MOVING IN THE INTERSTICES: CULTIVATING FLUIDITY

IN THE PARTICIPANT FACILITATOR'S ROLE

by

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Abstract

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Research focus was upon the inner experience of a participant facilitator (myself). Initial

questions included, Does my inner world have validity in group process, and if so, how to

make it useful? How to navigate and usefully engage in this context? Research method

was heuristic, informed by intuitive inquiry and organic inquiry. Data were gathered

through my participation in group processes in Tokyo, Japan, Portland, OR, and London

Worldwork. Experiences in MACF2 residencies, conversations with senior colleagues,

and Process Work seminars during 2008 offered supplemental data. Findings

experientially corroborate close relationship between role of participant facilitator and

role of an elder. Results indicate innerwork, cultivation of metaskills, and framing are

vital to navigating in relationship internally and with external others.

Acknowledgements

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My colleagues in MACF2 cohort have offered challenge, support, and much more as we've moved between laughter and tears, gaining seasoning in our own ways.

Being in moving relationship with colleagues in Aikido and Buko-ryu practices has been an essential compliment for my internal focus and wordwork, richly informing my ways of relating with others and myself.

My heartfelt and sincere "Thank you!" to all involved.

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Chapter 1: A Beginning . . .

I first met Process Work while in the doctoral program at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (ITP). During that time, group process simply baffled me. The program required 2 years of it, from various theoretical orientations, and it was not until I met Mindell's *Leader as Martial Artist* (1992) that it began to make any sense to me.

Historically speaking, groups have not been my favorite place. This may be mutual as my way of being inward and quiet often seems to disturb groups I find myself in. Yet, drawn by the Tao, I joined a group focused program (MACF2) at the Process Work Institute.

Questions . . .

How to be myself in a group and how to see my experience as helpful in some way for the group I'm in? Or, in other language, does my inner world have validity in this setting, and if so, how to make it useful? How to navigate and usefully engage in this group process context?

How could I translate what I've learned in other realms (visual and movement arts), into my study of facilitation in group process in Process Work? Or, how can ways of attending learned elsewhere be applicable as I deepen my understanding of facilitation in Process Work? Was it even relevant? My hunch was an internally resonant "yes!"

From my own experience in the body-based practices of fencing, Aikido, and Buko-ryu naginatajutsu, attitude and intention shape movement and subsequent verbal expression. Do attitude and intention shape the shift from observer to participant, and participant to participant facilitator? If so, how so? What is the relationship of role to

this process? I suspect that role may be a vehicle / medium for moving this process. (Is a role a form for Process Work? Kata is form that carries knowledge. Does a role serve this way, too?)

Cognitively, I understand that becoming more fluid in recognizing, picking up, and then leaving a role contributes to increased fluidity as a facilitator. How to embody that, how can I experientially *intentionally* access that fluency of movement?

Bringing transparency to the inner world of a participant facilitator could potentially enhance / enliven the field itself. Attending to the inner experience of a participant facilitator could offer another means / view of group facilitation. I felt that becoming more aware of what happens for me in the participant facilitator role would usefully inform my development as a Process Work facilitator. In turn, I believed that making this process as transparent as I could, would have reverberations on personal and professional levels.

As I cultivated an embodied understanding of moving with roles as a participant facilitator in group process, I hoped that I would also increase my fluency of expression and range of options in these relationships and beyond. My hunch was by becoming more fluid in shifting between roles, that I would also develop increased transparency in a role, and thus cultivate smoother movement in the interstices. Based on my prior research (Newton, 1996), moving in such space may be experienced (in part) as having an expanded range of options, of comfort with and in the process of change.

Would feeling less opaque contribute usefully to moving fluidly among roles? I suspected it could definitely contribute to feeling that one travels with less baggage or is less readily identified as "only" a role. As I explored my experience of moving with

roles in group process and elsewhere, these were some of my questions and concerns active underneath.

More Specifically . . .

I conducted a literature review, and write briefly of what I considered the most essential aspects in Chapter 2. Mine was essentially a heuristic research process, informed by the work of Douglass and Moustakas (1985), Moustakas (1990), Anderson (1998), and Clements (2004). Chapter 3 contains my rationale for this approach, as well as details of the research procedure that I created. From January 2008 to April 2008, working within groups of varying sizes in Tokyo, Portland, and London provided much of my data. What actually happened, and what I found is in Chapter 4. Additional material came from a July Process Work seminar in Tokyo, as well as during fall residency of MACF2. This is also in Chapter 4, as I felt it most relevant there. My conclusions comprise Chapter 5.

My focus in this research was upon the inner experience of a participant facilitator (myself), as I was involved in group process. I believed this would offer me a deeper understanding in an embodied way of the transitional space that allows me to move between being a participant and a facilitator, and as the two roles combine in differing degrees. I continue to explore how to move smoothly, fluidly, and fluently in group process, definitely work ongoing.

Criticism . . . of course, "Who cares about *that* stuff?" "How could it possibly be useful in the real world?" "That's just *your* own innerwork." In questions I posed to guide my research, and in conversations with those senior to me in Process Work, I addressed these comments. Consultation with my own inner critical voice, self-talk, and

interior commentary were also useful as I have lived this exploration. My own experience could address criticism most directly though, *if* I could be aware and transparent enough.

Potential Contributions to Process Work

I feel that my findings may have facilitative applications in individual, group, and organizational settings. I believe they could be useful for folk working on themselves, as well as for those working with others in guiding, mentoring, coaching ways.

To this research, I brought background and training as a transpersonal psychotherapist, experience of years of engagement with several body-based practices, most recently in the context of living / working / training in Japan for 10 years. Now, I am deepening my engagement with Process Work, begun at ITP.

Succinctly, the blend of perspectives I am informed by is uncommon. Sincerely, I hope that my quiet voice may offer a fresh perspective.

Chapter 2: Background

I drew from my reading to create context for my research. Pragmatically, my sources are primarily from Process Work and transpersonal psychology.

Historically Speaking . . .

Role theory grew out of systems thinking, among other sources. For this project, I have focused on the concept of role in group process (facilitator and participant facilitator are also roles), from a Process Work lens. Thus, I have sought out what has been done in Process Work around the experience and inner world of the facilitator and participant facilitator.

Organizing Concepts

One metaphor that has resonance for me is to consider the relationship between body / mind / spirit as three mirrors reflecting each other, wherein a change in one is also reflected in changes in the others. I wondered if there was a similar relationship at play in my project? I felt it apt, and focused upon three facets—field, group process, and role—as being of essential relevance for my inquiry.

Field. In language of the visual arts, the figure-ground relationship is an essential dynamic, wherein the ground offers context for the figure. Development of perspective in Western drawing and painting allows for depiction of figures interacting in and on planes of activity occurring from foreground, to middle ground, at a distance, and in the space between. In my understanding of systems theory, a field may also be considered as the ground that a figure moves upon and within. Jung's concept of collective unconscious is one example of a field that is patterned by archetypes relating to each other as well as to both the larger field and the individuals in whom they manifest.

Inherent in these concepts then, is a relationship between the figures themselves and the ground.

In other language, the dreaming field may be considered as the ground for group process and its roles and relationships to emerge and engage. Some of this is conscious and some is not. One could say that a dream is part of the field waiting for conscious expression.

Mindell writes of a field as

an area in space within which lines of force are in operation. It is simultaneously everywhere with everyone. It is here and now in its entirety, whenever we merely think of it. The world is you and me. It appears in dreams and body problems, in relationships, groups, and the environment. And it appears through the feelings it creates in us when we are near scared and awful places on earth. (1992, p. 17)

Characteristic of a field is that it exists regardless of time, space, and physical separation (Mindell, 1992, p. 26). Attending to the field or atmosphere of a group, organization, or community nurtures it. "Fields are like dreams: without our conscious appreciation and intervention, most of their wisdom may not appear" (Mindell, p. 28). Mindell states that the field itself teaches the facilitator how to work with it by remaining void, or open to the movement trying to happen (p. 61), if the facilitator is sufficiently aware.

The figure / ground relationship in Process Work is thus based upon and within a field of awareness that seeks to know itself. In other words

relationships are partly architected by the interactional field, which pulls people into roles, and co-determines the interactions between them. The idea of roles and fields is at the heart of the Process Work approach to multiple role relationships, and is discussed in terms of the dreaming process, that shapes, pulls and architects manifest reality. (Diamond, n.d., p. 8)

In other framing

> The group field uses relationships as a channel through which to express aspects of itself. The field chooses people who are an appropriate expression of certain forms of behavior and then hurdles these people into the center of the group. (Dworkin, 1989, p. 126)

My experience in group process during the Tokyo summer seminar (in Chapter 4) offered

corroboration, as I moved into the role of participant facilitator.

