEFAN SCHRÖDER'S** Impossible Promise is that, by 2024, all relationships are loving, joyful, creative and healing. This promise was created in the Power and Contribution course in 2008, led by Helen Gilhooly, in the listening of a group of health practitioners called Health and Happiness for Humanity ("HH4H"). HH4H has presented several times at the Conference for Global Transformation. Schröder is a university lecturer for psychiatry and the head of a psychiatric department in a general hospital in North East Germany. Schröder has five children and two grandchildren and lives with his family and many animals in the countryside between Berlin and Hamburg.

**RICH SCHUSTER** might be considered one of the elders of the Wisdom Course Area. Schuster is committed that all people have access to the created dimension of being and they are thereby empowered to be up to great and challenging work.

In addition to having had a productive career in physics and engineering, he is a student of, and has trained many people in, practices of communication to support aliveness and productivity.

**CORRINA SEPHORA** is a contemporary mixed media artist specializing in metal sculpture. She is a professor in the art and visual culture department at Spelman College and previously was a professor of art at Georgia State University, University of Georgia and Savannah College of Art. Her work is on permanent display at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens, Martin Luther King National Historic Site and Museum of Contemporary Art Georgia. She works individually and collaboratively creating a dialogue with personal psychology, social interest and a current state of being in the world through art.

**SAEED SEYED** has been in management for many years in the area of technology and has worked for large corporations in telecommunications, computing and graphics. He has had responsibility and accountability for managing teams globally and is a leader in innovation with 20 patents. He has been engaged in the area of transformation for about 30 years and has led courses and presented at conferences. Seyed is a commitment to peace and quality of life for everyone through innovative thinking and technology. He has been married for more than 30 years and has two daughters.

For more than 25 years, **HEATHER SHAPTER** has been building the capacity of organizations throughout the world to further her commitment to end poverty for vulnerable populations. She is an international development executive with a master's degree in business administration. She has held leadership roles in both nonprofit and private sector organizations, as well as heading up her own consulting business for 15 years. Shapter has worked in diverse environments including the Caribbean, Africa, Russia, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. She has been recognized nationally and internationally for leadership in service of others.

**ARLON STAGGS** is an award-winning marketer and copywriter who has performed across multiple industries, from fashion eyewear to biotech, for the last 15 years. Currently, he is focusing all of his efforts completing his first novel, a lifelong dream. An avid runner, he recently committed to running a half marathon for charity in all 50 states through Run 50 With Me, an online community he created. Staggs and his husband, Drew, are both Self-Expression & Leadership Program leaders in San Diego and recently established the Crazy Pants Foundation with a commitment to bring awareness to mental health and its surrounding stigma.

**LILY STARR** did the est Training in 1973 while she was teaching gifted and challenged children. She enrolled her principal and entire faculty in the training. She went on staff in 1975. Starr managed Europe from 1987 through 1997 and led the Wisdom Unlimited course there. She has led Wisdom for 26 years, the last 16 of which have been in Los Angeles. She has also led Transforming Yesterday's Strategies and a Life That Sings. Starr has supported delivery of The Landmark Forum all over the world, including Ethiopia. She will be celebrating 50 years of marriage in July.

**ANNIE ROSE STATHES** devotes her life to creating environments in which people have power. Using improv, dialogue and body awareness as tools, she co-facilitates workshops that support communities in finding new solutions to historically stuck issues. She holds a bachelor's degree in international affairs and a master's degree in political science. She has earned numerous certificates in conflict resolution from the United States Institution of Peace and holds certificates as a yoga and dance practitioner. She is currently pursuing a certificate in social therapeutics from the East Side Institute in New York City, and has participated in Landmark courses since 1994.

## BREAKOUT SESSION PRESENTERS (CONTINUED)

**MARIA STERGIU** has more than 20 years' experience in higher education and the public sector. She studied art history, anthropology and linguistics and earned a master's degree in advanced studies from University of Zurich, Switzerland and Paris-Sorbonne, France. She has participated with Landmark since 1998 and the last 10 years in Landmark's Wisdom and Well Being Group courses. Stergiou is committed to a future where ontological and phenomenological training are part of our educational system. She is in training to deliver the Being a Leader and the Effective Exercise of Leadership course in the higher education sector in Europe.

**MARY STROUPE** was co-founder with her husband, Ed, of an electronic medical records software company that they sold in 2013. She now volunteers in several domains she cares about and is learning to weave and speak Spanish. Stroupe has participated with Landmark since 1989. She led the Communications Program courses for five years in the early 1990s and completed many programs in the Wisdom Course Area, including Creation of Freedom, the 2016 Developmental Consultants Training Program and numerous vacation courses. Mary's 93-year-old mother moved in with her and Ed in 2018 and later moved to an independent living community.

