

On Becoming a Scholar-Practitioner

by

Kenwyn K. Smith

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Preamble

For me, the search for an integrated professional persona has been long, arduous and rewarding. Today I see my work as a researcher, my role as an educator, my actions as a community builder, and my contributions to the academy, as highly interwoven. When functioning as an educator, be it in the classroom or the field, I am engaged in research, reconfiguring community dynamics, and service; when intervening in fragmented and fragmenting community relations, I am serving as a scholar-educator, contributing to our School's and Penn's overall mission, etc. I am an organizational psychologist, operating in the action science, ethnographic, appreciative inquiry paradigm, and am engaged in the hands-on work at every point of the research cycle, the educational process, and the communitarian enterprise. As a member of the scholar-practitioner tradition, I am involved primarily in theory building that has direct applications and applied work that contributes to the development of theory.

A. On Becoming a Researcher

My contributions to social and behavioral science knowledge, best captured in my books, address three interlinked domains: (1) group and intergroup relations, (2), conflict in human systems, and (3) organizational change. In each of these arenas I have added to established theories, developed new theoretical breakthroughs, laid the philosophical-epistemological-methodological foundations for more sophisticated theory to be developed over time, demonstrated the robustness of my conceptualizations, and shown their applicability to organizations of all kinds.

Group and Intergroup Relations

Power and Group Relations. As I began my scholarly life, research on group and inter-group relations (done within the Tavistock, the National Training Laboratories, the social psychological, the therapeutic, the managerial, and the sociological traditions) had built a theoretical and empirical base for understanding individual functioning within groups, group-as-a-whole behavior, group evolution and interactions among groups. However, the impact of power relations and context on group and intergroup behavior had yet to be adequately explored. I was eager to grasp the influence of power. Building on the work of Barry Oshry, I launched my research program and made a key “discovery,” which is fully elaborated in *Groups in Conflict: Prisons in Disguise* (1982).

Classic hierarchal authority in human systems that make possible organizational processes such as strategy formulation, division of labor, responsibility mapping, etc., generate a number of “structural encasements,” each linked to the relative power of organizational groups. These “structural encasements,” help in the development of important internal group dynamics such as creativity, cohesion, and efficacy. However, they also impact the intergroup relations within which each group exists, resulting in system-wide dynamics such as (a) groups with power have minimal insight into the impact of their actions, (b) groups with little power get imprisoned by the self-protective barriers they erect to deal with their vulnerability, and (c) those caught in the middle between the powerful and the powerless are dependent on preserving the very relations they are trying to change, creating for themselves energy-draining and stress-filled conundrums. Equally important was the discovery that every group in an organization can be caught up in multiple structural encasements simultaneously, because in regular organizations, any group is usually powerful in one configuration of relations, powerless in another and caught in the middle in yet a third. For example, a group of principles in a school is in a position of power when making decisions about internal school organization, assigning of teachings, etc.; it is in a position of powerlessness when required to implement unfunded mandates like “no child left behind;” it is in a position of middlelessness when negotiating with the superintendent’s office over resources and staffing for the school. My first major ethnographic study of intergroup relations was undertaken in a School District in New England.

In the two decades since formulating the concept of intergroup structural encasements, along with the intra- and intergroup processes these encasements spawn, my conceptualizations, in tandem with Oshry’s work, have become infused into the literature on groups. However my early writing on intergroup relations left unaddressed two troubling issues, how to harness the constructive energy

latent in conflict-laden intergroup relations and how to change the problematic processes triggered by hierarchical intergroup relationships that exist in organizations. These seemingly unresolved and unresolvable issues continued to drive my work until the 2003 publication of *Yearning for Home in Troubled Times* (discussed later).

2. A New Theory of Group and Intergroup Relations. Within a few years of becoming a researcher I was perturbed by several things, in addition to those identified above. First, prevailing group theories provided post-hoc explanations for group behavior but were hard to translate into action-useable knowledge. Meaningful bridges between group theory and group action had yet to be formulated. Second there were inadequate links between the actions or inactions of a group and its impact on other groups because the unintended effects were likely to overwhelm the intended ones, which meant a different kind of theory was required. Third, most of group development theories at that time alluded to the presence of conflict in groups but did not address the persistence, character and evolution of conflict in intra-and inter-group life, even though an earlier generation of researchers (e.g. Bion, Simmel, Coser) had demonstrated conflict was central to group functioning.

As I and my colleague, David Berg, began our collaborative writing on group theory we recognized that “left brain,” digital, or so called “rational” thinking, by itself, was not an adequate logical system for understanding these and numerous other theoretical complexities. When we included insights that came from “right brain,” analogical, or so called “paradoxical” thinking, we could create a truly robust theory of group and intergroup relations that generated action-useable knowledge. Our formulation of a new theory of group and intergroup relations, published in 1987, was titled *Paradoxes of Group Life: Understanding Conflict, Paralysis, and Movement in Group Dynamics*. This book was reviewed favorably at the time, but it took a while before the ideas began to reach the thinking of other scholars. This work provided a new epistemological platform for the

study of group and intergroup relations. What was once deemed intuitive was henceforth recognized as being a highly reasoned process, but within a system of logic quite different from, but as sophisticated as, rationalism. Although we did not, and would not even now, use any of this kind of language, David Berg and I had formulated for group relations, the equivalent of what is currently referred to at the individual level as “emotional intelligence.” Our book provided a way to integrate right and left brain reasoning about group and intergroup dynamics, built an action-useable theory of group functioning, and established the essential bridges between the co-evolutionary processes of groups and the systems within which they are embedded.

