Patterns

From the Editor:

We are happy to welcome **Matthew Shapiro,** founder of the Idaho Systems Institute, who writes; "*I am honored to have been asked to serve as guest editor for this issue of PATTERNS, whose theme is "Citizens' Movements to Re-design Society."*

"*I have been working in this arena – the arena of participatory design and conscious evolution of society – for about nine years. I cannot claim to have begun any revolutions, but the effort to bridge ideas about participatory design of social systems with practical methods for doing so has been extremely fruitful. Along the way I have also had the good fortune of making the acquaintance of some wonderful thinkers, practitioners, and mentors. Among these I include the late Bela H. Banathy, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Alexander Christakis, Jonas Salk, Alexander and Kathia Laszlo, PATTERNS' own Barbara Vogl, and many others.*

"*The design in redesign is a word that, for me, is loaded with core ideas and values. One of those ideas is that it is only authentic if it is participatory. This means that design goes hand-in-hand with democracy. This is not the democracy we know, of course; it is the promise of democracy yet realized. As Mary Parker Follett pointed out succinctly in her 1918 work The New State – a work introduced to me by Bela H. Banathy and which revolutionized my understanding of democracy – "We have not yet tried democracy." What she meant is that we have not yet built a reality of self-determined persons being able to produce a will in common and to act upon that will. We have instead allowed a cheap imitation to fill its place, a pseudo-representative, depersonalized framework based essentially on fear.*"

Deep Understanding:
Wisdom for an Integral Age

by Copthorne Macdonald[1]

Ed. Note: This is an excerpt from one of the many articles that can be found at the author's website <http://www.cop.com/ > Juxtaposing the insights of Ken Wilber (see PATTERNS January 1997) and Paul Ray (see PATTERNS November 2001), Macdonald points out that "To be able to deal effectively with the major biospheric, social, and economic problems of our day, we need to become more holistic knowers. We must acquire a deep and comprehensive understanding of the context in which those problems are set. We need to develop a broadly-based intellectual understanding of systems and the system hierarchy that pervades cosmos; the evolutionary process in its most general sense; consciousness; human cultures; economic systems; and various key principles, laws, and regularities which underlie functioning in all of these areas.

The Challenge

When we think about transforming today's economic, political, social, cultural, and personal realities into the new realities needed for a sustainable, equitable, and highly enjoyable world, it is easy to get discouraged. The task seems overwhelming. Where do we begin?

Abraham Maslow told us where. We begin by understanding the reality that presently exists — very deeply, very completely. Maslow noted that for self-actualizing people (and others during self-actualizing moments) facts were value-laden. They had a certain "oughtness" and called for certain actions. As he put it:

When anything is clear enough or certain enough, true enough, real enough, beyond the point of doubt, then that something raises within itself its own requiredness, its own demand-character, its own suitabilities. It 'calls for' certain kinds of action rather than others. If we define ethics, morals, and values as guides to action, then the easiest and best guides to the most decisive actions are very facty facts; the more facty they are, the better guides to action they are. ...the facts themselves carry, within their own nature, suggestions about what ought to be done with them. If we wish to permit the facts to tell us their oughtness we must learn to listen to them in a very specific way which can be called Taoistic—silently, hushed, quietly, fully listening, noninterfering, receptive, patient, respectful of the matter-in-hand, courteous to the matter-in-hand. (Maslow, 1971, pp. 121, 124.)

Maslow is telling us three important things: 1.) When we understand the present reality with great clarity and depth, we will also sense the kind of ac-

tion that is needed. 2.) In order to understand reality in that deep way, we need relevant, totally convincing facts. 3.) To receive the subtle value messages inherent in those facts, we must approach them with a quiet, receptive, patient mind.

To follow Maslow's prescription in the context of societal transformation, we face two serious problems. The first concerns a prior education that, for most of us, has not given us a sufficiently complete, sufficiently relevant set of "very facty facts." Some of us were educated in the sciences. Others were educated in the humanities. Those educated in either of these "two cultures" often know little about the other, and few in either one understand much about economic realities. (Unfortunately, the education of most economists appears even more narrowly focused.)

This is not a satisfactory situation. To be able to deal effectively with the major biospheric, social, and economic problems of our day, we need to become more holistic knowers. We must acquire a deep and comprehensive understanding of the context in which those problems are set. We need to develop a broadly-based intellectual understanding of systems and the system hierarchy that pervades cosmos; the evolutionary process in its most general sense; consciousness; human cultures; economic systems; and various key principles, laws, and regularities which underlie functioning in all of these areas. Robert Ornstein and Paul Erlich summarized our task (1990, p. 12): "We need to be 'literate' in entirely new disciplines."

The second problem is that few of us encounter the reality around and within us with a quiet, receptive, patient mind. We don't listen to what is in that Taoistic, fully listening, non-interfering way. To correct this problem we need a very different kind of mental development — not intellectual this time, but intuitive — the kind of development facilitated by quiet-minded Eastern practices such as meditation. The exploration of one's own psyche in this way leads not only to a quiet, receptive mind, but also to an appreciation of the laws by which our inner, subjective lives operate; ethical understanding; moral behavior; and even insights into the nature of primal reality.

