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Inclusion NEWS

Centre for Integrated Education and Community

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All Means All: No Buts!



And the Circle It Goes Round and Round

by Sharon Gretz

As I walk into the school, I get a brief anxiety attack. I'm here to discuss enrolling my young son, Luke, into kindergarten. It's kind of a last minute decision. What is my anxiety about? Well, my son brings some significant needs with him to this place. Having listened to true stories of unwelcoming schools, I fear the response and reception. The principal greets me and we sit down to talk - later to be joined by the person in charge of special education. These are no strangers. We already know each other as I've had two children already move through these walls. . . I leave the meeting with great excitement. So far so good. Although he will be a young kindergartner with significant delays in some areas, no one tried to talk me out of it! They asked good questions. They had good ideas. The issue of "placement" was such a non-issue, it never even came up. All of us - ALL of us were operating with the assumption that my son would be in the regular kindergarten classroom.

I can't believe this. How far things have come in the last 7 years. Back then, a little 8 year old boy decided he wanted to go to school here - the same school as his brother went to. He wanted to ride the big yellow bus with all the other children in the neighborhood and not the little van that came and took him to the special school. In the beginning, I didn't know that boy, but I read about him in the newspaper. His mother was told it wasn't possible - he could not go to school in this very building I was leaving today. In the newspaper, the mother was quoted as saying, "I only want for my son what all parents want for their children." After reading that story, I had looked up her phone number and called her. I told her I believed in what she was doing and wanted to help. She started to weep. After all the publicity, I had been the only call that came to reach out to her.

Eventually word came that her son could start school - right here - right in our neighborhood school. He was the first child with significant disabilities to come to school here. He opened the door to many that

would follow. His mother, now my friend, thanked me for reaching out to her. With no "true" understanding, I said, "It's OK I did it for my kids too." Today, I am the one to weep. Joyful tears from a deep place. Because of what she did then, today, my son is welcomed here. There is no question now about where he belongs. Today, she and her son reach back to me. It is awesome. Thank you to those who have gone before. Thank you for this day.

And the circle, it goes 'round and 'round...

School starts in a few days and today I am bringing my son to school to meet his teachers and visit his classroom. The first to greet us is the school secretary who calls Luke by name. Making our way to the kindergarten room, we are stopped by one of the fourth grade teachers who had taught my older children. With warmth and surprise, she gushes about how big Luke is now. "Could it be true that you've grown up so fast? Luke, I remember when you were a baby and look at you now!" It felt so good to see her familiar face. As he exuberantly makes it to the kindergarten room, he greets his teacher by name. Oh, how he has worked on saying that name for many days now. As Luke explores, and the teacher and I talk, she realizes that she does, in fact, know Luke. "Didn't you come to school with your baby-sitter last year Luke? I think you were in my classroom when we had class parties and Billy's mom came to help!"

Indeed, indeed. Well I'll be. She is absolutely right. Luke did come to school last year when his baby-sitter was helping with the class parties. What a coincidence that the teacher is now teaching kindergarten instead of first grade.

And the circle, it goes 'round and 'round...

Luke went home and I stayed to meet with his new school team. Again, there is some anxiety rising up in me. The learning support teacher starts the meeting by asking me, "Who is Luke?" This question is followed by, "What are your hopes for Luke at school? What do you see for him five years from now? What are your nightmares about school?"

My God, she was there! She

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Inclusion: Tools for Change

Jack Pearpoint & Marsha Forest

This issue of Inclusion News is about people building inclusive community all over the world. Inclusion is simple and yet profoundly complex. Like love it is a concept, a word, a philosophy we are striving for worldwide. We cannot be naive to think that "inclusion" will just happen in a world where wars still rage, where half the population i.e. women do not have equal rights, and where injustice and inequality are still the norm. The trend in the world is moving toward real democracy: the end of apartheid in South Africa; the Israeli's and the Palestinians attempting peace; attempts at a cease fire in Northern Ireland. The world is in turmoil so why would we think it would be easy to welcome all people to our schools and communities. However if we see ourselves allied to the larger human rights struggle, if we see ourselves as part of the peace movement, if we see ourselves as part of the environmental movement, we will not get depressed. We might get tired as there is much to do. But we will pace ourselves for we are in this for the long haul. In one lifetime we may not see world poverty and illiteracy eradicated but we will be moving toward the "North Star" of a world where we will learn to live "with" one another with respect and dignity.

Inclusion is not a local issue - it is an international concern being discussed in India, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the USA, Britain, etc. We are part of a worldwide movement for change! It all starts however with the first step of checking out our own lives and not telling others what to do but sharing together what we have learned from what we do.

It begins with building strong circles in our own lives. This issue of Inclusion News features articles about building circles and about person centered planning. It must start with each of us using new tools and new ways to get us into a new future. It is about not doing "more of the same thing. MOTS (more of the same thing) means "no" in the Cree language. It is about believing and acting as Shafik points out in his article that **It Takes a Whole Village to Raise a Child.**

This issue of Inclusion News tells stories of people attempting to use creative and innovative tools to move into the 21st Century. Telling people what to do and thinking they will then do it just doesn't work. Involving everyone in the process of change is the key. Most of all involving the people who have been left out and listening to one another are essential if any real change is to happen.

Inclusion defined:
Include (verb) means to possess as an integral part of the whole, to embrace, to encircle.

Exclude (verb) means to leave out, omit, reject, eliminate.

Inclusion is NOT a Part time program. It is a right of life! We were ALL Born in!





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Things do not Change:
We change.
Henry Thoreau

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The Tea Dance: Inclusion In Action

Jack Pearpoint & Marsha Forest

Gliding feet, crisp swirls, memorable tunes, smiles, friendly chatter and a cup of tea. It was the first time we had seen a "tea dance" - a well established pastime in many English communities - usually from 12:30 to 4:00 pm. But the performances we witnessed were paradoxically extraordinary, and totally ordinary. The dancing was delightful to observe. There was intricate coordination, impressive steps, and giggles and smiles when amateurs, who dance for delight, slipped and coach each other back in rhythm. That is wonderfully ordinary. We enjoyed it.

The exceptional component of the dance was the diversity of the dancers. One might well expect to find recently retired people enjoying this hobby, loving the dancing, delighting in the company, and making new friends. They were. But in addition, a number of dancers had in earlier times, and today in most other situations, carried various 'disability' labels including mentally handicapped. But at the tea dance, they were "dancers" and friends. It was inclusion in action - at its best. It was a group of friends sharing a hobby.

We were introduced to the tea dance because we were privileged to be part of a special celebration in Oldham - greater Manchester, England where Owen Cooper, a leader of the future, is creating positive futures for people using social services. The occasion was the closure of an old prefab "residence" for the handicapped - integrally linked to the creation of the fiftieth new "home" for previous residents. In their new homes, people previously "cared for" were now citizens with rights - tenants in their own communities.

The celebration had an overflow crowd, but rather than listen to officials drone on about the statistical achievements, five skits were presented revealing the enormity of change. People gave testimonials about their "real" jobs; about being residents who were no longer beaten; about new partnerships with small businesses that provided shopping choices and job opportunities; about turning a run down hall into a palladium of happiness. An artist named Alan, who had been restrained for forty-five years in an institution, exhibited skilled paintings of joy and happiness. Each story collapsed imagery of staggering changes in attitudes and opportunities into stories that will help us "to remember - but not to repeat".

For us however, one performance - the tea dance - was a remarkable metaphor - that needs to be shared in detail. The performance had three acts depicting phases of their experience. Act I opened in the tea dance pavilion - with mainly "regulars" whispering in discomfort as a group of "handicapped" arrived for the afternoon. "What are 'they' doing here?" "They don't dance do they?" "I hope they stay on their side of the room." Comments that we all know, have heard, and are reluctant to admit, were overheard. The music began. Even with the expert coaching of Trudy Theobald, a staff member/dancer from Oldham Social Services, the dancing was stilted, awkward - and segregated.

Act II - six months later - unveiled a mixed group of dancers - with regular "experimental encounters" between the 'olds' and the 'disabled'. But with six months experience, the pace had picked up; there



were cha-cha's and rumba's; and ALL the dancers were markedly improved. The 'demarcation line' across the room was being danced away. The tea table chatter included, "I had no idea they could learn to dance." "Did you see Graham's last move?" There was relatively little "us and them". Most of the dancers had touched - and partnered - at least in some of the circle exchange dances. And some of the tea tables had 'just dancers' chatting about their hobby. It's harder to be us and them when you love the same things.

Act III was "show time". It was ballroom dancing. We kept looking for the television cameras. Smooth moves, dramatic dips, partner exchanges. We're not saying it was perfect, but our toes were tapping, and the raw enthusiasm and quite remarkable skill of the troupe was a great show. Act III needed a different kind of commentary because all the labels had disappeared. It was no longer a turf battle over tea cups between the seniors and the disabled. These were friends who gathered weekly to share their passion - dancing. The tea tables were no longer 'reserved'. Friends shared tea breaks before resuming yet another round of intricate dances that celebrate life and friendship.

A brief epilogue from the cast told us that the performers were actually the friends who had grown through their shared love of dance. "I can assure you this is exactly how it happened," said Gordon. Ethel affirmed. "It really happened - just like this..." The labels had evaporated. The troupe were now friends and dancers.

A standing ovation was a genuine response to excellence, the courage of these friends to tell the uncomfortable truth about their evolution, and a celebration of their success. We want Oldham Community Services to "take the Tea Dance" on the road, but in case you miss their performances, this little story conveys the possibility of the 'impossible' transition from segregation to inclusion - by finding the things we citizens love to do together.

You can contact Owen Cooper at the Oldham Learning Disability Service, Broadway House, Broadway, Chadderton, Oldham OL9 8RW England Tel: 0161-911-3840 Fax 0161-911-3870

"Special schools divide children because of the differences they have which they can't do anything about. They stop contacts between children. Special schools lead to ignorance and fear. Going to ordinary schools would let everyone know it's OK to be different and would help people with disabilities to be treated as people first."

Monica Hunter, Chairperson of People First Scotland. A self-advocacy organization of people with learning difficulties.

No one is free while others are oppressed.

We did not weave the web of life. We are a strand in it.
Chief Seattle



Enjoy life. This is not a dress rehearsal.

IT TAKES A WHOLE VILLAGE

by Shafik Asante

A beautiful reminder rose out of Africa thousands of years ago. The reminder was that "It takes a whole village to raise a child". But what exactly is "villaging"? And how could anyone debate the need for villaging?



Shafik & Judith as Villagers

I am a villager, and I am part of a village in Philadelphia. Simply put, villaging means realizing that People Need People. I was raised believing that there is nothing more successful in life than in serving others. Villaging is rooted in the understanding that people should be supportive of one another all the time when such support is needed, or requested. In fact, there is really not very much that people can do by themselves. Villaging is accepting that "together we are better".

It takes a whole village to raise a child. According to national statistics published by prominent newspapers, single parenthood is common amongst families in the United States. It is estimated that over 50% of African American families are single parent families. It has been reported that 50% of marriages end in divorce within the very first year, and that 62%-64% of all marriages will end in divorce eventually. Single-parenting has become the "norm" more so than the exception. Many of these single parents are also working eight or more hours a day. The question becomes, "who is raising our children?"

Too many of our children are be-

ing raised by TV shows, sitting home alone. Studies have also shown that by the time a child completes 6th grade, they will already have witnessed some 8,000 fictional murders on TV. What are our tender ones experiencing? If their parents can't be available to them, who can be? I think it will take a village to be there for them. It takes each one of us taking responsibility for all of us. We need to raise our children collectively. You must see your child as being my child as well, and I must see my child as being yours. This is villaging.

In the United States, the #1 killer of a child under 12 years old is a parent of that child. Why is this? Of course there are many reasons and parents who have done this have been interviewed on television. What several of them have stated is that they felt so stressed out that they could no longer handle the responsibility of child-rearing... so they killed their child. I wonder if they had gotten the support they needed, would their child be alive today? It takes a village. I also know parents who have turned to providing therapy for their children because their child is experiencing "difficulties". When I talk with some of those same children, I realize that what they need is not therapy, but friendship, someone to talk to! Worn out parents often just can't summon up the energy they need to deal with their little ones, especially if they themselves aren't getting their needs met. If other villagers were available to them...

It takes a village to raise a child. I believe it also takes a village to help one another sustain our relationships. Losing touch with our mates is not an unusual thing, but we don't have to stay out of touch. When we lose touch with our companions, we often need others (the village) to step in and help us repair our brokenness. If the villagers don't step forward, and with the two people in conflict not talking with one another, the breakdown of that relationship (divorce) is

more likely. The village intervention can help end the fragmentation.

Villaging is not debatable. While it may be a hard concept to bring to reality, we cannot afford to concentrate on how hard doing so may be. Yes, it's hard, but we have a choice. We can focus on the fact that villaging is hard, or we can concentrate on the fact that villaging is necessary.

I am fortunate to be part of a village in Philadelphia known as the village of Kum Ba Yah (in Swahili this means "Come by here"). We meet once a month and what I'd like to share is what the village actually does.

The Village Agenda

Our village meetings are dominated by one agenda item... ourselves, ourselves, ourselves! We talk about ourselves and how we are (or are not) doing. Specifically, each villager updates the rest of the gathered on events in their lives. Afterwards, the group responds to what they've heard. The conversations are real and often very emotional. Everyone leaves feeling heard and supported.

Our last meeting was intense (as usual). It included a review on how our children are doing; how our personal relationships are going; the continual raping of a young woman we know who has a mental disability; a young man who is caught up in a court case. Everyone who comes to our village conversations goes away feeling cared about. Every agenda concern has a plan attached to it (what we're going to do about what we've just heard). It takes a whole village...

How to Village

The first step in villaging is wanting one. That we need one is not up for debate. One of the very first things that must be done is the gathering of food. The movie called "Field of Dreams" has a line in it that says, "If you build it, they will come". My granny (an original villager) had a slightly different thought about this. Her view was "If you bake it, they will

come." Bake some food, make it free, and they will come. At the gathering, talk about your real needs and concerns. Share beautiful stories about yourselves and your family. Develop a plan to resolve what- ever needs to be resolved. Remember, all of this should occur while food is available. Food creates warm environments.

Another thing we do that builds the village is taking our children out fairly regularly. The children need to grow up knowing they are a part of a conscious effort of community building (villaging). The children also



It Takes a Whole Village to Raise a Child.

Akan Proverb

need to know that there are people committed to their comfort and development as are their parents. When a child falls down in our village, or is crying, we strongly encourage someone other than the parent to be the first person to attend to the child. This teaches the child that others are available to them who are committed to their comfort. Be with the little ones. Take them all out together, and we do mean all!

Each child needs to know that they will never be alone unless they want to be. Our children are our future as well as our present. We all need to increase our commitment to their development. Leaving the development of our children up to chance is the same as refusing to tend our gardens, the weeds will eventually choke the plants. It takes a village. Build your villages.

1994 Inauguration Speech - Nelson Mandela

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our Light, not our darkness that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, Who am I to be Brilliant, Gorgeous, Talented, Fabulous?

Actually, who are you. Not to be? You are a child of God.

Your playing small does not serve the World. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking, so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are born to make manifest the Glory of God that is within us.

It is not just some of us; It is everyone.

And as we let our Light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

And we are liberated from our fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

FIRST THEY CAME FOR THE....

Shafik Asante

First they came for the "Black man". They said he was a menace to society, a drug dealer, a school drop-out, very violent to all humanity. But I was not a Black man. I said nothing, and did nothing...

Then they came for the welfare mothers. They said they're lazy, overweight, have too many children, a drain on society. But I was not on welfare. I was not a woman. I said nothing, and did nothing....

Then they came for the elderly. They said they were using too many of our dollars. They had too many needs, a drain on society. But I was young. I said nothing, and did nothing....

Next they came for the disabled. They said these people had nothing to give to society, that they were ill, diseased, another drain on society. But I was not disabled. Again I said nothing, and did nothing....

Then they came for me. They greeted me with big smiles, smiles that represented approval, for by my silence, they knew I was one of them. And together we began planning who we'd go for next!

Many people fear nothing more terribly than to take a position which stands out sharply and clearly from the prevailing opinion. The tendency of most is to adopt a view that is so ambiguous it will include everything and so popular it will include everybody. Not a few people who cherish lofty and noble ideals hide them under a bushel for fear of being called different.

(Martin Luther King Junior)

First they came for the Jews and I did not speak out - because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for the communists and I did not speak out - because I was not a communist.

Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out - because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for me - and there was no one left to speak out for me.

Pastor Niemöller
(Victim of the Nazis)

Shafik is a human rights activist, close associate and friend of Inclusion Press. He lives and works from Philadelphia.

I have learned that, in order to bring about change, one must take the first step, or else it will not be done.
Rosa Parks

Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines, sail away from the safe harbour. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.
Mark Twain

Circles in England

Derek Wilson and Colin Newton

Each of us needs friends and fears isolation from others. Our psychological well-being is tied up in our relationships and closeness to other people. Within these relationships we discover who we are and who we can be. Without such relationships we can lose our bearings. We can behave in ways we do not understand because there is no one to help us make sense of what we are feeling and how we are acting. This is the starting place for our work. No complex psychological theories are necessary. The message is a simple one: relationships are what matter most - whatever our difficulties, whatever labels we have been given, however awkward or untypical our needs.

What we also know is that for many young people (especially those labeled 'disabled' in any way), the growth of relationships and community connections is not something that we can take for granted. The educational segregation of individuals with untypical needs leads inevitably to the social isolation of those same individuals within their local communities. We must begin the journey towards inclusion with the intention to build relationships and connections. This means taking the long view, and one not typically encouraged by our year-at-a-time Statements or termly Individual Education Plans. Building and sustaining relationships takes time and is a 'long haul' commitment. It is basically about building community.

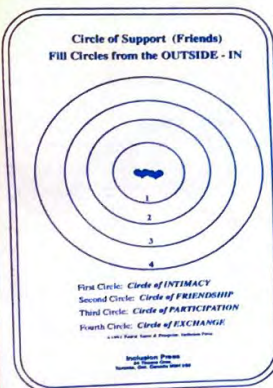
The "Circle of Friends" approach works to promote the inclusion of individuals who are at risk of becoming isolated or excluded because of their difference or disability. We use the same approach as outlined by O'Brien, Forest, Snow, and Pearpoint in their book *Action for Inclusion*.

Who is in your circles? This central role of relationships is brought to life by picturing ourselves at the centre of four concentric circles. Each circle represents a set of relationships in our lives.

The circle of intimacy Circle 1 contains the people who are closest to us in our lives, those who love and are loved by us - our anchors.

The circle of friendship Circle 2 contains people we are not quite as close to as those in circle 1 but who we still count as good friends and allies.

The circle of participation Circle 3 are our associates and acquaintances, people we see regularly in social or work settings, such as youth clubs or school.



The circle of exchange Circle 4 contains people who are paid to be in our lives - teachers, doctors etc. (This group have their own agenda for us and it is not always the agenda we would have for ourselves!).

This way of thinking about our relationships very clearly shows the importance of friendships in our lives whatever our age or situation. We work with groups of pupils and use this picture to enable them to empathize with the focus child who typically has few, if any, friends.

We ask the child's class or tutor group to think how they would feel and how they would act if their second and third circles were empty. We ask them to imagine life without best friends and other acquaintances and that their only contacts are with family and with people who are paid to be in their life. For individuals with a disability, a typical pattern of relationships is that circles 2 and 3 are relatively empty and the only people involved in the person's life are family and people who are paid to be there. Most children (and adults) of all ages

have little difficulty in imagining how they would feel and act if their lives were empty in this way. Below is a list of the kinds of behaviours children say they would show:

- swear
- be bad tempered
- not listen and not learn things
- hit out
- threaten with fists and bully
- do things for attention
- hide from everybody
- run away
- smoke or take drugs
- feel like dying.

Asking the peer group to imagine and empathize in this way is the first step in the formation of a circle of friends and gives the group a deeper insight into the life and likely behaviour of the child labeled disabled or emotionally disturbed. If we are working with a class group we ask for individuals who are willing to be part of a support circle for the focus child. This group then meets weekly, together with the focus child and an adult to facilitate their problem solving. In our work, the facilitator is typically a member of staff in the school. An effective facilitator enables the circle to take responsibility for keeping the focus child on track with their behaviour and in identifying shared interests and potential areas of participation. One of the most powerful ways they do this is by letting the focus child know he or she is included, that they accept and care about who they are and want to help.



Derek Wilson & his daughter Caroline doing graphic facilitation for a group.

This is a powerful message for the focus child, but the circle of friends approach has a deeper message for everyone in the class and school community. It is saying that it is all right to have needs and sometimes not be able to cope. It is saying that others can be there for you when this happens and that it is fine to need help.

Circle members may plan ways in which the focus child can become more included in events outside of school, perhaps by inviting him swimming or to a party. Children know what makes them feel they belong, the adult's role is to listen to the group's suggestions and help them realize these in practice. The circles of friends approach brings alive the collective responsibility of the group towards one of its members who is in trouble or in danger of becoming isolated. Teachers we have worked with see the approach as the Personal and Social Educational curriculum in action, using real and lively problems that are part of the life of the school.

In a community context there is no reason why parents themselves cannot set up a circle of support for their own child (or indeed for themselves). A key principle is to build circles from the outside in beginning with circle 3, the circle of participation, and looking for areas of shared interest. This is another way of saying that we cannot expect to create real friendships on demand or by asking, 'who wants to be my child's friend?', but we can find out who likes doing the same things as my child and is willing to help think of ways they could become more involved.

Sometimes it is very hard to know just what the

focus person's dreams might be, particularly if he or she does not use language to communicate and their behaviour is hard to 'read'. When this is the case, we have learned that the process of reading the focus person's dream is made easier if many and diverse voices - particularly those of children - are invited to contribute.

This approach to helping does not depend on the circle members having a particular competence in any of the above skills. Competence will come from their involvement in the circle. All that is asked for is a willingness to get involved. Nor is it important for circle members to be model pupils in their own behaviour or attitudes. We have realized that some of the most effective and committed circle members can be young people with problems of their own. It is however, important for the adult facilitator to 'buy into' the philosophy behind circles of friends. He or she needs to be able to stick with the group through the inevitable 'rough patches' when it seems as if all attempts at helping the focus child are failing or being sabotaged. He or she needs to believe that pupils are able to find ways forward and help them recognize this. Most importantly, the facilitator needs to believe that the focus child has more in common with his peers than otherwise. Support circles need to be built over time and do not arrive ready-made for the focus child. Sometimes it proves too difficult and the circle is ineffective. This is not surprising, the circle is working in the messy and ambivalent area of human relationships; we do not yet know how to get it right every time.

We believe that involving other children in providing support has the potential to revolutionize thinking in special education. We should increasingly see children with special needs as true members of their natural peer group and less as individuals apart, needing adult support.

Those of us working in the 'special needs' field have underestimated the therapeutic power of acceptance and overemphasized the negative influence of the peer group. The reality is that there are enormous benefits to all if the strengths of the natural peer group can be realized to support the vulnerable individual. Such peer support viewed positively and creatively has the potential to bring about a major shift in thinking for a whole range of education practitioners over the coming years.

Derek Wilson and Colin Newton are Educational Psychologists in Nottinghamshire, England

Readers wishing to find out more about the circles of friends approach in England, are welcome to contact the authors at the following address: **Educational Psychology Service, The Mundella Centre, Green Street, The Meadows, Nottingham NG2 2LA Telephone 0115-986 8968.**

Circles Network is a Bristol-based charity that can provide training for organizations as well as advice to individuals. Circles Network, Pamwell House, 160 Pennywell Road, Upper Easton, Bristol BS5 0TX Telephone 0117-939 3917.

In England, books and videos are available from:

**Inclusion Distribution, 29 Heron Drive, Poynton, Stockport SK12 1QR
Tel: 01625-859-146
e-mail 10041.525@compuserve.com**

For information about Support Circles and training in Canada and USA, contact Inclusion Press.

I realize that humour isn't for everyone, it's only for people who want to have fun, enjoy life, and feel alive.
Anne Wilson Schaeff

Far away, there in the sunshine are my highest aspirations. I may not reach them, but I can look up and see their beauty, believe in them, and try to follow where they lead.
Louisa May Alcott

Circles, MAPS and PATH: Creative Tools for Change

Marsha Forest, Jack Pearpoint,
John O'Brien, Judith Snow

Warning Label: Circles, MAPS and PATH are NOT programs. They are powerful tools for change. They are part of a tool box of person centered planning strategies. Each of these processes must be engaged in on a voluntary basis in order to be effective and not to be harmful. The ethic of the tools requires that the facilitators have had the personal experience of being the focus of these powerful strategies in their own lives. In other words, "Do No Harm". Do not use these tools with others until you have experienced them for your own life.

Circle of Friends/Circles of Support

What is a Circle? Circles do not belong to any one author. They are an ancient concept of building community and relationships in a modern context. Sometimes a Circle is called a Circle of Friends, other times it is referred to as a Circle of Support. A Circle is a group of people who gather around a person who has become excluded or isolated. The focus of the group is to find and create ways for the vulnerable person to participate in her/his community. This participation will be structured around the gifts and talents that this person wants to contribute to community.

The circle discovers these gifts by listening to the person's dream and personal story. Historically, circles have often been built around people who have been labeled disabled and who have become trapped in the human service system or other forms of isolation. However, circles are change tools and are applicable to anyone of any age who is vulnerable, isolated, or in crisis. Circles usually originate around the needs of one individual, but over time, circles diminish dependency and foster reciprocal, respectful relationships for all.

A circle is not a program. It is not a one shot exercise. It is not a quick fix. It is a way of being with a person. It is a form of being members of each other.

MAPS (Making Action Plans)

MAPS is a powerful way of creating a holistic portrait and of collecting real information about a person, a family or an organization. MAPS is a process for people or organizations to share their stories and begin making

changes that will lead to closer relationships with vulnerable persons, families, or in organizations. The process is based on an intimate reflection of a personal story (history) - the story of a person who has lived through crisis, a family that has shared difficult times with a vulnerable person, an organization/team struggling with change.

The eight questions in the MAPS mandala lead the group through a focused reflection on the gifts and capacities that are so often hidden. The questions help the group to reflect on the valuable contribution that everyone can make. The outcome identifies ways that



My Daughter's Map

Mary Peterson

With a child like Rachel, it is sometimes easy to forget that she is a whole person. She is often fragmented into bits of information such as cognitive level, gross motor, fine motor, social skills, etc. We were always addressing her need based on what therapy or tool could help individual problems. Anne Malatchi introduced us to MAPS which changed all that by helping us focus on who Rachel truly is. She is a child, sister, friend, student and most importantly, our beloved daughter. Through the MAPS process, we came to realize that she has an enormous group of people loving and supporting her. We were able to piece together the parts, to see Rachel as a "whole" person. Even though we always knew it, MAPS reminded us that Rachel is a little girl with many gifts and strengths and not a bunch of broken parts.

MAPS is such a powerful tool. Our hopes and visions for her future are much clearer now. We have goals that exceed far beyond just the next skill that she will master. We actually think about her future which includes work, supportive family and friends, and fun. We want Rachel to be happy and have a full life. We don't think that is too much to ask for anybody. MAPS was able to show us that if we start now, and don't abandon our dreams and Rachel's dreams, we can build a better life for her. It will be a lot of hard work, but it is worth the effort because she deserves a good life!

Mary Peterson just moved from Virginia to New Hampshire.

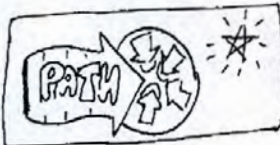


the community can draw together to support all people to be full participants.