Both *Groups in Conflict* and *Paradoxes of Group Life* broke new ground and only with the passage of time did the ideas in these books take root. However they have stood the test of time. *Groups in Conflict* is in its eleventh printing and *Paradoxes of Group Life* its fifteenth printing. In the 1990s, as chaos theory and the principles of quantum began to be addressed by organizational thinkers, it was evident our paradoxical theory had uncovered the group-based equivalents of the strange attractor, holism, part-whole parallelisms, well before the principles of chaos theory were part of social-science vocabulary. In the mid 1990s the publisher included *Paradoxes of Group Life* in their classic series, a great honor to have occurred mid-career. However, by the time this book became recognized, from my perspective the world had evolved at such a pace a whole new body of group-based research and conceptualization was beckoning, which I later set out to explore.

Conflict in Human Systems

There is a vast literature on conflict of all kinds, from face-to-face relations to international conflagrations, covering activities such as bargaining, negotiation, and deal-making through to curbing conflict-escalation such as nuclear proliferation. For decades “conflict resolution” was the approach favored by theoreticians eager to repair fragmenting groups, reign in combative inter-

group interactions, and arrest deteriorating organizational relations. The search for compromise, the wish for conflict to disappear so “normalcy” could be restored, and the imposition of regulations to limit conflict, is understandable. However, most theories of conflict resolution have limited utility when human institutions are unstable, when contexts are turbulent, when foundations are shaking. I operate out of a “conflict-release” rather than a “conflict resolution” paradigm. I begin with three premises (Berg and I laid out the underlying theory in *Paradoxes of Group Life*). (1) Conflict is inherent in all human interactions and is not an aberration of any kind. (2) Conflict conveys a message that current arrangements are on the cusp of being altered, refined or falling apart. (3) If the conflict can be released instead of repressed, displaced, or dismantled, it contains enormous, long-gestating, creative energy waiting to be birthed.

I have made several theoretical contributions to the literature on intra-group, inter-group, intra-organizational and inter-organizational conflict. The essence of it is expressed, using non-technical language, under three broad umbrellas. (1) Conflict is rarely expressed at its source and invariably migrates to another set of relationships, often picking up extra ballast along the way by fusing with other conflicts similarly seeking an outlet; hence when it is expressed it cannot be understood in terms of its manifest form, or as an attribute of the location where it erupts. (My writings, along with Alderfer’s, on Parallel Processes provide theory, data and discussion on this issue.) (2) Working from first principles, as laid out by the early balance theorists, and augmented by the writings of Murray Bowen in the family therapy tradition, I have constructed a robust way of tracking the pathways by which conflict moves, the mechanisms by which it gets amplified, the processes through which it gets reshaped or eviscerated, and the location towards which it cascades. This offers opportunity to reverse the flow so it can be addressed at its source as opposed to in its symptomatic form, to channel it into either “acceptable garbage dumps” or more productive outlets,

and to fuse it with other constructive energies so that it has creative rather than deleterious outcomes.

(3) To operate in a “conflict-release” paradigm requires change agents to make use of numerous naturally existing containers in organizations, to create new temporary containers so that the conflict can be “held” until it has been rechanneled or reshaped, and to dismantle unneeded containers so they do not become part of the institutional clutter.

Virtually all my research has been done in settings where significant conflict already exists or is the product of organizations striving to change (to grow, to overcome some destructive pattern of functioning, to innovate, to adapt to or seek a new strategic direction). This means that as action researchers I and my associates are always creating hypotheses, gathering data, intervening, generating collective reflection devices, doing analyses and making meaning, in conflict-filled settings. Hence our theories, methodologies and data-gathering instruments have to be extra robust, because in addition to analyzing conflictual dynamics, they must serve as a container of conflicts.

I have been involved in action-science research on human-system conflicts of every conceivable kind. By way of illustration here are a few: a multi-year project addressing race and gender relations in a Philadelphia bank whose decisions and oversights were profoundly impacting the local economy and the welfare of the local communities; an intense intervention in an agency in a war-torn nation whose senior leadership was in constant conflict due to different ethnic/cultural assumptions about authority relations; multiple interventions into conflict-filled relationships within the HIV/AIDS community in Philadelphia. My theories about conflict have been tested in different national contexts, in multi-cultural settings, across racial, gender, sexual orientation divides, on different continents, in stable and chaotic systems, in both aging and young institutions, in the non-profit, governmental and private sectors, with service deliverers, with workers, with managers, with senior leadership, and across every possible configuration of hierarchical arrangements.

