Into the Unknown: OD and the Co-creation of Meaning

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What has been most meaningful for you in attending this alumni conference?
POVERTY in AMERICA
ONCE YOU CHOOSE

HOPE

ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE

, Christopher Reeve

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We’re in the business of co-creating meaningfulness leading to hope, and its hope that leads to possibilities!
Traditional OD has long favored the Diagnostic and Intervention model of change, and its subsequent outcomes as what’s meaningful.....

OD in a complex future is the Co-creation of Meaning, which places the *interactive process as primary* and what generates *meaningfulness* ..... Ergo, the hope for a better possibility.
Meaning(fulness) becomes the bridge between the intrapsychic dynamics and subsequent interpersonal action one is willing to take!
We all search for meaning(fulness) in our lives, whilst already in the process of making meaning.....

And from this, in the midst of our journey.....

Our grand narrative emerges of who we believe we are, making sense of our experience and providing us an identity.....
Four Phenomena Shaping the Grand Narrative in our Life

- Places of Discovery
- Profound Moments
- Shared Experiences
- Significant Relationships
Our construction of meaning(fulness) speaks to how our existence makes a difference (positively or negatively) via the Grand Narrative we generate.....

.....about ourselves, our life, and about others.
### Core Dynamics Underlying the Meanings in our Grand Narrative

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<th>Unconscious Psycho-emotional Processes</th>
<th>Conflicting Feelings and Goals from parallel Psych/Emo/Social/Cognitive Processes</th>
<th>Early Experiences Fostering Confidence or Generating Wounds</th>
<th>Our Images of “others” and relationships impacting social interdependence</th>
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Identify a significant theme in your story (life), (one you hear yourself saying often) and discuss what are the sources of experience that give rise to its meaning(fulness) for you?
What if we looked at the change process as the co-creation of meaning (fulness), and the task of all change leadership as community building?
The Process used to co-create Meaningfulness of the Change must:

1. Become Profoundly Personal
2. Become Relevant to the Core Self
3. Trigger Intrinsic Motivation
4. Mobilize Energy to Act
6 Elements Model for Co-Creating Meaningful Change

- Finding Unity in Community
- Responsiveness is Essential
- The Future is Always Emerging
- Leaning in to Possibilities
- Dialogue is Indispensable
- Recognizing Context is Crucial to Understanding
Element 1: Finding the Unity in Community:

- Experiencing a Sense of Belonging
- Being Related to as a Valued Member:
  Knowing Who you are Matters
- Feeling a Part of Something
- Sense of Communal Responsibility & Commitment
- There is a Unity of Purpose
Element 2: Context is Critical to Our Understanding

“The future is recognizable when it arrives, but in many respects not predictable before it does.”

(Stacey, Griffin, & Shaw 2000)
Context is Critical to Our Understanding

We see through the lens of our past experiences -

Ergo, we use our past to make sense of our present in an effort to predict and control the future.....
Realizing this is to grasp that we are always:

....Bringing Together Diverse Sense Making for Mutual Understanding
• In the complexity of life and organizations we recognize that our present day experiences and relationships are difficult to define and defy meta-narrative understanding, since each of us potentially sees something different based on our past experiences.....

• (Mangifico, 2003 based on adaptations of Clegg & Hardy, 1996)
Element 3: Responsiveness to Intra- and Inter-Personal Dynamics

Finding the meaning for the evolved narrative that is necessary for change requires challenging the meanings of our current one.....at both an individual and collective level

Who Am I

To Be Announced

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Responsiveness to Intra- and Inter-Personal

- Fears define the boundary of one’s life.
- Overcoming the present story requires an ego strength that allows one to take action.
- Consequently, we must have the courage to meet our self in this journey in order to change our life.
Element 4: Dialogue is Indispensable and creates a new lived experience

- Effective Dialogues allow for Prospective Sense Making: *How do we know what is Meaningful to me? To you?*

- Allows a New Story about the meaning(fulness) in our relationships and community to emerge through a new lived experience.
Dialogue is Indispensable, But Difficult To Do!

Speaking out that hurt/injury that binds becomes subversive in a world where the social/professional message is to be unflawed .....but it is necessary for genuine transformation

The gifts of imperfection

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Dialogue is Indispensable

Each Gathering is about the Future we want to create......, so:

What’s the conversation we need to have that will hold meaning(fulness) and create the desired transformation we’re seeking?
This is from where emancipatory learning emanates!
Element 5: The Future is Always Emerging

Future is always being created by what we believe.....

Consequently we must learn to live with the emergence of meaning as a natural state
The Future is Always Emerging: Ergo, be careful not to move too quickly

Need to just explore it and discover what it is telling you,

...allowing the data to emerge unstructured so that it might come together as a new perspective, creating new meaning(fulness)...

......Thus a new narrative, a new way of knowing becomes possible
The OD Practitioner Needs to Facilitate That Future is Always Emerging

Only by accepting that you have a choice in interpreting the meaning that was created around this hurt (thus, you are not powerless) are you liberated (emancipated learning) to move beyond the story you’ve been holding.

Change the meaning, thus changing the story, allows a new future to emerge!
The OD Practitioner Needs to Facilitate Leaning in to the Possibilities

Which requires a leap of faith, taking action before the outcome is known!
The OD Practitioner Needs to Facilitate Leaning in to the Possibilities

Transformation occurs when we have the courage to act on the meaning(fulness) that is Possible!

The Construction of Meaning(fulness) creates the shift!
The OD Practitioner must Facilitate the Co-Creation of a Shared Process that holds for the Collective:

- **The Promise of Something Hopeful**
- **A Plan that is Aspirational and Achievable**;
- **Being a Part of Something Greater than Ourselves or in the Service of Others**
- **A Purpose that is Meaningful at the Level of One’s Identity**
What's the meaning(fulness) that if manifested, has the power to transform you?
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Thanks