> *We need to be 'literate'*
> *in entirely new disciplines.*

Each of the problems mentioned above has its rather obvious solution. Each "calls for" the particular course of action just mentioned. Together, these courses of action constitute a two-element strategy for developing deep understanding: On the one hand, go outward and acquire relevant intellectual knowledge. On the other, go inward and find self-knowledge and a quiet mind. Some day, a future integral society/culture will have programs and institutions dedicated to helping people do this. Today, however, it is likely to happen only through self-motivation and self-direction.

Intellectual Development

Although acquiring either kind of knowledge is not trivially easy, for most people the acquisition of intellectual knowledge is the more familiar, more comfortable of the two processes. For many, the exploration of "new disciplines" will begin with the sciences of energy, complexity, and information; systems and the evolutionary process; consciousness and the workings of the human brain/mind system; human cultures; and economic systems. If, in addition, we want to actually change what needs to be changed, we also need to understand ethics and techniques for changing ethical perspectives; probability as a decision-making tool; the techniques of conflict resolution and effective persuasion; and what people are proposing — and already doing — to solve the problems that the world faces.

Fortunately, being literate in new areas of knowledge does not mean that we need to be experts in them. What is very much needed — and what we already have in some of these areas — are books, audio and video tapes, multimedia CD-ROMs, Internet sites, online courses, and other resources that can help people grasp a discipline's key ideas with a reasonable expenditure of time and effort. We also need high-relevancy cross-disciplinary maps of reality that, by pulling together material from many disciplines, can help us deal with the overwhelming complexity of the human situation. Some potential aids to this kind of exploration are suggested online at http://www.cop.com/outward.html.

Psychological-Spiritual Development

Paul Ray's "cultural creatives" espouse values which indicate development to the early vision-logic stage in Wilber's schema and the Sensitive Self "wave" in the Beck and Cowan schema. This level of personal development is characterized by egalitarianism, ecological sensitivity, emphasis on dialogue and relationship, affective warmth and sensitivity, the enrichment of human potential, and more (Wilber, 2000, Introduction). Wilber pointed out long ago (1977, 1981) that the psychological and the spiritual are just locations on one expansive spectrum of consciousness. Deficiencies at the less-developed end are addressed through psychological therapies. Deficiencies at the more-developed end are addressed through spiritual practices. Beck and Cowan identify eight locations on this spectrum: 1.) Archaic-Instinctual, 2.) Magical-Animistic, 3.) Power Gods, 4.) Conformist Rule, 5.) Scientific Achievement, 6.) The Sensitive Self, 7.) Integrative, and 8.) Holistic. Thus, the task faced by the typical cultural creative — who currently hovers around location six — is that of further developing Integrative and Holistic characteristics. And, since all three of these locations reside at the highly-developed end of the spectrum, the developmental tool of choice will be one or more spiritual practices. A variety of practices from Eastern and Western mystical traditions would be suitable. Here I mention two that have proven especially effective for Western practitioners. The first goes by the names mindfulness, Vipassana, and Insight meditation. The second is the Tibetan nondual practice called Dzogchen.

2.

Mindfulness meditation is a practice devoted to the development of attentiveness and the exploration of mind content and function. Initially, one watches physical sensations in a narrowly-focused way — usually sensations connected with breathing. Attempting to pay continuous attention to these subtle sensations settles the mind and develops concentration. This practice is continued until attention is able to remain on the chosen object for a reasonable period. At that point, the focus of attention is widened to include other mental objects: physical sensations, feelings, sounds, incipient thoughts — and ultimately, whatever arises in the mind.

The benefits associated with this type of meditation are many: insight into how the human mind works; insight into our own values and behavior (seeing things that we may have previously denied or repressed); the development of our intuitive process; enhanced access to the subconscious; enhanced creativity; a quieting of the mind that can become quite profound in retreat situations and during long periods of solitude; skill at dealing with reactive emotions; and increased levels of patience, acceptance, and inner peace. I have gone into this in some detail in Toward Wisdom (Macdonald, 1996 [1993]), and there are many excellent books that deal exclusively with this type of meditation. You might wish to check out the list of books and other resources at <http://www.cop.com/inward.html>.

The farthest reaches of inner development involve internalization of the nondual view. Those who have developed attentiveness/mindfulness to a fairly advanced degree sometimes move on to practices that specifically promote cognizance of the absolute reality and identification with it: nondual practices. Ken Wilber's "favorite meditation on nondual awareness" — and one of mine — is Chapter 12 of his book The Eye of Spirit, entitled "Always Ready: The Brilliant Clarity of Ever-Present Awareness" (Wilber, 1997; and 2000, Introduction). Wilber's words give the reader an excellent sense of the goal of nondual practice, and can be a useful tool for developing it. Dzogchen is an effective nondual practice that today has a growing English language literature. As with Wilber's meditation, the aim of Dzogchen practice is to relax, just BE, become cognizant of Spirit (the ever-present absolute aspect of mind, the ever-present absolute aspect of everything), and realize that your deepest, truest self is nothing other than this primal sentient-active oneness. Again, check out the resource list at http://www.cop.com/inward.html.

