

Introduction

*I do not think of political power as an end. Neither do I think of economic power as an end. They are ingredients in the objective that we seek in life. And I think that objective is the **creation of the beloved community**.*

–Martin Luther King

We have written this book because we have been privileged to learn from courageous and creative people who have remade the world for people with developmental disabilities. In so doing these pathfinders have built up communities that come a little closer to the beloved community because they work a bit better for everybody. These creators are people with developmental disabilities, family members, providers of personal assistance or professional help, and leaders of significant changes in the way publicly funded assistance is organized. They come from North America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Some of our learning partners and teachers have left this life and many others are now young people. All of them recognize that people with developmental disabilities have a moral claim on the responsibilities and benefits of citizenship that far too often goes unredeemed. They know that things are not as they should be for people with developmental disabilities and that this is wrong and unjustly limiting, not only for people with disabilities and their families, but for our communities and our society as a whole. Keeping people on the sidelines of community life impoverishes everybody. Most important, our teachers have set out to discover what will move us along a path that makes things right. Their action has led to positive change that justifies our belief that current reality can move closer to the vision of the beloved community.

Our joy is to be among the riders on the waves of creativity involved in forming lasting good relationships between citizens with and without developmental disabilities, bringing infants

I want a cultural change,
I want to contribute to a
work of art in the domain
of human existence, I want
to contribute to evoke a
manner of coexistence in
which love, mutual respect,
honesty and social respon-
sibility arise spontaneously
from living instant after
instant.

—Humberto Maturana

and children out of residential programs and into permanent families, designing and managing local service systems that make institutions unnecessary for anybody, offering families flexible supports to their flourishing, discovering how to make preschools and schools and universities fully inclusive for all children and young people, organizing people with developmental disabilities to find their public voice, creating the means for people with developmental disabilities to live with support in their own home, opening the ways to good jobs in ordinary workplaces, building bridges to membership in community associations, recognizing and enhancing the value brought by direct support workers, and creating ways that people can be in control of the assistance they require.

Mostly we work as independent partners in learning. In company with friends, especially Connie Lyle O'Brien, we design, facilitate and document ways that people and families, organizations and systems can clarify the contributions that life calls them to make, describe where they are now, and figure out a way forward. We have walked with some people and families and assisted some organizations for thirty years and more. These partnerships give us the opportunity to listen to people who are committed to building a more just and inclusive community and support them to make sense of their situation, plan and take action.