A MAP is not an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). It is not a case conference. It is not an assessment tool. It is personal. It is designed to be co-facilitated. It uses a colourful wall graphic and visual imagery. It can be used with any age group. It is specifically designed to hand over "leadership" to people who have been isolated (and the people who are most intimately involved with that person or family). It is a tool to empower those with voices we seldom hear to be leaders in planning their own lives. It enables those in "support" roles to be genuinely supportive of an individual's own priorities. MAPS was developed by Marsha Forest, Jack Pearpoint, Judith Snow and John O'Brien.

PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrow's With Hope)

PATH is a systematic creative planning tool that begins by creating a vision, then specifies actions to get moving on the Journey to that desirable future.



and possible future.

PATH is a tool - adaptable to individual, family or organization situations (large and small). PATH relies on the creative tension set up by exploring the future and contrasting it with the present (Now). PATH produces a step-by-step grounded action plan which locks in individual commitments and enrolls other important actors. The Final Step is the "First Step" which begins immediately. If Pathfinders are truly committed to moving towards their dream (North Star), an enthusiastic action plan emerges which begins now.

PATH is not for the faint of heart as it truly asks "do you want to make change happen?"

PATH is not easy. PATH is powerful, challenging and real. It is an action oriented, colorful, co-facilitated plan of action.

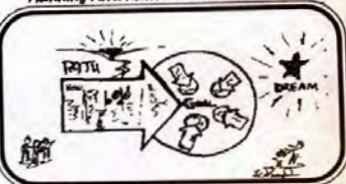
(PATH was developed by John O'Brien, Jack Pearpoint, and Marsha Forest)

PATH is a powerful tool. It makes the implicit - explicit. It takes out the "whining" and asks bluntly if people are willing to do the hard work to invent their future.

PATH plans backwards. It begins by creating a Future Dream (North Star), then focuses on creating a real positive

PATH:

Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope



an 8 Step tool to a new future.

New MAPS Training Video

SHAFIK'S MAP

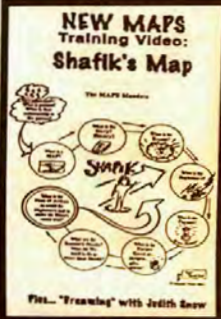
Prod: Inclusion Press & Parashoot

MAPS Team: Shafik Abu Tahir, Shina, Bahiya, Jack & Marsha

Shafik's MAP is a powerful training video which shows a family doing a MAP. It is a must for school and social service systems. It is an excellent tool for in-service. The video gives insight about recognizing what is going on behind the scenes in the family. It shows how important it is to involve the family and friends of the family in developing a plan of action.

Shafik's MAPs process is powerful, informative, and enlightening. The process of future planning through MAPS is portrayed as a powerful tool of community building and sharing vision around a focus person or issue/concern.

This videotape production was financed in part by the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities under the provisions of Public Law 103-230. Content of this videotape does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities or the Minnesota Department of Administration (July 7, 1995).



PATH Training Video Introduction to Path

Prod: Inclusion Press & Parashoot

Exciting, creative, colorful futures planning tool. Jack & Marsha demonstrate 8 steps with an individual and his family. An excellent introduction - linked to the PATH book. (35 min)

The PATH Training Video

John O'Brien, Jack Pearpoint and Marsha Forest are known innovators in the field of inclusion of individuals with challenges in community. The development and conception of PATH is yet another tool for building better communities, organizations, schools and families. PATH is a powerful tool for acceptance and empowerment. It is outlined with clarity and sensitivity in the PATH workbook and Training video. The com-

binning of graphic recording and verbal facilitation within the context of an achieved future results in an entirely new and powerful planning process. Those seeking to work toward building diversity in any organization will be well advised to consider PATH. It is a major addition to the growing body of materials and approaches which support the movement to inclusion of all in the community.

Gary Bunch is a Professor at York University and is the Research Fellow for the Center.



Inclusion: A Great word!

Marsha Forest & Jack Pearpoint

People often ask us, "What is Inclusion?" It is a good question. It gets to the heart of the matter. Inclusion is a marvelous word. "To include", according to the dictionary, means "to hold, to embrace, to involve, to count among." Isn't that great. We all want to be "counted among" the human race. There was a time (and still is many countries) when women were not "counted among" those we considered fully human. But the world is changing - and moving toward being inclusive.

What does being "inclusive" mean? Again we turn to the dictionary. Being inclusive means: being all embracing, being comprehensive, being expansive, extensive, full, vast and wide.

The opposite of the word inclusion is exclusion. Inclusive vs. exclusive. Exclusive means being select, restrictive, cliquish and clannish. It means absence, and incompleteness.

Surely we want to be "all embracing" of people we have historically left out. Inclusive, as a word, does not belong to any one group or issue. It is all embracing of disability, ability, age, gender, social class. It is inclusive - not exclusive as a word.

When someone wants to know what inclusion is all about, a simple exercise helps. Ask the person (from their own experience) to name the feelings surrounding a time/event in their life when they were excluded. The kinds of words people use are universal: sad, bad, scared, depressed, left out, alone, cold, in jail.

Second question: ask how the person felt when they were included. Words emerge like good, great, warm, welcomed, happy. The answers are similar from people of all ages in all countries. That is the best definition of what inclusion is about. It is those deeply rooted feelings that we have all experienced. Further definitions are unnecessary. People understand.

This demystifies the definition. It makes the complex simple. Everyone knows what we are all talking about. It even provides a tool for decision making. When looking at an issue, if one of the choices feels down deep like it is moving towards exclusion, it is likely a poor choice - and a better choice would be to search out an alternative that your heart tells you is more inclusive. Even in corporate decision making, managers are being counseled to listen more carefully to their hearts. Noticing your sensitivity to inclusion is a powerful decision making tool.

Unfortunately, implementing the elegantly simple concept of inclusion is not easy, especially on a large scale. We are still building jails and nursing homes - the two largest growth industries in North America. These are not inclusive, but the push is on to find more inclusive ways. The word "inclusion", like the word "love", is more easily said than done. But inclusion, like love, is a goal worthy of life long aspiration.

Take note that "inclusion" is not a new category of child, a new program plan, a new model, or a kind of classroom. Inclusion is a way of life, a way of being, a way of living. When inclusion becomes a model - beware. When

you hear people talk about "the inclusion kids", "inclusive lunch or coffee break", "inclusive recess" or "the inclusion class" - beware! We don't need to throw out the word, just because it is abused. We do need to use it correctly. Inclusion by definition cannot be narrow - it must include families, friends, learning opportunities, workplaces, places of worship, recreation - the broadest possible context.

A question to ponder: "If there is an inclusion class, what does the exclusion class look like? If there is an inclusion student, who are the exclusion students?" If we have "day centre" for people with disability labels, what would a centre for "ability" labels look like? Inclusive options are a human right. There is one race, the human race. Inclusion is fundamentally democratic, responsive to the rights for justice and responsibility for all. Simply, we all have the right and the need to be included. Thus, there cannot be "special education" and regular education. There needs to be "education" - quality education for all. There cannot be 'housing' and 'special housing'. Everyone needs decent shelter. There must not be jobs and incomes, and 'special jobs' with 'allowances'. This is demeaning and unfair.

The fact that some people need a bit of extra support must never be used as an excuse for exclusion. The truth is that ALL of us need 'special supports' from time to time. All of us are aging. All of us are at best 'temporary' able bodied. Thus, support systems that allow all people to be included as full citizens are not a luxury - but enlightened self interest so we

too can be included if an when the occasion arises.

Inclusion has also been used as a smoke screen for budget cutbacks - a way to make 'savings'. This is inaccurate and irresponsible. It is 'dumping'. Quality services for all are an investment in our future. Inclusion needs appropriate budget support - regardless of the delivery mechanism - central, local or familial. Cutting supports on the backs of those who are least able to fight back is both mean spirited and short sighted. Downloading these responsibilities to families or local government structures without appropriate funding is unacceptable. Rather, high quality education and/or services will use the resources to ensure that every person has an individualized plan that accommodates their learning needs and styles. Every person will be challenged to reach their potential and thrive by making their best possible contribution to society. That is inclusive. Thus, there is no good or bad inclusion; there is just good or bad education, good or inadequate support. There is no inclusion or exclusion student; there are just students. Beware of the trap of using the word inclusion to make a new category or label.

Inclusion is just another form of the concept of democracy. The United States constitution says it so well: "with liberty and justice for all." That's inclusion in a nutshell. It may take many lifetimes to make it a reality, but it is worth the effort. It is right and it is necessary. Let's just do it. Make it so.

Circles cont. from p.1

was at that workshop I helped to organize 4-5 years ago, the one on inclusion with Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint. She was there! Bless you, bless you.

And the circle, it goes 'round and 'round....

The meeting was just fabulous. It was every parent's dream to have such a meeting to share their child with people at school. As things wrapped up, a first grade teacher pops her head in the room and asked how my meeting went. I told her how very happy I was feeling. The first grade teacher said, "These are incredible people Luke will be with. I have learned so much from them being in my classroom with me. And... don't forget about me next year! I want to be Luke's teacher too."

She was wonderful back then. Five years ago, my daughter had just started first grade in her classroom. I was as pregnant as one could get - ripe as they come. I asked her to keep an eye on my daughter. Luke was expected any day and we already knew that it was possible there could be serious complications. Knowing this had produced a lot of anxiety and stress at home and I worried that my daughter may have absorbed some of it. I didn't know if I'd be able to bring Luke home with me when I left the hospital or if he would have to stay there for a while. "Please take care of her", I had asked. And the teacher had.

And the circle, it goes 'round and 'round....

I am soaring as I drive away from the school. In that moment, the universe made complete sense; everything that had come before made sense. In that moment all of the seemingly unrelated events and happenings and history converged. I embrace it all and I fly.

I stop at the little store across the road from the school and Debbie is behind the counter. "Hey, how's my little boy doing?", she asked. As I tell her about my adventure at school, she remarks, "is he that big already? I can't believe my little guy is going to school already!" My little guy...

Debbie had fallen in love with my son at the church nursery where she sometimes helped look after the little children. She'd bring him special presents on holidays and never failed to gush over him anytime we met.

And the circle, it goes 'round and 'round....

Speaking of the church, further down the road as I drive by it, I see little Billy, our pastor's son, in the yard with his soccer ball. Billy's mom had helped me out by baby-sitting Luke after his grandmother had died last year. They were such a blessing. It was right there in the yard behind the church, that Luke, one who shied away from physical activity, had decided he wanted to play soccer. That little Billy - I had him to thank! I started thinking about the soccer thing and realized

that I am scared to death!

Hey wait a minute - wait a minute! Jonathan, the man who sits in front of us at church, didn't he say he had taken over as head of the local soccer league? That 's right! Yes, he had said it. I'll have to speak with him about this soccer thing. He knows Luke. He could help me find a good coach.....

*And the circle it goes round and round
And the painted ponies go up and down,
We're standing on the carousel of life.
We can't return
we can only look behind from
where we came
and go round and round and round
in the circle game.*

-Joni Mitchell

Update: "The rest of the story. We have just finished the school year, Luke's first, and wildly successful at that. Know what I mean? As the school year has just ended, Sharon wants to add that her dream of inclusive schooling that would support and welcome her son was indeed fully realized! She wants us to know that the three key ingredients are

1. THE PEOPLE
2. THE RELATIONSHIPS
3. THE CHILD

So here's to the wonderful folks at Hartwood Elementary School: Rose, Barb, Jill, Pat, Arlene, Mrs. B., Sandy the bus driver, Lynn, and Ron's leadership, keeping things focused on the beautiful little person at the center of our efforts."

I tell you, I feel so darn blessed. These folks "love" my child. Do you know how safe it feels to send him off each day to be with people who love him, worry about him, celebrate him? These are people who took the time to "really" know Luke. What a relief. His success has been incredible, really incredible and a lot of work on everyone's part. It hasn't been easy or perfect (even in this ideal situation where everyone believes he has a right to be here!). Our relationship web among each other has not been always easy or perfect. But they always make sure Luke is in the middle of the circle and thus everything stays on track in this way.

Sharon Gretz is a friend and leader in the Inclusion Movement. She lives and gets to work in support of the PADevelopmental Disabilities Council's creative work in Relationship and Community Building and edits "The Common Thread" - 17 A Eisele Road, Cheswick, PA 15024.



Live your dream. People who say it
cannot be done would not interrupt
those who are doing it. (anon)

Person-centered planning taken to another level

Jeffrey L. Strully

We stood and watched as the Jumbo 747 took off from Los Angeles to Paris. Our son, Alex, and his friend, Robin, had decided to go to Europe for a few months. They wanted to travel to France, Germany, back again to the south of France, England and end up in Ireland. Alex had given up his stable job with a large fast food chain and his apartment to go off and explore the world. Robin, who joined him, had recently returned from several months in Africa and was looking to continue her adventure. Together they were going to travel around Europe using the rail system, living in youth hostels, hanging out with friends and asking friends to "crash" at their place, and other "youthful" approaches to ensuring that their limited resources were spread over the longest possible time-frame.

These two adventurers chose to leave in October to begin their journey. To travel in Europe one should only do this in warm weather like June, July or even August. But Europe in October and November is not a place "thoughtful and 'real' adults" should be. Of course if it was up to me, I would have traveled to the Caymans in the winter season! But again, I am so much wiser. However, young people do these things. I am not sure why they do it, but they do it none the less. I think at least my children do these things purposefully to annoy their father. Nobody seems to listen to dad, my son and his friend, Robin, just made up their minds and did what they wanted. Can you believe that?

To be 27 again and to choose to be carefree and to just try a new adventure, make a life change, explore new possibilities without feeling the pressure of conforming to the day-to-day routines seems so exciting and something I don't understand. I thought adults settle down, get stuck in the day-to-day experiences of living life, trying to make it through each day. People are supposed to get stuck in their life patterns, aren't they?

This journey sounds somewhat typical of many young people you might know. However, when you add to the story line that Alex has "Down Syndrome" then for whatever reason this story seems to go from one level to another in people's minds. Lots of people can't make sense as soon as a "disability" is factored into the equation.

I know you are asking yourselves - How could I allow my 27 year old son (WITH DOWN SYNDROME) to leave a good job (you know they don't grow on trees), an apartment, and just take off for Europe. What is going to happen to him? What if.... Does he have the skills to change US currency into French Francs and get the best interest rates? Do they teach that in school? I thought those special classes were still working on identification of body parts and how to cross the street safely! How is he going to cross the Atlantic safely? How is he going to communicate with those French who don't seem to like Americans on a good day and now they will be dealing with an American with Down Syndrome!

Obviously, as a parent, you still have not come to grips with the fact that your son has a disability. You are still in denial. You are trying to have your son be "normal". Shouldn't Alex just be involved in special Olympics and attend People First meet-

ings? As a dad, I wanted Alex to have a life even if what he did wasn't what I would do. I wanted him to explore the world and enjoy it like the rest of us.

Thank goodness I still have my daughter to count on. At least she is the more traditional one as well as the sensible one. I am sure the supported employment agency will find her a job one day. They have promised us for the last several years that they will find a job. Of course, it would be easier if she would only have more skills, less behavior problems, etc.. Probably she will only work 20 hours a week for minimum wage, but that is better than being in a day wasting center or riding in a van (van therapy has been approved as a reimbursable Medicaid service as of 1/1/97). I should be happy that people want to find her a job, but I get the feeling that most people believe she should be in some sort of work crew. However, even if she gets



a job, I still better not give up my day job so fast and think my lovely daughter is going to support me in the manner I am familiar with or want to be familiar with. She probably will be working on a crew in the fast food industry or the nursery watering plants. You know people with developmental disabilities and nature type of activities are closely linked.

Self-determination will become another word meaning "same old thing with new packaging". I don't believe this is what person-centered planning was about. The talk about self-determination fills all our meetings, but when you get down to it the day-to-day experiences have not changed. People are still doing the same old thing. Riding the van, waiting for services, hearing excuses, living in congregated and segregated environments, being pleased that they live in shabby apartments with little money, having few or no real friends, being strangers in their community, etc.

I am not pushing for people to travel to Europe though that does sound kind of interesting (of course, if people with disabilities would go to Europe they would travel in a herd). I am not pushing for people with disabilities to own their own business either. I am just concerned that we are settling for people being part-time employees (20 hours per week) in 16 year olds jobs (the jobs people with disabilities obtain are jobs we had when we were 16) for the rest of their lives making minimum wage?

I am not saying that living in your own place, having a job, being a good citizen, having fun at the mall, etc., are not worthwhile goals. They are! Of course, even these goals are still not REAL for far too many people in our country and around the

world today. I am not suggesting we should not work to get to this level of support for everyone. However, if we just settle for supported employment and supported living as acceptable outcome, we are falling short of living life to its fullest. Supported living and supported employment are human service words, phrases, ideas and structures. There is a difference from having an exciting life and being in a human service program entitled supported living.

Of course, supported living is far more preferable to group living (congregated and segregated living) - unless you are in your 20's then group living could be considered a party! But for most people, congregated and segregated living still is a reality. Families still believe that their son or daughter is better off "with their own kind". Governmental structures still fund group living over supported living. That is a real problem and I don't mean to imply that the movement away from any congregated and segregated living isn't a good idea, because it is!

However, far too many people remain in large institutions (if one person did then it would be far too many people). Far too many people remain in nursing homes (if one person lived in a nursing home then that would be far too many people). People remain in group homes (if one person did that would still be far too many people). Moving from these structures to supported living is a tremendous step forward and one we should be working on. But let's not declare victory even if everyone would be in supported living/supported employment. As these structures still fall short of real life in the community for people.

If we can't continue to dream, think in bright colors, figure out new and exciting opportunities, then we will get stuck at the supported living and supported employment level. It wouldn't be terrible, it just wouldn't be exciting. It wouldn't be real life.

Pushing the envelope means being open to new and interesting ideas. Thinking in different patterns, shapes and colors. I am not sure where my children's journey will end. I do hope that they continue to come up with new and exciting ideas in order to keep all of us young at heart, especially their dad! However, if their lives are going to be truly wonderful then all of us want more than supported living, supported employment and the person-centered planning approaches which are being conducted throughout the US today. We want the person to be put back into the person-centered equation not just what is available or possible, or what vendors will do because of the funding, or what parents think is safe and secure, but truly what is wonderful and exciting for that specific person.

Let's make person-centered planning what it was truly intended to be, a way for each person to think about, talk with people who matter, and to figure out what they want to do while they are on this earth. Wouldn't it just be fascinating if the rest of us listened to people, utilized resources to support people's dreams, and worked together to achieve what people really and truly want and desire. So, let's get to work. There is a lot to do. I need to get to the airport and find out where my son is headed next!

We are often asked what it takes to be a good MAPS and PATH facilitator. We think the great dancer and choreographer Martha Graham gives the answer in her famous quote:

"I AM A DANCER. I believe 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 desires. Practice is a means of inviting the perfection desired."

Even as I write, time has begun to make today yesterday - the past. Even the most brilliant scientific discoveries will in time change and perhaps grow obsolete, as new scientific manifestations emerge.

But art is eternal: for it reveals the inner landscape which is the soul of man."



Sitting in a Circle

The American Indian regarded the circle as the principal symbol for understanding life's mysteries, for he observed that it was impressed everywhere throughout nature. Man looked out on the physical world through the eye, which is circular. The earth was round, and so were the sun, moon and planets. The rising and setting of the sun followed a circular motion. The seasons formed a circle. Birds build their nests in circles. Animals marked their territories in circles. In the old days, tribes lived in circular homes called tipis and their communities were arranged with the tipis in a circle. Indeed, to the Indian, the whole of life appeared to operate in circular patterns.

What is Person Centred Planning

Marsha Forest, Jack Pearpoint
& John O'Brien

Many people are asking "What is Person Centred Planning?" Basically, it is a constellation of tools developed to help a person or a family who want to make a purposeful and meaningful change in their life. Person Centred Planning tools include Individual Service Design, Lifestyle Planning, Personal Futures Planning, Essential Lifestyle Planning, and MAPS and PATH.

Person Centred Planning is a wonderfully clear three word name. No jargon. Very straightforward. The planning is centered on the person. Simple and yet profound. The planning is not for the convenience of the service, the organization, or even the family (when a person not a family is the focus). The plan simply serves the hopes, dreams and visions of the focus person or family. This is very exciting work.

Is it easy? No. Does it always work? No. A plan is simply that: moving from "hope" for a better future to specifying personal commitments that increase the chances of moving toward that future. There are no guarantees, only

person-to-person commitments. But the plan gives motion to the possibility that something real and meaningful will happen. A good plan with no action won't take anyone anywhere.

The facilitator is a servant to both the person and the process. Imagine the facilitator holding a set of empty containers and drawing the contents to fill each container out of the person and his/her friends, family and colleagues. Each of the different tools offers a somewhat different set of containers.

The choice of method is more like choosing a musical instrument than it is like selecting a hammer or a screwdriver from a toolbox. Facilitators learn a method that matches their gifts; they practice faithfully; they take master classes; they carefully review their performance. Some facilitators, like some musicians, learn more than one instrument as a way to extend their range or deepen their skills in their chosen instrument.

The plan does not belong to a service organization or to the facilitator. Both the process and the content belong to the person and those who are committed to accompany the person along the journey the plan outlines.

The facilitator gives up any pre-

conceived notions of what is possible or impossible, even what is good or bad. The facilitator is not passive but pushy about the process of getting clear statements and clear agreements about which direction the person wants to move and which route the person wants to take. The facilitator is never pushy about content: where to go and how to get there is up to the person and the person's allies. This takes practice. It's easy to stop the plan from truly belonging to the focus person by standing in judgment. The only limits on what the plan can include are the limits of imagination and commitment. The only limits on what the planners can achieve are the limits of their ability to enroll and align the necessary resources.

Some people ask, "What if a person makes a bad or illegal choice?" Others wonder what to do if the person asks for the moon. Both of these questions result from the same misunderstanding; both assume that the process belongs somehow to the facilitator. But it doesn't. The process offers people a way to clarify what they want and what they are willing to work together to make happen. Those who know and care about the person, and often those who control neces-

sary resources, need to choose to sign up to help the person. The process offers a way for people to surface and negotiate disagreements about what is right and what they will consent to work on.

Of course, facilitators are responsible for their own ethics and can always say no before beginning the process of helping someone who wants to take a wrong direction like planning a crack selling business or putting someone in an institution. Even in such challenging circumstances, it may be helpful to "listen under" the "named goal" before outright rejection, because it may turn out to be the only available term for deeper and richer dreams and goals.

These tools are for all people; not just for people with disabilities. We find that the more facilitators use the tools in their own lives, the less dangerous they are. Dangerous facilitators impose their own words, their own images and their own interpretations on the focus person.

Good facilitators are good listeners who see their role as creatively helping people to design lives that reflect their gifts. That's what Person Centred Planning is really all about.

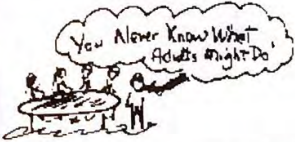
They Don't Want to Go to Room 20

Nathan & Richard Rosenberg & Mary Falvey

The services and supports for, Nathan, have progressed this year. Nathan is now 10 years old and completing his 5th grade school year. He has had a GREAT year. His 5th grade teacher, Mr. Proctor, has been extremely supportive and understanding of how Nathan is a unique learner and what forms of support he needs to be successful.

The services and supports that Nathan needed in the 5th grade were in:

- Handwriting
- Math
- Organizational skills
- producing "s" and "z" sounds.



You never know what adults might do!

As the year progressed there were two or three meetings with Nathan, Mr. Proctor, and the teachers from Room 20 - the special education resource staff. Nathan was doing extremely well with his friends and was having a fun year.

At mid-year his teachers expressed their concerns that Nathan's organizational skills and handwriting needed to be addressed, especially in light of his transition to Middle school next year. Mr. Proctor utilizes the Writing Workshop method of teaching and supporting children in their writing development. He felt that the Room 20 special education staff could provide him with additional support each day in the writing program.

When Nathan was asked what he thought about going to Room 20, he responded that other kids say that Room 20 is for "the dummies" and

that he did not want to go to Room 20, ever! He was very clear that support was OK in his classroom, but he did not want to be pulled out of good things in his class and did not want to go to Room 20. The Special Education Resource Teacher wanted to know from Nathan who called the kids from Room 20 "dummies" and he said "all the kids at school do". Mary, Nathan's mom said that as adults we really had an obligation to pay attention to the message Nathan was giving us all. Even if there was no intent to create an atmosphere where a group of students were rejected and devalued, it in fact had happened. Instead of focusing on who was doing the rejecting, it was important to focus on how to welcome those students into the larger school community. Children learn what we teach them and if we teach them that certain students need to be separated and segregated from the rest, we are only modeling for them a very powerful message that rejection and devaluing some members of our community is OK, and may even be preferred.

Off to Middle School

Nathan has always been an active member of his team meetings, and the end of the year IEP meeting for this year was extremely important to him. His 5th grade class had completed a tour of the middle school and it was somewhat overwhelming to the students how big the middle school was and how big the kids were...but Nathan thought they had GOOD FOOD at the Middle School, much better choices than at the elementary school.

We had requested that the Middle School team be invited to Nathan's end of the year IEP meeting. The meeting included:

Nathan, Mom, Dad, Aunt
5th grade classroom teacher
Room 20 special ed teacher
Assistant Principal Middle School
School Counselor Middle School

Middle School Resource Teacher

Nathan was quiet at the beginning of the meeting when the special education resource teacher from the elementary school shared her assessment information. She had shared that her testing was not reliable as far as she could tell, but she still felt the need to share. His classroom teacher, Mr. Proctor who really got to know and appreciate Nathan as a learner shared some very insightful information about him. He stated that what was important was that Nathan many times would utilize logic that was circular in nature as opposed to linear, and that he is very creative.

A particularly powerful moment during the meeting was when the Assistant Principal from the middle school, who seemed to really bond with Nathan, was moved by the process. He shared that he had received support from special education resource services when he was a child and wished that he had been a member of his team. He was also very moved and impressed with how much Nathan understood his needs. The Resource teacher from the Middle School observed the Elementary School Resource teacher stressing as she was trying to write goals for next year in Middle school. It was very powerful and extremely symbolic when the middle school Resource Teacher asked for the pen and IEP form to work on Nathan's behalf. The counselor suggested that we call the end of August to discuss the staffing so we could be sure that he has a good match between Nathan's needs and his teachers.

We are all looking forward to Nathan's education, social and support opportunities at the Middle School. The Assistant Principal asked Nathan about half way through the meeting if he was having a hard time sitting still and paying attention. Nathan said he was and the Assistant Principal reassured him that he was having a great

deal of difficulty sitting still too, and hoped the meeting would end soon!

Nathan would like to share with all students who receive support that they should all go to their meeting, even though, sometimes it is scary, and is often boring, BUT IT IS WORTH IT. "You never know what adults might do if you're not there."

Nathan, Richard and Mary are friends and advocates in Los Angeles.

**Dear Teacher,
I am a survivor of a
concentration camp.
My eyes saw what no
man should witness.**

**Gas chambers built by
learned engineers.**

**Children poisoned by
educated physicians.**

**Infants killed by trained
nurses. Women & babies
shot & burned by high
school & college gradu-
ates.**

**So, I am suspicious of
education.**

**My request is that
teachers help students
become human.**

**Your efforts must never
produce learned monsters,
skilled psychopaths,
educated Eichmanns.**

**Reading, writing,
arithmetic are important
only if they serve to make
our children more human..**

from: Haim Ginott (1972)

Teacher & Child

**True peace is not merely the
absence of tension. It is the
presence of justice.**

Martin Luther King, Jr.