> Process Work recognizes that it is the background field or global dreambody which leads a group. The field, when expressed in its totality, has the power to guide the group towards its divine center. Leadership need not be limited to any one given person; it is our collective responsibility.
>   The leader is a perceiver. Anyone who picks up a part of that background field and brings it into the group with awareness is in a leadership position. (Dworkin, 1989, pp. 168-169)

From another perspective

> Fields spontaneously organize people into groups which have particular patterns and agreements on specific values and identities. These norms, beliefs and values are evident within the field and are constellated in different individuals and groups within this field. In Process Work we describe these subgroup constellations in the field as roles. (Schuitevoerder, 2000, p. 39)

> *Group Process Work.* Group process in Process Work is one field of play for roles.

Basic structural roles include participant observers, participant facilitators, and

facilitators. Designed to study what is happening for group members, its underlying

philosophy and the interventions based upon it are offered in service of awareness of the

dream that underlies the group, and to allow all of its facets expression. Ideally, as

Mindell states, "An awakened group will be self-balancing and wise" (1992, p. 44).

Further

> Fields have the tendency to find equilibrium and resolve tensions themselves. But resolution requires the facilitator and as many participants as possible to be aware, notice what is happening, encourage overt and covert tendencies, and help others express themselves more completely. (Mindell, 1992, p. 44)

Role / Timespirit. A role may be considered as a figure that moves within and / or upon ground. An interdisciplinary concept, in the early part of the 20th Century, the concept of role emerged. Simply stated, expectations and social norms shape, influence, and construct behavior, identity, and self.

> Role theory enhances psychology by including social norms, forces, and interaction as a way of understanding personality and behavior. Role theory also enhances sociology by showing that the social order not only consists of and is determined by large-scale, fixed structures and forces, but also arises through, and is created by social interaction in daily life and experiences. (Diamond, n.d., p. 8)

Founder of psychodrama, Moreno distinguished between taking a role, and enacting a role. Playing a role could be spontaneous and creative, distinct from taking a role and automatically assuming social expectations.

> A role can be defined as a unit of behavior with social meaning. . . . a role depends not just on consensual views and expectations, but also on the momentary context and set of players present. (Diamond, n.d., p. 9)

Rather than considering an individual as an isolated unit, a systems approach to behavior considers that roles are dependent on other roles in the system, and behavior is their interactions.

In Process Work, role theory is considered as an extension of the dream figure concept.

> Process Work theory does not distinguish theoretically between a role in a group, and a role in an individual's inner world, such as a dream figure. While roles are found in groups and relationships, dream figures are found in nighttime dreams, body experiences, projections, complexes, and other subjective experiences. Both roles and dream figures are understood as parts of a larger field, as functional sub-sets of behaviors and identities, arising out of deep feelings and experiences. (Diamond, n.d., pp. 11-12)

Mindell states, "Each role in a field can be understood as a reaction to another role, and polarizing these two roles clarifies the field" (1989, p. 99). My own experience in the July Tokyo seminar echoes this (in Chapter 4).

> Regarding the usefulness of working with roles, Diamond offers

> Working on inner role relationships develops the personality. Roles complement each other, and the interaction or relationship between roles creates transformation. Just as a group of individuals has the possibility to change through dialogue and debate, so too does an inner landscape of dream figures have the capacity for change and development through their interaction. (n.d., p. 12)

Yet, what is it about a role that holds such potential?

> the essence of a role is its ineffable, transcendent and numinous quality. It is not the material manifestation of the role, but the quintessential elements that comprise it. (p. 35) . . . The transformational experience one has when stepping into a role comes from feeling its essence, and experiencing life from an alternative state of consciousness. (Diamond, n.d., p. 36)

In his more recent work, Mindell uses timespirit for the term role.

> *Timespirit* is an update of the role concept; it describes and emphasizes the temporal and transitory nature of roles in a personal or group field better than does the term role. *Timespirit* is meant to remind us of the transformation potential of the world around us. (1992, p. 34)

> Neutrality and objectivity are important tools in groupwork because they also enable us to separate people from the parts or timespirits in the field. Each member is more than their momentary role and has all of the parts within himself or herself. (1992, p. 46)

As part of the larger field, an individual may be used to express a bit of its energy or essence. In its expression, one may or may not personally identify with the role one channels. Thus, roles / timespirits are simply present in the field, awaiting someone to enliven them. They have an essential contribution, in that "As long as a person is found to take on the qualities prescribed by the role, the group or society can express itself" (Dworkin, 1989, p. 150).

> Timespirits can also transform and evolve.
>
> Groups and individuals, however, are not identical with timespirits; individuals have the potential to have many different feelings and timespirits within themselves as well as the capacity to become conscious of those feelings and timespirits and to use them profitably. (Mindell, 1992, p. 35)
>
> Awareness of timespirits, however, turns group process into a chance for individuation. Individuals have the opportunity to discover the various timespirits in themselves. In fact, groups work best if individuals are aware of what timespirits they can identify with in a given moment, move into that spirit, and give it a voice. (Mindell, 1992, p. 47)

Indeed, this is one of the ways I used in my own explorations of moving into and out of a role.

Of essential relevance to the practice of group process is that an individual's wholeness or "globality" depends on his or her ability "to play a great variety of roles" (Dworkin, 1989, pp. 160-161). Further, "Regardless of what the nature of your role may be, filling it consciously is a means of helping the field know itself" (Mindell, 1992, p. 99). This idea which felt very abstract at first became much more experientially anchored over the course of my research.

> Roles are momentary manifestations of deep feelings and tendencies. They are also socially defined units of behavior containing status, function, and responsibility. . . . Both descriptions co-exist without negating the other. (Diamond, n.d., p. 19)

As an individual who is woven into different groups, in different cultures, and in different practices, my responsibilities are also varied. All of this comes with me when I engage in group process. There, I also have other responsibilities that come with a participant facilitator or facilitator role. In the moment, there are facilitator's tasks to attend to, one of which is framing.

> Framing helps increase participation because it offers a sense of pattern or structure. Without a pattern or structure to what is happening, there is no "in" and

"out" of participation: anything goes, and people don't feel safe, because there is no way to *not* participate. (Diamond, n.d., p. 26, italic in original)

Considered in a larger context

Every role has a function and a set of tasks associated with that function. The function includes both the "higher purpose" of the role, as well as the more mundane set of duties and tasks that the professional is meant to fulfill. The practitioner is also responsible for being able to assess her capacity to fulfill those duties. (pp. 29-30) . . . The higher purpose or principle governing the Process Work practitioner according to the Ethical Guidelines is to "promote and foster the client's well-being." (Diamond, n.d., p. 30)

I had suspected that I might find a deepened awareness of personal patterns, and hopefully, increased options to shift them, as I moved into exploration of edges (mine as well as those of the group I was in). This now feels accurate, and continues to be ongoing work for the next while. From a beginning position long ago of not liking groups at all, it increasingly feels that I'm being drawn deeper in order to learn how to navigate and move with . . . and not as a talking head, but rather as an embodied spirit.

Process Work Elements

In Process Work, group work and Worldwork, when we become conscious of our feelings and perceptions and express these in the collective interaction of the group, we enable the group to consciously explore and evolve through the interaction of the different roles within the group's field. With awareness, edges (or growing places in the roles) emerge, and the interaction between the roles unfolds. Once developed, roles, edges, and dialogue allow the group to evolve and unfold together into new ways of relating and expressing. At another moment different roles will again constellate creating opportunities for new issues to emerge and be worked on. (Schuitevoerder, 2000, p. 40)

As roles, relationships, and their interactions unfold in group process, some aspects will be closer or further from one's awareness. Those aspects closest and most identified with are termed primary processes. Mindell describes them as "The self-description, methods and culture with which you and your group identify yourselves. 'Process' in primary process emphasizes how identity changes in time" (1995, p. 42).

Processes that are further away from awareness or that happen to one, are termed secondary. Mindell writes of them as "Aspects of ourselves that we, as individuals or groups, prefer not to identify with" (1995, p. 43).