Organizational Change

The term “Organizational Change” is a huge canopy under which many complex processes and different logical types have been both coherently clustered and meaninglessly dumped. I have argued that we need “to change the organization of our thinking in order to think about how we change our organizing.” The categorization system I laid out for conceptualizing *change* (Morphogenesis, morpho-stasis, development and adaptation) and my decision to think of *organization*, not as an entity or a tangible object, but as “the relations among the elements of a system and the relations among the relations,” provided an important base for my research, interventions and writing in this arena. My work has provided a seamless way to make translations between all forms of system thinking, cybernetics and chaos theory and ultimately led to my current theoretical formulation of organizing as “the structuring of chaos for purposeful action.”

My theoretical and applied work on organizational change is based on four key principles.

(1) All stability is predicated on change and all change is predicated on stability; since change and stasis co-define each other, neither can exist without the other. The logical consequence of this is a set of paradoxical imperatives, such as “to promote change preserve the status quo,” and “to increase stability embrace change.” Hence, “change programs” and “status-quo programs” are most viable when cast in change-stasis terms (i.e. reasoned in a both/and logic as opposed to an either/or logic), as in “this change is dedicated to preserving X; this investment in stability is in the service of enabling Y to change.”

(2) Beneath all organization is a bed-rock of chaos. However there is order in that chaos which can be identified and understood but is also evolving in tandem with the structures by which it is contained. Hence organizational arrangements are in constant need of restructuring to harness the energy that emerges from the chaos upon which it depends. However, chaos is usually seen as

threatening the structure and not as structure's valued partner. Such reasoning prompts leaders and managers to try to suppress or remove chaos because of its structure-threatening quality, which in turn leads change agents to restructure for the purpose of getting rid of the chaos. The result? Structures grow more fragile and less able to manage the chaos they are designed to contain and mobilize in the service of their primary purpose. A more productive path is to focus restructuring efforts on mobilizing the vibrant energies coming from its bed-rock chaos.

(3) Developmental change, a natural part of all human systems, occurs within a web of relationships that can enhance or strangle growth. It is well documented that the things assisting development at certain stages hinder it at other times, and that today's successes often ensure tomorrow's failures. The question is how to conceptualize the tipping points before they occur. I argue that understanding when to grow and when to cut back, when to diversify and when to consolidate, when to innovate and when to stick with core practices, requires thinking within multiple logics. This is greatly enhanced by going beyond standard statistical reasoning. For example knowing when continuous consequences of continuous processes are about to be replaced by discontinuous consequences of continuous processes is greatly helped by using alternative mathematical logics like catastrophe theory.

(4) The most potent way to change the internal dynamics of any human organization is to alter the character and form of the external relationships within which it is embedded.

The tapestry created out of these above conceptualizations, interlinked with my group relations and conflict theory, for the past two decades has defined my theory of practice in the domain of organizational change and is found infused into my published works.

A Significant Turning Point

Upon joining the School of Social Policy & Practice (formerly the School of Social Work) I

immersed myself in research on several issues at the heart of this profession, and the non-profit sector in general. I focused my energies on five domains: (1) assisting local businesses engage in culture change programs designed to make their workplace more hospitable and career enriching for African American, Latino, and Asian graduates of Philadelphia high schools; (2) trying to discern which organizational dynamics enhanced versus threatened the physical and emotional health of employees; (3) understanding societal intractables such as homelessness; (4) helping to make HIV/AIDS center stage in the social sciences when this epidemic was still being glossed over by large segments of the academy; (5) exploring how to assist incarcerated fathers find their way back into the main stream of family and societal life.

I built a research center, hired a staff and got launched. From the outset two things happened. (1) I recognized how encased I was in epistemologies that were reparative in nature. I decided to refocus my energies. Rather than work to fix what was already broken, could we, without being trapped by utopian logic, create organizational thinking to assist in the formation, nurturance, maturation and functioning of human systems so they did not need as much fixing? And when repair was necessary could we develop early detection devices, so organizational maintenance could be done before the system became non-functional? (2) I began taking seriously a question I had been asked repeatedly over the previous decade by managers and executives in the non-profit, governmental, and private sectors: “have you ever tried to implement any of your ideas in a real-life organization, in real-time, dealing with real, time-sensitive processes?”

MANNA in the Wilderness of AIDS: Ten Lessons in Abundance. This self-redefining confrontation, identified above, occurred at the time a small group of us, during the early days of the AIDS pandemic, were forming MANNA (Metropolitan Aids Neighborhood Nutrition Alliance). This started for me as a non-academic enterprise but once I embraced my leadership role within this

organization, I realized it was to be one of the most academic things I would ever do. Helping to create and run MANNA, along with the attendant community building activities, was a huge experiment that went way beyond the scope of what most consider as social science research. It became the testing ground of all my theories to date, except they were all being applied in unison and not serially. This work spawned a body of theorizing I had not previously considered. My book, *MANNA in the Wilderness of AIDS: Ten Lessons in Abundance*, although written in non-academic language is filled with these lessons I garnered during my seven year intense engagement with the Philadelphia AIDS community. It provides robust evidence about which theories of mine work and which need refinement.