**No matter what our attempts to
inform, it is our ability to inspire
that will turn the tides.**

(Syracuse Cultural Workers)

Listen to the Children: Hope was Ignited:

Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint

We are always amazed at the quality and sensitivity of suggestions made by children when we are called into a school to find solutions to complex issues. This is still "novel" to most educators who still seek "expert" solutions from "professionals" when the real experts are sitting right in front of them.

If we had only one suggestion to make to all educators, it would be: **"ask and listen to the children"**. We are not saying that adults don't have good ideas. We are not suggesting turning everything over to the children. We are not abrogating responsibility, avoiding discipline or inviting anarchy. We are saying let's add their voices to the list of those we listen to. We added a clarification - to ask AND to listen. We need to do both.

We find that children often bring a fresh and unique perspective to quite complex problems. Their heads are less cluttered with "can't" than most of us, and often they have the audacity to state the obvious and simple truths we are too close to see.

We were in an Ontario school attempting to work with family, staff and students to build a quality educational experience for all children - including a beautiful child named Lorna. At seven years old, Lorna was on the verge of expulsion. Her crime - pulling hair. Her labels - too many to mention. They were a lovely family with a beautiful and complex child. Everyone was frazzled and frantic as their seven year old was on the verge of suspension based on the school's "zero tolerance for violence" policy.

This is an extraordinary example of the kind of insanity making behaviour in some schools today. To equate bringing a hand gun to school with "hair pulling" by a child with the label autism is a policy to create violence - from families to administrators. It is beyond reason. We acknowledge that pulling hair causes a minor disturbance. But to equate this with life threatening violence is truly theatre of the absurd. But the principal was adamant. Lorna was "violent." The policy was the law. There could be no exceptions. The solution was suspension and expulsion.

Picture this violent child. Big eyes, small frame, sings and hums, has many friends among the other children. This is not a gun-toting gangster. (Even if she was, we have to come up with creative and constructive solutions to this issue as well.)

We gathered a group of about thirty children from the school and asked the principal and staff to sit and listen to their children for an hour. We invited Lorna's family to participate when appropriate. Her grade 2 teacher and supportive assistant joined. Lorna was in the middle. Most of the children crowded around on cushions and on the floor.

We started chatting with the children about friends and friendship in general - not about Lorna at all. We used the metaphor of a glass half-full or half-empty. The children liked that. Some felt the glass was half full. Others argued it was half empty. It was

lively. The children were enthralled. We asked the children what their "gifts" were. We drew a big gift graphic. Lorna was just one of the circle of children.

"How would you feel if you had no friends?" we asked the group.

Words emerged as they do all over the world. Their words were: sad, lonely, not good, bored, need to get friends, left out, frustrated, humiliated.

Our next question was, "What would you do if you had no friends?" Their answers: I'd kick, be unhappy, be mad, do nothing, cry, skip school....and the key that always comes out "I'd kill myself." In our experience, this answer is universal when asked of children age 10 and over. Without dwelling on the fact that loneliness kills, the children genuinely understand how unthinkable loneliness is. We moved on.

"What can we do to make and be friends with one another?" Their answers: go swimming together, go to the movies, call each other, go places together, hang out together, play together.

We explained our belief that we all need help in life. "What are some examples of things you need some extra help with?" Their answers: reading, painting, basketball, spelling, crafts, to stop hurting myself, writing, talking louder, drawing, math. One child spontaneously volunteered that his grandma needed help walking, speaking and hearing.

We then asked Lorna if we could focus on her for a few minutes. She gave us the OK sign. At times she said "I'm itchy" and then went to the nearby piano which she played quietly. It was not disruptive. Later she returned to the center of the circle with her assistant and several children who sat and held her hands. Her parents joined her in the front of the room.

With her parents surrounding Lorna, we urged the children to ask anything they wanted to know about Lorna and her family. We assured the students they were free to ask anything.

Clearly magic was happening. Jack was recording everything in colourful graphics. When the recess bell rang, no one moved. The children decided unanimously to stay. The principal, surprised at the whole development, went and got his camera.

At the appropriate time, we asked the children if they had specific suggestions about how Lorna could be more a part of the class. They were bursting with suggestions. We had a good age range of children - not simply from Lorna's class. This really

made for a lively discussion.

Lorna's dad was often speechless and close to tears as he heard the children's desire to include his daughter.

At the end of the session, the teachers commented that the children had devised a better Individualized Education Plan (IEP) than they had. They were not defensive, but were enthralled with the quality of the responses generated by the children.

Lorna's mom and dad thanked everyone and planned a future session - with pizza for the kids. They were both too emotional to talk. They summed it all up in a letter.

"Watching the children today was a remarkable experience for us. Doing the PATH and then following it up with the amazing discussion with the children has given us hope again for the future. In just a few hours Lorna became connected to the school and the children in a new way. The staff finally broke down their "professional" reserve and came to a place of real understanding of our vision and hopes for our two daughters. Hearing the children express such love and acceptance of Lorna was truly inspiring."

The North Star Dream

We now think about our "North Star" every day. In our family's North Star, Lorna is a full citizen in our community. She lives in a lovely little cottage type house right near our home. She has a "funky" roommate - a theatre person/artist from our local and thriving theatre community. She is supporting herself through her skills in art. She feels she is a valued contributing member of the community.

She has mastered new ways of communicating. She uses the phone to call us. We can go away for vacations and not feel tied down and worried all the time.

Lorna has links to a nearby farm where she keeps a horse. She has pets in her home. Her church community has also fully welcomed her. She is happy and content because she has many friends with whom she does numerous activities. When she sees former teachers and mentors on the streets, she tells them, "Thanks, you really made a difference in my life."

This is a transcript of the North Star part of the PATH we did. It was the first time Lorna's parents (both extremely articulate) had stated out loud their deepest hopes for their daughter. The father, was deeply touched by the experience.

Following Up...

We did a follow up call several months later to see how everyone was doing. We are thrilled to report that Lorna and her family are not only doing well, they are in their own words "doing great!" This is a verbatim report from an emotional dad on what happened.

"That day was the breaking point. They were either going to finally understand, or we were going to fight them legally and spiritually. The whole day was very moving. I still get really choked up talking or trying to write about it. The process was very moving. Hope was ignited."

"We are moving toward our North Star and we are right on track with our one year goals. I can't believe it. The principal is even relaxed. Lorna says "good morning" to him each day and he actually smiles."

"We just got Lorna's report card which says she is making good progress in all areas - especially in controlling her behavior. She participates more in everything and is getting used to changes in routine. She can count from 1-50 and is learning addition facts. She has improved self-control and is making gains socially and academically."

Lorna's dad was thrilled to report that Lorna had signed her own report card, and that as a family, they were all doing much better than in the fall.

"There is no more tension or upset with the school. We are enroute to the North Star."

Instead of a war, this situation was saved when everyone involved sat together; listened to one another; and listened to the children. It would have been a tragic waste of time, energy and money to have taken the other route. More important, Lorna would have been excluded - perhaps beginning the long slide to institutionalization. No school system should ever expend the energy and finances to exclude children when we know that creative solutions can be found. It is a matter of will - and priorities. The same energy is available to welcome all children - or to battle endlessly for exclusion. Congratulations to Lorna, her family and their school. It wasn't easy, but they are on the right path.

**Inclusion is Simple:
But it is NOT EASY!**

Pearpoint/Forest

Defining Problems Differently

Since the major "problem" defined by the principal and special education teacher was Lorna's "disruptive" behaviour (specifically pulling other children's hair) we addressed the issue head on.

"What do you think Lorna needs some help with?" Their answers:

- * talking and listening to us
- * looking at people when they talk and when she talks
- * eating her lunch
- * learning to be a friend and how to have friends

- * learning to play with the other kids
- * expressing her feelings
- * controlling her emotions and not pulling hair

Why do you think she pulls other children's hair?

- * She wants to communicate.
- * She wants to get to know us.
- * She doesn't know it's wrong, she wants to get our attention.
- * She wants to say "hi".
- * She likes to smell and feel hair and she doesn't know it hurts when she does it.
- * I don't think she likes to pull hair.

She just doesn't know how to control it.

What can we do to help her?

- * When she reaches out to pull hair just hold her hand and gently but firmly say "No". (We acted this one out a few times.)
- * Don't ever slap or hurt her.
- * We can talk to her more.
- * We can care about her more.

The children asked a lot of great questions of Lorna's mom and dad. They would have gone on all day but we were all emotionally drained.

Joel and Bryce: A Lesson in Friendship

Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint
Inclusion Defined

Inclusion, by our definition, means learning to live with one another. It is not simply being "in" a physical space. It is being "with" and embracing the people in that space. The prerequisite is 'being there': being at the table, in the classroom, in the workplace.

Magie happened in microcosm in the relationship that developed between Joel Hollands who is 12 years old and came to the Summer Institute on our invitation as a student helper.

Bryce Thomas, 9 years old, was there with his parents Janet and Daryl. They just moved to Texas from Louisiana. They had met Shafik Asante at a conference and were inspired by his message that inclusion was bigger than disability. A bond was built and an invitation was extended to come to Toronto.

People saying 'yes' to the seemingly impossible increases the potential for creativity and new life to happen. Janet and Daryl found out about the institute late. They did not have the funds to attend. They had never taken Bryce, who uses a wheel chair and is labeled profoundly disabled, on an airplane. They had never been out of the USA with Bryce. They had never eaten bagels and lox.

We said, "If you can get to Toronto i.e. raise the money for the airfare, we will find money for the tuition and housing. We will arrange transportation, oxygen in case of medical emergency, and we will feed you bagels and lox." They said 'yes' and arrived in Toronto on July 5, 1996.

Other important factors. In Texas, Bryce fell in love with Jack, now known affectionately as "Uncle Jack". They played together in the swimming pool in the incredibly hot Dallas June sun. It is not talking about friendship or inclusion that really forges people together. Doing things together starts the process. The Thomas family sat and ate with us for two days in Texas. That was the start. Was there a guarantee that things would go further? No. Invitations are made often, but many of us are unwilling or unable to risk saying 'yes' to new opportunities.



'No' is most common. Knowing when to say 'yes' and 'no' makes a difference.

While Bryce and Jack were swimming in the pool with Judith Snow, Jay Klein, and Marsha Forest, fun was the key. We weren't thinking about inclusion, diversity, disability, community. We were having a ball, outdoing one another with splashing, games, etc. Bryce, who doesn't speak very clearly yet, was shouting "I like this Jack. Do it again." A very tired Jack limped from the pool sunburned and exhausted an hour later.

Janet, Bryce's energetic mom and advocate, had the chance for a few precious moments to just sit and watch. She even disappeared for a few minutes as she sensed she could trust this lunatic bunch of pool crazies with her precious child.

So the Thomas family decided to come to Toronto to be with some people they liked and trusted, and who seemed to genuinely like them in return. No one felt sorry for them or their son. This was a comfortable group of people who challenged themselves and each other, and had fun as well as doing some serious work.

What occurred was not magic at all. Conditions were brought together to create the possibility for lives to be lived to the full. Exploring this vast human potential is what we want for all our children and for ourselves - for everyone.

Will this relationship continue? The boys live thousands of miles apart. But there are phones and there is e-mail. Already plans are underway for next year in Toronto. Equally important, both boys have experienced a new and intense friendship. With this as a foundation, they will continue that search. It is the opening of a possibility that didn't exist before.

This is the story of two boys whose hearts met. They liked to play together. They listened to one another. They found acceptance in one another's eyes. It is Joel who now avidly waits for e-mail and is sorely disappointed when it doesn't arrive. Bryce

was so excited when we all called the other night that he didn't let anyone else get a word in edgewise. He was literally choking with excitement. It is a two way street - a reciprocal relationship where each benefits by knowing the other.

Several points need to be clarified. We believe that neither Bryce nor Joel are unique or unusual. Neither the Hollands family nor the Thomas family are endowed with "special" powers. It is too easy to write this off as one of those 'special' happenings. It was extraordinary (and we celebrate that), but in its foundation - it was very ordinary. We believe in our hearts and souls that what happened with Bryce and Joel, and with all our families together, can happen anywhere and everywhere. It takes hard work, but it can happen. It is not a miracle.

Several conditions are needed for friendship and learning to flourish in families, in schools, in workplaces, in communities.

- An atmosphere of welcome, hospitality and trust.

- A belief that Bryce has as much a right to be present and participating as Joel. We must believe that Bryce is as valuable and worthwhile as Joel.

- A belief that there are millions of Joels and Bryces in every neighborhood anywhere in the world.

- Role models set the tone and model the very behavior we want to see in the children. It will not happen otherwise.

- People (including adults and children) must sit with one another, share meals, conversation and connect with one another before anything can develop.

- Safety boundaries are established for children.

- Children's names - and no other labels or negative descriptors - are used.

- No jargon is necessary. Plain language will do.

- Complex medical briefings are not required for friendships. Joel had all his questions simply answered by those who knew and loved Bryce. He needed to be around Janet, Daryl and others who loved and accepted Bryce. He needed to know what he wanted to know and no more. He didn't need fancy explanations about cerebral palsy. He wasn't interested. He was interested in Bryce as a person.

- When we focus on community capacity, communities will develop their own internal capacity to facilitate inclusion.

- Attendants and assistants are necessary when needed for physical care, but this must not get in the way of friendships developing. Stepping out of the way so a relationship can happen is a critical skill.

- Adults present must know how to foster and facilitate friendships and community for all - and when and how to 'step back'.

- Financial resources are needed. Note: what happened with Joel and Bryce involved no extraordinary financial resources.

- We need to acknowledge and act on the fact that young people - Joel and Bryce - and their families are the key to the future.

- Schools must involve families and neighbors in figuring out how to live day to day together at school. Professionals must be hired who are trained and skilled in facilitating relationships among all children.

Update: Bryce, Darryl and Janice arrive in Toronto on July 2nd for the 2nd Annual Summer Institute. Cory arrives on July 5th. It will be quite a reunion!

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or touched... but are felt in the heart.

Helen Keller

An Interview with Joel and Bryce

Their remarks are profound in their simplicity. (Note: Joel was interviewed by phone and Bryce by e-mail with his mother typing his answers.)

Marsha (M): Joel, you mentioned that John McKnight's opening talk at the institute really struck you. What particularly stood out for you?

Joel (J): I liked the part about a glass being seen as half full or half empty. Our society is concerned with what is wrong with people - the empty part. I just never thought of it like that, but it's really true. Nobody ever pays attention to the full half of the glass.

M: Is this true at school for you?

J: It's true especially at school. Nobody really seems to care about anybody else but themselves. They are all judging people all the time. You know the saying, "You can't judge

a book by its cover." But that's what



they do at school. Everybody is just judging all the time. If the adults see someone with a problem, they assume an empty glass and don't see the full side. They assume it's all empty and there's nothing good there.

M: Why do you think this happens? Is there anyone taking leadership?

J: There's no one there to set an example. There's no direction about

that sort of thing.

M: About what sort of thing?

J: About values and attitudes.

M: Let's talk about you and Bryce.

What do you think happened that brought you two together?

J: The second night of the Institute, me and Jonathan and Cory were playing ball at our house. Janet (Bryce's Mom) had to go somewhere for a few minutes. She asked us to watch Bryce while she was gone. That's what happened. We played together.

M: Tell me a bit more. What drew you to each other?

J: He likes the same super-heroes that I like. Batman and Robin. Bryce liked to talk about Batman, Robin and the bad guys on the roof. So we shot balls to the roof and had a good time.

M: What happened that made you and Joel become friends?

Bryce: (B) We liked each other

and our ages are close.

M: What did you especially like about Joel?

B: He is nice.

M: What do you think Joel really liked about you?

B: I was nice to him.

M: Joel, how did you understand what Bryce was saying? Lots of people can't seem to understand him.

J: At first I had trouble, but Janet would sort of tell me what he was talking about, and once I understood what the subject was, I knew what he was talking about - like the "bad guys on the roof." We liked playing the same games.

M: What role did the adults around play in all this?

J: They were great. They weren't discouraging but were encouraging. I really learned a lot from the adults at the institute. I

(continued p. 11)

Building and Sustaining Friendships: The Courage to Ask

Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint

Building friendships is an intense and deep activity. We get many letters and calls from people who want the "answer" - how to do it. This is like asking "How do I do life?" It is not simple. The only answer we know is to live life every day, and surround yourself with support. It is the only way to survive. If you wait for a crisis before building your support, it is too late. Resilient people "appear" to sail through life's inevitable challenges because they have been building and sustaining their support networks, day after day, year after year, slowly and surely. This creates the illusion of "easy," but the real story is the courage to ask, and endless hard work.

What does it take? It is not words alone. It takes deeds as well. Most of us can dream - and this is important. But dreaming - without doing - leads to disappointment and disillusionment. A psychiatrist friend gave us a relevant joke. "What's the difference between a neurotic and a psychotic? A neurotic builds castles in the air. A psychotic moves in."

A circle builder is neither neurotic nor psychotic. A circle builder is grounded in the realities of life. No castles in the air; no imaginary friends. The circle builder's feet are planted firmly on mother earth, building every day, for today and tomorrow.

Life in times of economic cutbacks effect almost everyone. Job loss, unemployment, depression, stress, physical and spiritual illnesses are daily realities. It is tempting to hide, but most of us plod on. Joy comes from treasured moments - being with the people we love, sharing meals and music, sharing common cause, sharing grief and sharing success.

Great visions are accomplished by slogging - hard work. Think of a great writer, artist, musician. They dream the dream and then comes the work. Thousands of hours of practice, failed attempts, and then when it works, the vision finally emerges on paper, a canvas or a musical score.

The analogy holds true for friendship. It takes years of hard work. Do we nurture our friendships?

How many phone calls, e-mails do we make? How many dinners do we share with friends? How many tears do we share? Do we overlook the annoying behaviors we all have? How often do we say "I'm sorry"? How often do we say "thank you"?

When schools attempt to build friendships around children who are usually excluded, they cannot expect a formula to work. What is needed is sensitive, empathetic adults who are nurturers of the circle, who understand and can tolerate the ups and downs of childhood issues and who are patient, honest and real with children. These also need to be people who themselves have a rich circle of friends.

Doing an exercise called "Circle of Friends" is only one possible step in a long and complex road to building relationships. There are guidelines. We can work with each other to help build circles. But, there is no recipe to guarantee success.

Change of any kind takes years to develop. Real friendship comes from nurturing people being together in doing activities together be it sports, music or watching television. Eating together is a great beginning. Singing together another indicator of harmony. But harmony itself isn't the goal. There are times of real disharmony, real disagreement, hurt, but in spite of it all, friendships grow and change.

What is at the core for us are the words trust and respect. When trust and respect go, the relationship is really over. Friendships have a bond of trust and respect that does not waver. Do friends annoy each other? You bet. Do friends always agree on everything. Not on your life. But respect must be there for a friendship to survive.

Another lesson in circle building is "the more the merrier." Or we would say, "the more the safer". If a circle is too tight, it may become a knot. When we have hit the inevitable snags in any relationship, we have called other friends to get us untied. Sort of family/friendship therapy. Others have mediated some of our more intense differences.

The research on friendship and health is incredible. People have dramatically improved chances of surviving major illness or life crisis if they have a circle of friendship and support. This has proven

true in our own lives. Every medical, spiritual or work crisis, the troops rally and we have survived!

This is no mean feat. Loneliness is a killer in our society. As the nuclear family disintegrates, as people move far from their biological families, isolation and loneliness become epidemic in proportion. It is a deeply human issue.

We know that lonely children often die not from any disease of the body but from a disease of the soul. We know that our elderly often die alone and without anyone around. We know all this and yet we often persist in irrelevant curriculum, foolish life skills programs etc. instead of getting together and figuring out how to help the person who is at risk build a network of support i.e. build a life. Life and people around are the prerequisites for anything more that might come. It is the foundation of the house. Without a good foundation eventually the house will fall down.

There are few guarantees in life. What we can do is live life well today. The only guarantee against the disease of loneliness is building friendships now, and doing the daily and often unseen activities that keep the house from falling down around you.

Therefore we suggest Starting Now! Call a friend - Right now. Call someone just to say hello. Invite a friend to dinner. After you make the phone call, get a little note card. Write a note to someone you haven't seen for awhile. If you have e mail, send a few hello notes to your network. Do it Now!

Friendship and circle building are activities that take time, energy, devotion and commitment as much as the activities that we define as work. Some would say it "should" all happen naturally, that love and friendship should be natural. We know that all the things that look easy and natural are events that take nurturing and care. Those beautiful gardens we see are nurtured and planted by careful and loving gardeners. Friendship and Circle Building need gardeners to till the soil so that the beautiful seeds will blossom and in the long run add beauty and meaning to your life.

Start now. It is never too late!

Joel & Bryce - continued from p. 10

learned about stuff going on all over the world. I even talked to Te Ripowai a lot about New Zealand and Heather about Scotland. Everyone was really friendly and getting along with one another. You all had no barriers for me and Bryce. You didn't say "You can't do this and you can't do that." Also nobody told me anything bad about Bryce.

M: Joel, what would happen if Bryce came to your school?

J: He wouldn't be allowed to come.

M: OK. Let's assume he was finally allowed to come to your school. What do you think would happen?

J: They, the teachers would ignore him. They wouldn't deal with him and they'd talk about him behind his back.

M: Joel, why do you think Bryce liked you?

J: That's a good question. We like to do the same things. We really aren't all that different from one another. We like animals, the same kinds of movies, Batman and Uncle Jack!

M: What did you like best about Bryce?

J: He listened to what I had to say. It wasn't like one of us was controlling the other. At school groups of kids stay together because one is popular and usually one controls things. You stay together just to fit in.

M: Joel am I right to say that Bryce really seemed to like you just for you.

J: That's it! That's right! He liked me for who I am and I liked him for who he is.

M: Bryce, what did you like most at the Summer Institute?

B: It was fun. It had elevators to go down and up.

M: Do you want to come back next summer and why?

B: Yes. Because I like Joel. I want people to let Joel and me be crime fighters and do karate.

Janet, Bryce's mom adds: Bryce talks about

Joel all the time. In fact, with all the friends and relatives we've been visiting recently, the first things Bryce says are:

"I went to Canada. I found a friend. His name is Joel. We are crime fighters."

M: Joel, what do you think Bryce would like more of at home in Texas and at school.

J: He says he wants to play more and be more with the other kids.

M: If you were going to talk to a group of adults, mostly teachers or other professionals, what would you tell them?

J: I'd say that even though Bryce needs a good education, he needs just as good or at least the same amount of being with other kids and having more friends. That is just as important as his education.

M: How do the kids at your school who don't have friends act.

J: They act weird. Nobody ever gives them a second chance. Most of them are very smart but they don't do their work and they get in lots of fights. The more they are excluded the sadder and sadder they get and they stick to themselves.

M: Is there anything else you want to add.

J: You all were more like friends than teachers. At school the teachers act like they see each other every day but they don't know each other. You all acted more like....(long pause)

M: Joel take your time. It sounds like what you want to say is important.

J: It is but I just don't know the words. You all (Marsha, Jack, Te Ripowai, John O., John McK, Judith, Shafik) you all were like a.... (long pause)...like a family. You acted more like you act with your own family. You didn't always agree but you liked one another. I wish it was like that at school.

See you at the NEXT Summer Institute, July, 98

Quality Education

means Inclusive Education.

There is no such thing as "Inclusion doesn't work!"

Good Schools are by definition Inclusive Schools and serve All!

Forest and Pearpoint

Those who are enamoured of practice without science are like a pilot who goes into a ship without rudder or compass and never has any certainty where he is going. Practice should always be based upon a sound knowledge of theory.

(Leonardo da Vinci)

Thank You's

Thank you Susan Young of Imperial Oil Limited, for having faith in our work and our dream, and supporting it generously over the years. We deeply appreciate your generosity and friendship over the years.

Thank you Nathan Gilbert of the Laidlaw Foundation for your continual support of our work and your generous contribution to the 1996 Summer Institute. We value your friendship over many years.

Thank you Sam Josephs of McDonald's Canada for always being there for our courses with the wonderful McDonald's goodies that everyone loves. And thank you for your spirit and help whenever we need it.

Thank you to new friend and donor Alex Grossman of Belmont Properties who is generously supporting our exciting new venture - the 1997 Summer Institute.

Thank you New Concept Printing for the best quality and service in printing. We urge our readers to call Barbara Seed for any printing you need done. 416-252-3367.

A Circle Check-Up

authors: John O'Brien & Jeff Strully



photo: John O'Brien

Grand Exalted Pooh Bah of Inclusion Press
For the past four years, circles of support have been a key element in developing and guiding the supported living program operated by Jay Nolan Community Services (JNCS) in Los Angeles. Initially responsible for designing and implementing each individual's move from group home life into their own home, each person's circle now manages the person's support system and makes and implements long term plans. This shift of responsibility from agency to circles moves family members from being monitors of a group home to being directors of a personalized support system. It moves staff from being in charge of a group of clients to participating

with circle members in designing and offering the supports and services a person requires to live successfully in their own home and participate in community life in satisfying ways.

The people JNCS supports count on their circles for the safety and quality of their daily lives. Only a few people currently have communication systems adequate to allow them an unambiguous voice in stating their dreams or directing their supports. Circle members hold responsibility for developing a deep, accurate, and clear account of the person's interests, preferences, and dreams and assuring that this understanding guides day to day staff behavior. People will require a highly organized support system for the rest of their lives. Circle members hold responsibility for extending continuity through the person's lifetime by clarifying and supporting the commitments necessary to the person's security. Prejudice, widespread confusion about the nature of autism, and a history of segregated services leave people at great risk of isolation. Circle members hold responsibility for expanding the circle's membership and supporting and challenging the person to expand the network of those who know and care about him or her. Many barriers stand in the way of pursuing simple things, like living comfortably or having a job; and, keeping the supported living program focused on individual needs can call for the most assertive and creative negotiation with the service system that funds and regulates supported living. Circle members hold responsibility for persistent, creative problem solving,

and vigorous representation of the person's interests. People are vulnerable to changes in their own condition, changes in the lives of the people who are critical to them, changes in their support system, and changes in the policies and programs that fund and provide the assistance they depend on. Circle members hold responsibility for sticking with the person through crises in order to protect the person's interests.

From time to time, a circle can use these key questions as a way to check up on their stewardship of these vital responsibilities.

A circle may want to choose one of these questions and take time to discuss it at a regular circle meeting, or a circle could set aside a meeting for reflection on some of these questions with an outside facilitator, or circle members could pick some of the questions and ask an outsider to interview circle members individually and report the results for discussion. What matters most is building honest reflection into the work of the circle.

This paper is based on a discussion with family members, friends, and JNCS staff involved in circles of support which was held on 27 April 1997.

John O'Brien is the Grand Exalted Pooh Bah of Inclusion Press. Jeff Strully is a long time friend and a leading advocate for full inclusion for all - and he means all. John lives and works from Atlanta, GA. Jeff is the Director of the Jay Nolan Community Services in Los Angeles, CA.

Key Circle Questions

- How have we strengthened our relationship with the person at the center of the circle?
- What have we learned about accommodating the person so that we are better able to understand him or her; and so that he or she is better able to participate in the work of the circle?
- What assumptions about the person's preferences, interests, or abilities have we revised? What have we been wrong in believing about the person? What differences have those of us who are closest to the person discovered between our own preferences, interests, and values and those of the person?
- How have we shared the person's life outside the formal work of the circle?
- How has our shared knowledge about the person's identity and desirable future grown? What has become less certain about the future and what has become more clear to us?
- What have we agreed to invest in for the person's long term future?
- What have we discovered about what works to assist the person with life changes?
- What have we done to deepen our understanding of the person?
- What have we done to better organize our

shared action?