**MONIQUE SULLIVAN** has a commitment that humanity gets that we are one; one with all of it. All expressions of life get honored. She led the Wisdom Unlimited course in Los Angeles, Toronto and San Diego. She sourced the "Celebrate Wisdom" events in Chicago and Washington, DC in 2018. This was inside of her commitment to empower community leadership. She lives in Hermosa Beach with her husband, daughter and two beautiful granddaughters.

**LINDA VERNOOY** has worked on climate change work since 1998. She worked with a team who successfully passed the first bill on climate change in the State of Washington in 2002. In 2006, she founded the carbon-offset company, NetGreen. She was one of the key volunteer leaders of the campaign which successfully closed down the

Harding Street coal plant in Indianapolis, Indiana in 2014. Currently living in Washington, DC, she is working on carbon policy in the District of Columbia and volunteers with the Chesapeake Climate Action Network. She has presented workshops seven times at the Conference for Global Transformation.

Since he started to walk, **PAOLO VISENTIN** looked in the direction of the stars and has wondered "what is this and what's it all about?" He is known in his community as a Landmark graduate, successful business owner and someone who swims five days a week. His promise for the world is: All people living a life that they love.

**LORRAINE "RAIN" WARREN** is a facilitator, educator and deep listener. She holds a Ph.D. in depth psychology specializing in community, liberation and ecological psychologies from Pacifica Graduate Institute in Santa Barbara, California. She conducted research interviewing genocide survivors in Rwanda, Central Africa. Warren is the recipient of the APA Psychologists for Social Responsibility 2018 Josephine "Scout" Wollman Fuller Award for her work in peace-building and social justice, 2016 Legacy International Humanitarian Award for directly impacting the lives of more than 34,000 youth worldwide and 2018 Conference for Global Transformation runner-up award for her poster, "Creating a World that Listens."

**LIZ WILLIAMSON** is a New Zealand dentist who completed The Landmark Forum in 2014 and Wisdom Unlimited course in 2016. At the 2018 Conference for Global Transformation, she co-presented a poster on plant-based nutrition and health with her husband, Martyn. She came across the health benefits of plant-based nutrition while preparing for a Self-Expression & Leadership Program project on oral health. She has also trained in hypnotherapy, neuro-linguistic programming and life coaching. Williamson is passionate about inspiring others to adopt a healthy lifestyle and applies her various skills to reduce stress and anxiety for her dental patients. She completed the eCornell certificate in plant-based nutrition.

**MARTYN WILLIAMSON** is a family doctor and senior lecturer at Dunedin Medical School, New Zealand. He completed The Landmark Forum in 2014. Last year, he and his wife, Liz, attended the Conference for Global Transformation and presented a poster on whole food plant-based nutrition and health. Williamson is committed to the thriving of all human beings and preventing and reversing chronic disease through nutrition and lifestyle. He heard of the evidence for plant-based nutrition and health in 2015 and, subsequently, has inspired patients and colleagues to change. He is continually learning about the power of lifestyle choice to influence our health and well-being.

**LAURA WOLZ** grew up in Italy and came to the United States when she was 21 to attend school after living and working in Israel and Germany. She received a reserve officer training corps scholarship and served in the Army for four years, achieving the rank of captain. Her undergraduate degree is in math, physics and French, with her Master of Arts in education and teaching credentials from Mills College in Oakland, California.

**JON WRIGHT** has been in education all his life. He has taught English language and psychology in schools and is now involved in teacher and school development. He appreciates the nuances of language in spirituality and transformation. Spirituality has been important in his life, both as a child and rediscovering its delight at age 27, 16 years ago. He has worked in many places, most recently in Bethlehem and West Bank Palestine. With Martin Michaelis, he created this session, meeting in London, Bethlehem and online. He enjoys discussing religion, spirituality, transformation and possibility.

Originally from Bulgaria, **MARIA ZAHARIEVA** has been living in Sweden for the past 19 years. A clinical psychologist with more than 250 hours of psychodrama training and an undernurse with years of experience of taking care of, and being around, elderly patients in the last stages of life, she is also a coach, transformational consultant

and speaker. She has participated in countless training at Landmark, including working on staff for two years and being the Partnership Explorations champion for Europe for five years. She has attended many other courses and workshops for the past 20 years.