Due to its narrative form, which includes voices from all parts of the MANNA community, the following claim might surprise some people: in my view it is the most scholarly document I have written to date, and is filled with more academic/applied/creative theory than my previous work combined. However, the theory is latent in the stories recounted, is not bundled in academic-speak, and comes into focus only as the reader engages the emotional and intellectual struggles the text demands.

Most critically my MANNA work, as recounted in this book, demonstrated the transformative possibilities created by exiting the paradigm of scarcity and operating out of the paradigm of abundance. I now realize “abundance” and “scarcity” are ways of thinking with their own inherent logics. I am captivated by the idea of constructing an epistemology based on the principles of abundance as opposed to those of scarcity (upon which all modern economic theory is predicated) and expect to dedicate a large portion of my remaining days to this theme.

Yearning for Home in Troubled Times. My foray into understanding homelessness in the United States led me to a stunning discovery, that all human beings feel homeless in some critical domain in

their lives. Hence when society mounts programs to deal with the problems of those with no habitat, important though that is, it is treating only a symptom of a larger societal phenomenon. This treatise, I believe, unlocks the mystery of what, in my view, has wrongly come to be labeled the problem of “homelessness.” In this book, I take all my prior work on group and intergroup relations, conflict, paradox, parallel processes, human change processes, etc., and provide my best understanding, at this point of my life, of human functioning. As the investigator, I also include myself among the investigated. I use the motif of power, powerlessness, and caught in the middle, formulated in my earlier work, and show its relevance to every facet of human organizations, at the system-as-a-whole level, in the relationships among groups, in the dynamics within groups and in the inner landscape of each person. This book makes a fully-integrated statement of what I have to offer as a scholar, a practitioner, and interventionist, as of 2002.

Freed to be Father: Lessons from Men Doing Time. Triggered by an MSW student project we began a prison-based project in the tradition of “what makes a difference in restoring a life gone wrong?” Our initial findings quickly morphed this into a study on incarcerated fathers. This book, while explicitly addressing fathers in prison, is about the plight of American fathers in general. It is my most significant contribution to the “Men’s Movement.” Like the books on AIDS and homelessness, it is presented in narrative form, giving voice to untold stories that deserve to be in the public domain.

On Social Work and Spirituality. While writing the above three books I chose to also explore the relationship between organizational phenomena and spirituality. This was personally challenging because I was determined not to use language and concepts aligned with one spiritual tradition and alienating to another. For this aspect of these books, I placed over every phrase I used, the following filter: “will it equally nourish, educate and support people in all

three mono-theistic faith-traditions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam?" I also asked myself at each point, if it could be said in a way that is embracing of teachings in faiths such as Buddhism and Hinduism? I was pleased with what this discipline fostered, both in terms of what is on the written page and in my own growth as a human being.

Research Methods. Although I received significant education in mathematics, I use statistics based on least squared analysis only in highly circumscribed settings. My first Masters degree (University of Queensland, Australia) was research-based and required a dissertation the equivalent in scope and size of many an American Ph.D. For that degree I redid the classic experiments in social psychology, analyzing the findings using non-Euclidean assumptions, (e.g. instead of doing only "least squared analyses," I also did "least cubed analyses," "least quadrupled analyses" through to analyses based on $n-1$ dimensional space, where n was the number of verifiable dimensions underlying the operationalization of the variables). I discovered what had come to be reified as knowledge in social psychology, conducted using the rigors of the experimental paradigm and analyzed according to the "least squared" statistical conventions of the time, was quite different from what would have been concluded if analyzed according to a mathematics based on $n-1$ dimensional space. I did not have the mathematical skill or predisposition to define my career in terms of solving the statistical problem I had stumbled into; but more importantly I felt convinced there were other valid ways of knowing than those defined by the positivist and predictive paradigm and was determined to plumb these, which is where my career took me as a methodologist. My thinking and contributions to the action science, ethnographic, qualitative research methods I most commonly use are explicated in my 1988 edited volume with David Berg, *The Self in Social Inquiry: Researching Methods*.

A Research Project in the Making

As previously mentioned, I am convinced there is a need for a next evolutionary leap in the nature of group and intergroup theory. This is the product of several forces: (1) social evolution has made the character of the contexts within which groups come into being and develop more complex than the last half of the twentieth century; (2) the purposes for using groups has altered; (3) the theories given academic credence in the past were developed primarily within Euro/American-centric epistemologies and organizations.