The border between them is termed the edge. Goodbread writes, "The 'something' which stands between the observer and his secondary process we will call an edge. It is, quite literally, the edge of the observer's identity" (1987/1997a, p. 50). Mindell states, "An edge is reached when a process brings up information which is difficult for you to accept" (1985/2002a, p. 63). Further, "Edges are names for the experience of confinement, for the limitations in awareness, for the boundaries of your own identity" (Mindell, p. 67). In a group, "Edges may be experienced as resistances to recognizing, allowing, and living certain disavowed parts of the group" (Mindell, 1992, p. 43). Personally speaking, recognizing and going over my own edges was an essential part of becoming more aware of the shift that happens for me as I move into the role of participant facilitator.

Also present in the field are ghosts, "implied or background feelings in the atmosphere" (Mindell, 1992, p. 42). In another framing,

> The dream figures manifest in roles within the group; individuals can, at least in theory, move into and out of identification with these roles. If no one identifies with a given role, this role is unoccupied by any individual, but exists like a spirit or ghost, influencing the dreams, feelings, and behavior of individuals in the group. (Goodbread, 1997b, p. 157)

If ghosts in a system are not allowed space or voice, they will eventually disturb or even destroy it. Granting them a voice offers the possibility of change and transformation.

Essential to the function of the system is the metacommunicator. Maintaining a neutral viewpoint, the workings of the system are followed with awareness. Having the ability to observe, one of its tasks is to intervene in the relationships in the group.

Metaskills show up as the way in which an intervention may be used, and as the beliefs and attitudes underlying its application. As Mindell once advised, "Follow your feeling attitude and bring it in consciously!" (cited in Amy Mindell, 1995, p. 171). From Diamond and Jones, "Metaskills create the kind of atmosphere that holds an unfolding process in moments of turbulence and uncertainty" (2004, p. 128). As to how they might be nurtured, Amy Mindell writes, "To be fluid, we also need to both let go and remain centered, to give up forms and concepts and ride the waves of nature while maintaining a steady awareness that remains quiet in the flow of events" (1995, p. 157). I have an embodied sense of what she describes from my body-based practices. My challenge is to cultivate and use it skillfully in group process.

> Succinctly, Schuitevoerder writes of the Process Work model that
>
> Through Worldwork, small group work, and individual work, Process Work provides a format and structures to recognize, explore and understand the range of experience . . . . These include structures for analyzing power and rank awareness, encouraging the emergence of ghosts, awareness of edges, holding to hot spots and the metaskills of deep democracy. (2000, p. 142)
>
> Mindell describes his concept of Deep Democracy as an underlying Process Work

principle.

> In personal life, it means openness to all of our inner voices, feelings, and movements, not just the ones we know and support, but also the ones we fear and do not know well. In relationships, deep democracy means having ongoing awareness of our highest ideals and worst moods. In group life it means the willingness to listen to and experiment with whatever part comes up. (1992, p. 173)

Cultivating such openness is a humbling and ongoing process for me.

New Information

As I was nearing completion of my own thesis draft, I received two that had been recently completed. One is an inquiry into the concept of participant facilitator in Process Work (Burkhardt, 2008), and the other looks at the place of innerwork and the development of metaskills in facilitating change in an organizational setting (Smith, 2008).

Burkhardt writes on the theoretical and historical basis of the participant facilitator concept, anchoring it cogently in Mindell's writings. Given that the facilitator is one part of the overall process of any field, "the facilitator is always a participant-facilitator, participating in and affected by the field, subject to its various forces" (Burkhardt, 2008, p. 19).

An awareness that is focused upon the field, the space, and the relationships of its parts is essential for a participant-facilitator. To focus upon the interstices or space between is familiar territory for me, in other contexts. Expanding my focus of attention to the interstices in the group process context offers useful means to consider the role of a facilitator freshly. This is essential because, as Burkhardt states, ". . . the role of the facilitator as a channel or agent of awareness needs to be occupied in order for the field to manifest its wisdom" (2008, p. 24).

Writing of innerwork, Smith considers that it offers essential and useful information to an organization.

> . . . expressing the nature of the system at the essence level and contains the deep feeling attitudes or metaskills that are needed to help facilitate second-order change . . . . The facilitation skill is in the attitude used to bring this information from the awareness of the facilitator and then to make it useful to organization. This new knowledge and meta-awareness appears to help traverse the edge into the emergent process of the organization. As the quality of relationships change

the emergence of the new system is eased into being. . . . Most importantly, the use of innerwork helps to directly access these needed experiences. (2008, p. 150)

I was pleased to realize that what I had come to in my own musings had reflections in their work. Congruent with Mindell's view, "To understand yourself, you need to explore your inner experiences" (2002b, p. 3), my own focus is often upon working internally and with metaskills, as I seek to know myself. Such internal work indeed has external reflections, as interrelationships and interconnections are of the essence, and "the inner self, relationships, and the world are all aspects of the same community process" (Mindell, 1995, p. 66). On some level then, what innerwork I do, is also work for those with whom I'm in relationship, in contexts both personal and professional. Succinctly, "Every feeling, thought, movement, and encounter is simultaneously an inner and an outer event. Thus, meditation or innerwork is a form of worldwork, just as world events are also personal ones" (Mindell, 1992, p. 26). This clearly speaks to the external relevance of one's inner work, one of my initial questions.

Growing Elder

Although I had met the concept of eldership prior to joining MACF2, and then again in my reading, it somehow remained abstract and distant. When I was into analysis of my data, I realized how relevant it was personally, and shifted my own perspective on the territory I was exploring. I acknowledge reluctance to see myself aging, and in the past few years, it has come home in ways that I cannot not see / feel, and cannot ignore. So, how to have it be useful?

Moving in the role of a participant facilitator has been my research focus. In my reading, I've also found a deep connection between the role of a participant facilitator

and that of an elder, and I'm now keenly interested in how to cultivate eldership. Indeed,

Mindell writes that an elder is a "participant-facilitator" (2002b, p. 164), and thus is not

only an individual but also a role.

> Eldership is the result of inner development and in response to outer circumstances. Because she knows that the field draws her in, she is some complex combination of mystic and activist, a part of everyone, connected to the suffering of her people and, at the same time, to the infinite. (2002b, pp. 165-66)

In MACF2 over time, I have occasionally accessed this role, though with varying degrees

of awareness and fluidity. Sometimes, I feel I do serve in cultivating community,

expressing another facet of the field through offering my own voice.

> By following their dreams, these elders remind us that great visions yearn to become real. The elder knows that not only is she herself a dream, but all groups are mythic, held together by ancient beliefs, traditions, and new stories. This is why the elder is a dreamer as well as a realist. . . . They monitor the slow transition needed to help groups transform from self-destructive conglomerations of adversaries into cocreative communities proud of their interactive gatherings. (Mindell, 2002b, p. 166)

In the role of an elder, one has the transpersonal rank of relating to something

larger than one's own identity. Self-knowledge is its foundation. As I cultivate

awareness of rank, I need also to be mindful of the power that comes along, in order to

make best use of my self, in whatever role I may be in, for the moment. Power is a

process, and comes from our own relationship to ourselves, the world, and spirit

(Goodbread, 2007, p. 76).

> For the elder, switching roles is not a technique to be learned, but an ability that arises within her in response to the moment and for the benefit of all. . . . Selflessness is part of her teaching. She may have a very strong mind of her own and, at the same time, may act as if she has no self at all; rather, she is a channel through which nature speaks. She is active but, in a way, does nothing. (Mindell, 2002b, p. 167)

However, when eldership prevails, you become a participant facilitator, edgeless and free. For you, freedom manifests as the truth in the various roles and the awareness experiences into and out of which you move. (Mindell, 2002b, p. 168)

Yet, this too is a role in the field. "The elder manifests from the dreaming field itself, and is a role which can be embraced by many people, but is only held for a moment before being relinquished in the continuing journey of the group" (Schuitevoerder, 2000, p. 93).

Amy Mindell writes

This elder can be both an ordinary person with her or his own standpoints as well as a facilitator who can flow with and support the interactions between all sides. She or he gives the relieving sense of "having been there before" and helps to create a home for all. In so doing, this elder models the world that she or he is hoping to create. (2008, p. 223)

Eldership and leadership differ. In one framing, it looks like a recipe composed of leadership (whether it's agreed on or not) + social awareness + personal development = eldership (Schuitevoerder, 2008). Links between eldership and leadership show up in the work of many in the Process Work community and its applications are being more directly manifest through the application of Process Work in organizations (e.g., Diamond, 2007, 2008; Mindell, 1992, 1995, 2002b, 2007; Schuitevoerder, 2008, 2009; Schupbach, n.d., 2006).