- What actions have we taken that identify and deal with threats to the person's safety, comfort, and well being?
- What actions have we taken that stretch us outside our comfort zone?
- What has the circle put behind itself (for example, resentment at the responsibilities of circle membership, or fear of sharing dreams, or denial of unsatisfactory conditions)?
- What conflicts still get the circle stuck?
- What do members see and believe that they are afraid to say? What circle business do people talk about outside the circle that doesn't get brought up with the whole circle?
- What decisions does the circle try to avoid by passing them on to service agency authority?
- What issues cause unproductive fights and cue disrespectful treatment of other circle members or supported living staff?
- How has the circle reached out to recruit new members and put them to work...
 - ...from the person's family and extended family?
 - ...from the larger community?
- What have we learned about achieving and maintaining an effective balance between the contributions of family and friends and the contribu-

tions of paid staff members?

- How have we become more effective as a group...
 - ...by increasing our ability to speak openly and honestly when we disagree?
 - ...by dealing more creatively with conflicts?
 - ...by learning how to better understand members with different points of view?
 - ...by finding ways to inquire more deeply into issues that keep coming up over and over again without resolution?
 - ...by noticing when we fail to treat other members respectfully and making amends?
 - ...by acknowledging our own ways of getting in the way of the circle's work and supporting one another to achieve self control?
- How have circle members increased their skills and knowledge...
 - ...through participation in training related to values issues and positive practices?
 - ...through research on how to make the systems that affect available opportunities work for the person?
 - ...in discussion and exchange with members of other circles?
 - ...by learning ways to improve the effectiveness of the circle as a creative problem solving group?

Who is Cathy Hollands?

Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint

Many of you know the third voice of Inclusion News - Cathy Hollands. Cathy is the indispensable third member of the Inclusion Press team. Aside from running us and the office, Cathy is the mother of our 5 adopted grandchildren Jonathan, Joel, Alex, Danielle, and Emma. She is also the partner of Daddy Dave Hollands, a gifted museum designer and architect. They live diagonally across the street from Inclusion Press, so Cathy does not buck traffic or have parking problems. She can be found in the office - usually late at night after the children are asleep. She tolerates us when we are in town and loves it when we travel. Then she then has the office all to herself and lots of peace and quiet.

Cathy is part and parcel of our lives and our work. We thank her for her support, loyalty and hard work.

You cannot discover new oceans unless you have the courage to lose sight of the shore.

Live with intention. Walk to the edge. Play with Abandon. Listen well. Choose without regret. Do what you love. Appreciate your friends. Act as if this is all there is.

Maryanne Radmacher-Hershey



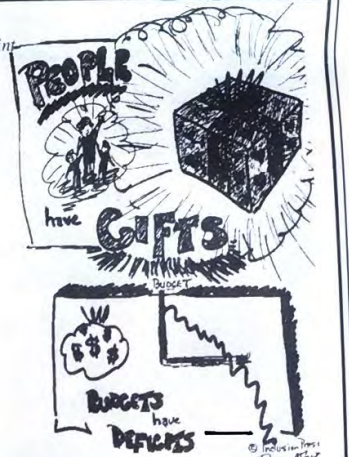
What Do You See?

Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint

What do you see?
You and me
or us and them
women and men.

What do you see?
Another breed or
people in need.
They are we.
That's what we see.

What do you see?
Humanity!
Build a jail cell.
Put people in hell.
Or are people the key?
What do you see?



See You at the Toronto Summer Institute: July 4-10, 1998

Hegemony of Ableism

Judith A. Snow

I am buying a house. What's a little unusual is that I am buying it with two men. One, Sheldon, I have known for six years. He has a wonderful vision of community. The other, Matt, is a young man with autism who has been fighting the good fight for many years to be a full participant in his community and his school. I have been part of Matt's life for twelve years and his circle for three or four. By living together we think we can build the sort of community of hospitality that is our passion and that has always been our "North Star". I am also looking forward to being more of a daily part of Matt's life and getting a chance to learn from him and use the skills and knowledge that I have built up over the years about supports that work.

Making this decision has put me face to face with a dilemma. In the eyes of many people, Sheldon, Matt and I are setting up a sort of private group home. We are all very aware that this is a direction that our venture could take. We have written pages of agreements with each other about how we will live, how we will resolve conflicts and even how we will split up the equity if necessary. In the background is that voice that says: "Inclusion means only one person with a disability at a time."

What concerns me is how much our culture forces me, and others, into a choice that seems false to me. The segregationists, disabled and not, want me to choose "my own kind". The inclusionists, often including myself, want me to choose infiltration into "normal" society. I have people I love, people I'm similar to and whose experiences I share and people I can contribute to, firmly ensconced in either camp. Why can't I choose both? Why shouldn't Matt and I live together? Why shouldn't I want to go to People First dances? At the same time, why shouldn't Matt and I get regular jobs, pay the mortgage and do things that will help sustain our neighbourhood, just like other folks?

I am growing more aware of and more tired of the hegemony of "ableism". People who are considered to be strange and deficient have much to contribute to each other. We DO have our own story. We have knowledge to share and similar problems to solve. But the cost of sharing is very high because it adds to the

likelihood that we will not be seen as "normal". That alone is enough to drive us away from each other in fear that we will be singled out and targeted even more.

I think genuine inclusion would not force us to abandon our own sisters & brothers, black, white, walking, wheeling, talking, or listening. I guess I just wonder if we will all ever get to be different AND normal. What do you think?

And Jay Klein, Director of the National Home of Your Own Alliance, Univ of NH, wrote back....

Dear Judith,

Thanks for your note. What you say is so true. We must find a balance somewhere in between. The problem is that it is hard to trust that people who support segregation will ever understand how to respect people and allow them to struggle with such issues.

My friend Sol Gordon said, "We must stand for something or we will fall for everything." I wish others would come to this discussion with your honesty, then we could truly accept that it is neither this or that! I think telling your story with this discussion in mind may be very instructive. Unfortunately, you are correct that it will give some places ammunition for segregation. But, they will find a way to justify what they are doing no matter what we do.

I think you need to tell your story because it is real. You are really living. It is not a rehearsal for life. It is not segregation and is not someone's program! Somehow this discussion needs to be on the table. Some will get it, and others will find ways to use it to justify controlling others.

I agree with your note. You can and must choose both! You, Matt and Sheldon can and will live together. People who are considered different have much to contribute to each other. People who are considered different also have much to offer those who are not considered different. I am real tired of the one solution, one way street, that limits peoples options for real living.

I know genuine inclusion will not force us to abandon our own sisters & brothers. Let's keep this discussion going.

I miss you and hope you are well.
Love, Jay

This is Judith Snow's New home - 209 Garden Ave. Her room will be on the second floor when the fund raising pays for the elevator (in the back - donations welcome). In the meantime - Judith is getting on with her dream. And Sheldon and Matt (below) are already there - making a welcoming home in the community.



RETHINKING SELF-DETERMINATION

Judith A. Snow.

"We create our path by walking it."

Mondragon Cooperative, Spain

The idea of self-determination is hotly debated these days. Activists are demonstrating in front of court houses both for and against the right to die, with and without assistance. Others are challenging the service system to put money into the pockets of those who use personal assistance so they can "self-direct" their supports.

Underlying these and other activities is the assumption that self-determination is real. We say - most people have the competence to direct their own lives. We say - those that do ought to have their right to self-determination safeguarded. We say - an unfortunate few cannot achieve the competence to make valid, critical life decisions. We argue about the best way to make decisions for such people.

The debates are important! Those who have been labeled disabled are frequently equated to puppets - beings with no sense of purpose who need to be managed through lives designed by experts. Other people predefine the meaning of life for "the disabled", making all the important choices: where "they" will live, who "they" will be with, the work "they" will do, if any, etc. Under such circumstances the potential richness of life for labeled people is diminished and survival itself becomes precarious. More and more often these days - again - others are choosing whether labeled people are born and when they die.

But a focus on "self-determination" cannot help us to resolve the debates and end the all too frequent tragedies. This is because no human being is self-determined.

In reality each of us makes decisions in a social context. The needs, knowledge, interests and preferences of our loved ones, trusted friends and colleagues affect our decisions as much as our own desires and commitments do. CEO's of multinational organizations can count on trustworthy consultation and guidance from hundreds of reliable sources to resolve issues that range from what to wear to a meeting and how to get a good night's sleep in a strange time zone to where to invest company resources. Daily the more

mundane of us also turn to tradition, consult friends and strangers, hire professionals ranging from financial advisors to mediums, and read, watch and listen to thousands of sources of guidance.

We are creatures of relationship. Every human being in the history of human beings is capable of entering into a dynamic decision-making process. We place our own wills and desires into relationship with all of the processes of influence to create a direction of activity that will itself affect our own and others' wills and desires. Everyone!

Of course each of us knows or has heard of someone who doesn't speak, doesn't see, doesn't hear and/or We say of that person: "They have no will. They have no desire." Or, perhaps we know of or have heard of people whose will and desires seem so trivial or so misdirected that their participation in their own decision-making could never be trusted! Could it?

What a vision-less, thought-less, heart-less time we live in. On the one hand we casually take the life of a baby born with Down Syndrome because we already "know" that their life is "meaningless" to themselves and others. On the other hand we daily support powerful people to personally make decisions that will bring war, famine and ecological devastation for years because we know they can be "trusted".

What is missing is creative, responsible listening. Every human being deserves to be listened to in a responsible manner. This process of listening says: "Let us hear your dream, your desires, your will. Once we understand, let us think together of ways that we can work together so that your essence benefits your community and does no harm."

These listening processes have already changed communities for the better for dozens of years. For detailed information on how such processes work see the Inclusion Press publications, *Members of Each Other* by Connie Lyle O'Brien and John O'Brien and *What's Really Worth Doing and How To Do It - A Book for People Who Love Someone Labeled disabled (Possibly Yourself)* by Judith Snow.

We must end our misdirected faith in self-determination and build a world that works for all!

This is the true joy in life, being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one. Being a force of nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.

I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as I live, it is my privilege - my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I love. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me; it is a splendid torch which I've got a hold of for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

George Bernard Shaw

Visit our WEB PAGE: <http://inclusion.com>



The Four Questions: A Tool for Change

Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint

We believe that to move into the new era of "inclusion" we need to use new and creative tools. We can't do MOTS. That's more of the same thing. It is exciting that when we introduced the term MOTS in Winnipeg at a recent workshop with Aboriginal Health Care Workers and Head Start Educators they told us that the word MOTS in the Cree language means "no!" No more of the same thing. We can't get to the future by using old ways of working.

The Four Questions have been designed by Marsha and Jack for individuals, families, organizations.

1. What are we doing OK or well right now?
2. What could we be doing better?
3. What could we be doing differently?
4. What can we do now or within 48 hours to start doing things better and differently.

We have designed The Four Questions exercise to help families, groups, organizations of any kind to get out of the trap of negative thinking. We hear so many good people asking, "What are we doing wrong?" What's wrong is that the question "What's wrong?" is the wrong question and sets in motion the wrong answer.

For example. An organization we work with truly wanted to do better. They kept asking the people they worked with to tell them what was wrong so that they could improve. But the people told them everything was really OK. Everyone knew it wasn't. They were stuck.

First of all the "consumers of their service" didn't want to hurt anyone's feelings. Life was so much better for most of them that they didn't want to complain. But the organization knew there were problems.

We suggested they ask a new set of questions: First ask "What are we doing OK right now?" This question sets everyone up for success. We didn't phrase it "What are we doing really great?" We just stated it as "What's OK?"

They asked and the people suddenly gave good and clear and plentiful feedback on this question. For example they said the staff are really nice people, work really hard, we like being in the community, we like certain individuals, we like going to the new mall, we like our neighbors.

The next question we suggested is "What can we do better?" Now we got to the heart of the matter. People have already told you some positive stuff so they can feel free to tell you what you can do better? Here's some examples: The food could be more spicy and better; I want to choose my own roommates; It would be better if I could help hire my own attendants; I need better transportation so I can get into town more. I have no friends. Help me get friends. Fix it so we can go more places.

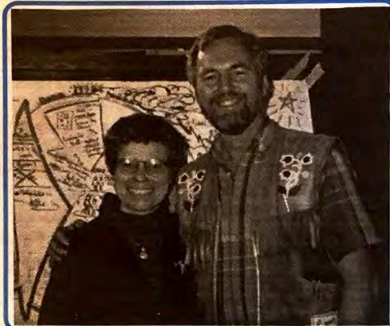
The third question takes a new twist and asks,

"What could we do differently?"

Now we get to some real creativity. Examples are: We could start the project all over again.

We could all go away for two days and really talk about what needs to be done. We could pay people more and make their hours flexible. We could rent or lease a car so we can get places and make sure all the staff drive. If staff don't drive we could get someone to donate driving lessons or teach anyone without a license to drive.

And finally given that we know people need to do something within 48 hours to start any process of change we ask, "What can we do now or within 48 hours that can help us get started on making ourselves both better and different." Examples include: We can set a date for the retreat. We can stop and really think about what we are doing. We



can make a list of what we do well and put it on the wall so we aren't always focusing on the negative. We can get Jane to driving school tomorrow as she's great but she can't drive.

Now use your own family as an example for a few minutes. We urge people to sit down with one person recording the notes using words or graphics or both. You could use a tape recorder if you want. Do what it takes. Give each person the time to answer. Make sure each person gives at least three responses to each question. More are certainly welcome. Here's an example of how one family used the tool. If someone doesn't speak with words use any means possible to get them communicating.

These are 4 very powerful questions.

Question One gets you out of the negative.

"What are we doing now that's OK?"

Question Two leads to constant improvement.

"What can we do better?"

Question Three leads to creativity and lateral thinking. "What can we do differently?"

Question Four leads to first steps and doable action. "What can we do NOW or within 48 hours?"

Whether by yourself, in twos, in teams, or in larger groups this is a usable easy and doable exercise to start change. We use it ourselves all the time. You can do it with children and adults. You can ask children, "What did we do OK today?"

What can we do better? What can we do differently? What are we going to actually do tomorrow?

The Four Questions are not about "trying" to change. They are about actually taking small possible steps to do something to really change. We see again and again that until small steps are actually taken families or organizations are never going to get to the really big stuff. Changing the world only comes from doing something real today. One step at a time is truly the only way to go. Step by step gets you to the top of the mountain.

We have used this tool now in Canada, the USA, Scotland, and England. It is powerful and positive. It works with large and small groups. First use it in your own life. Then work with others. Actually do it and let us know what happens.

A Family Sample

This was a family of 5 with mom, dad and three children aged 12-18. One child uses facilitated communication to speak. (He said plenty.)

What are we doing OK? We like each other. We try to talk to each other. Mom cooks good. Dad works a lot so we can have toys. We care for one another. We watch television quietly, we clean up sometimes, we talk to grandma every week.

What could we do better? Watch television less. Talk to each other more. Come to dinner when mom calls. Not talk to our friends on the phone so much. Not tease each other. Tell each other good stuff. Not argue so much.

What could we do differently? Turn off the television at 8 PM and talk together for half an hour at least four times a week. Turn off the phone at dinner so we can talk to one another. Thank Mom when she makes a good dinner. Ask Dad to be home for dinner at least 2 times a week and on time.

What can we do right now? Tonight we can turn off the television and talk. We can do this four questions exercise once a week. Let's book every Wednesday night. Dad can come home for dinner tonight. Let's call him now and if he can't come tonight we'll get him for tomorrow night.

The feedback from the family was great. They said the exercise helped focus them and acknowledged their good points which they sort of forgot. It gave them realistic challenges to do. It gave them an opportunity in about 15 minutes to think about what they really needed to change and do. It enabled them to put thoughts into immediate actions. It got them unstuck. They mostly said it started them on a manageable plan of action to communicate with one another as that seemed to be the main problem (as it is with so many families.)

Ear

Eye

Undivided Attention

Heart

The Chinese characters which make up the verb "to listen" tell us something significant about this skill.

Learn to Listen

Come to the edge
It is too high
Come to the edge
We might fall
Come to the edge
And they came
And he pushed them
And they flew.

Guillaume Apollinaire
(1880-1918)



**We make the
road by walking.**

"We must stand in unity. When one person's voice is silenced, it is up to the rest of us to cry out. Justice is not a flexible tool. It must be applied to all, and it must be applied equally. This is a shared planet, and until we can learn to respect and tolerate one another's differences, we risk the continued loss of our freedom, our dignity and the chance to create a peaceful world for our children."

In the spirit of Crazy Horse. Leonard Pelletier

Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.

Thomas Edison

No More of the Same Thing...



NEST Building

by Dave Hingsburger

"Can We Talk to You After the Conference?"

Public speakers hate this question. It means that some one wants a free consultation after we've spent a long day in front of an audience.

Few members of audiences realize that public speaking takes energy and at the end of a day all that is wanted is beer and bed.

"Please?"

The same people who would put a person with a disability on a program to stop their whining feel free to do it themselves.

But here my initial assessment was wrong. A small group of very nervous people gathered to ask me what I was doing the next day. They knew from the organizers of the conference that I was staying over Saturday and flying home Sunday to cut my travel costs.

I felt trapped. I told them that I had brought work with me to do on Saturday. But they wanted to take me somewhere.

Sure. Right after presenting "Pro-Sex Attitudes" in a state where agencies were almost universally hostile toward sex and disability, I'm going to get into a car with a bunch of them.... I said I was uncomfortable with the idea as they were all strangers and I could tell by their behavior that something was up.

They said they were excited and they hoped I would join them. To their credit, they didn't pressure me. They said: "Tell you what. We'll come by tomorrow at ten a.m. and meet you here in the lobby. If you decide you don't want to come, we will just drop it."

That sounded reasonable and I agreed. I immediately found the bar, had a beer, and shortly thereafter was in bed.

When they drove up the next morning in a vehicle with an agency logo on it, I decided I would go. It would take an awful lot of coordination to arrange for an agency car to take a harmless Canadian to a lynching party.

Through the hour-long drive, their party mood began to affect my spirits. I was buoyed by their excitement.

We crossed a state line. When asked why, they only said, maddeningly, "Just wait."

My mind roamed through the Saturday possibilities. Could it be a bowling tournament? That is, after all, the Disabled National Sport.

Perhaps lunch at a McDonald's Playland? For people with developmental disabilities, lunch out usually involves McHaute Cuisine: "...and would you like McFries with your McPoverty and McOppression?"

Other options: an after noon dance at the sheltered industry; a Special Olympic Mini Putt Challenge; or maybe, maybe, a trip to Dairy Queen.

We entered a smallish city and pulled into the parking lot of a Unitarian church. Did the church have a bowling alley in the basement? Inside, I saw several people rushing about, decorating the sanctuary.

The minister, a robust woman, was introduced to me and then hustled away. Clearly this was a church where a wedding was to be performed. Soon the ceremony began.

The congregation sat in a semicircle. Two aisles led to the altar. When the music began, the small crowd of about 50 people hushed. An air of expectancy ... no ... reverence filled the room.

Then into the sanctuary, into the house of God, came a man with a developmental disability. He walked slowly, with the gait of a man who had once worn the shackles of institution-

alization. He looked to be near 60 years old.

I smiled, and tears formed in my eyes. When I see people with disabilities marry, I recognize that their march to the altar to stand before God is long. They must march past society's bigotry, family disapproval, religious intolerance, and—most difficult—agency dictates.

Finally, he reached the altar. The music stopped. Silence. The music began again. From the opposite door came another man. He too was older. He too walked as if the chains that bound his feet had only recently vanished.

I looked to the woman who sat next to me and whispered, "What's going on!?"

She smiled and said, "They are finally getting married."

She told me that the two had met as young men in a state institution and had been caught together, "engaging in sexual behaviors." (That's the social worker term for making love.) The two had endured years of punishment and separation.

A young female staff person had heard the story from one of the men and diligently set out to reunite them.

She hoped it would be possible for them to live together at last.

Once reunited, the two men decided that they would not live together, and they would not have sex, until they were married.

They had been punished so often, told for so long that they were dirty, sinful, hateful creatures, that now they wished to be married "like other people." When staffers told them they couldn't be married, they cried but seemed prepared for the answer.

But this staffer wouldn't let go. She visited a Unitarian church in their town and worked with the minister to find a church where the ceremony could be performed. This church was

far enough removed to protect the sanctity of the ceremony and provide secrecy. Every person on hand had pledged support.

Informing the two that their marriage could be performed, the staffer told them that while God might smile on the marriage, the government wouldn't. It would be a holy ceremony, not a legal contract. That was fine with them. They did not understand that we in the modern world had switched allegiances and have granted Government more power than God ever wanted.

"See the fellow on the right?" I nodded. "When he was in the institution he was castrated. They thought that would stop him from being homosexual and wanting to see his boyfriend. Can you believe it?"

I can and do, having worked with two women with disabilities who had been clitorotomized to stop them from being sexual.

How We Hate the hearts of people with disabilities! We have caged their bodies. We have disfigured their genitals. We have drugged their minds.

But we have never, ever controlled their spirits. What other group of people could move from institution hallways to community streets with so little difficulty? What other person could go from the sacrificial table of medicine to the altar of God to take the hand of a man he had loved for decades?

The two men stood, pledging their lives to each other. Standing on holy ground, each professed, through his pledge, his faith in the other.

Seeing the beauty and steadfastness of this love, the power of these two spirits, I wept. And, I believe, so did God.

Commentary

by Dave Hingsburger

Snow, circumstance and time. We stopped on Route 15 to consider options. We wouldn't make it. As snow billowed, I thought, "What can I say?" I was invited to speak at the Not Dead Yet rally outside the US supreme court. Those in wheelchairs outside would scream "No" to assisted suicide as the robed inside considered "Yes."

What an irony! The court discusses death and disability inside a building accessed by stairs. As I understood it, I was the only Canadian, and one of the few without a disability invited to the podium. Not Dead Yet doesn't like PLOD's - the acronym for People Living Off Disability. But I had passed some litmus test and was given 4 minutes.

A simple issue. Assisted suicide. A kind way to deal with human suffering and inhumane pain. But people with disabilities see it differently. The issue is giving the state, through its doctors, power to terminate the lives of those deemed suffering. There are the poster children for death, who come forward with tales of pain and say, "The decision should be mine." They discuss pain without context. The fact that less than 5% of people

who are terminally ill are given effective pain care, isn't raised. The fact that people with disabilities and catastrophic illnesses are often financially poor, socially restricted and "with pity" afflicted isn't mentioned. And of course when government's weigh the costs of health it isn't hard to imagine them weighing the cost of life. Even pain, horrible pain, has context. Yes, suffering is a political issue.

Snow, circumstance and time. We head home, silent. Silent because driving over the Adirondacks we see only beyond the bumper. Silent because I am thinking, "What could I say?" Yesterday, I chatted with folks with disabilities. Four had Down Syndrome. In a flash I realized that this may be the last generation of people with Downs. These who love, laugh, who experience pain and hope, are genetic undesirables. These a German dictator once denounced as useless eaters. These would be gone soon ... a medical victory saving them from the pain of existence. Ah, hiding bigotry behind compassion is a wonderful trick. The man with the mustache must grin.

"What can I say?" I wanted to say that I'd noticed. Really noticed that those who deny the thin edge of the wedge are inevitably those who wield

the axe. I wanted to say that I had seen how those who mock the idea of the slippery slope are those who would stand and push. But snow, circumstance and time.

A bus pulled up to an institution. It was full of those labelled hopeless. They were to be exterminated. Saved, as the rhetoric of the day would have it, from the pain of their existence. The nuns who ran the institution stood aside as soldiers came to evacuate and then murder these the disenfranchised, the disavowed, the disappeared. As the church stood by, as society watched, as PLOD's assisted, they resisted. People deemed as willing recipients of death, fought back. They fought alone and they fought hard. Some say they lost, I say that in battle against tyranny the oppressed never loses.

Snow, circumstance and time. Years ago an elderly Jewish man discussed his child with a disability with me, he said, "Life — Hope — same word, different spelling." I think this is what I would have said if it weren't for snow, circumstance and time.

Dave Hingsburger is a leading activist, writer and speaker on abuse and violence in society. He can be reached at: *Diverse City Press, BM 272, 33 des Floriales, Eastman, QC J0E 1P0*



**Don't Defend Inclusion;
Make Others
Defend Segregation**

**If we are to achieve
a richer culture, we must
weave one in which each
diverse human gift will find
a fitting place.**

Margaret Mead

**INCLUSION:
A HUMAN RIGHT!**

Inclusion Illusion

Marsha Forest

It's easy to say the words of 'inclusion' and reality's simply a messy intrusion often creating chaos and illusion.

Inclusion isn't sweet
isn't always a treat.
It doesn't mean we'll all just get together and
belong,
singing the same song.
No, not at all.

Inclusion will create confusion,
and induce illusion
to create real diversity
means doing life quite differently.

It means giving up the status quo
letting go slow.
Because the solution is 'we'.
We really are the key.
Sitting together and working on
answers to complex questions
means we'll need massive doses of humility
and forgive ourselves for our stupidity.
It means working together in spite of this or
that style.

Some will yell, others will smile.
The children and the elders must share their
views
as we bring together atheist, Moslem, Christian
and Jews.

Yes, that's real inclusion.
It's about embracing humanity with humility.
It's not a program to put on TV
a package you can buy
a new label 'the inclusion student'
a new classroom 'the inclusion class'.

Inclusion is hearing each other's deepest cry
and deepest yearning.
Inclusion is the human heart burning to create
the new.

"That's what inclusion is about," I shout.
"That's what it's really about."

Where there is no vision people perish

Proverbs 29:18

An intriguing tidbit.

The Brush Dance is a Yurok Indian
healing ritual where being true to yourself
means giving your best to help a person in
need. Being true to yourself is the one
and only Yurok Indian law.

Laughter is the most inexpensive and
most effective wonder drug. Laughter
is a universal medicine.

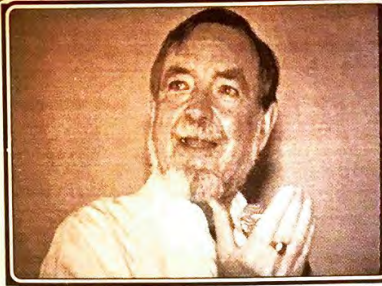
Bertrand Russell



What do you see?

With Liberty and Justice for ALL

Visit our Web Page: <http://inclusion.com>



Redefining Community

John McKnight

It was in a small New England town that I first understood the limits of community services. The town was located in a state with one of the most humane and progressive systems for serving people who are labeled developmentally disabled. Very few were in large institutions, small group homes had proliferated, sheltered workshops were being dismantled, and a serious effort was under way in the schools to bring labeled children into the regular classrooms. In this town, I was taken to one of the group homes. The home was physically indistinguishable from the other houses on the street. Living in the house were five middle-aged men, most of whom had lived there for nearly ten years.

It was with considerable pride that an agency director and a public official took me to visit these men. They wanted me to see how their clients were "a part of the community" and the beneficiaries of an effective program of community services. When the opportunity came to talk to each of the men, I inquired about their lives, experiences, and relationships in the town. To my surprise, the response of each man made clear that they had almost no social relationships with their neighbors or the other citizens of the town. None of them could identify a close local friend or neighbor, and none were involved in any kind of organization, association, or club. When I asked the staff members whether they knew of any social relationships the men had in the community, they were unable to identify any other than a few shopkeepers.