Summary

In line with Maslow's contention that deeply understanding what *is* reveals what needs to be done, this paper suggests a two-pronged developmental strategy: *Go outward and acquire relevant intellectual knowledge. Go inward and find self-knowledge and a quiet mind.* It is suggested that we intellectually acquire knowledge of the sciences of energy, complexity, and information; systems and the evolutionary process; consciousness and the workings of the human brain/mind system; human cultures; economic systems; ethics and techniques for changing ethical perspectives; probability as a decision-making tool; the techniques of conflict resolution and effective persuasion; and what people are proposing and doing to solve the problems that the world faces. Regarding self-knowledge and the development of a quiet, receptive, Taoistic approach, it is suggested that we involve ourselves with mindfulness meditation and, at some point, Dzogchen practice.

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Reflections

"We are in the right, appropriate moment of an evolutional crisis to invent synergistic process which can enhance the emerging connectivity, breakthroughs, empathies, innovations, in every field. And one more degree of connectivity of that which is emergent and creative within a system far from equilibrium, such as our planetary civilization is, could create the islands of coherence that can jump the system to a higher order."

"It is arrogant to be pessimistic in the face of 14 billion years of evolution."

"Evolution optimizes life through greater connectivity of separate parts, creating whole systems greater than and more conscious than the sum of the parts. You begin to get the pattern of nature that we now have to emulate in order for that process to help us jump our system to the next level of order. Because we've entered the 1st age of conscious evolution, because we have the power to destroy and create that which we used to attribute to gods, we are required to emulate nature consciously for the first time."

Working for a Design Culture at the Level of Living

by Matthew Shapiro

We get a hint at the alternative to our present democracy, what we call the authentic participatory democracy that is brought about by a design culture, when we grapple with issues in local circles of people. This is at the neighborhood level where an association of citizens has to make a decision about something impinging upon their lives. We can also glimpse the promise of democracy in those occasional moments in occasional classrooms where young people are encouraged to explore issues and contemplate solutions. In sum, I believe that the democracy and the culture of participatory design toward which we aspire must be local in origin, and it must be creative.

Unfortunately, most people seem to be caught in a kind of paralysis, a paralysis based on the illusion of a separation between the self and the whole. People wait for "leaders" to break the pattern, but that is not the job of the conventional leader; their job is to maintain. It may sound like a cliché, but the real leader is each person. Why do I say this? Every person looks to those around them as a guide to what is okay and what is not okay. The ironic thing about this is that each person is the leader. Everyone is watching you.

I have been reflecting on the idea that the world is changed one person at a time. I have thought about this and decided that, no, this does not quite capture it. It is changed by one person at a time, because each person must make a choice to change themselves and something in the world. It is not a passive act, done to them.

The critical mass is not millions; it is one.

So where and how does this consciousness get raised? In dialogue that is connected with some kind of action. Only dialogue can bring assumptions to the surface. And this, as **David Bohm** in particular noted, is critical because it is whole seas of unexamined assumptions that underlie the very language and the social systems through which we live our lives. But dialogue alone is not enough; it needs to be connected to some kind of action, no matter how small. Actually, to call an action small is to fall into another illusion. How can an action be *"small"* when entire economic and governmental policies are driven by the daily *"small"* acts of individuals? As **Mary Parker Follett** suggested, *"the individual is the whole at one point."*

At the same time, there are different effects to actions. Actions taken personally and quietly are the most important, because they constitute the mass of collective reality. But actions that effectively set examples are even more powerful; they are like the energization of collective reality.

It was this spirit that I tried to apply locally when I ran for mayor of my city in 1997 and for city council in 1999. Is local politics a legitimate channel for introducing the idea of participatory design and conscious evolution? Yes, I believe so, although it does take significant commitment to the spirit of the mission to resist the pressure of conventional views of *"what politicians do."* I lost the elections, but spread some good ideas.

I am going to focus on a particularly intensive example of an effort to trigger a citizens' culture of participatory design. When I first communicated with Bela H. Banathy at the end of 1995, I was involved in my first local *"culture change"* effort. It was called *Coevolution Southern Idaho*, and it took the form of several diverse projects. One of these involved working to move education systems toward a systems view and philosophy.

For eight years since, I and those affiliated with the Idaho Systems Institute – now the Mary Parker Follett Foundation – followed Banathy's lead in focusing on public

education systems as a vital starting point for fostering democratic design competence. With the persistent intrusion of management-based concepts like *"accountability"* and so-called *"back to basics"* ideas into the learning experiences of children across the United States, the stakes grow very high for the future of our society and our world. What we have been able to do in those eight years is to take Banathy's general framework of the participatory, ideals-driven design of educational systems and develop a specific organizing model by which a community could undergo the journey. To empower them along the way, we have created some very new tools to constitute what Banathy referred to as a *Knowledge Base Support System.* One of these tools is a booklet that takes the most recent generally-accepted "facts" about how people learn – approximately 150 of these core ideas – and presents them in an easy-to-read format for laypersons who are the *"user-designers."* Each "fact" is accompanied by *"Questions Relevant for Design,"* so that citizens can more actively think about the implications of how the educational system is constructed.

Among the other elements of the support system for this particular design movement is an inventory of potential local resources of learning; a clear presentation of the laws that govern education and the waivers that can allow us to push beyond usual boundaries; demographic and geographic data; and other kinds of information.