As I understand it now, cultivating eldership is an individual process of individuation that may be developed through a spiritual practice of cultivating compassion, or in the ways one works with others in the world. Paths are as individual as those who walk them. This may well be my next research focus.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

Contained in this chapter is an explication of how I structured my inquiry. In

sections on research methods and theorists I drew from, I offer the basis for the specific

research design I used.

Design

Initially, I read widely, and then spoke with my study committee and others senior

to me in Process Work for suggestions for further exploration. I followed a heuristic

design (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985; Moustakas, 1990) and utilized organic inquiry

(Clements, 2004) and intuitive inquiry (Anderson, 1998) as informing and shaping the

overall ground / context of my research, as well as addressing concerns of validity. I

anticipated that this combination of methods would allow me to situate processes of

reflection, data gathering, and analysis in a manner essentially congruent with Process

Work.

Ethical Considerations and Informed Consent. I abided by APA guidelines for

ethical consideration of participants in human research, as well as by Process Work

ethical guidelines. My research focused upon an inquiry into my own experience, and

my ethical concerns included the others in group processes with me. Permission to

videotape the group processes I did was given verbally by all involved, as I made it clear

that they were for my own training, not for publication. Thus, no informed consent form

was required.

Plan. My data was drawn in part from my second MACF internship, which

involved my being in group processes as participant facilitator at least 6-8 times in Tokyo,

Portland, and London Worldwork. I was involved in another 6-8 group processes (in

Portland) as well, and was tracking my experience and reflections throughout.

Videotapes were made during many of the group processes I was involved with. I

discussed my experience with my supervisor(s) as a guide for what I did in the following

session(s). This was from January through April 2008. The following months were

devoted to crafting a context to place my experiences within, and creating the form for its

presentation / expression (in other language, reading / researching / dreaming / writing). I

shifted the focus of my reading to inquire more deeply into role (concept and theory),

group process, and facilitation in Process Work during this period. Additional material

offered itself as I participated in a summer Process Work seminar in Tokyo, and then also

from the fall residency of MACF2.

Rationale for Research Design

     Moustakas: Heuristic Inquiry. As a base for my inquiry, I drew from the heuristic

research method found in the work of Moustakas (1990), and Douglass and Moustakas

(1985), as I felt drawn to it as a way of working with my own experiences. They suggest

> In its purest form, heuristics is a passionate and discerning personal involvement
> in problem solving, an effort to know the essence of some aspect of life through
> the internal pathways of the self. . . . When utilized as a framework for research,
> it offers a disciplined pursuit of essential meanings connected with everyday
> human experiences. (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p. 39)

     Initial phases of inquiry originate in an affirmation of subjectivity, grounding the

self. They suggest a three-phase model, comprised of immersion (exploration of the

question), acquisition (data collection), and realization (synthesis). All of the constituents

necessary to move the process forward may not be known, even though the researcher

may be able to say what is being experienced.

From this perspective, revelations of meaning for the researcher come not from methods and procedures which have been predetermined, but rather from internal alertness and focused attention. The hunches and insights which characterize heuristic discovery, as well as inference and intuition, all emerge from the tacit dimension. "At the heart of heuristics lies an emphasis on disclosing the self as a way of facilitating disclosure from others—a response to the tacit dimension within oneself sparks a similar call from others" (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p. 50).

A whole is assembled from the fragments gathered in search of meaning and essence, during the realization phase of heuristic inquiry. Not simply a distillation of patterns, nor recapitulation or summary, in synthesis a new reality may be generated.

> The concept of intentionality is pertinent in realization through synthesis. In moving from the specific to the general, from the individual to the universal, from appearance to essence, the theme, question, or problem being explored is recognized as having a life of its own. The challenge is to nurture that life, letting it grow and mature in a way that is consistent with its true nature, as it is revealed experientially through the researcher's own internal processes and those of intimate collaborators. (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p. 52)

Intuition is an apt guide in the process of "discovery of patterns and meanings that will lead to enhanced meanings, and deepened and extended knowledge" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 24).

Anderson: Intuitive Inquiry. I am far more often an intuitive thinker rather than a logical one. Anderson's intuitive inquiry specifically includes the intuitive realm by offering the use of sympathetic resonance as a validation procedure. She illustrates the principle of sympathetic resonance in a scientific endeavor with an analogy.

> If someone plucks a string on a cello on one side of a room, a string of a cello on the opposite side will begin to vibrate, too. . . . The resonance communicates and connects directly and immediately without intermediaries except for air and space. The principle of sympathetic resonance introduces resonance as a validation

procedure for the researcher's particular intuitive insights and syntheses. (Anderson, 1998, p. 73)

Greater focus, coherence, and discipline come with bringing consciousness to one's intentions in the research process. "Akin to setting up fields of morphic resonance (Sheldrake, 1998), setting intention creates a movement in consciousness in a particular direction" (Anderson, 1998, p. 87).

Once the data collection process is complete, "Incubation invites the creative process to do its work while the researcher rests, relaxes, and otherwise removes her or his focus from the research inquiry" (Anderson, 1998, p. 91). In the analysis phase, "data analysis should accommodate the data that present themselves, rather than being immutably established at the outset of the study" (p. 91). There is room for new, unanticipated data to show up and be included as

> The most important feature of synthesizing data is the intuitive breakthroughs, those illuminating moments of insight when the data begin to reveal and shape themselves. . . . overall patterns seem to reveal themselves only after individual participants or portions of the data have been analyzed. (Anderson, 1998, p. 92)

Clements: Organic Inquiry. An emphasis upon how one approaches the research at hand is essential to organic inquiry. Speaker for the group of researchers who originated this approach, Jennifer Clements states

> Organic inquiry invites transformative change, which includes not only information, but also a transformation that consists of both changes of mind and changes of heart. . . .
>
> Transformative changes of heart, which is the added focus of organic inquiry, specifically requires a temporary suspension of that kind of thinking (critical reflectivity and rational discourse) in order to access liminal sources and ways of knowing, which are then ultimately cognitively integrated during analysis. (Clements, 2004, pp. 26-27)

This is keenly essential to my current research.

Inherent in each of the approaches I've drawn from is a deep respect for the ebb

and flow of focused attention upon the project underway. Each also underscores the

importance of being open to information from other than cognitive sources.

> The organic orientation includes the assumption of the mystical tradition that divine / human interaction is available to one who is open (Van Dusen, 1996, 1999). . . . The word liminal comes from the Latin *limen* or threshold. One may learn to cross the threshold beyond ego, gather experience, and to return "so that the deeper ground of the archetypal field can be seen, experienced, and allowed to flower" (Hopcke, 1991, p. 118). Crossing the threshold takes the psyche to a less structured and less familiar state, where experience may be witnessed, but not created or controlled by ego. (Clements, 2004, p. 27)

There is a developmental aspect to such changes, as in her view, "Changes of heart

transform the very nature of who we are, preparing us to be better partners to

liminal/spiritual influence" (Clements, 2004, pp. 37-38).

> integration of transformative change has been seen to show up in three ways. One may become more self-aware; one may develop a greater facility in connecting to the changes of heart and mind available from the liminal and spiritual realm; and one may come to feel a greater desire to be of service in the world—self, Spirit, and service. (Clements, 2004, p. 38)

Limitations

> Regarding the limitations of organic inquiry,

> Because the researcher is the instrument of the study, distortions, whether intentional or unintentional, are possible. . . . The researcher must be sufficiently self-aware to be able to acknowledge biases and assumptions, so that they may become informative filters rather than unseen confounding factors. Ongoing vigilance, honesty, and surrender are required to approach clarity of intent in undertaking subjective procedures. (Clements, 2004, p. 44)

Honoring these cautions, I acknowledged my assumptions and strove to be as honest and

vigilant as possible as I tracked my experience.

One clear limitation of my research is that it was essentially a heuristic study,

with participant / researcher of one. My focus was upon a specific set of

interrelationships, so that was another limitation. Thus, no generalizability emerges from my research.

Validity

Anderson emphasizes a commonsense understanding of validity as "just telling the whole truth of what occurred in lived experience" (1998, p. 72). Then, "The principle of sympathetic resonance introduces resonance as a validation procedure for the researcher's particular intuitive insights and syntheses" (Anderson, p. 73). Thus, I invite and welcome the reader's response.

Chapter 4: Explorations and Findings

In this chapter, I offer a description of my explorations, and then what I found as it related to my initial questions. In Chapter 5 are my conclusions.