I am exploring the possibility of setting up a research project in Andhra Pradesh (AP), India. This study, which I imagine will go on for more than a decade, is designed to deal with three things. (1) The group dynamics in women's self help groups (SHGs) in rural India, which are the centerpiece of many innovative micro-financing practices taking place in Asia. AP has 25 million people engaged in an intense struggle to create sustainable livelihoods while remaining in their rural villages. At this point 500,000 SHGs (all women who have spouses and several children) have been formed and are at different points of their evolution, making approximately 25 million rural poor in AP currently linked in a computer and socially networked set of evolving relations. There are many NGOs working with these self-help groups and several have signaled their willingness to be research collaborators with Penn. (2) There are a number of innovative partnerships being built between the public, private and governmental organizations in AP dedicated to creating new forms of sustainable livelihoods in these rural areas. However, to deliver on the dreamt-about collaborations, the established organizations have yet to create many new village and region based organizations, making this a fertile natural experiment in intra, inter-group, intra- and inter-organizational relations. (3) A state-wide school for the creation of sustainable livelihoods is currently being created by BasiX to educate people at the village level about how to construct never before imagined jobs and

to offer institutional development support in the building of sustainable livelihoods. This research project I am exploring to do in partnership with Indian colleagues in several organizations requires that I learn about and join with an Indian-centered research paradigm befitting the complexities of the Indian setting. However it is already evident that the insights coming from Indian innovations are highly applicable to the social innovations needed to enhance impoverished urban American communities.

B. On Becoming an Educator

On three occasions (1994, 1999, 2005) I was awarded the School's "Excellence in Teaching Award" by vote of the MSW student body, a pleasing sequel to the six teaching awards I received over the last two years I served on the Wharton faculty.

My most unique course is "Organizational Politics and the Dynamics of Change," the only course of its kind offered anywhere in the world in any educational setting. Entirely of my own creation, it enables students to learn the theoretical knowledge I developed on group relations and power dynamics in human systems, explores its relationships with other group relations theories, shows how this body of knowledge can be meaningfully applied in all kinds of human systems and uses a pedagogical methodology that is a direct product of my scholarly work, documented in three of my books (*Paradoxes of Group Life*, *Groups in Conflict*, and *Yearning for Home in Troubled Times*). This intensely experiential course is extremely demanding, personally and intellectually. It is designed for those who facilitate groups in agencies, educate in classroom settings, direct executive groups, conduct support groups, manage work teams, serve on task forces, chair committees, run organizations, etc. The lessons learned in this course are relevant to social workers, to managers in the Non-profit/NGO, government and profit-making sectors, and those aspiring to be leaders in any sphere.

This course consists of two modules. The first addresses group dynamic theory and practice, which melds the contrasting and complementary insights derived from both the digital and analogic brains, often referred to as left and right brains. The second module focuses on the systemic relationships between the “haves,” the “have-nots” and those “caught in the middle” in any human system, along with the transforming potential latent in three distinctly different forms of power, the power to create, the power to block (negate or destroy) and the power to mediate.

The pedagogy of the first module, built on the intellectual foundation laid out in *Paradoxes of Group Life*, was published in *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* (1995), and represents a new approach to learning about group relations. It delineates the sensory, cognitive and emotional work required to understand the relationship between normally “out of awareness” processes and the overt behavior of groups. This module simultaneously focuses on group-as-a-whole behaviors, the actions of individuals within a group, and the dynamics at play in the context within which the group is embedded. It addresses directly the complex interplay between group actions and race, gender, national identification, sexual-orientation etc. The second module is a “Power Laboratory” as described in Section I of *Groups in Conflict* and Chapters 2 and 3 of *Yearning for Home in Troubled Times*. In the Lab participants explore how creative power, negating power and mediating power play out simultaneously in three different levels of the system, at the level of the experiential mini-society they co-create, within the groups to which they belong, and within their own individual inner landscapes.

This course is unique in that it builds upon both the most recent approach to group dynamics and theory about the power dynamics between groups with differential power and access to resources. The course is designed anew on every occasion it is offered and is especially tailored to fit the educational needs of those enrolled, which invariably includes students from multiple

graduate programs. The learning is co-created by the instructor and the students as per the documented evidence offered by the students in chapters 5-9 of *Yearning for Home*.

One way to illustrate how I function as an educator in this course is to quote some of the evaluative comments of recent participants:

* * * * *

This is the most challenging, stimulating, and rigorous course I have experienced at Penn ... (it) will affect me, in a positive way, for the rest of my life. This course is why I came to graduate school. Professor Smith ... ingeniously provides the necessary tools for each individual student to travel down her/his own path and on her/his own journey.

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Every class I have taken to date has focused on filling my brain. This class actually seemed to expand my brain such that it can be filled throughout the course of my life ... Kenwyn seeks to engage the groups and individuals in the class in the deepest ways possible in order to maximize the benefit of the experience. This behavior requires the amazing capacity to love each person "where" they are in their life without stopping them from the pain/conflict required to grow. (His) example is personally inspiring to me as a (Wharton) student, Naval Officer, friend, son, husband and father ...

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... Kenwyn guided us through the activities, allowing us the space to come to our own understandings and conclusions. He didn't lecture ... (but) instead offered us the time to process together all that was happening in our group interactions. After completing the course, reading the various books, and writing the assignments, I felt as if I had come to a good understanding of how group theory actually works in real life situations.

