Dancing with the Shadows of Wellbeing

An Exploration of Participatory Action Research Processes
as a Catalyst for Transformation of Staff Wellbeing

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Abstract

My abiding concern with human and planetary wellbeing and an emerging interest in the potential of Participatory Action Research as a method of engaging with restorative, life-enhancing ways of being are central to the research reported here.

Chomsky (2003), Kelsey (2002), Roddick (2001), and Stiglitz (2003) are amongst many authors who argue that the way in which we shape and are shaped by our relationships with one another has contributed to an intolerable, inhumane and unsustainable compromise of human and planetary wellbeing. Through a Participatory Action Research (PAR) project with staff from Te Ra, a community based on the holistic ideals of Rudolf Steiner, and thus an organisation explicitly committed to holistic wellbeing of people and planet, we sought to explore the challenges to such wellbeing. While our mutual attention was focused on enhancing staff wellbeing at their place of employment, my wider attention was also given to an investigation of the value of a critical analysis to the wider political and economic context in which this organisation works to meet the aspirations of this community. My deep attention has also focused on the potential for PAR to make a contribution to the transformational aspirations of critical theorists who are concerned to uncover and transform aspects of society that inhibit justice and wellbeing of people and planet. My metaphor of choice, to allow me the engagement in all three spheres simultaneously, is the metaphor of Dance. In my work with the staff of Te Ra, our intent was to 'dance with the Shadows', alluding to Jungian references to hidden aspects of ourselves and this community, to discover if un-wellness and disconnection from self and others could be transformed into flourishing relationships and wellbeing in the organisation.

McNiff (2000) proposes that PAR has the potential to generate living theories that redefine the main purpose of organisation theory in terms of human wellbeing. Throughout this research project, principles of PAR are woven in with work of critical organisational theorists, psychologists and anthropologists. The already established ideas of reflection, observation, reflexivity, and action are choreographed with the less often considered ideas of those aspects of the research relationship that may inhibit mutuality. While this organisation is explicitly and deeply committed to underpinning all that is aspired to with a relational ethic, the impact that instrumental practices associated with an intensifying neo-liberal economic external environment have not left this organisation untouched.

It took commitment, courage and resources to identify and engage with the Shadows masked by intrinsic and extrinsic pressures and processes that these research participants were experiencing. Engaging in PAR processes allowed us dance 'up close and personal' with their aspirations to begin transforming what was not well, while recognising and reinforcing the organisation's existing strong philosophical and spiritual foundations that emphasized individual freedom and collective responsibility for wellbeing of all.

Based on the significant transformations achieved during this project we posit that PAR provides a collaborative opportunity for academics and practitioners to 'dance with the Shadows' of individuals and communities to make a significant contribution to the development of sustainable relationships in workplaces where human and planetary wellbeing is the priority.

Applauding the Dancers - Acknowledgements

Dancers learn from, and are inspired to lift their performance by other dancers. From our daughter, Susanne I have learned the most about the art form of dance. She inspired me to express my long held passion to dance. Thank you, Susanne for graciously allowing me to use your photos.

And to our three sons, my family and friends who have affirmed me and my work, thank you for your support.

And probably lastly…but certainly not least…

I am grateful to live in the lush vegetation of beautiful Aotearoa, New Zealand country side with my family, birds and animals, our cat Shiraz who sometimes sits on my knee and dog Meisha whose soft coat invites caresses.

All these, support and enhance my wellbeing.

Setting the Scene - Preface

Setting the Scene – a preface

> The longing for a more human society does not collapse into some idyllic or romanticized retreat from the world, but emerges out of critical and practical engagements with present social behaviours, institutional formations, and everyday practices. Hope in this context does not ignore the worst dimensions of human suffering, exploitation, and social relations; on the contrary, it acknowledges the need to sustain the "capacity to see the worst and offer more than that for our consideration."
>
> Dunn (2000) cited in Giroux (2003, p.59)

This research and thesis offered me, and invites readers to explore, the opportunity to critique and engage with such social and institutional practices that are diminishing human and planetary wellbeing on a daily basis. I invite inquiry into how we might live not as individuals but rather as interconnected beings on planet earth in ways that enhance the wellbeing of both people and the earth. As Handy (1995) suggests, and as my experience the manager of a government funded community organization for five years endorses, most managers are so busy in their work lives that their wider learning about topics such as international politics, new scientific thinking, demographics, feminisms, spirituality, ethics and philosophy, is neglected or gleaned from hasty skimming of business magazines. This leaves them intellectually ill equipped for the rigours of a globalized economy when they become leaders and are required to think creatively and conceptually about such issues (pp.103-104).

As one such a busy manager, it seemed impossible to allocate the time to consider the 'big picture'. In speaking with other managers in the region, some described themselves as mice running on the proverbial treadmill, the treadmill of western capitalist economy that we have embraced and have been embraced by. We appear to consciously and perhaps subconsciously allow 'it' to squeeze the lifeblood out of ourselves and our planet because the neo-liberal context has apparently become as natural to us as the air we breathe (Humphries, Dyer & Fitzgibbons, forthcoming b). We have not understood that this economy is a system of our own making. Humphries (1998) proposes that as the architects and functionaries, we actively and passively

give a system of ideas a 'life of its own' – a character, intent, and thereby imbue it with the power to control us like a Frankenstein monster turned on its creators and caretakers.

A recent and intensifying lexicon of sustainability has emerged in the policy arena, as illustrated by Helen Clarke's speech as New Zealand's Prime Minister, to the opening of Parliament (2007). From a more critical vantage, the trajectory of the current commitment to the intensification of a market approach to all manner of human endeavours does not bode well for our children, grandchildren and the generations beyond. With Giroux, however, we take up the mandate of critical theorists, not to shy away from robust analysis but to be inspired by transformational intent. The exposure of 'the economy' as a fictional beast, as an entity human beings could redesign if we so chose, is just one example of the potential for a more critical discussion of globalisation by community leaders. The willingness to explore regions of pain from a perspective of hope is another. In this thesis I explore theoretical perspectives I did not allow myself time for while involved in management practice. Through the Participatory Action Research processes described here, I demonstrate how both a deeper reflection among practitioners and a commitment to personal and organisational change can be en'courage'd.

This thesis is about "getting others to walk with you" (Hayes, 2001, p.149), a collective, civic movement which Martin Luther King advocated for achieving social change.

> The task of theory no less than in practice is…to re-illuminate public space for a civil society in collapse…Societies that pretend that market liberty is the same thing as civic liberty and depend on consumers to do the work of citizens are likely to achieve not unity but a plastic homogeneity – and …to give up democracy…We seem fated to enter an era in which in the space where our public voice should be heard will be a raucous babble that leaves the civic souls of nations forever mute.
>
> Barber (2001) cited in Giroux (2003, p.153)

Barber's indictment on our society spurs me to articulate the need to re-illuminate the plight of people's wellbeing within workplaces and to be inspired by the challenge that Gandhi's is cited as proposing: "We must be the change we seek to create" (Senge et al. 2004, p.151). Martin Luther King's words "All of us cannot be famous [as he and Gandhi were], because all of us cannot be

well known. But all of us can be great, because all of us can serve"[1] remind me of my civic commitment. In this way it is my hope to be of service through the transformation potential of the research work reported here.

Reflections on my personal dance that lead into this research.

As I began the writing of this research report I became acutely aware of the mechanistic attitude that has been hidden within my 'Shadow' or unconscious self, which drives me to perform day in day out in what I expect to be a consistent manner – similar to my expectations of my car or my dishwasher. Some years after leaving my employment and reflecting on my experiences in the agency, I discovered that this mechanistic manner of performing was not only expected, admired and encouraged it was also demanded of me from the outset of my job. Now, on reflection, I recognise that as well as accepting and attempting to comply with these demands, I developed similar expectations of those with whom I worked. Much of this demand and compliance happened subtly, quietly, almost unnoticeably – perhaps because the pressure to comply was not easily distinguishable from the prevailing values that were well established in the economic, political and social 'ether'.

Yet, while I became unconsciously indoctrinated in this cultural norm, a part of me consciously yearned to be free to express the suppressed aspects of myself as a human 'being' – the spiritual, emotional and physical. I mourned this dissection of myself. I resented the requirement that I bring just a portion of myself to work, the portion called the 'professional persona'. This persona became the mask or role that I performed or was harnessed into at work. By the time I made the decision to leave this workplace I was ill. I was unable to function cognitively. I was emotionally vulnerable and unstable, physically exhausted and spiritually lost.

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[1] http://www.share-international.org/archives/education/ed_ppeso.htm (Retrieved 20 February 2007)

Alone

Swimming against the current….
a sensation that requires more effort than is necessary when swimming with the current……
sense of being different…
not fitting in…
not being able to talk about the thoughts cascading around in my mind for fear of being thought 'crazy'….
was told that 'navel gazing is unhealthy'
and that I was suffering from 'paralysis through analysis'……
yet I continued to wonder…
analyse…
try to unravel the knot inside that told me these things were important to unravel………
Having a sense of being connected to others and a whole,
yet learning,
being taught and teaching
that I was a separate entity,
responsible

There was a significant cost to functioning from this persona, alone and isolated behind the mask. How many others function from behind such a mask in their workplace? How can people bring their whole selves to their workplaces? How can people within organizational communities be respectful, compassionate, just and supportive? These were questions that I sought to explore through this research. My long held interest and participation in self reflection, relationships, interpersonal communication and emotional and spiritual development was fostered through the course of my research. This research deepened the healing that was necessary after relinquishing paid employment in a state of severe trauma.

I now have greater understanding of the contribution of the neo-liberal economic context to the cultural climate of the agency that I managed. This contributed to the organization being mandated to serve the dual masters of community ideals and funded outputs. The staff members, predominantly volunteers, were recruited to provide a service formerly met by a state service agency. During my time in this organisation, increased accountability to government for the funding received, further squeezed the staff to provide higher levels of service to clients and increased reporting of activities. We were all, volunteers and paid staff alike, harnessed to a contract that was not possible to fulfil under the conditions that prevailed at that time.

As part of my recovery, I generated the question: If we are interested in management that is sustainable for the planet and all creatures including humans, what does a different model look like? How can human wellbeing and flourishing be at the forefront of management along with profitability and efficiency? I became interested in the exploration of Participatory Action Research (PAR) processes as a catalyst to investigate and transform the Shadow of staff wellbeing within non-profit organisations. Reason and Bradbury (2001) describe action research as a "participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory world view which we believe is emerging at this historical moment" (p1). Hence what emerged during this particular research is a historical moment in the constantly evolving, divergent processes of living for the people in one organization. These 'affecting' processes were an integral part of the web of life of Te Ra.

Intuition, described as 'a fusion of thinking and willing' (Wehr, 2002, p.149) and synchronicity, led to establishing and participating in action research into staff wellbeing and sustainability with eleven staff of Te Ra School and Te Rawhiti Kindergartens, a Waldorf education community on the Kapiti Coast of New Zealand. The research fieldwork period with the participants spanned four months, with an initial visit, followed by six weeks of dialogues as a Te Ra community member and then a follow-up visit.

When writing about our research I was conscious of how difficult it was to mask identities of individuals given that Te Ra was named and the smallness of New Zealand. The research participants preferred alphabet letters used as pseudonyms, although B recognized that she could be more easily identified and seemed comfortable with this.

Drawing on the writings of Jung and Steiner, this journey of research endeavours to acknowledge the value of bringing to consciousness the Shadows of that which is not well in our society - the separation and isolation of people - for consideration, and offers opportunities to dance with new awareness in the hope of bringing more of the potential wholeness and wellness not only to ourselves but to our planet earth (Wehr, 2002; Senge, 2004; Capra, 1997; Jaworski, 1996).

The Dancing Metaphor

Susanne Bentley, 'dancer extraordinaire' who integrates singing with dance, is our daughter and the person who re-ignited my passion for dance and continues to inspire me to see life through different lenses. As a dancer myself, I am deeply interested in the creative, trust-enhancing potential of dance.

> Dance is innocence, because it is a body…that forgets it fetters, its weight.
>
> It is a new beginning, because the dancing gesture must always be something like the invention of its own beginning…
>
> dance frees the body of all social mimicry.
>
> A wheel that turns itself; dance is like a circle in space …that is not drawn from the outside but rather draws itself.
>
> Dance…is the very source of mobility…
>
> dance is simply affirmation, because it makes the negative body – the shameful body- radiantly absent
>
> Badiou (2005, pp.57-58)

Drawing on the work of Janesick (2001), Bidiou (2005), O'Connor (2003) and Whittock (1997), we acknowledge the common use of metaphor in academic writing to express the complexities of human beings and human activities with a richness that would otherwise be absent. Dance provides the metaphor for the lightness, creativity, emancipation, transformation and affirmation possible through Participatory Action Research. Janesick (2001) utlises the dance metaphor when describing qualitative action research method as a "pax de deux" of intuition and creativity; "intuition is a way of
knowing about the world through insight and exercising one's imagination" and creativity "having the sense or quality of being created rather than imitated" (p.3). Whittock (1997) suggests that "we all grow up in the web of language, and much that we see, feel and do is coloured by our language. But to say this is not, is to deny the existence of pictorial or kinaesthetic experiences, structures and conventions" (p274).

O'Connor (2003) describes leadership attributes through the metaphor of dance, suggesting that the balance between intellect and emotion that is essential in dance is translated into the self-awareness, self-responsibility and empathy essential for interpersonal relationships (p.24). She posits that in some countries dance is more than the leisure activity it is viewed as in western society; it is intrinsically linked with a person's identity (p.23). The beat of the music is felt in the body of the dancer creating integrity with the mind, spirit and soul (ibid, pp.24 & 26). Reason and Bradbury (2001) suggest that an awareness of timing and space is essential in action research to enable people to participate fully, evolving as an "integrated, interacting, self-consistent and self-creative whole" rather than remaining as a collection of independent parts (p.7).

O'Connor likens the "stretch" and "push" that dancers, responding to their passion, can achieve as they to discover their potential through new dance steps, to the visioning and mentoring that happens within organisations (ibid, p.25). As dancing becomes a lifelong passion, so too does the quest for self learning and understanding. In accepting different styles [of dance] of being, there is potential for the fragmented parts of ourselves to become whole in relation to others as we "lead" and "follow" (ibid p.25). Douglas Wright[2], a prominent New Zealand dancer, described a dance that he had choreographed as a "bringing towards wholeness that which is dismembered, fractured and torn apart". O'Connor describes dancing as experiential, like life (ibid, p.26).

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[2] http://www.listener.co.nz/issue/3364/artsbooks/2816/dancer_in_the_light.html
;jsessionid=9B370C3CCFE1A2E9102F744D696DC0AE (Retrieved 10 November 2006)

Action research is experiential also, requiring the reflexivity and flexibility of a dancer. The collaborative team spirit from dancing together, acknowledging each person's contribution and accepting support and encouragement from each other is reflective also of PAR processes. For a dancer dancing is their life blood and thus human wellbeing is essential to all the dancers in our research. In this thesis I use the dance metaphor in writing to articulate the complex relational research inquiry into the Shadows of staff wellbeing. "Dancing with the Shadows" alluded to by Badiou (2005) as the "image of thought subtracted from every spirit of heaviness" offering the lightness of love, compassion and empathy that might otherwise not be released (p. 57). This integrative expression draws on Capra's (1997) description as an ecological world view, which aligns with the anthroposophical holistic foundations and explicit aspirations of the community of people who participated in this research. I use dance as a metaphor to highlight the inter-connectedness of all aspects of life, the essential relational affectiveness of dancers and the subjectiveness, qualitative nature of dance. Dance too, is an integral part of the culture of this community, offering additional appropriateness for this research writing.

There are many aspects of dance as an overarching metaphor for human endeavours. From this primary metaphor we can draw out constituent metaphors – the timing of the music, the variety of dance styles and steps, the leading and following, connection of dancers, the balance and passion of the performance, the illumination from lighting, and the variety of dance floors and costumes - all expressing interconnectedness and interdependency. The dance floor, for example, may be seen as a template with defined boundaries. The quality of the floor can affect the dance even more than its boundaries. A smooth, sprung wooden floor makes it easier for dancers' bodies to glide, spin and skip. Yet when music inspires a dancer, any surface can become a stage for a performance of the soul. So while the floor can provide a template, a dancer is not restricted to that template.

When seen as a metaphor for organisational situations, 'a floor' can be metaphor for the basis on which employees can act, conduct their dance. This floor may have 'creative spring', a 'dangerous surface', or 'clear or undefined boundaries'. The dance steps and styles can be a metaphor for the workplace culture 'dancing together' or 'competitive showcasing'

On the dance floor very different movements are possible. These may be influenced by reflecting the timing, mood, tones, pace and origins of the music. This music might be provided by interactive musicians, mechanically 'piped in', or individually chosen and privately sung and

danced to. Dancers have an infinite range in selecting, engaging with or interpreting the music - displaying with the best performance perhaps when the music is a happy fit with their creativity and personality. Within an organisation, the music may be likened to the 'tonality' or culture of an organisation. Is it compatible with the sensitivities of the dancers? Are there ways individuals can select, adapt, or adjust this music so they can dance their best?

Dances may be rule-bound or improvised. In the case of formalised routines the rules of technique are critical, particularly for those learning new routines. Some rules are to ensure the synchronization of the dancers and for their safety. Solid expertise in technique eventually allows the dancer to modify and interrupt the dance or the flexibility to improvise. The result is a creative act. The creative act relies on the dancer's intuition as much as physical technique, endurance, and stamina. In organisations, rules are often necessary for the safety of others, and for the completion of collective aspirations and achievement of organizational goals.

Similarly this research represents a jointly choreographed dance of dancers skilled in self reflection, observation, dialogue, action and self responsibility. PAR is choreographed reflexively, within the boundaries democratically agreed upon by those participating. It is an evolving creative act of awareness.

The Programme - Contents

Poised to Dance – an introduction

Over the past twenty five years in New Zealand people have experienced the consequences of rapid rationalization in education, health and social services, the shifting of responsibility of delivery of significant parts of these services from the public to the private sector, and other changes associated with neo-liberalism. This restructuring of our social, political and economic environs has been facilitated by, and embedded more firmly the concomitant exposure to the vagaries of economic globalization exacerbating the polarities of "winners and losers" in this country. Lange (1999) describes the impact of this rapid and wide reaching, and Treasury driven reform on schools and education. We can extrapolate from this analysis in order to explore the effect of this transformation on people working in many organisations. The subtle and not so subtle pressures to conform to the template of neo-liberalism squeeze us consciously and unconsciously by its dictates. The casualties are the wellbeing of people and of Earth that sustains us. This is despite very recent disassociation with this form of macro-organisation of our lives, and the advocating for greater collective responsibility by leading politicians (Clarke, 2007). How people survive or flourish in this way of framing human endeavours is still most generally and deeply articulated as an individual responsibility. My work is based on an explicit commitment to the collective responsibility for the wellbeing of people and Earth that sustains us. This commitment is the theme of this report.

My research was conducted with the staff, and in the community context of Te Ra, a Waldorf educational community, with a commitment to the creation of a holistic learning environment for children, staff, parents and visitors. Even in a robust and explicitly 'people and Earth centred' organisation such as this, people experienced challenges of dancing to their own and the communal rhythm within this wider neo-liberal context. Well established caring and supportive rhythms among staff can be seen to be adversely affected by pressures to collude with, adjust to and normalise the invasive rhythms of the wider macro pulses. Articulating these encroaching disciplines of 'the market' is not a simple task in a community so internally focussed on wellbeing and so pressured by time to achieve so many professional, personal and community commitments in each day. We undertook our task together by taking the metaphors of 'Shadows'

and 'dance' to see whether through Participatory Action Research (PAR) we could articulate and transform that which was not well in individuals or this community.

PAR processes offer academics and practitioners opportunities to collaborate in exploration through with others, the intent of shifting the focus of management practices from an instrumental to a relational ethic. I drew on the work of Jung and Steiner for inspiration for exploration of the 'Shadows' of wellbeing to elicit unconscious or unspoken relational knowledge. The term 'dancing with Shadows', used deliberately to evoke loving and compassionate creativity, is an appropriate reflection of the strong creative impulse visible with the Te Ra community. The transformative potential of this qualitative research method, now well established in the Academy, is examined in terms of its potential to enhance wellbeing in the particular workplace of this project, with a view to extrapolating from this to other work-places and to communities and nations .

Through the wider analysis of the macro context within which the people of Te Ra aspire to their ideals that examines the pressures of the ever encroaching 'market mentality' on us all, I offer a broader conceptualisation of wellbeing. I advocate that we reach beyond the commodification of people and planet endemic in the individualistic and materialistic paradigm that predominates the western world. I advocate for the collaborative and emancipatory support of people towards fulfilling their potential as human beings. We can look to many people, families, cultures and communities in the world for inspiration, but all are living their ideals to the ever-encroaching pulsation of the macro beat: neo-liberalist economic determinism, whether in its ruthless and explicit form we experienced in NZ during the 1980s and 1990s (Kelsey, 1999) or in the softer version of the Third Way. This research was centred in an organisation explicitly committed to values that dance to a different rhythm to this encroaching beat.

This report uses dance as a metaphor for the many dimensions of this creative research. There are four sections to the report, each framed in a very different dance tradition: Latin, a strong, formal literature review with the exacting and demanding form of a tango; Ballet, a description of the research unfolding the story as in this form of dance; Classical, the method and findings of the research through dancing up close and personally with the participants of the research as is typical of a waltz; and finally, Contemporary Dance, the reflections and conclusions, stretching one's boundaries of imagination and comfort to bring new and different ideas as is associated commonly with this dance form.

Firstly in the Latin section, *Dancing with the Shadows of Neo-liberal Policies and Practices* explores the current reality of most western countries and New Zealand in particular, outlining the impact on people and the planet. The impact of neo-liberal reforms on the education sector are outlined with particular reference to Waldorf education. An alternative paradigm concerned for sustainable practices is offered for consideration.

Shadows of Workplace Cultures draws on the Jungian inference to the parts of ourselves and organisations that are hidden or not spoken about. Collusion with such Shadows has embedded into workplaces management practices reflecting an instrumental approach to organisational theory and practice.

Workplace Wellbeing & Sustainability - Getting to the Heart of the Matter explores alternative critiques current discourse around wellbeing and identifies more holistic approaches to wellbeing that may better sustain people and the planet.

Choosing the Dance Genre – Participatory Action Research describes the research methodology of PAR, the practical application and the validity of the chosen method for this research.

Rising in Relationships – the Art of Dialogue describes the transformative potential of the art of making meaning together and is a significant process in action research.

The next section is a beautifully choreographed Ballet – a gentle graceful dance description unfolding the story of the research, stepping through the dance from the opening steps to the final bow.

The Classical Dance section lays out the methods, experiences and the findings of our research demonstrating the interconnectedness of everything and everyone. Like the waltz and the polonaise, these were gentle, delightful, personal dances that were characterized by respect, compassion, acceptance and love. There were unexpected Shadows and streams of light.

Dancing up Close and Personal – Action Research Participation and Practice intimates the personal engaging in processes by participants which enabled them to deepen their relational knowledge.

Dancing with Shadows describes the Shadows that participants courageously discovered during the PAR processes.

Transformational Dance of Dialogue brings the words of the participants to speak for themselves and endorses the transformative potential of dialogue to develop greater understanding between people.

Neo-liberalism Unmasked acknowledges the impacts of neo-liberal policies and practices within the context of a Waldorf school, highlighting the tensions of the compromise between their educational, ecological and spiritual principles and personal priorities and the current social, economic, political and educative policies.

Wellbeing – Dancing from the Heart explores the aspirations for wellbeing articulated by the participants, reinforcing the existing levels of wellbeing and transformations that occurred as a result of our research processes.

And thus we come to the last dance, Contemporary Dance, *Themes of Reflective Shadow Dances* – an opportunity to reflect on the journey in new light, draw together themes that have resonated throughout the research and aspire to new dances of discovery.

To enter into the world of 'dancing with Shadows' is a privilege. To be part of a research project where people are courageous enough to engage in such a dance with an intent to be more loving, is a privilege. To be trusted to record the processes of learning and stretching is a privilege, knowing that what is written is a small representation of our relationship. My intent is to be loving, compassionate and empathetic in that quest.

Author's Note.

Research participants' words and my journal entries are indicated by Comic Sans MS font. References sourced from the Internet sometimes refer paragraph rather than page e.g. (¶51).

Latin

The formal literature review with the exacting and demanding form of a tango, demonstrating the flair and passion of the dancers

Gisela Galeassi & Gaspar Godoy, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Dancing with the Shadows of Neo-liberal Economic Policies and Practices

> Changing consciousness is not the same as altering the institutional basis of oppression; similarly, institutional reform cannot take place without a shift in consciousness capable of recognizing the very need for political, economic, and social changes and the need to reinvent the space of collective struggle and the strategies for constructing an inclusive democracy.   Giroux (2003, p.55)

Jaworski (1996) invites us to dance with fundamental shifts of perception necessary to explore the Shadows of our current economic, social and political reality. Citing Einstein, he writes: "The world we have created is a product of our way of thinking" and suggests that we cannot address issues that arise from this way of thinking with the same form of consciousness that created the problems (p.9). Giroux (2003) proposes that it is the responsibility of academics to advocate for the paradigm shifts necessary to bring transformation of the problems wrought by neo-liberal economic policies and practices, which have been accelerated and exacerbated by globalization (p.58). In bringing such an analysis to the education of future generations of organisational managers, Humphries, Dyer & Fitzgibbons (forthcoming b) suggest that in contemporary management scholarship, "explicit and implicit commitment to narrowly conceived ideas about economic efficiency and growth as proxies for human wellbeing has diminished the conditions of service in employment for many and has exacerbated poverty and its associated distress for the vulnerable" (p.1). Aware of the powerful effects of ruling influences, they advocate redirecting the hegemonic force of management education to transform the predominating instrumental ethic embedded in this form of scholarship into a relational ethic as a basis for how we treat one another. Building on the work of Emmanuel Kant (1964) they argue that such a transformation requires 'seeing' and valuing people as they *are*, not for what *use* they are to others.

Through the title of her book about the global impact of neo-liberal economic policies and practices Anita Roddick (2001) urges readers to "Take It Personally". This mandate sits well with the transformational aspirations articulated in the work of the critical theorists that, in part,

underpins this research. My underlying concern is the negative impact on wellbeing that comes from intensified exploitation, alienation of and stress on individuals, and the exacerbated poverty and environmental degradation that has come increasingly to be generally associated with neo-liberalism (Humphries & Grant, 2005, p.1).

I grew up during the 1950s and 1960s when the Keynesian social, economic and political policies focused on family and community development. While sheltered from the effects of structural adjustments to many in the population, particularly the destruction of Maori rural communities at that time, my concern for the current and future wellbeing of people and the Earth seems natural when reflecting on what have been described as "the golden years of milk and honey" of my youth. And indeed, my response during the early years of the imposition of neo-liberal policies in Aotearoa New Zealand, anaesthetised by the rapid pace of change, was to relegate the impacts of politics and the economy into the 'too difficult for me to comprehend so I won't think about it' category. I focused on self development and my relationships with my family and my community. I was swept along by a prevailing rhetoric that dancing down the 'yellow brick road' of American materialistic 'dream' way, and what Galbraith in 1958, termed "the affluent society", would lead the world to prosperity. Thus I unconsciously and consciously participated in and contributed to the hegemonic patterns of thinking and being until I personally experienced a negative impact of working within a non-profit agency that was being squeezed as a result of neo-liberal economic policies.

Having recognized my own engulfment by neo-liberal thinking patterns, my preference now is to dance more consciously and reflexively with its 'Shadows'. This preference is motivated by personal experience and observation of the visible degradation of the wellbeing of people and the planet which critics such as Roddick (2001), Chomsky (2003) Korten (1996) and Gore (2006).increasingly link to the policies and processes of economic development loosely grouped as 'neo-liberalism' that is now a global phenomenon. The critique of this form of development is no longer the concern only of radical thinkers but also of international economists such as Stiglitz, who served the President of the United Sates on the President's Council of Economic Advisors from 1993 to 1997, was Chief Economist at the World Bank from 1996 to 2000, and was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2001. Stiglitz (2002) describes globalization as being "powerfully driven by international corporations which move not only capital and goods across borders, but also technology" (p.10). While this has reduced the physical isolation of Aotearoa New Zealand in the world economy, it has also contributed to the stripping of assets (e.g. minerals, industries,

land and public services). As a proponent of globalization which Stiglitz described as a "force for good…that has the *potential* to enrich everyone in the world, particularly the poor" (original italics. 2002, p. ix), he acknowledges that the way in which globalization has been managed has not brought the promised economic benefits to some of the poorest nations in the world. In his 2001 writing he stated that the number of people living in poverty increased by almost 100 million during the 1990s yet world income rose by 2.5%, indicating a growth in the gap between the rich and the poor (p. 5). He quotes a grim reality of 2.8 billion people living on less than $2 a day (p.25). Stiglitz (2002) urged "radical rethinking" of globalization management (p.x). Even in developed countries such as the United States, Britain, Germany and Aotearoa New Zealand, poverty, in monetary terms, increased as consensus policies on health, housing and education especially impacted on the poorest and most disadvantaged people in our societies (Hambleton et al, 2003, pp.23, 28 &29, Kelsey, 1999, Social Deficit, ¶5).

Kesley (1999) outlines changes that happened here in Aotearoa New Zealand, particularly from 1984 when neo-liberal economic policies of "market liberalization and free trade, limited government, a narrow monetarist policy, a deregulated labour market, and fiscal restraint" were voluntarily adopted more rapidly and more deeply than anywhere else in the world (¶3). Few critics were given voice. Among them, Kelsey's work stands out as a meticulous documentation of policies and their effects. She suggests that as a result of the fifteen years of these rapid changes "unemployment and poverty have become structural features of New Zealand life" (ibid. Social Deficit, ¶1). She argues that erosion of the essentials of housing, health and education previously provided under the Welfare State system, created heavy burdens on those who already had the least resources. Kelsey's view was that the life as we knew it was turned upside down.

It is through my own experience that the reading of Kelsey rings so 'true'. A moment of clarity, an epiphany that I experienced and a contribution to changing of my intellectual energies occurred while listening to Wahu Kaara, from the organisation Global Call to Action Against Poverty at the forum on "Global Poverty: A Challenge to the G8" at St Paul's Cathedral London in 2005.   Kaara was appealing to the western world for the right to fair trade to lift her native Africa out of poverty and hearing her words, further motivated me to 'taking it personally'.   Another speaker exhorted "All of us can leave our mark for good (or ill)" and this was a watershed moment for me, as I acknowledged that my interest in enhancing staff wellbeing within our Aotearoa New Zealand social, economic and political climate was part of an even bigger picture that I could no longer

ignore – global wellbeing. Gandhi is reputed to have urged people to *be* the change you wish to see in the world (Senge et al, 2004, p.151) – his words have inspired me for many years. Wilson Schaef (1996) stated that she had a "responsibility to live this life with the talents I was given…not to think about it: just to do it. … It's really that simple. The rest is up to the Creator" (p.139).

Wahu Kaaru's challenge motivated me to consider how I could make a difference and how I could serve not only my community, but a world community. What was my response-ability? The hopeful experience of being in the audience with over two thousand concerned people at St Paul's Cathedral strengthened the power of my intention to 'think globally and act locally', to articulate the problems that neo-liberal economics have spawned world wide and within our country in what Kelsey (1999) terms the "New Zealand Experiment", and to act from this new consciousness. Previously I had viewed the world through my personal lens that was focused on the individual responsibility of dancers within my family and small community. I was uneasily semi-conscious of the context in which my world existed, avoiding becoming more conscious as I felt powerless in the face of the enormity of issues that neo-liberalism brings. I made a paradigm shift from the personal to the interpersonal and from the individual to the collective. In this chapter I explore the Shadow of neo-liberalism with the hope for personal and community understanding and transformation.

Dancing within the Slippery Template of Neo-liberalism

The purported impact on societies, cultures, values and ethics of an intensified commitment to neo-liberal economic policies and practices globally is a complex issue that can be outlined only briefly within this chapter. In Roddick's book (2001), George explains how the seed of neo-liberalism started at Chicago University by philosopher-economist Friedrick von Hayek and his students, such as Milton Friedman (pp.184-190). She posits that well funded neo-liberalists chose powerful networks of organisations, scholars, writers and public relations experts to develop, market and disseminate their ideology skilfully and persistently. Neo-liberals' Darwinistic ideology, survival of the fittest, seemed a "natural and normal human condition of mankind" and millions of dollars were spent on promoting their message (ibid p.186). An example of this was the media funded 1978 TV and video tape series "Freedom to Choose" with Milton Friedman presenting neo-liberal ideology of achieving political and economic success through individuals pursuing their "personal interest goals" rather than social goals (Friedman, 1980, p.x). J.K. Galbraith (1978, revised 1958 edition), an economist who was a contemporary of Friedman's,

suggested that the 'ordinary man' was being offered the opportunity to win or lose economically with the inherent insecurity associated with individualistic 'survival of the fittest' policies and practices (pp.51-52). The potential security of foundational needs being provided, in part, through the moderating policies of a democratic state that was associated with Keynesian policies, disappeared.

Proponents of neo-liberalism challenged the supply and demand rationale of Keynesian economic policies in which the taxation system ensured that the wealthy provided government with funds to distribute into public endeavour – health, education, social welfare, and public amenities (Heskett, 2006, ¶3). Heskett suggests that neo-liberals relentlessly promoted a market-determined, private, individualist and dualistic model with minimal government role in the economy, reduced taxation which provided organisations and individuals with more income, and unfettered freedom to spend as they choose. This was heralded as the way to success and fulfilment. Friedman (1980) proposed that investing money in companies and giving them tax breaks was the best way to stimulate the economy and that this would have a 'trickle-down' affect that would benefit everyone. This promise of a 'trickle-down' effect continues to be used to support neo-liberal policies. He argued that competition would create a 'bigger pie' from "higher productivity, greater capital investment and more widely diffused skills" creating higher salaries for workers (p.247). However, this bigger pie was to become dissected differently, with the wealthy taking an even bigger slice and leaving crumbs for the rest. Parker (2006) reflects on the predictions of Galbraith;

> On the supply-side nostrum that top-end tax cuts would trickle down to produce unparalleled growth, Galbraith the farm boy was colorfully clear: "After feeding oats to the horses, one should not gaze too closely at what trickles down to the sparrows" (¶13).

Galbraith graphically alluded to the imbalance that we are indeed currently experiencing, with the world's majority struggling to survive in the compost of the greed of a few. Galbraith (1978) argued that through advertising, private business generated consumer wants leading to an artificial affluence through the production of commercial goods and services, with a resulting neglect of the public sector (pp.124, 189-190). He suggested that the concern for production led to "pride in the most frivolous goods" while the supply of "the most significant and civilising services" is given "with regret" (p105). Parker (2006) states that Galbraith's economic hope was for personal freedom that arises from everyone having access to education, first-rate health care

and a protected environment - a freedom not measured by what was made or owned (¶9). The Shadow of neo-liberal economic policies and practices that Galbraith (1978) alluded to not only includes the neglect of the public sector and the associated exacerbation of inequality but also the unprecedented exploitation of the Earth's resources (p.258).

Neo-liberalism has been called "the defining political economic paradigm of our lives" in that "a relative handful of private interest is permitted to control as much as possible of social life" (McChesney, 1998, p.1). What was previously the domain of governments he argues, now is controlled through private corporations. Not all agree that this analysis is correct. Stiglitz (2002) posits that those convinced that trade and capital market liberalisation will bring benefit to everyone are prepared to enforce neo-liberal reforms despite the lack of support for them and the failure to produce widespread wellbeing (p.216). Proponents argue that the critics who advocate a more managed approach to economic matters are in the way of the very thing they hope to achieve, and that liberalisation is the only sure, if somewhat painful, journey towards the ideals of emancipation that democratic societies espouse (Friedman, 1980, pp.5-7). Stiglitz (2002) says that "advocates of market fundamentalism still argue that the inefficiencies of markets are relatively small and the inefficiencies of government are relatively large" (p.219). He states that the Washington Consensus Policies[1] paid scant recognition to the social fairness, "benefiting the well-off at the expense of the poor" (ibid, pp. 20 & 78)

There are a growing number of critics who now make this association of social degradation with neo-liberalism. Humphries & Grant (2005) cite Bauman (1998), Chomsky (2003), George (2002), Giddens (2002), Kelsey (2002), Korten et al (2004), Roddick (2001), Shiva (2000, 1993), and Stiglitz (2003) as representational of the growing number of accessible writers who offer a deeper critique of these current ways of "organising humanity and our stewarding of the Earth that sustains us" (p2). Stiglitz (2002) recognizes that "commercial interests and values have superseded concern for the environment, democracy, human rights and social justice" (p.20).