Explorations

Although I began this project focused primarily upon the role of a participant facilitator in group process, what I've realized and discovered also travels thematically throughout my time in MACF2. As I consider it now, essentially, my experience relates to five basic areas that I believe are important. They are (a) Framing and metacommunication, and the challenges of being a body-oriented person transitioning from ideas to expression; (b) Introversion, how I've worked on coming out and needing to calibrate the intensity with which I do so; (c) My critical voice, how I am silenced by it, work on my moods, what happens when I become my critic, and how I've worked on it; (d) Finding my center, cultivating self-love, and getting out of the way, doing/not doing; and (e) Coming to understand myself as a role in the field.

Framing / Metacommunication. Although editing is one of my skills and I feel quite comfortable with words most times, in others, the verbal realm feels distant and abstract. When I'm immersed in Aikido practice and moving in relationship with another, or walking with my camera and feeling caught and drawn into resonance with light / place / space, words are simply not the currency of those realms. As I've been deepening my explorations of Process Work, I've also become aware that to utilize words more fluently may create links between my other worlds of practice and Process Work, as well as within my deepening Process Work study. It will also enhance my relationship capacity.

Shifting perspective is a practice I've long intentionally cultivated in other fields. How to implement this more skillfully in a Process Work context is now drawing my attention. In terms of this practice, it could easily be understood as changing channels of experience. Usually, in my primary identity, I move between the visual and kinesthetic channels. What I tend to marginalize is the auditory channel (perhaps because my critical voice is at home here). As this relates to facilitation in group process, one area of skill development is clearly in framing. In terms of my work ongoing, I feel that it is also on the way to developing my skills of metacommunication, which I sense will be even more essential in other relationships, personal and professional.

In one of the earliest group processes of this research in Tokyo, the topic had to do with jealousy, as that was up for the facilitator. Part way into the process and drawn by my concern, I moved to engage with another participant directly, hands-on. I had her permission to touch, and used this as means of connecting with her and offering my quiet support for her own internal explorations. I've been strongly encouraged to trust my hands, and allow myself to engage on their lead. When I do, it is mainly a nonverbal space, at least initially. I'm learning to give voice as an aid to connecting with the person I'm working with, and for others who may also be involved (as in a group setting), although I'm not consistent yet in doing so.

My actions prompted a mixture of puzzlement and concern from others in the group, as I did not split my focus and share with them what I was doing. On reflection afterwards, I realized that I need to include others more in what I do in a group situation. Framing is vital between my internal nature and the external folk I'm working with. Simply, I need to be much more aware of my nonverbal style.

Indeed, I was advised afterwards to try and put words to what I was doing and to offer metacommunication, for the person I was working with and so others know what I'm doing and leave me be to do it. Claim my rank of seeing differently and use it with awareness! It had not occurred to me that my way of seeing differently had rank.

During spring MACF2 residency, I was given the assignment for the next week of asking NO questions in my roles during group process ("you're *too* good at it" came from this supervisor). I acknowledge that sometimes it is an edge to share myself and my experience with others. Asking questions allows me to be present yet also somewhat distant, often not giving much of myself away other than in the framing or language I use, and frequently with an attempt at being emotionally as neutral as I can manage (or at least appearing so). This reflects both my own habits of style and prior training as a psychotherapist. However, at times, it also leaves others out, stopping down the relationship channel as I guard myself, and often resulting in a feeling of isolation for me.

Yes, there has definitely been an edge to being visible and audible in the group. At times, I've not felt touched or drawn in by what was in the field then and there. Other times and increasingly so, I've attempted to utilize my sensitivity to nonverbal signals to enable me to enter more fluidly and playfully. When I can work internally and utilize what metaskills I have, this seems to allow me to be more present. This was echoed by one of my supervisors as well, during this period.

As I think about what's happening and how to learn from it, on reflection, my critical voice is also present. If I do not speak so much, then this diminishes the chances of being misunderstood or inadvertently hurting someone by my words. On the other hand, it increases the chances of my leaving others behind, as often shows in their signals,

both verbal and non. Rather, I was advised to intentionally use role play as facilitation, to utilize joining and / or dreaming into in a role in order to show the affect of the other side. Also, for me to be phony . . . to forget authenticity, that the facilitator is also a role.

I have seen and now feel that I am gaining confidence in saying more. Yet, I still could usefully improve in how I frame what I sense. Sometimes, I use too many words, and other times, not enough or not useful ones. Transition time from my sensing something to then speaking of it could usefully be shorter. From my experience over the time of this research (and MACF2 overall), it has been shifting in that direction.

Introvert's Journey Out. As long as I can recall, I've been quiet, an acknowledged introvert. My expressive preference initially was mainly in the visual channel, although as I've gained seasoning from years of experience, I've come to recognize and increasingly honor my strong kinesthetic sensibility. Once a secondary channel, it now feels as though movement has become more integrated and that my primary identity now has ready access to a blend of both vision and movement.

I have read widely and much, as books were readily available company when I was not in school, drawing/painting, or being outside. However, my facility with the English language was of little assistance during my years of living in Tokyo. I have intentionally focused on attending closely to nonverbal signals as my way into some level of understanding situations I was in, both inside and outside of the Aikido dojo. My images also provided an avenue of respectful connection aesthetically, as my values felt clearly communicated without words.

While I was to varying degrees comfortable during the 10 years of my sojourn, I also internalized, or felt supported in ways already internalized, much that culturally

reinforced one's being quiet, and less verbally expressive than is the Western norm. In other words, much that was already part of my primary identity was supported, and much that is in my secondary identity was not.

So, when I began MACF2, there clearly were edges I was not very aware of. I often found myself internally very annoyed with early group processes, and with myself for not saying anything of what I was thinking and feeling, then exploding, not having *that* well-received by the group, and retreating inwards again. Striving for apt calibration and fit has been an ongoing focus of my awareness and intention over the course of the program. Now that I'm more aware of this pattern, my intention has been to shift it, and slowly, feel I'm doing so with increasing success.

From a beginning place of being intensely inward and holding my energies of expression closely until they burst out, often with more intensity than intended and then being out of proportion to the prompt, I find that I'm speaking more and sooner, or at least being engaged in movement and involved nonverbally in the process, if not both. This has involved much innerwork, and cultivation of metaskills. Innerwork has allowed me to work on myself alone, while working to intentionally cultivate metaskills has offered an opportunity to influence the attitudes with which I did and continue to do so.

In the group processes in which I was involved, I often struggled to find my way in to participation, let alone participant facilitation. I was advised that innerwork is the core of participant facilitation. Although I could often find conflict in myself, it was not with a sense of having access to all roles, nor with any faith that I'm a microcosm of outer conflict. That view simply felt presumptuous somehow . . . . As I explored this more deeply, I recognized that I was being requested to shift perspective and focus on my

internal group process, and how could I facilitate that, using the metaskills I was cultivating? This continues to be ongoing work for me.

What did I learn in group process during spring residency? This time, it was that in showing myself more fully, deeper connection was made, in the processes as well as in broader relations in my cohort. It felt a consistent thread throughout the residency that I was being asked to show up and speak of what was happening for me in my interior world. Many times, "I was hidden and longed to be known" echoed within. I did my best to be as transparent as possible, eyes often washed by tears, as I crossed many personal edges in journeying out.

In London Worldwork, I was often up and physically moving around the edges of the small group I was in when it was in process, and this helped me to move in and out of its center as well. On our last day, as were we all, I was invited to share or offer something to this group. Interest had been expressed in my nonverbal studies / practices, and was there anything I could share? Yes! From Aikido, I offered the basic 2-step, as a way of relating to another that was viscerally inclusive of the field as well. This got everyone up and moving, laughing often, and it definitely shifted the atmosphere in the room. As people became more familiar with the pattern, yet another shift occurred as folk connected at a bit deeper level. Then, in the room with almost everyone moving, I found it very beautiful to see how each pair came to also work with those closeby, adjusting their movements in the space available. This movement process seemed to assist another (even quieter) participant in offering something from his own study of Shintaido later, wherein he became much more visible in his own ways.

What moved me was my confidence in knowing that I definitely had something to offer in this realm, and I was also pleased at being so invited. The impact on the whole group, as they slowly moved with the unfamiliar pattern, then became more comfortable with it, looked to be one of increased shared engagement. I felt a coming together of attention, and then an expansion of focus, shifting from individuals trying to relate in pairs to pairs relating in the overall space of the room. I felt confirmed in my own ways of making a useful contribution to group process. In other framing, movement again brought me to my self, making it easier for me to then offer from my own experience.