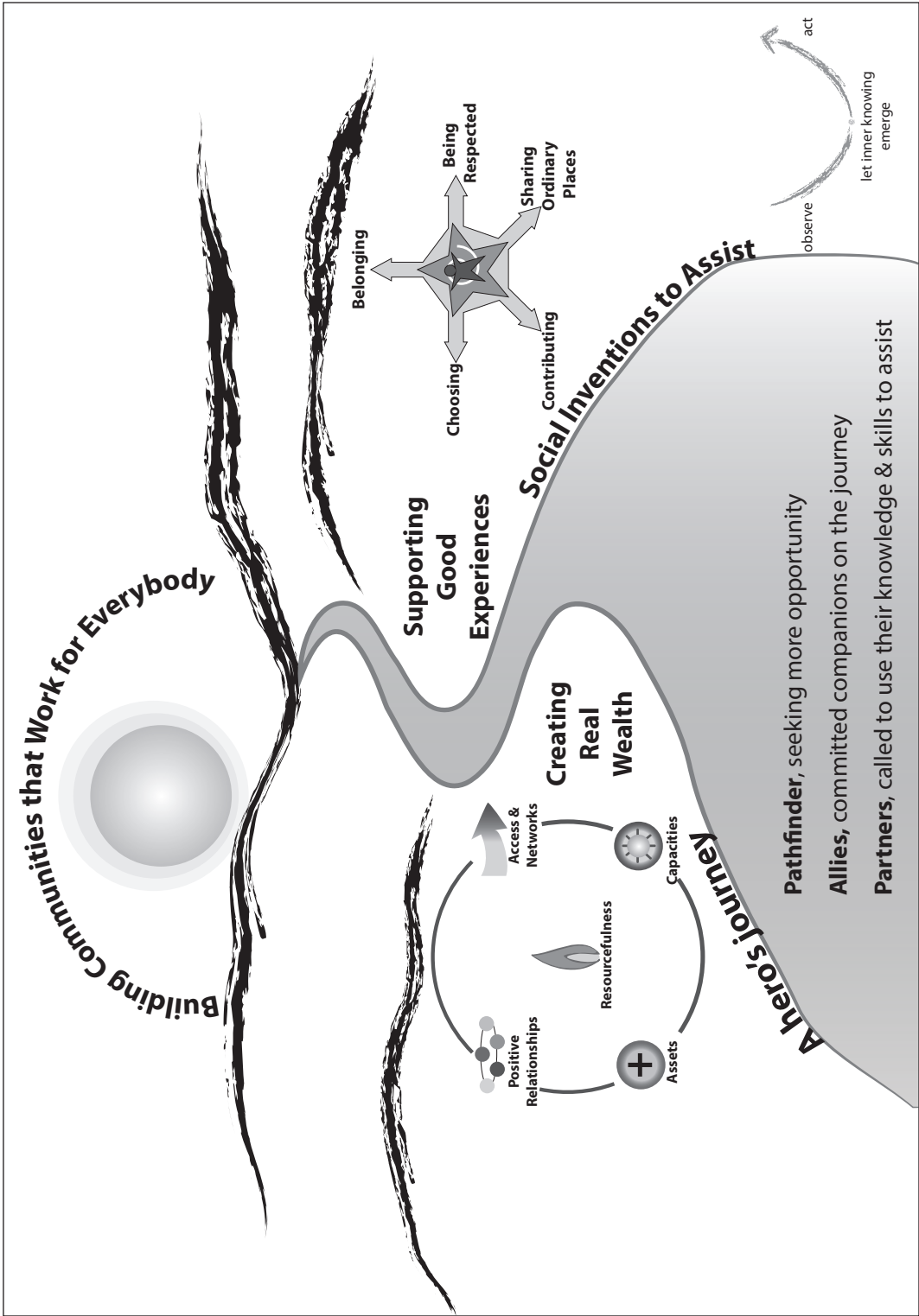
We are interested in what our friend Judith Snow calls great questions. She says,

A great question refuses to be answered. So it keeps leading us into deeper connections with each other and into deeper thinking.

The presence of people with developmental disabilities in the world produces great questions. Thinking about what we have learned with people whose everyday lives creatively engage these questions produced the ideas we offer in this book.

Our ambition is to present a useful story of the work of supporting people with developmental disabilities and their families. We don't claim that ours is THE STORY, we present a set of frames for action that we have found helpful. We develop connections among six ideas, pictured on the facing page.

- Our common purpose as citizens is to contribute, each in our own way, to building **communities that work better for everybody**. Communities will work better as citizens struggle to develop a sustainable relationship between the earth's human population and our planet and find ways to



overcome social exclusion and the common tendency to disregard some people's dignity on the basis of difference.