As Galbraith predicted, we now live in a market driven consumer society characterised by increased poverty and social injustice while compromising the planet's ecosystem through

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[1] The **Washington Consensus** http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington_Consensus (Retrieved February 07)

polluting the Earth by creating landfills of waste, plundering the Earth's resources and extinguishing life forms (Humphries & Grant, 2005, p.2; Capra, 1997, p.291). In a 'production' society of individuals, lip service only is paid to collective wellbeing (Galbraith, 1978, p.xxii). Giroux (2003) suggests that we collude with this competitive regime because the message that everyone who works hard enough or smart enough can succeed and survival of the fittest, appealed to our commonsense and to our human vanity and greed (p.157). He concludes; 'as society is defined through the culture, values and relations of neo-liberalism, the relationship between a critical education, public morality, and civil responsibility as a condition for creating thoughtful and engaged citizens is sacrificed all too willingly in the interest of finance capital and the logic of profit-making' (p.155-156). Giroux cites Bauman as hypothesizing that "What, however, makes the neo-liberal world-view sharply different from other ideologies – indeed, a phenomenon of a separate class – is precisely the absence of questioning; its surrender to what is seen as implacable and irreversible logic of social reality" (p.157). The reductionist lexicon of neo-liberalism is subtle, pervasive and invasive, permeating all aspects of our lives, muting and disabling most people's concerns and offering few possibilities to translate those anxieties into public, collective enquiries. Giroux (2003) posits that:

> ...as globalization saps the power of the state and individuals to influence the modalities of power, politics, and ideology, collective action seems improbable and politics turns inward. Individuals now assume the burden of their own fate, even though the forces that shape their destiny are beyond the scope of individual behaviour. Under such circumstance, all problems are defined as self-made, reduced to matters of character and individual initiative (or lack of it). The result is that personal worries and private troubles are disconnected from public issues and social problems. For millions, the political economy of insecurity now becomes endemic to everyday life and is understood in relation to a depoliticized notion of citizenship, largely defined as the right to consume rather than the ability of individuals to shape the basic economic and political structures of their society (p105).

Hertz (2001, p.1) and Hambleton et al (2002, p.xv) draw our attention to the tidal wave of resistance to globalization that has been building. This growing resistance is being demonstrated to world leaders since the millennium at G8, IMF, World Trade Organisation and World Bank meetings and through the establishment of the anti-globalization movements such as the World Social Forum. The last-mentioned organisation meets strategically in the same month as its

"great capitalist rival"[2] the World Economic Forum to over shadow coverage in the news media. Critics are becoming more vocal and more individuals are waking up to the devastation of human and planetary wellbeing and taking action. The inability of members of the World Trade Organisation, "the powerhouse of superpower domination, economic coercion and political bullying", to reach agreement; constant political restructuring; air, water and ground pollution becoming a visible problem impacting noticeably on our lives; and health, education and social services floundering; all point to a vulnerability that Kelsey (2003) suggests creates a time that is ripe for questioning and transformation (¶¶ 5-7). Al Gore's recent documentary "An Inconvenient Truth" (2006) links global warming and climate changes with current economic, political and social policies and practices and urges viewers to 'take it personally' by engaging in a variety of suggested positive actions.

McChesney (cited in Merino & Mayper, 2005, p.1) and Giroux (2004) posit that in the USA, "corporations increasingly design not only the economic sphere but also shape legislation and policy affecting all levels of government and with limited opposition" (p.xvii). Giroux (2003) suggests that the resulting domestication of people from the cultural changes manifested by these policies and processes, has subjugated their human capacities in order to fit into market-based values, relationship, identities and practices (p.153). He alludes to the increasing difficulty for citizens to challenge the status quo of neo-liberalism when they are regarded merely as consumers in unregulated markets that produce and distribute everything from material goods to spiritual values, from capital development to social justice, and from profitability to sustainable environments (p.156). Commercial values take centre stage, sidelining democratic community values.

The manner in which commercial values have upstaged social, societal and moral values is outlined by anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff (2000), who state that the forces of neo-liberal policies:

> …displace political sovereignty with the sovereignty of "the market" as if the latter had a mind and morality of its own; to reorder the ontology of production and consumption…to encourage rapid movement of persons and goods, and sites of fabrication, thus calling into question existing forms of community; to equate freedom with choice, especially to

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[2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Social_Forum (Retrieved 21 April 2007)

consume, to fashion the self, to conjure with identities; to give free reign to the "forces" of hyper-rationalization; to parse human beings as free-floating labour units, commodities, clients, stakeholders, strangers, their subjectivity distilled into ever more objectified ensembles of interests, entitlements, appetites, desires, purchasing "power" (Comaroff, 2000, cited in Giroux, 2003, p.157)

The domestication and objectifying of people described above is the result of the key elements of economic neo-liberalism that critical theorists Martinez and García (2000) describe; tax reforms, the privatisation of state owned enterprises that previously provided key public services such as transportation, electricity, health, education and social services; deregulation of laws that could reduce profits and protect workers and the environment; the reduction of government expenditure on social services, health and education; and the shift of emphasis from what is best for the community to promoting individual responsibility, which they argue disadvantages the financially poor people in society (¶6). The dances of the 'haves' and the 'have nots' appear more acutely defined than we saw them thirty years ago.

Giroux (2003) proposes that neo-liberal discourse promulgates 'corporate culture' with the good life, defining individual success and fulfilment in terms of material purchases. He critiques this 'corporate culture' as an "ensemble of ideological and institutional forces that functions politically and pedagogically to both govern organisational life through senior managerial control and to fashion compliant workers, depoliticized consumers, and passive citizens" (p.158).

Scharmer suggests that "the shadow side of such instrumentalization of people is losing our sense of autonomy, our will, and the real ability to make choices" (Senge et al, 2004, p.237). Flowers (ibid) includes "our humanity - our capacity to sense and feel" in the abilities that are diminished through this instrumentalization. 'Humanity' and words such as 'love', 'compassion', 'care', and 'feelings' are rarely used in business management practice or theory. 'Human capital' denotes the place that people have in the economy, as 'stock' or 'property' in a business. However, Senge acknowledges our complicity of this instrumental entrapment by stating "We create the machine collectively, but we feel trapped individually" (ibid, p.238). He suggests that in the face of our individual impotence, we deny our contributions to current realities. Klein (2002) suggests that people "retreat into a self-referential media cocoon" where they can remain blind, numb, deaf and mute to the pain and suffering that is occurring not only on their doorsteps, but in the wider world as well (pp. 169-171). Williamson (2003) argues that we do not so much lack

compassion - we avoid it. Too often, she notes, "we resist compassion with a peculiar hypocrisy, extolling the virtues of volunteerism, for instance, while making volunteerism more of a necessity by diminishing our budgetary commitments to the poor and the powerless. In America, we take away housing for thousands, then build a hundred houses for Habitat for Humanity and everyone gets to feel good" (p. 220). In this way our wellbeing is compromised as we unconsciously collude with neo-liberal practices that do not emancipate people, but instead stymie abilities to make choices, voice concerns and take action.

This is a contrary view to that of Friedman (1980), who suggested that neo-liberalism promised a "rebirth of freedom" (p.7) and posited that a society that put individual freedom ahead of equality, would experience both greater freedom and greater equality as a "happy by-product" (ibid, p.148). The resulting lack of freedom and equality for the majority of the world's population and the widening gap between the rich and poor are far removed from the predicted outcome. While the world has seen tremendous growth in development over the past twenty-five years as a result of free markets, innovative technology and communications, the 'invisible hand' of neo-liberalism has not had the positive social outcomes for the majority of the world. The Shadow of neo-liberalism is being exposed by not only by critical theorists, but also by activists, scholars, indigenous people, and conservationists throughout the world. Green (1999) suggests that Polanyi predicted this Shadow in his 1944 book The Great Transformation, "To allow the market mechanism to be sole director of the fate of human beings and their natural environment...would result in the demolition of society" (p.73).

Over two centuries ago Adam Smith, in his famous classic book (1776), "An Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations" used the term the "invisible hand" to describe the social impact that unconsciously accompanied the self interest of capitalism. He wrote:

> *As* every individual, *therefore,* endeavours *as much as he can both* to employ his capital *in the support of domestic industry, and* so *to direct that industry* that its produce may be of *the* greatest value; *every individual necessarily labours to render the annual revenue of the society as great as he can*. He generally, *indeed,* neither intends to promote the public interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it. *By preferring the support of domestic to that of foreign industry,* he intends only his own security; *and by directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends* only his own gain, and he is in this, *as in many other cases,* led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his

intention. ***Nor is it <u>always</u> the worse for the <u>society</u> that it was no part of it.*** By pursuing his own interest he <u>frequently</u> promotes that of ***the*** <u>society</u> more effectually than ***when*** he really intends to promote it.

(Chapter II of Book IV of Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* cited by Rankin, 1998, author's underlined and bolded italics*)*

Rankin suggests that Smith was clearly urging capitalists to invest in the 'domestic' market as a way of supporting the national economy even though they could make greater profits from foreign investment. He maintains that Smith's intention in advocating support of the national economy was the creation of economic stability thus ensuring the wellbeing of capitalists, and inadvertently the wellbeing of society. This view challenges the assumption that economic policies based on foreign investment as we have seen over the past twenty-five years with neo-liberalism, will result in positive social outcomes nationally. Rankin maintains that Smith suggested that even as capitalists pursue self interest, they also have a social intent thus he believes that Smith's reference to 'the invisible hand' indicates "that our social consciences lead us to re-evaluate our self-interest, without our being fully conscious of the process" (¶¶ 5-9).

While Adam Smith may have been alluding to the positive aspects of social contribution, the Shadow of the unconscious also needs acknowledging. Wehr (2002) outlines Jung's concept of this Shadow in describing the unacknowledged, unconscious behaviours associated with wartime in 1917:

> The psychological concomitants of the present war – above all the incredible brutalization of public opinion, mutual slanderings, the unprecedented fury of destruction, the monstrous flood of lies, and man's incapacity to call a halt to the bloody demon – are uniquely fitted to force upon the attention of every thinking person the problem of the chaotic unconscious which slumbers uneasily beneath the ordered world of the conscious (p.79).

Jung could easily have been describing the current Shadow of neo-liberalism and globalization. Rankin (1998) argues that Smith was not suggesting that capitalists should be the "rulers of mankind"' nor did he support commercial greed (¶10). He highlights the erroneous extrapolation of Smith's liberal economic policies to neo-liberalism with its focus on maximizing individual profit as being best for individuals and their communities. In Smith's world it would seem that there was

moral component to liberalism which Rankin and LeFevre (2006 ¶8) suggest is lacking in neo-liberalism.   Giroux (2004) deplores the 'debased belief' of neo-liberalism that profit making is the 'essence of democracy'.   Stiglitz (2002) also posits that globalization has done little for democracy as countries are dictated to by international financial institutions (p.247).

Hambleton et al (2002) comments that with 'free' trade we have industrial restructuring, mobility of labour, technology transfer and electronic communication creating remarkable global opportunities, creating a "dual, segregated labour market with increased unemployment and growing inequality" (p.1). Giroux (2003) cites that companies focused on seeking cheaper labour markets offshore or over borders ignore the social and economic consequences of this local disinvestment.   He posits that success of new technologies and production process relies on replacement and elimination of labour (p.105).   This results in human resource management practices that sanction 'rationalizations' and redundancies, and in organisational structures, processes and contracts aimed at maximizing profit. The draconian impact of neo-liberalism is seen in the marginalization of the vulnerable groups within the labour market and those affected by limited access to housing, health, and education.   Stiglitz (2002) states that "it is not true that 'a rising tide lifts all boats'. Sometimes a quickly rising tide, especially when accompanied by a storm, dashes weaker boats against the shore, smashing them to smithereens." He posits that those most vulnerable in our society have experienced such devastation.

The apparent lack of social conscience leads many social and political theorists such as McChesney and Chomsky to describing neo-liberalism as "the most dangerous ideology of our time" (Giroux, 2003, p.57). Giroux (2004) posits that society is no longer the space where values and relationships necessary for democracy exist, but instead have been 'recast' as an ideology of American supremacy through combining religious and market fundamentalism (p.xix). Roddick (2001) outlines how locally, nationally and globally predicted social outcomes of neo-liberalism have not eventuated (p.188).

Hambleton et al (2002) alludes to the 'trickle down' Shadow of the impact of globalization on individual democracy in local communities when he posits that: globalism is far more than a socio-economic phenomenon. It has far reaching consequences for local culture and local politics and how urban governments manage a range of political, economic, social and environmental issues. In particular, it has major implications for the conduct of local democracy (p.4). Bauman (1998) cites John Kavanagh of the Washington Institute of Policy Studies as saying that

globalisation has given more opportunities to the extremely wealthy to make more money quickly. While it is very beneficial to the very few it leaves out or marginalises two thirds of the world's population (p.71).

Savitch (2002) suggests that unprecedented global seamlessness has been propelled by the technological and communication revolution. This has resulted in the impact of change in one country having almost immediate consequences in other countries, for example the sale of a business to a multi-national company or the importation of goods previously produced locally (pp.19-20). A new term "glocalisation" (p.9) describes current co-existence of many global and local policies.

Dancing "The New Zealand Experiment"

New Zealand critical theorist Kelsey (1999) describes the paradigm shift from the Keynesian welfare state and state socialism to the adoption of neo-liberal economic policies from 1984 onwards as the "New Zealand Experiment". Political scientist Clancy (undated) suggests that in a similar manner to Britain and America the Labour neo-liberal coalition (including organized business, ruling parties, and key state agencies) sought to embed a basic transformation of the entire state, (for example, trade de-regularization, reduction in taxation, sale of state-owned enterprises, withdrawal from health, education and social services,) and by structuring the changes to ensure they were not easily reversible (¶5). Proponents of these policies claimed its success through measurements of budgetary surplus, a stable currency, favourable credit ratings, moderate inflation and a buoyant export sector (ibid, ¶2). Lange (1999), Prime Minister of Aotearoa New Zealand from 1984 to 1989, reflected that like most modern governments, the policies of the Labour Government at this time were preoccupied with the articulation and achievement of efficiency and profitability – as defined by the neo-liberals in Treasury. There was promulgation of the view that the State processes were unwieldy, outmoded and costly. Restructuring the State was viewed as an inevitable and preferred complement to the economy by the neo-liberal politicians (¶¶51-53).

Clancy (undated) states that these changes in New Zealand were labelled and heralded as a 'prototype for neo-liberal reform' by the international agencies, International Monetary Fund, European Management Forum, and International Institute of Economics (ibid ¶3). Kelsey (1999) argues that proponents chose to ignore the far reaching political, economic, cultural and social

deficits, the Shadow of neo-liberalism, which impacted on families and communities, rendering them impotent in the face of these rapid changes;

> Most voters felt paralyzed by the pace of change, confused by the Labour government's role after 1984, and trapped in nostalgia for an interventionist welfare state which was disappearing before their eyes. While they felt uneasy, most remained isolated, insecure, unorganized, and politically inert (Political Deficit, ¶1).

In her critique of New Zealand's economic policies in the decade following 1984, Kelsey explores the Shadows of these rapid changes that pervaded all aspects of New Zealand life and summarises the far reaching impact:

> The ethos of the market pervaded everyday life. Even the language was captured, dehumanizing the people and communities it affected. It became acceptable to talk of "shedding workers," as if they were so much dead skin. "Incentives" meant cutting benefits to force people into low-paying jobs. "Broadening the tax base" meant shifting the tax burden from the rich to the poor. "Freeing up the market" meant removing all impediments to profit-making. "Deinstitutionalization" meant closing state institutions and shifting responsibility for their occupants to poor families and communities. "An open economy" meant welcoming foreign purchasers of the country's assets and resources. "International competitiveness" meant competing with countries whose economies are based on prison and child labour, grinding poverty, and environmental degradation (1999. Cultural deficit, ¶2).

Kelsey appropriates Friedman's title "Freedom to Choose" when describing the choices that the New Zealand Experiment provided for the poor – freedom to choose how to spend what little they had on their very basic, essential needs for housing, health, education and food (ibid, Social Deficit ¶5). Kelsey (2003) suggests that "relative poverty remains a reality for one quarter of our families, especially in Maori, Pacific and new immigrant communities. There is gaping inequality. Neo-liberalism has intensified the legacy of colonisation, racially exploitive immigration, gender and class divides. Yet the reality has become normalised" (p7).

She also points to the stark reality of New Zealand's place within, and our reliance on the dominance of international capital. Kelsey cites the diminishing of our manufacturing industry, the

foreign control of most of our transport, communications, energy, media and financial sectors, and the sale of natural resources to foreign investors creating a fragile economic infrastructure and an import dependency that creates trade deficits. She posits that the low tax regime coupled with fiscal austerity has led to "dilapidated social and physical infrastructure" (ibid). The Shadows of neo-liberalism impinge of every aspect of New Zealanders lives, forming a nebulous background in which to think and act. King (2003) posits that when politicians woke up to the social cost of neo-liberalism, the policies and practices were ingrained (pp.491-492). Now New Zealanders engulfment in this entrenched position appears commonplace.

This can be seen clearly in the New Zealand education sector. The devolution of the State responsibility for education, health and social services to the community was promulgated as opportunities for individual and community involvement in the shaping and delivery of services. The State's withdrawal of responsibility was managed through the introduction of Tomorrows Schools in 1989. Local responsibility for managing schools was given to Boards of Trustees comprising community elected parents, teachers elected by staff, and the school principal. Parents' motivation for this role varied, and over time some who felt obligated and unable to resign resented the amount of work and relatively little 'real' control (Grant, 2006), The State retained the over-arching policy decisions for curriculum standards and measurements, finance allocations, and zoning. Lange (1999), who was Prime Minister when Tomorrows Schools was introduced, acknowledged the intent of the government at the time not only to commercialise education by withdrawing from its management but also to discourage debate with the teachers and the public:

> It's also fair to say that the removal of layers of education bureaucracy was a strategy very much favoured at the time by the Treasury, because it calculated that community education forums and boards of trustees were not going to be a significant force in future battles over education policy or resources (¶ 49).

Lange (1999) acknowledged that this relegated teachers to a position of potential conflict by having effectively two employers and little professional support, which was prophetically and accurately criticized by teachers unions at the time as being primarily fiscally motivated. The intention of Tomorrows Schools was to provide equal education for all children. Lange argued that what we have in Aotearoa New Zealand currently is very different from the original vision. "It follows that I don't believe in a market model of schooling. Markets are made by winners and

losers, and I don't believe we can afford to have losers among our schools" (ibid, ¶18). Lange commented that the subsequent government created competition within education with the removal of schools zones and the system of ballots to enable students to attend out-of-zone schools. Removing zoning, for example, favoured parents who could afford to transport their children or move closer to the school of their choice, which resulted in greater disparity in the social, cultural, economic and education characteristics of schools. Lange comments that some schools could afford sophisticated marketing techniques or high profile cultural events to allure 'customers', creating inequality and 'survival of the fittest' with some schools flourishing while others struggled.

He noted that the Parent Advocacy Council, a group originally instigated to provide an avenue for parents to raise concerns about school's performance, was dismantled by a subsequent government. This effectively reduced parents' redress to the educational system. Lange reflected that the Tomorrows Schools' principle of greater parental involvement in decision making for their children's education still has validity. His view is that the competitive education model in practice has "meant that many students are condemned to failing schools" (Ibid) and created a reality of unequal education opportunities for New Zealand's children. Some private schools that receive substantial fees from parents and government funding are greater 'winners' than the 'cash strapped' schools in some areas of New Zealand. In 2004, of the 2646 schools in New Zealand, 325 were private integrated schools[3].

The new management of schools under Tomorrows Schools has resulted in higher levels of reporting to meet government accountability criteria. In a 2003 qualitative study[4] of twenty secondary schools reviewing factors affecting recruitment and retention of teachers, the time required for completing "the ever-increasing amount of paperwork and administrative tasks that they felt did not directly contribute to teaching and learning" was described as "overwhelming" and intrusive into their key role as teachers. In the market driven model of education, competition drives high levels accountability and private integrated schools are subjected to the same levels of accountability reporting as State schools.

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[3] www.qpec.org.nz/privatisation/**integrated_schools**.doc (Retrieved March 07)

[4] http://educationcounts.edcentre.govt.nz/publications/schooling/recruitment-retention.html (Retrieved Feb 07)

In Aotearoa New Zealand in the 1980's, when the government outsourced responsibility for governance of its schools, it provided bulk funding to cover not only salaries but all aspects of the business of managing a school. Munro (1999) outlines how the previous system of subsidies to private schools was abolished, in effect forcing them to become integrated with the State education system which requiring higher levels of compliance. He suggests that integration was timely for the struggling Waldorf schools:

> Undoubtedly the situation of New Zealand Steiner schools before integration had always been difficult, and sometimes precarious. As with any initiatives in the cultural sphere, the schools were heavily dependent on local and overseas donations, voluntary work and assistance, and tuition fees. Many potential parents felt themselves excluded by the level of tuition fees even where policies stated that no child should be excluded from the school on financial grounds. Teachers had traditionally been on minimal salaries, and by the late eighties many parents, teachers and friends would have recognised that a pervasive culture of poverty had developed, which itself was beginning to wear down the strong sense of community that at most times characterised each school's social life. In many cases buildings were becoming unusable or unsafe, if not totally inadequate.
>
> Munro (1999, Changes in the State's Relation to Private Schools, ¶4)

Munro states that staff and parents had been lobbying government for recognition of Waldorf schools as an educational option for parents since the 1970's and had sought an independent legal integration act without success. Then in 1989 they were offered the option to integrate under the Private Schools Conditional Integration Act 1975 which created serious debate within the Waldorf fraternity.

> Were we in danger of selling our soul? Was it not better to be poor and free than rich and bound? Stereotypes and suspicions abounded. Had not Rudolf Steiner spoken quite clearly about the state having nothing to do with the administration of education? (ibid, Debate & Dissension ¶1)

On the other hand,
> If we were already so subject to state regulation as private schools, would it not be better to be on the inside influencing what happened? If more and more parents could get access to Waldorf education via state recognition and support, would not this ultimately

strengthen our movement? Would it actually be possible to get legal recognition and protection for the special nature of Waldorf education and, thus armed, be able to proceed upon our own self-determined course to deepen and involve our education work and institutions? (ibid, Debate and Dissension, ¶2 & 3)

For the Waldorf schools, the sweeping changes under Tomorrows Schools in the state system paved the way for integration that allowed them to retain their special character of anthroposophy. Munro outlines how the Government provided money for teachers' salaries as well as some operational costs, requiring Boards of Trustees to source funds to cover the shortfall. Parents' levies were used to finance commercial and private loans for buildings, training and specialist teaching staff. As an integrated school they were governed by the same legislation for financial reporting and audit requirements as all state educational organisations. The Ministry of Education determines the policies and funding while the Education Review Office is responsible for evaluating schools and reporting their findings to the public[5].

Each school was required to establish a governing body, a Board of Trustees, produce a public charter outlining their legal educational requirements and philosophical intentions, adhere to a large number of administrative and reporting requirements and maintain cognizance with a wide range of legal requirements, from employment law to building codes. Munro suggests that Waldorf Schools have the continual pressure of remaining vigilant of possible negative impacts upon their 'special character' from the high level of external accountability that is associated with being integrated with the state (Ibid).

Munro notes that:

> It is a constant challenge to find creative ways of assisting the authorities to remember that, while integrated schools are state schools, they often need to do things differently if their special character is to be fostered and not jeopardised.

> Considerable effort and resources have had to be devoted to administration and paperwork, detracting from what could otherwise be devoted to purely educational endeavour. But this is a complaint of New Zealand educators everywhere! Another

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[5] http://www.ero.govt.nz/ero/publishing.nsf/Content/Integrated%20Schools%20-%20Position%20in%20the%20State%20System (Retrieved Feb 07)

demanding area has been to maintain the colleges of teachers at the hub or heart of the school. Some schools have experienced a tendency for the College of Teachers to be displaced somewhat by other organs in the integrated school constitution. A lot of effort was needed to go into defining the appropriate roles of the various bodies, to ensure that the spirit of the Waldorf School can prevail.(The Experience to Date - Positives and Negatives, ¶7 & 8)

From this description the efforts required to sustain the 'special character' of Waldorf schools appear to create tension for staff and Boards of Trustees in their dance within the template of universal educational policies and processes. Giddens (1998) also suggests that tension is common with universal mechanistic approach of neo-liberal policies because contradictory values are in a constant process of redress – "devotion to the free market on one hand, and to the traditional family and nation on the other" (p.15). He posits that the "dynamism of market societies undermines traditional structures of authority and fractures communities; neo-liberalism creates new risks and uncertainties which it asks citizens to ignore" (ibid).

In response to these social tensions, New Zealand followed Britain's lead in the adoption of Giddens' (1998) Third Way outlined in his book of the same title, explained as the way forward through 'renewal of social democracy' (p.viii). He suggests that while critics of third way view it as a guise for 'warmed-over neo-liberalism" it is promoted as an alternative response to obsolete views of the left, and inadequate and contradictory views of the new right (p. 25). It offers some social responsibility with economic profitability as the priority. He outlines the tenets of social democracy; equality, protection of the vulnerable, freedom as autonomy, no rights without responsibilities, no authority without democracy, cosmopolitan pluralism and philosophic conservatism (p.66).

Giddens states that: "The overall aim of third way politics should be to help citizens pilot their way through the major revolutions of our time: globalization, transformations in personal life and our relationship to nature." He appears to tread a cautionary middle road between recognizing the destructive effect of globalization on local self sufficiency yet stating that economic and cultural protectionism is neither sensible nor desirable. Giddens proposes that third way politics should primarily be focused on social justice, seeking to redefine the rights and responsibilities of the individual in relation to their community (p.64-65). This has been seen in New Zealand through the fostering of 'socially responsible practices' in private and public enterprise. These are

demonstrated through increasing visibility of corporate support of non-profit organisations, the establishment of such promotional organisations as the Council for Socially Responsible Investment that are focused on ethical, sustainable contribution, and such government schemes as KiwiSaver [6].

Giddens advocates partnerships between government and community agencies to foster social renewal and development (p.69) and intimates that this would require social welfare agencies to modernize. Zappalà et al. (2001, p.2) and Tennant (2001, p.154) outline changes that have resulted in non-profit organisations conforming to "macho-style" corporate-like structures through implementation of such policies as human resource practices, contracts for service that are regulated through mandated reports and audits, and rationalization of resources. In New Zealand, amongst many issues identified by the 2002 Community & Voluntary Sector Working Party[7] was the need for government to collaborate with the community sector on developing policies. This report recognised the "fundamental imbalance in power and resources between government and community organisations. A healthy relationship recognises this imbalance and seeks opportunities to mitigate its effects" (p.63).

As a result, the Ministry of Social Development established the Office of the Community and Volunteer Sector in 2003 to foster this healthy relationship. The people in this Office are mandated to work alongside staff in government departments who are developing policies that impact on the community and voluntary sector and potentially to redress this imbalance. As a government department charged with bridging this gap, these people are face a delicate task. In order for Office staff to facilitate this relationship, they need the support of and communication with the community and voluntary sector. However, community agencies need to remain vigilant to the subtle collusion with neo-liberal rhetoric, which could minimise organisations' concerns about the sustained pressure to meet contractual requirements. It behoves us all to recognise that wellbeing of people and the planet relies on each one of us treating the other with dignity, respect, understanding and becoming vocal in our support of others.

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[6] http://www.kiwisaver.govt.nz/about (Retrieved March 07)

[7] http://www.ocvs.govt.nz/documents/reports/he-waka-kotuia.pdf (Retrieved September 06)

A Reflexive Dance of Interdependence

> Our task must be to widen our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.
>
> Einstein (cited in Senge et al, 2004, p.209)

Prophetically in 1973, Schumacher (1999) predicted this Shadow of neo-liberalism - the exploitation of people and the planet. That paradigm has become as unnoticed as the air that we breathe – almost undetectable except for when we experience its fouling or unexpected purity! The paradigm fosters competition in which atomised individuals are depicted as winners and losers. It is driven by a limited form of rationality that appears to focus all attention to economic growth as an unproblematic ideal that all energies should be harnessed to. Schumacher and other critics of neo-liberalism and globalization offer an alternative of the collective, the interconnectedness of all that speaks of collaboration and commitment to wellbeing of people and the planet.

Long before the full impact of neo-liberal economies and globalization, Schumacher observed that:

> In the excitement over the unfolding of his scientific and technical powers, modern man has built a system of production that ravishes nature and a type of society that mutilates man. If only there were more and more wealth, everything else, it is thought, would fall into place. Money is considered to be all-powerful; if it could actually buy non-material values, such as justice, harmony, beauty and even health, if could circumvent the need for them or compensate for their loss. The development of production and the acquisition of wealth have thus become the highest goals of the modern world in relation to which all other goals, no matter how much lip-service is paid to them, have come to take second place. The highest goals require no justification: all secondary goals have finally to justify themselves in terms of the service their attainment renders to the attainment of the highest (p248).

Schumacher observed that large organisations were viewing people and the Earth as resources that would create income, rather than as capital that is reliant on good stewardship (ibid, pp.3-10). 'Income' acknowledges receiving; stewardship denotes entrusted management of something. His concern was that people and the Earth were not being managed in a trustworthy manner. He offered the possibility of organisations based on a 'common wealth' structure similar to the Scott Bader Commonwealth (pp.232-239). This organisation gave equal priority to four tasks;

'economic' production, 'technical' marketing, 'social' satisfaction, and development of workers and 'political' - "encouraging other men and women to change society by offering them an example by being economically healthy and socially responsible" (ibid, p.237).

Schumacher predicted that the philosophy of materialism would be challenged not only spirituality but by physical events in the form of terrorism, genocide, pollution and exhaustion of nature (ibid, p, 249). His recommendation was the development of a lifestyle in which patterns of production and consumption of material things are afforded secondary place to wellbeing of people and the planet. He stressed the imperative of this action, as the alternative could be the downfall of civilisation for our children and grandchildren (ibid, p.250). He urged that people take action by "putting our own house in order" as we re-member what he calls "traditional wisdom of mankind" (ibid, p.252), our ability to acknowledge in our stillness, our intuitive knowing about finding "Right Livelihood", the middle way between materialistic heedlessness and traditionalist immobility (ibid, p.45).

An economic system based on simplicity and non-violence, and maximum wellbeing achieved through minimum consumption was Schumacher's proposal (ibid, p.41). In our current world there is growing concern for the quantitative and qualitative impact of the levels of consumption on people and the planet's wellbeing. Prescott-Allen (2001), in acknowledging that qualitative data on sustainability and wellbeing are difficult to communicate clearly, suggests that people need to start addressing the issues of sustainable wellbeing of all things locally (pp. 10-11). Over fifteen years ago Miller (1991) suggested that our social needs are best served locally:

> According to Rene Dubos, "we are beginning to witness a revival of regionalism that will complement the global point of view" (p.10). The world of forty or fifty years from now, Dubos believes, will be One World, but it will include many local worlds within it. We need these local worlds because "human beings require more than health and emotional security." Human life is also made up of "emotional and spiritual satisfactions that have their origins in our contacts with our physical world and social surroundings."

> These local worlds are the immediate communities in which we live. They are made necessary, paradoxically, because nation-states, and the industrialized world everywhere, do not provide a sufficient sense of community. E.D. Hirsch stresses this point in *Cultural Literacy* when he writes, "Localism is constantly being reinvented all over the world, since the large, modern national state does not and cannot lend enough social

glue or emotional meaning to satisfy the human desire for community". (Miller, 1991, ¶4-5)

The need for human sustainability through community, is addressed by Capra (1997) who posits that the current 'systems' thinking and linear patterns of cause and effect need to be replaced with a paradigm of cyclical interdependence. Bohm (cited in Senge et al, 2004) argues that fragmentation – making a false "division where there is a tight connection" and "seeing separateness where there is wholeness" - is the "hidden source of the social, political, and environmental crises facing the world" (p196). Capra advocates a world view based on deep ecological awareness of the interconnectedness of all living things that affect and are affected by each other. He refers to the cyclical evolution of communities of organisms over billions of years and suggests that sustainable patterns of production and consumption need to replicate nature rather than continue to plunder the Earth's resources and pollute the planet with waste (p.291). This will be possible he states, if we can recognise that:

> All members of an ecological community are interconnected in a vast and intricate network of relationships, the web of life. They derive their essential properties, and, in fact, their very existence from these relationships to each other. Interdependence – the mutual dependence of all life processes on one another – is the nature of ecological relationships (p.290).

Capra argues that the behaviour of every living member of an ecosystem depends on the behaviour of others and we need to move beyond our separatist systems thinking to focus on the whole and from our preoccupation with materialism to an intent on relationships (ibid). Senge et al (2004) reinforces this view; "unlike machines, living systems such as your body or a tree, create themselves. They are not mere assemblages of their parts but are continually growing and changing along with their elements" (p3). He cites Goethe, who maintained that a part was a manifestation of a whole rather than just a component of it. Neither exists without the other. The whole exists through continually manifesting parts and the parts exist as an embodiment of the whole (ibid, p.4). Roddick (2001) uses the words of Martin Luther King, "where there is injustice anywhere, there is injustice everywhere", to remind us of the imperative of seeing our collective responsibility by "taking it personally'. Senge (2004) quotes Einstein as saying that the "optical delusion of our consciousness" is whereby we experience ourselves as "something separate from the rest", urging that "our task must be to widen our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures…" (p.209). Physicist Bohm, after observing the interactions of the two parts of a split atom in distant locations alludes to the possibility of our interdependence extending beyond the 'external world' to include the linking of thoughts, emotions, and measurable phenomena (ibid, pp.200-201).

Kelsey alludes to the wide permeation of the Shadow of the "invisible hand" of neo-liberalism in New Zealand as creating unwell-ness. Clark (2007) acknowledged that "the invisible hand of the market doesn't deliver a sustainable nation, as an earlier era of New Zealand politics showed only too well".[8] Much we are still unconscious of. However the degree to which we and our governments defend against the existence of these Shadows, dictates our ability to become conscious of and transform 'what is not wellbeing'. Bringing to our awareness the presence of these Shadows, the "chaotic unconscious which slumbers uneasily", is the first step. Being willing to explore and understand, to dance with those Shadows, and having the courage to take action to transmute them is the next. Kelsey (2003) suggests that we "will need to engage more with these realities if we are to have a say in the shape of our future world" (¶5). She also alludes to new possibilities for transformation through the mobilization of social movements both nationally and internationally. LeFevre (2006) suggests that "A new order requires questioning together beyond comfortable categories of pluralism and 'inter-faith dialogue.' Above all, a new order needs new human beings, people who can reason well, but who are anchored in attention, feeling, and insight"(¶12). Based on my research, there appears to be a groundswell of opinions being expressed by such people, although one has to wonder if their voices will match or have the capacity to dismantle the mighty power of the global corporate machine.

Often in our current western working worlds people are continually focused on working more effectively and efficiently. Creating time to dialogue about the Shadow of neo-liberalism and the human wellbeing is a challenge in such frenetic environments. Yet in order to bring to consciousness and explore that which is invisible, we need to engage in such emancipatory discourse. Giroux (2003) urges educators to develop a critical language for "challenging the currently fashionable presupposition that global capitalism represents an 'empire' for which there is no outside" (p.58). This thesis offers this challenge and also the hope outlined by authors who are thinking from a different consciousness that created our present reality.

Capra (1997) is one such educator, who contrasts the current neo-liberal economic emphasis on competition, expansion and domination with an ecology focused on cooperation, conservation and partnership (p.293). He posits that the ecological option he offers based on interdependence, recycling, partnership, diversity, flexibility, is imperative for human and planetary sustainability (p.295). Stiglitz (2002), in acknowledging that globalization is not working for many of the world's poor or the environment, suggests that the way ahead depends firstly on financial and governmental leaders facing the Shadow of

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[8] www.beehive.govt.nz/Print/PrintDocument.aspx?DocumentID=28357 (Retrieved March 07)

global neo-liberalism policies and practices by accepting the dangers of capital market liberalization and short term capital flows (pp.214, 236-237). He states that there is growing recognition and political determination to address problems, and suggests that each 'developing country must assume responsibility for their well-being themselves' (p.250). However, it is clear from our experience in Aotearoa New Zealand that human wellbeing is an issue in developed as well as in developing countries.

Stiglitz suggests that governments need to be effective, 'with strong and independent judiciaries, democratic accountability, openness and transparency and freedom from corruption' so that societies can function humanely as well as economically (ibid, pp.218, 227-229). Prescott-Allen (2001) points to the need for all countries to follow the lead of countries like Sweden, Finland and Norway, which currently have high levels of human wellbeing with the least stress on their eco systems. He reinforces the interconnectedness of all things that Capra articulates by suggesting that "The rest of the world may feel that development is challenge enough without bothering about conservation – but for all societies, real progress depends on both [human and ecosystem wellbeing]" (p.114). This progress is dependent on an understanding of the Shadows of current realities, a deeper awareness and new consciousness that brings not just surface changes within our organisational policies and practices, but far reaching paradigm shifts in our respect for one another, all living organisms and our Earth.