I offer these as examples of the kinds of affordances that need to be created to help make social systems more transparent – or, as my friend and colleague Chris Francovich suggested, translucent. If we achieve the goal of making them translucent – visible without hiding the existence of a more fluid background of assumptions and relationships – then we will take a great step toward a designing culture.

What is motivating the recent intensive development of this *Knowledge Base Support System* is the prospect of creating a design-based charter school in a local community that lacks any school at present and which includes both the lowest-income and one of the highest-income neighborhoods in the area. The downside of charter school notwithstanding, in this particular case, the *Garden City Community School* could be an opportunity to demonstrate participatory design in a close approximation of Banathy's vision. Coming this close to being able to implement a citizen-driven design journey has taken a great deal of patience and networking. Several years ago I began working in the public schools locally, getting a view of things "from the inside" while never losing sight of the vision of total, community-based redesign. I also returned to the world of higher education to obtain a teaching degree. Speaking of which, generating a sense of activism among future teachers is a major opportunity waiting to be tapped.

> *Generating a sense of activism among future teachers*
> *is a major opportunity*
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Some of these ideas about participatory design are older than we sometimes realize. In fact, a 1946 report on pubic education in Idaho, produced by Dewey-influenced *George Peabody College* (now part of Vanderbilt University) by a commission of the Idaho legislature, recommended shifting away from what they called the "Assign-Study-Recite-and-Test" method (see *"No Child Left Behind"*) and toward the "Experience Unit." Remarkably relevant to the culture of design, one of their reflections was that *"a sound conception of learning on the part of teachers is the first requirement in securing the participation of pupils in evolving worthwhile purposes for learning...Both elementary and high school teachers should begin to share thinking with each other and with school leaders about ways and means of securing more pupil participation in (1) evolving the purposes of learning, (2) devising ways and means of achieving the purposes sought, and (3) evaluating both the processes and outcomes of learning."*

How many educational models in place today involve learners in the design of their learning? The *Reggio Emilia* preschool philosophy is described as "learner-emergent." That is, learners are considered to be partners in the design of their curriculum. This suggests the potential for a design culture at an early childhood level. Unfortunately, it does not appear that this philosophy is anywhere extended into upper childhood and adulthood.

I have focused on education. But every major social and societal system has a local reality and source of energy. Health care, justice, economic systems, transportation systems and their relationship to the layout of communities and human behavior – all of these are or should be subject to citizen-driven movements for participatory (re)design.

I sense that people want something other than the status quo. They also yearn to connect with others. But they don't know how to find the courage to question and the courage to reach out. They will be looking to you for courage.

There is today an abundance of movements, models, methods, and tools for emancipatory and creative thinking and living. At the same time, the forces of inertia, complacency and loss of relationship are very strong. The convergence of these two great forces is to be expected at an evolutionary turning point like the one we are facing. It is part of the script of the adventure. Our story has shown that this adventure is played out through citizens' movements. Design is a citizens' movement for our time.

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See also: *PATTERNS September 1999, September 2000, November 2000, September 1996.*

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Citizens' Initiative:
A Department of Peace Website

An interview with John Zielinski
by Barbara Vogl

John Zielinski has a BA in Chemistry, a BA in Physics and an MA in Computer Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana. He studied with Heinz Von Foerster at the Biological Computer Laboratory and was influenced by Gordon Pask, Humberto Maturano and Herbert Brun . In this interview we explore the potential for a World Wide Web Department of Peace in shaping the future of humankind.

Please visit :   http://www.departmentofpeace.net

Barbara: What prompted you to establish a Department of Peace as an interactive website?

John: I was inspired by the vision of Dennis Kucinich and his Department of Peace Legislation introduced into the U.S. House of Representatives. It illustrates the tremendous potential we have right now__the mandate to solve the problems in the world not for academic reasons but for our very survival itself. I felt compelled because of my background and need to contribute. I see an incredible potential for the application of Cybernetics and clear thinking and logic and sensibility to get ourselves, as individuals, as communities and as nations, out of the situations we are in and get into a world that works for everyone.

Barbara: Would you describe the legislation and how it is serving as a model for your website?

John: Our website <http://www.departmentofpeace.net> is to be functionally designed on the model of the **Department of Peace HR 1673,** a bill introduced into Congress by Rep. Dennis Kucinich and 48 co-sponsors in April 2003. We have a copy of the complete legislation on our website. The bill is presently stalled in committee and we feel we can pre-empt the bureaucratic lethargy of our government by establishing it on the net to see what people can do with it.

B: There is a saying that when the people move, the government will follow.

J: Exactly! As we become aware of how pervasive media is and as we see the power of websites like **MoveOn.org** starting out with a couple of good ideas on a website and spreading to hundreds of thousands of people instantly saying, "here's how I feel," and contributing money and seeing actual things happening which is affecting millions and millions of people....its affecting our thinking and our awareness all over the world, internationally and especially in this country.

B: Do you think it contributes to our ability to think more wholistically?

J: I think the cybernetic inclusiveness, the circularity of the concept of 'Peace' that I see in the DOP legislation is based on wholistic goal-oriented action that we have built into the World Wide Web Department of Peace website. It functions as an "autonomous and self-organizing" Department of Peace designed to help facilitate and organize the peace efforts of individuals and organizations nationally and internationally. *Our goal is to facilitate the paradigm shift from reactive war to responsive peace.* This reflects a global movement emerging from within humanity itself. We are now making a transition from war to peace; Peace operating as a multifaceted solution to the complex issues of our time. The Dept. of Peace website is where wisdom and technology and people meet to create a world culture of Peace.