- A community that works better for everyone is a place where citizens offer one another opportunities to create **real wealth**. Real wealth includes money and what money buys but only in the context of other values: good relationships, access to networks that channel flows of knowledge and support, development of capacities, and nurturing resourcefulness.
- People with developmental disabilities are vulnerable to social exclusion because they have differences that often lead others to disregard their dignity and exclude them from opportunities for contributing citizenship. Today, social inclusion is the result of a **hero's journey**. It involves courageous and creative pathfinding, even when the destination is such an ordinary matter of social justice as the key to one's own home, a job, opportunities to learn and the chance to pursue one's interests through participation in civic life.
- The journey to the dignity of contributing community roles is most likely to be successful when pathfinders recruit committed allies and skillful **partners**. Allies are people who act from personal commitment to the person with a developmental disability. Partners are people who use their knowledge, skills and authority to put specialist and public resources at the disposal of pathfinders and their allies. The task of publicly funded services is to develop and support creative partnerships with people and their families and allies.
- A key difference that exposes people with developmental disabilities to social exclusion and devaluation is their need for accommodation and continuing assistance. Our system expends far too many public dollars on services that demand separation from community life and intrusive supervision as the price of assistance. Good partners on the journey to social justice learn how to assist people to have **valued experiences**, including being respected, sharing ordinary places with their fellow citizens, developing their capacities and contributing, exercising choice and directing their lives, and belonging.
- Developing and sustaining contributing community roles calls for **social invention**. Personalized discovery and design are at the core of good support. Theory U, which we will summarize in Chapter 5, guides a process of invention that

A Note on Words

Unless we can use a person's name, it's hard to decide on the way to identify the people we have learned with. We don't accept the assumption that labels like intellectual disability and autism are diagnoses of a medical condition that calls for treatment. We see these terms as having migrated from the diagnostic clinic in order to define a legal status, bureaucratically assigned under color of medical authority as a condition of receiving benefits, services and protection for specific rights.

Practice and preference vary with geography. "Intellectual disability" is probably the term currently in widest use world wide, "learning disability" or "learning difficulty" commonly refers to the same status in the UK. These terms narrow the group of people we know best to people with cognitive impairments, so we have settled on "developmental disability" when we need a general term and, when it seems clear that we are referring to those who receive support, just people. When we talk about people when they are subjected to staff or management control we refer to them as "clients."

We are aware that some disabled and autistic people object to the usage that puts "people first". They argue that autistic or disabled describes an identity they are proud to have, not an accidental characteristic. This criticism, like every effort to contest the terms of identity imposed on people by others, is instructive. In general, we refer to "people with developmental disabilities" and change our usage when writing about disabled or autistic people who refer to themselves that way. When we are writing about history, we use the terms in common use in the period we write about.

The term we choose as least worst, "**developmental disability**", is a coinage of 1970's US federal law. To influence public policy and expenditures the status clumps together people whose impairments are evident by age 18 and require life-long, coordinated assistance because of limitations those impairments impose on performing life activities.

We follow a social model of disability in understanding **impairments** to be persistent differences of body and mind that limit a person's opportunities and activities unless the person has effective accommodation or assistance. Impairments may be evident at birth, they may result from an accident, they may come as a consequence of chronic disease. From this perspective, elders don't require publicly funded assistance because they are old but because they acquire impairments in old age. Some impairments require adjustments to a physical or social setting or individually tailored equipment if the person is to function comfortably and competently there. Some impairments require that the person have effective personal assistance some or all of the time in order to function comfortably and competently in settings that matter to them, whether home, work, leisure, or civic life. Restrictive definitions of **assistance** are unhelpful. It is best understood as whatever it takes –that a capable, ethical and well supported assistant can sustainably do– to enable each person with impairments to live a life that they, and the people who love them, have good reasons to value.

Disability is the disadvantage that people with impairments experience when they encounter barriers to opportunities and experiences that would be available to them if they were not impaired. Creative action to name and remove barriers to full participation in ordinary life and mainstream services is an urgent and continuing necessity.

System means the whole network of relationships, structures, policies and practices concerned with assistance to people with developmental disabilities and purposeful support to their action as full citizens. This network is reproduced and changed by the interaction of people with disabilities and their families and allies, advocacy groups, service providers, administrators charged with managing services, and legislators and courts as they take an interest in policy and resources for people with disabilities. We call it **our system** because we are among its members, shaped by and shaping its culture. This usage differs from identification of the service bureaucracy as "the

system”. We see **publicly funded assistance** as one possible source of support for good lives, but we don’t use the terms interchangeably because people can rely on many other sources of support in addition to publicly funded assistance and because the delivery of publicly funded assistance can deprive people of the conditions necessary to good lives (think of the millions squandered on survival level assistance in nursing homes).