Wehr (2002) cites Emil Bock, a theologian and Anthroposophist, who uses an ecological metaphor to urge us to surrender that which is not working for humanity in a synoptic effort towards wisdom and knowledge.

> In these times we have to learn two things: sense for what is dying, so we can recognize it; and a sense of what is emerging, so we can cultivate it. The outer conditions of the world are doomed; everything transitory, everything time-bound, is essentially dying. But there are also signs of something new emerging. To see the first rays of eternity glimmer through the cracks and crevices of the bursting sense world: this gives us the strength to calmly give over to the abyss what is dying, and to welcome that which is arising' (p.47).

Waldorf Schools are of particular interest in my developing understanding of the critique of and alternatives to neo-liberalism. The underlying values of Steiner education resonate with the ideas expressed by such authors as Capra, Schumacher and Bohm. The educational community has been subjected to the templates of a neo-liberal framework that have brought both economic opportunity as well as challenges to values and pressures to day-to-day management. The opportunity for me to work closely with a Waldorf education community to develop conversations that explored 'Shadows' of staff wellbeing with hope of transformation, highlighted a tension and an emotional cost that results from dancing 'to a different drum' within this current broader

political and economic setting. Our work together also brought illumination to ways of being in relationships that nourish wellbeing which are possible within an organisation, even within this challenging broader context. Emphasis on developing relational knowledge and practices offers as an alternative to instrumental management practices that is worthy of consideration by those seeking to enhance the wellbeing of people at their places of work.

Shadows in workplace cultures

In 1917 Carl Jung wrote:

> …the chaotic unconscious….slumbers uneasily beneath the ordered world of consciousness
>
> (Cited in Wehr, 2002, p.79).

While Jung was referring to the horrific psychological concomitants of the First World War, his writing remains relevant in our current world, perhaps even more so as technology has graphically brought human suffering into our homes daily through the media. Our ordered legalised western world masks the chaos that lies uneasily and unconsciously within people as they manage their day to day lives. I draw on the research of Jung and Steiner to illustrate the term 'Shadow' and to invite consideration of the Shadows of workplace cultures. My aspiration is that people's wellbeing may be enhanced through 'dancing with Shadows' of their own sense of self and of their organisational experiences.

Wehr (2002) states that Jung thought that human beings have two images – the conscious and unconscious. Jung is cited as describing the conscious self as the ego, the part that creates continuity and identity, and the persona, being the part of ourselves that we present to the world. He describes one aspect of the unconscious as the Shadow self, a self consisting of the

> …negative, reluctantly acknowledged and for the most part unconscious traits of our character. …The relation of the Shadow to the unconscious is such that the Shadow's negative traits are denied to the point of seeming non-existent, both to the outside world and the inner self. (If consciousness becomes aware of the Shadow at all, it often sees it as "projections" from the darker side of the psyche without realizing what it really is.) (ibid, pp.100-101).

Wehr (ibid) cites Jung as maintaining that it is through integration of the unconscious and the conscious a person became "whole" or became "the Self"(p.100).

Wehr (2002) suggests that Jung built on the work of Freud in describing the Shadow as the disowned or unconscious part of the self and therefore hidden from our conscious awareness and attention. Jung is cited as proposing that this hidden part of ourselves can be seen most clearly when projected onto others, for example when we become upset about the behaviour of others or when we place 'on a pedestal' people with qualities we admire. He argued that these 'mind sets' deny the Shadow or disowned part of ourselves and subsequently deny the actualisation of our potential by seeing ourselves as victims and our shortcomings as "bad luck" (ibid, pp.100-101). Leonard (1996) a Jungian analyst, suggests that people need to be willing to face their Shadow in order for transformation of their concerns to be possible. She suggests that the alternative is to live a life of "unconscious despair" (p,82). At about the same time as Jung was doing his work on the unconscious, so too, with no overt connection with each other, was Rudolph Steiner.

In 1919 Steiner, cited in Wehr (2002), urged that people needed to "look into the unconscious and subconscious in human nature in order to be able to draw the necessary and urgent conclusions for shaping the social conditions of the present time" (p.78). Steiner posited that consciousness could not predict the future of humankind in the way that tapping into the unconscious could provide "the most essential transitional forces for the *whole of mankind*" (Steiner's emphasis, ibid). It could be extrapolated that we cannot merely 'think' our way out of our current workplace problems; we need to address the Shadows, the unconscious, in order to find possibilities for transformation that can benefit all of humankind. The late Professor David Bohm, a physicist, offers ways to dance with these Shadows.

Bohm, cited by Jaworski (1996), highlights the gift of insight into interdependence that becoming conscious of the Shadow brings: "Yourself is actually the whole of mankind" and "If you reach deeply into yourself, you are reaching into the very essence of mankind" (pp.80-81).

> At present, people create barriers between each other by their fragmentary thought. Each one operates separately. When these barriers have dissolved, then there arises one mind, where they are all one unit, but each person also retains his or her own individual awareness. That one mind will still exist even when they separate, and when they come

together, it will be as if they hadn't separated. It's actually a single intelligence that works with people who are moving in relationship to one another (ibid, p.81).

Wehr (2002) states that Jung called this single intelligence the "collective unconscious" (p.101). Jaworski (1996) suggests that what blocks people from this unifying practice is the lack of belief in the possibility. He suggests that when people collectively become conscious of habitual ways of being, even greater possibilities are transmuted. Reason and Marshall (2001) suggest that PAR promotes the possibility of transformation through engaging in such co-operative exploration of the collective unconscious (p.415). Gaventa & Cornwall (2001) suggest that using observation, reflection, and dialogue, conscious awareness of familiar behaviours is enhanced. Jaworski cites Bohm as stating that in order to transform that 'block' it is important to bring conscious attention to it;

> You have got to give a lot of attention to consciousness. This is one of the things of which our society is ignorant. It assumes consciousness requires no attention. But consciousness is what gives attention. Consciousness itself requires very alert attention (ibid, p.82).

Nichol (2003) cites Bohm recommending the skilful steps of dialogue to reinforce this attention to consciousness, thus creating profound possibility for shaping and informing the whole of society. His view was that dialogue could creatively shine light on and release "assumptions and values held rigidly but often outside the scope of consciousness", thus enhancing understanding. This dialogue involves "not only "suspending" one's own concrete values and assumptions, but now extending this suspension to the values and assumptions expressed by others" (p.290). This view is supported by Senge et al (2004) who suggest that our capacity to "suspend" means "stopping our habitual ways of thinking and perceiving." They cite Bohm's acknowledgement of the disempowering influence of entrenched reactive patterns of thinking: "Normally our thoughts have us rather than we having them" (p.29).

Bohm (2004) posits that the characteristics of the mechanistic philosophy that currently dominates our world view are defined and limiting (pp.13-15). Most western workplaces, defined by legalities and lineal processes, reflect these limitations. The predominating dualism of western epistemology that supports the fragmentation of the material from the immaterial and the separation of body from soul, over shadows the possibility of other ways of being (Bohm, 2004).

Lips-Wiersma (2002) suggests that, most commonly, workplaces do not acknowledge the spiritual aspects of being human. Psychiatrist R D Laing alludes to the deadening effects of Galileo's restriction of science to only phenomena that could be measured and quantified (cited in Capra, 1988, p133; 1997);

> Out go sight, sounds, taste, touch and smell and along with them have since gone aesthetic and ethical sensibility, values, quality, soul, consciousness, spirit. Experience as such is cast out of the realm of scientific discourse. Hardly anything has changed our world more during the past four hundred years than Galileo's audacious program. We had to destroy the world in theory, before we could destroy it in practice (p.19).

Steiner (cited in Wehr, 2002) acknowledged the importance of the aesthetic and ethical, the soul, the spirit within the ecology of life in what he termed "anthroposophy". This view contrasted with Descartes extended instrumentalism that viewed the material world, including living organisms, in terms of their components (Capra,1997). Senge et al (2004) suggest that this mechanistic view is expressed in workplaces where 'effective teams' are focused on roles, tasks, and interpersonal dynamics, while ignoring their interdependency within the larger organisational context. "Organisational performance is measured by adding up the performance of isolated 'business units'" (p.197). This requires similar fragmentation in our minds as we dissect and label aspects of ourselves (ibid, p.206).

Jung suggested that recognition of the Shadow, and its potential for re-connecting disconnected aspects of self, provides one way of bringing to our attention the unity of humanity, or the "collective unconscious" (Wehr, 2002, p.101). In turn, this recognition of necessary human interdependence brings us to fuller consciousness through using choreography that is more easily understood through Eastern, and much indigenous ontology (Senge et al, 2004, p.196; Schumacher, 1999, pp.37- 45). This ontology of interconnectedness is being given increasing attention through exploration of works by western quantum physicists such as David Bohm, a colleague of Einstein, John Bell and Alain Aspect (Pratt, 1993). Bohm's thinking was also influenced by the Indian philosopher Krishnamurti[1], whose ideas meshed well with his own. Lips-Weirsma, 2002 and others allude to the wholeness that arises in workplaces when people are able to acknowledge their spiritual and emotional selves, along with their physical and mental

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[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Bohm (Retrieved 15 March 2007)

aspects.   Capra (1997) cites physicist Stapp as saying "An elementary particle is not an independently existing unanalyzable entity. It is in essence, a set of relationships that reach outward to other things", and thus reflects the "web of life" (pp.30-31).

Bohm (2004) links the importance of this collective or participatory consciousness to the ability to suspend opinions within dialogue. He suggests that when people can suspend their individual assumptions in order to create collective meaning in a group, then a collective consciousness evolves (pp.320-321). This deeper understanding enhances group work in ways that might not be possible when individuals competitively seek only to have their opinions heard and to defend their ideas.

A Shadow within a workplace culture becomes apparent when people do not acknowledge incongruity between espoused values and beliefs and practices, or alternatively, defend the inaptness. McLain Smith (in Senge et al, 1999) suggests that this incongruity occurs because the knowledge needed to effect the gap between espoused behaviour and real life actions is far more complex and demanding than people recognise (p.127). She recommends that people listen to their awareness of discrepancies as they highlight Shadows that can be explored. In other words, accept rather than defend, because acceptance enhances our ability to transform such Shadows.

Senge et al (1999) posits that when leaders of organisations acknowledge such inconsistencies in their ability to "walk their talk", this can emancipate other staff to address discrepancies (pp.193-203).   Nonaka (1991) suggests that an organisation "is not a machine, but a living organism.   Much like an individual, it can have a collective sense of identity and shared purpose…a shared understanding" of what the organisation stands for (cited in Senge et al, 1999, p.201). People then have to step into consciousness around walking their talk by paying attention and contributing to their "constancy of purpose" through their being optimistic and alert to unplanned but purposeful opportunities, and by being compassionate and loving (Pierce, ibid, pp.211-212).

Within groups or organisations the degree to which people acknowledge their Shadow or unconscious selves influences the ability of members to know and communicate openly with one another and to develop their potential. Senge et al (1999) outlines the capabilities necessary to develop what he terms a "learning organisation" - "mutual reflection, open and candid

conversation, questioning of old beliefs and assumptions, learning to let go, awareness of how our own actions create the systemic structures that produce our problems" (p.241). Action research is based on such capabilities.

American psychologists Luft and Ingham (1955) suggested that the Shadow can be what we choose to hide as well as those parts of ourselves to which we are blind. Chapman adapted the four quadrant representation of their ideas, the Johari Window[2], in which four aspects of the self in relation to others are described:

i)   the open self that is known by the person about him/herself and which is known by others

ii)   the blind self that is unknown by the person about him/herself but which others know;

iii)   the hidden self that the person knows about him/herself that others do not know;

iv)   the unknown self that is unknown by self and others.

While the image appears to illustrate a static mechanistic model with the quadrants representing possibilities of constant motion as a living organism, the link can be made with Capra (1997) and Bohm's (2004) concept of the interconnectedness of everything. As such the Johari Window has significant appeal and consciousness raising value in its depiction of potential and actual relationships with self and others. Diagrams when seen not as static representations but as

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[2] Alan Chapman's adaptation of Johari Window. www.businessballs.com website (Retrieved 10 June 06)

possible relationships become a useful heuristic device. Some of these are deeply embedded in our subconscious, often as apparently static moulds to which we unconsciously conform.

Polanyi, cited by Senge at al (1999) describes the tacit knowledge that comes from mental models, assumptions, skills and capabilities that we can be unaware of (p.422). He contends that it is the contemplation of the deeper meaning of tacit knowledge that enables people "to know" more about themselves and others (p.423). It is through developing "learning organisations" that foster such self-discovery and communication that the first quadrant can be expanded and the others contracted. The process increases and enhances relational responsibility. Park (2001) posits that PAR provides opportunities to develop this "relational knowledge" that is important in strengthening communities (pp.83-87).

Thus exploring the Shadow becomes a tool for developing relational knowledge within an organisation. Park states that "this way of knowing is the real basis for solidarity and community, and one of the cornerstones of rationality. Through language, expressions of tolerance, compassion, understanding, acceptance, love, humour, pain are shared and the affectivity of such exchanges enables people to experience their own separateness while paradoxically developing intimate relational knowledge of others" (ibid, p.85). Steiner (cited in Wehr, 2002) proposed that knowing the 'self' in the physical body, the soul, and the spirit created freedom to develop from who we are, to whom we can become, and through this freedom it is possible to develop democracy and respect for others (pp.93-99). This is the basis of anthroposophy.

Nichol (2004) cites that Bohm's view was that "in general we do not exhibit genuine free will, and thus do not rise to the original definition of "individual" – one who is undivided" (p.253). He suggests that preoccupation with knowledge from the past limits free will and free choice. Freedom comes, in Bohm's view, from

> giving sustained and serious attention to how un-freedom arises basically from identification with the past, to which the mind commits itself to act as if it were determined mechanistically in the ways in which grosser levels of matter are determined. We have to use the past, but to determine *what we are* from it is a mistake…The clear perception that we are the unknown, which is beyond time, allows the mind to give time its proper value, which is limited …This is what makes freedom possible, in the sense of realizing

our true potential for participating harmoniously in universal creativity, a creativity that also includes the past and future in their proper roles (p.260).

Bringing our attention to the present moment, bringing into presence, or "presencing" as Senge et al (2004) describes, is a way of being "your highest future potential" (p.226). They suggest that freedom comes from recognition that "our actions are completely predetermined by our habitual ways of thinking and acting in reaction to our circumstances." Through "awakened awareness" we gain freedom to "become what we were meant to become" (p.229).

Senge et al (1999) posits that in most conventional workplaces, "harmony is maintained through the façade of "Don't rock the boat" "(p.241). He suggests that fear and anxiety drive people to collude with each other to maintain the Shadow of un-discussable topics that prevents transformation. Senge suggests that raising difficult issues in a way that does not invoke defensiveness requires a high level of interpersonal skills. However, within "learning organisations" cycles of reflection, dialogue, listening, and self-aware action can be established in a climate of openness, safety and trust (pp.246-250).

Gordon (2001) discovered that the processes of action research highlight and dance with the Shadows of socially constructed issues such as racism, illuminating her own and others' silence. With the silences exposed, fuller expression the subtleties and nuances of the dancers' (participants) creative inquiry into living are possible as they collaborate to articulate their story. Gordon reflects on her own experience of such Shadows that "enforced silencing" was "further institutionalized within the system through the *self-silencing* born of frustration" (author's italics, p.319). She suggests that for individuals to end the silence around the Shadows of un-wellness, is to risk personal persecution, but that the alternative is to become compliant with the silence through unconscious self-preservation and social numbing. Gordon is an advocate of first person action research for the critical consciousness and self knowledge that she has gained. Through this self awareness she is able to assess appropriate and empowering use of silence (ibid, p.320).

When groups engage in the 'dancing with Shadows' processes of action research, participants are engaged in first and second person research which Senge & Scharmer (2001) suggest can transform the collective unconsciousness (ibid, p.246). Reason (2005b) alludes to the liberation of previously muted voices through participation in decision making, which impacts on not only their own wellbeing but others wellbeing also. He argues for this attention to human wellbeing

and the wellbeing of the planet's creatures and ecosystem as being a political imperative for all human beings (Participation as power and democracy section, ¶1). Thus the use of participative action research processes within a workplace has the potential to deconstruct organisational and living patterns of behaviour that create un-wellness for staff.

In her research, Marshall (1999) discovered that people struggle to recognise when to persist in attempting to influence complex systems in their workplaces and when to desist in order to maintain their health and wellbeing. She found that when people ignored their perceptions that 'something was wrong', their ability to act inquiringly was limited and sometimes led them to stay longer in work situations that were unhealthy for them (p.9). In her introduction to her book, Williamson (2006) acknowledges that:

> The times in which we live are difficult, more difficult than a lot of people seem willing to admit. There is an abiding sense of collective anxiety, understandable but not always easy to talk about. When things aren't going well for you in your personal life, perhaps you call a friend or family member or go to a therapist or support group to process your pain. Yet when your feelings of upset are based on larger social realities, it's hard to know how to talk about them and to whom. When you're afraid because you don't know where your next paycheck is going to come from, it's easy to articulate; when you're worried about whether the human race is going to survive the next century, it feels odd to mention it at lunch.

When organisations are open to using participative action research, there is potential to dance with these Shadows that otherwise may be ignored, thus providing opportunity staff to nurture their own and others wellbeing. In the introduction to Isaacs (1999) Senge proposes that people are hungering for values of respect, love, emancipation and trust, fostered through dialogue, to nourish deeper ways of knowing and being (p.xx). When referring to African racial oppression and suffering in her ancestral background, Gordon (2001) cites Segal (1995) in recognition that she is "charged with a special responsibility to remember and remind: to redeem that past with a creative meaning" (pp.321-322). We respectfully suggest that participative action research provides staff with a responsive, collaborative method of redeeming oppressive organisational practices which have and continue to create suffering.

McNiff (2000) proposes that greater collaboration between organisational participants and academic researchers has the potential to generate living theories that redefine the main

purpose of organisation theory in terms of human wellbeing. She advocates for the promotion of practitioner generated knowledge in which all participants regard themselves as equal in terms of contribution to their own practice and in relation to one another. Her view concurs with Reason (2001), Kemmis (2001), Rahman (2003) and others, who suggest that participative action research has emancipatory potential through providing the opportunity to reflect on personal choices in our various relationships and to exercise those choices responsibly. In this way, Fals Borda (2001) posits that participative researchers have the opportunity to deconstruct global uniformity that pervades organisational theory in developed nations (p.33). Through participative research, organisations can awaken the "slumbering chaotic unconscious" and may have greater opportunity to choreograph their own dance, reflecting the individual and collective dance styles of all participants rather than conforming to a one-dance-fits-all style.

Workplace Wellbeing & Sustainability – Getting to the Heart of the Matter

> The stream of life that runs through the world runs through my veins night and day and dances in rhythmic measure. It is the same life that shoots joy through the dust of the Earth into numberless blades of grass and breaks into tumultuous waves of leaves and flowers.
>
> - Rabindranath Tagore, cited in Jeffers (1997, p.206)

The seamless dance of living with wellness as a human being in harmony with all life on Earth is a theme of this thesis. In this chapter the terms wellbeing and sustainability are described. I critique current literature that portrays a prevalent instrumental and fragmented approach to workplace wellbeing, which has a primary intention of improving productivity and efficiency. Then I explore what is described as a more holistic approach to wellbeing that may better sustain people and the planet than the prevailing ethic. Attention to this form of sustainable wellbeing requires a paradigm shift, a 'change of heart'.

To 'change one's heart' requires a shift in life-world view from an instrumental, masculine, systematic, legalistic world view to encompass one that encompasses a balance of the feminine, nurturing, creative, holistic life-world and could achieve economic sustainability also. From dancing at arm's-length, this shift invites a willingness to 'get to the heart of the matter', to dance up close and personally with the Shadows of wellbeing.

This world view would include awareness of and actions to enhance the Earth's ecosystem that sustains humans, rather than the exploitative practices of the past few hundred years. Indeed it would include what Capra (1997) describes as a "deep ecological awareness" (p.8) where people understand their interconnectedness with that "stream of life that runs through the world". Senge (2004) suggests that such a paradigm shift to focus on human and planetary wellbeing is necessary to prevent the long-term prospect of global extinction of humans (pp.24-25).

Wellbeing and Sustainability Defined

In indexes in management books, finding words like 'wellbeing', 'love', 'compassion', and 'tolerance' is rare because they do not fit with the instrumental management models in vogue, which, have reduced people to objects in a process rather than human beings living purposefully (Humphries, forthcoming; Reason & Bradbury, 2001, p10). Currently in much of the literature on management practice, staff wellbeing is described in the context of legal requirements intended to safeguard the rights of the employer and the employee and in terms of goals for efficiency and productivity. Paine (2006) suggests that this instrumental approach to wellbeing has a domesticating affect on people, resulting in; "hopeful engagement" in dialogue and behaviour change, overt compliance and covert resistance to work requirements and "withdrawal and despair" from staff who, in the face of the colonization by market forces, simply give up and become emotionally and mentally 'absent' from work, often while seeking employment elsewhere" (Jones, 2000, pp. 368-370, cited in Paine, 2006, pp.74-75).

The Concise Oxford dictionary (1961) defines wellbeing as 'welfare' which is in turn described as "satisfactory state, health and prosperity, wellbeing" (ibid, pp.1457-1458). Health (meaning "soundness or wholeness", and wellbeing are often linked together (ibid, p.554). Sustainability has been given many meanings: "holding up, enabling to last out, giving strength, encouraging, enduring without giving way, representing adequately, keeping going continuously" - all depicting 'continued effort' in some form (ibid, p.1281).

Articles 1 and 25 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Appendix 1) provide an international framework for wellbeing. This framework was assumed as the basis for the 1988 NZ Royal Commission for Social Policy. It asserted that social wellbeing meant that basic needs of housing, health, education and worthwhile work were met; that people would belong to a community where individuals experienced a sense of responsibility and choice about how they functioned in their everyday life; that people had their ideas valued and respected. In the Ministry of Social Development's 2004 Survey Report, wellbeing refers to individual happiness, quality of life and welfare, as determined by a society. This illustrates a significant shift in discourse over the short period of sixteen years from the emphasis on basic public needs being met, communal belonging and individual responsibility within that community, to a focus on the individual rights decided by a society based on material consumption, competition, private wealth and a globalized economy.

When wellbeing is linked with the term 'sustainability' then the concern shifts from the rights and responsibility of individuals and communities in the present time to our responsibility for the future livelihood of whole nations' peoples and to the Earth itself. The term 'sustainability' became widely known through the Brundtland Report[1], also known as "Our Common Future" (1987) that states "*sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*" (p.43). This report alludes to the sensitivity of the symbiotic relationship between man and Earth that is necessary for sustainable development. It recommends a focus of improving the quality of life for all people on Earth, *within* the limits of natural resources that the environment can supply indefinitely. This development requires changes in policies and practices, individually, nationally and globally. Human wellbeing is intrinsically linked with sustainable development.

Many indigenous cultures acknowledge the importance of harmony and interdependence between the environment, people and prosperity. Now researchers (Capra,1997; Senge et al, 2004; Bohm, 2003), business entrepreneurs (Roddick, 2001) , economists (Schumacher, 1999; Stiglitz, 2002,2005), politicians (Clarke, 2007; Kennedy cited in Roddick, 2001) and concerned citizens, all acknowledge the affect that the plundering of the Earth's by western industrial society is having on the life world of the planet (Simms, cited in Roddick, 2001, pp.160-163). The Prime Minister of New Zealand, Helen Clark (2007) stated that "now the quest for sustainability has taken on a new urgency because of the scale of the environmental challenge the world faces. Traditional patterns of development and fast growing populations have put an intolerable strain on the planet" (p1). It would appear that attention is being focused on the inextricable link between sustainable development and human and planetary wellbeing.

Globalization and rapid increases in information technology have seen 'sustainability' popularized since the early 1990s with concerns articulated over creating 'sustainable future societies' in a 'sustainable planet'. For example, the United Nations Indicators of Sustainable Development [2] aim at providing international social, environmental, economic and institutional guidelines to address the following issues; poverty, natural hazards, economic development, governance, atmosphere, global economic partnership, health, land, consumption and production patterns, education, oceans, seas and coasts, demographics, freshwater, and biodiversity (2007).

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[1] Gro Harlem Brundtland was chair of the World Commission on Environment and Development, and elected Prime Minister of Norway on three occasions. http://www.envireng.co.uk/content/sustainability.htm

[2] http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/indicators/factSheet.pdf (Retrieved 26 July 2006)

Sustainable wellbeing in broad terms for human beings and planet is clearly a widely shared and articulated aspiration. Yet the actualization of such wellbeing is a 'flight of fancy' for many people. And even in developed countries such as Aotearoa New Zealand, critical theorists Kelsey (1999) and Humphries & Grant (2006), argue that current mechanistic economic policies and practices diminish human wellbeing. Workplace bullying is a term that has been utilised in recent years to describe "hidden psychological harassment" (Leymann, 1990, p.1). In describing the American workplace, Yamada (2000, ¶B) posits that this phenomenon is associated with the global profit squeeze, the decline of unions, the diversification of the workforce, and increased reliance on contingent workers and the growth of the service-sector economy. Our national policies seem to reflect global neo-liberalism, suggesting a similar trend in New Zealand.

During the early 1990s in Aotearoa New Zealand, typically 60-70% of employees in an organisation would be union members. A decade later, union membership has decreased significantly to only 5-20% today[3], increasing employer responsibility for the health and wellbeing of employees and reinforcing 'top down' legislated regimes. The NZ State Services Commission has produced information to assist organisations in developing positive work environments[4]. Employer funded EEO (Equal Employment Opportunities) initiatives have been implemented in an attempt to legislate workers rights in the public and state sector and for local governments, but there is no legislation mandating the practice of EEO in the private sector. However, all employers are required to meet their non-discriminatory statutory obligations under the *Equal Pay Act 1972*, the *New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990*, the *Human Rights Act 1993*, and the *Employment Relations Act 2000.* A 2004 Summary Report on EEO states that "The findings show that the reality for many New Zealanders does not match the rhetoric of a "fair go for everyone at work," [5] indicating the limitations of such legislation on worker wellbeing, and concludes:

> The widespread adoption of effective EEO initiatives is critical for New Zealand's continued economic and social development. Insufficient efforts have been made to

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[3] http://www.seed.co.nz/wellbeing-and-new-zealand-workplaces-key-issues-forum/ (Retrieved 20 January 2007)

[4] http://www.ssc.govt.nz/display/document.asp?NavID=82&DocID=3296 (Retrieved 20 January 2007)

[5] http://www.hrc.co.nz/index.php?p=55467 (Retrieved 20 January 2007)

create new opportunities for traditionally disadvantaged groups in the New Zealand labour force. Our benchmarking of New Zealand's EEO initiatives with those of peer nations indicates that New Zealand now lags behind other countries. This is the bad news. The good news is that New Zealand does have a history of pursuing social justice through government policies. Further, since EEO policies were introduced in the state sector in the 1980s, some important efforts have been made in the right direction. Building on the best of current practice in New Zealand, a range of focused, new initiatives could close the gap between EEO policy efforts in New Zealand and efforts underway elsewhere. More importantly, such efforts could promote positive changes in the New Zealand workplace that would serve to reduce current inequalities in the labour force. In turn, improving the situation of traditionally disadvantaged groups could generate major – and urgently needed – gains for the economy, while allowing New Zealand to remain a model society, in terms of social harmony and the advancement of human rights. Our goal should be a nation where, in the words of Amartyr Sen (2000: 281), everyone may "lead the lives they have reason to value".

With this legislation falling short in providing equal opportunities in safe, respectful workplaces where people's wellbeing is paramount, there appears to be a very urgent need to explore *with* staff how to achieve 'lives they have reason to value'.

While Kelsey, Humphries and Grant direct our attention to resulting poverty and social injustice, the introduction of the 2003 Amendment to the Health and Safety in Employment Act (Appendix 2) in Aotearoa New Zealand may be interpreted as a signal of injustice in workplaces. This act acknowledges and addresses behaviours that can cause harm to individuals and work cultures. Stress brought about through the "harnessing" of 'human resources' is now recognised (Humphries & Grant, 2005). Beehr and Glazier (2005) suggest that stress is produced by stressors that are inherent in jobs, through roles performed, interpersonal relationships, and organisational structures and climate, and other external environment stressors such as home or social situations (p.8).

Bianchi et al (2005) suggest that lack of flexibility in work schedules, the need for families and employers to accomplish more with fewer resources, and the lack of social and policy support to address these stressors, contributes to the stress of balancing family and work life.

Given these changes, the challenges of integrating work and family can be daunting. Workers are torn among their roles as parents, spouses, and providers, often feeling pressured for both time and money. Stress caused by this friction often has negative effects on the health of the workers and their families. These stresses have a tendency to spill over to other social and community institutions not designed or sufficiently funded to deal with them – schools, social service agencies, police, courts and religious institutions. Employers with workers facing difficulties at home suffer the high costs of turnover, absenteeism and lost investments in human capital" (ibid, p.532).

The language of "lost investments in human capital" utilised by Bianchi et al in their 2005 management book entitled "Work, Family, Health and Wellbeing", illuminates and reinforces the view of humans as expendable capital. The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1961) defines "capital" as "stock with which a person or company enters into business or accumulated wealth used in producing more" (p.175). Human wellbeing is measured in the writing of Bianchi et al (ibid) in terms of cost effectiveness and efficiency.

Fassel (1992) and Giroux (2003) state that this focus on 'human capital' has heightened levels of fear not only in workers, shareholders and suppliers but within society, as people live constantly with uncertainty. At a forum on "Wellbeing and the New Zealand Workplace" in June 2006[6], the fear of uncertainty and the personal pain of job loss, even though restructuring is acknowledged as common practice, was stated as a factor affecting wellbeing. Fassel (1992) posits that people are regarded as commodities to be used and discarded because there are always more workers waiting in the wings to take their place (p.83).

Maslach and Leiter (1997) suggest that this has brought general pressure onto workers who work longer hours for fewer rewards and benefits and with less personal satisfaction than previously (ibid, pp.2-5). They highlight ways in which technology and tight human resource management policies and processes are focused on the bottom line of profit, maximising profitability by utilizing as few staff as possible. Work overload is cited as a cause of burnout of people, as they are expected to achieve the same outcomes with fewer people and resources (ibid, p.10-11). They suggest that much work is prescribed and monitored to such an extent that people's own values, creativity, knowledge, decision making and sense of contribution is constrained, and managers'

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[6] http://www.seed.co.nz/wellbeing-and-new-zealand-workplaces-key-issues-forum/

focus is on being accountable to those at the top of the hierarchical structure while being tasked to deal with problems without real power and often with few resources (ibid, p.7). Lack of respect and recognition for contribution is cited as another way in which workers are devalued (ibid, p.13). Divisive practices that mean workers are in competition with each other rather than in collaboration can reduce the sense of community and safety within a workplace.

Bianchi et al (ibid) highlight the importance of recognizing the interdependence and affectivity of these issues. They recommend collaborative scrutiny of this dilemma through various theoretical lenses incorporating anthropology, sociology, economic policy, business management, epidemiology and health, public policy; indeed they suggest a holistic rather than a fragmented approach to seeking to ameliorate workers' wellbeing (ibid, pp.532-533). Lips-Wiersma (2002) reports that participants in her research expressed that avoidance of the spiritual, emotional and other ways of knowing and being human was the norm in their place of work (p.385). Mental and physical agility, measured in terms of profitability and efficiency was the main focus. In our compartmentalized culture, organisations may offer staff the service of counsellors and workplace welfare supporters to meet some emotional and spiritual needs, reinforcing the fragmentation of human beings rather than the integration of all aspects that promotes wellbeing.

Maslach and Leiter's (1997) research leads them to state that burnout of workers was reaching epidemic proportions in USA at that time, citing not human inadequacy but fundamental changes in jobs and in the social environments in workplaces as causal (p.1 & p.18). "The structure and functioning of the workplace shape how people interact with one another and how they carry out their jobs. When the workplace does not recognise the human side of work, then the risk of burnout grows, carrying a high price with it" (p.18).

"The erosion of the soul" is the description of burnout term used by Maslach and Leiter (1997) when referring to the disintegration of values, dignity, spirit and will that occur when there is a discrepancy between what people are and what they have to do (p.17). With the prevalent 'survival of the fittest' mentality, burnout is often erroneously perceived as an individual's weakness, rather than an organisational, cultural or societal responsibility (ibid, p.32). When the individual is tasked with resolving burnout through 'self management', taking stress leave or leaving the organisation, the factors contributing to the burnout remain. These authors maintain that the stress and strain associated with global competition, technical innovation, tighter control systems and unjust compensation, is experienced in people's bodies, minds and souls (ibid,

p.34). They argue that it is imperative to focus on human wellbeing, not from an economic perspective but from a human value perspective because it is 'the right thing to do' (ibid, p.128). They suggest this would require action to maintain sustainable workloads, feelings of choice and control, recognition and reward, a sense of community, fairness, respect and justice and meaningful and valued work (ibid, p.149).

Roddick (2001) suggests that this 'burnout' trend has accelerated as myopic corporations rationalize and merge to increase assets and gain short term profitability, utilize cheaper manufacturing labour off-shore in developing countries, and focus of servicing debts rather than creating excellent products or creating strong communities. She views such materialistically focused strategies as short sighted.

> Gross National Product measures neither the health of our children, the quality of their education, nor the joy of their play. It measures neither the beauty of our poetry, nor the strength of our marriages. It is indifferent to the decency of our factories and the safety of our streets alike. It measures neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our wit nor our courage, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country. It measures everything in short, except that which makes like worth living, and it can tell us everything about our country except those things that make us proud to be part of it.
>
> Robert Kennedy (Roddick, 2001, p.257)

Human values that inspire us to work well, to serve and contribute to our community, indeed what creates citizens, are subjugated to economic values and in this way people have become domesticated by the market. Sheehan (1999) suggests that:

> Capitalism is in crisis and organisations within capitalist societies are faced with ever changing pressures, such as global competition, consumer demand, technological change, changing labour expectations, environmental awareness, and economic recession (French and Bell, 1995; Halal, 1986; Limerick and Cunnington, 1993). These pressures increasingly demand organisational change (Argyris and Schon, 1996; Burgoyne et al., 1996). Evidence of corporate reaction to the uncertainty produced by these pressures may be seen in the growth of contemporary managerial buzzwords such as flexibility, market orientation, flattening structures, managerial excellence, productivity, quality, retraining, participation and creativity (Hilmer and Donaldson, 1996; Pascale,

1990). Together these terms signify the emergence of a "discourse of restructuring" (McCarthy et al., 1995) which is affecting organisations and the people that work within them. One outcome within the discourse appears to be workplace bullying (Introduction, ¶1).

McAvoy & Murtagh (2003) cite Rayner and Hoelt (1997) who describe five categories of workplace bullying behaviour; "threats to professional status, threats to personal standing, isolation, overwork, and destabilization" (¶.1). They suggest that "economic rationalism, increasing competition, "downsizing," and the current fashion for tough, dynamic, "macho" management styles have created a culture in which bullying can thrive, producing "toxic" workplaces (¶.2).

Sheehan suggests that "Organisations appear to have developed a culture whereby the achievement of organisational goals justifies the means" with much of this pressure being exerted on managers (ibid, Signs of Bullying, ¶4). He posits that people's wellbeing has been compromised, resulting in "declining morale and decreased profits (American Management Association survey cited in Filipowski, 1993), decreased productivity and work intensification (McCarthy et al., 1995), and declining commitment, job satisfaction and motivation (Littler, 1996)" (ibid ¶3) .

With greater responsibilities being devolved by governments onto non profit organisations and associated pressures to adopt market driven, productivity and efficiency goals, such communities previously associated with goodwill and altruism are also experiencing workplace bullying (McAvoy & Murtagh, 2003). Sheehan (1999) highlights this paradox of the rhetoric of productivity and profitability by illuminating the human cost, especially with work overload on managers (Signs of Bullying ¶2 & 5). It was in response to the acknowledgement of increased workplace stress, that the New Zealand parliament formulated the 2003 Amendment to the Health and Safety in Employment Act. It is designed to legislate against emotional abuse by further regulating the way people treat one another at work.

Increased levels of reporting of incidences of "workplace bullying" (Needham, 2003) or "psychological abuse and violence" (Lutgen-Sandvik, P. 2003, p.471) may indicate an increased awareness of and attention to staff wellbeing and sustainability. It may be a reflection of the increased domestication of workers that squeezes people to perform within highly regulated,

mechanistic practices (Humphries et al, forthcoming a) or it may be illuminating a workplace Shadow that has long been ignored. However, this act brings into the workplace arena acknowledgement of the emotional, physical, spiritual and mental health and wellbeing of workers.