B: That's a big dream.

J: But, in today's world the ideal is practical. It establishes nonviolence as an organizing principle of American society, providing the U.S. President with an array of peace-building policy options for domestic and international use. Just as the passage of the thirteenth amendment abolishing slavery took years to pass; just as the nineteenth amendment providing women's suffrage took years to pass; just as the Civil Rights legislation of the 1960's took years to pass, this legislation provides substance and meaning to the political yearnings of our generation. It systematically applies the power of peace to the eradication of root causes of violence.

Domestically, the Department of Peace would be responsible for developing policies which address issues such as domestic violence, child abuse, mistreatment of the elderly, gang and drug related violence, poverty and other issues of social violence. Internationally, the Department would gather research, analyze foreign policy and make recommendations to the President on how to address the root causes of war and intervene before violence begins, while also improving national security, including the protection of human rights and the prevention and de-escalation of unarmed and armed international conflict.

B: We *are* beginning to see that we can't afford violence to our environment...nor to each other either when you consider that in our nation we spend more on our penal system than on our educational system. It's crazy!

J: Yes. I like what Martin Luther King said; *"The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it....*
Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that."

B: With the www Department of Peace, are you suggesting that we can move democracy to a new level__ from just pretty much having it mean the right to vote for our representatives to actually having people involved in the quality of decisions that are made? How would the a DOP in cyberspace affect how we do government?

J: Basically, using a cybernetic model, we can see we have a closed system; earth and ecosystem, which is divided into nations. Entities of the model are humans in relationships influenced by cultures, communities, belief systems, etc. Each individual has a goal, interacting with others, with corporate and governmental entities, all in relationship with the environment. The overall systemic goal is survival. Within the model we have a variety of methods of attaining goals. For example with goals of health and wellness we have varying models such as "power over," using up natural resources, and then we have a sustainable model such as living in harmony with the environment and each other. The Dept. of Peace is designed to reach the goals of a system that understands long term survivability. Our world is a very complex system.

The way governments function does not allow for the variety or flexibility required to respond to the complexity of war and peace. By using a cybernetic model on the web we have the requisite variety to match the requisite variety in the real world. The internet provides the flexibility where, in principle, everyone can participate allowing decisions to then manifest in cities and states and the nation. The members of the world wide web DOP foster a culture of peace, a culture which is, by definition, based on integrity, mutual love, and respect for life. The goal is to coordinate peace at every level of society, a way to address domestic violence, local and state violence as well as international violence.

The website has no boundaries and follows the model in the Congressional legislation and includes a Peace Academy equivalent to West Point and other institutions which support the Dept. of Defense. The bill will *"create and establish a Peace Academy, which shall— (A) be modeled after the military service academies; (B) provide a 4-year course of instruction in peace education, after which graduates will be required to serve 5 years in public service in programs dedicated to domestic or international nonviolent conflict resolution."*

The www Peace Academy with it's on-line learning capability allows global citizens to introduce alternatives and become a part of the dialogue and decisions of global governance.

B: That sounds like a big order. How do you plan to do this?

J: It really requires creating learning communities__ a worldwide learning society Peace Curriculum. Among provisions of the bill in Congress are the provision to: (4) maintain a site on the Internet for the purposes of soliciting and receiving ideas for the development of peace from the wealth of political, social and cultural diversity; (5) proactively engage the critical thinking capabilities of grade school, high school, and college students and teachers through the Internet and other media and issue periodic reports concerning submissions; and (7) provide grants for peace studies departments in colleges and universities throughout the United States.

B: So, by sharing these ideas and actions internationally on the web we can strengthen the creation of better solutions__greater ecological solutions__ than those that are tied to national boundaries which have an old habit of domination and control because of fear-infested thinking?

J: Yes. I believe it is that powerful.The interesting thing about, and the economic advantage of, the DOP in Cyberspace is that Cyberspace allows for people to interact meaningfully without offices or other considerations in the physical world. It is instanteous relating and interaction, keeping information current and at the same time allowing for reflection__an antidote to sound-bite news releases used to control and dominate.

The website allows for the development of a Cybernetic model of the system so we can see if we can predict solutions to help reach the goals we have in mind. For example, the contact database allows for communication among all sides in a conflict situation.

The science of Cybernetics studies these complex systems and often offers solutions both doable and sufficient to address the magnitude of the problem. One of the first activities of Cybernetics is to build a cybernetic model of the problem and since Cybernetics is concerned with control and communication, let's look at the concept of central control, such as in the central nervous system.

B: I've heard of the world wide web as a global brain. But that is a metaphor.

J: Maybe, but first let's look at the primitive concept of 'center' and the 'how' and 'what' of a 'center.' The what of a center implies there is a location for the center in which to be defined, and that there are entities which are observed which define the 'center.' The 'center' implies a closed system, so a 'center' can be defined in relation to this finite set of entities. If it were not a finite set we could not define a center. These entities can be seen as 'members' which implies that these members have common properties which define the members. One of the properties is that the members have a common goal___ Peace.