Within our system, **administrators** are people who accept responsibility for the healthy development and operation of the whole publicly funded enterprise of offering assistance in a region or state. **Managers** accept responsibility for the healthy development and operation of an organization that offers publicly funded assistance.

Person-centered work co-creates the means for a person to live a life that they and the people who love them have good reasons to value. Person-centered work takes three forms. **I. Person-centered planning** facilitates a person and their allies discernment of the person’s purposes, gifts, and capacities so as to identify and coordinate access to the opportunities and supports necessary to show up in community life as a valued friend and a contributing citizen. **II. Person-centered direct support** develops and sustains respectful and productive relationships with personal assistants who align their capacities with the person’s chosen path to contributing citizenship. **III. Person-centered design** orchestrates available resources and constraints at the personal, organizational, and system levels to reliably offer the assistance and support a person requires to show up in community life as a contributing citizen.

References we point to a variety of books and websites that we have found helpful. Books from Inclusion Press simply refer to inclusion.com as their source. Long web addresses have been shortened with Google URL Shortener; links worked as of 1 June 2015.

creates new capacities and opportunities. The design question that engages us is,

How might we make it much easier for people and their families to choose self-directed journeys to contributing roles and social inclusion?

We hope these six ideas create a story of inventing and supporting new opportunities, a story that helps people celebrate and build on what is meaningful in their own journeys. We hope that the lessons we have learned from many efforts to support real change will be of use to pathfinders and their partners.

Some books promise a guide that guarantees success to those who follow the steps outlined between their covers. This isn’t one of them. We notice that many investments in change, whether personal, organizational or systemic, produce variations on more of the same rather than the deep change necessary to build a more inclusive community. Two generations of service reform show that conditions for excluded and supervised people can improve remarkably without much real increase in self-direction or access to contributing community roles and relationships. We speak from experience of tough and shifting terrain: partial successes, frustration, disappointment, unexpected turns and reversals,

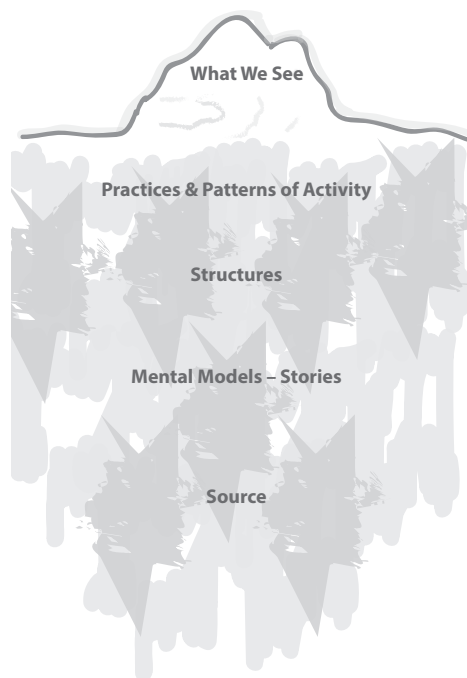
This kind of organizing takes a lot of patience because changing people and people changing themselves requires time. Because it usually involves only small groups of people, it lacks the drama and visibility of angry masses making demands on the power structure. So it doesn’t seem practical to those who think of changes only in terms of quick fixes, huge masses, and charismatic leaders.

–Grace Lee Boggs

remarkable changes for individuals and slow change for a disappointingly small set of organizations. And all this calling for celebration as committed leaders formulate more interesting and more powerful questions and move organizations to better assist people with developmental disabilities to take their rightful place in community life.

We respect the work of researchers committed to investigating the paths to social inclusion and self-direction, but this book reports neither the results of statistical analysis nor coding pages of field notes. We constructed these pages by making sense of our partnership with people, families and organizations who struggle to make social inclusion and self-direction real in their lives. We don't claim objectivity; we care about the people whose stories inform us and we speak from inside the effort to change things. Shared commitment to action for inclusion biases the experience we reflect on; there is no more convenient sample than this one. We question the ways people understand social inclusion and self-direction and the actions that follow from that understanding, but from a position of commitment to these values.