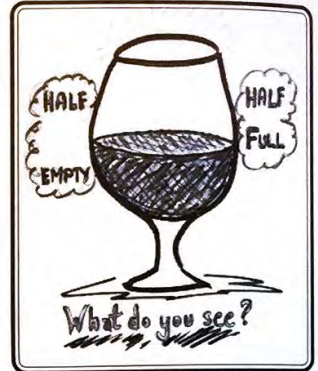
Later I learned, by talking with other people within the state human service system, that the isolated circumstances of these five men tended to be the rule rather than the exception. Nonetheless, they were described as "deinstitutionalized," as being "in the community," and as receiving "community services." That was when I first realized that all of this community language obscured the basic fact that these men were completely isolated from community while surrounded by community services.

One wonders how it is possible, in a small town of 5,000 people, to find a typical house and have five residents live there for ten years without any effective community relationships. Yet human service systems designed to provide what are called "community services" often have managed to do just that.

Perhaps the issue can be clarified by defining "community services" more accurately. I would not want to suggest that these are services that will "make people part of community." Rather, I mean to point out that services provided in small towns or neighborhoods should not be called community services if they do not involve people in community relationships. Indeed, what are now called community services are often the major barriers to involvement in the community. Let's say, then, that the system in this state is now providing local services, not community services. And that the relocation of those services to local places has had almost no positive effect on the participation of labeled people in community life.

This failure of integration clearly

limits the lives of the labeled people themselves. But the exclusion also limits the experience of local citizens. Most community members have infrequent opportunities to be joined in their common life by people who have been given one of the labels established by the service industry. Indeed, the common life of North America is so segregated that the absence of experience with those who are excluded has led many citizens to imagine that labeled people are somehow inappropriate for community life. Many have come to believe that labeled people are so incapacitated that their lives literally depend upon separate and expert attention. Having accepted this proposition, most citizens lead lives in which they can only imagine, never see or talk to, labeled people.



(This is an edited excerpt from *The Careless Society*, pages 114-116)

John McKnight has worked with communities across the United States and Canada and is the co-author of a workbook that has already sold more than 19,000 copies entitled **BUILDING COMMUNITIES FROM THE INSIDE OUT**. He is the Director of Community Studies at the Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research at Northwestern University where he is a Professor.

THE CARELESS SOCIETY by John McKnight is published by Basic Books, 10 East 53rd Street, New York, New York 10022-5299

For information on the workbook **BUILDING COMMUNITIES FROM THE INSIDE OUT** by John Kretzmann and John McKnight
Tel: 1-800-397-2282

Martin Luther King Jr. said:
"I have a Dream!"
He did not say:
"I have quarterly
goals and objectives!"

When the best leader's work is done,
the people say, 'We did this ourselves.'

Lao-Tzu

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A Keynote by

John McKnight

55 minutes of Vintage McKnight

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Jasmine's Tea Party

Heather Anderson

with Michelle and Jasmine Roots
in Edinburgh, Scotland

Michelle and Jasmine recently presented a "wee" skit at a conference to try and show what words often fail to convey. They did a remarkable job, so we asked Heather to tell us about Jasmine's Tea Party.

Michelle is Jasmine's mum. Jasmine is 6 and after a year of battles, forms, files and discussions, Michelle managed to get Jasmine into an ordinary primary school in the middle of Edinburgh. In Edinburgh this is no small achievement. Jasmine is a cutie, as we say in Scotland - petite, dinky and very opinionated and with a big sense of herself.

One Saturday afternoon we were talking with people about inclusive education and Michelle was talking about why she wanted Jasmine to be in her local school. While telling her story Michelle set up a table with four chairs and Jasmine put out the plastic tea set and side plates.

Jasmine had lots of her dollies with her and Michelle picked up Kumari, an old ragdoll with silver hair in a bun. "Oh" said Michelle "this is Kumari. She writes poetry. She doesn't see the world with her eyes. She's 70 years old now and someone has decided she should go into a box labelled old people's home". Kumari was then bundled into a brown box labelled "long term nursing care".

And then there was a doll called Francis - he loves football but he doesn't walk - he uses a wheelchair. Somebody has decided he should go to a school for physically disabled children. So Francis was bundled into a box labelled "special school".

And then there was Beth. She is very artistic. She doesn't learn as fast as a lot of people in her community so someone has decided she could never get a job and she spends all her working days in an adult training centre box.

And then there was a doll called Lucy. Lucy has a gift of always being able to see things from a different perspective. At times the world is a frightening place for her and she feels people want to harm her, so someone has decided she must go into the long stay psychiatric hospital box.

Then we met Sajdah who has no formal education and no-one will give her a job, possible because she has brown skin and wears saris. Sometimes she takes things for her children because she has so little money. As this has happened a number of times someone has decided she has to go into the prison box.

And then we met Tom, who has a great sense of humour. He can come to the tea party but only if he doesn't bring his boyfriend because some people think they shouldn't be allowed to be a couple in public places. So he'll have to pretend he's attracted to women or he will have to stay in a box to be with his boyfriend.

"So" said Michelle, sitting at the table with Jasmine and Tom "let's have a tea party then". Jasmine looked round a bit bewildered. "But where are all the dollies Jasmine?" asked Michelle. Jasmine jumped off her seat and started to empty the boxes.

You see, Jasmine is a really friendly wee girl and she loves company and tea parties. She'd never put anyone in a box and she has a gift for emptying them.

Heather Anderson works with SHS in Edinburgh, Scotland. Call 011-44-131-538-7719.

Late Breaking: **The Scottish Alliance for Inclusive Education** will be formally launched in December. For information, contact SHS.

Treasures

Rick Betz,

Nashua High School, NH

Inclusion is what it is all about. Teaching all treasures is thinking in the right direction. It really hurts me when people don't teach us the important things in life, like the vulnerability of each of us and how there is just one chance to give friendship a try.

Freedom is the key to unlock the door to the future. Heed my call, hear the great cries of the many oppressed people. This is the message for all the world to hear. Dear ones must trust and believe in our words that have long been silent.

Labels must be discontinued. People are all one people underneath the same sky. Understanding and celebration of our uniqueness is now at hand. Friends are very important to me. They are the future treasures that, with proper guidance, will grow. Hope and creativity, freedom

and belief are so crucial.

People used to see me as a nobody, but now I have a big voice and I am special. Believe me, kids have lots to say but teachers must believe in them. Fight! Stand up! Believe your child can have a big voice, too. Never give up. Before facilitated communication, I was locked up. Now people see me as a real human. Facilitated communication has opened up the world's eyes to me. Please believe I was locked away in the most frightening house ever imagined. Now, I am free. If treasures had not believed in me, I would be no better off than the slaves and the people who jailed them.

Friendships happen only when kids get to be together. Getting teachers to believe this is the most trying part of all. We're on the jutting tip of the iceberg. Together, we can meet the challenge to support young people having real lives.

From the Univ of NH book: *Treasures: A Celebration of Inclusion* (p.45)

We're not primarily put on this earth to see through one another, but to see one another through. Peter De Vries

Meet Maresa

We recently met two delightful people in the Nottingham area of England. Maresa and Caroline are a mother and daughter duo that is going to change the face of education in Britain.

One of Maresa's teenage friends decided to produce a colour pamphlet that could be given to anyone coming in contact with Maresa. She and Maresa worked on it together and because Maresa cannot yet speak with words they titled the piece "Get to know all about me in my leaflet."

Inside the pamphlet (all in great jazzy colours) Maresa says, "I think that everyone should believe in kids who can't talk."

Facilitated Communication. Because Maresa can't talk, she uses facilitated communication. This is where Maresa points to letters on a letter board and spells out words.

Maresa says: *The first step is to BELIEVE in me.*

Step 2 is to stand on Maresa's right side.

Step 3 is to hold Maresa's left hand still by her wrist.

Step 4 is to hold Maresa's right hand and let her point to the letters on the spell board.

There is a poem and a delightful photo of Maresa and 13 of her friends. Under the photo it says Maresa likes...Jewellery, Make up and loves Peter Andre.

The final page is called **Maresa's Circle.**

Maresa has a circle. This is where a group of people meet together to support and help Maresa. There are 16 people in Maresa's circle. Maresa says the best part is coming together. Maresa enjoys going swimming and bowling with people in her circle.

The back page has coloured flowers. The pamphlet was designed and printed by Lelitia and Maresa.

Its a charming colourful inviting way of introducing Maresa.

Maresa and her Mother Caroline live in Nottingham, England

Inclusion Is/Is Not!

Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint

* Inclusion means all embracing (by definition)

* Inclusion is not a narrow concept.

* Inclusion is not a single issue.

* Inclusion doesn't stand in opposition to movements for self-determination or self-help.

* Inclusion is a simple concept, but difficult in practice.

* Inclusion is recognizable when seen, but is rarely seen.

* When seen, inclusion is usually in embryonic stages.

* Inclusion is a journey toward a

destination called Equality.

* Inclusion is not achievable quickly, but it is possible.

* Inclusion is more than budgets or law, yet budgets and laws make it possible.

* Inclusion is full of paradox. It needs big minds and open hearts.

* Inclusion needs a new kind of work, done in teams with collaboration.

* Inclusion is not for the faint of heart.

* Inclusion is not for those who cherish the status quo.

* Inclusion is not for dreamers, but for dreamers who are doers.

* Inclusion is the future.

Tales of Inclusion

Derek and Joanna Wilson

in Nottingham, England

Scene: The Third Annual **Inclusion Conf.** at Holme Pierrepont Water Sports Centre, May 23rd 1997, Nottinghamshire, England.



Maresa & Joanna demonstrating "judging" wigs at the Conference

This is the first time I have ever attended a "conference" with my 11 year old daughter, Joanna. It feels a bit strange but we know something about being together in these sorts of gatherings because we are both members of a "circle of support" for Maresa, who is also 11, and Caroline, her mother. Maresa and Caroline were able to stay for the a.m. only and during that time Joanna and Maresa were called centre stage on several occasions. I was proud of

the way Joanna rose to the event, her voice was clear and strong as she read out to the conference some of Maresa's thoughts about children and friendship. That confidence left her entirely at the moment Maresa had to go..... (Maresa and Caroline had a previous appointment.)

Joanna writes:

I felt the day brought me closer to my dad for this was the first time that I had been to a meeting with him. It also brought me closer to Maresa, because as Marsha said: "Joanna needs Maresa and Maresa needs Joanna". When Maresa left early, I knew exactly what Marsha meant, because Maresa gives me the courage to speak out and without her I didn't say as much. Even though everybody was welcoming and cheery and it made the building feel warm, without Maresa I was lonely.

Derek writes:

This was the realization that taught me most. I finally understood that Joanna was able to see Maresa in a way that I will probably never be able to - as someone whose presence was essential to enable Joanna to say the things she did in front of 100 people and as someone that when she had to leave took that support with her.

TWO WORLDS OF CARING

David Schwartz

When my friend Gerald looked out his office window, he saw the woman about to jump off the bridge. She stood on the edge, wavering. Below her the Susquehanna River flowed rapidly around the bridge footings, carrying flood logs and debris over the dam and to the Chesapeake Bay. Behind her, busy traffic sped home from work to the West Shore, drivers and passengers listening to traffic reports on the radio.

Gerald stood for a minute, frozen. What should he do? He seemed to be the only person who had spotted the woman, from his vantage point one story above the street. Shaking himself into movement, he grabbed the telephone and started to dial the emergency number 911. Could the police and the ambulance and the crisis intervention team possibly make it there in time? What would the woman do when she heard the police sirens speeding to her rescue?

As his fingers punched the numbers, he saw a city bus rounding the turn onto the bridge. The bus drove slowly along the edge of the right lane. As it neared the woman, he saw the front accordion door open. Then suddenly—almost too fast to see if his eyes hadn't been riveted on the scene—the driver, in one continuous motion, stopped, leaned out of the open door, grabbed the woman's arm from behind, and pulled her backward into his bus.

My friend sat down, shaking slightly, and replaced the telephone receiver in its cradle. He thought about what he'd seen. And because he was a reflective person, he thought about what he had done. As he explained to me later, he realized that his response to the life-or-death situation of this stranger, this woman, had been to mobilize the complex human services system set up and ready to deal with such situations. That is what anyone would do, would they not? But the bus driver had responded completely differently. He had not flagged down a police officer. He had not dialed 911. He had seen the situation and had immediately done some thing himself. He had grabbed the woman by the arm and pulled her into his bus. Why, Gerald asked himself, had he not dashed down the

Those who are enamoured of practice without science are like a pilot who goes into a ship without a rudder or compass and never has the certainty where he is going. Practice should always be based upon a sound knowledge of theory.

Leonardo Da Vinci

The Community Place: More than a place...A way of welcoming.

Ernie Pancsofar, Pat Beeman, George Ducharme

"Your job is to plant good seeds and nurture them until they get big enough to grow up, and not smother them while they are growing. You shouldn't over crowd them, overfertilize them or overwork them. And when bugs get on the plants, you've got to get rid of them so the plants can grow. People have a potential for growth; it's in the seeds." (Myles Horton)

"Community is the place where everyone can give their gift." (Jean Vanier)

These two quotes come from the Community Place Newsletter and tell you all about the underlying philosophy of the team at the community place. This includes founders Pat Beeman and George Ducharme, as well as Ernie Pancsofar. This team also founded Communitas - an organization dedicated to building local and international community where all truly belong and can give the gifts Jean Vanier describes in his quotation above.

The Community Place opened on August 1, 1994. The purpose was to provide a place of welcome for the abilities, gifts and talents of all who entered their doors. Since their first day of operation this vision has been expressed by

- *providing a friendly, efficient U.S. Postal Station for all residents and merchants of downtown Manchester, Connecticut;

- *purchasing cards, candles, and gift items from as many local artists, businesses and crafts people as possible;

- *installing an automatic door opening system, a TDD machine, wider aisles and other adaptations which make it easier for people who get around,

stairs and across the street and done that very thing?

This book is about that question. Specifically, it is about two different ways that we, as individuals and as a society, have of responding to the situations of people who appear to be in need. They represent two different ways of living. One approach has to do with the formal world of systemic ways to help people. The other has to do with the informal world of personal responses people may make from within the context of historical traditions and out of some degree of personal autonomy. The first, in this instance, was Gerald's. The second was the bus driver's.

Why do some individuals act like the bus driver, whereas others do not? What is there about contemporary living that makes it more likely that one will respond like Gerald than like the bus driver? Finally, how might we go about explaining this characteristic of modern existence historically? These questions, too, are part of the subject of this book.

One of the certainties of modern existence is that we respond to the situation of people who are ill or hungry or dying or about to jump off a bridge by erecting and maintaining complex professional human service systems. By "certainty" Ivan Illich means something—an idea—that is so deeply ingrained in current shared perception and thought that the "rightness" of it is as sure as the ground beneath one's feet. Gerald's reach for the telephone is a good example of how this particular certainty forms the ground for our response, our consideration of the scope of possibilities for action, for this kind of situation. I recognize it as a certainty because had I been in Gerald's office, I would have done exactly the same thing.

Taking up Illich's investigations, I would like to consider how this belief has arisen, why we have become so certain that the best or perhaps even the sole way to respond to people is through the development of professional service systems, and some of the consequences of this belief. And I would like to examine the possibilities for action like that of the bus driver's that may yet exist outside of the formal systemic sphere.

From *Who Cares*, David Schwartz, published with permission of Westview Press (1997) p 7-8.

Let there be no other difference between human beings than those of age and sex. Since all have the same needs and the same faculties, let there be one education for all, one food for all.

Francois Emile Brebeuf: *Manifesto of the Equals*

communicate and "see" differently to be fully welcomed.

- *sponsoring an annual event (Walk 'n Roll) which celebrates the diverse gifts of all who live around and visit Main Street, Manchester.

- *providing the space and an atmosphere where children and adults feel comfortable sharing some of their journey with us and others who regularly visit the store.

Why did the Communitas team do this? Here's their own answer.

- *"We wanted to "walk the walk" of being at the heart of community building and connecting rather than merely "talk the talk" of community inclusion.

- *By being in the middle of an active postal station and small business on Main Street, we know we will be in contact with a very wide and very culturally rich portion of the Manchester Community.

- *By simply adding the dimension of making The Community Place and postal station fully accessible and welcoming to all people, including children and adults with disabilities, we expect to be able to live what we believe many businesses and associations in every town and village have the capacity to do very naturally - welcome and connect ALL interested community members. LISTENING for the gifts, contributions, abilities and capacities of children and adults with disabilities we believe we can connect people who have certain gifts to give with those who could benefit from these gifts.

For more information, for the bi-monthly newsletter and for the catalogue write, call fax or e mail. The Community Place 730 Main Street, Manchester CT. 06040. ph.860-645-3177; fax 203-645-3179 or e-mail Ernie Pancsofar at Natnad@aol.com.

Te Ripowai Higgins & Emma Hollands
(Assistant Office Manager, Inclusion Press)



Summer Institute Reflections

Te Ripowai Higgins

Calmly, deliberately
he circled . .
the inner circles
the outer circles
the new found circles
the family circles
the circle of friends

excited, delighted
expectant., anticipative
apprehensive, defensive
the faces, the races
from many places

the eagle
he circles
sweet grass smudgings
spiritual offerings
encompassing

sacred feet
of the four winds
unaware
of the seeing, soaring
eagle

settling, seating
envoking
hushed tones
thundering
electrifying

silently calling
'e kui mā, e koro mā'
(the ancestors)
accompany the
travelling company

PATH finding
dreaming, silently screaming
weeping, cheering
caring, learning
ALL means ALL
sharing, soul searching
community building.

building. . .
communities, alliances
giving, receiving
reflecting, connecting
on top of Mt. Primrose
all mingled and kindled
baskets brimming
from freely given treasures

now is the time
to the four winds return
to share with the people
complete the great circle

"What is the greatest and most
precious thing in the world?
I say to you,

'tis people, 'tis people, 'tis people."

Te Ripowai Higgins
Aotearoa / New Zealand
(Summer Institute - Toronto 1996)

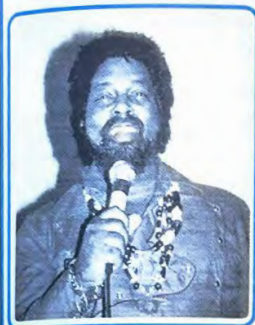
What is Community?

Shafik Asante

I want to address the question of "what is community" by first addressing what it means to not have community. All across this country I have asked people to describe the opposite of community. Words like "alone, lack of support, isolation, tears, exclusion," always come up. Even as people respond to my question, I can feel the emotion tied to their words. I believe this is because many of those who are responding have had the experience of being without community, and they feel their words.

Nanny

I was raised in a community. What I am writing about is not theoretical. It is my experience with community.



I was raised in a house with a grandmother who never received any city or state-wide awards for her community organizing efforts. There were/are no days set aside to honor her.

She was not college educated nor did

she complete high school. She was just plain loving "Nanny" (my grandmother). She decided that she wanted to turn our neighborhood into a "community". Nanny understood that living in a neighborhood in the changing times of the 50's and 60's was no longer sufficient. She felt people really needed to know each other better. She also

felt there was a clear difference between a "neighborhood" and a "community". In a neighborhood you share space, or an area. In a community you share thoughts, resources, and love. Nanny was clear on this. Nanny wanted to live in a community, not a neighborhood.

Nanny decided that one tool she could use to get people to shift from just being neighbors (sharing space) to being community was food. Nanny decided to open up the doors of our house to all of our neighbors (to come in and eat) every Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Upon people coming into the house, Nanny had one requirement - all food had to be eaten in the house. By having to eat in the house, people talked with and really got to know each other. They quickly shared their stories (mostly about their children and what it was like when they themselves were growing up) and thereby bonded. They came in as "neighbors", and they left as members of a "community".

Where is the Community Today?

I truly miss those days. As a result of my community experience, I grew up secure, and protected. Where are our communities today? What is preventing us from embracing our "oneness"? I believe too many of us have fallen victim to the "isms" (racism, sexism, ableism, etc). Too many of us, due to these "isms" now embrace exclusion. We have decided that "this" group and "that" group don't belong with the rest of "us". We have decided that "Black" youth are our enemies, that people with disabilities don't belong with "us", that people needing financial and medical support (welfare receivers) are drains upon us, etc. We need to take a serious look at what this "exclusion" is going to mean for all of us - not just for the victims of exclusion.

What Prevents Community?

What's a Solution?

There is so much we need to unlearn and

relearn about one another if we are going to recognize one another's value. We grew up accepting too many stereotypes about one another. We grew up believing too much about one another that is just not true. What we will have to do is learn about one another more accurately.

We all must make an honest attempt at getting to know one another. Community builders everywhere need to take responsibility for creating "days of diversity". On such days the neighborhood schools could sponsor "intro" days. Invite community members to come in and creatively (use skits, hands-on exercises) introduce their cultures to all gathered. We could develop information leaflets about ourselves, our viewpoints (on some community topic), etc. We could sponsor "collective meal" days. On such a day the community would gather together for fun and food at the community center. We could sponsor a "kids day". On "kids day" we could gather together for the single purpose of talking about who our children are and how we could take them on outings together. We could sponsor "ability recognition" days. On this day people with disabilities could share their stories, teach about their disabilities and inform their communities about what they need to be fully included in community life.

There are many other things we could do to put ourselves into relationships with one another. They don't have to be large scale events, they can take place with people who live right next door to you. None of these things are going to happen though if we don't consciously make it happen. The community could sponsor "nights of story-telling". This creates a relaxed setting in which much sharing takes place among the gatherers. Lets start building communities and stop settling for neighborhoods. To survive as a society, community building becomes a key solution.

A 3000 Year Old Chinese Story

Once there was an old man who lived in a tiny village. Although poor he was envied by all for he owned a beautiful white horse. Even the king coveted his treasure. A horse like this had never been seen before - such was its splendor, its majesty, its strength.

People offered fabulous prices for the steed but the old man always refused. This horse is not a horse to me he would tell them. It is a person. How could you sell a person? He is a friend not a possession. How could you sell a friend? The man was poor and the temptation was great. But he never sold the horse.

One morning he found that the horse was not in the stable. All the village came to see him. You old fool they scoffed. We told you that someone would steal your horse. We warned you that you would be robbed. You are so poor. How could you ever hope to protect such a valuable animal? It would have been better to have sold him. You could have gotten whatever price you wanted. No amount would have been too high. Now the horse is gone and you have been cursed with misfortune.

The old man responded. Don't speak too quickly. Say only that the horse is not in the stable. That is all we know: the rest is judgment. If I've been cursed or not, how can you know? How can you judge?

The people contested. Don't make us out to be fools. We may not be philosophers, but great philosophy is not needed. The simple fact that your horse is gone is a curse.

The old man spoke again. All I know is that the stable is empty and the horse is gone. The rest I don't know. Whether it be a curse or a blessing I can't say. All we can see is a fragment. Who can say what will come next?

The people of the village laughed. They thought that the man was crazy. They had always thought he was a fool. If he was not, he would have sold the horse and lived off the money. But instead, he was a poor woodcutter, an old man still cutting firewood

and dragging it out of the forest and selling it. He lived hand to mouth in the misery of poverty. Now he had proven that he was indeed a fool.

After fifteen days the horse returned. He hadn't been stolen: he had run away into the forest. Not only had he returned. He had brought a dozen wild horses with him. Once again the village people gathered around the woodcutter and spoke. Old man you were right and we were wrong. What we thought was a curse was blessing. Please forgive us.

The man responded. Once again you go too far. Say only that the horse is back. State only that a dozen horses returned with him but don't judge. How do you know if this is a blessing or not? You see only a fragment. Unless you know the whole story, how can you judge. You read only one page of a book. Can you judge the whole book? You read only one word of a phrase. Can you understand the entire page?

Life is so vast yet you judge all of life with one page or one word. All you have is a fragment. Don't say that this is a blessing. No one knows. I am content with what I know. I am not perturbed by what I don't.

Maybe the old man is right they said to one another. So they said little. But down deep they knew he was wrong. They knew it was a blessing. Twelve wild horses had returned with one horse. With a little bit of work the animals could be broken and trained and sold for much money.

The old man had a son - an only son. The young man began to break the wild horses. After a few days, he fell from one of the horses and broke both legs. Once again the villagers gathered around the old man and cast their judgments.

You were right they said. You proved you were right. The dozen horses were not a blessing. They were a curse. Your only son has broken his legs and now in your old age, you have no one to help you. Now you are poorer than ever.

The old man spoke again. You people are obsessed with judging. Don't go so far. Say only that my son broke his legs. Who knows if it is a blessing or a curse? No one knows. We only have

a fragment. Life comes in fragments

It so happened that a few weeks later the country engaged in war against a neighbouring country. All the young men of the village were required to join the army. Only the son of the old man of the village was excluded, because he was injured. Once again the people gathered around the old man crying and screaming because their sons had been taken. There was little hope that they would return. The enemy was strong and war would be a losing struggle. They would never see their sons again.

You were right old man they wept. God knows you were right. This proves it. Your son's accident was a blessing. His legs may be broken but at least he is with you. Our sons are gone forever.

The old man spoke again. It is impossible to talk with you. You always draw conclusions. No one knows. Say only this. Your sons had to go to war, and mine did not. No one knows if it is a blessing or a curse. No one is wise enough to know. Only God knows."

If there is not struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground, they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters... Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue till they are resisted with either words, or blows, or with both... If we ever get free from the oppressions and wrongs heaped upon us, we must pay for their removal. We must do this by labor, by suffering, by sacrifice, and if needs be, by our lives and the lives of others.
Frederick Douglas 1817-1895 abolitionist

The FIRST TORONTO SUMMER INSTITUTE - July 6-13, 1996

110 people gathered together from July 6 - 13, 1996 for the first and very successful Toronto Summer Institute. We came from 28 states, 6 provinces, 2 from Scotland, 1 from England and 1 from New Zealand. And we had DIVERSITY. We had an age range from 8 - 64; we had all colours, shapes, sizes. We had teenagers, families, professionals - but mainly - we had a community of co-learners. Appropriately, we met in the "Rainbow and Starlight Rooms" on the 23rd floor of the Primrose Hotel in downtown Toronto.

Now we can admit we were terrified - and that it was a very high risk venture - AND that it was worth every minute of planning.

We began on Saturday evening - July 6. Mike Doxtater from the Mohawk nation in Brantford, Ontario did a welcome - so that Te Ripowai, a Maori from New Zealand could participate. She answered in song - and brought her ancestors to help us through our learning. John McKnight from Chicago mesmerized the throngs with "the gift of blarney" dashed with wisdom. Then, Ron Satok (an artist who is totally blind) showed slides of his artistic evolution - then painted a mural to jazz. Most of us were a bit "stunned" by the end of the evening - which was perfect. We wanted to stretch people just beyond their comfort zones...and begin "differently" so that it would be clear this was about "the bigger picture". The stretch was as intense for us as any other participant.

Sunday morning, remarkably - everyone was there at 9:00 a.m. - and we began with a new story - from John O'Brien. Then we formed everyone into a "koru" - a Maori spiral. We asked each person to "make yourself known to the group by creating something you want to say in one minute." It was powerful, focusing, and vital to give the group an opportunity to begin meeting each other. One of the key "needs" was to share stories - to build a network - so we "made time" to listen to each other. We also created a Polaroid Story Board with photo's of every participant - with "their notes" of who they were and what "gifts" they were bringing to the community.