Flood (2001) acknowledges the sometimes unconscious 'creep' of this human cost, observing that:

> First, people may feel that they have become instruments of re-engineering in today's drive for efficiency and effectiveness. Secondly, people may feel there is little meaning to them in participatory work practices when intrapsychic forces (Arguris & Schon, 1996) and cultural forces invisibly shape outcomes. Thirdly, people may sense limits to and unfairness in the roles predefined for them by the might of knowledge-power (p.140).

He suggests that people's wellbeing and their potential development is severely restricted in western society. Reason & Bradbury (2001) cite Laing (1967) describing common universal human traits that result from such domestication:

> …the ordinary person is a shrivelled, desiccated fragment of what a person can be…
> What we call normal is a product of repression, denial, splitting, projection, intro-jection and other forms of destructive action on experience…It is radically estranged from the structure of being (p11).

The Heart of Wellbeing

Senge et al(1999), Reason (2002, 2005b), Marshall(1996, 1999), Heron (1996) and other action researchers are focused on constructing healthier workplace frameworks that support human wellbeing and flourishing. These authors recognise that the cost of current instrumental practices is unsustainable. Humphries & Grant (2005; 2006) cite Chomsky (2003), George (2002), Giddens (2002), Kelsey (2002), Korten et al (2004), Roddick (2001), Shiva (2000, 1993), and Stiglitz (2003) as critics who are concerned that the stress that has been imposed on social and environmental systems through exploitation of people and nature is intolerable. Now the New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clarke (2007) is echoing these concerns. Along with other writers, Isaacs (1999) suggest a new paradigm is necessary in order to "build capacity for new behaviour"

(pp.79-81). McNiff (2000) suggests that such evolutionary processes can involve slow, often imperceptible movement, reflecting shifts in consciousness (p.8). Senge et al (2004) postulates that a paradigm shift is crucial and possible to prevent the long-term prospect of global extinction of humans. They suggest that if people could face their fears about their collective mortality, rather than avoiding that Shadow, a paradigm shift could occur (pp.24-25). "The only change that will make a difference is the transformation of the human heart" (ibid, p26).

Senge (1999) states that the current mechanistic view of organisations is limited, as overall effectiveness is dependent on the efficiency of separate parts. People are regarded as "human resources" to be used. Humphries et al (forthcoming a.) posit that the existing instrumental ethic which takes precedence needs transforming to the primacy of relational ethic. Senge (ibid) suggests that a shift to regarding organisations as living beings that evolve in relation to one another is necessary to enhance our wellbeing. He highlights that the oldest terms for 'business' in Swedish mean "nourishment for life" and in ancient Chinese characters depict "life" and "meaning" (pp.503-504). Schumacher (1999) draws on the Buddhist view of work as an opportunity to develop one's unique faculties, to overcome "ego-centred ness" for common benefit and to provide for a "becoming future" (p38). Capra (1997), contrasts the current universal, instrumental "economic emphasis on competition, expansion and domination" with a sustainable "ecological emphasis on co-operation, conservation, flexibility, diversity and partnership" (pp.293 & 295).

This ecological emphasis is reinforced by Prescott-Allen (2001) who developed five criteria for instrumentally measuring human wellbeing in conjunction with wellbeing of the Earth's ecosystems globally. The human dimensions included health and population, wealth, knowledge and culture, community and equity. He states that this research is the first to combine measures of human wellbeing in conjunction with the ecosystem. The ecosystem criteria is developed to explore land, water, air, species and genes and resource use (p.7).While there are limits to the usefulness of these data, they do graphically illustrate the inequality and inequity of human and the ecosystem wellbeing globally. He suggests that because human populations and economies have become global, it is impossible to improve ones own wellbeing without affecting other people and the planet. He points to pollution, declining resources and reduced diversity of plant and animal life as a sign that too much of nature's bounty has been plundered (p.1). He maintains that in order to sustain human wellbeing we need to look after the wellbeing of the ecosystem.

Hambleton et al (2002) observe that well-organized and peaceful protest movements are assisting in melding together people from a broad spectrum of backgrounds and cultures to challenge the influences of global capitalism (p.xv). One such example is the 2006 documentary produced by Al Gore, "An Inconvenient Truth", based on his book of the same title, screened at mainstream cinemas. There has been a notable increase in documentary movies that explore exploitation, pollution, climate change, and social injustice over recent years, indicating a visible preparedness to dance with these Shadows. More people seem willing to raise their awareness and concern for human and planetary wellbeing. Gore outlines the dramatic global warming changes that have occurred over the past thirty years associated with globalization and neo-liberal economic processes and paradigm.

Prescott-Allen (2001) predicts that "making progress towards ways of living that are desirable, equitable and sustainable is like going to a country we have never been to before with a sense of geography and the principles of navigation but without a map or a compass". However he suggests that societies need to explore three questions: how well are people, how well is the ecosystem and how are people and the ecosystem affecting each other? (p.1) Hambleton et al and Gore encourage people to believe that they can make a difference, and there has be a proliferation of information on the Internet and in books on actions that can be taken to influence the wellbeing and sustainability of the planet and all living species. Hayes (cited in Roddick 2001) suggests three common strategies for behaviour change – identifying and publicizing key problems, identifying desired behaviours and supporting behaviour changes (pp.148-149). However, Jaworski (1996) and Senge et al (2006) suggest that deeper shifts in consciousness are needed and that these intrinsic changes can occur through becoming fully present in the moment, through meditative or spiritual practices. Changing, from the inside out (Covey, 1993).

Breton et al (2003) cite the 13th-century Sufi poet Rumi, who expressed this way of living from the inside out:

> When you do things from your soul,
> you feel a river moving in you, a joy.
> When actions come from another section,
> the feeling disappears.

Breton et al (ibid) highlight that this inner motivational orientation has been practiced by some indigenous culture for millennia, and is now being embraced more widely. They cite Gene Weltfish, who in observing the Pawnee (American First People) during the early 1930s, alludes to democratic outcome of this inner orientation when he wrote:

> [The Pawnee] were a well-disciplined people, maintaining public order under many trying circumstances. Yet they had none of the power mechanisms that we consider essential to a well-ordered life. No orders were ever issued. No assignments for work were ever made nor were over-all plans discussed. There was no code of rules of conduct nor punishment for infraction. There were no commandments nor moralizing proverbs. The only instigator of action was the consenting person … Whatever social forms existed were carried within the consciousness of the people, not by others who were in a position to make demands … Time after time I tried to find a case of orders given, and there was none. Gradually I began to realize that democracy is a very personal thing which, like charity, begins at home. Basically it means not being coerced and having no need to coerce anyone else (A New Model: Justice from the Inside Out. ¶5).

This inner orientation contrasts with our current western world focus on externalization sought through materialism and performance. McNiff (2000) describes the type of learning environment that fosters greater inner development through emancipatory, democratic and transformative practices, processes that are necessary for the paradigm shift to a relational ethic.

> "The things people do in relationships are the surface manifestation of the deep-level values they hold. Much of what informs practices is tacit. In order to understand how we might improve our actions we need to tap our deep tacit knowledge and raise it to explicit levels of awareness. We need to become aware of our educational values and potentials in order to develop educative relationships. We need to be aware of the nature of our transformative practices as we aim to turn our values into practice. What we do in the process, moving from the tacit to the explicit is the practice that matters" (p.51)

Marshall (1996) suggest that the Cartesian dualism that frames current workplace practices, separates "doing from being, action from inaction, independence from interdependence, part lives from whole lives, goal-oriented planning from process-based development (p. 40). Humphries et al (forthcoming b) suggest that this dualism places aspects of ourselves, such as "spiritual-

material, subject-object, male-female, reason-intuition" in opposition rather than in collaboration, creating inner tension and outer friction (p.10). This tension can create barriers to alternative ways of learning and knowing, flexibility or diversity that might be possible from an inclusive world view. Marshall suggests that this dualism denies the wholeness Capra alludes to, and as a result human health, dignity, creativity, motivation and thriving is reduced.

By using holistic practices that acknowledge mind, body and spirit, and creating authenticity and congruity between work and other aspects of living, Haworth (1997, p.98), Lips-Wiersma (2002, p.385), Marshall (1996, p.5) and Ouimet (2002, p.86) suggest that individuals and communities can *experience* wellbeing and flourishing. They maintain that a focus on a relational ethic can achieve human wellbeing along with efficiency and productivity. Lansford et al. (2005) suggest that when people act on values of compassion, acceptance, affirmation, support and guidance, wellbeing is enhanced (p.1). Researchers reinforce the view that relationships characterized by these values create trust that in turn reinforces healthy workplace cultures that are fun to work within (Wilson, 2003; Lips-Wiersma, 2002, pp.391-395; Yerkes 2003, pp.48-50; Spence, Laschinger & Finegan, 2005, Discussion ¶1).

Covey (1993) posits that when organisations are founded on such interpersonal values and principles of congruity and authenticity, the result can be a sense of empowerment for people. He suggests that this creates "synergy," in which the whole is greater that the sum of the parts (pp.262-3). Ouimet (2002, p.87-88) and Marshall (1996, p.12) allude to social cohesion, justice, spirituality, and morality that arises from such synergy, reinforcing the affectivity or the cyclical nature of relationships. In his book entitled "The Web of Life", Capra (1997) describes human beings as interconnected living organisms rather than isolated parts. He draws on the writing of Kant (1790) to explain that living organisms are "parts [that] exist by means of each other, in a sense of producing one another" rather than as separate parts "supporting one another within a functional whole" as with a machine (pp.21-22). In her poem Plummer alludes to the importance of recognizing the 'big picture', the whole dance of life.

A photograph –

A limited boundary –

Yet inter-textual meanderings

run wild.

To see the world in finest detail

do we forsake the awe

of the whole?

I observe life acutely

through my multi-coloured

ultra-zoom lenses …

but do I live it?

Caroline Plummer

Plummer alludes to the importance of recognising the 'big picture' when we dance through life focused on the detail. She questions the ability to live fully without understanding our part in the 'whole'. Steiner (1973) acknowledged this interdependence of humans and the Earth, and the spiritual awareness of that relationship. He articulated this through anthroposophy as "a path of knowledge, to guide the Spiritual in the human being to the Spiritual in the universe. It arises in man as a need of the heart, of the life of feeling; and it can be justified only inasmuch as it can satisfy this inner need. He alone can acknowledge anthroposophy, who finds in it what he himself in his own inner life feels impelled to seek. Hence only they can be anthroposophists who feel certain questions on the nature of man and the universe as an elemental need of life, just as one feels hunger and thirst"(p.1).

The Waldorf website[7] describes anthroposophy as "a human oriented spiritual philosophy that reflects and speaks to the basic deep spiritual questions of humanity, to our basic artistic needs, to the need to relate to the world out of a scientific attitude of mind, and to the need to develop a relation to the world in complete freedom and based on completely individual judgments and decisions". Steiner suggested that Waldorf teachers "consider that each human individual has incarnated into physical being, that each Earth life is unique for that individual and contains tasks

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[7] http://www.waldorfanswers.com/Anthroposophy3.htm (Retrieved 6 June 2006)

to be met." He also suggested that people consider the possibility that "before birth, each individual decided not only the place of birth, but also the choice of parents, of cultural and geographic context, and in a sense 'mapped the journey'.[8] Anthroposophy articulates a desire to sustain wellbeing of people in harmony with the Earth's ecosystem.

Dancing with life is moving with the flow of our experiences – good and bad – with a feeling of harmony, trust, gratitude and love.

Susan Jeffers (1997, p3)

Harmony, trust, gratitude and love, along with respect, compassion, tolerance, acceptance and understanding, are feelings or qualities that people are longing for according to Senge et al (2004). They suggest that it is through bringing our awareness into the present that we enhance our ability to connect with these feelings and qualities. According to Marianne Williamson (2003) love expressed as compassion is not just an emotion. It is a force. It is a power to be applied - not less so that the power of steam, the power of electricity, or the power of the atom (p.219). The power of love as an energy for transformation is nascent until we learn how to apply it. "We knew there was an atom long before we knew how to split it. People enjoyed the beauty of Niagara Falls long before its hydroelectric power lit whole cities. Today we know there is love in our hearts, but we have only begun to scratch the surface of how we can use it to restore and transform our world" (p.220).

Mulkey (2002) cites Gandhi as saying; "when I despair, I remember that all through history the way of truth and love has always won" (p1). In a speech in 1967[9], Martin Luther King stated, "I know that love is ultimately the only answer to mankind's problems".   Jaworski (1996) states that "love is an art, and we must master not only the theory of love, but the practice of love". He cites Fromm (1956) as stating that the elements of love as: "care, which is active concern for the life and growth of the one we love; responsibility, which is caring for one's physical needs as well as one's higher needs; and respect, which s allowing others to grow as they need to on their own

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[8] Te Rawhiti Kindergartens and Te Ra School Information Brochure, p.7.

[9] http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Martin_Luther_King Where Do We Go From Here? "(1967)

 (Retrieved 2 February 2007)

terms" (p.46). He posits that love requires conscious awareness, self knowledge, being fully present in the moment, listening and being patient. Isaacs (1999) suggests that to Plato love and appreciation of all that is beautiful was intrinsically connected to knowing and loving oneself (p.315).

The ability to 'flow with our experiences with love' is heightened by what Jaworski (1996) calls a "flow state", where sense of time is altered and there is extraordinary clarity, focus and concentration (p.45). His experience and his observations of others, led him to suggest that this flow state can be achieved through skilful dialogue. Such dialogue, he posits, provides the stage for people to be fully present and 'suspend' individual assumptions and opinions so that collective consciousness is possible. Reason and Bradbury (2001) suggest that PAR offers such an opportunity for dialogue to explore this deep ecology.

Senge (in Issacs. 1999, p.xx) argues that there is "a deep hunger in the modern world for meaning and the core practices whereby human beings make meaning together". He suggests that "we have an insatiable desire to live lives of dignity and meaning and when we discover ways to do this, there is a quiet sigh of relief"(ibid, p.xx). Many individuals and organisations seek immediate, instrumental solutions to this hunger in terms of personal and professional development training. However, Isaacs argues that what is required is a shift in our world view (ibid, p.2) as the disconnection of people cannot be remedied with the same mechanistic thinking that created this situation. Jaworski (1996) cites Bohm saying "everything starts with you and me", suggesting the personal and collective responsibility for reconnecting people, through being 'heart centred' (p.83).

Wilson Schaef (1995) views Western culture that focuses on the external as a "virtual reality that we have constructed and then forgotten that it is not real". Realness she suggests, comes from understanding our "participation in the universe," our connection with every living thing and seeing it as part of ourselves, not separate. "We don't realise we are destroying ourselves when we destroy the planet" (p.137). Her view is that with such awareness people will cease to plunder the Earth and harm one another.

> Today, we can stand in the midst of the great illusions of the world and by our very presence dispel them. As we cross the bridge to a more loving orientation—as we learn the lessons of spiritual transformation and apply them in our personal lives—we will

become agents of change on a tremendous scale. By learning the lessons of change, internally and externally, each of us can participate in the great collective process in which the people of the world, riding a wave of enlightened understanding, see the human race on a destructive course and turn it around in time. Williamson (2006, A New Beginning, ¶2).

Choosing Our Dance Genre - Participative Action Research

Can you love or respect the people and assist their/our inquiry without imposition

of your will

Can you intervene in the most vital matters and yield to events taking their course

Can you attain deep knowing and know you do not understand

Conceive, give birth and nourish without retaining ownership

Trust action without know outcome

Guide by being guided

Exercise stewardship without control…

Lao Tzu, c.550BC[1], cited in Wadsworth (2001, p.420)

The interpretation of this Lao Tzu poem articulates the timeless qualities of the love, respect, reflexivity, humility, emancipation, trust, compassion, acceptance and service that potentially characterize relationships between people and can bring a sense of wellbeing and inner peace. Wadsworth (ibid, p.420-431) proposes that these qualities are desired to accompany the dance of participative action research processes.

In outlining the qualitative research methodology of participatory action research, I examine the focus placed by advocates on emancipatory learning, action and knowledge generation that arises through both choreographed and improvised or reflexive exploration of diverse forms of subjective/objective knowing (Heron, 2001, p333). Senge and Scharmer (2001) suggest that 'knowing' used in this context refers to evolving, non-static information created from a process of living, rather than knowledge that is generated and stored for future access. Participative action researchers integrate diverse ways of knowing, or extended epistemology to enable people to make sense of their world. Heron and Reason (2001) describe four inter-dependant ways of knowing: experiential knowing through direct contact with a person, place or thing, or through perception or empathy; presentational knowing – illustration of the meaning and significance of

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[1] Drawn from five Interpretations/translations of Passage#10 from Tao Te Ching. (Reason & Bradbury. 2001, p431)

what emerges from experiential knowing; propositional knowing of ideas and theories expressed as information; and practical knowing that comes from acting on skills, strengths and competencies (p.183).

This extended epistemological position on knowledge seeks not so much an objective truth that would hold under all circumstances and command our compliance, but subjective understanding always in the making. These authors allude to the "intensely human, messy process of imagination, invention and learning from mistakes, embedded in a web of human relationships" that creates this knowledge (p.247). Heron and Reason (2001) posit that from participants' attention to "their ways of being, their intuitions and imaginings, their beliefs and actions" they develop "critical subjectivity" (p.184).

Senge and Scharmer (2001) suggest that self awareness and "becoming still and allowing inner knowing to emerge" are prerequisites to access the deep level of consciousness for robust choreography of action research (p.246). Csikszentmihalyi (1996) alludes to other characteristics necessary for research. He argues that being a researcher takes enormous courage (p. 217). Tillich (1961 states that "Courage is self affirming 'in-spite-of', that is in spite of that which tends to prevent the self from affirming itself" (p.31). The investment of one's life over an extended period in researching a problem with possibly erroneous outcomes has high personal and professional risks and of course, a risk to those we research with and profess to care about. Dutton & Dukerich (2006) describe the cognitive and emotional vulnerability that can be experienced by researchers and participants as they develop trust and mutual dependence and learning (p.24). By acknowledging that it is *through the process* that we learn about ourselves, each other and the world we are creating, the processes of learning to dance, not the final fleeting performance, are where the real discovery and transformation occurs. Reason and Bradbury (2001) describe the engagement in participatory research as a "process of learning through risk-taking in living" (p.416). Indeed this is a risky dance.

Dutton and Dukerich (2006) highlight the importance of relational practices, the skilled work so necessary in creating connections between people, which are so often invisible or devalued in organisational contexts and within research practices also (p.21). The qualitative research outlined in this chapter aspires to be grounded in relational qualities of the love, respect, reflexivity, humility, emancipation, compassion, trust, acceptance and service - terms that are often maligned in traditional western management practices as being 'warm fuzzy' or 'touchy-

feely'. Yet Park (2001) suggests that these qualities are encompassed in, contribute to and are the result of the relational knowledge that arises from and leads to, people connecting with others to create and sustain communities. He suggests that this depth of communication can be achieved in many forms of interaction describing an attitude most conducive to listening in conversations, as "putting our ear to someone's heart" (p.86).

> An honourable human relationship – that is – one in which two people have the right to use the word 'love' – is a process, delicate, violent, often terrifying for both people involved, a process of refining the truth they can tell each other.
> It is important to do this because it breaks down human self delusion and isolation.
> It is important to do this because in doing so we do justice to our own complexity.
> It is important to do this as we can count on so few people to go that hard way with us.
> Rich (1979, p.188)

Authors such as Senge et al (2004), Ornish (1998), Reason & Bradbury (2001), Isaacs (1998) acknowledge the connection between developing 'loving, respectful' relationships and wellbeing of people. Through action research praxis, people are provided with an opportunity to develop honourable human relationships that dissolve separation and unrealness. Wilson Schaef (1996) and Williamson (2006) allude to respecting ourselves as inextricably connected to caring for the planet. Capra (1997) speaks of the deep ecological awareness that enables humans to have a sense of belonging to the whole universe (p.7). This interconnection may be imperative to human and planetary wellbeing.

Within our current mechanistic western culture, the focus of people in workplace organisations is most often on efficient, effective and immediate outcomes. Park (2001) argues that scant recognition is given to the value of relational knowledge and its importance to human wellbeing is marginalized or not articulated at all (p.84). He suggests that participative action research is "a social practice that helps marginalized people attain a degree of emancipation as autonomous and responsible members of society" (ibid, p.81). Heron (2001), Reason & Bradbury (2001) and McNiff (2000) are among many authors who outline the wide application of action research for personal and organisational transformation. Thus this form of research provides an opportunity for people to build their relational knowledge within any context. Reason & Bradbury (2001) posit that it contributes to "the flourishing of life, the life of human persons, of human communities, and increasingly of the more than human world of which we are a part" (p.10).

> To heal means to make whole: we can only understand our world as a whole if we are part of it; as soon as we attempt to stand outside, we divide and separate. In contrast, making whole necessarily implies participation: one characteristic of a participative worldview is that the individual person is restored to the circle of community and the human community to the context of the wider natural world. To make whole also means to make holy: another characteristic of a participatory worldview is that meaning and mystery are restored to human experience, so that the world is once again experienced as a sacred place.
>
> Reason (1994) cited in Reason & Bradbury (ibid, p.10)

Senge et al (2004) cites Bohm's understanding of the "wholeness of nature" as being a continual interconnected dance of the "explicit or manifest order" with the "implicate order" where "awareness, space and time are interdependent" (p.203). Capra (1997) alludes to the spiritual dimension of connecting the explicit and implicate orders. Senge et al (ibid) cite Capra who identifies three characteristics of living systems of which humans are a part: ability to create themselves; ability to be self organizing in ways that could not have been predicted in the past; and awareness of interacting effectively with their environment (p.2004). Action research builds on these characteristics, emphasising the interdependent and evolutionary relationship of researchers. Pålshaugen (2001) differentiates between researcher and research participants. He suggests that researchers need to be linguistically competent to translate knowledge through the language common to the participants thus strengthening the bridge between theory and practice (p.209).

Park (2001) draws on the writing on Habermas (1981) to broaden the idea of 'rationality', going beyond the prevailing 'objective' instrumental concept of outputs. He cites Habermas as proposing that being 'rational' means acting according to our tacit knowledge of our world, honouring our moral stance in our relationships and our internal subjective state that arises from being human. In his terms "human rationality" is interrelated with other aspects of life that cannot be "objectified". Habermas suggested that through dialogue the art of making and understanding meaning, questions not only about fact but about norms, assumptions and feelings, are 'rational'. Park posits that "rationality entails relationship" (p.84). Thus Participative Action Research involves the subjectivity of interpersonal relationship, people ever evolving in relationship to one another, affecting and being affected one another (ibid, pp. 84-85). Nichol (2004) cites Bohm

describing this affectivity as the "subtle unity of the 'observer and the observed'" reinforcing the interconnectedness of all things (p.2). These authors argue that through this rational learning about self and others, relational knowledge develops knowledge that can build understanding within communities of people.

Gordon (2001) suggests that through participants individually and collaboratively engaging in cycles of observation, reflection, dialogue and action, "taken for granted assumptions" can be deconstructed as a way of making sense of their world (ibid, pp.315 & 318; Heron & Reason, 2001, p.184). Kemmis (2001) argues that research participants can become emancipated from habitual, customary, illusionary or coerced behaviours that sometimes frame and constrain people in organisational and social practice (p.92). PAR provides such an opportunity for deeper observation and reflection by viewing the 'whole picture' rather than isolated parts.

Torbert (1991) cited in Gordon (2001), suggests that this choreography "is the kind of scientific inquiry that is conducted in everyday life" and is familiar to people with a heightened intent on learning processes and personal development. Self and other awareness is a necessary initial step in the metamorphosis from a person to a nimble and grace-full dancer in relationships. Gordon outlines areas that people can focus their attention on in order to develop this awareness: their motivating purpose or vision; their emotional, physical, psychological, spiritual, cultural and historical tacit knowledge; becoming critically conscious; collaborating with and supporting others to learn; embedding new knowledge and understanding; being reflexive to new knowledge; and remaining connected to the "outside world" (ibid, pp.318-319). These processes are similar to some professional development and self management practices. Action research processes therefore can offer a degree of familiarity enabling participants to engage with relative comfort. This may also enhance the emancipatory potential of participatory action research.

Hence the extended epistemology of PAR has an empirical and critical focus. Reason & Bradbury (2001) promote this praxis-method as a catalyst for democratic social change that supports human wellbeing and flourishing (p.9). Kemmis (2001) describes the method as 'research by practitioners', as something they do rather than something that is done on or to them (p.91). He draws on the opinion of Habermas (1974) that "in the process of enlightenment there can be only participants" (p.40), to reinforce that enlightenment comes from within, not from without. He suggests that action research offers the potential for empowerment when participants within a community or organisation engage in democratic, egalitarian processes.

Park (2001) suggests that the collaborative and emancipatory processes of participative action research enable people to generate knowledge that addresses common needs in their daily lives. He reinforces this key element of 'non-experts' who share common concerns, decide collaboratively how to solve them and take action accordingly. Park posits that this is unlike other forms of "action-oriented research" in which outside people determine which problems will be addressed, and the processes and actions to be implemented (p.81). Reason (2001) also advocates for the potential for personal and social transformation that arises from participants having an opportunity for democratic dialogue around the research decisions that impact on them. In his view this qualitative participatory research has a double objective.

One aim is to produce knowledge and action directly useful to a group of people—through research, through adult education, and through socio-political action. The second aim is to empower people at a second and deeper level through the process of constructing and using their own knowledge: they "see through" the ways in which the establishment monopolizes the production and use of knowledge for the benefit of its members. This is the meaning of consciousness raising or conscientization, a term popularized by Freire for a "process of self-awareness through collective self-inquiry and reflection. (Reason, 2001, ¶4).

McNiff (2000) posits that raising consciousness in the context of action research, requires honesty, energy and commitment to look within for understanding of the living "I" and to seek creative, adaptive processes for responding to a particular relational situation (p.59 & p.136). This invitation to the full engagement and further development of the 'self' invites closer and continuous acknowledgement, examination, and transformation of our 'selves' – including those dimensions that we may rather ignore, diminish or deny. Jung calls these dimensions of the Self the Shadow or the unconscious (cited in Wehr, 2002).

McNiff (2000) proposes that greater collaboration between organisational participants and academic researchers has the potential to generate living theories that redefine the main purpose of organisation theory in terms of human wellbeing. She advocates the promotion of practitioner generated knowledge in which all participants regard themselves as equal in terms of contribution to their own practice and in relation to one another. She also posits that such collaborations, providing opportunity to reflect on personal choices in various relationships and exercise those choices responsibly, may contribute to an emancipatory form of research. (p.7 & p.139). McNiff describes collaboration as "an effort to develop mutually respectful autonomy, a practice in which people work together as equals, engage in the give and take of negotiating positions, and agree

settlements which are then subjected to critical processes of evaluation and modification" (ibid, p.217). She posits a social constructionist view as a core principle of action research – that people create their own realities. She acknowledges that the degree to which people are aware of their own cultural and historical situated-ness, influences the reality they can create (p.111). In this way, Borda (2001) argues, participative researchers have the opportunity to deconstruct the global uniformity that pervades organisational theory in developed nations (p.33). Through participative research, people, working together within various forms of community or organisation may be provided with the opportunity to create their own dance, reflecting the individual and collective dance styles of all participants rather than conforming to a one-dance-fits-all style that might arise from a positivist methodology.

Swantz (1988) suggests that the crucial aspect of PAR is not the extent of the participation but whether the planning and action emancipates the people involved rather than further binding people to obedience to those in authority (p.130). However Heron (2001) posits that while each person has an "idiosyncratic viewpoint…a reference for participative perspective and action", their "internal authority" can be overridden by an "internalized version of the external authority" (pp.333-334). He suggests that it is through reflection and action with others that people can discriminate about these internalizations and validate their personal 'authority'. Thus people participate in a continuously evolving process.

Reason and Marshall (2001) suggest that this way of researching posits that researchers themselves and the focus of their interests are always in process of change. They posit that the very action of engagement embroils researchers and the communities with whom they work in the constant process of becoming. Every action is an interaction of creation (p.416). McNiff (2000) suggests that by embracing this understanding of mutual affect in this form of scholarship, metaphors for integration, reconciliation and hope for harmony can emerge, "creating new theories that acknowledge the transformative nature of living" (p.6).

Reason (2005b) states that his journey of exploration began with the idea of "*participation as method*, inquiry *with* people rather than on people"[2] thus perhaps increasing the effectiveness of the research as it reflects a broader array of participants' perceptions and knowledge rather than being choreographed by a single, leading researcher (¶.5). As one of the participants, the initiator of the research may have specific responsibilities to facilitate the inquiry processes and to

[2] author's italics - Reason. 2005b. Participation as Method, paragraph 1

disseminate any associated scholarship, requiring the self and other awareness, mindfulness and reflexivity outlined in the above translation of Lao Tzu. Wadsworth (2001) suggests that in shorter research inquiries her most useful contribution to the process occurs at the outset. She assists in the "shaping, framing, conceptualization and design" of a project (p.421). She states that this involves intense cycles of listening, questioning, observing, clarifying, offering thoughts and being guided by participants' responses. Bentley and Humphries (2006, p.3) proffer that this way of researching contrasts sharply with the tradition of logical positivists who separate the researcher from the phenomena under investigation. As Heron (1988) outlines, in that tradition research design, direction, management and conclusions tend to be the domain of the researcher (p.40).

Unlike the focus only on the third person as in positivist research, Reason and Torbett (2001) highlight three significant forms of attention associated with action research that provide opportunities for practice in relational responsibility:

i) in the first-person to address the ability of a person to foster an inquiring approach to his or her own life;

ii) in second-person, through face-to-face group collaborative inquiry

iii) through third person research and practice that asks how we can establish inquiring communities that can have a ripple affect on human wellbeing within whole organisations, communities and nations (p.4).

These three foci provide deeper and broader conceptualization of knowledge. The emancipatory inquiring approach of first person research requires high levels of conscious awareness, thought and practice. R D Laing wrote:

> The range of what we think and do
> is limited by what we fail to notice.
> And because we fail to notice
> that we fail to notice
> there is little we can do
> to change
> until we notice
> how failing to notice
> shapes our thoughts and deeds.

Cited in Zweig & Abrams (1991, p.xix)

It is this attention to noticing that Marshall (1999) describes when she is "working with a multi-dimensional frame of knowing; acknowledging and connecting between intellectual, emotional, practical, intuitive, sensory, imaginal and more knowings" (p.2; 2001, p.433). Through these diverse ways of knowing, Marshall proposes that action research is more focused on people-centred processes that provide opportunities for learning and provide information, rather than on outcomes and being attached to "getting it right" (1999, p.8). This suggests an ecological rather than an instrumental ontology for management theory; Reason and Bradbury (2001) describe action research as a "living process" (p.11). Action research is not something separate from life but the processes engaged in, as part of everyday living. Swantz (2001) disclosed: "I do not separate my scientific inquiry from my life. For me it is really a quest for life, to understand life and to create what I call living knowledge – knowledge which is valid for the people with whom I work and for myself" (p.1). Her statement reflects a humble quest for understanding that appears devoid of egoism, and highlights the inclusiveness and practical application of action research.

Reason and Bradbury (2001) reinforce the ability of action research work to bring together academic research and practical application through integrating first, second and third person research and practice. (p.xxvii). First person epistemology reflects Gandhi's famous quote "Be the change you want to see". This aphorism is based on the premise that change originates within the individual and that in bringing to consciousness that which is unconscious, we liberates ourselves from habitual thinking and behaviour patterns. Gordon (2001) considers that such attentiveness has enabled her to become a"self-renewing organism" as she consciously lives her values (p.321). It is her view that research enables people to explore what is real for them in their world as they seek to make social changes. Torbert (2001) reinforces this 'realness' by stating that his purpose in sharing first person inquiry with others is "not because I want to create a

model for others to follow, but because I want to model following an idiosyncratic path that leads us more and more often into the inclusive present" reinforcing the potential for an egalitarian and collaborative research paradigm (p.252). Wadsworth (2001) refers to the "real-izing interconnectedness" that occurs when people make the connections between their inner and outer existences as they focus on "arc-ing" the spaces between people (p.426). Marshall (2001) refers to "inner and outer arcs of attention" in describing the link between first and second person inquiry (pp.433-434).

Senge et al (2004) have drawn on their own and the experiences of people in fields of science, business and social entrepreneurship to offer their explanation for how profound collective change can occur. They suggest that reactive learning processes, characteristic of instrumental thinking, focus on thinking and doing that reflect and are governed by established mental models and habitual styles of action (p.8) as shown in the model below.

Thinking   **Doing**

"Downloading mental   "Re-enacting

models"   habits"
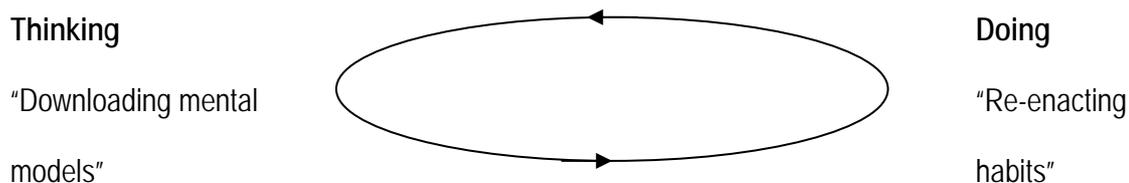
Fig 1. Diagram adapted from Senge et al (2004, p.8)

In first and second person research Senge & Scharmer (2001) suggest these deeper levels of inner knowing can emerge through being still and fully present in the moment. They refer to this attention as "presencing". They posit that these meditative processes do not exist in traditional learning cycles. They argue that rather than being dependent on reflecting on past experience or planning future action, deeper knowledge in the present can be accessed through 'presencing':

> Whereas reflective learning builds on inquiry-based dialogue and reflective cognition, learning through 'presencing' is based on a different kind of awareness – one that Csikszentmihalyi (1990) describes as 'flow', that Bartoft (1996) describes as 'presencing the Whole', that Rosch (2000) characterizes as 'timeless, direct presentation (rather than stored re-presentation)', or that many people encounter in generative dialogue experiences (Isaacs, 1999).   Senge & Scharmer (ibid, p.246)

They suggest that deeper levels of learning are possible through increasing awareness of the larger whole – both what is and what is evolving – which they argue leads to actions that increasingly serve the whole (ibid, p.9) as illustrated below.

Thinking   **Doing**

Increasing   Action that

awareness   increasingly

of the whole   serves the

                                                                                                      whole
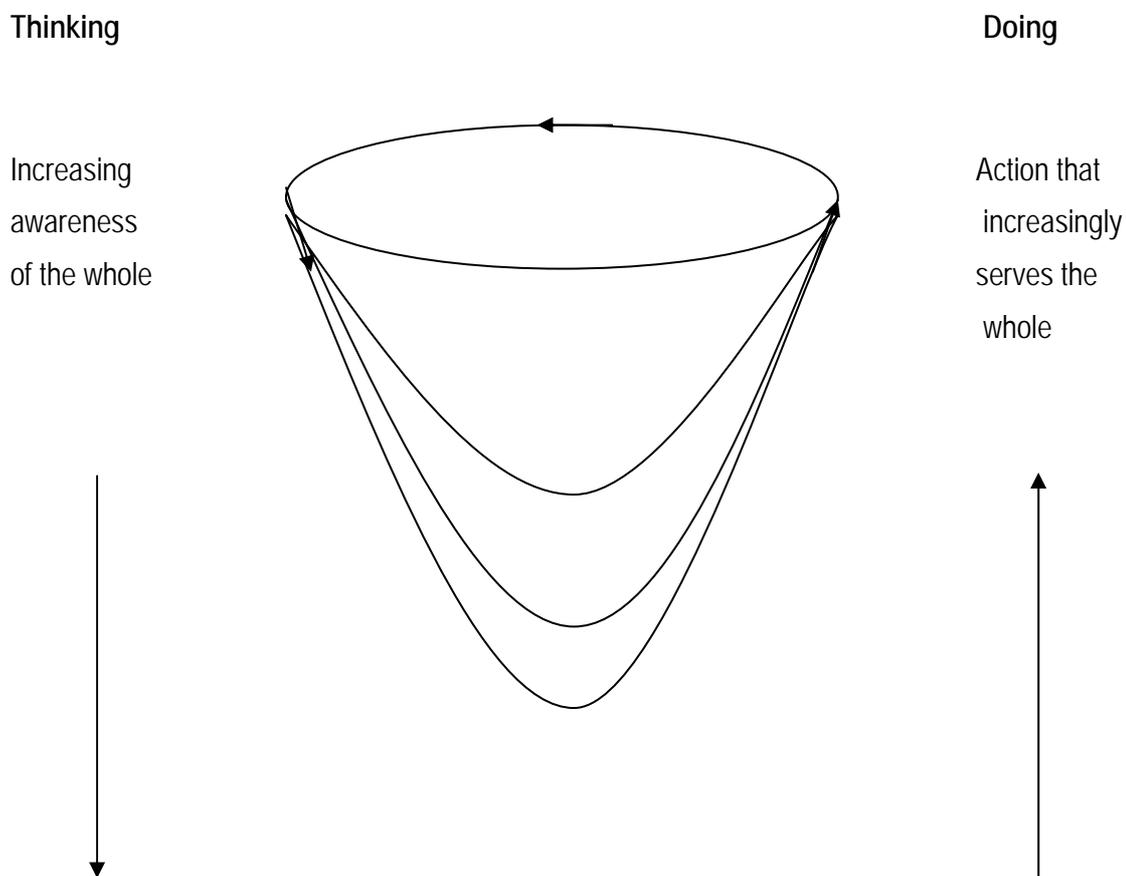
Fig. 2. Diagram adapted from Senge et al (2004, p.9)

Senge et al (2004) argue that if awareness is determined by superficial events and current circumstances, options for action are limited to reactions. They propose that deeper awareness accessed through spiritual practices allows people to "be fully conscious and aware in the present moment" giving recognition to the interconnectedness with everything. They suggest that this way of being provides a greater source of options for action, with heightened awareness of "consciously participating in a larger field for change" (p.11).