We like the system's thinking metaphor of the iceberg as a guide to reflection. We look for signs of growth in people's engagement in community and their ability to direct their lives. We notice where action for social inclusion and self-direction is absent or stuck. We ask people in the situation, and then we ask our friends and ourselves, what lets action flow freely toward a rich life in community and what inhibits movement. The idea that the multiple influences on what we observe can be arranged to show different levels of power and visibility keeps us thinking together. In stuck situations people often start by blaming other people – clueless staff, controlling parents, heartless community members. We've discovered that more options show up when we consider the mental models (stories) that structures and practices express. In our understanding, stories that people take as the way things are can be invisible to those who live inside them. Sometimes they hide behind words that float free of what is happening. Words like person-centered can mask untested assumptions about the inevitability of social exclusion and control by others – *he could never...*; *the community won't...* We have found



leverage for positive change when people intentionally revise mental models to test assumptions that compete with expressed values. To bring mental models into the light we ask, *What story could we be in that makes what's happening seem like the best or only possibility?* Theory U, which gives us a grammar for social invention, draws attention even deeper under the waterline to consider the source of action in the social field of attention. The quality of attention that we bring to our shared world powerfully affects what shows up. Inattention to capacities and gifts traps us in a story of fear and isolation. Intentional opening to the highest potential of a community that works better for everyone energizes co-creation.

We have learned much from disabled people who have led the independent living movement and articulated the social model of disability. Our experience, and our focus in this book, however, is more narrowly on people and families who rely on assistance from publicly funded services for those assigned the status of intellectual or developmental disability. This includes some people diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorder. Their lives raise questions about the design and delivery of assistance that the social model doesn't fully consider.

As you read, remember that we write about what we are learning from people and families and service workers who choose to go for something more than is currently easy to find in their community. We are not prescribing for those fulfilled by their current relationships and roles. It would be awful to try to drag people satisfied with their lives down the paths our teachers have broken. We do hope, though, that the stories and lessons here encourage more pathfinders to set out on their own self-directed journeys.

Something darker in our environment also motivates our writing. At just the time when we have enshrined in law and policy the highest aspirations in history for people with disabilities, at just the time when we know more than ever about how to offer good assistance, we are collectively hellbent on shrinking the space for personal journeys of discovery. In announced pursuit of health, safety, self-direction, person-centered support, inclusion and partnership, we are choking the life out of those who want to do the work necessary to realize these very values.

We see this irony as an invitation to look deeper into our understanding of these commonly espoused values, and we'll do so in these pages. Along our way we have developed a perspective that can seem quirky. Because so many words have lost the savor they once brought to people's thinking. We have tried to tell the truth

we know. Our slant on familiar terms and practices like person-centered planning, system change or self-direction may seem odd and our observations puzzling, at least at first.

One reason for this is the considerable tension we experience between what we have found that it takes to make significant change and the working assumptions about change most common among administrators. Common practice would have us believe that professional strangers can reliably conduct life and system changing person-centered plans in no more than a couple of hours for each of 75 people on their caseload or that a strategic plan or change of rule or performance contract will galvanize service managers to transform their organizations. Our experience of these and other current managerial certainties is otherwise.

Our perspective may seem weird for another reason. We encounter mystery in a field that prefers to solve problems and count the outcomes of tool use. We take inclusion as mutual welcoming and mutual accommodation. Inclusion cannot be done to or for people with developmental disabilities by application of a technique. It is relational work in which people with developmental disabilities must do their share. All who participate do most of this work spontaneously and beneath verbal communication. We have repeatedly participated in and frequently observed people who do the work of inclusion stepping out of their typical roles and into an everyday mystery, a relationship that dissolves the distance created by fear of difference and allows diverse gifts to flow among them. We speak of everyday occurrences. Nina relaxes to Cori's music. Evan exchanges greetings with his co-workers at the grocery store. Steve and Mark play Metallica in a guitar lesson. Angie reads to the preschool children she assists. If angels sing as these things happen those involved are too absorbed in the ordinary to hear them. What is mysterious is invisible without a sense of the sheer improbability of these things happening, given the history of deprivation driven by the social devaluation of people with developmental disabilities.