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... this has been the most influential course I have even taken. It has also been the source of more learning than I ever expected. The texts are difficult and wonderful at the same time. I do not doubt that I will read them several more times ...

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I have never met a professor who put forth the time, energy, caring, and commitment as he put into this course ... his capacity to be nonjudgmental is comparable to no one I have ever met.

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What I appreciated most about the class was the extensive feedback on the 2 assignments. Prof. Smith typed a total of 2.5 single spaced pages of feedback which is more feedback than I received in my previous 9 classes combined. ... he understands well what students are looking to get out of classes.

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... Kenwyn has an incredible ability to guide students to their own learnings. It is a teaching style best represented by the metaphor of a duck. On the top, he appears calm and at rest. Underneath the water, his legs are ferociously beating ... Kenwyn seems to have a very passive teaching style that allows the students to arrive freely at their own learnings. However it is a very "Active" passivity - that enables and energizes the class to

move ... (This class) contains lessons in leadership, in society, in human interaction and so many other topics. It is a class that anyone who is ready to do the learning would benefit from no matter what their future path in life.

* * * * *

I plan to keep your evaluations and pull them out from time to time to help remind myself of the valuable lessons I have learned ... This class helped me to address the most important areas for success in business, personal relationships and life in general: empathy, communication and leadership, areas in which I need the most work ... my model of leadership is quite backward ... it was really all about me, me, me. I now want to be a leader who is dedicated to serving others ... I know that it is going to continue to take a lot of hard, painful work to become this kind of leader. I will not quit however ...

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This is by far the most valuable course I have taken while getting my MBA at Wharton ... Kenwyn Smith is a professor of the utmost integrity and caring. He allowed us to enter into a true interaction and meaningful exchange with him -- something rarely found in the harried and fleeting typical classroom experience ...

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Each time I teach this course, I organize it around a theme that is at the center of some social crisis. One example is “homelessness,” which is the heart of the two Power Labs discussed in *Yearning for Home*. Another was immigration and refugees. Yet a third was taking over a turbulent system from an “interim authority.” In each case the participants are co-creators of their own knowledge.

As an educator, no matter what kind of course I teach, I am mindful of four key functions I must fulfill: (1) to create a context in which students with a wide range of learning styles can discover their self-educating capacities; (2) to build, with the students’ help, a psychologically safe container, so they can readily push themselves to the cusp of their ignorance (for it is on the boundary of knowing and unknowing that genuine learning occurs); (3) to impart, in an engaging way, established knowledge developed by former scholars so students can use conventional nomenclature, think using established concepts, and embrace the intellectual heritages upon which they depend; and (4) to appreciate that the most significant

learning will occur months or even years later, when some of the seeds I am attempting to plant, will have taken root and ultimately sprung into full bloom.

On occasion I have taken a class into the field with me, and educated the students on how to participate in my research. The most significant example was the 250 hours of data-gathering done by a 1996 class of mine that I took into MANNA. This contributed significantly to my book *MANNA in the Wilderness of AIDS*. I wrote the MANNA book for several reasons, but one was I wanted a book I could use with students that documented the conception, infancy and early developmental years of a non-profit organization. At that time, I could not find such a book.

On another occasion, Ann Rogerson, an MSW student, whose husband had died, leaving her a single parent of four adolescent boys, proposed, as part of a course, doing research on the kinds of fathers boys who lose their father early, become. Her course paper was so insightful she convinced me to partner with her in launching a project to explore this theme with incarcerated fathers. This eventually resulted in the publication *Freed to be Fathers, Lessons from Men Doing Time*. I appointed Ann a part-time researcher in my research center, educated her on the research methods for a study of this kind and personally mentored her throughout. This was a role in which Ms. Rogerson functioned extremely well, even while working full time upon graduation, as a hospice social worker. I dedicated this book to Ann Rogerson, my former MSW student, in gratitude for all she prompted me to grapple with in the process of this research.

Serving the whole of Penn as an Educator

My role as an educator has stretched beyond the bounds of the School of Social Policy & Practice. When the Provost decided to re-invent the Fels Master of Government Administration in the late 1990s, I served on the curriculum committee that redesigned the MGA program, constructed one of the Fels core courses, “Leadership in the Public Domain,” which I taught from 1998-2005. I

have also taught consistently at Aresty, in Wharton's senior executive education programs (Advanced Management Program and Executive Development Program). In the executive classroom every idea I express is scrutinized and passed through three filters: (a) its immediate relevance to the actions being taken by leaders concerned with efficacy, global dynamics, short and long-term organizational and economic viability; (b) how it stands up to the intellectual critique espoused by other scholars and practitioners; and (c) does it add value to the other disciplines such as finance, marketing etc. Every minute I spend in the classroom in these programs, no matter what the topic I am teaching or the people I am engaged with has infused into it, one way or another, the following themes: what reflective devices must be built into regular organizational processes so that the organization-as-a-whole and groups with decision-making responsibilities can learn from their experience and not repeat the same mistakes over and over, and so that new learning can be stored and made accessible when needed; how to ensure that those with the knowledge are empowered to make the relevant decisions; how to access right brain thinking to augment the insights that come from classic rational deliberations; how to make decisions that address the well being of the whole, (the community and the environment included and not just the business enterprise); how to construct human organizational environments so that the creative contributions of all employees can be tapped; how to address the isms that debilitate, such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, etc; how to think in abundance terms and not just within the scarcity paradigm.