Schumacher (1973) alludes to this 'presencing' when he says "clear-eyed objectivity, however, cannot be achieved and prudence cannot be perfected except by an attitude of "silent contemplation" of reality, during which the egocentric interests of man are at least temporarily silenced" (p.251). This suggests the critical imperative of going beyond the 'individual' to focus on what is best for the whole community. Torbert (2001) extends this emphasis on deeper inner knowing by stating that he "cannot imagine how anyone can generate awareness, mutuality and competence-expansion without (a) eventually seeking direct tuition in some sort of meditative inner work; (b) seeking 'seeking friends'; and (c) framing one's own organisational roles as action inquiry opportunities"(p.252). He recommends daily meditative rituals that serve the personal needs of the participants engaged in first person research.

While first person research inquiry relies on paying attention and listening to how we are experiencing ourselves, in second person research Torbert (2001) posits that "speaking-and-listening-with-others" is quintessential to the process (p.253). He highlights the mutuality of loving listening, disclosing and questioning in respectful second person practice that is reflects the interpretation of Lao Tzu words (p.254). Irigaray (2002) suggests that for true sharing to take place, all parties must not only be able to listen to one another; but also be able to listen to themselves (p.x). McNiff (2000) proposes that through our struggle to learn to listen to ourselves and to others we can gain insight into our compassionate, tolerant and forgiving 'Self' and cites Polanyi (1958, p.43); "my eyes have become different; I have made myself into a person seeing and thinking differently" (p.181). She refers to the spiritual dimension within relationships as dynamic, transforming connections between people who long for "belonging, love and peace" (p.4). In Heraclitean cosmology, reality is always changing. We are affected by and affect relationships continuously in just the same way as it is impossible to step into the same river twice. The river, as is life, is always in flow and therefore never the same (p.43). Relationships, like the spaces between dancers, are in constant flow, shifting, moving, expanding, and contracting. It is the recognition of this constant change that distinguishes various forms of action research from the attempts by empiricists who attempt to 'capture' observations in equations of truth.

Shotter (2005) suggests that in the search for a solid basis for claims to knowledge, researchers "have looked to an ideal realm located somewhere beyond our social and historical relations to each other, a world located in mathematical, logical, mechanical, or organic systems" (¶1). He states that central to second person inquiry is "our *living relations* to our surroundings", giving

spontaneous expression to thoughts and ideas hidden inside individual inquirers' heads so that living, responsive, relational activities occur explicitly for all to see. McNiff (2000) suggests that when engaging in action research, participants recognize this affectivity, mutual interdependence and connectedness, and this encourages personal and collective responsibility for making one's own life work in relation to others (p.217).

When people treat each other as equals and with care, respect and trust, the relational knowledge that arises enables each person to transcend and transform, a process that Park (2001) describes as love (p84). 'Agape' is the Greek word for this kind of love. Maturana cited in Senge et al (2004), says that "love, allowing the other to be a legitimate other, is the only emotion that expands intelligence" (p.203). Fromm (1956, p31) is cited by Park as saying that "the only way of fully knowing likes in the *act* of love: this act transcends thought, it transcends words. It is the daring plunge into the experience of union". Park posits that relational knowledge is mutual in that is created and received by each person in the relationship and becomes a part of who they are. He suggests that this process of knowledge building is the foundation of 'community' (ibid, pp.84-85).

In developing research methods in which the ever emergent self and ever changing community are conceived of not as objects to be measured or mastered, but relationships to be negotiated, levels of sensitivity to self and relationship with others become essential to the research process. Action research provides this opportunity.

Validity of Participative Action Research

Wolcott (1990) cited by Bradbury and Reason (2001), argues that discourse about validity is bound to positivist research (p. 447). In this paradigm validity and reliability are linked to replica-ability and generalisability. They question the appropriateness of such discourse. McNiff (2000) echoes this view as action research is focused on understanding what is happening in one particular situation and therefore such traditional validity criteria are obsolete (pp.135-136). Reason and Bradbury suggest:

> …shifting the dialogue about validity from a concern with idealist questions in search of "Truth" to concern for engagement, dialogue, pragmatic outcomes and an emergent, reflexive sense of what is important (ibid, p.447).

In this discourse, Reason and Bradbury (2001) direct our attention to questions about five interconnected aspects of action research that focus on quality and validation. They invite questions about "emergence and enduring consequence", "practice and practising", "plural ways of knowing", "relational practice" and about "significance" to validate action research (p.12). Kemmis (2001) suggests that such questions enable people to understand the ways in which they are "shaped by taken-for-granted assumptions, habit, custom, ideology and tradition". He draws on the dialogical principles of Habermas (1979) that direct participants to communicate authentically with the challenge of attaining "mutual understanding and unforced consensus about what to do" (p.93).

Heron and Reason (ibid) suggest that this diverse knowledge is accessed by and validated through using cycles of reflection and action, diverging onto other issues or converging on one. They maintain that authenticity is ensured by attention to egalitarian collaboration that safeguards the process by challenging consensus collusion. They highlight the transparency of handling emotional states openly and allowing a balance between order and chaos in the process (pp.184-185).

Giroux (2003) suggests that it is through combining criticism and a hope without illusions that critical action offers the possibility for social transformation (p.63). Such transformation can be achieved through dialogue into the Shadows, through accentuating existing compassionate, supportive foundations and enhancing and transforming that which is not well. Senge (1990) describes a learning organisation as one where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together (p.3). Deetz et al (2000) refers to the "most basic assumptions people make about the nature of their world and the people in it…that …includes their most basic ideas of what is proper and moral…what is fair, how things should work'(p.21). He argues that the culture of an organisation is strengthened when organisational values are deeply integrated with values of employees.

McNiff (2000) suggests that action research offers a "methodology of hope". She states that the acknowledgment of the "ambiguous and volatile nature of human relationships as well as the primacy of politics" is important to finding solutions to social problems. She highlights the potential

positioning of real people as strategic thinkers who "find ways of creating new social scenarios for better living" (p.77).

Senge et al (2004) cites Bohm as saying:

> The most important thing going forward is to break the boundaries between people so we can operate as a single intelligence. Bell's theorem implies that this is the natural state of the human world, separation without separateness. The task is to find ways to break these boundaries, so we can be in our natural state (p.195)

I suggest that PAR provides the opportunity for people to be heard, to understand and to participate in transforming into reality the essence of Bohm's philosophy. Pratt (1993) states that "Bohm believed that the general tendency for individuals, nations, races, social groups, etc., to see one another as fundamentally different and separate was a major source of conflict in the world. It was his hope that one day people would come to recognize the essential interrelatedness of all things and would join together to build a more holistic and harmonious world."

Rising in Relationships through the Art of Dialogue

> From time to time, (the) tribe (gathered) in a circle.
>
> They just talked and talked and talked, apparently to no purpose.
>
> They made no decisions. There was no leader. And everybody could participate. There may have been wise men or wise women who were listened to a bit more – the older ones – but everybody could talk. The meeting went on, until it finally seemed to stop for no reason at all and the group dispersed. Yet after that, everybody seemed to know what to do, because they understood each other so well. Then they could get together in smaller groups and do something or decide things.
>
> David Bohm, *On Dialogue*. (Cited in Jaworski, 1996, p.109)

Habermas (cited in Kemmis, 2001) argues that in our mechanistic, compartmentalized and output focused western world, the evolving, organic characteristics of dialogue described above, with its depth of possibility for understanding, love and compassion to create living knowledge, can be obliterated from our view and hence our experience (p.91-101). The emphasis on time bound, fragmented conversations tends to be the norm in our western world, which on the surface may appear efficient and cost effective but does not account for the cost to human wellbeing through the inhibiting of depth and wholeness of understanding. Drawing on Bohm's insights into quantum physics, Isaacs (1999) suggests that dialogue offers the ability to pull together all that might previously be fragmented (pp.57-58) to make explicit what previously was implicit so that we can experience ourselves as part of the whole.

The Greek root for the word 'dialogue' translates into a "flow of meaning" (Isaacs, 1999, p.19). Jaworski (1996) notes that dialogue contrasts with discussion, the root of which means "to break things up" (p.110). Dialogue and the art of thinking together can be represented through the metaphor of dance. Like the conversations of the tribe observed by Bohm, dance also flows with crescendos and diminuendos until it is complete and the dancers disperse knowing more than they knew before the dance began. In New Zealand we can draw an example of this type of

dialogue from Maori traditional hui which is characterised by the time allowed for evolutionary aspects of dialogue. The current idolization of lineal time by people in western capitalist management practices can diminish communication and inhibit relationships. Isaacs (ibid) suggests that we need to appreciate and accept both types of time, the first more qualitative and the second more quantitative articulated by the Greek words 'kairos' referring to internal natural rhythms, sense of 'appropriate' or 'right' moment and 'kronos' (chronos), describing external, chronological time (pp.288-289). To communicate takes time. To research is to communicate. It is to 'take time' – with self and with others to learn more than we knew before.

In this chapter I discuss the intentionality and abilities required to create interpersonal communication that enables the respectful and egalitarian collaboration that forms the basis of PAR. Through such dialogue, action researchers may contribute to enhanced wellbeing and flourishing within themselves and the communities they serve. I describe the creation of a climate conducive to the practices of reflection, observation, reflexivity, and action. While not all dialogue may be as organic as that described by Bohn above, he provides an aspiration of the characteristics possible. These characteristics may provide the creative space in which research participants can find confidence and courage to reflect deeply enough to become conscious of shadows. Transformation of personal and interpersonal disconnection may then be possible.

Isaacs (1999) suggests that our world view can alter through dialogue. He considers that to establish a space conducive to dialogues requires characteristics of respect, openness, and the ability to listen with attention rather than waiting to talk, to suspend opinions and also to have the courage to voice them when it is useful or appropriate (p.134-135). Heron (1996) argues that we can inquire into aspects of what it means to be human only from being fully present with ourselves and others (p.200). He states that people become people only in the context of "mutual communion and communication in which those involved function as free, autonomous beings, in loving, creative and intelligent dialogue and endeavour with each other"(ibid, p.201). Reason & Bradbury (2001) proposes that this type of communication can be fostered through the participatory, democratic and evolving choreography of action research dances (p1). Isaacs (1999) cites an example of an action research inquiry that extended over one year in an organisation, which resulted in formerly deeply polarized groups of people gaining understanding and clarity of their situations from such dialogue, transforming a traditional authority relationship into one of mutual respect (pp.113-114).

> The heart of dialogue is a simple but profound capacity to listen. Listening requires we not only hear the words, but also embrace, accept, and gradually let go of our own inner clamouring. As we explore it, we discover that listening is an expansive activity. It gives us a way to perceive more directly the ways we participate in the world around us.
>
> Isaacs (1999, p83)

Such dialogical transformational processes are possible when the contributors observe Tillich's (1886-1965) aphorism "the first duty of love is to listen". Zuker (1994) posits that this love arises from "an honest desire to see things the way another person sees them" (Chapter 2, ¶1). Barker (1990) describes listening in this sense as "active listening" involving processes of hearing, paying attention to non-verbal stimuli, seeking to understand, remembering, reflecting and considering and finally, responding to the speaker (pp.47-50). Isaacs (1999) recommends that people listen to hear the 'intent' behind what is being said, which can happen when judgements are suspended long enough to allow the listener to be curious (p.200). In our rapid paced world he suggests that most people think that they have to fix things or change people in order to be content, but he advocates that we "listen for an already existing wholeness, and create a new kind of association in which we listen deeply to all the views that people may express" (p.20). He acknowledges that in a mechanistic view of life it can be difficult to slow down thinking and listening even when there is an intent to deepen relationships in this way.

Isaacs (1999) posits that currently favoured management practices now dominant in western societies have been generated from the mechanistic view of the world made possible only after the Descartian separation of the material from the spiritual. This separation of the physical world as an objective entity, and the human being as an observer of it, enabled Newtonian physics to measure precisely the forces of discrete particles. The rapid embedding of the scientific method associated with what has been termed the post-enlightenment period is visible in the work of such theorists as Hobbes, Adam Smith, Freud and Karl Marx. These thinkers fostered a search for universal laws that they believed pervaded social and scientific thinking. Their collective endeavours in harmony with like-minded specialists in many fields culminated in the focus on mechanistic, instrumental prediction and control models for human organisations practised in current western capitalist management (ibid, p.118). Isaacs posits that this fragmentation, this splitting of spirit from matter, has encompassed people as well as processes, dismembering our ability to communicate as equals, bringing a sense of separation and isolation (ibid, pp.121 & 279). He notes that just as astronauts were surprised see a beautiful whole earth from space,

with no man-made national boundary lines fragmenting country from country, we have to be reminded that we have conceived similar divisions in our minds about many aspects of our lives (ibid, p.53). Jung and Steiner's work sought to dispel illusions of separation within ourselves by acknowledging our wholeness.

Jaworski (1996) is one of many researchers who addresses this separation by directing our attention to Bell's 1964 physics theorem on the oneness of the sub-atomic world, validated by Alain Aspect of Paris University in 1972, proposing that everything in the world is fundamentally inseparable, including humans (pp.79-80). Bohn, in conversation with Jaworski, proposed that humans have an innate capacity for collective intelligence because we are all connected and operating within what he calls "living fields of thought and perception" (ibid, p.109). He acknowledges the time it took him to assimilate the conscious shift about the impermanence of boundaries or "unity consciousness" (ibid, p.56), inferring that people gradually evolve into such new levels of awareness and acceptance. He extrapolates that to think together and tap into this collective intelligence enhances dialogue, heightening our ability for collaborative action and thus diminishing the artificial separation associated with the Descartian dualism (ibid p.111).

Jaworski cites Bohm as suggesting that the often unconscious assumptions that direct people's thinking patterns inhibit many discussions, creating conversations that are characterized by all sorts of "'undiscussables" that lie "beneath the surface blocking honest, heart to heart communication" (ibid, p.110). Isaacs (1999) posits that in western organisations the structure and time constraints of workplace meetings commonly results in authoritative and formal discussions rather than dialogues (p.42). He hypothesises that these discussions force people into dualistic thinking and to focus on funnelling the conversation towards completion and closure. Dialogue tends to open up and fan out an array of possibilities collectively to consider, developing towards a conclusion and action. Workplace corridor conversations are often hallmarked by brevity and ambiguity. In these formal and informal discussions, Isaacs (1999) suggests that it is common for people to experience fear, confusion, boredom, indifference and anger, and to make assumptions, be intent on expressing their opinions, not hear what is said, withdraw or fight. Such experiences can result in people leaving conversations with very different understandings of what has occurred, compromised commitment to decisions, and an unwillingness or inability to admit this. Isaacs conjectures that people resort to "thinking alone" because collective thinking is fraught with these difficulties, increasing isolation, separation and fragmentation (pp.49-50). He posits that "thinking alone" leads to people making defensive judgements that they impose on

others and the word (p.67). When communication breaks down and conflict arises, or when difficult decisions are to be unilaterally implemented, workplaces sometimes engage 'communication facilitation experts' to choreograph a dance of unequal and disenfranchised employees in an attempt to achieve cohesion.

Habermas (1998) suggests that "professional, specialised, self-sufficient culture of experts and functional imperatives of state and economy have destructively invaded both the ecological basis of life and the communicative infrastructure of our lifeworld" (p.424). He advocates for non-reified everyday dialogue. Similarly Isaacs' (1999) view of dialogue is as "conversation in motion", an evolving process not a lineal one (p.254). When people have the opportunity to see how they fit into the whole picture, to listen and respect others opinions and to be listened to and have their opinions respected, Reason and Bradbury (2001) contend that their ability to affect the wellbeing of themselves and others can be enhanced.

Isaacs (1999) is an author who subscribes to the view associated with the emerging quantum physics, bringing these concepts to organisational thinking: the theory that the observer and the observed cannot be separated, that human beings are all intimately part of the whole fabric of life. He suggests that it is interconnectedness not fragmentation that is significant in relationships and conversations. His view is that the "wholeness of a situation is the objective thing that directly influences behaviour rather than immutable laws that always apply everywhere as the Newtonian theorists told us" (p.119). He cites the experiences of Garrett, who facilitates dialogues with serious offenders in prison, referring to this interconnectedness as "an appreciation of the principle of coherence":

> The impulse behind intentions is pure, even though the intention may be distorted and the impact not what was intended. Inquiring deeply enough to reach the original impulse will always reveal wholesomeness. This provides the confidence to enter the loudest confrontation and the darkest territory without fear that it will get forever worse (p.121).

Garrett's work indicates that dialogue is more than just conversational skills - it is the position of deep respect and inclusion, recognition of our similarities as well as than our differences, which must exist for an inquiry to be effective. Such underpinning can foster a climate conducive to individual exploration of own and others' shadows, thereby gaining understanding and acceptance of and compassion for the ways in which we are interconnected.

In order to see ourselves as the micro of the macro, interconnected with all living things, Isaacs (1999) proposes that we consider ourselves and others as many faceted jewels; the more intimately we know all the facets, the more clearly we can see, value and respect the whole jewel (p.110)

> To be able to see a person as a whole being, we must learn another central element in the practice of dialogue: respect. Respect is not a passive act. To respect someone is to look for the springs that feed the pool of their experience. The word comes from the Latin *respecere,* which means "to look again." Its most ancient roots mean "to observe." It involves a sense of honouring or deferring to someone. Where once we saw one aspect of a person, we look again and realise how much of them we had missed. This second look can let us take in more fully the fact that here before me is a living, breathing being (ibid, p.110).

It is this ability to 'see' people as *legitimate* (Isaac's emphasis) that is the basis of the act of respect. Integral with 'seeing' people is the respecting another person's boundaries, without withdrawing ourselves from them so that we can learn from them (ibid, pp.114 -115). Issacs suggests that this means seeing their potential, treating people as 'teachers' from whom we can learn and about whom we can be curious, looking for what is the 'highest and best' in a person while minimizing focus on perceived 'faults' (ibid, pp.116-117). My experience and literature research demonstrates that 'respect', 'love' and 'compassion' are words and actions not readily used or recognized in many, if not most western organisational management practices. These practices are characterized by a preoccupation with mechanism, prediction and control (ibid, p.118). Isaacs cites Humberto Maturana (1998) as saying that 'love is the space in which others arise as legitimate selves' suggesting that people exist only because of each other, therefore how can 'love' not be used in any context where people are together(ibid, p.408). Isaacs links love and dialogue in this way:

> Dialogue enables a "free flow of meaning," which has the potential of transforming the power relationships among the people concerned. As this free flow emerges, it becomes quite apparent that no one person owns this flow and that no one can legislate it. People can learn to embody it, and in a sense serve it. This is perhaps the most significant shift possible in dialogue: that power is no longer the province of a person in a role, or even of any single individual, but at the level of alignment an individual or group has with the

power of Life itself. We have a familiar way of understanding power of this kind, though it comes from an unusual source. Power that respects no one but includes everyone, that calls for the best in people, and that evokes creativity, is love. Dialogue can unleash the power of love, not in a sentimental or moralistic sense but in the genuine sense of true creativity (p.395).

Irigaray (2002) suggests that this creativity arises from discourse around love as a verb, rather than a noun. She considers love to be a commitment that connects a person with themselves, their world and others in a generative way. She differentiates between language expressed to reduce someone to an object of love (I love …) and language that respects autonomy and freedom (I love to…) (p.60). As Maturana indicates, love is about what happens in the spaces between people, 'doing' love by 'being' loving.

Isaacs (1999) suggests that the moments of entrance into a relationship can determine how the dance will develop, so taking time to connect with each person and to listen to their unique perspective sets the scene for ongoing flow of dialogue (p.293). This important scene setting is intended to create conditions in which inclusive participation is more likely to happen. He uses the word "container" to describe the establishment of a safe atmosphere or climate, facilitating the creation of boundaries in a group setting so that individuals are able to raise difficult issues to clarify thoughts and feelings. If people can resist the temptation to blame and instead listen to others with the view that what is 'out there' is also within themselves, he proposes that the possibility for love and respect is enhanced. This also means understanding and accepting how people affect and are affected by one another and by experiences. He suggests that seeking to conserve and build on that which already exists in relationships, in preference to focusing on what needs to change, can reinforce foundational strengths (pp. 242-251).

A "container" can mean talking in a circle that holds all, symbolising wholeness (ibid, pp.242-243). The circle is an ancient symbol for dialogue and used by many cultures because it creates a conducive and effective space for everyone to see and hear, implying that each person is on the same level and creating a setting where transformation can take place (ibid:p249). Bohn's view (cited in Nichol, 2004) supports the potential use of a circle for transmuting authoritative, hierarchical relationships (p.310)

Isaacs (1999) outlines three foundational levels of human interaction necessary for dialogue. The first is awareness of incongruity between our actions and words and developing a capacity for new behaviour (ibid, p.29). He terms the second level as "predictive intuition" (ibid, p.30), the ability to anticipate a range of individual underlying goals and needs and be flexible and fluid, so that stuck interactions are liberated, promoting transparent interactions. The third level is a fostered awareness of habitual thinking and feeling patterns that he calls "the invisible architecture of human beings" (ibid, p33). This is closely connected with Jung's 'shadow'. Isaacs concludes that awareness of and attention to the shadow, the unconscious or 'invisible' greatly influences the quality of insight, depth of feelings and clarity of thought in dialogue (ibid, p.30).

> Here it is again
> The voluptuous flow between conscious and unconscious
> Sliding and flying
> Earth and sky…
>
> From 'To dance' by Caroline Plummer[1]

This appreciation and knowledge of the "invisible architecture of human beings" can be accessed by being fully present to ourselves and another person. Jaworski (1996) and many authors recommend spiritual practices such as prayer and meditation to enhance this awareness (pp.81-82). Using the analogy of the hub of a wheel, which at its very epicentre is not moving at all, Isaacs (1999) considers that it is through becoming still and centring ourselves we can develop our ability to perceive what is going on around us and this enhances our ability to respect, love and be compassionate. (ibid, p.122). This process illustrates the "presencing" as outlined by Senge et al (2004) and illustrated in the chapter 'Choosing Our Dance Genre - Participative Action Research' in this report. Senge (Issacs, 1999) suggests that in comparison to the demands of people's job, this style of conversing together can seem esoteric and requires interpersonal skills many do not possess (p.xix). However, providing a favourable and supportive scene for such engagement of awareness of these foundational interaction elements can diminish the protections that people engage to avoid encountering their own shadow self or the shadow of the organisation, creating a wholesome space for dialogue.

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[1] Caroline Plummer, a NZ dancer, writer…and so much more (1978-2003). http://www.carolineplummer.org.nz/writings_poetry.htm

Bohm (2004) describes his view of the process of dialogue:

> The object of dialogue is not to analyse things, or to win an argument, or to exchange opinions. Rather, it is to suspend your opinions and to look at the opinions – to listen to everybody's opinions, to suspend them, and to see what all that means. If we can see what all our opinions mean, then we are sharing a *common content*, even if we don't agree entirely…We can just simply share the appreciation of meanings; and out of this whole thing, truth emerges unannounced – not that we have chosen it (p.320).

Through the invocation of hope, intention and the aspiration of the potential of dialogue Isaacs (1999) proposes that participants can reflect on their responsibility to acknowledge current realities honestly, feel supported to articulate their dreams and be assisted in the creation of their ideals (pp.293-294). It is likely, however, that not all differences of opinion can be conversed to full consensus. Apparent contrasts of values or opinions invite a deep respect for difference to what Levinas (1987) might call 'alterity'. This concept invites the acknowledgement and appreciation of differences between oneself and other persons, rather than glossing over those differences or insisting on a false sense of agreement and offers a deepening of the dialogue or inquiry. This concurs with Jaworski's (1998) ideas that dialogue does not require people to agree but encourages people to participate in shared understanding that may lead to aligned action (p.111). Irigaray (2002) suggests that for true sharing to take place, not only must all parties be able to listen to one another; they must also be able to listen to themselves.

Matthew Fox (cited in Reason & Bradbury, 2001) also extrapolates that indeed we are impotent in our outer world if we do not attend to our inner world.

> The outward work
> will never be puny
> if the inner work
> is great.
> And the outwork work
> can never be great or even good
> if the inward one is puni and of little worth.

<div align="right">Fox (1983a, p99) cited in Reason & Bradbury (ibid, p.11)</div>

While many organisations profess to foster 'open communication' and provide training to enhance interpersonal skills, Isaacs suggests that this can often be a guise for blaming others rather than taking responsibility for one's own part in creating unfavourable or untenable situations. In some

situations people collude to suppress 'the truth' in order not to 'rock the boat' in what is viewed an 'open' organisational culture. Isaacs' (1999) experience suggests that when dialogue is practiced consistently and well, people are able to reflect on and address their own and others behaviours that are incongruent with their beliefs and values and those of the organisation (p.330). He proposes that this can be achieved through "suspending taken-for-granted ways of operating" to gain clarity about actions that are incongruent with wellbeing for all, respecting the ecology of relationships, staying fully present by listening, and acknowledging and reinforcing the organisational or community mantra or story or philosophy.

Senge (Issacs, 1999) notes the current paradox of workplaces knowing the importance of dialogue to enhance and deepen relational knowledge, yet not giving time and attention necessary to facilitate such conversations. Individual and collective shadows can remain buried which can stymie wellbeing. However his experience suggests that where dialogues become a part of everyday routine in organisations, ensuing changes become embedded in the culture, enhancing people's ability to communicate and work collaboratively (p.xix). Other authors such as Bohm and Isaacs echo Jaworski's view that for the transformational potential of communication to be realised people need the opportunity for sustained dialogue over a period of time (ibid, p.111). This provides opportunity for increased awareness, observation, and reflection. Action research practices can offer opportunity for this sustained dialogue.

> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the very first time.

> T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets

Ballet

The description of the research, unfolding the story as through this form of dance.

Susanne Bentley in *Swan Lake* prior to becoming a contemporary dancer.

Choreographing our Participative Action Research Inquiry

> The choreographer's work is live, ephemeral, taking place at a particular moment in time…
>
> The choreographer relies on other people (dancers, musicians, lighting designers, costume and set designers) …
>
> Choreography speaks to us about the familiar, but in a way that makes us see it anew…
>
> …choreographers remain eternally alert to the sensibilities of their own times.
>
> …choreographers must continually replenish their known storehouse …[from what] they observe in life.   Lesser (2007)

While a choreographer has a key responsibility for the unfolding of the dance, the dancers are affecting and being affected by and contributing to the development of the dance. Thus in our participative action research, all the people collaborated in its choreography – the timing, the pace, the movements, the content, the expressions.

The way in which this action research was initiated, facilitated and participated in is recounted in this chapter. I describe our experiences of the synchronicity that brought the researchers together and the way we came to the in-depth dialogues about individual and collective wellbeing. From the conversation that sparked the research possibility at Te Ra to the third and final visit spanned eight months. . An initial exploratory visit to Te Ra of two days established the possibility of the research with the participants. A concentrated six week period of fieldwork of was followed up two months later with two days of dialoguing with individuals about their reflections on our research experiences.

Setting the Stage for our Action Research at Te Ra and Te Rawhiti.[1]

Intuition and synchronicity led to the establishment of the research opportunity. A rare and brief conversation with a friend, B, was the catalyst. B is the co-ordinator of the Te Rawhiti kindergartens and Te Ra school, collectively referred to as Te Ra in this thesis, situated on the Kapiti Coast in the south east of New Zealand's North Island. One of the Te Rawhiti kindergartens is situated in a nearby community while the other is in the same grounds as the Te Ra School.

Within Te Ra there are three management groups, the College of Teachers, the Board of Trustees and the Kapiti Waldorf Trust and a number of mandated working parties bring recommendations to these three decision making bodies. B is one of a team of six teachers referred to as College of Teachers responsible for the daily implementation of management decisions for the kindergartens and the school. "This group collectively carries the role of the **principal of a team,** as defined in the Integration Agreement with the

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[1] Te Ra -The Sun; Te Rawhiti-The Sunrise. It is increasingly common in Aotearoa New Zealand to use Maori phrases and concepts as part of everyday English speech.

Crown. It strives to implement the principles upon which a Waldorf School is founded, which is 'self administration by the teachers in a 'non-hierarchical structure'"(Kapiti Waldorf Trust Information Brochure p 30, includes the bolded text).   While all decisions are made collaboratively, B has the extra legal responsibility of being the principal in Te Ra's relationship with the Ministry of Education. The egalitarian and collaborative processes through which these people worked was consistent with to the ideals of participative action research described more fully in *Choosing the Dance Genre – PAR.* This research opportunity interested B because in response to parents' acknowledgement that teachers' wellbeing was vital to that of the children, 'research into sustainability and wellbeing of staff' became one of the 2006 strategic goals for Te Ra.

Te Ra is governed by the Kapiti Waldorf Trust in New Zealand. Their vision is to create a school arising from the educational principles of Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), founder of the Waldorf School movement in Germany. The school community intention is to evolve in and integrate with the cultural and geographic environment of the Kapiti Coast. They aspire to create an open, caring environment with communication and participation as its tools; and tolerance, trust and goodwill as its characteristics. The mission of the two kindergartens is to nurture the children's senses, to protect the wonder of childhood, to foster the child's imagination, to convey a feeling of reverence, and to awaken a respect for the environment. The mission for the school is to educate the pupils intellectually, emotionally and physically, through an anthroposophical understanding of child development, so that they may ultimately fulfil their potential as human beings (Kapiti Waldorf Trust Information Brochure p.4). One of the kindergartens and much of the school are housed in purpose built, creatively designed, eco-sensitive wooden buildings.

The other buildings have been adapted with attention to meeting Te Ra's requirements. All classrooms are decorated inside with colours reflecting the stages of childhood development that Steiner developed in his art of education. They are set sympathetically within the natural environment and the structured bio-dynamic gardens that are maintained by children and staff in accordance with Steiner's philosophy.

Over several weeks following the initial conversation with B, I sought to establish the possibility of a PAR relationship through

corresponding with her, mainly by email and a few phone calls. I was mindful that there were processes and relationships unknown to me at Te Ra that required consideration and action before they could agree to this research opportunity. I provided information (Appendices 3-5) for their consultation processes that involved several different groups within the organisation. They provided Te Ra's key information communication documents (the 2006 Annual Plan, a 2004 Te Ra Teacher Support & Inspiration Report, a staff newsletter, a parent newsletter, the Te Ra Calendar and School timetable) which enabled me to begin my orientation into their organisational culture. The research was timed to fit in with a house-sitting opportunity which synchronized well with the Te Ra school calendar.

In describing the process of this research, I continue with the metaphor of dance introduced in *The Dancing Metaphor*. The choreography of our research dance flows through three Acts.

Act 1 - Invitation to dance

The initial visit was intended to build my relationship with Te Ra and to explore in more depth with staff the possibility of researching wellbeing together. I met collectively and individually with staff members who were considering becoming participants. B had arranged for me to meet individually with eight of the eleven people interested in the research opportunity. The remaining people were unavailable at that time. Each dialogue lasted between thirty to forty five minutes and took place mainly in the staff room with other people coming and going or in a classroom when children were not present. These conversations were focused on learning something about each others' backgrounds, commitments, interests and hopes, to gain some understanding of our mutual interest in the topic of staff wellbeing for ourselves and within the school, to learn more about the PAR processes and to ascertain which of these would be most appropriate for each participant if they chose to participate.

During that first visit I was invited to attend a faculty meeting, given the opportunity to explain the research opportunity and asked to facilitate a discussion on the topic. Most of the staff members, approximately twenty three people, were present. I facilitated a thirty minute exercise on "What does personal wellbeing look like?" After an initial 'icebreaker' discussion in pairs, we brainstormed ideas that were encapsulated on paper. This was a very brief exercise but as a result of this presentation, three more people chose to join the research project. A month later, two people withdrew from the research citing work pressures as their reason. Eleven staff

members agreed to participate. A twelfth person who was exploring wellbeing in a different course of study, joined in two of the three group dialogues.

Act II – We are dancing!

Scene I… Scoping the dance floor with the troupe for our potential

On the first day of my second visit, I was introduced to the three research participants whom I had not met previously. Two were able to set time aside to talk with me. Those dialogues were choreographed around the same topics of the conversations held with those I met on the initial visit. That day I was introduced to or met many of the staff as they came into the staffroom or office and as I walked around the school.

During the next day I started to ascertain possible times for meeting with individuals and talked with F about a whole group pot luck dinner and discussion. She suggested their home as a venue and a possible date. She offered to talk with her partner and confirm arrangements which she did the next day. I continued to meet and have conversations with both staff who were participants and those who were not. They were happy to explain their responsibilities at Te Ra.

During the first week of my participation at the school, Te Ra was building up to a large event, the annual Harvest Fair. This involved most of the staff, children and parents. It became clear that my intention to start our research discussions was not an appropriate priority during that week for the staff. I shifted my focus from the intended conversations to ascertaining participants' availability during the next week for such dialogues and arranging the group pot luck dinner and discussion. Beyond this pragmatic change in plan, I used my time to learn about the participants and their environment through engaging in their world. I became more visible in Te Ra by sitting in the staffroom where staff came to work in their free lesson time, to talk and eat together, and I conversed with staff. I brought food for staff, washed dishes and swept floors. A staff member

invited my opinion on colours for a building that was being painted. I helped one teacher set up her classroom for the Harvest Fair. I chose not to record the conversations during the first week, making notes and recording my observations in a journal at the end of each day.

Our aim was to support the wellbeing of participants by fitting dialogues in where and when it was feasible for them. It was stated at the beginning that whatever time they could give, whether it was half an hour a few times over the project or several times a week, would be sufficient for our research. This enabled them to manage the project in a way that appeared to work for them.

On the third day I visited the kindergarten situated in the grounds of the school where K and L worked with the children. While K was busy with children. L spoke to me about her work, her transition to Waldorf education from the State system, her relocation to the Kapiti coast and her family life, as we watched children in the playground. I talked about my family and we observed similarities in our backgrounds. We discussed a suitable meeting time for the following week.

On the fourth day at Te Ra, a Saturday, I assisted in the major work of setting up for the fair, predominantly the task of parents, children and a small number of staff. I noted that each staff member greeted me by name and that I was experiencing a level of 'belonging' to the school community. People were noticeably smiling, greeting each other cheerfully as they worked around the school creating a festive co-operative endeavour. The next day I enjoyed the festive and well-attended Harvest Fair with my cousin and one of my sons.

At this stage I had visited Te Ra six times for varying hours, and B announced that I was "one of the staff now". This endorsed my level of comfort and what I perceived as the comfort of the research participants and some of the other staff members. By the end of this period, times for research conversations and a group gathering in a participant's home were agreed upon and relationships had been established.

Scene II… Finding ourselves fleet footed on the dance floor

In the second week I started the recorded dialogues with individual staff members at times that they had suggested. Some of my time was spent ascertaining possible venues for uninterrupted conversations. We settled on meeting in a variety of settings depending on their availability; the library, cooking room, handwork room, office and classrooms. I initiated the talking with the participants by asking about their day and offering the following questions as a possible catalyst for discussion;

What does staff wellbeing look like at Te Ra?

In what ways is your wellbeing nurtured at Te Ra or Te Rawhiti?

What are your questions about wellbeing?

What do you want to get out of being involved in this opportunity?

At the end of that week all except one of the participants met for the pot luck dinner and discussion at F and her partner M's house and he joined in. After dinner we sat around a circular dining table, enabling everyone to see each other. My MP3 player and large paper and coloured pens were set up on the table to record the evening's discussion. I started the discussion part of the evening by reading and giving a copy to each person of Marianne Williamson's (1992) quote "Our Deepest Fear" (See Chapter: Dancing with Workplace Shadows).