On our first afternoon, we made space for the Host learners - "the faculty" to each share a bit of themselves. Marsha and Jack outlined "boundaries" and talked about "all meaning all". Shafik Asante from Philadelphia made it clear that we were all going to "go home" from Mount Primrose (our hotel) and our task was to collect the skills and the strength to go home and "do it". Judith Snow reminded us about the nature of "giftedness" and that each of us is a gift. Tracy LeQuerey told a little of his story - from the street, through prison, then learning to read and write - and now being a successful entrepreneur. Te Ripowai introduced us to the wisdom of our ancestors - and reminded us that there is an answer, "Tis people, tis people, tis

people." It was a marvellous team of hosts - who created metaphorical "jazz" melodies - with spontaneous solos - built around a consistent theme. And then, we collectively invited everyone to join in the music making - to create our own improvisation - a learning symphony - or at least a jazz combo.

By the end of Sunday, we were collectively bound together - and exhausted - and we hadn't even scratched the surface.

Monday morning, we took the largest leap of the institute - John O'Brien and Jack opened our "Learning Marketplace". After setting guidelines, we spent till noon creating and negotiating a collective agenda for the next three days. We estimate that our group generated about 250 topics they wanted to discuss, and two hours later, we had merged dozens of ideas, and found spaces for groups of all sizes and every topic...in OUR collective agenda. The first priority of every participant was included - plus dozens of additional topics. People took their "Dance Cards" (personal program schedules - and went to work. We gave each participant a blank personalized Learning Marketplace program outline - to fill in and make their own personal learning agenda. The sessions were wide ranging. John McKnight conducted a popular three day series of workshops on the ABCD's of Community Building. Shafik built "alliances" for several sessions, and did "conflict resolution" almost constantly. Judith worked on Circles. Marsha, Jack and John did a PATH day. Tracy took people for street walks in the late evenings. Jack did personal circles and Maps. People made organizational plans, personal plans, life plans, game plans. There were PATHS going on morning, noon, night - and late night. There was an introduction to the Internet. Some went dancing; everyone ate; a few got to the theatre. Some of us played laser tag, Simulator Pinball (with us being the ball), and pretended to skydive on the glass floor of the CN Tower - 1200 feet off the ground. There were Virginia Satir movement and communication sessions, and seminars on religion, church and community. People worked hard and played hard. We learned a great deal from and with each other. We started early each day - and ended late every night. No one was forced to do anything. People chose to participate - and given that choice, people pushed themselves to their learning limits - with enthusiasm.

Each morning, we had a "community gathering" for one hour - and then for three and a half days, the "market place" took people where they needed to be to learn what and how they needed to learn. It worked. On Tuesday morning, we began with Shafik telling us the TRUE story of the Three Little Pigs - (from the Wolf's perspective). We learned the importance of planning together - so as not to be barbecued ribs. Rose Galati stopped us all when she introduced her daughters and put on "rubber gloves" - a cold and graphic reminder that the "staff at her school" feed

Maria wearing rubber gloves - in front of other children - and then we wonder why making friends is difficult. It was a stark and chilling moment of passion from a mother and a teacher.

On Wednesday morning, Marsha and Jack introduced "solution circles" so that a dozen individual problems were turned over to the 110 person international brain trust - and extensive progress was made on the spot on many complex issues. Then, the "dance schedule" resumed. In response to popular demand, Emma and Jack led a group on graphic facilitation. The schedule filled itself to overflowing.

On Thursday morning, Shafik led a tribute to the people who were quiet pioneers that gave all of us the gift of Judith Snow - her parents - Ted and Rita Snow. It was a moving tribute. Ted recalled a lesson he learned on the streets of London during the war.... 'together we can stop the traffic - and get across the street'. None of us will forget his message - to do it together. Ted called this 'discipline' and stressed that it was that discipline that got Judith into schools and anywhere else she needed to go - in the pioneering years.

It is not possible to enumerate all the learnings in our group/community. But there were some extraordinary happenings that moved us all and reminded us why we were there - constantly. Matthew Macdonald and his supporters attended the full Institute. Matthew has been rejected a thousand times, and internalized the rejection over two decades. But Matthew stayed, and was seldom too noisy. Most often, he was just one of the crowd - because he was accepted - not rejected.

And then there were Joel and Bryce. Joel Hollands was one of our student assistants; Bryce Thomas was from Texas. They became friends. We all saw it happen. Joel invented games for the two of them to play. They told each other stories. They "got a lot of bad guys". I think most of us were quietly embarrassed as we were reminded of the brilliance of children. Here we all were - from the corners of the earth - gathered to teach and learn how to "include" everyone... and right in front of us, without any "courses", Joel and Bryce were running a "master class" in how to just "be together". They were brilliant and a glorious image of the future we all long and work for...

Friday morning - we gathered as a community to listen to each other. We gathered in a huge circle - and began the climb down from Mount Primrose with music.

There were two more events. First, the "Gifts of Community" - the "community" shared their gifts. Spontaneously, people stood and sang, recited, performed. Shafik sang. There was a drumming song. We laughed, we cried. We had collectively learned

to "laugh, cry and let the mucus flow". The Community sharing went on and on. Te Ripowai read a poem to her Grandmother... and then from the Maori on the opposite side of the globe - to Mexico - Carmen Ramirez and friends - an ancient Aztec ceremony - using a conch to honour the Four Winds - and our journey with each other. We began with a Mohawk greeting, and a Maori answer, and closed with an Aztec blessing.

Then it was time to Graduate from the First Toronto Summer Institute. Graduation Certificates, announcements for NEXT year's Toronto Institute, and a globe key chain were given out by the children - all to the music of the Graduation Polka. Address lists were handed out. Hugs were exchanged. Evaluations were written - and amazingly, the room was cleaned up - by a team of course.

Over one hundred new and old friends converged for a Chicken Extravaganza - at Jack and Marsha's - 24 Thome. The weather cooperated so groups large and small circled, chatted, told stories in the yard, on the deck, in the living room, in Inclusion Press Headquarters, - all over. There was a final Internet seminar, and food, drink, deserts and treats mounded over the table - and into people's bodies. Music entertained the neighbors (who were of course invited) from time to time. Marsha on piano, Jack on Sax, half the crowd in voice - the other with "rhythm" instruments. And then there was drumming - on drums, pianos, spoons, and a dozen other surfaces.

Finally, it was done. The kitchen was clean. The First Toronto Institute - 1996 was over.

And now the 1997 Institute is almost ready to begin on July 5-11. Already there is an international group attending with six folks coming from Scotland and one coming all the way from Australia to join the North American group.

We are choosing to keep the institute small, so book now and avoid disappointment. Dates: July 4-10, 1998.

And thus, the saga of the First Toronto Summer Institute has made a mark - and has begun a future etching that will be an important learning landmark for many of us.

Jack Pearpoint & Marsha Forest

See You at the
Toronto Summer Institute:
July 4-10, 1998



McKnight, Snow, Pearpoint & O'Brien at Grand Exalted Pooh Bah Installation

Helicopter Syndrome

Anne Malatchi

While I'm sure my parents (and several teachers) had various labels for me as I was growing up, I did not grow up with a system label—one that implied a disability. Yet there were (and still are) times in my life when I've needed support and intervention to facilitate friendship building. The last time was following my June, 1993, move from Colorado (where I lived for 32 years and had a large circle of friends) to Virginia, where I did not know anyone. Colleagues learned about my interests and offered information about places to go and things to do. Occasionally, someone would offer to go with me, or invite me to join a gathering they were attending. After four years in Virginia, I feel I have developed a new circle of friends, while continuing to remain in contact with previous friends. I might have accomplished this on my own, but I view the support that was provided as 'thoughtful facilitation'.

While my new relationships were forming, I remember one uncomfortable situation involving a well meaning, but 'intrusive' individual (my label for her) who decided it was up to her to 'get friends' for me. While the idea of someone else attempting to take charge of my social life concerned me, I also became annoyed about being smothered and 'hovered over'. I finally shared this frustration and our relationship has moved into what I call one of 'acquaintanceship' rather than friendship. That's OK. I like acquaintances as well as friends, and feel there is room in my life for both.

Reflecting on this experience, I am struck by the parallels our children with disabilities encounter everyday in classrooms. Well meaning, but often 'hovering', smothering, intrusive adults actually impede friendship development and make choices

for children that are not truly reflective of the child's preferences. **Strong statement?**

Yes! However, in many

schools the potential for this to occur is in direct correlation to the number of students in inclusive classrooms. At many Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings I attend, the administrative response to an IEP team decision requesting placement in an inclusive classroom is 'I will need to find the money for a paraprofessional (often called teaching assistant or teacher's aide). Unfortunately, when that person is hired, they are often provided with little or no training and find themselves 'in charge' of a child, responsible for most of their education and everything else that happens while the child is at school. When there are mobility and/or communication issues, it may be left to the paraprofessional to also decide who the child will sit next to and interact with each day.

During one recent observation I watched a wonderful math activity involving geo boards. Children were seated in collaborative teams and the group I observed was very supportive of each other. It was Jack's first week at his new school and it was obvious he was a bit uncertain about the routines. He became upset when it was his table's turn to get up and select rubber bands. His vocalizations did not bother those at his table, and one buddy continued to assure him everything was OK, talking to him, and assisting him over to the rubber bands. Halfway there, the teaching assistant stepped in between the two of them and 'took charge'. Two out-



hovering helicopter

comes: 1) Jack's distress did not end with this intervention and, 2) the most critical outcome was the look on his buddy's very red face. 'I must have been doing something wrong.' Do you think this friend will soon offer to help Jack again? Jack was not hurting or bothering anyone, but the teaching assistant had been assigned to Jack.

Issues surrounding paraprofessionals have long been hot topics for those of us concerned with providing adequate support for children in general education classrooms. The key here is that I said 'children', not just 'child with a disability'. I believe very strongly that there should not be a person "assigned to a child", but rather support must be provided to environments, based upon the documented needs of all the children in those environments. When the issues involve relationships and friends, there is no better support than children of the same age. (Note: Interventions for some children with Deaf Blindness are necessary, but these individuals also need training to prevent the occurrence of the 'helicopter syndrome'. They, too, need to learn the difference between hovering and thoughtful facilitation.)

Children are the first to tell you how important friends are to them. Ask them about the importance of friendship and listen to their answers. The older the child, the more crucial that friendship link is to survival. Why is it then, that in many schools and classrooms making friends is not considered a priority because 'our time must be spent on academics'?

Those of us who have studied relationship building and empowered learners to explore and discuss making friends through classroom meetings or other circle of friends activities are well aware of the valued outcomes of thoughtful facilitation for ALL students:

- increase in understanding and appreciation of all members of the class
- increase in listening skills
- development of group problem solving skills
- increase in expressive language skills
- elevated self-esteem and sense of belonging
- motivation to be a part of class community

Additionally, adults who support and facilitate these classroom activities have discovered:

- students as a resource in curriculum adaptations
- fewer classroom management problems when students feel empowered to share feelings and ideas
- a feeling of community development in the classroom
- they develop a more holistic view of their students

Thoughtful facilitation translates to empowerment, choice, and exploration. The 'Helicopter Syndrome' equates to power, control, and over-protection. Our role as educators must be to provide the necessary support and facilitation for all students to develop successful relationships with others: to make friends, share secrets, have disagreements, lose friends, and make new ones. Having an adult hovering over you all day will not allow this to happen.

[There is a wonderful book on training Inclusion Facilitators from the Univ. of New Hampshire - *Changes in Latitudes/Attitudes* - the editors]

Anne Malatchi is a frequent contributor and award winning distributor of *Inclusion News*. She is one of our key Circle, MAPS and PATH facilitators. She lives and works in Richmond, VA.

Life is not the way it's supposed to be. It's the way it is. The way you cope with it is what makes the difference. (Virginia Satir)

Lucy and Her Classroom Assistants

Michelin Mason, Alliance for Inclusive Education, England

In our society, people are supposed to be independent of direct help from another person from the age of about six. Consequently we have not really developed the art of being helped or giving help. Children



Michelin and Lucy Mason - advocates!

with disabilities are however being allocated full or part time adult helpers in regular schools to make it possible for them to participate in lessons, breaks, mealtimes and after school clubs. My daughter Lucy is one of these children, and her

difficulties making this relationship work made me aware of how little thought has gone into what the role of non-teaching support should be. Lucy had fights with her 'helpers' and I was often being asked to mediate between the two.

They felt Lucy was being stropky and unreasonable and ungrateful for their efforts, and Lucy felt she was being over-supervised and controlled in ways her friends were not. Finally, their employer came to our house and listened to Lucy's detailed catalogue of everything that was wrong for over an hour! She suggested that there was a conflict between the helpers' assumed 'liability' for Lucy, and Lucy's real need for personal autonomy. She asked Lucy to write her own job description, and this is it:

Job description: Musts and must nots: (for Lucy)

- * Must be a woman
- * Must be young enough to understand a young person's mind
- * Must have strong back and arms.
- * Must be able to listen to what child wants and use their say (the child's say) whenever possible.
- * Must know the limits of keeping a child safe.

- * Must not want job for power.
- * Must be willing to stay after school. (You do get paid for this.)

* Must let the child decide on things like: where they want to go and when, their wheelchair, etc.

Needs:

* I will need a helper to come to and from school with me.

* I will need a helper at break and at lunch.

* I will need a helper to come to PE lessons and technology lessons and going to the loo.

* I will need a helper for some after school clubs, e.g. basketball

* I won't need a helper for changing lessons on most occasions.

* I may need extra help if I am recovering from injury.

* I need my helper to be trained about what to do in an emergency by me and my mum.

* I would like my helper to have some understanding of the rights of people with disabilities.

The employer took this away and incorporated some of it into the advertisement for the post, and some into the job interview. She also took it to the school and talked with them about it. The result is that the difficulties have been solved, and both Lucy

and her assistant feel confident that they are both working towards the same goals. Lucy is able to speak up for herself, as long as someone is listening. I am sure that she is also 'speaking' for many young people who are in her situation. In fact we know of at least one child with learning difficulties who has written his helper's job description as a result of Lucy's success.

Disabled adults have fought for 'independence' through employing our own personal assistants. People with learning difficulties are doing the same with facilitators. It seems to me that learning to be in-charge of help given, is a true life-skill that children need to be encouraged to develop by adults. What do you think?

For more information on the Alliance for Inclusive Education write: Unit 2, 70 South Lambeth Road, London, England SW8 1RL Tel: 0171-735-5277

The central question is not 'do we know what to do' but rather 'will we do what we know.'

Gary Bunch

The CREATIVE FACILITATOR: My Report

Joel Hollands

WHITE HAT INFORMATION

For the past week I have been working as a student helper and participant at the course held by Mr. Jack Pearpoint, President of Inclusion Press International and Dr. Marsha Forest Education Director of The Centre for Integrated Education and Community at the Primrose Hotel.

There were twenty-six students from the USA and Canada plus a team of facilitators from New Zealand, Winnipeg, Toronto and Indianapolis. The course was on the twenty-third floor of the Primrose Hotel. The room was divided into two parts — The Skylight Room and the Rainbow Room. On the evening of Tuesday, October 29, 1996 Marsha Forest, Cathy Hollands, Jonathon Hollands, Emma Sullivan and I went up to the twenty-third floor and began to set up our equipment, chairs and so on.

I worked and learned from nine o'clock to five thirty every day: Wed., Thur., Fri. and Sat. Twenty-two out of the twenty-six people thought that the course was great.

RED HAT INFORMATION

Overall I felt that the course was GREAT!!!! All through the course I felt excited and nervous all at the same time. It was a very interesting and intriguing learning experience. At the end of each day I felt exhausted and hungry. At the end of the course I felt very relieved but upset that the course was over.

PURPLE HAT INFORMATION

I personally had no purple hat feelings about the course other than watching five adult participants who just refused to take off their purple hats throughout the entire course. They were finding everything wrong with eve-

rything I think they were only there because they were sent and they really didn't want to be there. But what really scared me was these people were working with families and children on a day to day basis.

YELLOW HAT INFORMATION

I'm optimistic that the skills I learned throughout this course will help me on a day to day bases both at home and in the classroom. I found the course to be a great way to make new friends and explore my vast imagination. I am very thrilled about the amount of information I have learned.

GREEN HAT INFORMATION

For the first time I

actually ate in a Chinese restaurant and tried some new and interesting foods, even though I got indigestion it was a great learning experience. I also for the first time late in a Thai restaurant which was a wonderful exposure of the Thai culture. And now when ever I get confused or in a jam I can use the scuba rules [see attached]. And I have acquired a new skill which is paths. I had a path done and I graphically facilitated Helen's path. Helen is a social worker from West Virginia.



BLUE HAT INFORMATION

By watching a team of facilitators I have acquired new skills that will help me throughout my life.

MAJOR THINGS I HAVE LEARNED

- 1) Circle of friends.
- 2) PATH.
- 3) Six thinking hats.
- 4) How to think in creative ways.
- 5) Scuba Rules
- 6) Graphic Facilitation
- 7) Glass half full or glass half empty.

Joel Hollands is in grade 7 in Toronto and works with us at Inclusion Press.

Enrollment Limited Teams Welcome

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Visit our WEB Page: <http://inclusion.com>

To organize PATH Workshops or
Creative Facilitator Events, call or fax us.

Creative Facilitator Thoughts

Bryn Fortune

This workshop was for me a profound and powerful learning experience. The opportunity was a real sacred blessing in my personal life. As the head of a major family project in Michigan I have been so busy that I haven't stopped to reflect on my own life and my own family for awhile. These four days gave me a chance to stop, think and reflect. I had neglected to slow down long enough to reflect. I had set aside aspects of my personal life that needed scrutiny. God in his wisdom understood that I could only do this work in the presence of a community who could love and support me in a very special and unique way. While I am aware that our group also had some negative forces present (just as our society does) I was drawn to those who had the love in their hearts that I needed. I needed to follow my path of seeking love. I realize I had left that job to others.

One of the things I committed to on my actual PATH and first steps was doing a better job of telling people how important they are in my life. I feel much more at peace with how I can best play this deck of cards with the illness of my own children. I did not choose this. I can now deal with it more comfortably. This is a precious gift of the PATH.

When I came home my husband, Clark and the children Kalli and Lindsay were so excited to see my MAP and PATH. We unrolled them on the bedroom floor and they all studied the contents and pictures and colours in silence. I was struggling with how I would explain the MAP and PATH to my children. They have the same information about their health situation as I do, but I don't believe they choose to spend any energy focusing on their probable brevity on this earth.

They are children who focus on enjoying each other and every moment of their lives. For this I have always been grateful. After a long silence I made a comment that I didn't have as much wall space in my bedroom as I thought I did. This was where I was going to hang my MAP and PATH. My oldest daughter Kalli immediately responded by saying, "You have your entire ceiling available, Mom. Children really are blessed with a unique ability to not get stuck in boxes. That of course is where I will hang them. Kalli then proceeded to say, "There will still be plenty of space left for Dad's MAP and PATH to join them."

Both girls were very excited to think they will get to have their MAPS and PATH done when we come to the Summer Institute. The children needed no explanation of the MAP and PATH. They got it all from the graphic. I don't need to worry about my dream and vision at all! Doing this work personally has opened the door for me to be more relaxed and effective at work. See you in July.

Bryn lives and works in Michigan.

both personally and professionally. After this I came to the Summer Institute and that in itself was another fantastic experience. The two together have solidified my PATH of life. Darleen Simmonds lives and works in Minnesota.

A Personal Perspective

Darleen Simmonds

There I was on a plane heading for Toronto Canada. A close colleague of mine and I were attending the Creative Facilitator Course to learn about new tools particularly MAPS and PATH for facilitating our annual team meetings for people who receive services from our organization. We were discussing in flight how untimely this training was for us (November) with the Thanksgiving and Christmas season approaching. Our families and our work loads were heavy on our minds. Lacking both energy and inspiration we agreed we would hang out in our hotel room, avoid socializing and get the work done which we had brought along. What followed the next four days, in spite of our plan to be reclusive, was most definitely a life transforming learning experience for us both.

The training, which is called "Creative Facilitation for Inclusive Communities," was a four day experience in exploring and challenging our beliefs in what "inclusion" is really all about. Having worked with people with developmental disabilities for the past fifteen years, I came to Toronto thinking I knew a lot.

But right away the presenters of the workshop provided us with a much broader perspective of what inclusion really means and gave us the opportunity to experience the planning tools in our own personal and work lives. Doing my own MAPS and PATH and watching my plan of action unfold over the

year after the workshop has had a profound influence on what I now believe about people, myself and the world in which I live.

The message given in the course is about including all people. It is about creating and seeing a world of "giftedness" where all people have something to contribute and have dreams that need to be heard. The facilitators challenged us to see how our beliefs create the world in which we live. They stressed that building a world which fully includes all people can't be done alone and the course itself was a living example of creating a group for four days that worked cooperatively and modeled the philosophy that "together we are better."

I did not hide in my room. In fact the very first night's assignment was to bring a gift the next day to share with the group. Four of us composed a song about inclusion at a local blues bar which we also completed with choreography which was done by 2 A.M. This was not the vision my colleague and I had in flight to Toronto.

To this day I continue to experience the profound impact of the PATH process and all the tools from the course. It was in Toronto that I became truly committed to discovering and uncovering my real dreams, sustaining my spirit and living with renewed passion. Take the "Creative Facilitator Course." It will help you reassess where you are now and help you make a concrete action plan for your future. It has helped me

HURRICANES HIT OLDHAM, ENGLAND

Owen Cooper, Service Manager

Oldham's Learning Disability Service

Jack & Marsha led two workshops in Oldham in May 1996 and in May, 1997. Months after each event, the town is still recovering from their whirlwind presence! On the first day, Jack & Marsha led an Inclusion Workshop. This was an attempt to pull together a whole range of people who potentially have a significant role to play in building a more inclusive community. The second day was geared at all the managers within the joint Learning Disability Service in Oldham and was an exploratory day on the role of a manager.

INCLUSION is not About Disability, But About All of Us

The Inclusion Workshop aimed to pull together 100-120 people who were either directly involved in or could become involved in making Oldham a more inclusive community. There were staff from the Learning Disability Service, staff from the Independent Sector, people who use services, carers of people who use services, people from campaigning of community facilities, eg, leisure centres, libraries, museums, colleges, adult education centres, etc, as well as staff working within schools, housing provision, and health provision. (Such was the interest in the workshop that we could have doubled the numbers, however the venue meant we had to limit the size to 120. A larger venue is planned for next year).

The workshop organisers, along with Jack & Marsha, had a ball decorating the venue the day before the workshop and testing out the special effects. People walked into the venue on Friday knowing something very different and special was about to happen. They were not going to be disappointed. Not too many work-

shops are decorated with balloons, crepe paper, streamers, and have candies and party hats on the chairs. The stage filled with smoke, chariots of fire music played, the strobe was switched on and suddenly Jack & Marsha appear. Let the show begin!

The workshop attendees were made up of a real mixture of those who've previously spent time with Jack & Marsha, those who've read their literature and/or seen their videos and were up for it, right the way through to those who knew little or nothing about Jack & Marsha and were a bit wary, and those who were physically brittle! A challenge if ever there was one.

Even the Lone Ranger Had Tonto

Within the hour, Jack & Marsha had 120 people linking hands, swaying, and singing "Getting to Know You." Incredible. The workshop continued in that vein - a brilliant mixture of insightful presentations, participatory exercises, fun, and powerful messages

- Inclusion is about all of us, not the person with a disability.
- Inclusion is about seeing the

gifts and positives in ourselves and others, and not sitting in negative judgement.

- Inclusion is not something you do to people, but a way of living.
- You can't do it alone. Even the Lone Ranger had Tonto. We need to build links, create relationships, and support and be supported by others.

I wouldn't describe the Workshop as a relaxing event, where you can cruise through the day. The workshop challenges, makes you question your values, and sends you on an emotional roller-coaster. You can't hide. It seems as if everyone is engaged and actively involved in the workshop. This is uncomfortable for some, sufficiently so that we lost a few at each of the breaks. The majority were enthralled, enthused, and fired up to make Oldham a more inclusive community.

Sometimes there is a danger of events not living up to their billing, yet no matter how high the expectation, Jack & Marsha always deliver the goods.

Sensational = Brilliant + a Half

The second workshop was geared at the 23 managers within Oldham's Learning Disability Service. It's a service that has nearly doubled in size over the last 4 years, employing nearly 500 staff, and it often feels that there isn't enough time to just be together. Sub-groups of managers, eg, the nine connected to supported accommodation, will have reflective away-days, but we hadn't managed to get all 23 managers together other than for fairly functional meetings.

If the Inclusion Workshop was brilliant, this day was sensational. Jack & Marsha are known for their Inclusion Workshops, but are equally skilled at leading workshops that relate to organisational issues. We wanted to look at the role of the manager within the wider context of building inclusive communities.

The day was very dynamic and fluid, and a variety of techniques were introduced by Jack & Marsha from their vast "menu" in response to what was happening within the workshop. We had worked out an overall aim for the workshop, but which vehicles would be used for the

journey were being determined by the terrain we encountered.

Jack & Marsha helped us create an atmosphere where we could all be open, where we could reveal stuff below the surface, and generally be who we are. It wasn't meant to be a "team-building" day in any conventional sense of the term, but it was such an incredibly strengthening experience for the great majority. The day was fun, it reinforced a radical view of management, and created a collective "feel-good" "can-do" factor. The benefits of the day are still being felt long after.

This visit to Oldham was jointly organised with Gerv Leyden of the University of Nottingham. They will do it again in May, 1998.

What Do We Really Do?



Marsha Forest & Jack Pearpoint

People often ask us "What do you really do?" It is a good question, an honest question and one we want to answer. First and foremost we have created an independent publishing company called Inclusion Press. It is run and operated from our home in Toronto and has a core team of Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint as Directors and Cathy Hollands who runs the office (and us). We work in cooperation with Barbara Seed of New Concept Printing who print and store all our publications. Harry Mathews our accountant (also a poet) is a key member of our team. Harry sees us as a cross between the United Church and a Theatre Company. Two other key members of the team are the indomitable Judith Snow who is the philosopher Queen of the theory of inclusion and our Grand and Exalted Pooh-Bah, John O'Brien who is a major contributor to the creation of our materials and is the co-inventor of MAPS and PATH our two central tools. Rounding off the team is our research associate Gary Bunch and our grass roots teacher and amazing parent inspirer Rose Galati.

In association with the Press we also run The Centre for Integrated Education and Community which is a Canadian Charity. The major activities of the Center are the running of the Toronto Summer Institute on Inclusion, Community and Diversity and the writing and distribution of the popular Inclusion News. The Center also does pro bono work with certain grass roots groups of families and people with disabilities and as well spends much time listening and working with families by phone, by e mail and in person. The Centre has been assisted in its work by two major funding sources: Imperial Oil Canada and The Laidlaw Foundation. Susan Young of Imperial Oil and Nathan Gilbert of Laidlaw have been loyal and generous supporters of our work with the Center. Tracy Lequere has also served us enthusiastically as a fund raiser and cheerleader for the

work of the Center.

Our central mission is to assist any individual, family or organization who wants to move from exclusion to inclusion, who wants to deal with diversity, who wants to move into seeing communities of capacity vs. communities of deficiency, and who basically wants to change. We give people usable and creative tools for change. Our three main tools are "Building Circles of Support", Making Action Plans (MAPS) and Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH).

We travel internationally to do this work. We work mostly in Canada, the USA, England, Scotland, New Zealand and Australia. We work particularly with Human Service Organization and School Systems who want to deal creatively with diversity and change.

We are anti global whining and into assisting people to figure out how to creatively solve all the problems that are inherent and inevitable in life at this time in history.