C. On Becoming a Community Builder

Director of the Center for Workplace Studies. When I joined the School I took on the task of breathing life into a moribund, unfunded, un-staffed research center on "Workplace Studies" designed to achieve three purposes: to apply the Penn approach to improving the quality of work-life for employees, to offer organizational assistance to non-profit social service agencies, and to bring in

corporate dollars to underwrite the research costs of the center. The Dean at the time was eager to diversify the potential funding pool for the School's research. I got this center off the ground, defined its agenda, crafted a set of research projects, hired a staff, created a business plan, built relationships with an array of local organizations, and covered all the center's costs. Within three years a newly appointed Dean made it clear that this research Center was not compatible with his agenda and asked me to move it off campus. Accepting the political realities of the situation, I continued running this center from an off-campus site until all the center's research commitments were fulfilled, all its financial obligations were met, and all the students and employees under my charge could move on seamlessly to the next stage of their lives. The attendant transitions (building, relocating, and dismantling the research center) were extremely taxing. I, as director, had little discretionary time to write up the research we were doing but contented myself with the knowledge that in a few years I would have a full sabbatical. I immersed myself in the drafting of five books over the last half of the 1990s and setting in place my next research agenda, quietly accepting that one of the political costs I would pay for this huge perturbation in my career, was my research productivity would appear to be minimal for a substantial period and henceforth, I would be seen as not contributing enough to the finances of the school. (Three of these books were completed and published as a result of my 2000-2001 sabbatical at Oxford University).

Faculty Master of Ware College House. In 1988 I accepted the position as faculty master of Ware College House, moving my family (including three pre-teen children) onto campus for this 24/7, nine months a year, job. I am grateful to the University and my family for this opportunity to serve the undergraduate population in this capacity. Even though this was a wonderful experience for my family, by the time my children became teens they made it clear they needed more of our parental attention than this job permitted. While I was only in this role for two years, I was pleased with

what I achieved, but in that time, my physical and emotional reserves became totally depleted. Blessedly, after a year's sabbatical they were restored.

School Transformation Committee. In the spring of 2003 Dean Gelles constituted a committee consisting of a substantial number of faculty and staff with the charge to report by the end of the semester on whether to initiate a major transformation of the school, and if so what shapes might it take. I chaired this committee, which proved to be one of the most collegial, satisfying, and efficiently executed tasks I have been part of at Penn. It was this group that formulated the new direction for the school, unanimously proposing a set of recommendations that subsequently led to the renaming of the school and the decision to introduce two new graduate programs, one in Non-profit/NGO Leadership and one in Social Policy.

Designing and Operationalizing the Non-profit/NGO Leadership Program. During 2003-2004 I chaired the group consisting of six faculty members, representing our School, Arts & Sciences and Wharton, asked to discern if a graduate program focused on the non-profit/NGO sector should be created by Penn, and if so its structure, design, educational pedagogy, the appropriate market, and the resources that would be needed. This was a huge task but was extremely rewarding as the members of the three schools forged a joint path that would represent a genuine collaboration among the three schools if appropriately implemented. In April of 2004 this committee made its recommendation to the deans of the three schools. In October of 2004 a small group was charged with the task of creating a one year master's program in Non-profit/NGO Leadership (NPL). Again I chaired the oversight group planning this program and took on the task of bringing it to life. In the fall of 2005 the University admitted the first class of students for this program. It is fortuitous that these plans were made as Professor Gutmann was being appointed President of Penn, because this program's agenda is a bold enactment of every aspect of the President's compact. In a way, being

asked to bring these three schools into partnership was a task that fit perfectly my skill set, since I am, at present, the only person at Penn with educational teaching responsibilities in all three schools.

The Professional World. I have regularly done reviews for the journals in my field, served on the editorial board of the *Organizational Behavior Teaching Review/Journal of Management Education* for many years and was an associate editor for the *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* from 1990-2003. I have worked on six continents, delivering a large number of seminars (from Oxford University to the State University of Mongolia in Ulaanbaatar), workshops, paper presentations, lectures (to as few as five people in a round table exchange to 3,000 in a huge auditorium), conducting research (such as the emerging project in India), being involved in the education of approximately 5,000 international executives in the private, civil society and public sectors, and intervening in organizations (from Australia to Belgium).

Since joining the School I have helped birth three non-profit organizations in Philadelphia. **MANNA.** This has already been discussed. However I want to highlight MANNA's long-term economic contributions. Over the first 15 years of its existence MANNA prepared and delivered, without charge, 5 million meals tailored to the specific nutritional needs of the recipients. This represents a \$50 million direct contribution to the HIV/AIDS community. In total, it has cost \$25-\$30 million to run MANNA during these years, thanks to the volunteer labor of 1,000 people per year. The reduction in number of days spent in the hospital by people with AIDS, which can be attributed directly to MANNA's services, has saved the medical system, at minimum, \$100 million.