Then I initiated the dialogue by inviting the participants to articulate how they were feeling at that moment and what they were bringing to the conversation. People were able to speak when they were ready, rather than in any order. When each person had spoken, I asked several questions

to elicit from the group what they would like to discuss. I suggested the following questions as a catalyst:

- What are your questions about wellbeing?
- What do you want from participating in this research?
- What is not well-being that could be transformed?
- What is working that would be enhanced further?
- What processes do you want to use?

Their suggestion was first to discuss "How does staff wellbeing look or is reflected at Te Ra?" and then "What things would enhance staff wellbeing and sustainability?" These two questions generated many thoughts and aspirations in a relaxed dialogue, which were recorded colourfully on paper by Z. The participants were motivated to have another whole group pot luck dinner and discussion and a date was scheduled.

I summarised the findings (Appendix 6) and circulated the document them to the participants, thanking them for their time and participation and offering some additional suggestions to consider. I encouraged them individually to prioritize the findings in terms of how they wanted to take action. Also included was a portion of the Te Ra Waldorf School 2006 Annual Plan, "Charter Goal 7 on Personnel" which stated the intention to:

Research what contributes to the well being and sustainability of teachers – having acknowledged that it is the key for the well being of students and that way the whole school.

Weekly actions to meet this goal include regular Class Teachers and Kindergarten Teachers meetings to provide professional development (curriculum) and support, weekly administration meetings to ensure a positive and efficient working climate in the office, college meetings and regular Faculty meetings for all staff to
- study and do artistic work together
- encourage work out of anthroposophy
- provide regular professional development

- conduct child studies

 - provide opportunity for all staff to communicate and share.

As a way to stimulate further thinking around the topic, I asked the following questions: **How well are these actions contributing to well being and sustainability? What is your understanding of "sustainability"? How will you know that this goal is being achieved?** I affirmed also the strong foundation of wellbeing that I was observing. Four staff members responded briefly to this email.

The Te Ra parent newsletter outlined the purpose of the research, my commitment to working with staff members and duration of the visit. Subsequently, when I was introduced to parents at the school, they commented on reading this introduction.

At this point in the research, after two weeks on the Kapiti Coast away from my home and husband, I spent two days and a weekend more focused on my extended family. I cared for my 95 year old aunt who lived nearby while her daughter was away, had a friend visit, attended the orchestra and visited my son. This provided me with some relaxation and 'grounding' time within familiar relationships, respite from the intensity of the new relational learning that I was experiencing within the Te Ra community. It also provided some time to reflect on my work within a wider social context.

Scene III – Developing our dance

When I arrived at Te Ra, on Tuesday after my weekend away from the community, I was proudly shown the staffroom by V. With the guidance of B and physical support of C, on the previous day these three people had transformed the room. Their intention was to create a place more conducive to the needs espoused by the research participants at the group dialogue. He had also written a notice on the board to elicit feedback from all the staff. People expressed delight and satisfaction with the new arrangement of the room. I acknowledged this action in an email to the participants, including other actions that were suggested at the Group Discussion (Appendix 7).

We continued individual dialogues during this week, mostly in the late morning and during the afternoon when teachers had more flexibility in their day. It suited the four kindergarten teachers to meet after school. My main role was to listen, acknowledge feelings, ideas and concerns, ask clarifying questions and summarize what was being said.

After a meeting in Wellington one day, I returned to the Kapiti Coast to have a dinner conversation at the home of one of the research participants. I had been informed on the previous day that my mother had been hospitalised in Auckland six hundred kilometres north of where I was. This dinner discussion offered the opportunity to talk through some of my concerns about my responsibility to my mother in this situation and for my research. At our first meeting, this researcher had demonstrated reciprocity of care through enquiring into my wellbeing and this enabled me to openly express anxiety about this situation. I experienced sensitivity to my wellbeing from many of the people within this community.

A participant's suggestion that the Faculty Meeting would be good place to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the staff and Te Ra, was corroborated by B who invited me to attend that week. About twenty of the staff gathered at 3.15pm for a social afternoon tea supplied by staff members who were rostered for this duty. At 3.45pm they adjourned to a classroom where chairs were placed in a large circle around a low central table draped with a cloth and adorned with flowers, a candle and a few stones, shells and pieces of wood. One teacher facilitated the meeting. Another teacher recited a blessing and we were asked to 'hold' in our thoughts, children whose names mentioned. Notices were communicated both verbally and a pad and pen were passed around the circle so they could be recorded. One kindergarten teacher gave two child studies, outlining their personalities, behaviours and skills, illustrated with art work that they had done.

At the closing of this part of the meeting, there was four part harmony singing, after which several people left. Then the eurythmy teacher showed us some movements which were performed as a whole group. (Every Waldorf student practices "eurythmy." Eurythmy is a type of body movement that results in "visible speech." Philosophically, it acknowledges a person's capacity to communicate through non-verbal gestures. Eurythmy is made up of discreet movements that represent various phonetic sounds. Steiner says eurythmy is "art." While eurythmy has often been compared to modern dance, martial arts (e.g. tai chi), physical therapy, and performance art, eurythmy is none of these things.) [2]

A few more people left the Faculty Meeting and a craft exercise was explained by one of the teachers. Tables, boards to work on, scissors, coloured tissue paper, card, craft knives were distributed and those who were left became absorbed in talking together as they created a 'rose window' from the materials. Each was encouraged to admire other's handiwork and pleasure was expressed. By this time it was almost 6pm and a few people left prior to all the rest of the staff finishing their work and tidying up the classroom.

On Day Eleven, I met with two participants in their homes. For personal reasons it suited them best to meet there for dialogues. After school that day I had been invited to attend a rehearsal for

a major eurythmy performance that was being presented to a Napier Waldorf school the following week. Prior to the start, one of the musicians for the performance asked me to take photos of the rehearsal for him. The

performers came together in a circle, hands crossed over their chest while a blessing was said, I was introduced as the audience, and at the conclusion they formed a circle to close. The

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[2] http://www.openwaldorf.com/eurythmy.html (Retrieved Feb 07)

spectacular performance involved six staff, two parents and approximately 15 children and what was significant to me was the egalitarian manner in which these adults and children collaborated.

Scene IV – Deepening our Dance

During this next week I continued to meet for dialogues with individuals. Mid week, seven of us met in the staff room after school for a group discussion. This meeting was planned to follow up on some of the topics raised at the previous group dialogue and to explore more specifically how the Shadow of wellbeing at Te Ra could be articulated. We sat around the table with afternoon tea which I provided. This attention to nourishing the physical self reflects the honouring of the whole self. In Maori tradition, as in many cultures, sharing kai (food) is included in a hui (meeting). One participant also did handwork (crotchet) while we talked. I initiated the discussion by inviting each person to talk briefly about their day, their feelings at that moment, and to indicate their time allowance for the dialogue. I disclosed my uncertainty about what processes were needed to continue the research now that we had brainstormed ideas. While over the previous weeks I have chosen to mainly listen, I recognised that now it was appropriate to put more of my thoughts into research discussions. I acknowledged the disempowerment that can come from viewing problems 'out there' rather than looking within ourselves. I described two

aspects of being human…being and doing and initiated a discussion on the term 'Shadow'. We talked about some Shadows of Te Ra and how we could 'be' rather than what we needed to 'do' in terms of wellbeing at Te Ra. Some of the dialogue centred on the Faculty Meeting. We finished by each person summarizing their thoughts.

On the following day an agenda for that afternoon's Faculty Meeting was posted on the notice board in the staffroom. This was the first time an agenda had been provided during my time at Te Ra. Also G and B produced a 'Faculty Meeting Survey' to ascertain how well it was fulfilling its purpose of professional, spiritual and emotional nourishment, inspiration and knowledge building.

I was invited to write contributions for both internal staff flyer and the parents' newsletters outlining the learning and questions around staff wellbeing. (Appendices 8 & 9) During that week I was invited to a birthday party for B's husband along with some of the staff from Te Ra, and was given a spiritual book by one of the research participants. All of these actions contributed to a sense of inclusion.

The pattern of dialogues and attending Faculty Meeting continued in a familial pattern during the following week also, culminating in a second pot luck dinner and discussion with the whole group, with the addition of a visiting teacher from Australia. This discussion followed a similar dance process to the first and was recorded with MP3 disc and paper and pens. I circulated a summary of the discussion to research participants (Appendix 10).

The next day my 95 year old aunt and Godmother who lived nearby had a major stroke, was hospitalized and not expected to live. She had been a surrogate mother to me many times in my childhood and adulthood, and I loved her deeply. I informed the research participants of her imminent death and chose to spend some time with her on most of her last six days of life. I arrived home one day to find a bouquet of flowers from the staff of Te Ra. I arranged family support for my elderly mother in Auckland so that she was not alone when I told her that her sister had died. Over the following days, I focused on accepting my grief, supporting family and using the solitude I needed at that time for writing about the research. I arranged flights and accommodation for my mother, taking care of her during the three days around the funeral.

My aunt's illness and death meant that I was absent from Te Ra for a week and a half in the last two weeks of our research. My final visit was to the Faculty Meeting two days after the funeral

when I still felt affected by my grief. This meeting was on the final day of my research, leaving a sense of incompleteness as there had been no individual conversations following the last group discussion. I acknowledged this to the group and committed to return two months later for a follow up discussion with each person.

Act III   Reviewing our Dance

Two months later I spent several hours over two days reviewing our research dance with the nine of the eleven participants. Two had left their positions at Te Ra to return to their homes overseas. We met for individual dialogues, and I attended a Faculty Meeting and a Café discussion for parents on anthroposophy led by two staff members not in the research programme. Each participant seemed appreciative of the opportunity to talk about wellbeing again. One participant was unwell but really keen to talk so the conversation happened at this person's home.   The dialogues were initiated by my asking: "What are you noticing about your own levels of wellbeing at the moment and what is happening in Te Ra?"

So through observation, reflection, dialogue, and action this PAR evolved in rhythm with the needs of the participants, flowing with the significant impact of my aunt's illness and death on the process and uplifted by the care shown towards me at that time. As a researcher interested in a

project to meet the requirements of my degree, the research had been initiated by my invitation to dance. Over time, the dance became more jointly choreographed. Notable throughout the research was the mutuality of care that emerged. I used journals and MP3 discs extensively to record this choreography, and we also used pens and paper and emails. As well as this choreography, knowledge was absorbed through the improvised or reflexive dances of moment by moment 'living life as inquiry' (Marshall. 1999 p.155); understanding crystallized through fleeting encounters and sharing together through walking, eating, riding bicycles, painting and the myriad aspects of living in communion with others, 'not separating off academic knowing from the rest of my activity' (ibid. p.156)

Senge et al (2004) alludes to this interconnectedness when he draws on 'Bohm's theoretical contribution concerned with the 'wholeness of nature' and the continual interplay of the "explicit (or manifest) order" with the subtler "implicit order," where awareness, space and time are all interdependent' (p.203). Capra (1997) refers to the new paradigm of knowledge being a network, a dynamic web of interrelated events (p.39). Thus through drawing on the vast network of knowledge available to us, we became a learning group.

Classical Dance

The method and findings of the research through dancing up close and personally
with the participants as is typical of a waltz

Dancing Up Close and Personal – Action Research Participation and Practice

Some research projects draw you in. They touch you on multiple levels, expanding, stretching and teaching you.

<div align="right">Dutton & Dukerich. (2006, p.21)</div>

Such was the research project that we as participants experienced. As Gordon (2001) suggests and we individually and collectively expressed, the ways in which we were engaged, interested, expanded and connected with one another changed our awareness of ourselves and each other. For me this project with the people within the Te Ra community expanded and affirmed 'all of who I am' and I remain 'in relationship' with them. As facilitator of the project I aspired to the essence of the words of Lao Tzu, introduced in the chapter of this report *Choosing Our Dance Genre*; to respectfully and lovingly engage with these people, to be reflexive and responsive to them and the processes without holding onto ownership, and to understand and be guided by the collective energy that is interconnected with the 'whole'. A premise of action research is that "change begins with the involvement of those directly affected" (Pasmore, 2001, p.44). The participants were willing to commit to that intent. The depth of the collaborative research enabled us to acknowledge the Shadows along with the foundational wellbeing that existed in this community.

Jung defines synchronicity as "a meaningful coincidence of two or more events, where something other the probability of chance is involved" (cited in Jaworski, 1996, p.iv). A casual conversation with a friend resulted in the unexpected and surprising connection of our two separate but mutual interests in staff wellbeing and this provided the entrance to this research opportunity. Then, "the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too" (Senge et al, 2004, p.164). The research dance unfolded with notable synchronicity, illustrated by the close proximity to Te Ra of some extended family members, the provision of a home to live in and a bicycle to ride for the duration of the project, as well as eleven Te Ra staff keen to participate in the research.

Senge (1999) states that "every successful learning initiative requires key people to allocate hours to new types of activities: reflection, planning, collaborative work and training" (p.67). The success of this project was achieved because the research participants gave priority to time for dialogues and as facilitator I spent almost two months within this community.

In the initial phase of the research B and I shared information about Te Ra and the ethical, methodological and praxis considerations of action research, through the emails and phone calls. During this phase I became increasingly aware of the egalitarian consultation processes that are aspired to within the Te Ra community. This was illustrated by the role of B to bring the research possibility to the attention of the staff and to decide together whether to proceed. It takes time and careful attention to ensure that people "collaborate with mutual autonomy" (McNiff, 2000) with the hope of what Habermas referred to as "enlightenment through participation". I observed numerous communication forums within this community where they collectively addressed their common needs. My observations verified a democratic, egalitarian ethic within Te Ra.

Staff members were focused on individually and collectively extending their abilities and thinking patterns to create the results they were seeking in line with their anthroposophical beliefs and practices. They demonstrated mindfulness of the interconnectedness of everything through their attention to communication. Senge (1990) describes such a community as a "learning organisation". This contributed to a secure, creative learning environment in which to engage in this research. We drew on the ideas of Reason & Bradbury (2001), McNiff (2000), Torbert (2001), Heron (1996), Marshall (1999) and other action researchers to reinforce the aspiration of this inquiry - the enhancement and transformation of wellbeing within ourselves as participants and within this community of people.

My intention was to engage consciously in this inquiry, to bring to the project my "whole self", as outlined by Gordon (2001). I intentionally engaged my emotional, physical, psychological, spiritual, cultural and historical tacit knowledge and my practical and experiential or relational knowledge from socially constructed positions as a daughter, partner, friend, parent, dancer, teacher, facilitator, manager, and counsellor. Less immediately obvious to me, however, was the content of the Shadow I too would be bringing to the process. As an initiate in action research practices I was conscious of the complexity and challenges of the associated responsibilities. Continuous reflection, questioning and affirming of my practices, being affirmed by others, and guidance from my supervisor provided me with insight and increased awareness of about my

relational and ethical responsibilities. I brought to this inquiry my experiences of regular meditative practices, journal writing and co-mentoring with other self-reflective inquirers. These have been pivotal in the conscious choreographing of my life. Torbert (2001) identifies such rituals and experiences as significant to first person research practices of self reflection, observation, dialogue and action. I was very conscious of trusting my 'intuitive voice' and listening and acting with compassion, acceptance, awareness, respect and love to foster my wellbeing and a willingness to dance with my own Shadows. This concurs with first person research outlined by Reason and Torbert (2001) as "an inquiring approach to one's own life". They suggest that along with second and third person research, it provides to a deep foundation of knowledge from which relational responsibility can evolve.

Dutton & Dukerich (2006) allude to the challenging and underspecified research skills of gaining access to a research site, creating relationships with participants and maintaining support for the project (p.22). I was conscious and appreciative of my initial reliance on my relationship with B to pave the way in establishing the research possibility. I was also aware of an on-going need for high levels of flexibility to accommodate the 'unknowns' of the people and processes within the organisation and be reflexive in my responses, indeed to "yield to events taking their course" (Lao Tzu cited in Wadsworth, 2001). This appeared to enhance the relationship building.

In many cultures in the world, including Māori, it is customary to take off your shoes at the entrance of a building. On arriving at the Te Ra campus to meet with potential participants, I noticed shoes outside each room, and so I removed my shoes when entering. By removing my shoes I was demonstrating my intention to 'be' in their world and to honour their invitation to work within their environment. I was conscious of wanting to 'be one of them' as a participative action researcher rather than setting myself apart as might an external 'expert' positivist researcher. As Pålshaugen (2001) suggests, I was conscious of listening to language that the participants used and sought to couch my discourse in terms that they could relate to.

The intention was to create a democratic environment that McNiff (2000), Reason (2001) and Kemmis (2001) outline where each participant felt valued and was able to have their contribution affirmed. Our hope was that the initial conversations would enable staff to make a more informed choice about committing to being a research participant. During the first conversation I reflected that I had spoken more than I had listened, and wondered later if this contributed to one person's decision to not participate. The explicit reason given for this decision was a different one. I used

this experience of the first conversation reflexively, shifting to seeking to understand before seeking to be understood by listening first then expressing my ideas (Covey, 1993).

I began individual meetings with those who had agreed to participate. With each person the meeting flowed differently and in hindsight I recognised how useful an audio recording could have been. I had chosen not to use a recorder because it may have inhibited rapport building with staff who had not yet signed consent forms agreeing to be recorded. These first conversations were characterised by what I perceived as a high level of openness given that we were beginning our relationships and did not know each other. A range of emotions was expressed, from tearful sadness and anxiety to joyful enthusiasm. This level of open and clear communication continued throughout the research inquiry.

Although I was the 'stranger' and had much to learn about the people and processes within the organisation, as Dutton & Dukerich found (ibid p23), we all had limited knowledge about each other, needed to build trust, become attuned to non-verbal cues, find a common language to articulate our thoughts on wellbeing, and become comfortable in negotiating to spend time in dialogue in their busy time frames. We cannot know what 'spoke' to each of these people who chose to participate in the research, just as we cannot fully know why two people withdrew from the project between the initial visit and my arrival to begin the inquiry. What the participants did demonstrate was their commitment to the project while I was in their community.

In accordance with Isaacs' (1999) view, our intention in building our relationships was rather than getting to others to understand us, was to develop greater understanding about ourselves and each other (p.9). By creating a safe communicative space or "container" as outlined fully in the chapter in this report *Rising in Relationships through the Art of Dialogue*, the trust needed to support honest and clear dialogue was established. Through inviting each person to reflect on their own Shadows and their contribution to the organisation's Shadow, we set about to foster open and honest communication (ibid, p.330). Our aim was to explore our abilities to listen to the 'self' and others, reflect, observe and take individual and collaborative action. During the fieldwork period of research I explained PAR processes frequently, alluding to the everyday nature of inquiries that Swantz (2001) suggests they engage in already. Paying conscious attention to these initial interactions appeared to be foundational to the ongoing development of the research relationships and processes. The initial work of establishing relationships is time

consuming and can be resource intensive, yet it often is unacknowledged in costing and evaluation of a research project.

Among authors of this practice, Park (2001) suggests that PAR is based on the premise that through cycles of observation, reflection, dialogue and action, participants gain insight and understanding of the world in which they live. We wondered whether, through exploring or dancing with the Shadows un-wellness and disconnection from self and others could be transformed into wellbeing and flourishing for individuals and for the organisation. Our purpose was to build on the positive commitment already present in this organisation, to enhance the courage and openness needed to identify and address that which was not (yet) well. We sought to discover if PAR processes could be effective as a catalyst for social change that supports human wellbeing and flourishing.

Our research affirms Torbert's (2001) view that action research in practice relates closely to the way that people live and work in daily life. This method involved the participants consciously observing the consequences of an experience or action and creating stillness to reflect on and monitor the appropriateness of the outcomes. Then from this new knowledge they suggested adaptations and adjustments to either reinforce or modify the behaviour to create greater congruency of actions with beliefs (Isaacs, 1999). Sometimes a shift in awareness or perception was made rather than in behaviour, reinforcing values of compassion, acceptance, tolerance, patience and love and reinforcing collaboration rather competition and blame.

Initially I experienced a sense of vulnerability that Csikszentmihalyi (1996) alludes to as some staff expressed expectations that I would provide 'expert advice' and 'structured questionnaires'. I wondered if I would be adding to the stress already expressed and would disappoint those who had agreed to participate. My tentative understanding of the evolving nature of PAR processes and my newness to research allowed to me to become anxious about my ability to facilitate the research project. My observations of my own processes (first person research), acknowledgement of my feelings and use of internal and external support strategies, enabled me to move through this phase of uncertainty to clarity which I was then able to express to staff.

To my position as a researcher, I brought my experiential knowledge as a former primary teacher, a parent within a school, an adult education facilitator, a counsellor and a manager. I concur with Orland-Barak (2002) who states that experience in the professional field being researched assists

the researcher to make sense of what is being observed. However as she also emphasizes, sensitivity is not only the result of accumulated past experience but also a dynamic, evolving process reflecting local considerations with the researcher flexing and flowing accordingly (p.263). My experience of being aware, sensitive and reflexive within the culture supports this view.

Jaworski (1996) proffers the transformational processes associated with journal writing. He discovered and my experience confirmed that the process of writing a journal of thoughts and reflections brought "coherence to my consciousness" and "understanding and peacefulness" (p.33). I suggest that this practice enabled me to be more fully engaged in the present moment when I was with other people.

By increasing my awareness of 'being fully present' during this research I was able to observe more deeply and I became clearer about the anthroposophical rhythm to which these people at Te Ra danced. It provides ecological and spiritual pulse very different to the materialistic and technological focus prevalent in our wider culture. It appears to bring a quiet assuredness about their purpose, which is evident in the unhurried order and rhythm of the daily activities and the focused attention on one another. I noticed that I became more still in response to their stillness. I recorded in my journal "I felt very at ease with F, which I saw as a reflection of her very still manner, direct eye contact and relaxed body and face. Her process was very stilling for us both…" This stillness that I perceived and experienced appeared to be complementary to and perhaps conducive to the expressions of creativity apparent in the vibrant atmosphere in this community. An interaction with one of the research participants on the first day of the fieldwork was indicative of the awareness and comfort with the spiritual world and the articulation of this. I recorded:

> I noticed Y smiled frequently and kept eye contact. She commented
> on my being very 'present' with her and said that she thought that
> just being very 'present' in the school would have an impact on staff.
> I felt comfortable with her so I shared the piece of writing that I
> have in the front of my notebook, which she thanked me for.

From her statement it appeared that she understood the integrity and authenticity that Senge et al (2004) suggest can arise from being 'fully present'. She expressed hope in the transformative potential of such attention to awareness. The writing I shared with Y was my personal reminder to focus on 'being loving' rather than allowing myself to become fearful in the face of the newness of the research processes:

> I am here to be truly helpful.
> I am here to represent Him who sent me.
> I do not have to worry about what to say or what to do,
> because He who sent me will direct me.
> I am content to be wherever He wishes,
> knowing He goes there with me.
> I will be healed as I let Him teach me to heal.
>
> Williamson (1993, p.177)

My use of inspiring spiritual writing reinforces the view of Senge and Scharmer (2001) and Torbert (2001), that spiritual practices enhance the 'presencing' process. I experienced a sense of freedom from having the courage to share what I would normally consider a very intimate part of myself, and her affirmation further reinforced the different rhythm that pulsated within Te Ra. At Waldorf schools and kindergartens Steiner's anthroposophical quotes are an integral part of each day with staff and children, and I observed in myself a sense of wholeness that came with continued expression of my spirituality during the research. Several participants alluded to personal spiritual practices that ranged from Buddhist to Christianity to being in nature, in a manner that indicated that these rituals were an integral part of all aspects of their lives. Haworth (1997), Lips-Wiersma (2002), Marshall (1996) and Ouimet (2002) posit that the holism that results from being able to express mind, body and spirit creates authenticity and congruity between work and 'rest of life' contributing to heightened wellbeing. This was affirmed by participants who acknowledged the spiritual through "being awake and alive to the beautiful and pleasant and joyful and familiar" as an integral part of our conversations (Eckhart cited in Reason & Bradbury, 2001, p.11). This expression of the spiritual seemed to contribute to the overall sense of wellbeing amongst staff.

Reason and Bradbury (2001) reflect on the sacredness of focusing on the "whole" through the expression of all aspects of ourselves. When one staff member told me that I didn't need to wash

the dishes in the staffroom, I reflected on the equality of all tasks when serving others and establishing relationships. Fetterman (1993, p.113) posits that to create solidarity "if you are in a group of people unlike yourself, the best way to become accepted is to find ways to meet their needs". While Fetterman's suggestion could be construed as instrumental or manipulative, I suggest that willingness to serve illustrates a more humane way of participating with each other. Such service draws us towards mutuality and collaboration and away from separation and competition that I suggest diminishes wellbeing.

Through being in a different environment my self-reflective practices seemed more acute than usual. Not only was I new to the Te Ra environment, I was house and cat-sitting for a family who were overseas and these new experiences required higher levels of awareness, thought and energy. Wadsworth (2001) posits that the facilitator needs to be an "energy worker" as initiating and responding reflexively to sustain movement in a research inquiry requires energy (p.426). While we had not started the formal dialogue of the research at this point because of the preparations for the annual fair, I was involved informally in conversations to build my relationships not only with the participants but also with the rest of the staff. After my first day in the school, I recorded some first person observations and reflections:

> I have reflected a lot on how much energy it is taking to find my way around this home that I am living in while doing the research and also starting the relationship-building process. It seems as though I am conscious of every movement I make, the things I say and myself in relation to others…..these 'normal' behaviours seem to be in 'sharp focus', obvious, accentuated and I note that I am more tired than usual. This could also be attributed to writing on a laptop instead of a PC, at a different desk and also to my bike-riding – using different muscles and skills to walking. I'm also very time conscious….should I be at school now or here writing….so it takes energy to start developing a way of working that is going to meet my needs and the needs of the participants.

This disclosure highlights the value of "noticing" our behaviour as R D Laing describes (cited in Zweig & Abrams,1991, p.xix) in order to become a "self renewing organism" (Gordon, 2001).

Torbert (2001), Kemmis (2001) and Heron and Reason (2001) urge that attention is given to ensuring that action research processes are egalitarian through inviting, respecting and valuing the contributions of all the participants. To reinforce our intention of egalitarian and collaboratively designed processes and communicating transparently and in language common to us all, as the facilitator of the research project, I sent an email to the participants on the third day of the field work visit. While I had talked individually about a group discussion, this seemed a useful way to give all the participants time to consider their needs, concerns and schedules. The email read:

> Hello B,C, F, G, K, L, V, W, X, Y, Z.
>
> Thank you all for being interested in working together on the staff wellbeing and flourishing research opportunity. Over the next week I would like to speak with each of you about how we can meet and work together. My main concern is working with you in ways that are supportive and affirming to you, can fit comfortably into your life and that enhance your wellbeing! There may be some of you who can contribute regularly to discussions and some who can give a little time. This is qualitative research, so whatever is feasible for you is useful and constructive.
>
> I envisage that there will be some one on one conversation, some small group conversations, some email conversations; some have mentioned keeping a journal........you may have some other creative ways of tapping into the topic of staff wellbeing. So there are many ways that we can work together. In this research we are all co-inquirers exploring the topic of staff wellbeing - my role is to facilitate this to happen but I know little about the topic as it pertains to Te Ra.
>
> I see the first step is to start thinking about what staff wellbeing means to you and what it looks like in Te Ra. Then the next step is to develop a question or some questions together that you would like to

explore on the topic of Staff Wellbeing. To do this step I am wondering if we can meet together as a whole group (13 of us with me) for a potluck dinner and discussion on Friday 19th May - venue to be finalised. We could meet at 5pm for an early meal with discussion at 6.30 so that it is not too late an evening if that suits everyone. If it needs to be at a different time please suggest an alternative.

I look forward to hearing from you

Rosie

I learned that in this community most communication occurs through face to face conversations and printed newsletters, with only essential reliance on computer technology for administration. So while emails were a useful way to disseminate information, only a few people responded and I learned that follow up conversations were essential to ensure transparency and mutuality.

It became imperative to find appropriate places where we could have undisturbed dialogue. At first this was at first challenging as most rooms are in continual use. One room that seemed appropriate for our purpose was offered to me by one staff member. However, I learned that this space was used regularly by another teacher by checking directly with her. This situation highlighted some assumptions and perhaps some lack of respect and awareness between staff. For me it highlighted my 'not knowing' and the need talk directly with people to foster the respect and care I wanted to achieve. With the assistance of B's knowledge of the timetable, several different rooms were found to be available for having dialogues.

Our ability to be reflexive in all aspects of the project was crucial to the dance of research – sometimes choreographed, sometimes improvised. As Heron and Reason (2001) suggest, in action research there is continual movement between order and chaos (pp.184 -185). The following journal entry reinforces the connection between Capra's (1997) view of our ecological interconnectedness with the invisible "stream of life that runs through the world" (Tagore cited in Jeffers, 1997, p.206).

As Y forgot about our appointment and Z was there, it worked perfectly to have a conversation with her. This was an excellent lesson again to me of a divine plan, as I had double booked myself for the next day when Z was due to come.

The use of the word 'divine' in this context relates to Heron's (1997 cited in Reason & Bradbury, 2001) spiritual experience of "simple openness to everyday participative experience, feeling that subject and object are in an inseparable seamless field of imaging and resonance – a field with infinite horizons" (p.11). Jaworski (1996) refers to the "mysterious power of the collective". Through the whole research project I was learning to let go of my learned reliance on lineal processes. I practised embracing my compassionate, tolerant and forgiving 'Self' that allowed me to recognise that like the spaces between dancers, relationships are in constant flow, shifting, moving, expanding, and contracting (McNiff, 2000). As well as drawing on our experiential and practical knowledge in our relationships, we expressed reliance on what Baldwin (2001) describes as intuitive knowledge, a recognised and reflected upon aspect of creative understanding (p.291). This intuitive knowing was accessed by what Senge et al (2004) call "presencing", an inner knowing that can emerge through being still and fully present in the moment. During our dialogues I observed most of the participants engaging in this practice, which seemed to contribute to the depth of knowledge that was illuminated by this process.

While Kemmis (2001) argues that research participants can become emancipated from habitual or coerced behaviours that sometimes frame and constrain people in organisational practice, the following journal entry illustrates that this takes conscious awareness on the part of all the people involved (p.92).

I met F in the handwork room as arranged. She was eating her lunch but chose not to continue and I'm aware that she may not have had time to eat it after we finished and before her next class. We discussed her time frame and agreed to talk for 20 minutes, giving her ten minutes to prepare for her next class.

F expressed deep personal satisfaction from our dialogues, which she stated reduced her sense of isolation, yet I wondered about the cost to her wellbeing of squeezing these dialogues into her tight schedule. Often when arranging a time to meet she took a moment's silence to reflect on her commitments before making decisions. Reflective rather than reactive responses seemed common amongst these people. Their focus was on seeking creative ways of being and learning together that supported loving relationships in their communal endeavour.

Creative Expression of the Harvest Fair

The following journal entry describing the annual Te Ra Harvest Fair is included in this report as it epitomises the reverence that Steiner placed on the magical world of childhood and illustrates the ethos of Te Ra, the paramount intent of sustaining human and ecological wellbeing. It illustrates the attention in this community to creative and motivated expression of their values and practices, reinforcing Marshall's (1996) conjecture of their importance to human health and flourishing.

> The fair is the main fundraiser organised by the parents each year.
> On arrival I exchanged money for bags of purple painted beans each
> worth one dollar, the currency of the day. Immediately I was
> reminded of Jack and the Beanstalk, and recognised a sense of child
> like playfulness inside me which I enjoyed. I noticed some children
> and parents with little cloth bags into which they put their currency.
> I suspected that others were enjoying this playfulness too.
>
> With bags of bean cash I headed to the plant stall, then on around
> the classrooms to discover their contents. Fresh fruit and
> vegetables, preserves, handcrafts, books, art materials, and food to
> eat of all descriptions were for sale. There was the puppet show,
> face painting, candle making, hair braiding, head garland making,
> balloon shape making, stilt walking, pony and flying fox rides and live
> chamber and Gaelic music being played in different locations to
> entertain all ages. There were hundreds of people and a real carnival
> atmosphere.

> Steiner's philosophy was to allow children to be children, and to me it
> seemed that the Fair epitomised anthroposophy – the wisdom of
> humankind – a way of understanding one's inner nature, courage for
> and insight into life tasks. I was aware of a deep contentment and an
> excitement from being present at the fair. To sit with our son who
> was sharing Mothers Day with me, listening to music, enjoying the
> natural surroundings and admiring the handiwork both in the buildings
> themselves and all that they contained, was inspirational for me.

At this stage I wondered if I was holding a consciously "idyllic or romanticized" view of Te Ra community. Consciously I became intent on exploring the Shadows of staff wellbeing through critical theory practices (Dunn, 2000 cited in Giroux, 2003, p.59) and appreciative inquiry processes that articulate, Reason & Bradbury (2001) suggest, the "positive, life enhancing qualities of a situation and amplifying these, rather than seeking the problems and trying to solve them" (pp. 452-453). By our posing of questions about what is and is not well within the community of staff, we were able to articulate what participants wanted to change and highlight aspects that were real strengths in supporting their wellbeing. As the project developed we sought ways to convey to extend our inclusiveness and our developing knowledge so that other staff felt included and considered. We did this by talking individually, at meetings and through newsletters about what we were doing, taking action, making decisions, and seeking reflection and feedback from other staff (Senge et al, 1999, p.437). This illustrates third person research through sharing of presentational knowledge (Heron & Reason, 2001).

To illustrate what Heron and Reason (2001) describe as "inter-dependant ways of knowing", the following is an example of that drew on the participants' relational, propositional, practical and presentational knowledge of their community to collaboratively recreate their staffroom (p.183). Our first whole group discussion held in a participant's home ten days into the research project began with a 'pot luck' dinner that was suggested by a participant. In many cultures food is an integral part of any gathering of people, so that physical along with emotional, spiritual and mental needs, can be met. This provided a relaxed beginning to the evening. I invited someone in the group to open the discussion part of the evening with a blessing as is the custom of this community. Following an outline familiar to me, based on Heron's work (2001, p186) I facilitated the opening of the dialogue by suggesting the each person introduced themselves by responding

to the following questions: How are you feeling right now? And what do you bring to this conversation about wellbeing at Te Ra? This enabled each person to 'bring themselves to the group', to speak and be heard.

Then I posed several possible questions to stimulate the generation of a group question: What are your questions? What processes do you want to use? What is not well at Te Ra that could be transformed? What is working that could be enhanced further? A discussion generated the question - How does staff wellbeing look or is reflected at Te Ra? – Which stimulated a collection of affirming attributes (Appendix 6). Then they asked what things would enhance staff wellbeing and sustainability? They outlined a number of issues that they were keen to address (Appendix 6). A significant issue to the participants was that the staffroom did not provide a sanctuary for staff. Through reflecting, "speaking-and-listening-with-others" (Torbert, 2001) disclosing, questioning and taking action we sought to understand, accept and honour the individual and collective needs. The positioning of the doorways meant that people were traversing the room and it was "hard to get into". They acknowledged that the comfortable seating was in a dark area and room was "cluttered". They were seeking to create a space that was a "resting and enlivening place", a "quiet, do not disturb" space, a place of "beauty and colour" where they could "gather self", "fall apart and come back together." In brainstorming, they articulated their emotional, physical, spiritual and mental needs. I suggest that such a comprehensive expression of needs reflects their anthroposphical values of holism, and may be less common to most workplaces. The dialogue was finished off with each person speaking about what they had learned and what they saw as the next step in this research dance.

Within a day a group of researchers took action to redesign the interior of the staffroom and the transformation was enthusiastically received and acknowledged by the rest of the staff. This example highlighted the emancipation possible through dialogue research processes to 'dance with Shadows' of wellbeing. Prior to this discussion the staff had not articulated their dis-ease with the state or layout of the staffroom, reflecting what Jung called "the collective unconscious" (cited in Wehr, 2002, p.101). This reinforces Senge & Scharmer's (2001) suggestion that engagement in first and second person research can transform the collective unconscious (p.246). From the outset of my visit to Te Ra, I was acutely aware that there was a disparity

between the nurturing atmosphere of the classrooms and that of the staffroom, and was curious about this. McLain Smith (cited in Senge et al, 1999) suggests that we need to listen to our awareness about such discrepancies. After the group raised this as an issue, I disclosed my observations and questions around the link between sustainable wellbeing and creating a sanctuary for staff.

The transformation of the staffroom into this sanctuary drew on diverse forms of knowledge, democratically emerged from the needs of the staff, observation, reflection and feedback confirmed that the tangible outcome was appreciated, thus affirming the validity of our research processes as transformative and emancipatory (Reason & Bradbury, 2001, pp.11-12). This transformation demonstrated attention to the aesthetic through use of colour and paintings, the compassionate through a circle of comfortable chairs, and the spiritual through a centrepiece on the table of candles, flowers and natural objects. The transformation of the staffroom was a "sacred experience… based in reverence, in awe and love for creation" (Reason & Bradbury, 2001, p.10) which contrasts sharply to the instrumental, cost effective focus most common in workplaces in our New Zealand culture.