Reflection can point towards, but not explain, the mystery of gifts flowing in all directions. Anna has assisted Rebecca for many years (for more of their story see page 45). She says,

I had never been around someone like Rebecca who wasn't able to respond to me in words. Someone who physically couldn't move in a way that would show me her interests or passions for things. So it was a real learning process for me. I didn't know what to expect.

I think at the time I very much felt like I was doing Rebecca a favor, that I was helping her. I've come to see that it's Rebecca who has pushed me on to do all the things that we have done together. She encourages me to be a better person in everything that I do. So even when we're not together her presence is with me and I bring that to each encounter that I have.

Whether our perspective seems resonant or weird, we ask busy readers to stop, at least long enough to reflect and test our experience with their own. Try on our perspective as if it is a pair of differently tinted glasses and see if something that adds usefully to your work shows up.

We remain confident that people with developmental disabilities and their families will continue to recruit allies and push toward better lives. We are less confident about publicly funded services supplying creatively flexible partners, at least in the short term. If our worry that systems will get even more mired in “no” turns out to be justified, this will limit the numbers of people able to make the journey to a better life without extensive support from their biological or chosen families. Others will be confined by services that will grow increasingly mechanistic unless service workers and managers succeed in heroic efforts to reverse the trend to impose ever more meticulous external control on their work. Our concern is especially strong for the US. Our estimate of the odds on a favorable climate for large scale social invention have shifted toward nations where there is somewhat more “yes space” in the bureaucracy and a somewhat less individualistic bias in social policy.

Whether conditions favor social invention or not, our hope rests in the spirit that animates people with developmental disabilities and their families to resist exclusion, imagine better and to go for it. We know that these pathfinders will continue to find ways to grow beautifully, if vulnerably, through the cracks in society and its organized systems.



Thanks

We have been on this learning journey for more than a generation. Evidence of our debts fill the pages of this book. We stopped listing names of the people we have learned with when we got to 100 names and were nowhere near finished. Our learning has happened in a network of networks that we can name in a reasonable space. In rough chronological order our webs of connection include networks formed around these people and projects.

- Wolf Wolfensberger created an international network to try, test and teach his ideas about comprehensive community services, normalization and citizen advocacy. People worked together across state and national borders to promote these ideas and related practices. Many of our friendships and collaborations began in these networks. Intensive work grew over many years in Georgia, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Ohio, Washington State, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Michigan, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire, Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta, England, Scotland, Wales, New Zealand and Australia. Work in these places has ebbed and flowed over decades, but reflection on many experiences, conversations and conflicts in this network, sustained over decades, are the source of many of the ideas on these pages.
- The Canadian National Institute on Mental Retardation (as it was known in the mid 1970's), led by Alan Roeher, harnessed Wolfensberger's ideas to a national dissemination effort. NIMR connected to systems design and development built on the work of Eric Trist and his colleagues. ComSERV, a nationwide change effort focused on developing comprehensive systems of community services, brought many more lessons on the politics and adaptive demands of change. NIMR also supported for a time the work of our friends Marsha Forest, Judith Snow and Peter Dill on inclusive education, organizing families and circles of support.
- CMH brought PASS, Wolfensberger's method for teaching normalization and evaluating programs, to the UK under the leadership of Alan Tyne and Paul Williams. This network grew into connections with the King's Fund Ordinary Life Initiative and David Towell and with the Northwest Training and Development Team.
- Organized self-advocates in Washington State, Ontario, New York, Pennsylvania, California, the UK and Australia have shown us the power of the desire for better lives.
- Pat Beeman and George Duscharme founded Communitas to hold their efforts to walk with people with disabilities and families in Connecticut. Collaboration with them has produced a deeper understanding of what works to change communities one person at a time.
- Under Steve Taylor's leadership, the Center on Human Policy at Syracuse University became a host for dialogs and provided colleagues and financial support for John and Connie Lyle O'Brien's learning and writing.

- Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint, among a great many other good things, founded Inclusion Press and an annual Summer Institute on Inclusion. Jack and Lynda Kahn continue this work and are the publishers of this book.
- Marcie Brost and Howard Mandeville have organized and financed multiple learning opportunities and writing projects in Wisconsin, first under the sponsorship of the Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities and then through DD Network, the co-publisher of this book. In addition to providing consultation, project management and training, DD Network supports in depth inquiries into individualized supports, self-direction, support to families, organizational and system change, and community development. Dane County, Wisconsin exemplifies a system committed to inclusion and self direction. So it is the site of many social inventions, including Options in Community Living, an early innovator in supported living and a rich source of learning for us.
- Washington State remains a leader in employment for people with developmental disabilities. Linda Rolfe made administrative space for supported employment to grow. A sustained commitment to developing capacity, implemented by Mary Romer and Candace O'Neill, produced many lessons on changing systems. Cross boundary investment in exploring community building supported Carolyn Carlson to work on inclusion from inside the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods.
- Simon Duffy has harnessed his creativity to fundamental reform of the relationship between citizens who require assistance to enact their citizenship and the state. He founded In Control and has moved on to found The Centre for Welfare reform..
- Fredda Rosen, Carole Gothelf, Bernard Carabello, Jen Teich, Diana McCourt, Clara Berg and Kathy Broderick have sourced a variety of initiatives in New York City that create new options for young people in transition from high school. A twenty year thread connects these transition initiatives beginning with the Pathfinder projects formed in the 1990s, the FAR Fund Initiatives, and the more recent Urban Innovations initiative in Harlem, New York. Kate Buncher and Cathy James spark the energy and initiative of self advocates, their families, and direct support allies, through their Mentoring for Excellence, activism and artistic collaborations.
- Under Ann Hardiman's leadership, The New York State Association of Community and Residential Agencies (NYSACRA) created a series of Learning Institutes (from 2008 to present) to support innovation in individualized supports using Theory U practice. A core group of ARC Executive Directors including Ric Swierat, Laurie Kelley, Hanns Meissner, Michael Goldfarb and Chris Fortune co-hosted the 2009 Garrison Institute Theory U Workshop to deepen organizational understanding of social invention.
- Cathy Stevenson, as Developmental Disabilities Division Director in New Mexico, has invested in multiple initiatives to inspire inclusion throughout the state. The seeds of community building have been nurtured by Angela Pacheco, Anysia Fernandez, Rebecca Shuman, Kay Lilley, and Marc Kolman and others.

- Julie Stansfield leads in Control in England as it becomes a citizen movement oriented to social inclusion and self-direction. Lynne Elwell and Julia Erskine have built a powerful network of champions through intensive leadership development centered on families and people with disabilities.
- More recent collaboration with David Towell has provided opportunities to explore the contributions that people with developmental disabilities can make to efforts to discover sustainable local and national economies. goo.gl/IU90P7
- Hanns Meissner is our partner in developing and delivering a number of multi-organizational change efforts. He has told the thirty year story of developing individualized supports in the organization he now directs, Renssalaer ARC, in *Creating Blue Space* from inclusion.com
- Through Inclusion Alberta, Bruce Uditsky and Anne Hughson and their colleagues assist families who choose an inclusive life pathway. Their contributions provide opportunities to better understand families as social inventors.
- The work of Otto Scharmer, Katrin Kaufer, Arawana Hayashi and the Presencing Institute provides a coherent approach to deep change and connections to practitioners in many other fields.
- Real Communities, a project of the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities organized by Caitlin Childs and Eric Jacobsen, tests community building as a path to social inclusion and leadership development for people with developmental disabilities.
- New Paths to Inclusion has opened a window into the work of change makers exploring person-centered work, community engagement and organizational change in 17 European countries www.personcentredplanning.eu.