Additional relevant experience came after London, during a Process Work summer seminar in Tokyo. The spinning pen chose me to work in the center on someone disturbing (more specifically, someone from the seminar's first day and a half). I drew in a deep breath, crossed yet another edge, and accepted its invitation, determined to be as transparent as I could be, then. However, I also opted to create a composite other (a role) to speak to, so I was weaving a construct as I spoke. The disturber I was addressing had shown in behaviors of more than one person, and they were cohort members with whom I was already working with outside the seminar on several levels. So, I chose to address the behaviors rather than the personalities.

What had caught my attention was what felt to me to be assumptions of rank and privilege, and what I perceived as unconsciousness in doing so. My critical voice was also very active and involved, as I've been sternly chastised for similar behavior in my past, and I wondered how they could not only feel entitled, but also seemingly get away with it, and even be supported in doing so? As I took my own view more fully, realized that I'd also like to feel free to be that way, and that it could be exhilarating. Then as I

felt more deeply into becoming that role and how it would sit and stand, I felt decisive and powerful, and also realized I could also easily be isolated in that position. Yes, there were aspects that I wanted, that were secondary for me, and I also became aware of its down side, too.

In the center, I was asked if I could embody someone coming out fully to the group, what would I say? I spoke a little, shyly at first, and then being encouraged to brag, spoke more directly about my own accomplishments. Moving into how I would stand in taking central stage, I felt a sense of presence that was willing and ready to receive, not afraid of what might come, a physical position with an open heart and not many words. From this space came the realization that I'd need to struggle more with my quiet side to have this show up, and moving forward, that I'd advise my other self to quit holding back, and that my critic could simply take a hike.

It felt an introvert's journey out, as I was encouraged to speak of my accomplishments and own my successes, and far more publicly, to own my own rank. I had some positive feedback on my work and that I looked quite different afterwards, that my energy was forward and not withdrawn. I felt surprised that anyone noticed on this level and said a heartfelt "thank you!" Many times past when I've tried to speak of my internal experience, it has not been well-received. Pragmatically, I may also have not spoken skillfully.

Simply, I was offered an embodied experience of shift and change as I moved between roles, not just words or mental constructs. Also, I realized another aspect of role as I framed the disturber as a composite "role of one who . . . ." First time it has shown

itself in that way for me, it felt natural, and feels a deepening of my understanding of framing a role, that this is growing, too!

Engagement with My Critical Voice. Being able to more freely express my uncertainty and vulnerability over the course of the extra group processes during spring and fall residencies seemed closely related to key learning times for me, when I was invited to speak from my own experience, to be deeply personal in a setting where that was decidedly not my norm. When I was able to cross my edges and do so, often with tears flowing openly, yet also somehow still present, it seemed to gather the group and then allow deeper discussion of other issues, almost as though I had helped to clear the atmosphere or freshly organize the field. I began to feel crossing an edge as a shifting of the field in a way new to me. Literally, I felt offered a fresh perspective from the other side of my edges, and am not done here, for certain!

My internal critical voice is fierce and tenacious—we share a long history, and it has grown from my experience, after all. Yes, performance is important as well as learning, which I agree with, yet can also feel blind-sided by. When it speaks, I often hear words of judgment, dismissive or sneering comments that undercut whatever shreds of confidence I had in my believed areas of competency. Feeling judged and lacking, my defenses come up, and I become silent, withdraw, and disappear. Often I've become moody when it surfaces surreptitiously, unaware that it has been activated. Increasingly, I'm learning to look for it when I notice I'm in a mood. Colleagues in my cohort and others I work with have also been helpful in alerting moody me.

Another way I'm learning to work with my critical voice is to become it. When I do so, things shift . . . it feels I'm in a much smaller, more rigidly compartmented world

than I wish to live in, and somehow, an artificial one. When I look at myself through its eyes, usually I do not see who I am (or believe and feel myself to be) in present time, rather, I see a much younger, much less seasoned person. Thus, I've sought to bring awareness to how it silences me, work on my moods, and become aware sooner of its activities. If I can catch it in action, it now feels as though I can do something to acknowledge, address, and counter its effects, albeit we are not yet complete.

In a group process during the Tokyo summer seminar, the topic involved being criticized / feeling judged. Several people spoke and then the energy in the room seemed to focus in the critic's role, and other voices quieted as she got bigger and bigger. Only one voice was heard, ranting and raving, seemingly delighting in its power to intimidate and scathingly belittle.

From across the room, I stood and spoke out strongly and I believe cleanly to counter the role she was in—NO! (to abuse, to being put in a box and labeled and put away, to being bound by guilt for that which I did not do, to being judged as never good enough and incapable of ever doing "it" right . . .). The other voice tried to shout me down, and I remained firm in my determined presence, yet I was not attacking back. Energy in the room shifted after several iterations of our call and response, gradually fragmenting into other voices that could then be heard.

What prompted me to move and enter as I did? Simply, I did not do so alone, rather, it was as if I had had an infusion of energy that moved me. It was a new experience to be in a role so clearly and strongly. The role picked me and used my voice . . . is how it felt. I felt clear and present and centered, with full voice and also with open heart—felt very clean in the sense of having little feeling of the personality of "me."

Rather, it was as though I was one intense essence or spirit responding to another . . . perhaps in service of the field learning about itself.

Later, I tried once more to speak from that space, and was not as successful . . . not as clear of "me" as it was with more deliberate intention and willed. Time prior, I felt moved to speak, distinct from me willing me to speak. I felt that the exercise in the center the day before had shifted my intention in a way that facilitated my engagement with role in yet another way new for me. Simply, I was freshly available, in a way I've not been before.

I was very surprised at the impact that my voice in role had on the group. Seemed to bring clarity, that she and I were holding clear and defining points on a range, and that in some way, I felt that the group had less tension as we gave voice to our positions. Afterwards, several people spoke to me of being very surprised by hearing me show up, and thanked me for doing so. I felt a bit shy, as was / is new territory for me to be so clearly present, and expressively powerful in a group setting. It also felt that I was continuing my work of coming out more, moving into territory and behavior much more secondary for me.

If I can attend to its message rather than only being triggered by its presentation, I have felt invited to stretch beyond my usual boundaries / edges and continue my explorations. This is quite a recent experience, however. The prompt was around my competency, perceived as lacking. When I feel like I've failed, my defenses come up, and I find myself in a complex. In this frozen place where I cannot access my best skills, a secondary mood takes over, and I'm out of the relationship channel and into my own internal tangle. To learn from this situation, I needed to shift my attitude towards

considering failure as a learning process. My defensiveness was around being competent, which put the learner as secondary. If I could not allow myself to fail, the learner could not exist. I was advised to practice failing and love myself for it.

Then to process failure . . . and that took me into very unexpected territory. As I focused on going deeply into the experience of failing, initially I wanted to simply disappear, become invisible. As I followed that, felt I was shedding layers and becoming lighter. There was a felt-sense of less density of my usual primary identity, that it was simply not relevant in this space. As I was reporting on my experience, my voice sounded quite different to me. I heard later at the close of the session that this was an indication that I had dropped my primary identity, and had moved into my secondary identity, at least briefly. So, I discovered that behind my sense of failure is emptiness . . . and that whenever I fail, rather than get in a mood, more helpful is to frame it as emptiness is calling me.

Cultivating Center. Regarding how I come out and relate with others, and from where (centered in my head? heart? hara?), I feel as though I've definitely begun to move in this area as of the July seminar, feeling drawn then into an essential role from which it was not only me who spoke. Events of the fall residency brought me further into this territory, as I was invited into several intense dialogues with different people, and simply stood and spoke for my ways of being, seeing, and doing with more clarity and presence than I've generally had in such situations prior. Some of these were in our extra group processes, and others were working on relationship conflicts, either in class or in a session.

Often I was intentionally focusing on, how can I cultivate center for myself in the context of Process Work? Movement based practices offered essential direction: find my feet, find my hands, find my head, and feel the breath that connects them. As a short form of this practice, and also honoring a senior colleague's support of the nonverbal knowledge in my hands, I've found that by focusing on what my hands energetically wanted to do, and perhaps were doing, brought me more present and ready to move. I also respect that this may be read as a signal quite different from my intention. For example, some have perceived quiet movements in my hands while I was standing counter to their position as getting ready to fight, seeing it as a double signal, whereas I felt it was being used as grounding, and gathering information. However, simply by standing so open and present, I was often battling my critical voice or that of an edge figure. I acknowledge that I need to be more aware of the impact of my movements on others.