B: That makes sense__ and if we look at the 'how' of 'center' we have the concept of 'centering' or 'relating' or 'connecting.' There could be many centers connecting into a wider, living whole.

J: Yes, and in biological systems, cybernetics looks at the central nervous system which functions to 'connect' our sensory systems and transfer information which results in biological and computational processes on all kinds of levels and complexities.

A key concept of Cybernetics is self-organization, which prevents the system from going to chaos. Self-organization implies that the system has one or more goals.

B: How does the cybernetic model help ordinary people?

J: Well, ordinary people who link together and become communities, organizations, businesses, and nationalities are biological individuals who have health and wellness concerns, cognitive concerns, and express feelings and conciousness. Communities, organizations, businesses and governments also behave as individuals and have discernable health/wellness concerns, are cognitive and express feelings and consciousness on a group level.

7.

B: It seems to me we all know that. So what?

J: We may all know that, but the trick is to *live* that way without the competition that leads to war. That's where a *Science of Second Order Cybernetics* comes in. First Order Cybernetics is the science of 'observed' systems whereas Second Order Cybernetics is the science of 'observing' systems. We no longer observe a model of the system "objectively" trying to solve our problems by moving pieces of a jig-saw puzzle around thinking that will bring about change.

In Second Order Cybernetics we become the observing system itself, capable of creating sustainable models because we are taking responsibility for *ourselves__* for our ability to change our way of seeing and being and, therefore, we become responsible for our ability to design innovative solutions. That individuals/communities/organizations/businesses/governments are 'observing' or 'conscious' participants of the whole makes this *WWW.DepartmentofPeace.net* a Second Order Cybernetic system__the living process.

B: So *that's* what is really meant by a paradigm shift?

J: Yes, and the survival of the individual, community, organization, business and nation means a long term survival, not only for these entities, but also for the environment, earth and it's ecosystem. That answers your previous question as to whether the world wide web Department of Peace will contribute to our ability to think wholistically.

B: Thank you, John. I feel even more strongly that the evolutionary leap that we must take in our time is to be able to think and live wholistically. That means that, for the first time, human individuals take responsibility for the evolution of life.

The website, www.departmentofpeace.net has been dedicated to the memory of Heinz Von Foerster, known as the father of Second Order Cybernetics.

John Zielinski can be reached at <jrzielinski@hotmail.com>

Excerpts from the Preamble for HR 1673 establishing a Department of Peace

During the course of the 20th century, more than 100,000,000 people perished in wars, and now, at the dawn of the 21st century, violence seems to be an overarching theme in the world, encompassing personal, group, national, and international conflict, extending to the production of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons of mass destruction which have been developed for use on land, air, sea, and in space.

Such conflict is often taken as a reflection of the human condition without questioning whether the structures of thought, word, and deed which the people of the United States have inherited are any longer sufficient for the maintenance, growth, and survival of the United States and the world.

It is the sacred duty of the people of the United States to receive the living truths of our founding documents and to think anew to develop institutions that permit the unfolding of the highest moral principles in this Nation and around the world.

The Wounded Knee International Memorial and International Youth Project

The Midnight Strong Heart Society of the sovereign Lakota nation (a.k.a. The Great Sioux Nation) has teamed up with WomenRise for Global Peace <www.womenrise.org> and sustainable village developers of the Pacific Northwest and the California Central Coast to create a living memorial to those who sacrificed their lives at Wounded Knee, Sand Creek, and all other sites of human genocide.

The Memorial will provide an avenue of healing, not only for indigenous people, but for all peoples of the earth. The youth will take the lead in constructing this Memorial with earth/straw bale techniques. The Medicine Wheel-shaped wall will be constructed from our sacred Grandmother Earth, opening to the four directions, with a central altar ensconcing the World Peace Flame. The Memorial will be shaped and molded with prayer by everyone who joins us. Many of us believe our American culture will not heal until we openly acknowledge and correct the deep wound inflicted on the people of indigenous nations. Today, in the Lakota nation, at Wounded Knee and on the Pine Ridge reservation, as is true with most US reservations, there remains 80% homelessness (with seasonal wind chill factors to 60 below zero) 95% unemployment, and one of the most alarming youth suicide epidemics we have known.

To substantially change the conditions in our communities, we open full potential to unlock our nation from the stranglehold that racism and greed has had over the people of these United States. By our actions we remember that we owe the original protection and balance of our ecosystems and our landscape to indigenous first nations.

From June 21st, through September 21st, and continuing in following years, international youth from organizations interested in alternative building and peace activism are invited by The Midnight Strong Heart Society to work side by side, mutually learning how to build a truly sustainable modern village and culture that can easily be modeled for other communities. We are working with combination natural material methods for constructing beautiful (extremely low-cost) homes and buildings. This precedes developing low tech greenhouses, fish ponds and energy systems necessary to provide true independence. We are inviting folks to fill out an online application, and to bring primitive camping gear, and ample food. A community kitchen will be established. Participants will be invited to keep a prayerful attitude in a non-drug and non-alcohol community while also enjoying ceremonies with the Lakota, and building, playing, and celebrating life together. We will conclude this first summer of work on September 21st International World Peace Day, when we will be joined by other major peace activists celebrating a sustainable world.