Close to the book you are holding we are grateful to Connie Lyle O'Brien and Hanns Meissner for careful reading and many good suggestions for improvement. Carol Blessing, Gail Jacob and Sheli Reynolds provided encouraging and helpful readings.

The Cover Images

The images on the front cover and those on the next page are taken from the quilt, *Garden of Soul*, pictured on the back cover. Beth created this quilt to explore the resonance between this insight from Carl Jung's *The Undiscovered Self* and the experience of making real change in partnership with people with developmental disabilities, work that brings everyone involved into awareness of their own imperfections, weakness and need for relationship:

A human relationship is not based on differentiation and perfection, for these only emphasize the differences or call forth the exact opposite; it is based, rather, on imperfection, on what is weak, helpless, and in need of support –the very ground and motive for dependence. The perfect have no need of others, but weakness has for it seeks support and does not confront its partner with anything that might force him [sic] into an inferior position...It is from need and distress that new forms of existence arise.

Beth's commentary on her quilt:

The great healer, Carl Jung, helped us see that each of us possesses a higher level of self, at least in embryonic form, and that under favorable circumstances the higher self emerges. Therefore, in a generative community, the most important problems of life are never really solved, but only outgrown in the context of widening circles of mutuality.

The star represents the defining image that calls us to our destiny. The cross in the circle is a universal symbol of the sacred soul space in which we live or hope to live. Our capacity to live out our call is directly related to the fertility of our environment, our relationships, our sense of belonging, purpose, and access to opportunities and resources that enrich our development. In contrast, discrimination, injustice, intolerance, poverty, and economic exploitation distort development and weaken the entire social fabric. This image challenges us to create a fertile garden of soul for all people, not just a chosen few.

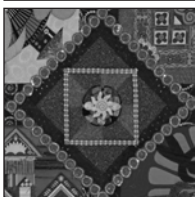


The quality of the journey to a better life is determined by the quality of our attention and commitment to the person, allies and community. Everyone has a higher purpose and gifts that relate to their highest purpose.

We build communities that nurture the highest potential of all members. We reach for the highest potential in all of us.



Our role is to discover, reveal, and clarify a pattern language for assistance that allows our communities to benefit from each citizen's gifts. We discover ways to connect with roles, relationships, places, and organizations that call forth personal initiative and contribution.



Highest purpose is expressed by the ways we co-create and multiply valued roles. Devaluation, social exclusion, isolation and segregation are the biggest threats to quality of life.

Our job is to resist the devaluation, cynicism, despair and fear that disconnects people from one another and from the highest potentials in human life.



We amplify gifts, strengthen relationships, and create places to belong.

We align with others who share common passions and concerns. Possibilities are endless as more people care, share action, and create deeper relationships. Nothing happens when nobody cares.



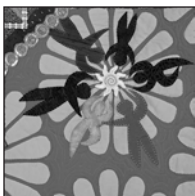
We know that communities are made of assets and opportunities for contribution. Pathfinder's journeys always include creating relationships that deepen people's belonging and strengthen local community.

We get outside of ourselves, our organizations and our isolation and discover the interests and concerns of others. We join with others to create real wealth.



We take the next step to deepen relationships with family and friends, create jobs and volunteer roles, make neighborhood connections, and connect to associations.

We continually question what more is possible and cultivate ways that one thing leads to another good thing.



We invest in design teams to generate social inventions.

We practice opening our minds, hearts, and wills to harvest new energy to sense, discover and embody new possibilities for our communities to work better for everybody.



We know that deep change is tough. We live with the discomfort of letting go of our certainties and not knowing. We develop the resourcefulness to stick with the creative process. We wrestle with voices and forces of judgment, cynicism, and fear. We fiercely confront conditions that hurt people and create conditions that nurture.