Our work is also expanding into the field of health care and medical education training and as well we work with small business, architects, and other organizations who want to change.

Our workshops are 3-5 days and are for training facilitators in creative and colorful problem solving strategies. We particularly enjoy running "The Creative Facilitator Course" which teaches people to use the tools we have developed.

We also do organizational change and team building work with organizations moving to a team model and moving from traditional hierarchies to shared team leadership.

Our favorite work is using PATH to move organizations into new ways of working. This is very exciting work and takes us all over the world.

We promote team leadership by working as a team and we attempt as much as possible to "walk the talk" we are promoting. We are a small team and a small organization with a big heart and a big mission. We are simply part of a world wide movement to humanize the society and to put people on the center stage of life. We are guided by our Maori elders in Aotearoa (New Zealand) who have taught us the motto which acts as our guide.

"What is most important in this world, 'tis people, 'tis people, 'tis people."



Let me give you a word on the philosophy of reform. The whole history of the progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims have been born of earnest struggle.

The conflict has been exciting, agitating, all absorbing, and for the time being putting all other tumults to silence. It must do this or it does nothing. If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without ploughing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.

(Frederick Douglass, abolitionist, 1817-1895)

But Emily Would Set Doors Ajar

Gary Bunch & Angela Valeo

Emily Eaton is a vivacious young girl with sparkling eyes and ready smile. As well as a loving and caring family, Emily has friends in her neighborhood, at her school, and in the community organizations in which she participates. She leads an active and full life as a pre-teen.

Emily is also the centre of a storm of educational controversy reaching into the Supreme Court. On October 8, 1996 the Court denied Emily the right to be educated in a regular classroom. Cerebral palsy is a part of Emily's life. In the opinion of her school board, Emily's resulting degree of difference requires that she attend a segregated special class. So firm is this belief that the board has contested the parents' desire for an integrated regular class placement to the highest court of Canada.

The story which led to Emily being a prominent instrument of challenge to the model of segregating students with special needs has become common in Ontario, in Canada, and across the world. A child with a disabling condition begins school. School officials judge that a segregated placement would best meet the child's needs. The parents prefer an integrated, regular classroom placement in their neighborhood school believing this best. An educator - parent impasse results and the matter moves through a series of increasingly quasi-legal to legal steps.

For Emily the impasse did not arise until after her first years of school. Initially her board provided an integrated placement, although Emily had been designated exceptional through Ontario's Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) process. However, under the review provisions of the IPRC the board eventually decided on a placement in a segregated class outside Emily's immediate community. The Eaton's did not accept this decision as they believed an integrated placement more beneficial. Following a series of review processes mandated under the Education Act, the argument moved to the Ontario Divisional Court which

found against the Eatons. The Divisional Court's decision was overturned by the Ontario Court of Appeal, which led the school board to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Supreme Court Decision

The Supreme Court set aside the decision of the Ontario Court of Appeal which had found in favour of the Eatons. At the time of the writing of this article, the Supreme Court's reasons for its decision had not yet been released. However, an article in the *Globe and Mail* of October 10th, 1996, suggested that the Supreme Court may have overturned the decision of the Court of Appeal on procedural grounds only. According to the article, the deciding issue may have been the fact that the Court of Appeal considered the constitutionality of the Education Act without a representative of the Attorney General being present in court to defend the statute. If so, the Supreme Court did not decide against the Eatons in terms of the right to regular classroom placement, and that issue remains unclear.

What leads some educators to consider special education placement so much more beneficial than regular classroom placement that they will proceed against the parents' will? What persuades some parents that regular classroom placement is worth going to extreme lengths on behalf of their child? These questions may be understood to some degree by considering background social debate, research, and educational practice.

Social Debate

The social debate argument turns on the prerogative of a school system to order that system in terms of professional views of practicality of implementation and of differing student abilities. The model evolved to obtain the greatest good for the greatest number in a manageable fashion is that of parallel systems of service delivery. One system educates the mass of students in neighborhood schools under the tutelage of teachers knowledgeable in basic instructional and student management approaches. Paralleling this "regular" system is special education in which significant numbers of students having "special needs" are placed in des-

ignated segregated schools or classes.

More recently, this traditional model of education has been queried by an increasing number of educators, parents, human service workers, and members of the disabled community on various points, including that of social justice. Proponents of integration, or inclusion, posit that it is unjust to segregate students on the basis of differing abilities. They view the regular classroom as the natural place to bring all children together for increased understanding and acceptance, as well as the setting in which academic and social development will be most realized. A basic tenet of the argument is that parents and children have the constitutional right to choose regular class placement or special class placement. This social justice argument calls for significant reform in how educators view the structure of the school system and who may be a learner within it. Comparisons to the civil rights movements for the educational inclusion of women and of minority populations are frequent. The Supreme Court did not deal with this argument.

Research

Research support for the inclusive position is beginning to emerge. While findings are not uniform for all conditions of challenge and for all types of regular and special settings, it appears that parallel systems of education do not result in higher levels of achievement for identified students. Research suggests parity between regular and special class effect at the least, and to increased benefit from regular classroom attendance for many. At the same time, there is little evidence that the achievement of regular students is affected negatively. Rather, that there are spin-off benefits of caring, acceptance, and understanding.

A second supportive finding is that from teacher efficacy studies which investigate whether differing sets of instructional and management strategies are required for regular and special students. In brief, the finding is that the strongest approaches for regular students are also the strongest approaches for special students.

The basic strategies learned by all teachers work for all students.

Educational Practice

In the end, nonetheless, educational practice is controlled by the attitudes and beliefs of educators. At this level the jury is still out on whether the parallel model or the inclusive model best serves the interests of all students. Educators vary in their attitudes to working with students with challenging needs. The majority favour the familiar parallel approach. When asked to explain reticence to include, they point to perceptions of inadequate teacher preparation for integration, lack of leadership, fear of lowered standards, disruption to classroom process, and insufficient material and personnel support.

However, more and more school systems and individual educators are moving to inclusive policies and practices. The majority of provinces have announced policies favouring integration as the first choice for all students. A growing number of school boards are adopting the inclusive model and significantly reducing their special education structures. Many individual educators, even in parallel model boards, are electing to make their classes or schools inclusive, despite sharing many of the above teacher concerns noted, particularly as they touch on teacher preparation and administrator leadership.

The jury may still be out on the issue of including all students, but social debate, research, and changing educational practice are documenting continuing societal movement toward including more and more once-marginalized students. While Emily and her parents await the final legal educational interpretations of the decision of the Supreme Court, the decision has already been made for many other Emilys.

P.S. While Emily's public school board and her parents have been contesting her right to regular classroom placement, Emily has been included in a regular classroom of the other school board in her area. She is progressing well.

What We Think About the Eaton Decision

Jack Pearpoint & Marsha Forest

What do we think about the Eaton decision in the Supreme Court? Is this the end of Inclusion? Have parents and children lost all their rights? The way the decision has been reported, it would be easy to conclude that the inclusion world is near its end.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The Eaton decision (a battle between the Eaton family and the Brant County Board of Education began when Emily was a little girl - and was not allowed to be fully integrated in a regular classroom. Years later - at the "Supreme Court", the apparent "victory" of a school board over a family is "thin".

Facts:

- A family took a school board to the Supreme Court in order to have their

child included. That school board didn't agree, but Emily has been fully and successfully integrated in a near by school all these years. It was and is a matter of will - and the unthinkable amounts of money that went to lock Emily out could have HIRED dozens of personnel and adapted stairs, curriculum, and the future attitudes of thousands of children. Instead, a school chose to pay lawyers to lock a child out of a regular classroom.

What did the Supreme Court say?

All right - they did NOT say (which we would have liked) that the parents have the right to choose! However, they did say (and this is the Supreme Court) that:

"Integration of children with disabilities is the norm because of the benefits it provides" (This is the Supreme Court speaking.)

Failure to accommodate the needs of children with disabilities constitutes

discrimination under section 15 of the Charter.

Schools must provide all reasonable accommodation to children with disabilities in the regular classroom.

These Supreme Court judgments are huge victories for Inclusion. There is more to be done, but let's not ignore the desert we came from - to these solid "rights" for children.

Where do families stand with inclusion and integration into regular classrooms as we enter a new year?

- Inclusion is an issue - all the way to the Supreme Court!! It's not that long ago - no one had heard of it!

- Inclusion is officially the "norm" and schools MUST provide accommodations. These are huge victories

- Some of us hoped that the decision would be that parents/children could decide to be included - and that would be the final decision. In fact, there are more actors in that decision

- but the decision must take place in the context of rights for full inclusion.

What actions does a family take when they register their child with a "disability" in a classroom now... The answer is the same as it was before - only with the Supreme Court assuring your right to insist on all reasonable accommodation for full inclusion in regular classrooms. Many of us "insisted" before, but we didn't have the Supreme Court saying we had the right. If there is a major disagreement, then as now, making the demands for full inclusion strong and early is the BEST strategy.

The simple answer was and is "INSIST on full inclusion and don't back down". We're on stronger ground than ever before.



The Paths of Yellowknife

Jack Pearpoint and Marsha Forest

Monday morning - 25 high school students were "sprung" to help plan a better future for their school. They were a mixed lot - not just the student council types - all types. A small selection of faculty were welcomed. We did a PATH. It took all day. It was not easy. The future was relatively easy - once the students figured out that this wasn't just a game - and that we were actually LISTENING to what they were saying. The hard part was describing the student's perception of what the school is like "now". The students were brave, but needed to be reassured that it was OK to tell the truth. They told us that school was really deeply boring, irrelevant, and that many of the "great programs" adults raved about were meaningless. It was hard to hear their truth. But they didn't stop and they didn't just whine. They moved on to solid, tangible, doable steps that would begin their journey to excellence. And then we blocked - right at the end. We had struggled all day to "name the PATH" - and we knew it would come. We tried intermittently to name it, but time was running out. Small groups buzzed, "titles" emerged. Most of them used "dream" as a theme. With coaxing, we thought we had one, and in a final flurry of "approval" asked, "Can every one live with it.". The chair of the board growled, "just barely". It sounded like no to us, so back to the groups. The

heat was on. Another "dream" title...another push...and one more veto - a "NO" from one student who had been quiet all day. "Why?" we asked. "I don't want this Path to be a dream. I want us to do it. I want us to create our future!" In the hush, "Creating Our Future" got unanimous approval - and a surge of "yes's".

We thought we were done. Then Ken, the seemingly quiet superintendent who had been in the middle all day, explained that the System Administrative Team - all the Principals, Vice-Principals and senior administrators were meeting with us for the next two days to do their own PATH. Would the students like to monitor the adults? A wave of hands surged forward almost crushing the poor man with enthusiasm. Five were chosen to see that the "student path" would be given a full and fair hearing, that their voices would be heard first and not second hand. Quite a day. All this is on video which we will in time edit.

The next two days were the Yellowknife 1 (YK1) Administrative Team PATH. It is a courageous leader that invites ALL the team into a room, with a video, and a group of high school student participants, to plan the future for the system. Ken Woodley did that.

We repeated the same process as with the students. After some warm ups, we began the Dream portion of the PATH with the Administrative team. They did well, but as expected (by us) it was harder for adults to "let go". Thus,

when we asked the students to roll out their Path from the previous day, and compare it to the Administrators Path, the tension peaked. The students talked through their images of the future which were not dramatically different than the adults, although more energetic. However, when they talked about "NOW", the room went cold and silent. Hairs bristled. All the "defensive" genes in the adult team worked overtime. It was hard to hear. People reacted. The students held their ground. It was tense. But there was truth in the tension. The real cards were on the table. We coached the students not to be defensive because they were being paid an enormous compliment - they were being heard clearly and with great difficulty - but they were being heard.

The Path proceeded, and with occasional comparison points, the two groups began to notice that most of their goals were similar, perceived from different viewpoints. Thus, the potential for teamwork, rather than adversarial conflict, emerged from the chrysalis.

Often blocks emerge in the PATH process. Path is designed to identify the sticky points that need extra work. As we rumbled toward first steps, traditional defenses were rolled out. "Don't we need to involve everyone before we do anything?" Everyone had "signed on", but struggled hard to come to terms with starting NOW and not some time "soon". Now. We got through.

The Train...

We wanted to empower the group to move, so we gave a final assignment, to DESIGN the ideal YK1 Vehicle to get them to the future they had designed. We split them in teams. Each team presented their proposals. We complimented all the excellent ideas. However, we noted that YK1 could only be one vehicle. The new assignment: negotiate or create the ONE YK1 Vehicle.

It was remarkable. The fastest ever - an indication of the health of the team. One of the team vehicles had been a special kind of "train" that laid it's own track. In 30 seconds - the group agreed on that ONE image. They added more cars to the train - and put every group's vehicle on the train. We said - "GET ON BOARD!" And they did. Again, it was remarkable. Everyone "knew" where they fit and could articulate it clearly. One principal AND a student took a chunk of their vision and sat right in front "Holding the Vision in front to give clear direction." The Board Chair was a few cars back. He was a "snowplow attachment" - ready in waiting to come to the front and clear debris from the track when required. And in the caboose, there was a lounge, with good food (the students insisted), a resting place. And the Conductor with his whistle was leading from the rear - "All Aboard!" - signaling the engine to pull out of the station. The conductor was Ken - our Superintendent.

PATH Workshop Update

Ken Woodley

Last night we had a Board meeting at which I made an hour long presentation. The subject of the presentation was "Vision and Direction in Education District No. 1". I reviewed 10 initiatives that we have embarked on during the past year in the district and tried to highlight the underlying philosophical directions for each. After this, I did an extensive review of the PATH process and compared the 2 PATHs we constructed in March. Part of this presentation pointed out that each of our initiatives aimed at the "Dreams" that had been identified in the PATHs. I ended off the session with

a review of "Visionary Leadership".

The point made throughout the hour was that we are moving in very specific directions - all of which have at their heart, changing mind sets to enable educational opportunities for all our students. Emphasis was placed on change, innovation, risk, etc. At the very end, the Board was asked one very simple question. "Are the directions we have been going all year, and the North Star "Dreams" identified by the PATH workshops in March an accurate reflection of the "corporate board's" vision for YK1? Very quickly a motion was unanimously passed adopting the vision that had been articulated. And

then they went one step beyond - they included in the motion that this vision was to be used as a basis for District planning both now and in the future. (Part of my presentation included a discussion of strategic planning and the PATH process - and the argument that PATH is an extraordinarily effective type of just such a process.)

The next step in the meeting was the passing of a motion to proceed with staffing changes such as we were considering in March. This process begins tomorrow, and of course I am extremely sensitive to the impact that our decisions will have on the individuals concerned. I have to take solace in knowing that it is for a greater good for a greater number of students. Still,

it is not something to be entered into lightly. Fairness, equity, and compassion are a difficult set of ingredients to mix in balanced proportions. At times like this, perhaps our hearts become the most accurate measuring sticks we have.

We have a remarkable opportunity here and we must not lose it. There is so much about this undertaking that is controlled from who knows where. We are a happy accident of introductions. Imagine how different things might be if we did not have the specific mix of Board members, administrators, students, and facilitators who have come together in this.

Ken Woodley lives & works in Yellowknife, NT

A New School Year

Hugh G. Lloyd

As with so many other organizations in the north, the Yellowknife School Dist. #1 (YK1) has undergone major changes and cutbacks in the past year. Part way through the last school year, Dr. Ken Woodley was hired as the new Superintendent. He has been heavily involved with changes ever since.

To start off the new school year, Superintendent Woodley felt that training in team building and coping with change would help all the staff to get things going with a confident and positive attitude. Jack Pearpoint and Marsha Forest, were asked to lead a session that would give the district's staff a new sense of direction, commitment and enthusiasm.

On Monday, August 26th, about 150 district staff gathered at Sir John Franklin High School for an unprecedented experience. A pancake breakfast was prepared and served by the School Trustees and administrative staff. Superintendent Woodley prominent in his chef's hat and industrial strength apron. It was the first opportunity staff had to greet each other after the summer holidays and the halls

of Sir John were alive with shouted greetings, hugs and smart remarks. The relaxed and welcoming atmosphere, the food and the coffee set the tone for the rest of the day. At 9:00 the staff gathered in the auditorium, but things were not as expected. The stage was decorated with party hats, balloons and banners. Each seat had candy and paper streamers - the whole thing looked like an oversized birthday party just waiting to begin.

Ground rules were established for the day - no judging of others or one's self; a ritual dumping of mental and emotional garbage that might get in the way, and sound advice on how people learn new ideas.

A unique element of the morning was that many of the comments and discussions were captured in colorful graphic drawings by Jack, resulting in a series of visual posters incorporating peoples' ideas and reactions. These posters became the lasting record of the day's work.

Ken Woodley addressed the staff on the new opportunities ahead - in spite of recent cuts and major changes. "Twenty years from now, if the District looks much as it does today, we will

have completely missed the opportunity to change to meet the rapidly changing needs of the community." He stressed five key elements: Reflection, Celebration, Innovation, Teams and that Dreams are Just Unrealized Goals. He emphasized the commitment of the District to support all staff and schools as they wrestle with more students requiring a more varied education, while resources seem to evaporate faster and faster.

After coffee, another element in the team building day was introduced - live music from the "Gumboots" - a local singing group. A rousing concert had the teachers and the students in the halls (registering for classes) wanting to join the party.

By lunch time, (again catered by Trustees and staff), the auditorium looked like a major party site. The staff were loud and laughing. The atmosphere was charged with the fun of being back. Next: a session on building "All Star Teams" prepared all staff to do work in groups. They trooped into the gym to apply the lessons they had learned to their own situations. They also drafted letters of advice and commentary directly to Ken Woodley and the District administration. The after-

noon concluded with final remarks on starting and maintaining new approaches and with Ken thanking all the staff for their enthusiastic start to the new school year.

The blank letter to Ken from all staff had the following outline:

Dear Ken:

* Here's a couple of thoughts that I wanted to share with you...

* In order for me to be as effective as I can in my work, there are a couple of things that I need from the district and its managers. These are....

* If I could change one thing that would really make a difference, it would be...

* Thanks for listening. My e-mail address is....

This letter went to every staff member. Ken answered every one within the month. Result: Staff felt listened to, heard and valued. (Note: Ken did not promise to fix everything.. but to listen and respond!)

Note: An exciting video will be ready by spring 1998 showing a planning session with administrators and high school students in Yellowknife using the PATH process and other creative Tools for Change. Hugh Lloyd lives and works in Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada

THE ART OF GROWING INVISIBLE ANTENNAE

Nicola Schaefer

In a plane heading for Toronto, where I was to be part of a conference to do with the inclusion of people with disabilities in their own homes within typical neighbourhoods, I found



Nicola, Katherine and friends myself talking, as one does on planes, with a fellow passenger. We were both middle-aged women with adult offspring. Ellen told me about hers and then it was my turn.

"My youngest, Ben, is a tree surgeon in England; next up is Dominic, who's a freelance photographer in Vancouver, and my oldest, my daughter Kate, is a teacher in Winnipeg."

"Oh yes," said Ellen, "What does she teach?"

"She's not a conventional teacher," I said, "But I suppose one could say she teaches the art of growing invisible antennae." Before Ellen's baffled expression had time to become permanent I explained further. I told her what an interesting and complex woman my daughter is and how despite, or rather because of, the inconveniences with which she has to contend - including quadriplegia and lack of speech - she is indeed a brilliant, full-time (if unpaid) teacher to anyone willing to learn.

As her first student, I told Ellen, it

took me a while to adapt to her teaching methods. There were no lecture notes to be taken, no essays to be written, no exercises to practice, no books (beyond the generic "Cerebral Palsy: How to Deal with your Wonky Kid" type) to study. There was, and still is, just this lovely person lying or sitting around and challenging me to help her have a life.

Anyone unable to move much, or to communicate beyond body language, needs to have enormous patience when trying to get their point across. So too, of course, does the recipient of the information, so one of the first things I learned from Kate was to slow down when I was "listening", and to try first one thing and then another, and another, until I felt I had understood her. Consequently I also learned to watch her expression carefully to see what made her demonstrate different emotions. These emotions included amusement (the trigger for which might be me dropping something on my foot and hopping around cursing, for example), alarm (the approach of a nurse with a needle or a baby brother looming over her with a Tonka truck), dreaminess or contentment (particular pieces or types of music, having a massage), interest (when she was young it was usually food but when she became a teenager this was superseded by hairy young men), irritation or disdain (being encouraged, sometimes of necessity forcefully, with the in take of fluids when she wanted simply to be left alone), and pure joy (the appearance of a favorite person, perhaps).

A major lesson I've learned in life with Kate is the importance of becoming an advocate on her behalf. Originally a shy person who accepted the status quo, I gradually realized that Kate had rights and needs that weren't being addressed, and wouldn't be

unless I got together with the other parents and, with them, spoke up for our children. Back in the '70s, when there was literally nothing to assist parents like myself and our children - integrated school, respite care and so on were but dreams - I remember saying to a friend, "I'm constantly putting up my hand at meetings, typing proposals, phoning bureaucrats; I'm becoming nothing more than an irritant."

"Remember," said my friend, "irritants create pearls" - referring, of course to the grain of sand in the oyster that is the beginning of the pearl. It was a good thought.

I reckon Kate also teaches philosophy and ethics. Had I not known her I don't think I'd ever have appreciated my own life as keenly as I do. Nor would I have given as much thought to ethical questions about amniocentesis, abortion, the implications of the words "quality of life," or the frightening knowledge that certain individuals are devalued. By her very being, she has encouraged me to ponder these issues and has guided me in my thinking.

Everything Kate has taught me sprang from the same root - trying as far as possible to see and feel life from her point of view. What must it feel like to be stuck in a wheel chair half the time, to be unable to say, "I really fancy a plate of fish and chips and then a meander round the neighbourhood, now that spring is here", to have little or no control over what is done to me or by whom, to be reliant on others for every aspect of my life? I've learned to be as empathetic as possible and to try to sense what's going on in her head, in other words to grow invisible antennae.

During our conversation (I didn't do all the talking!) Ellen told me how much she'd learned from her nephew, who had Down Syndrome. Later she asked me where Kate lived and what she did during the day. I described

Kate's living arrangement and then explained that because there was no suitable daytime occupation in Winnipeg for her when she reached school-leaving age, she stayed in the Multiply Handicapped class - or, as I preferred to call it, Room 107 at Gordon Bell High School until she was 23. Then, she and three other young women (including Diana Tureski), spent a couple of years in Project Inclusion, an individually designed adult education program at Red River Community College. When a decrease in funding caused the demise of this initiative, I investigated daytime situations for adults with significant disabilities and decided the one that would be best for Kate. Luckily, she was accepted and has been there ever since.

As we headed down to Toronto, I told Ellen that over the years I've often popped into the program and have noticed with interest and appreciation the way it has developed and adhered increasingly to its mandate of regarding participants and individuals, each with their own specific contributions to make and needs to be met. I also find it immensely gratifying that, almost without exception, the people working in the program have proved to be among Kate's most exemplary students. First, they take a real interest in Kate as a person and her methods of communicating. Second, they have learned to adapt to her specific and complex needs. And third, I can rely on them to advocate for Kate when necessary. I stressed to Ellen that these good staff people take a similar interest in all the participants, and I'm sure have been as open to learning from them as they have from Kate. I think they would agree that Kate and company are extraordinary teachers.

Introduction to "Yes - She Knows She's There!"

Nicola Schaefer

Many biographies of a person born with a disability have a synopsis on the front flap that starts something like this "At seven months Catherine was diagnosed with severe and widespread brain damage which would affect her entire neuromuscular system. Her mother was told that Catherine would never walk or talk and would become an increasing burden to her family. She was advised to put her baby in an institution."

The next paragraph, the one designed to hook you on the book, might go: "This is the amazing and heart-warming story of how Catherine's parents refused to accept the grim prognosis and how, through courage, faith and determination, they helped their daughter surmount her awesome disabilities. Now, thirty-five years later, Catherine is happily married and has two healthy children. Having acquired a Ph.D. in anthropology (specializing in the left big toe of prehistoric man), she is Dean of Arts at Gungho University. In her spare time she flies back and forth - yes, she has a pilot's license! - to Ecuador to volunteer with political refugees."

I enjoy reading such books. We

all know, however, that such tragedy-to-triumph transformations rarely occur. It certainly didn't for my daughter Catherine. The first paragraph of this introduction applied to her and to this day (she's thirty-five) she is unable to move much at all, let alone walk, and she has never spoken. Nevertheless, she is a beautiful and fascinating person and I believe her life to date has been equally valid a success story.

In 1978 Fitzhenry & White-side (Toronto) published *Does She Know She's There?*, a book I wrote about growing up with Cath. In 1982 I added to it for an updated edition. Both Catherine's life and my own got pretty busy after that and I failed until now, over a decade later, to continue her story. I'm hoping that Fitzhenry & Whiteside will publish Catherine's entire biography - the updated version and this chunk - as a single entity, but until then Jack and Marsha of Inclusion Press have kindly offered to produce simply this chunk. They believed it stood on its own and would help inspire other families. I hope you enjoy it.

Nicola Schaefer is a respected author & lecturer in Winnipeg, MB.

This NEW book will be published by Inclusion Press very soon...

From Victoria in Australia - Scenario of the absurd.

Rosemary Crossley

In this state more than half the children with disabilities attend typical schools, but with widely differing levels of support and inclusion.

The group of children I'm particularly concerned with are those without fluent or intelligible speech. They are at particular risk of exclusion if they don't have a voice. Once upon a time there were quite generous programs providing communication equipment for children, but these have been progressively cut during the nineties. Meanwhile Victoria provides free communication aids for all adults (people over the age of 18) who need them.

So we're taking the government to court. On Feb. 20, 1997 the first part of an action alleging discrimination on the basis of age will be heard in the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal here.

The action has two parts, because as well as refusing to give communication aids to children the government also refuses to give specialized wheelchairs to people (usually seniors) who live in nursing homes.

This produces complete absurdities: an adult with cerebral palsy who lives in a nursing home who needs both a communication aid and a motorized wheelchair is judged to be in

similar circumstances to all other non speakers over the age of 18 for the purpose of getting a communication aid, but is judged to be in a different circumstance when it comes to getting a wheelchair. A child with cerebral palsy who lives at home who needs a communication aid and a wheelchair is judged to be in a similar circumstance to all other non walkers (not residing in nursing homes) when it comes to getting a wheelchair, but is judged to be in a different circumstance from most non speakers for the purposes of getting a communication aid.

The adult can order a hamburger but cannot get to McDonalds.

The child can get to McDonalds but cannot order anything.

Neither the child nor the adult have been provided with the aids and equipment necessary to increase their levels of independence.

Wish us well, I'll keep you posted.

Rosemary Crossley is a well known activist, advocate and writer in Australia.

In Australia, some Inclusion Network e-mail contacts include:

* Rosemary Crossley: s9340099@cougar.vut.edu.au
* QPPD (-Jan Dyke) in Brisbane: qppdavo@peg.apc.org
* Darrell Wills: pledgdw@gateway.net.au

on Communication

Will Turnbull

Real freedom of speech is guaranteed under the First Amendment to the American Constitution. This has applied historically to the ability to speak in a public forum, but I submit that it may also apply to the right to communicate. Yes, there is a difference between the two. There are many people who lack the ability to create intelligible language. They still have much to say and strong opinions about what goes on around them.