I respect that I need to remain alert for the presence and influence of prior patterns from other practices as I continue to explore moving from my center in Process Work. However, in addition to times with Arny and Amy Mindell at Yachats seminars, and then my own more recent solo explorations of processmind, moving from a centered place simply feels home, in both my other movement based practices and Process Work.

As I grow in my Process Work development, I've been advised that the metaskill of self-love would be of assistance. I welcome the prompt, as caring for myself is often a secondary process for me. Getting out of the way, especially getting out of my own way is also crucial. As with my experience in the Tokyo summer seminar when I intentionally attempted to speak in a voice that had first come through a role, there is a

vast difference between not-doing and allowing the flow of experience to do, and willing something done. There is also a level of trust in the process that is requisite. I do feel my trust is growing, which in turn fuels my continuing to navigate edges and explore my inner and outer groups.

Understanding Self as Role. My own sense is that I need to find and / or create my own way into a role, and that it's not only via my head or feeling, but also is very much body-based. I've been advised that awareness of what one is feeling is helpful in distinguishing the presence of a role, and that physical discomfort and a felt-sense that something is other than usual are often keys. They were certainly so as I reflected on the summer Tokyo group process ("NO!").

Soon after that seminar, I realized that if I am a reflection of a group and its processes are also in me, then how I work with my own internal conflict / process is relevant for the group as well as myself. It will show in how I am in the group, in that as I stretch and grow, so will the group I am part of. Thus, work I do on myself is relevant for the field as well. Studying myself as participant facilitator is thus intimately linked to studying group process which is directly related to field study. (I had read about this in theory, and then came experience itself.)

There are several surprises coming out of my current Process Work study. One is a major shift in my relationship with group as well as with role. As my relationship with the concept of group moves into experiencing a felt-sense of shift in relation with some groups, I also am aware of feeling an internal shift, which may be providing access to moving with role rather than simply thinking about it or observing.

I began this program with mostly curiosity in combination with bodily felt-sense that there was more within than met the eye and a hunch that it might be useful / helpful for me. I'm also realizing that as with other practices I've researched over time, what is drawing me deeper is engagement of heart and body as well as head.

I can hold the space well for others, but to jump in and engage, I respect that is *my* growing edge. I acknowledge my long-term challenge of how to be myself in a group setting. What I set myself for this project was the challenge of becoming aware of, and then moving into roles during a group process, and especially the role of participant facilitator, which necessitated my own edge explorations. This entailed my both acknowledging and then acting on and moving in a wider range of roles than I normally do.

Essential has been my creation of a new relationship with the notion of role. To me, playing a role had suggested someone being fake, artificial, phony, false, and / or otherwise essentially dishonest, and lacking in integrity. It felt entirely too contrived and manipulative, and I did not trust it. However, a senior colleague offered another framing, that role play is in between primary and secondary, and goes into dreaming. This echoes being ½ in and ½ out that Arny and Amy Mindell also spoke of at seminars in Yachats. During the MACF program, I've felt increasingly prompted to put my sense of "what if . . .?" into action. In combination with awareness of my body's information and what I'm seeing / hearing / reading between and under the words, it continues to move me over edges and into new territory.

Honoring the rank of roles, and their power, was the way I framed access for myself into this next phase, acknowledging also that my own rank and roles are shifting.

Relationship / interrelationship of rank and role and power . . . questions are present for me in the sense of how to move into my power, exercise it skillfully, and abuse neither the rank nor roles I have? I strongly suspect that this shows in how / to what degree I'm willing to be visible in a group, or perhaps, in general. As I feel less stuck in one position or role, I am more willing to be seen as I have a felt-sense of options . . . and having options seems to come with increasing rank . . . and power, if used wisely.

In the July Tokyo seminar, clearly what had been simmering quietly came forth, in terms of sensing and taking a role. It felt like it caught me, and for the first time, I allowed myself to be moved in this way. Keenly relevant for me was that it was (according to both feedback and my own sense) my own presence, nonverbally congruent and definitely *in* that space, that was the important piece. That I could remain congruent and powerful in the face of repeated attacks, without offering any return attacks, served to defuse the other. I was simply in opposition and yet, not attackable. I felt afterwards that yes, my various trainings are indeed integrating, and am quietly very pleased. Experience during our extra group processes in the fall residency supported my ongoing sense of both integration and movement continuing, as I stood and more congruently spoke for my own ways of being in the group.

Findings . . .

As I continue with my ongoing work of cultivating fluidity, I acknowledge that attention to these questions is essential.

> What happens at the edge of moving into group process, as I attempt to move?
> What blocks / what helps / supports?
> How can I best help me to become more fluid?

What I've learned about what happens at the edge of moving into group process (for me), is that my way in seems not to be via using my head and thinking about what's happening. When I try that way, I tend to get caught in my thoughts and considerations and analysis of . . . as a result, I'm stuck, feel that I have few to no options, cannot move, and would be way out of time even if I could. Thinking is simply way too slow! When I can get myself out of the way, then I find it easier to move and enter. When I can more smoothly integrate information from my kinesthetic channel with my thinking and feeling regarding the situation, I suspect that that will be the next level up in my facilitation.

What blocks me most often is my own internal critical voice, often playing on my fear of failure, or of showing a lack of competency. As I was encouraged to explore not worrying about coming in, being playful, and even deliberately inappropriate, I felt freer to move and do, speaking more and also becoming more a part of the visible field. Feeling invited to play simply drew me home to body and movement focus. Feeling encouraged to trust my own bodily felt-sense and allow that to guide me in this arena has been of the essence.

How to help me become more fluid? From a conversation during the summer came a suggestion for a metaskill that could assist me, that of self-love. I concur, and am definitely attempting to add this seasoning to the ongoing mix. Continuing to observe and reflect on my experience enables me to become more aware of both what I'm doing well and what I can improve upon. I also sense the importance of trusting my engagement with the process to guide and move me, although it is certainly more familiar from my movement practices than in a group process / facilitation setting.

Looking at the concepts of role, group process, and field, I see it as a figure / ground both / and relationship wherein roles relate and move in field of relationship. I'm guided by my own questions to myself of how skillfully can it be done, and to what ends? Process Work is distinguished by its focus on awareness, which may guide the facilitation process on three levels: Consensus Reality (the world we agree upon), Dreaming (home to both night and day dreams), and Essence (underlying nonverbal, nondual spirit or energy at the edge of consciousness). Rather than operating primarily on the level of consensus reality, simply negotiating or settling a dispute by exchanging words, focus is on moving underneath the words to what's deeper in connecting and perhaps resolving the issue or process at hand. So, intention does contribute hugely to shifting between figure and ground as it may show in shifting roles and relationships in the field. I suspect that the notion of orders of change is relevant here, too, as what was ground comes to be seen as figure from a different point of view.

I see the early Tokyo, Portland / London, and later Tokyo / Portland group processes as a developmental sequence—and wonder, then where to? It is a developmental process of gaining basic skills, developing some fluency in picking up / moving with and internalizing skills which allow fluidity, then to go beyond—this is *Shu, Ha, Ri* in other framing. In the tradition of the Japanese arts I'm studying and practicing, *Shu* is to learn the form. *Ha* is the stage of internalizing the form, making it one's own in an embodied way. *Ri* is to transform, moving beyond the form itself, simply being moved by its essence. Or, in other language, learn the form, embody the form, then transcend / go beyond the form.

Reflecting on my initial questions now, it is clear to me that one focus is upon the place of innerwork, and its broader relevance in and to contexts not only individual. Mindell writes of deep democracy as being essential—"in group life, it means the willingness to listen to and experiment with whatever part comes up" (1992, p. 154). I need to respect this in working with my internal group as well as with myself in whatever outer group context I'm in.

The framework of my other practices allows for deeper engagement with movement in relationship, in an embodied way, rather than as abstract thinking about as I tend to fall into in other situations. Metaphors of experience therein serve to translate fruits of experiential learning to other aspects of my lived experience, allowing me to see it freshly in many cases, and to figure a way into territory new to me in others.

Last summer, I realized that the group of my learning is not only the MACF2 cohort, but also includes the two dojo that I am part of here in Tokyo. Internal shifts continue to come from that new perspective. As I've made the transition to more fully accepting being part of a community of practice, so I've also needed to learn the roles and customs of those groups, which has taught me much of the culture that the practices grew from. In a Process Work context, it has offered experience that has helped me to grow in my own exploration of role and group process in a larger field of play.