# 2019 Conference Organization

## CONFERENCE DESIGN COMMITTEE

**Julie Reynolds, Julia Simms, Marci Willems, Tobin White.**

## KEYNOTE SELECTION COMMITTEE

**Angela Amado, Jo Blackwell, Khush Cooper, Annette Nathan, Sarika Punjabi, Julia Simms.**

## ASSISTING TEAMS

**ASSISTING PROGRAM – Ana-Maria Garcia & Rose Hampton** + Team Members Sally Criss, Kristen Mangione, Gari Thompson, Ann Wilson.

**AUDIO VISUAL – Tom Davidson & Geoff Wheeler** + Team Members Judy Aburmishan, Mark Elliot, Ed Hinterneder, Gail Hurlbut, Paul Hurlbut, Albert Koscal, Herb Quick, Frank Quinlan, Mark van der Pol.

## **CONTENT MANAGEMENT**

**Chet Burgess, Susie Fraser, Tracy Hunt & Alisa Reynolds** + Team Members Bruce Campbell, George Finsrud, Catherine Gallogly, Melissa Gold, Michelle Mathison, Rich Schuster, Meredith Wiley.

## **DATABASE DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORT**

**– Maura Junius.**

## **EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES – Scott Hanan**

+ Team Member Geraldine Convento

## **HOSPITALITY & FACILITY LIAISON – Troy Beckwith, Jane Bitto, Linda Lawson**

**& Sonda Rocchio** + Team Members Jeremy Gordon, Lisa Hoga, Alice Keck, Diane Lane, Lily Levine, Joanne MacLeod, Gregory Marposon, Jan Martin, Linda Morrison, Adelaide Smith, Travis vanBrasch.

## **JOURNAL OF THE CONFERENCE FOR GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION – Melinda Voss**

+ Team Members Joan Bordow, Sam Bowen, Ruth Shields, Meredith Wiley, Scott Wolf.

## **KEYNOTE SPEAKER SERVICES – Carla Barrow & Mary Ann Gallagher**

+ Team Members Phorest Bateson, Terry Kreuz, Jamal Wesley.

## **ON-SITE MANAGEMENT – Blair Barnett**

+ Team Members Peter Kang & Agena Sheik.

## **POSTERS – Dee Farrand & Melissa Gold**

+ Team Members Michael Berard, Gunilla Birkestad, Carol Braford, Tom Braford, Marv Gold, Lawrence Hui, David Lumley, Marc Malamud, Sharon Ondrusek, Sarah Thomas.

## **PRINTING & PROOFREADING – Cecilia Burch & Susan Bouet**

+ Team Members, Meredith Boyles, Bill Paul, Jane Self.

## **PRODUCTION – Aaron Bartlett, Adrienne (Puffy) Kwong & Denise Ovaldson**

+ Team Members Leslie Agron, Sean Angier, Dana Blencowe, Richard Carstens, Helen Chang, Batsheva Decora, Sandy Glickfield, Nim Grinvald, Marie Guilbeault, Byron Johns, Alexis Kemp-Angier, Pranav Kulkarni, Meegan McNelly, Margaret Packer, Joseph Perrie, April Smith, Charles Tam, Fabiola Velasquez, Federico Velasquez, Neika Whittemore.

## **PROMOTIONS – Chuck Beasley, Susan Bouet & Marc Malamud**

+ Team Members

Barbara Jenkins, Ada Frazier Turner.

## **REGISTRAR – Sue Volpi**

+ Team Member

Asa Romberger

## **REGISTRATION FULFILLMENT – Paula Bass**

+ Team Members Roberta Chavez, Jackie Hamer, Ellen Hsu, June Overholt.

## **SHOW DIRECTORS – Kent Knight & Michael Saperton**

+ Team Members Kevin Bass, Brian Gaudet, Steven Morris, Danita Norman, Donald Norman, George Paganini, Carly Pandza.

## **STAGE MANAGEMENT – Liz Laughlin & Jesse Muson**

+ Team Members Michael Campbell, Annemarie Cassidy Muson, Donna Scott.

## **STATE OF THE WORLD SCORECARD –**

**Asa Romberger & Laura Wolz** + Team Members

David Flattery, Tony Graddon, Paul William.

## **WELCOME & REGISTRATION – Louise Glaser**

**& Anna Meck** + Team Members Barda Allen, Melvin Allen, Sherrie Allen, Suzanne Burdon, Laurelle Chaidez, Romeo Chaidez, Patricia Dougherty, Cheryl Gundred, Kerry Jurgens, Izzy Miller, A.M. Noel, Diane Smith, Khadija Sunderji.