The problem enters when no efforts are made to find an avenue for real expression for language. The societal norm has been that if a person cannot talk, then he/she must be mentally retarded. You have to understand that many people have been classified as mentally retarded based solely on the "language standard." Many people suffer from motor disturbances rendering them without speech. However, there is no congruence between the lack of speech and mental retardation. The absence of intelligible language does not compromise the ability to think, to decide, to judge, to analyze, to go through all the processes of cognition.

We folks without speech deserve to have attempts made to allow us to communicate. The thorny issue is where lies the responsibility to search for the avenue of expression. As in my case, a few wonderful people have taken on the responsibility. But, for many without words, how long must they wait for someone to begin the search. Fending for themselves, they are mute, lost in a world of unspoken thoughts and wishes. The lives that have gone unfulfilled for lack of language are really tragic.

We as a society, must systematize the process for presenting alternate modes of communication to those without language. Foregoing previous assumptions, we must now assume the intellect is intact and begin the process of determining how to best access that intellect. Once accessed, that expression must never be suppressed. An array of choices such as a communication board, facilitated communication, communication technology and sign language should be offered continually. The preferred avenue of communication should

always be available, just as a voice is always available to those who speak.

We are now on a path to providing access to public areas to those who are wheelchair-bound. We must continue on this road to allow expression in all areas of daily life to those who use alternative means of communication. Each individual should be allowed full expression. They should have the same rights as those blessed with a natural voice.

Bob Williams, the national Commissioner of the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, speaking (via his augmentative communication device) at the 1994 Strategies for Inclusive Education Conference, said that we may have torn down some of the communication barriers that exist, but tens of thousands still are robbed of their freedom of speech: "Free speech is still a fundamental American value. It's still a question of power and personal autonomy and we in the disability rights movement as well as the larger community have to wrestle with what free speech means to our folks . . . it comes back to a question of do you want kids to grow up knowing only powerlessness, or do we want to put power within the reach of kids and let them somehow grab onto it?"

Considering this, Carolyn Reed poses the question: "Or do we prefer their silence?"

Tough question. Perhaps it is easier and more comfortable to just leave things as they've been. Maybe it's more comfortable to continue to place things outside our immediate awareness and avoid the real business of trying to understand each other. Perhaps ignorance IS bliss! But to accept this notion would mean that we would have to deny a basic truth in our lives, which has been summed up most eloquently by Dr. Martin Luther King. He said: "In a real sense all life is inter-related. All (of us) are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the inter-related structure of reality."

from A FOOT IN BOTH WORLDS, Mary Lapos, Editor
100 Center Road, Danville, PA 17821 717-275-5361

Weeds or Wildflowers: What Do You See?

Marsha Forest

Weeds or wildflowers.
What do you see?
What will it be?
Clearly for me I now see
beauty and the reality of uncertainty.
I see life comes without a guarantee.
This is how life really must be.

This is how life really is.

I am not always comfortable
or feeling right these days.
In my brain new zones of light
display a new dance.
The dance is complex - not good or bad
but in me a battle rages
to feel the full range of my humanity.
Not the good nor the bad
but all of it,
the sad, the glad, the mad.
Not the happy little A plus girl child,
but the wild, passionate and often scared woman
whose heart bleeds
with the need
of a friends hand to hold
as I and he grow old.

More human now I hear the other's cry
and I finally know that we will all die.
Illusions are gone.
As the cancer was cut
a door was shut.

I choose now to open my eyes,
hear the rage and the lies,
see the pain and the cries
as well as delight and joy
the haka and the poi.

I walk more gently on the earth these days
appreciating the warm rays
of a sun that can warm or burn.
I still yearn for the guarantee that will never come
but I will not run away from the pain
for in every cloud there lies sunshine and rain.

I marvel at the fierce summer storm with
thunder, lightening, hail stones round
the power to destroy or give growth to the ground.

I survived difficult and challenging years.
My nerves are raw.
My heart still sore from wanting
so much more of life and love.

But now I know
I can only take today.
I can only stay
as long as this very day.

And facing this uncertainty
I touch humanity and humility
and give up illusion
to see each magic dawn.

I must learn and want to awake more clear
without this nausea and fear
thus giving up
a childish illusion
a simple delusion
that only causes me pain and grief
for it isn't real
and I want to simply feel,
real.

Safe in the arms of a friend
I will soon learn to awake
and take
each day.
Choosing still to see
wildflowers not weeds.
What do you see?

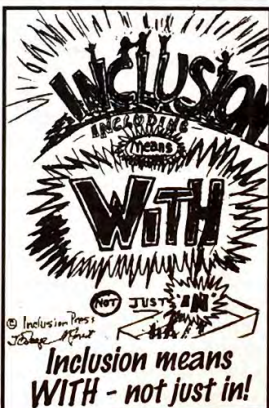
Marsha and Jack encourage anyone encountering serious medical issues to "move" ... do not hesitate. Do mammograms, do regular tests - invest in the treatment of choice - and get on with your life!

Language of Us/Them

Mayer Shevin

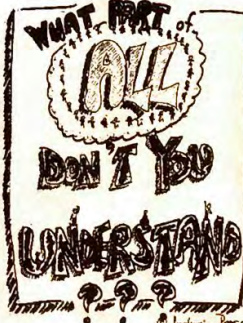
We like things
They fixate on objects
We try to make friends
They display attention
seeking behaviour
We take breaks
They display off task behavior
We stand up for ourselves
They are non-compliant
We have hobbies
They self-stim
We choose our friends wisely
They display poor peer
socialization
We persevere
They persevere
We love people
They have dependencies
on people
We go for a walk
They run away
We insist
They tantrum
We change our minds
They are disoriented and have
short attention spans
We have talents
They have splinter skills
We are human
They are ... ?

Mayer Shevin is an advocate/writer
from Syracuse, N.Y.



Life is either a daring
adventure or nothing.
Security does not exist in
nature nor do the children
of men as a whole
experience it.
Avoiding danger is no
safer in the long run
than exposure.

Helen Keller



"Kvetching" is Yiddish
for "whining".

To create teams - conversations
are "face-to-face",
no back stabbing,
no complaining "outside"

We can throw stones, complain about them, stumble over them, climb over them or build with them.

Instead of seeing the rug being pulled out from under us, we can learn to dance on a shifting carpet.



The Talking Stick Reflection: An Exercise in Listening

Marsha Forest & Jack Pearpoint

The **Talking Stick** is an ancient Aboriginal tool for healing relationships through learning to listen to others and to speak your truth. We have asked permission from Aboriginal friends to use the Talking Stick to help connect people to one another and to begin dialogue through listening. They have graciously granted us their blessing.

The Talking Stick is appropriate to modern needs. The stick is passed around the circle. The person holding the Talking Stick is the only one who speaks. Everyone else listens. There is absolutely no interruption. Everyone's viewpoint is heard. Great Councils in Native America were held in this fashion and the Council of Elders made decisions after listening to all the viewpoints expressed.

We have adapted this philosophy into a short and powerful tool to stop the bustle and hysteria - for three minutes. It is one of our most powerful transformative tools for families, schools, human service organizations, teams - anyone willing to listen. It creates a climate for effective communication and teaches listening skills.

We begin by setting a tone with gentle music. We use the music of R. Carlos Nakai - a Navaho flute that settles the room in a magic way. Then we explain the rules of the exercise.

Minute One - Person A gets the talking stick and has one uninterrupted minute to speak or communicate in silence. Person B listens and does not interrupt the words or the silence.

After one minute, the facilitator (who is timing the exercise) dings a little chime and the talking stick passes to person B.

Minute Two - Person B gets the talking stick and has one uninterrupted minute to speak or communicate in silence. Person A listens and does not interrupt the words or the silence.

After person B speaks, the two participants can share a one or two minute dialogue.

Minute Three: Dialogue - talk WITH each other.

We are avoiding discussion (which comes from the root word percussion, concussion - hitting each other over the head with ideas) and moving to the word **dialogue** (which comes from the root word dialogos or thinking together.)

The topic can relate to work issues, values issues or whatever needs dialogue. In large groups, we usually have one pair do this publicly to demonstrate the process. Then we get the room into pairs who will listen to each other for 3-4 minutes. This can be done several times during a workshop.

No one need be afraid they will not be heard. No one may dominate. The Talking Stick is given to each person, so everyone has an equal opportunity to express themselves. This makes the Talking Stick an excellent tool for conflict resolution.

We also build in time to process what it was like to listen and to be listened to. Many of us in North America find listening to one another difficult - we want to jump in, interrupt or add pearls of wisdom. This exercise, in conjunction with our **Scuba Rules: Stop, Breathe, Think then Act**, can change the atmosphere in a workshop or organization. The Talking Stick Reflection is a foundation for sharing. It creates a safe space for people who have worked together for years, but never really connected, to talk to one another from the heart.



Solution Circle: Getting Unstuck A Creative Problem Solving Tool

Designed by Jack Pearpoint, Marsha Forest & John O'Brien

This is a short and powerful tool that takes no more than a half hour. It is effective in getting "unstuck" from a problem in life or work. Solution Circles are tools of "community capacity". It assumes and demonstrates that nearby people - in any community or work place have the capacity to help - if asked. It requires a person to **ASK** - not an easy thing in our culture of privacy and "do it alone". This tool puts all the values we espouse into practice and demonstrates that **TOGETHER WE'RE BETTER**.

Time required: No more than thirty minutes.

People per Solution Circle: Best with 5-9.

Roles to be played:

- **Problem Presenter** (focus person)
- **Process Facilitator** (team manager, time keeper)
- **Note Taker or Graphic Recorder**
- amazingly creative **Brainstorm Team**

For large groups, the group facilitator (i.e. you) asks the group for volunteer problem presenters. (The number required is the total group divided by 9 approximately). Then ask for a process facilitator and a graphic recorder to attach themselves to each problem presenter so each core team is now a group of 3. The balance of the large group (i.e. the world's most creative community members) now join the various problem solving teams so each team totals approximately 8-9 problem solvers. Diversity in teams is best: spread the age range; have male/female diversity; the greater the diversity per team the better.

Explain the steps to the teams in detail:

Step One: (6 minutes) The problem presenter will have 6 uninterrupted minutes to outline the problem. The job of the process facilitator is to keep time and make sure no one interrupts. The recorder takes notes. Everyone else (the brainstormers) listens. If the problem presenter stops talking before the six minutes elapse, everyone else stays silent until the 6 minutes pass. This is key! The problem presenter gets 6 uninterrupted minutes.

Step two: (6 minutes) This is a **brainstorm**. Everyone chimes in with ideas about creative solutions to what they just heard. It is not a time to clarify the problem or to ask questions. It is not a time to give speeches, lectures or advice. The process facilitator must make sure this is a brainstorm. Everyone gets a chance to give their brilliant ideas. No one must be allowed to dominate. The problem presenter listens - without interrupting. He/she must not talk or respond. We often give the person masking tape to facilitate their listening. It's hard to just listen!

Step 3: (6 minutes) Now the group can have a **dialogue** led by the problem presenter. This is time to explore and clarify the problem. Focus on the positive points only and not what can't be done.

Step 4: (6 minutes) The **First Step**. The focus person and the group decide on first steps that are doable within the next 3 days. This is critical. Research shows that unless a first step is taken almost immediately, people do not get out of their ruts. A coach from the group volunteers to phone or see the person within 3 days and check if they took their first step.

Finally the group just does a **round of words** to describe the experience and the recorder gives the record to the focus person. If in a large group, the teams return to the main group, debrief and continue.

In our experiences people love this exercise and find that it generates action. It does not guarantee a solution, but it usually gets people "unstuck" and at least points to the next logical step. Try it out and let us know how it works for you.

SOLUTION CIRCLE getting unstuck



The Great Spirit, in placing people on the earth, desired them to take care of the ground and to do each other no harm.

Young Chief of the Cayuses



TEAMS!

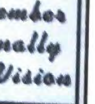
*Teams Outperform individuals
If they do 3 things:*



**Create Shared
Vision/Purpose**



**Do Real &
Challenging
Work re: Vision**



**Every Team Member
Commits Personally
to the Work & Vision**

© Jack Pearpoint & Marsha Forest, Inclusion Press, 1997

TEAM: Together Everyone Achieves More

Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint

The big buzz word these days is teams. Yet many people who are simply groups of people think they are a team. Check it out. Is the group you work with a team or simply a bunch of people. Pretending to be a team when you are not causes much confusion and burnout. Real teams create energy and get challenging jobs done!

Team defined: A small number of people (12-14) with complimentary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable. An interdependent system.

We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow men; and among those fibers as sympathetic threads, our actions run as causes, and they come back to us as effects.

Herman Melville

LEARNING FROM THE LIDTARD TEAM

MAINTAIN from the

We teach the Dogs - HOW!

- Constant attention - much
- Reinforce good behavior
- Discipline immediately - without anger
- Partner/mentor with a Mature Dog

We teach the Dogs - WHAT!

- MANNERS: NO snarling
- No means NO! (fighting)
- Socialization - be friendly
- Train Different Skills: lead, swing, team, wheel...

© 1997 Inclusion Press - Jack & Marsha

The top ten attributes of good teams in any field of work

Jack Pearpoint & Marsha Forest

1. Clear vision and an urgent purpose.
2. Members are selected for personality AND skills.
3. Clear rules of behavior and boundaries that promote a clear focus.
4. Group norms to enforce the rules and boundaries.
5. Performs real and meaningful work.
6. Challenge.
7. Spends time together getting to know one another as people.
8. Gives positive and honest feedback, rewards and recognition for work done.
9. Believes in the WE not the ME.
10. Have FUN together.



GOOD TEAMS

The Top 10

★ **Clear Vision**

- Members Selected for Personality & Skills
- Clear Rules of Behavior and Boundaries
- Norms to ENFORCE the Rules/Boundaries
- Perform Real Meaningful Work
- Have a Challenge
- Spends time together
- Give take-Honest Positive Feedback
- Rewards Recognition
- Believe in WE (not ME)
- Have FUN Together

★ **Urgent Purpose**

Laughter is the most inexpensive and most effective wonder drug. Laughter is a universal medicine.

Bertrand Russell

No matter how difficult the past, you can always begin again today.

Buddha's Little Instruction Book

Learning from the Lidtard Teams

Jack Pearpoint & Marsha Forest

The longest dog race in the world is the Lidtard - 1060 miles - in -40 degree weather - across Alaska. The record time is just over nine days. The dog teams and their mushers are remarkable examples of teamwork - where the stakes are survival. We asked mushers about their teams.

HOW do we teach dogs:

- ✓ With Constant Attention and Much Love
- ✓ Reinforce Good Behavior
- ✓ Discipline Immediately - without anger
- ✓ Partner/Mentor with a Mature dog

WHAT do we teach dogs:

- ✓ MANNERS: No Snarling; No Fighting; No Biting!
- ✓ No Means No! "Gee Hah" means Go!
- ✓ Socialization - be Friendly.
- ✓ Train to Different Skills: Lead, Swing, Team, Wheel...

The Key is TRUST!

Stones and trees speak slowly and may take a week to get out a single sentence, and there are few men, unfortunately, with the patience to wait for an oak to finish a thought.

Garrison Kellor

Time Management Matrix

Urgent Not Urgent

Important	I	II
	• Crises • Pressing problems • Deadline-driven projects, meetings, preparations	• Preparation • Prevention • Values clarification • Planning • Relationship building • True re-creation • Empowerment
Not Important	III	IV
	• Interruptions, some phone calls • Some mail, some reports • Some meetings • Many proximate, pressing matters • Many popular activities	• Trivia, busywork • Junk mail • Some phone calls • Time wasters • "Escape" activities

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From **First Things First**, by Stephen R. Covey, R. Merrill & R. Merrill, (page 37) Simon & Schuster, 1994

We recommend the book - as a way of clarifying direction - and systematically making time for Quadrant II Activity - particularly Planning.

Circles & Organizational Change

Jack Pearpoint & Marsha Forest

Circle Management is not simple - and takes constant attention. It also implies major change in how we plan and implement programs with people. Thus, organizational change, new training systems, and long term commitment are essential to deal effectively with the full implications of circles management in organizations.

We recommend studying "change" as an essential element. A great book is "All Star Company" by Nick Marsh - which explores the metaphors buried in our consciousness - then chooses an alternative performance metaphor to help us understand the nature of change in organizations.

5% REALITY 15% REALITY 60% FLOATERS 15% REALITY 5% REALITY

JOURNEY OF 1000 DAYS

HOPE DESPAIR HOPE

1000 DAYS

Change is a journey. Not everyone is willing - but we can choose to focus our energy on the positive, and build teams to sustain the predictable despair of the dark nights of every innovation. Then successful Change can happen.

Graphics from book: All Star Company

One can never consent to creep when one feels an impulse to soar. Helen Keller

Positive Inclusive Education Research Report

Gary Bunch and Angela Veleo

Many critics of inclusive education have focused so much on their concerns regarding the practice that they have ignored or played down what is positive. A recent large Canadian study exploring teacher attitudes toward inclusion investigated both concerns and positive aspects. It reveals that, though teachers are concerned regarding the adequacy of their professional preparation, workload and availability of necessary supports, regular classroom teachers, special education resource teachers, special education class teachers and administrators find much benefit in inclusion of students with challenging needs.

An important and fundamental finding is that teachers believe inclusion to be sound educational practice. It recognizes student rights to equitable educational placement and opportunity, reflects the diversity of any community in the schools of that community and enhances the learning of both regular and included students. As one teacher in the study said:

I guess if you're a teacher... and your heart is with the students... you want to help them feel better about themselves, help them succeed, help them become the best that they can be as human beings, that you don't isolate them or distinguish between different needs and different difficulties, or different gifts. (Secondary regular class teacher)

Study participants also found value in the close relationship of the regular class teacher and the resource teacher characteristic of inclusive practice. Views differed on the exact form the relationship should take, but there was little doubt that a close, positive, and effective professional relationship could be developed.

Though the support of informed resource teachers is necessary and valuable, teachers in general were strong in the view that the regular class teacher has to assume primary responsibility for all students, both regular and challenged, in a class. When asked if the regular class teacher should hold primary responsibility, the following type of response was common:

Absolutely. No argument there. Nothing else to say. Absolutely. The classroom teacher is

responsible for all those children in her classroom and for the programming. Yes. (Elementary special education resource teacher)

Considerable benefit was seen for regular students. On the social side, diversity and equity again were mentioned frequently. The general view was that regular students would be more informed and more accepting future citizens as a result of inclusive educational environments. Added to this were heightened self esteem and development of self understanding through interaction with peers of differing abilities. On the academic side, the learning of regular students was strengthened through peer tutoring and by instructional changes made to support included students. Almost no study participants mentioned negative social or academic effects.

Lastly, the majority of respondents believed inclusion to have positive academic and social effect on students with challenging needs. Often the teachers referring to academic effect said that it was difficult to measure in traditional ways, but that it was there. As one educator stated:

Academically, even though a lot of the work is individualized for the students. I think they will pick up a lot of other things that are being taught within the classroom. I think a lot of times, even their parents are surprised at their accomplishments. (Secondary principal)

With reference to social effect, teachers found peer models to be valuable in motivating and guiding included students, that included students benefited from belonging to a group, that self esteem developed, and that an overall social benefit was apparent.

These values all are among those educators, parents, and others want for all children. They are written into school curricula in all educational jurisdictions. This study suggests that they can be found in inclusive environments to a considerable degree and that teachers believe that, if supports are in place, these values can be realized.

(Copies of this 236 page research report may be obtained from Gary Bunch, York University, Toronto, M3J 1P3 for \$20.00 to defray cost).

JOIN TASH

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How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.

I am only one; I cannot do everything; but still I can do something. I will not refuse to do the something I can do.



Action for Inclusion

The TORONTO Summer Institute 3rd Annual on Inclusion, Community & Diversity July 4-10, 1998

Hosts for the Learning Community:

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- Marsha Forest
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Friendship: It's About Time

Produced by Vision TV
Executive Producer: Rita Deverell
Producer: Sadia Zaman

This outstanding 27 minute video is

truly inspirational. This video shows three friends Marsha Forest, Jack Pearpoint and Judith Snow talking about the unique bonds that have kept them together over the years and through several serious life crises.

As the three friends discuss their relationship with honesty and frankness we learn much about this particular relationship and friendship in general.

The two books **From Behind the Piano** by Jack Pearpoint and **What's Really Worth Doing** by Judith Snow are the perfect complement to the tape.

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MAPS and PATH Differences & Similarities

Jack Pearpoint, John O'Brien &
Marsha Forest

Maps and PATH are creative Person Centered Planning tools designed to identify do-able action steps in the direction of desirable futures.

They are only two of many excellent tools. Good facilitators have a full tool belt, and, as they approach a situation, they make judgments about which tools are most appropriate. Good facilitators may even switch tools in mid-stream when new information shows that the initial selection won't help people get where they want to go.

Both Maps and Path can be used with a person, a family, or an organization. Both need welcoming locations and include the people who support the person in focus or the key actors in the organization. Both get to specific next steps. Both use coaching and graphic facilitation.

The major difference between the tools is their starting focus. The center point of the MAPS process is the "story" of the person or organization at the center. MAPS encourages people to tell their story; to create a rich portrait of their journey which includes a statement of both a dream and a nightmare. By nurturing the dream, and confronting the nightmare, people increase clarity on a desirable future direction. Next we create a full positive portrait which brings strengths into clear focus before moving to define next steps.

In most cases, when we hear the story, we discover that there are obvious beginning action steps right in front of us - so close we couldn't see them. Thus, the MAP supports a journey to a desirable future - with a coach.

The MAPS process is ideal to get to know a person or organization. Sometimes it's important to get to know someone who is a newcomer. Sometimes it is important to make sense when identity and direction seem to be lost or confused. MAPS is much more powerful and revealing than file cabinets full of data because the story 'makes sense' of all the isolated facts: they fit into the pattern of a life.

If a person or a team is mired in a deep, complex or painful situation, MAPS may not be a good tool. If

people have struggled endlessly, revisiting the past may simply irritate open wounds. Generally, organizational situations are multi-layered and the past may be too complex for a quick overview. These are times when it may be appropriate to consider PATH as the tool of choice.

PATH emerged from our own frustration with the MAPS process in complex situations. We needed a 'sharper' tool to cut through and get into action in spite of complexity. PATH is razor sharp and must be used with caution.

PATH moves people through a highly defined set of questions. It is 'pushy' as a process, though it does not push toward any particular answers. PATH sets the 'confusions' of the present aside for a time, creates the opportunity to investigate common values, and then travels into the future. Through "planning backwards," PATHfinders create vivid images expressing their dream. Next, we come closer to the present, (still remaining in the future) and invent possible and positive goals that we will have 'accomplished' one year hence. In carefully orchestrated steps, the PATH process then 'grounds' the PATH with a brief visit to the "present", then systematically reviews what will be needed (enrollment) and what we will need to do to be strong enough to sustain this journey. Changing direction, and noticing both our goals and our enrollment needs, we again plan backwards from the future until we arrive at immediate next steps to be taken - with a coach.

In both MAPS and PATH, the process gets to next steps - with a coach. In both, team facilitation provides one layer of safety. Since both tools are person centered, the individual controls the depth and intensity of the process. They have the right to stop or to persevere. There is a simple safety check available to all facilitators; ask the focus person how it is going. They will tell you. Listen. A helpful guideline is 'do no harm'.

Choosing the right tool is an art. Make a great tool collection, then practice, practice, practice. Facilitation is an art, but it can be learned. Renewing dreams is a great gift, and with MAPS and PATH, people leave ready to take steps in the direction of their dreams.

blessing, but it certainly is present.

Have we learned anything? Relearned might be a better term. We certainly have learned that it is essential to "act quickly" to save your life. If you have symptoms, do not wait. Check them out now. Get the treatment of your choice, but act quickly. And, as much as we have learned to respect the medical system for its strengths (surgery and high tech treatments), we have also been reminded of the medical fact that lonely people die much faster. Thus, we have redoubled our efforts to sustain and nurture our Circle of Friends. One of the techniques we chose was to "take control" of one of the very few things we could - rumours of our early demise. Attempting to "hide" our crisis (for a few days) was enormously stressful. Every phone call, "So how are you?" however innocent, became

Before you work with others, do these introductory activities.

Introductory MAPS learning checklist

I have...

Watched the Shafik's MAP video.

Read...

- ___ All my life's a circle, pp.1-28
- ___ Action for inclusion
- ___ What's really worth doing
- ___ From behind the piano

- ___ Answered the sequence of MAPS questions reflectively, for myself, with facilitation, and provided the facilitator/ recorder with feedback.
- ___ Facilitated another person in answering the MAPS questions, and received feedback on my facilitation.
- ___ Made a graphic record of another person answering the MAPS questions and received feedback on my recording.
- ___ Developed a set of notes for myself on "What I want to review before I facilitate a MAP."
- ___ Made agreements with at least 2 other people who will support my practice with MAPS by encouraging me and debriefing with me.
- ___ Identified a family I will approach to be my partners in taking the next step by allowing me to facilitate a MAP with them.

Introductory PATH learning checklist

I have...

Watched the Introductory PATH training video.

Read...

- ___ All my life's a circle, pp.29-43
- ___ PATH Workbook

- ___ Been a PATHfinder on an issue that matters to me, and provided the facilitator and recorder with feedback i.e. have had my own PATH done.
- ___ Facilitated another person's PATH, and received feedback on my facilitation.
- ___ Acted as a graphic recorder for another person's PATH and received feedback on my recording.
- ___ Developed a set of notes for myself on "What I want to review before I facilitate or record a PATH."
- ___ Made agreements with at least 2 other people who will support my practice with PATH by encouraging me and debriefing with me.
- ___ Identified a person or group I will approach to be my partners in taking the next step by allowing me to facilitate/ record a PATH with them.

by O'Brien, Forest, Pearpoint

To be nobody but yourself in a world which is doing its best night and day to make you everybody else, is to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight, and never stop fighting.

E.E. Cummings

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and wisdom to know the difference.

Reinhold Niebuhr

The soul would have no rainbow had the eye no tear.

Living on the Edge

Jack Pearpoint

Some of you who know us might think that we "choose" to live on the edge. Regardless, even we have boundaries which we would not choose to exceed. These past two years, we have been "beyond those boundaries" a great deal. We have been struggling with the impact of Marsha's breast and ovarian cancer. We are surviving cancer. We feel it differently, but it impacts both of our lives enormously. We have done surgery, and chemotherapy, and radiation and more. We are fortunate that Canadian medicare still functions and we have had outstanding medical and personal support. Given all that, we would not choose this. We have learned a great deal, but for us, reminders to live everyday to the full, are redundant. We don't feel this is a

personal crisis. Instead, we decided to move into broadcast mode and tell the world (via e-mail) what was going on, and how we wanted to be supported. Setting clear boundaries was essential so that we were not inundated by visitors, flowers or other well intentioned "gifts" - that could easily have turned our healing home into a funeral flower shop.

For us, (and we recognize this worked for us), the e-mail network helped. We felt enormous support, were able to have quiet times, and most important, to get back to work with minimal delays. For us, travel was healing. For us, working means there is a future. We are not telling anyone else how to manage their crisis, except that avoidance does not help, and friends do. Our suggestion is to nurture your circle now, you never know when you'll need it! It also

turns out to be a great way to live life, enjoying it with your friends.

Does any of this guarantee "success"? There are no guarantees. The fact is that we all live on the edge. Some of us have more dramatic reminders about the precarious balance of our lives. But these often redundant reminders do help all of us to remember to smell the fresh cut hay, to savor that piece of chocolate, to laugh with the children, and to do it now. Live today, this is not a rehearsal for life. If we keep putting things off, it may help to remember that we never actually get to tomorrow.

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or touched... but are felt in the heart.

Helen Keller

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