When I met for a dinner conversation at the home of one of the research participants, we began with a relaxing late afternoon walk on the nearby beach. Having dialogue in this setting reinforces the seamlessness of life that Capra (1997) and Bohm (2004) refer to, being part of the whole…the interweaving of all aspects of life and the interconnectedness of all. Before and after we talked about the staff wellbeing at Te Ra, we had talked personally. This dialogue provided extended "speaking-and-listening-with-others" second person research that Torbert suggests is ideal (2001). Through mutually respectful and loving listening, disclosing and questioning we deepened our relational knowledge of ourselves and each other. This more relaxed engagement happened several times with three of the participants with mutually expressed satisfaction. The unbounded time frame was reminiscent of the tribal dialogue in Bohm's description at the beginning of this report's chapter *Rising in Relationships through the Art of Dialogue.* This contrasts sharply in my experience with time-bound fragmented schedules of many people in workplaces and mutually exclusive work and home lives.

Over the next week, I was impacted by my concern over my mother's ill health and the reactions to this event within our extended family. I felt very vulnerable, alone and unsure what my responsibilities were in the situation. A family member in Auckland assured me that she would

take responsibility for my mother's convalescent care and through the action inquiry cycles I gained clarity about my role as a phone support person to both her and my mother.

According to Capra (1997) human beings are "interconnected living organisms" with "parts [that] exist by means of each other, in a sense of producing one another" (pp. 21-22). Thus as Habermas proposed we are affected and affect each other and this provides a sense of belonging to the whole universe (p.7). I acknowledged in my journal (below) a concern about my contribution and responsibility within the research in relation to my 'whole' of life dance that included my family, at the time when my mother was hospitalized. Being able to express the emotions engendered by the 'balancing act' was useful from a first person research perspective. This illustrated the action research cycles of observation, reflection, dialogue and action that McNiff (2000) and other writers describe. Gordon suggests that this process requires researchers to be reflexive to their tacit knowledge and to trust the evolving nature of this qualitative research.

> My vulnerability comes from being half way through my research fieldwork and feeling unsure of what to do next. By asking questions and talking I have exposed some Shadows of the Te Ra community – a need for more trust, connection and communication between staff as a group. Their focus is on the health and wellbeing of the children and yet what about their health and wellbeing? Some staff choose to look after the wellbeing outside the community, by not attending morning verse and faculty meetings. There has been discussion around whether staff have this freedom to choose or whether it is a requirement for wellbeing of the community.

> This is raising my anxiety about – what is my responsibility? What do I need to do to be an <u>instrument</u> of wellbeing? [Author's note: I notice now the objectifying language I used. As a result of this research I am consciously changing my language to reflect my human-ness.]

Does my vulnerability come from being out of my comfort zone? From

working with a large group of people which I haven't done for a while?

From liking things ordered and this feels chaotic? Am I afraid

nothing will come from this research? Am I more conscious of a focus

by some participants on 'doing' because I'm more focused learning how

to 'allow' things to evolve through being 'fully present'?

This first person reflection seems to illustrate what Bradbury and Reason (2001) describe as "paralysis or emotional overload" that can overwhelm a researcher who does not remember that action research is emergent and while there may seem to by a myriad of topics, it is usually concerned with one broad issue, in this case, sustainable staff wellbeing (p.449).   With the support of my supervisor and through my own research I was reminded to focus back onto being fully present and open to what was emerging. I wrote myself a reminder!

What do I need to be fully present and centred?

- stay out of fear

- exercise

- focus on listening and serving others

- share my thoughts and learning

- ask myself – am I '*dancing* with my Shadows'

- remember -   I DO NOT HAVE TO FIX ANYTHING

This first person reflection and dialogue was the catalyst for creating a diagram representing the centrality of 'being-ness' to 'doing-ness' as well as the dynamic relationship between these two aspects of the self.
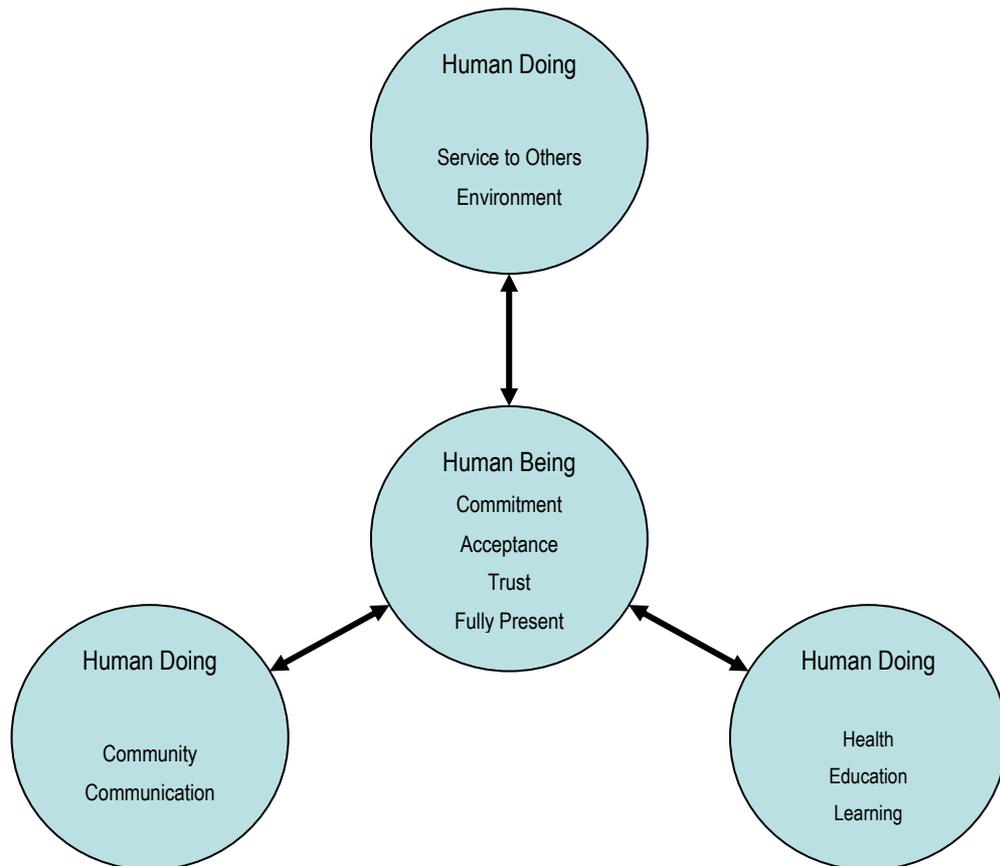
Using this diagram I explained the concept in a discussion with some of the research participants the following day. Reflexively I considered that it may be useful at this point of the project to create some impetus to move the dialogue from being centred on 'doing' to include 'being' as described by Jaworski (ibid) – "our orientation of character, our state of inner activity". He suggests that this focus engages people in a "fundamentally open and interconnected state of being". From this state he suggests that we can act "almost without conscious reasoning" (p.185). Senge et al (2004) suggest that it is from this deep state that transformation occurs that "increasingly serves the whole" (p.9). This was the depth of emancipatory action that we were seeking in order to enhance staff wellbeing. The discussion that resulted from the illustration above, shifted the focus from action to states of being as outlined in the next chapter *Dancing with Shadows* and there was a significant transition to loving attitudes towards ourselves and each other that underpin wellbeing. The act of creating this illustration clarified

through writing reinforces Jaworski's (1996) suggestion that such journal scribing has transformational and emancipatory potential.

The dialogue that was sparked from the explanation of this diagram is outlined fully in the chapter *Transformational Dance of Dialogue*. Seven of the researchers participated in this gathering arranged by me with the knowledge that some staff were involved with other meetings. I wanted to promote group dialogue about what is meant by 'Shadow' and more specifically what is the Shadow of wellbeing at Te Ra during the three weeks between our two full group meetings. The smaller number of people involved in this conversation may have also contributed to the openness and depth of knowledge that was achieved. We had been having conversations about wellbeing for three weeks at this point so they were 'warmed to' the topic of wellbeing and the participants' relationships with me were more established. During this dialogue there was a significant shift in focus from looking 'out there' to working with the premise that a paradigm shift occurs when we have a 'change of heart'; change arises from within each person (Williamson, 2006; Senge et al, 2004). From the question I posed "How do we want to *be* at Te Ra?" the group brainstormed what was meant by 'being'. I had made a decision to bring more of my experiential knowledge to this discussion by talking about my own Shadow and the transformation that I experience by asking questions such as "What is in my Shadow?", "What do I need to know and do here?" and "How can I dance with these Shadows?" (A useful question found during my research, which I now use frequently, is "What does love look like in this situation?" It helps to direct my 'being-ness' as well as my 'doing-ness'.) These questions were not designed to provide a model for first or second person inquiry, but to foster attention to self reflection practices already engaged in by the people as individuals. We were focusing on what Marshall and Wadsworth (2001) refer to as "inner and outer arcs of attention" to 'make real' their inter-connective-ness.

Each one on one dialogue began with a 'checking in' process to ascertain how we were each feeling and how our day was progressing. As some dialogues were as short as twenty minutes, this was sometimes very brief and sometimes this was the topic. On a few occasions participants asked for the conversation not to be recorded, highlighting their clarity about their needs for privacy in relation to their need for transparency and reinforces the egalitarian and emancipatory intent of action research. Participants expressed appreciation for the time spent in this quiet reflective and expressive process. There was a wide range of expressions of emotions from laughter to tears to silence. These dialogues were part of the many cycles in the PAR that are

outlined by authors Gordon (2001), Heron & Reason (2001), McNiff (2000) and others. Our research affirmed that through participating in such cycles of observation, reflection, dialogue and action, assumptions can be deconstructed to assist participants to make sense of their world. As Kemmis (2001) suggests, participants expressed awareness of some of their "habitual, customary, illusionary or coerced behaviours" within the social culture of Te Ra (p.92). These PAR processes provided them with an opportunity for deeper observation and reflection individually, as well as collectively.

The deepening of knowledge that was generated within both the individual dialogues with me and the smaller group dialogue seemed to contribute to greater transparency at the next full group conversation. As Reason and Torbert (2001) suggest engaging in three foci of first, second and third person inquiry to access the participants multiple ways of knowing about themselves and their community, provided a deeper and broader conceptualization of knowledge about what contributed to staff wellbeing at Te Ra.

Heron (1996) argues that you can inquire into aspects of what it means to be human only from being fully present with ourselves and others. He states that people become people only in the context of "mutual communion and communication in which those involved function as free, autonomous beings, in loving, creative and intelligent dialogue and endeavour with each other" (pp.200-201). Reason & Bradbury (2001) posit that action research processes are participatory, democratic and evolving. Collectively and individually the participants decided which aspects of staff wellbeing and sustainability in their environment to inquire into, what methods to use, how much time they wanted to give, what actions to take and how to disseminate their learning. Our focus during this process was monitoring the wellbeing of each participant and other staff.

Each participant expressed some constructive personal transformation of feelings, attitudes, and behaviours that they sensed was occurring as a result of the research inquiry. Also they reported observing some shifts in some of the staff that could also be attributed to the changes within themselves, reinforcing anthropologist Margaret Mead's belief that it only takes a few committed, concerned people to effect social change (Senge et al, 2004, p.138).

It was important to me to be authentic at the time of my aunt's dying and death. My aunt was also my Godmother and a significant older woman in my life. To spend time with her and her family at this time was an important acknowledgement of embracing my 'wholeness' as a person. Previously in my position as manager and even as a mother of four young children, I had felt

constrained by what I viewed as the 'norm' in the organisation and family social practices. By participating in this research, I experienced a sense of freedom from these self imposed restrictions to be with my family or alone as I needed for this emotional and spiritual journey. That meant accepting that the field work visit of the research project ended differently than it might have otherwise done. As John Lennon's words highlight "life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans" or as a friend said "people plan, God laughs!"

Dancing Up Close and Personal - Epilogue

Two months later when I visited Te Ra for two days to review the outcomes of our research with the nine remaining participants, there was a range of responses to my question "what are you noticing about your own and others wellbeing?" Some expressed "disappointment that the momentum of the research had not been sustained" and that "things seemed much the same as prior to our dialogues on wellbeing". Some acknowledged that it was "not possible to detect the internal shifts that may have occurred". They thought that even when "shifts may remain submerged they can have a powerful influence on future behaviour" despite them being unconscious or visible in the present. However others observed that "people were a little bit more caring and considerate" and that "there's been a shift – people are more open". Some expressed an ongoing concern about the difficulty of finding time to meet with others to talk about conflicting ideas, and how not addressing such issues can erode interpersonal relationships. Others reported that they "hadn't noticed too much friction". Participants were creating more fun social functions and some meetings were started by each person saying something about themselves to deepen their relationships. "People are putting themselves forward more in the Faculty Meetings and that feels good."

They reported that the transformation of the staffroom continued to have a positive affect on staff and a later email from one of the participants stated that further enhancement has been made resulting in a warm, golden yellow repainted and uncluttered space with new comfortable seating. "Being more welcoming" as an individual and collective responsibility, one of the aspirations of the researchers, had been realised so it was affirming when a visitor to Te Ra had commented positively on his welcome. Conscious of this G apologised for not welcoming me to the Faculty

meeting that I attended on this visit to Te Ra. She described me as "part of the wallpaper" which I interpreted as a positive acknowledgement of my integration into this staff community.

One of the staff members not involved in the research thanked me at the end of the Faculty meeting I attended for being a listening ear for her that day. She commented that it was more important to her to have someone to 'off load' to after a difficult lesson than it was to have a welcoming staffroom space. In a long conversation the next day in her home, prior to going to school B was very positive about what is happening at school. B expressed that "despite everything people are still getting sick and finding relievers is still difficult". [During this visit over half of the participants had cold or flu symptoms, a common reality in teaching during winter.]   She stated that she was much more conscious of her wellbeing. She still found it "hard to have the energy to do it all", to achieve a comfortable balance of family and work and to find the time to nourish herself physically and emotionally, even though she was enjoying the richness of her life. With "family as number one priority" she reminded herself to accept and affirm that what she was doing was enough and that staff needed more regular affirmation for their contributions.   Like others she alluded to subtle shifts of awareness as a result of the action research practices. I listened and affirmed her. She went on to share more personal concerns that highlighted the strengthening of trust that had occurred through the research processes. Her comment that "there's a full time job here for you as the wellbeing person" affirmed of the impact of having a designated facilitator of action research and the aspiration to continue to momentum for which this research had been the catalyst.

While we have completed this small piece of research together, the ongoing impact of what has happened is perhaps unconscious, hidden, subtle and difficult to articulate. We cannot know where the ripples of these dialogues and writings may lead.   As Susan Copas (2004, p249) posits:

> What we've shared is not lost through time or space: it becomes part of who I am. Because it not about the organisational process, it's about us. All of us.

We do know that we as co-researchers in this project are now different people. We are more connected as human beings, from the experience of dancing with our Shadows together. We can agree that PAR processes have the potential to foster increased awareness of what Bohm called

the "implicate order", people participating in the unfolding of their wholeness, their 'oneness', so that transformation is manifested (Jaworski, 1996, p.6). These processes provide people with the opportunity to learn more about themselves and the people they are in relationship with, about issues that affect them personally and about creating emanicpatory outcomes. Through using action research people became aware of and were able to articulate deep knowledge of personal 'Shadows' and 'collective Shadows' that had previously been hidden or not spoken about.

I posit that this research method was appropriate for the task of dancing with the Shadows of organisational systems and practices and personal habitual thinking and behaviour. As Gordon (2001) suggests, this choreography "is the kind of scientific inquiry that is conducted in everyday life" and I suggest that the participants' familiarity with the practices enhanced their ability to use our research as a catalyst for transforming staff wellbeing.

Dancing with Shadows

"You know how people talk about dismemberment and being fractured and torn apart – I think it [the dance choreography] begins with that [disconnection] and is working towards a wholeness. It's like a re-memberment of something" - Douglas Wright[1].

Wright is describing the dance process. He believes that talking about the broken, painful parts of us can lead to healing. Through dance he aspires to reconnect the unconscious and the conscious to transform the dis-ease into wholeness. I am the mother of a dancer. I am a dancer myself. I am aware of how dance can bring people 'up close and personal' with themselves and with others. The very act of dancing has the potential to bring us face to face with our Shadows, the parts that we disown or don't yet know or see. Through participating in dance forms in which bodies move together closely and touch, and people rely on and co-operate with one another for mutual support and strength, I find myself confronting feelings and thoughts, assumptions and judgements that might otherwise have lain dormant.

Susanne Bentley, contemporary dancer/singer[2]

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[1] *From* Dancer in the light *by Francesca Horsley*
http://www.listener.co.nz/issue/3364/artsbooks/2816/dancer_in_the_light.html;jsessionid=9B370C3CCFE1A2E9102F744D696DC0AE (Retrieved November 06) **Douglas Wright** is a New Zealand dancer. In 2000 he was one of five inaugural Arts Foundation of New Zealand Laureates.
http://www.penguin.co.nz/nf/Author/AuthorPage/0,,0_100063692,00.html (Retrieved 6 February 2007)

[2] Susanne Bentley, in 'Bent Object' http://www.foton.be/bentobject/ (Retrieved 6 February 2007)

PAR provides opportunities for people to recognize their interconnectedness through dancing with Shadows, up close and personal, with themselves and with others. The inference from the phrase *dancing* with Shadows acknowledges lightness, intuition and creativity rather than exploring Shadows through a lens of fear and guilt (Janesick, 2001, p3). 'Deep ecology'' is a concept I have integrated from the work of Frijof Capra (1997), in which he views humans as an integral part of the natural environment, not separate. This also encompasses a spiritual 'sense of belonging or awareness of 'connectedness to the cosmos as a whole' (p.7), which invites profound questioning about the 'very foundations of our modern, scientific, industrial, growth-oriented, materialistic world view and way of life (p.8). He posits that such deep questioning is essential for the paradigm shifts necessary for human and planetary wellbeing. He differentiates 'deep' from 'shallow ecology' which is human-centred, superior to nature and only values instrumental use of nature. The interconnectedness of self and others is highlighted through the 'deep ecology' of dancing.

To dance is to aspire to "seeing the world as an integrated whole rather than a dissociated collection of parts" (ibid, p.6). How would we recognise wholeness? Would our dance with the Shadows of wellbeing transform the broken parts within the participants in this research, or would it create more fractures? It felt a challenging and risky dance, yet I felt inspired by the courageous willingness of the staff to participate in this exploration of Shadows.

When B expressed her mutual interest in the topic, she stated that researching sustainability of staff wellbeing was a strategic goal for the 2006 year at Te Ra. She was concerned about the levels of stress affecting staff despite the school's strong focus on wellbeing. I became very curious, wondering what Shadows of wellbeing we might discover together. My curiosity arose from an assumption that in an organic, holistic anthroposophical organisation, staff would reflect that 'wholeness' in their wellbeing. B was clearly a competent manager with ten years of association with Te Ra School. She had founded the first Te Rawhiti kindergarten in her own back yard thirteen years previously. She used the word "**stressful**" frequently to describe her responsibilities and finding the balance she sought between work and other aspects of her life. B described the responsibility for managing and maintaining healthy relationships between staff, parents and children in Te Ra as "**busy and full on**". Her description of their community as a "**large live being**" reflects the scale and fluidity associated with a dynamic organisation. She

explained that the work that staff did was "**intense**" and despite encouragement and support to maintain healthy and balanced lives, people got sick. This situation was puzzling. What might our research discover when we reflected on what Jung termed the "negative, reluctantly acknowledged and for the most part unconscious traits" and Steiner referred to as "the unconscious soul life" that might be contributing to this disparity (cited in Wehr, 2002, p.110)?

B wondered "**if they were doing all they could to enhance wellbeing**", including her own, and expressed a deep desire to understand how they could improve the situation.   She acknowledged the support that she had: as member of a team of six teachers, the College of Teachers; from the Chairperson of the Board; from her mentor from Raphael House (the Waldorf Upper School in nearby Lower Hutt); from other staff members and from her husband and family. She managed her 0.8 of a job flexibly by working more hours during term time so that she could spend school holidays with her family. However, as with many managers, overall her hours well exceeded what was allotted. Also, this accentuates the inappropriateness of a mechanical division of time into 'hours of work' as separate from the integration of work/life responsibilities that she experienced. As one teacher said "**Being a Waldorf teacher is a way of life**". B expressed that her biggest challenge is "**the switch between family and her job with the after school meetings and evening meetings**".   Other participants expressed that getting balance between family and work was challenging, concurring with Bianchi et al's (2005) view that the tension between the roles as parents, spouses and workers often has negative effects on their health.   How does this tension between the fragmented, time bound ethic of current workplaces and society and the ecological ethic of wholeness and the natural rhythm of the seasons that anthroposophy aspires to, impact on staff wellbeing? (Wehr, 2002; Capra, 1997; Senge et al, 2004)

B felt that she had the structural support and yet she still felt "**overworked and overwhelmed**". The administration of staff changes was one stressor. As some staff originate from overseas, Te Ra considers it important to support them by giving leave without pay to visit their homeland. It is also considered important for staff to be able to take sabbatical leave, especially at the end of the seven year cycle of teaching. Finding relievers when people are sick can be challenging and stressful. B sometimes takes a class in handwork, which she enjoys and allows her to reconnect with teaching.

The other main stressor seemed to be the tension for her between meeting the relational needs of the staff and meeting bureaucratic requirements as a school integrated into the State system, as mentioned in the previous chapter. She saw enhancing the relationships between members of the school community as the most important priority, but recognized that the accountability to the government was also important for their funding and integrated status. She found that achieving the reporting requirements was time consuming and competed with her responsibilities for supporting staff. The Chairperson had suggested that she spend one day a week at home to attend to this reporting and during my visit she did that a few times to her satisfaction.

She did allocate many hours for dialogue, reinforcing the effectiveness and affective-ness of this process for exploring relational wellbeing (Isaacs, 1999, p.395) as well as her commitment to the goal of sustainable wellbeing for staff.

B was clearly 'one of the team' at Te Ra, and participants regarded her leadership as contributing vitally to staff wellbeing. I had the sense that in many ways she was pivotal to the ongoing facilitation of the dance in this community. She was very skilled at delegation, but her responsibilities were wide ranging and her knowledge was deep and of significant value to the co-ordination of Te Ra. She and other researchers articulated concern about how Te Ra would function without her. Did this create vulnerability for the organisation with so much depending on her wellbeing? As we spent time together using the cycles of observation, reflection, dialogue and action, we were able to dance more deeply with these Shadows (Bohm, 2004, pp.320-321).

During our research many comments were made by many individual participants and within group dialogues about B's leadership style. They acknowledged B's belief in and creation of possibilities of abundance, and her support and nurturing as making a significant contribution to the overall wellbeing of the staff. Her leadership was appreciated reinforcing the view of Deetz et al (2000, p.17) that self management, motivation and commitment are increased in a positive culture. I wondered about how well known her concerns were to staff and how much support she gained as a 'team' member of this community? While B's commitment to this leadership style was cited as foundational to staff wellbeing, was this contributing to the articulated pressures that she was experiencing? And how could she be otherwise given the pivotal nature of her position and financial constraints? Given the 'stress' that she was already experiencing, how could she become more conscious of her "habitual ways of thinking and perceiving", outwardly manifested in her ways of 'being'? (Senge et al, 2004, p.29) How could she become more cognizant with the

"chaotic unconscious" that "slumbers uneasily beneath the ordered world of consciousness," the encompassing template of neo-liberal capitalism that directs our dance within our society? (Jung cited in Wehr, 2002, p.79)

Engaging in first person research, I reflected on my own Shadows during my initial visit to Te Ra, noticing my response to B's concerns. I inwardly acknowledged a familiar embodiment of her expressed feelings and thoughts associated with a stressful employment experience of my own (Torbert, 2001, pp.250-251). I felt a sense of compassion and empathy for her position. I was also mindful of listening to her situation and "allowing" my "attention to broaden and expand, to include more and more of our immediate experience" (Isaacs, 1999, p.144), rather than sliding my focus onto my own past experience. This recognition of the importance of staying in the present moment was a useful prompt for later conversations with the staff members who were considering becoming research participants. Some people expressed high levels of distress and others appeared more peaceful and relaxed. Some felt that there was not a place for honest, clear and direct communication, leaving people not knowing what others were thinking and possibly making assumptions about others' realities. Some felt that the focus on "**getting along with others**" precluded "**expression of aggression**" and the ability to "**dialogue in the Steiner way**", that is, to be able to "**communicate conflicts and dissolve problems**" among staff. Personal inability to say "**no**" in order to care for personal wellbeing was mentioned. Deciphering boundaries between personal, others' and collective problems was expressed as a dilemma for some, contributing to an uncertainty about trust and communication processes.

Research participants expressed that in Waldorf schools and kindergartens anthroposophy emphasizes egalitarian communication with aspiration of building trust and freedom. Mentoring, teacher meetings, Faculty meetings and working parties are the main formal forums for this communication, along with informal conversations. Yet the researchers intimated that while some of these dialogical processes were in place, clear and direct communication was not always experienced. Some suggested that greater emphasis on addressing disagreement and talking directly and honestly could enhance the levels of trust, compassion, support, empathy, love, respect and freedom that they were seeking.

As with B, one of the espoused common difficulties for other research participants was creating a healthy balance between work and home life. Faculty meetings and morning verse gatherings

were perceived as an important commitment to building relational knowledge (Reason & Bradbury, 2001, p.86) and trust (Lips-Wiersma, 2002, pp.391-395). However some expressed an inner dilemma of meeting the requirements to participate in collective activities when they also wanted to be with their families at that time. This issue was raised several times; was it appropriate for some staff to choose not to attend Faculty Meetings and morning verse gatherings or was attendance a cultural requirement of a Waldorf organisation? Some held a basic assumption that it was "fair and how things should work" to expect all staff to commit to these meetings as part their Waldorf or anthroposophical requirements (Deetz, 2000, p.21). They thought that this participation would create a closer sense of community and thus more understanding, love and compassion for one another. Others held different assumptions about the rights of individuals to have the freedom to choose differently (ibid, p.22-24) in order to take responsibility for their own wellbeing and work/life balance.

This discussion highlights McNiff's (2000) view that "collaboration becomes an effort to develop mutually respectful autonomy, a practice in which people work together as equals, engage in the give and take of negotiating positions, and agree settlements which are then subjected to critical processes of evaluation and modification" (p.217). The unresolved nature of this discussion also reinforces what McNiff calls a "dynamic system" that is "self organizing" and "self correcting". Her view is that "human organisations can be self-organizing" and that "learning often happens in letting go and having faith that things will turn out right if we act with integrity and with best effort" (p.217). This self correcting, cyclic or seasonal ecological nature of circumstances reflects the anthroposophical view. Several research participants alluded to the resolution of issues through such an organic evolution.

On one particular day I did not have interviews with participants and chose to arrive at school to join in the social time of afternoon tea and the Faculty Meeting that was to follow. 'Faculty' refers to all the teachers and administration staff at Te Ra. This includes part time teachers but some seldom came to these meetings. Attending this meeting was to highlight some of the Shadows of wellbeing at Te Ra. At the time I was very conscious that I was observing in both the first and second person.

Journal Entry 25 May 2006

Reflections on the Faculty Meeting

At 3.15pm I arrived at the staff room for refreshments before the 3.45pm weekly faculty meeting. Someone had provided sushi for afternoon tea which was greatly appreciated. There were some cakes and muffins also. Staff flocked around the food and chatted hurriedly it appeared to me. I felt most uncomfortable, an outsider. One person engaged in conversation with me, but seemed distracted. There are twenty six part and full time staff at Te Ra, and two more currently overseas. About twenty staff attended this meeting, which is expected for full time staff, and part time staff members are invited and welcome to attend.

The meeting started with a blessing and children who were to be 'held' had their names mentioned. Then notices were communicated. At this point I experienced little sense of cohesiveness in the group. Many looked tired and uninterested. I wondered if I was gauging this correctly, especially as I did not know the agenda or format for the meeting.

One kindergarten teacher gave two child studies, outlining their personalities, behaviours and skills, illustrated with art work that they had done. At the closing of this part there was four part harmony singing, after which several people left.

The eurythmy teacher showed us some movements which we performed as a group and this was the first sense that I had of energy and unison. The group seemed to become lighter at that point.

A few more people left and a craft exercise was explained by G. Tables, boards to work on, scissors, coloured tissue paper, card, craft knives appeared and those who were left became absorbed in chatting together as they created a 'rose window' from the materials. People seemed to enjoy this activity also and went home with an outcome. We were encouraged to admire each other's handiwork and pleasure was expressed. By this time it was 5.45- 6pm and one or two left prior to us all finishing. There was collective tidying although I noticed some just left, which had been commented on to me in an individual dialogue.

Overall I did not experience a "team spirit" at this meeting. I found myself wondering why the idea of an introductory round had not been used. We had discussed this process at the group discussion, as a possible way of people feeling more involved.

The following week at a group discussion G, who facilitated the Faculty meeting, described how she had the mandate for this meeting, which has an established structure but flexible content. She used B as a sounding board and received content suggestions from staff. She alluded to the responsibility of leading the meeting last term when she was handling a difficult professional situation. Her concern was the impact that her distress had on the meetings. G said that –

even turning up to faculty meetings and being there and continuing to chair the meetings was really hard when I was in that space. Because the meeting is structured …even though everyone does all different bits…it's hard to inject lots of good stuff into it when I'm feeling like that. Last year I think they [the meetings] were going well but they did go down when I went down …a lot…and I think that's the relationship with it going wrong because we haven't got other energy from other people lifting it as a collective…It shouldn't just depend on one person… It should be our meeting not just what G wants for

the meeting and it shouldn't fall down just because I'm struggling to be there.

This example highlighted how sustaining an enlivened faculty meeting is challenging, especially when one person is mandated with the responsibility. It reinforced that the Faculty meeting reflected the natural ebb and flow of most relational practices. This dialogue was an example of the "knowing" that provides "evolving, non-static information" that is relevant at that point in time as Senge and Scharmer (2001) suggest. This example highlighted the value of illuminating a Shadow to gain subjective understanding of a situation so that cycles of action, observation and reflection could follow. Her disclosure confirmed my observation about the lack of "team spirit" at an earlier Faculty meeting, which I had perceived as puzzling within this community with such a strong relational intent. It also illustrates the depth of clarity and honesty generated within this discussion by the research participants, a depth possible through their courage to 'dance with the Shadows'.

A number of issues about the Shadows at Te Ra are illuminated by this dialogue. Firstly the power of "silence" or people not talking about issues that maintains a denial of a current reality (Gordon, 2001, p.319). Secondly, people ignoring their perceptions that "something was wrong" (Marshall, 1999, p.9), which can 'institutionalize' people, inhibiting their ability to be reflexive to their discomfort and responsive in the situation. Thirdly, the example reinforces the importance of "respecting people's boundaries, while not withdrawing from them" (Isaacs, 1999, p.114). The impact of G's difficulties on what was happening in Faculty meetings also highlights that the staff are "not …a collection of isolated objects but …are fundamentally interconnected and interdependent" (Capra, 1997, p.7), creating a dynamic web (p.39). Again this draws attention to

the possible vulnerability of the 'whole' when there is reliance on one person rather than responsibility spread over the collective. Karen Morrison Hume's[3] analogical description of an organisation as a spider's web highlights Capra's concepts.

> The spider's web represents for me the image of interdependent community held together which at first glance appears fragile, however the strength of the connections enables the web to withstand wind and storm. It is not symmetrically perfect but the beauty is in its singular uniqueness – no two webs are exactly the same. They adapt to the environment they are woven into. All the strands connect one to the other and there are "wounded" parts to the web (broken places) which is held by the whole. It is not a hierarchy, rather an organic set of linkages held together for a collective purpose.

Staff members were affected by the wounded parts in the web. However, in the busyness of their lives, the impact was not fully acknowledged and the strands became very fragile. If there is cohesion, one vulnerable thread can be supported by the remaining connections. Our dialogue gave opportunity for fuller expression of people's concerns.

G then went on to outline what the agenda was going to be for the Faculty Meeting the following day and the changes that she intended to make. I suggested that she could put out an agenda and ask people to bring their energy. She agreed with the former but thought that the latter may cause resistance in some staff, so I amended my suggestion to "**we could bring our energy and full participation to the meeting**". This dialogue gave G an opportunity to break the 'silence' and share her concerns about facilitating the Faculty meeting, to articulate some assumptions she had made and to provide to and gain new information from others. She demonstrated her willingness and ability to "**bring her sheep**" (her analogy for self expression). Her courage gave us (researcher participants) an opportunity to "**be good shepherds**" (her analogy for providing safety through listening and not judging), reinforcing the importance of creating a safe "container for dialogue" (Isaac, 1999, p.250). This example reinforces that we are all part of an undivided whole affecting and being affected by other people and experiences (Isaacs, 1999). The small number of seven people may have been more conducive to honest, compassion and empathetic communication.

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[3] Karen Morrison Hume, Director of Anglican Action, Hamilton has a photo of a web in her office, and wrote this analogical description in an email to me in 2006.

The conversation earlier in that dialogue had focused on aspects of "being" that we, as research participants, wanted to aspire to at Te Ra (Lips-Wiersma, 2002, p,385; Marshall, 1996, p.5). We articulated these qualities that we felt were foundational to staff wellbeing

> gratitude – an appreciation of what we have here at Te Ra, especially when things are not going well; being thankful for everything…seeing it as part of the whole…transforms the negatives…; tolerance – not reacting straight away…giving a second consideration…sitting with it…taking a step back and looking again; reflecting….reflect before responding; love – what would 'love do in this situation; compassion….be compassionate…with passion…joining with another…;empathy…ability to feel what another person is feeling; forgiveness…needing to start each day new…without carrying over burdens/resentments of previous day…letting go…love; hearing what is said…; kindness…being akin with someone…what you do to one you do to all…we are all one; being present – centred-ness (I know when I'm not centred because nothing flows) Being in the moment…human being… Choosing to give a person this moment…

This was the first group discussion where we began to "tap our deep tacit knowledge and raise it to explicit levels of awareness' significantly in order to 'inform our practice" (McNiff, 2000, p.51). We were recognising our affective-ness, "our mutual interdependence and connectedness", and were encouraging ourselves and each other to take "responsibility for making one's own life work in relation to others" and enabling them "to know" more about themselves and others (McNiff, 2000, p.217; Polanyi cited in Senge, 1999, p.423).

From this discussion the researchers voiced awareness of a disparity between the welcoming behaviour of staff at another Waldorf community and that of Te Ra. They acknowledged how they rely on the office administrator to make people feel welcome rather than viewing it as a collective responsibility. Several people recognised that they were not "**fully present**" with visitors, did not take the time to be helpful or to inquire what they needed. Participants were actively listening to their awareness of discrepancies with the aspiration to transform these Shadows (McLain Smith in Senge et al 1999). One person acknowledged that she "**hides away**"

rather than being welcoming. This dialogue signified a noteworthy movement in focus from 'out there' or "explicit" content to what Steiner and Jung referred to as the 'I', acknowledging the unconscious or what Bohm (2004) might refer to as "implicit" content, that which is in the background (p.111).

What was being described concurred with my own experience in the first days of the fieldwork. Behaviours ranged from smiling helpfulness of a few people asking "Do you need any help with anything" to being not noticed. Initially I made the assumption that this culture encouraged people to be independent and autonomous, which I actually experienced as freeing, enabling me to ask for what I needed. The participants recognised a tendency towards deferred rather than active responsibility and delegated rather than collective responsibility for the wellbeing of all.

> By analogy, in most spiritual traditions, sooner or later one comes to the question, "If we are all interconnected, how did we come to think we are separate?" The usual reply from most spiritual teachers is this: That question is not answerable from within the context of the question. If you are in the middle of a dream in which you are being chased by a tiger and you ask, "How did I come to be chased by a tiger?" The question is not answerable from within the context of the dream. As long as you are dreaming, the dream seems very real, the tiger seems very dangerous and frightening. Only when you wake up do you realise the truth". (Ornish,1997, p.172)

Our dialogues provided an opportunity to explore the Shadows from outside the dream. To do this we raised to consciousness that which was previously either unconscious or not acknowledged. We as participants "stepped into consciousness around walking our talk, by paying attention and contributing to our "constancy of purpose", through their ability to be optimistic and alert to unplanned but well-prepared opportunities, and by being compassionate and loving" (Pierce, ibid, pp.211-212). Through the choreography of dancing with the Shadows of Te Ra, we learned more about the "chaotic unconscious …. slumbers uneasily beneath the ordered world of consciousness" (Jung cited in Wehr, 2002, p.79). To reinforce the emancipatory effect of heightening awareness of our unconscious, I offered the following poem to the research participants.

Our Deepest Fear

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?

Actually, who are you NOT to be?

You are a child of God.

Your playing small does not serve the world.