West Philadelphia Alliance for Children (WePAC). In 2004 I co-founded this volunteer-based, non-profit organization to enhance the learning environment in educationally under-resourced neighborhoods and to bridge the racial, economic, geographic and cultural divides between West Philadelphia and its surrounding neighboring communities. Currently serving Carroll Park, Mill

Creek and East Parkside, WePAC (a) places volunteers in elementary grades to assist classroom teachers, (b) runs an all-day job and skill-development program for teens who have dropped out of high school, (c) conducts a youth club for street-corner males, (d) provides, with the assistance of Wharton undergraduates, basic business acumen to middle school children who run their own thrift store, (e) works to ensure adequate after-school and early childhood development programs in these neighborhoods, (f) advocates for children and teens having difficulty at home and school, and (g) conducts parenting skills workshops for teens. Presently I chair the board of WePAC.

The Other Carpenter (TOC). This is a volunteer-based housing repair organization, operating on a habitat for humanity model, serving under-resourced home owners in East Parkside. I have no current role in TOC, but along with the current executive director, I drew together the relevant parties, catalyzed the process of bringing this organization into being, and chaired the planning group until the first Board of Directors was appointed.

D. On Developing an Integrated Persona

It has been important for me to develop an integrated professional persona, which I feel is well illustrated by my role in Penn's support of those striving to end Apartheid in South Africa. In the mid 1980s, when students were calling on Universities to terminate their investments in this Afrikaner-ruled nation, Dr. Bowen, President of Princeton, sought the counsel of black South African leaders, who said, "Our people will be badly hurt by this, but we support divesture. This is a price we are willing to pay because the Apartheid rulers will not change until the economy is about to collapse. However we fear once foreign investments end, no one will care what happens to us. Please help create a new communication pipeline so we remain connected to the USA." Dr. Bowen and Penn's President, Dr. Hackney organized for Wharton, under the guise of offering a special executive education program for black South Africans, to function as an invisible conduit for the

desired communication system. Offering executive education to blacks in companies with a social responsibility agenda (known as the Sullivan Principles -- negotiated by the Philadelphian African American leader, Rev. Leon Sullivan,) was acceptable to the Afrikaner regime. Wharton and the University of Pennsylvania began bringing cohorts of black and so-called "colored" South African leaders to Penn. I was one of the faculty members who designed and ran this program. It started four years before Nelson Mandela was released from prison, and continued until well into the Mandela presidency. Upon moving from Wharton, where I served from 1985-1990, I transferred this project into the research center I directed on behalf of the School.

When we began, none of us at Penn knew what it was like to be a black leader in an organization under the apartheid regime. So we had to build a set of sustained relationships and create a collective process by which "we" (they and us) could construct an appropriate learning environment and agenda befitting their context and their needs. I was the faculty member assigned this task. The first thing we discovered was the Afrikaner's divide-and-conquer strategy had created such intractable divisions among South Africans of color they were unable to speak with a common voice. The second was that these extreme divisions within the oppressed peoples of South Africa meant that post-apartheid, this nation would be in a protracted struggle to avoid a civil war. A large part of our agenda hence had to be knitting a fabric of relations among these many factions.

Some of the work we did with black South African leaders occurred at Penn and some was on the ground in South Africa. Always it was done without fanfare and was kept out of sight, because we never wanted to endanger the covert communication channel we were creating as Penn's contribution to the anti-apartheid struggle. At the peak of this project a wonderful set of partnerships was forged; within Penn it was Social Work with Wharton; externally it was with Howard University and the Martin Luther King Center in Atlanta; internationally it was the USA with a

potentially post-apartheid South Africa. Over 250 South Africans leaders of all races and “color designations” were involved in the Penn-based executive seminars, many of whom moved immediately into senior business, government and NGO positions upon Mandela’s election. A comparable number were involved in the work done on South African soil, from community building in the black townships surrounding Johannesburg, to addressing race-relations among executive leadership groups of business enterprises. Throughout, the central theme was "what can be done, as the new South Africa comes into being and crafts a new place for itself in the international world, to ensure that it does not tumble into a civil war?"

In the larger political scheme of things, Penn’s contribution to the South African struggle to dismantle apartheid and build a nation based on non-racialism was miniscule. However, to this day Penn is a much appreciated and respected institution in the minds of many South African leaders.

This project, with all its nuisances, illustrates how I weave into one fabric, my work as a researcher, educator, intervener, and community builder. Given the complex set of dynamics entailed in such work, my writings usually have a long gestation period and are often published well after the work is completed. I have an early draft of a book-length manuscript on the scholarly work undertaken in this ten year engagement. My experiences with black South Africans catapulted my thinking about the role of conflict in human systems to a level yet to be fully articulated.