It was keenly important that I notice where and how I used my attention in the moment-by-moment unfolding of group process in whatever role I found myself in, although I was focusing especially upon the role of participant facilitator. As I gained a bodily felt-sense of increased awareness in role over the course of this research, I found

that awareness was essential, intention focused it, and what I observed from that perspective usefully stretched my usual envelope of ways of perceiving / interacting.

In other framing, what have I learned about role as a form and its possible relationship to group process? As I consider it now, role in group process functions as a way of the group (and field) learning about itself. In a practice context, an individual may be transformed. In group process, a group and its individuals may grow and transform. Role is not a kata for group process. Rather, it is a vehicle of exploration as a group seeks to discover itself, and may serve to illustrate the creative tensions in the field. If the field is seeking to discover and learn about itself as well, then are practices entities within the field also seeking to grow? I suspect, yes, and that this may be an area for future inquiry.

Initially, I suspected increased exposure and experience of being in group process would be essential, as I sought to understand that experience and process. Now, I feel that it is useful, yet alone it is not sufficient. Here, too, attitude and intention shape outcome. Key to this piece is the practice of becoming lighter, more transparent . . . being less attached to a role. An early goal of mine was to be able to move with nonattachment in places, situations, and events I found myself in, and I was feeling drawn to embody this attitude in group process. In conversation with a senior colleague, the suggestion came that I embrace my experience of "being in the world and not of it" in group process as a facilitation tool, to use it like a vector tool, where many differences and directions add up to something else. This resonates, and feels an approach to explore more deeply.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

What have I learned in my explorations? How does it relate to cultivating fluidity in the role of participant facilitator? Where to go from here? I address these questions in this concluding chapter.

More Specifically . . .

Reflecting on my explorations of the areas identified in my data, I realize that there is more than one developmental process underway. I've been exploring roles as I have been moving from participant to participant facilitator and I've also been looking freshly at the role of an elder in a larger system. As my focus of attention has shifted from what's happening in my experience of role, to what's happening in relationship with others in group process, I find I'm drawn to an expanded view of the whole, feeling less attached to its parts.

Framing what I sense more clearly and quickly will open space for me to move with increased options in relation to others and the situation at hand. While working internally and utilizing the metaskills I have allows me to be more present, framing is vital between my internal nature and the folk I'm working with externally, bridging the relationship.

As an introvert journeying out, I've learned that I'm not so aware of my own behavior and its effects on others, as well as being rank unconscious. To look both inwards and externally will help me to be more aware and move in the space between with increased options of both perspective and movement. Coming from 7 years in Tokyo, MACF held both attractors and disturbers. Over the next 3 years, many times I

felt caught between cultures, and then being even quieter as I was sorting internally, attempting to discern what behaviour would fit where I found myself in the moment.

My critical voice had a field day in such times. Yet, when I could intentionally shift from feeling judged and failing to honor the learner of me, things were quite different. Exploring failure more deeply, I felt drawn to emptiness, and from that perspective, the critical voice no longer was heard.

Being able to find my center not only in my head but also in heart and hara during times of emotional intensity and confrontation has become increasingly possible. I feel that this is a way I will be able to care better for myself in such situations, and get out of my own way. As I nurture self-love, I believe that this will allow me a perspective not as caught in needing to do something, rather one than can allow events to unfold in their own timing. Thus, nurturing self-love is also cultivating compassion for my self.

As I've looked at the concept of role in relation to the concept of group, I've also looked at the various roles I've been and am in with the groups I am part of. My primary identity now feels more flexible, fluid, not as identified with any one position. Simply, I feel that I am coming to understand and increasingly accept myself more as a role in the field.

Cultivating Fluidity

I recognize that shift into movement and then visibility happens when I'm more open and centered in my body. Movement through a developmental process may be facilitated via metaskills, so a focus upon innerwork will be even more essential as I continue my training and explorations. Clearly, this speaks to an attitude of awareness and intention . . . and a cultivated metacommunicator is requisite. So, to focus upon

cultivating metaskills as basis for facilitation with an individual, group, or organization feels and resonates as accurate.

My ongoing training in movement arts is developmental and encourages a focus on what is happening in the moment, to then follow and / or respond as appropriate. I now realize that moving with roles in the ways new to me that I have been exploring over the course of my Process Work studies is also developmental. It reflects something that is arising in the moment, and also allows me (usual primary identity) to get out of my own way, to open space for something new to emerge. As my fluidity grows and deepens, I believe it may well lead to eldership.

For Future Research

An elder may embody qualities often sought in a therapist, coach, or guide, embodying qualities of presence as well as fluidity, as I frame it now. How might eldership be intentionally cultivated?

Schuitevoerder writes of the relationship of rank to the role of elder, and suggests beginning by learning to work consciously and skillfully with rank.

> All of us have the possibility of following our dreams and visions for the world and becoming elders in our small circles as well as at times in larger spheres of influence. In order for us to develop eldership and care for others and the world around us, we need to recognize our rank and begin to develop the skills of using it well. (2000, p. 82)

With attention to how others see me has come more awareness of the varieties of rank that are mine, as well as areas that I need to attend further to developing. In addition

> Eldership grows out of experience as we "burn our wood" so to speak, coming to terms with our own limitations, knowing ourselves and the world, our own tendencies towards revenge, and how we operate within the field of tensions. . . . As facilitators [therapists, coaches] we don't have to agree with all sides but it's important that we can understand how and why that side emerges. As we develop

this capacity for compassionate awareness, we grow in eldership. (Schuitevoerder, 2009, p. 10)

Gaining Seasoning

Innerwork is an essential component of my own practice and as I move in and out of participant facilitator role in group process. Metaskills may emerge as I gain seasoning and "burn my own wood" and the metaskills of a participant facilitator are closely related to those of an elder. Both require the ability to be present, to both see and express clearly, and to see all sides in an argument, group process, and / or discussion. Through working on one's own personal process, eldership may emerge. In conversation with a senior colleague, an elder was also characterized as an Ambassador of Deep Democracy, through her / his ability to make and hold space for all positions. In turn this may show as fluidity of awareness, positions, and roles, which is what I have been seeking to cultivate over the course of this research, throughout MACF, and in my other ongoing training.

Over time, the place of focus of attention shifts, from point (on specific technique / figure) to space (the ground of movement, the field of play of all techniques). This is a natural developmental process. In turn, I can then relate to the field from an expanded sense of self from which I experience more options available than in prior times. Being both in group process and in this space is a next step, I suspect, whether evident internally as innerwork or externally as may show in group process or another form of relational engagement. Over time of practice and in due time, the field may come to know itself better through my participation, and intentionally, there will be less of me filtering such awareness.

This research has offered opportunities to shift and change who I believe myself to be, to adopt new roles and shed them, as I move with increasing fluidity in varieties of relationship with the groups I am part of, held in a field vaster still. Earlier, I wrote of my awareness that roles also have rank and power. Reflecting on my growth as a Process Work facilitator in light of the application of rank to roles, I'm now especially interested in cultivation of the elder's role, and wise use of power that may accompany such rank. As I reflect on it now, cultivating compassion for my self will also grow me as an elder, in that it encourages a shift out of focus on self and more on self in relationship. Cultivating compassion for self and others allows for growing through the personality level to a transpersonal view. One aspect of the power of the transpersonal perspective is being in the world and not of it. In other framing, the rank of an elder comes from transpersonal power, of perspective and options that come with expanded awareness and view.

While speaking with a senior colleague recently about how to cultivate my own elder, I sought to feel the place in my body where my processmind was focused. Standing, knees soft and flexible, hands free and open, I could feel my attention follow my breath inwards and then to my heart, then hara. Several breaths later, from that place of connecting with my deeper self, lines of energy ran from my feet down to the ground, and further . . . as I felt integrated into the dragon lines of the earth. From my open hands, softly extended and raised, I felt connected to the energies of the space around and beyond me. Then, it was as though I was but a channel, as I felt connected and open to the space in which the earth moved. I felt clearly that I need to honor the elements as well as their roles in systems. From this perspective, it simply felt natural to do so.

I feel that my willingness to grow down through my experience may naturally be moving me towards changes of heart, and perhaps also, towards what may be termed eldership. What I've learned about cultivating fluidity as a participant facilitator in group process feels congruent with such development. This feels an apt focus as I continue my explorations in the field.

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