Project information : www.timetoshine.org

Tax deductable donations can be mailed to: COIN (Council On IndigenousNations) 125 Water Street, Suite D, Santa Cruz, CA 95060   tax id#: 34-1994965

The World Peace Flame was instigated by Life Foundation International <www.lifefoundation.org> a group of health professionals who work to heal trauma in war zones: "...amidst the worst situations there are always people creating great healing. They work heroically for the people around them and are like flames of light and hope within their communities. These people are seen as living 'World Peace Flames'."

Lit by indigenous elders, eminent peace-makers, soldiers and royalty, seven Millennium Flames were flown from five continents across the oceans by military air forces and combined together to form one flame for peace, the World Peace Flame.

Humanity already has enough knowledge to solve its problems. The World Peace Flame aims to catalyze a paradigm shift towards implementing solutions. People are recognized__both well-known and unseen__who are creating positive role models in many spheres of life: the environment, peacemaking, commerce and science, religion and politics. Humanity's faith in itself as a mature species capable of upholding the unity and diversity of life on this planet is affirmed.

The World Peace Flame is now being installed in the world's centers of decision-making, being carried into war zones and to thousands of places of cultural and religious significance.

For more information: <www.worldpeaceflame.com>

Dialogue: A Paradigmatic Shift in Communication
by Anne Adams

There is a dynamic, national movement called, Let's Talk America , <www.letstalkamerica.org> that has stepped forward to address the powerful possibilities available when Americans from all points on the political spectrum talk together.

Their website states, "We need to talk. We believe the time is ripe for a national dialogue on the state of our democracy." Their dialogue sessions promise an environment of inclusion, respect, nonpartisanship and a new quality of thinking together. People listen, speak, ask and learn without being manipulated to agree, change or withhold thoughts or feelings. The format is most often in small groups followed by a collective sharing of insights, topics, feedback and possible action steps.

John Dewey, a staunch advocate of education for a democracy said, "Democracy begins in conversation." Great changes begin in conversations. To converse means "to live with, keep company with, literally . . . to dance together. "There are many divergent forces and points of view that appear to be fragmenting Americans today. The Let's Talk America movement is giving us a renewed education in democracy by having us practice together of, by and for the people. "Democracy takes guts. It is a process, not a given. It is a nationwide activity not a spectator sport. It requires keeping an open mind and honest, respectful listening and speaking . . . like working out for healthy bodies, conversation works our 'democracy muscles'."

The art of conversation through dialogue allows people to learn what it means to create together. David Bohm contributed powerfully to the dialogic exchange. As a physicist, he had a particular definition of dialogue: "Through the meaning of the word, a stream of meaning flowing among and through us and between us." (Bohm, 1996, p.6) He related to dialogue as a "multi faceted process which explores an unusually wide range of human experiences: our closely-held values; the nature and intensity of emotions; the patterns of our thought processes; the function of memory; the import of inherited cultural myths; and the manner in which our neurophysiology structures moment -to-moment experience" (Bohm, 1996, p.vii).

Bohm* presents unique distinctions in the area of thought, which as a physicist, he viewed as a more fluid medium than the accepted "objective representation of reality" which so many people hold as truth. Engaging in dialogue meant for Bohm observing how "thought is generated and sustained at the collective level." This kind of inquiry "calls into question deeply-held assumptions regarding the culture, meaning and identity. Dialogue is an invitation to test the viability of traditional definitions of what it means to be human and collectively to explore the prospect of an enhanced humanity." (Bohm, 1996, pp. vii-viii)
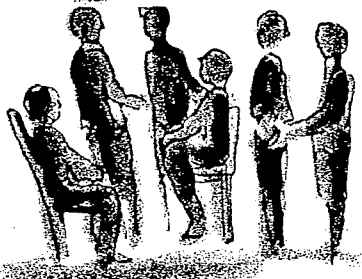
From this premise, it becomes clear how participating in The Let's Talk America dialogues, with a multi cultural and diverse group, can foster understanding and provide an essential platform for the co-creation of a different future.

* Bohm, D.(1996) On Dialogue. London: Routledge

Ed. Note: Following our last issue of PATTERNS in which we described SelfDesign Learning Community in British Columbia, Canada, we are increasingly impressed with the strength of the world-wide movement to redesign our thinking about what we call "education." I met Manish Jain at an international, intergenerational dialogue recently and was struck by his holistic understanding and deep personal commitment to co-creating a world that works for all. He has served as one of the principal architects of UNESCO's Learning without Frontiers transnational initiative and is presently the coordinator and co-founder of Shikshantar.

Vimukt Shiksha, the bulletin of Shikshantar, was created to liberate the vision and understanding of learning-sharing-doing from the walls of factory schooling, and to develop learning spaces and opportunities that free the full potential of human beings. It seeks to stimulate and inspire teachers, activists, practitioners, educationists, and policymakers by creating a trans-disciplinary platform for mutual sharing of innovative visions, ideas, research, resources, and experiences. This is the third of a series of books published with the hope that they will catalyze critical and constructive reflection. They write;

"In many places of the world, September 11ᵗʰ has opened up spaces for critical discussions around education, as many people are starting to realize that healthy societies will not emerge simply by getting all children to school, improving school facilities, or achieving high test scores; and that meaningful learning cannot be nurtured in environments of fear, violence, compulsion and competition. In addition, the recent meetings of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre (Brazil) have expressed a deep concern with the dominant paradigm of development and the Global Economy. Some new spaces are opening up for imagining the possibilities of another kind of world, and with this, another understanding of education."

Manish Jain writes; "The challenges facing learning societies seem to be growing with the onslaught of the "Global Knowledge Economy" and the "Information Age." We are witness to devastating forms of modernized violence and poverty, as well as arrogant experiments in nuclear testing and genetic engineering, which try to address (but instead compound) the various problems which have emerged from mal-Development. The growth of patent regimes, coupled with the rapid loss of bio-cultural diversity, makes the search for new, contextualized alternatives and possibilities appear more dismal. The situation in most schools is getting worse...the environment in homes and neighborhoods is also deteriorating, as escaping to the virtual world (brought to us courtesy of television, video games and the internet) is becoming more important for children and youth than living in the real world. Powerful research__ which can greatly democratize and revolutionize human learning__is being commercialized and exploited by elite education franchises like Eurokids, and by corporate gurus like Edward DeBono. *They try to convince us that we have to continually pay if we wish to "access" our innate abilities to learn.*

"What may be most depressing is that several of the groups today which are raising profound questions around mal-Development and experimenting with alternatives to it, still hold on to the same frameworks of mainstream education.

Over the past several years, I have been exploring the concept of unlearning within myself and with other friends..... At its most basic level, unlearning starts with looking at the realities and possibilities of life from other points of view.... It has made me question my role as an "Expert"__that what I say has validity for everyone, everywhere, at all times. Most importantly, it has made me question the claim that local people are "ignorant," "backwards," "superstitious," etc. and are not capable of thinking and doings things by themselves...Unlearning actually opens up new spaces for self-directed learning and co-learning. It is a process that involves looking both inwards and outwards, journeying into the unknown, exploring the whole self.

Over the past four years, Shikshantar has also been to support the growth of co-creators in many different organizational and community contexts throughout the world. During this time, we have also tried to develop our own space as an organic learning community to nurture fellow co-creators....we have focused on creating spaces where people can start to reclaim control of their own *shiksha*. *This is done in two ways: 1) by exposing and dismantling the culture of schooling; and 2) by exploring and regenerating spaces for learning-sharing outside of the culture of schooling.*

It is difficult to describe what Shikshantar is, as it does not fit neatly into one category. It has purposely been set-up as (and evolved into) a hybrid orgnization__research institute, library, community activity center, place for retreat, publishing house__to allow it to cater to varying needs of the larger movement. Our experiences have shown us that the path of becoming a co-creator is not a linear, predetermined one. There is a continual dialectic process between unlearning and doing. What we can say, is that transformation of self leads to transformation in the System, and transformations in the System lead to new transformations of the self. So in the process of unfolding learning societies, there is a need to look at both the self and the System__in conversation and interaction with each other. We invite you to experience the possibilities with us.

<www.swarj.org/shikshantar/ls_discussion.html>
<manish@swaraj.org>

Announcements

The 2004 Sir Geoffrey Vickers Award Competition of the ISSS

In memory of the humanistic vision of Sir Geoffrey Vickers and his deep commitment to, and belief in, the power of young people to contribute creatively to the betterment of the human condition, a plaque and check for $500 will be awarded for the best student paper. The Award recognizes outstanding work done in the domain of the systems sciences, and is considered the most prestigious prize in the field at the pre-doctoral level. The competition takes place only once a year, and is open to all students from any country. Although the student's advisor may be a co-author, it is understood that this award is meant to recognize student accomplishment and the paper should reflect principally the work of the student. At the time of paper submission, please indicate if your paper is to be considered for the Vickers Award and certify that this work was performed while you were a student. (You may have since received your degree.)

This Award commemorates the life and works of Sir Geoffrey Vickers. His view of the human condition as fundamentally embedded in a web of value relations, and of the dilemma of human action as both rational and valuative, lead him to the formulation of the Appreciative Systems approach. The spirit of his lifework is tremendously contemporary, even though he wrote his most significant works in the early second half of the 20th century: society as evolutionarily emergent; partici-pative and interactive communication as a creative agent; humanization as the necessary normative component of socialization — all this as part of what he called "a science of human ecology." It is through a truly integrative and systemic approach to our humanity that Sir Geoffrey believed we can learn to navigate multi-valued choice in the ways we structure and value our situation. Being critical (without criticizing), judging (without being judgmental), and engaging in normative decision taking (without ignoring or subjugating the interests of others) — these are the challenges of a science of human ecology as he saw it. The realization that "Science is human" [Vickers, Geoffrey. Value Systems and Social Process. Middlesex, England: Pelican Books, 1968. P. 214] derives from his assertion that we are "incorrigible valuers" [ibid., 214]. Indeed, it was Sir Geoffrey's fundamental affirmation that only by learning to be appreciative systems, ourselves, will we create social structures capable of supporting the essence of our humanity. The ISSS Vickers Award seeks to recognize promising work that advances the systems sciences toward this vision.

Please send your clearly indicated submission to laszlo@syntonyquest.org AND to acollen@saybrook.edu.

Systems Thinking and Chaos Theory Network
and the American Society for Cybernetics

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