There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We were born to manifest the glory of God that is within us.

It is not just in some of us: it is every one.

And as we let our own light shine. we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.
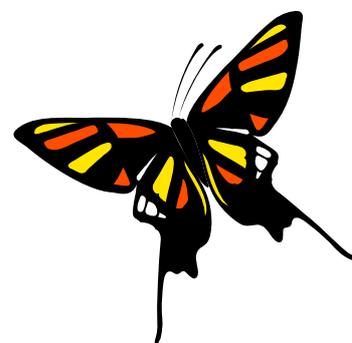
Marianne Williamson 1992 (p190-191)

Nelson Mandela used this quote in his 1994 Inauguration Speech[4]

> "… we seem to have great resistance to looking at our lives, and our world, with emotional honesty…it's when we face the darkness squarely in the eye – in ourselves and in the world – that we begin at last to see the light. And that is the alchemy of personal transformation."
>
> Marianne Williamson. 2006

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[4] Mandela made Williamson's quote well known, and it was some years before I knew the true authorship. While initially I was concerned that Williamson was not often credited for her words, I recognise the beauty in this symbiotic relationship, bringing attention to the inspiring essence of this poem. The evolution of my own perspectives is similar to the evolving nature of participative action research processes, reinforcing Maturana's suggestion that "no human being has a privileged view of reality" (Senge et al. 2004:209).

It is the alchemy of personal transformation through remembering and reconnecting fragmented parts towards wholeness to which dancer Douglas Wright, physicist David Bohm, academics Reason & Bradbury, businessman Jaworski, and many others all exhort people to give their full attention. Through such remembering and reconnecting a strong foundation of wellbeing was illuminated along with the Shadows of Te Ra. Within our dialogues we were able to start to "pull together [all] that might previously be fragmented" (Isaacs, 1999, pp.57). We choreographed action research processes of observation, reflection, dialogue and action, which enabled each of us to gradually let go of our need to 'protect' ourselves, become more curious about our own Shadows and the 'collective Shadow' of the organisation (Zweig and Abrams, 1991, pp.xix-xxi). Initially there was greater focus by participants on what needed to change 'out there' which then was transformed to self reflection of 'what could we change within ourselves'. This choreography evolved in an organic manner as, individually and collectively, we chose the Shadow aspects of staff wellbeing and sustainability that were important for us to transform.

Susanne Bentley, contemporary dancer/singer in Bent Object.
http://foton.be/en/projects/bentobject

Transformational Dance of Dialogue

> On the level of everyday conversation, we conspire with each other to pretend that things are basically okay, not because we think that they are but because we have no way of talking together about these deeper layers of experience. Not dealing with our internal depths, we emphasize external superficialities.
>
> Marianne Williamson (2006, p.1)

American CBS Correspondent Andy Rooney's quip "life may not be the party we hoped for, but while we're still here we may as well dance" illustrates the avoidance of the 'Shadow' in our world that Williamson (2006) alludes to. Her view is that talking about personal experiences and feelings is deemed permissible but "when it comes to our collective experience, public dialogue allows for little discussion of events of equally personal magnitude". Bohm's view (cited in Jaworski, 1996) corroborates her observation. He states that people's often unconscious assumptions inhibit conversations that are then characterized by all sorts of 'undiscussables' that block honest, compassionate communication (p.110). At Te Ra the research participants expressed similar reticence about bringing to the 'public' forum of Faculty meetings their collective concerns. This reticence may be exacerbated by the organisational culture that is focused on the spirituality and creativity of human beings with an emphasis on the positive and the possible. Gordon (2001) implies that the colluding with silence around 'difficult' issues requires risk-taking to speak up as outlined in the earlier chapter *Shadows in workplace cultures.* This risk-taking requires the courage that was demonstrated by the people at Te Ra who participated in this research.

According to Isaacs (1999) action research offers the opportunity to dialogue about "deeper layers of experience" (ibid, p.121). Through our research we 'danced with the Shadows' of staff wellbeing by talking about the concerns of the research participants in both formally arranged and impromptu individual dialogues as well as three group discussions. These were the catalyst conversations for reflective thinking, observations and action. We also enjoyed improvised

dances that arise from what Marshall (1999) describes as "living continually in process, adjusting, seeing what emerges, bringing things into question' within the myriad of interactions that occur within a day (p.157). These activities included cleaning, tasks to prepare for the Harvest Fair, meals, walks on the beach, bike rides, birthday celebrations, watching performances, and so many more little activities. Such interactions increase our relational knowledge, and we expressed how this strengthened our connection with one another, diminishing our sense of aloneness. Our dialogues reflected that through "expressions of tolerance, compassion, understanding, acceptance, love, humour, pain are shared and the affectivity of such exchanges enables people to experience their own separateness while paradoxically developing intimate relational knowledge of others" (Park, 2001, pp. 83-85). The willingness and the commitment of the participants to talk about these deep issues, their demonstrated love, acceptance and compassion for one another and their articulated satisfaction from the process, reinforced that our conversations were meeting what Senge describes as "a deep hunger …whereby human beings make meaning together" (cited in Issacs, 1999, p.xx).

Senge and Scharmer (2001) and Senge et al (2004) propose that "becoming still and allowing inner knowing to emerge" are prerequisites for accessing the deeper levels of consciousness required for robust choreography of action research (p.246). Most participants demonstrated 'becoming still' during our conversations and being 'very present' was a characteristic fostered among the staff. I focused on being 'fully present' with each participant to build and maintain rapport. Isaacs (1999) suggests that by being "fully present, listening to hear rather than waiting to speak, respecting varied perspectives, suspending opinions" enables people to "think together", which strengthens relationships (pp.134-135; Heron, 1996, p.200). We perceived that this conscious attention to such personal and interpersonal behaviour enhanced our ability to speak of difficult matters with relative ease from the beginning of our research. I observed that two staff, who behaved in a distracted manner at the beginning of a conversation, became more fully present and still within a short time. I wondered how much my calm, still and relaxed mannerisms and my focused listening and reflecting attributed to this. Our common familiarity of greeting people by name and with eye contact may have assisted also in establishing the rapport. In our conversations I listened, reflected, and summarised what was being said, occasionally asking open ended questions to clarify their concerns and needs. I felt compassionate and accepting, and affirmed people for their honesty, courage and willingness to learn and stretch their thinking. This contributed to establishing trust and empathy in our relationships.

At Te Ra, staff demonstrated their intent of "an honest desire to see things the way another person sees them" when they were communicating with each other (Zuker, 1994, Chapter 2, ¶1). Focusing their attention on the other person, summarising what they thought the person was saying, asking clarifying questions to deepen understanding, acknowledging feelings, suspending their judgments so that they had time to reflect on their own thoughts, as well as voicing their opinions, were observable communication features common amongst these people. These skills or indications of awareness that Isaacs (1999) suggests accompany meaningful dialogue, contributed to the existing levels of wellbeing that staff were experiencing within the Te Ra community.

The communication competency and transparency of awareness of some of the staff were apparent during my first dialogue with one participant when she openly described and wept about what had been for her an extremely distressing situation. At the time I wondered how much her openness was a reflection of who she was and how much was associated with how I was and my own levels of awareness and communication. This query reflects Maturana and Varela's (1992) views that we are "actively creating our experience" of our world "through the structure of our nervous system and consciousness combined with the stimuli from the environment" (cited in Isaacs, 1999, p.145). Thus through the affective-ness of dialogue, conditions are cultivated in which people are always in what Bohm described as a "process of becoming" (cited in Nichol, 2004, p32). I felt empathy and compassion for this staff member and wondered if the support and mentoring that she described was going to be sufficient to enable her to regain her confidence and wellbeing. I recorded in my journal on my return to Te Ra a month later:

> I was impressed by the difference in G's face which appeared
> 'lighter'. She smiled often, her body posture was more relaxed and
> open, her head was more erect and later as she and I talked she
> frequently ran her hands through her hair. The difference between
> her apparent sadness and distress reflected in her words, posture
> and face when we initially spoke and how she is now seems dramatic to
> me.

She confirmed that my observations of her body language were indeed a reflection of feeling more confident, reassured and peaceful within herself. "Instead of seeing the rug being pulled

from under us, we can learn to dance on a shifting carpet" (Crum, 1988, p.15) aptly describes the reflexive response that this person had taken to seek the support and resolution that she needed. Bohm (2004) suggests that such conscious attention to and responsibility for our own internal processes underscores the skilful steps of dialogue.

I reminded myself to "live life as an inquiry" (Marshall, 1999) by suspending assumptions and opinions and remaining curious and open to all that was happening at Te Ra. It seemed that such monitoring of perceptions during our dialogues enhanced my listening processes.   I became sensitively aware of the complex dance of self-reflection that characterizes first person action research; "noticing myself perceiving, making meaning, framing issues, choosing how to speak out… paying attention to assumptions used, repetitions, patterns, themes, dilemmas, key phrases which are charged with energy or that seem to hold multiple meanings to be puzzled about" (ibid, p.2).

During the first week I began to gain more insight into staff responsibilities, and school and kindergarten timetables and procedures. In hindsight, an orientation of the school facilities, staff and processes could have been useful. There appeared to be an assumption that I would ask for what I needed while I was unclear about existing boundaries and processes. For example, I was uncertain about how appropriate it was to enter teacher's classrooms. Although I had been assured that it would be alright to visit the kindergarten by one staff member, I initially felt uncomfortable and sensed that I was intruding. I recorded in my journal:

> As I hadn't spoken to two of the kindergarten teachers, K and L, I
> decided to visit their area for the first time as I have not seen them
> in the staff room. When I arrived K was busy with children, helping
> them into wet weather clothing and footwear for an hour of outdoor
> activity. I asked if I might look in the classrooms and discovered L on
> the other side of the building supervising children playing there. I
> reintroduced myself to her and she spoke very freely about her
> transition into Waldorf kindergarten education from state teaching,
> her move to Kapiti coast, her family, and the adjustments she has

> made. It was a very easy conversation. I spoke about my own family
> and we recognised similar age groups of our children.
>
> A parent and partner of a class teacher who helps in the kindergarten
> and other classes introduced herself to me and spoke about her
> family, Steiner education, and asked about my research. I dried the
> dishes as she washed while talking about the commitment of some
> parents to help in the school.

Maxwell (cited in Fetterman 1993 p.113) states that "similarity in status between change agent and client leads to greater perceived trustworthiness." These two impromptu interactions were examples of 'bridge building' and I reflected on how much more comfortable I felt about being with the kindergarten staff as a result. The manner in which these conversations evolved reflects the degree of openness and reflexivity amongst staff and the Te Ra values, practices and culture.

One day after school an opportunity to help a teacher prepare her classroom for the Harvest Fair enabled me to 'be in their world' again. As we worked together she spoke about some aspects of her Shadow and her enjoyment of co-operative endeavour. We shared ideas about these topics and at the end she was smiling as she embraced me and expressed appreciation again for my help. Many of the staff at Te Ra expressed the closeness in their relationships physically through hugs and touch. As this research participant had earlier expressed that she was a 'yes' person and tended to overload herself, accepting my offer of help enabled her to feel supported and to see this particular situation differently. It allowed me to be of service and through taking this time to be together, fostered our relationship. Also it was an opportunity for me to learn more about the Waldorf education system.

Most participants decided to meet with me weekly to talk, and a few met about fortnightly. Each person chose times and lengths of conversation that suits them. These conversations were intended to help them to become clear about what they wanted or needed from the research so that they could feel more empowered to speak about those issues in the group discussions. A wide range of both personal and collective concerns for wellbeing was raised. **"There is a**

question around wellbeing for all teachers in general and how we can best work with that to grow it" because "having to step in front of a class everyday is stressful". Some thought that wellbeing "is when you have a work life and a life outside of that too" reflecting a more instrumental view. These people talked about the challenge of maintaining a balance between work and family life. There was recognition that "because of our philosophical tie, we [some staff] work and play together and this often involves our families as well". This reinforces Steiner's world view of interconnectedness as well as that of many authors including Isaacs (1999) and Capra (1997). "I know that we are not all humming… I think we have to be realistic…I think everyone's hearts are in the right places". It became clear that they recognised a relatively high level of wellbeing "because we have established relationships …know each other well", contributed to by considerable levels of acceptance and tolerance of each others' personalities and behaviours as illustrated by the comment "we cut a fair bit of slack with each other". There was appreciation that "the ebbs and flows of wellbeing" associated with any living organism, described life at Te Ra. There were times when individual and collective wellbeing was strong, but over the past few years it was more fragile, giving rise to the formation of the strategic goal which was the catalyst for our research. C, who had been involved with Te Ra since its inception commented that with any organisation "it starts as an organism, then gets organised and becomes an organisation…in an organisation people don't have the same buy in". The concern highlighted was where the variable levels of commitment to each other may lead without a conscious shift towards increased cohesion amongst staff.

People regularly stated that they were finding talking with me useful and that they were thinking and talking with other people about wellbeing as a result. I recorded in my journal:

> While B had indicated that she could only talk for thirty minutes, I
> observed that she relaxed into our conversation and probably talked
> for almost an hour. I noticed this in our previous conversation as well
> and think that the benefits of talking about wellbeing manifested in
> her in a very visible way.

Most of the conversations were characterized by behaviours that Isaacs (1999) and Senge et al (2004) consider crucial to dialogue – the ability to be still and use silence to reflect – 'presencing'. I recorded in my written diary the following observation about a conversation with F:

> When we started talking about when it might be possible to have discussions together, I was impressed with the way she asked for 'a moment of stillness' to think it through. I sat in silence as she looked out into space for a minute perhaps before saying "Tuesdays at 3pm". Her process was very stilling for us both and I experienced it as very respectful and empowering in that it was not my responsibility to help her to come up with an answer. It was a very clear boundary – "give me the space to do my thinking".

As Isaacs' (ibid) suggests 'seeing' people as they are by respecting their boundaries enables learning (ibid, pp.114 -116). This experience of being asked to be 'still' was new for me, enabling F to be my teacher. Indeed this incident continues to be a reminder to me to **"using silence to bring respectful space"** [a research participant's words] in conversations as my previous tendency was to 'fill the spaces' by speaking.

Our research confirmed Isaacs' view that when we are curious enough to see another's potential by looking for the 'highest and best' in that person, levels of compassion, caring, tolerance, acceptance and love grow within ourselves and enhance cohesiveness in our relationships. Research participants readily acknowledged the 'highest and best' in each other. They were quick to highlight each other's positive attributes and skills. Often they spoke of their appreciation of B's **"leadership and guardianship"**; she was a **"buffer"** to **"having to jump through bureaucratic hoops"** and created the **"possibility of abundance that they experienced"** at Te Ra (Appendix 6). They **"didn't know how she did it because it was such a huge job"**. "**B is in a vital role as co-ordinator and the whole thing is built around her"**. Her reflexive management of staff was appreciated: **"I have never met anyone like B…she said tell me want you want and we will make the job fit you… (Not you fit the job box)"**. Her positive influence and huge responsibilities were tangible.

There was an expressed inability or wariness to speak in the full staff forum about issues that involved everyone. Our group dialogues were useful and crucial stepping stones towards greater transparency about the participants collective concerns: a desire for greater cohesiveness and shared responsibility, their sense of isolation, separateness and aloneness within this community, a desire for more open and direct communication about difficult issues, the benefits from one person having overall responsibility but concern for the vulnerability of the community that arises from this, and a thirst to know each other better so relationships are stronger, more caring, loving, compassionate and supportive. After our first two group dialogues I was asked to write a brief article for the "Faculty Flier" (weekly staff newsletter) affirming the existing wellbeing that our research was uncovering and posing a question about collective responsibility (Appendix 8). This highlighted to me the sensitivity of the staff about speaking about their collective concerns in a way that could invite collaboration and a desire not to impose the participants' views on the rest of the staff. A delicate dance!

Their respect for people's individual freedom was difficult in some circumstances to reconcile with a desire for commitment to the staff community. C suggested that there had been a **"tendency to let go of collective responsibility to keep the fire going".** While they thought that people had the right to choose how much time they wanted to spend on Faculty meetings and morning verse gatherings for example, they also recognised the affectivity of those choices on the relationships within the community. They articulated an awareness and reverence for the interconnectedness of everything that Capra, Bohm, Jaworski and others describe, and could see how the fragmentation within the school was affecting overall wellbeing. They acknowledged that fragmentation and isolation is usual in teaching, especially with a mix of full and part time staff. However they were intent on finding ways to strengthen their communal dance.

While the staff in this community aspires to individual and collective responsibility, the usual time bound activities and spatial separation of teaching have resulted in fragmentation, loneliness and alienation from one another. While the ecological rhythm of the school linked with the seasons and festival creates an ongoing pulse and flow, there is an underlying 'systems' tempo typically associated with accountabilities, timetables and curriculum. Habermas (cited in Kemmis, 2001) acknowledges the problems that arise when the fragmentation of our western 'systems' driven management practices collide with the personal, social and cultural processes that characterize what he called a 'lifeworld' (p.94). Our research concurs with the view that such fragmentation reduces the depth of relational knowledge. The participants who were primary school teachers

and administration staff frequently expressed concern about time pressure, whereas this seemed a less pressing issue for the kindergarten teachers. However the isolation resulting from division between school and kindergarten was expressed as a barrier to feeling part of the whole staff community. Their commitment to spend many hours in dialogue during our research, while ironical given expressed time pressures, reinforced the value of such conversations to their overall wellbeing.

Our experience concurs with the work of Levinas (1987) and Garrett (cited in Isaacs, 1999) who suggest articulating respect and compassion for our differences as well as our sameness enables 'undiscussables' to be spoken about. Steiner described four temperament characteristics - choleric, melancholic, sanguine and phlegmatic, to enable people to acknowledge and understand difference and likeness. When staff referred to these 'temperaments' in our conversations they were illustrating a depth of understanding, empathy, compassion and acceptance they had for themselves and for other staff. From our dialogues it was clear that people aspired to communicate without blaming others and instead listened and reflected recognising, as Isaacs suggests, that what is in the other is also in themselves. Their "ego boundaries seemed to be stretched and removed" (Rowan, 2001, p. 114) and they sought to overcome ego centred thinking to focus on common benefit (Schumacher, 1999). In this way they expressed their respect for one another. One person acknowledged that it **"takes confidence not to be defensive"** and that **"recognising that we all have a lack of confidence helps us to feel accepted".** Again this reflected seeing their sameness in order not to create obstacles to their communication. From my experience, I suggest that the level of comfort with this deep introspection and the conscious and deliberate 'setting aside' of ego based behaviours is unique to this community and also contributed to the sense of wellbeing that already existed.

During one group dialogue participants expressed concern about the lost potential of the Faculty meeting to contribute to relationship building amongst all the staff (Outlined in the chapter *Dancing with Shadows.* and *Dancing up Close and Personal*). We conversed about the need for greater transparency in communication. As a result the next day G, who had responsibility for facilitating the Faculty Meeting, posted that afternoon's agenda on the staffroom notice board. The intention was to prepare staff's thinking around the meeting and engender more collective responsibility for the participation. Z disclosed **"I don't feel safe and secure in Faculty**

yet". This newer staff member and several others were not comfortable with the lack of personal sharing and recalled once having an 'opening round' at a Faculty meeting which had helped them to get to know each other better. Z said that **"hearing each person speak even if it is just for two minutes, gives personal insight into what is happening for a person and helps team building"**. L thought that **"helpful processes that orient people give them security and safety"**. Opening 'rounds' – a brief disclosure about feelings and thoughts, were part of each dialogue in our research and they commented on the relationship building with less well known staff members that resulted. The theme of 'not knowing each other' surfaced many times during the research. Some cautionary comments about this personal knowledge building and some assumptions were made:

> Some people do not want share…so it has the ability to shut everyone
> down…maybe we have done that unconsciously. I am aware of that
> because we had that ethos [sharing]…we changed to make Faculty less
> threatening for those people and that changed Faculty. For some
> people they don't rank that highly to share on that level. It takes
> time to share on those levels. I don't think it would work at Faculty.
> People shut down and don't come…

Again there was a sense of tension between meeting individual and collective needs. Bohm (2004) suggests that as reality has such depth and width we cannot know the consequences of our actions so freedom of choice has little meaning (p.254). So while people may have previously freely chosen not to come to Faculty, they are unlikely to have been aware of consequences that the participants were discussing. At the conclusion of this dialogue about the Faculty meetings, C acknowledged that **"everyone that has to be out of their comfort level at some stage in order for the collective to function more effectively otherwise we end up with half a process. We just have to commit for the time, give it all that we have"**. This comment reinforces Bohm's (2004) ideas about building relational knowledge and our collective consciousness. He argues that in the beginning people may not trust each other but if they see the value of the dialogue – people thinking together – they will participate. Then, as their relational knowledge grows, so too does the trust and this takes time (p.320). **G's comment that "sometimes people who don't feel comfortable make flippant remarks"** concurs

with Bohm's experience that at first people may talk in a trivial way about superficial issues because they are afraid of doing more. However he suggests that when people listen and suspend opinions as they consider ideas together, the content of their consciousness is essentially the same. By participating, people are "partaking of the whole meaning of the group, and also taking part in it" (ibid, pp.320-321).

The need for more considered interpersonal communication was discussed with F talking about the importance of **"waiting…if you are unsure…checking…"so you are saying"…so that you are hearing people clearly. You can model that and ask for that type of listening. 'Making heart space' as the Māori teacher does …which takes as long as it takes".** This comment reflects the listening that Bohm describes at the beginning of *Rising in Relationships through the Art of Dialogue.* In his view dialogue is not analysing, making a point or exchanging opinions, it is "listening to everybody's opinions…suspending them…to see what all that means" (p.320) and Isaacs (1999) says the *heart* of dialogue is listening (p.83). Through our interconnectedness during our dialogues we were affecting and being affected by each other which Bohm (ibid) describes as the "subtle unity between the observed and the observer" (ibid, p.2).

As a result of this dialogue the Faculty meeting the next day had a different 'energy' as we (researchers) were more conscious of supporting G and being responsive in the group processes. The idea of sharing "golden moments" (positive uplifting anecdotes from school or personal life) was introduced and staff seemed to enjoy the anecdotes. Research participants were significantly 'more present'. G seemed 'lighter', possibly from her courage in sharing her concerns the previous day, in her words **"letting her sheep out"**, which provided an opportunity for the research participants to be **"good shepherds by providing safety"** for her.

Some staff expressed stress from trying to create balance in their lives. We observed that through the process of dialogue, of being able to express concerns and be heard, there were shifts in some people's body language as they relaxed and some expressed satisfaction that talking seemed to reduce the feelings of tension and bring some peacefulness. This highlighted the power of dialogue in enhancing wellbeing. It also raised questions about how to maintain that

level of dialogue to support ongoing health. Several people commented that having an outside person taking the time to listen to staff appeared to have a bigger impact than when they tried to listen to each other. I did not have same time constraints and work requirements, related concerns, history or agendas as they did and was focused on listening during our one-on-one conversations.

The participants appreciated both the individual and the group dialogues for different reasons. Talking one on one with me enabled a deeper level of honesty and openness than in the larger group. People were able to cry about pain, laugh, and appreciate the beauty, joy and loving that they were experiencing. There was a high level of authenticity…realness. They enjoyed **"Seeing each other in a brighter light"**. They were clear that they wanted to know and communicate with each other on a deeper level to reduce their aloneness and isolation. They appreciated the lifestyle they had chosen and enjoyed and were committed to their work at Te Ra. They aspired to strengthening the sense of community so that they functioned more cohesively and lovingly.

People appreciated the group dialogues as a way of getting to know each other better, bouncing ideas off each other, having fun and enjoying each other, and reinforcing a sense of collective intent and direction. These dialogues were characterised by competent and respectful listening that is crucial in "making meaning together" (Isaacs, 1999).

We achieved our intent that Isaacs (1999) suggests that dialogue offers – we were able to pull together some of the previously fragmented aspects of the staff community, to make explicit what preciously was implicit through dancing with our Shadows, and people gained a greater awareness of themselves and each other as part of the whole. Such exploration took courage and compassion and some participants acknowledged pain that was triggered by these conversations along with immense satisfaction.

> The Real Self…the innermost and truest part of the separate individual, still seen as a separate individual. It can be described as the existential self, or the integrated body-mind centaur. As such it offers a centre for the full integration of the person…What this means is that the usual splits which are found in so many people, between body and mind, intellect and emotions, duty and inclination, top-dog and underdog and all the rest, can now be healed very simply. It may take a little time to work through all the

implications of this healing of the splits, and there may be some painful choices to make along the way.   Rowan (2001, p.119)

I suggest that such healing may require 'dancing with Shadows' of the tension and compromises that are exacted from stepping to an anthroposophical rhythm from within high levels of structure and restriction required by the Ministry of Education and the general neo-liberal context in New Zealand. Articulation of such concerns may shine light on how this is affecting each staff member and release them to new levels of wellbeing.

The dialogues that we all engaged in as part of the process of participative action research deepened our relationships, and as Lincoln (2001) suggests "leave-taking, when it must occur [at the end of the project] is painful and researcher and researched miss each other and the friendship and experiences they shared" (p.127). While we acknowledged sadness about the cessation of our conversations and being together, our experience suggests that the emotional, spiritual and cognitive relationship is ongoing albeit in a modified form once researcher and researched are no longer in physical proximity. As Lincoln suggests, this is creating new bonds between researchers and communities to assist in generating "knowledge for understanding how to enable democratic action and greater social equality" (ibid).

During our research fieldwork we partially achieved the aspiration of talking together about our deeper layers of experience. My use of the word 'partially' is to indicate an agreement with the views of Jaworski (1996) and other authors that a project of longer duration may have accessed deeper levels of transformation from our dialogue. Even so, participants individually and as a group spoke about the aspects of the "invisible architecture of being human" or Shadows, as well as overt behaviour and experiences that were impacting on them (Isaacs, 1999).

The extent to which PAR enables participants to articulate deep concerns and values is illustrated by one person's aspiration for the staff community expressed at the beginning of our research:

> At the end of the day I enjoy the whole process…whether you are
> doing well or not doing well it doesn't really matter as long as you
> recognise what you are here for. I believe in a divine plan. What is
> necessary to manifest will manifest…Unconsciously people do share

that philosophy – something as magical as this – anthroposophy is a beacon…lightening rod…I work with that energy…I don't test people…We will be through this project.

So easy to get caught up in your own egotistical dramas and lose sight of the big picture…that is the key I think to have a sympathetic view of one's own life and everybody else's…the whole universe is working towards creating harmony, beauty and goodness…because of the nature of creation there is this element of the Shadow and that is there for a purpose…

This is an opportunity for the school to step up its journey…I know I'm much happier when I'm involved in that goal…any goodness I acquire I hand it back to the whole…then it will feed back…the more good you do the more good comes back to you so you can do more good…etc…etc. We are so lucky to be in such a wonderful environment with all these lovely souls who have come to join us, we make a difference to their lives and hopefully it will have a positive affect which will ripple out…that's why we are all here.

………………

Neo-liberalism Unmasked

> ...so much is glossed over and suppressed. Each of us, as individual actors in a larger dream, carried an imprint of a larger despair. We are coping with intense amounts of chaos and fear, both personally and together. We are all being challenged, in one form or another, to recreate our lives.
>
> Marianne Williamson (2006, p.1)

According to Bohm (cited by Jaworski, 1996, p.80) "If you reach deeply into yourself, you are reaching into the very essence of mankind". From this perspective it is important to look within ourselves first to understand the whole. As Williamson (2006) suggests from the moment I was born my free spirit was choreographed by the organizing values of my family which were in turn shaped by the cultural, political, social and spiritual morés of the time, and by geographical and historical location. As with most people, I have since spent my life in a quest to find my unique dance form that expresses my spirit, subjugated by the internal and external constrictions that provide safety and relative freedom as well as confinement and restriction. I aspire to being able to find ways of expressing myself authentically while remaining interconnected with those who have constraining and domesticating expectations of me and those who dance to very different melodies and genres.

Where neo-liberal capitalism has become the predominant organizing paradigm, selective emphasis is placed on individual human rights. Our International bodies struggle with a sense of collective rights and the protection of 'the commons'. Individual and collective responsibilities have been recast in the dance of Darwinism in which the steps are about individualism, competitiveness and economic prioritization. Not only is this dance about the prioritization of economic growth over all other human and environmental needs, but Giroux (2004) refers to the 'militarization of public life with the collapse of the welfare state and the attack on civil liberties resulting from the reign of neo-liberalism (pp. xiv-xv). The unmitigated search for the fuel of this life-style is justifying ruthless subjugation of peoples from the oil rich regions of the Middle East to

the mineral rich regions of India, the nomadic peoples of the Kalahari, and the First Nations people of the ice-regions of the North. He argues that "self reflection and collective empowerment" have been reduced to "self- promotion and self-interest" legitimized by "a new and ruthless social Darwinism played out nightly on …television as a metaphor for the "naturalness" of downsizing, the celebration of hyper-masculinity, and the promotion of a war of all against all over even the most limited notions of solidarity and collective struggle" (p.xv). In referring to the destructive impact of globalization, Roddick (2001) quotes Martin Luther King as having said "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" (p.256). Through my research, I have come to understand that this is an ethical imperative that can no longer be ignored.

In the past thirty years this self-promotion and self-interest that Giroux writes of has been apparent in the noticeable increase in books and courses for personal and professional self development, heightening the sense of the 'individual'. Experts promote a universal western model for that 'individuality' both within western cultures and wherever their Development or Aid interests reach. Under the hegemony of neo-liberalism "human misery is largely defined as a function of personal choices, and human misfortune is viewed as the basis for criminalizing social problems" (Giroux, 2004, p.xviii). Globally speaking, resistance to open markets is deemed as a form of self harm and can attract the wrath or the forced intervention of more powerful states. He argues that the flushing of all social activities onto the market is aided and abetted by the appeal to our compassion for those living on less than two dollars a day, with no accompanying understanding of what social sophistication may be found in cashless societies. Despite discourse around 'celebrating differences' (e.g. Universal declaration of human rights Article 2), those who are 'different' continue to be marginalized, diminished and even demonised. Rhetoric about 'community' appears to be driven by fear rather than compassion and responsibility and bound up with "civil order and domestic security" (Giroux, 2003, p2). The over arching context in which we live and work may be difficult to comprehend yet it acts like a fortress wall constricting individuality and community, fashioning "compliant workers, depoliticized consumers, and passive citizens" (Giroux, 2003, p.158). This template confines the dance and the dancers within boundaries of the floor itself, the rules of the dance, and the ideas the dancers have learned about themselves. It may make for a beautiful or dramatic or dangerous dance – but it is not freedom!

I, like many of us, was unaware that I was dancing unconsciously and seemingly 'willingly' within this hegemonic template. Like others I was also unaware that the very act of this unconscious

dance was pressing the ideas of neo-liberalism into ever more seemingly concrete existence. In this way I have contributed to strengthening an assumption that this dance is the only reality, and a reality to be shared by all. How does a fish describe the water it swims in? How does a human describe the air they breathe? Neo-liberalism appears to have become "as natural as the air we breathe" (Humphries et al, forthcoming b, p.5). It is not only when we notice unfamiliar clarity or unpalatable pollution that we tend to reflect on its necessity to our wellbeing. Thus, blinded by our own greed, fear, hopes, aspirations and unwellness, we consciously and unconsciously collude with the current competitive "glocal" (Savitch, 2002, p.9), global and local context in which we live (Giroux, 2003, p.157).   There is a 'sameness' about our dance that can be attributed to the social impact that Rankin (1998) suggests unconsciously accompanies the self interest of the 'invisible hand' capitalism. And yet, no hegemony is ever total. There are always shafts of light through which consciousness and conscientization can enter. In the same way that we are slowly awakening to the need to respect bio-diversity for its mysterious complexity that holds together our common wellbeing, we are starting to become aware of the social, economic and political limitations of neo-liberalism from observation of communities that aspire to other values - indigenous cultures and communities living to manifest alternative social and environmental values within western cultures.

Dancing to a different rhythm

The Waldorf education network is an example of an alternative community within western society and Te Ra is a local expression of their aspiration of their values. The staff at Te Ra are dancing to a different rhythm to those who have become adjusted to the dance within the neo-liberal template. The beliefs and values for their work and their lives are based on anthroposophical principles developed by Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). He researched many aspects of living through his studies of philosophy, religion, education, science, mathematics, medicine, architecture, social organisation, economics, art, drama, speech, music, the movement arts, and care of the handicapped and the elderly. Steiner was intent on assisting people to discover and experience the divine spirit within the world and within themselves.

Steiner reports experiencing events between the ages of four and eight that led him to believe spiritual phenomena are as significant as those we recognise in the physical world. He based his convictions and subsequent studies on these foundational soul/life experiences (Wehr, 2002, pp.55-58). From early in his own schooling, his understanding of mathematics, and geometry in

particular, underpinned much of his insight: "One comes to know the physical world through mathematics, but to do this one must first let mathematics emerge from the human soul" (ibid, p.67). In Waldorf education, mathematics and science are based on working from the whole to parts the process of analysis comes: learning to divide, to multiply, to subtract and to add, to understand the recombination of the parts of the whole".[1] Steiner emphasized the importance of body, soul and spirit, by drawing on the words of Goethe's description of these three aspects:

> First the objects we constantly receive information about through the gateways of our sense, the things we touch taste, smell, hear and see;
> Second, the impressions they make on us, which assume the character of liking or disliking, desire or disgust, by virtue of the fact that we react sympathetically to one thing and are repelled by another or find one thing useful and another harmful;
> And third, the knowledge we 'quasi-divine beings' acquire about the objects as they tell us the secrets of what they are and how they work. (ibid, p.93)

Steiner maintained the way to live in the world through anthroposophy could be achieved by "rigorous, exacting training of the inner faculties that slumber in everyone" (ibid, p.94) so that these three aspects above are activated. He posited that when this occurs human beings can continually be recreating themselves. He believed in a fourth aspect which he called the "I", the part which 'belongs forever to the spiritual world' (ibid, p.94), the part that incarnated into the bodily form with each life, an idea that is aligned to karma and reincarnation (ibid, p.98). This approach to research and understand is echoed in Capra's (1997) ecological 'web of life', the interdependence of all living things.

Some of the philosophical differences from state schools that anthroposophy bring are seen initially in the buildings through the choice of building material, the unusual shaped windows and the colours on the walls inside that are said to reflect the ages and stages of the children. A low central table in each room covered with a soft coloured cloth with candles, flowers and some natural objects adorning it draw the eye and the mind to the sacred. The difference becomes more apparent as the children and teachers look at each other as they formally greet "good morning, [name]" at the entrance to the classrooms each morning and farewell each other

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[1] Te Rawhiti Kindergartens & Te Ra School Information Brochure, p.15

similarly at the end of the day. The day begins and ends with the candle being lit and the children standing in a circle reciting a blessing together.

The Waldorf curriculum at Te Ra school includes German and Māori as well as English. Along with subjects common to most primary and intermediate schools, history and historical literature are included in the curriculum with the intent of fostering appreciation for 'those who have gone before'. There is emphasis on the arts through drawing, painting, modelling with beeswax, handwork such as knitting, cross stitch, flax weaving, music, woodwork, and cooking. The use of colour and drawing is encouraged to express the children's work. Eurythmy, an art of movement, develops co-ordination, grace and flexibility (Koetzsch, 2004, p9) and is woven through the children's weekly activities. Children learn to speak clearly and recite poetry. In science and nature study, soil cultivation, composting and growing fruit and vegetables is learned in gardening classes. The focus of all learning is to engage the head (intellect), heart (feeling life) and hands (physical will) of the child (ibid, p8). The mission of Waldorf education is to "nurture the senses" and "protect the wonder of childhood". The intent of the teachers is to convey a "feeling of reverence and an awakening of respect for each other and the environment" (Te Ra Information Brochure, p10). This awareness is developed through attention to the rhythm of life through celebration of festivals such as Easter and through observing the seasonal changes in daylight, weather, plants and animals. An artistic, ecological lexicon is common in the discourse amongst staff at Te Ra as they describe 'rhythm and beat', 'harmony', 'movement', 'journey', 'evolution' and 'symmetry and balance'.

The school can be described as an "ecological community", one that aspires to living in the world 'consciously', focused on the interconnected-ness of a "vast and intricate network of relationships, the web of life" (Capra, 1997, p. 290). Yet it sits within the great context of neo-liberalism that promotes the lineal "market mechanism to be sole director of the fate of human beings and their natural environment", which Polanyi predicted would result in "the demolition of society" (Green, 1999, p.73). The market-determined, private, individualist and dualistic model promoted through the policies and practices of neo-liberalism described by Hackett (2006) and Capra (1997) contrast sharply with the collective, holistic, social network model of Te Ra. This community expresses a wholly different aspiration, creating hope for an alternative that is more attentive to the needs of people and the Earth.

This community is focused on ecological wholeness, spiritual, mental, physical, aesthetic, moral and emotional awareness, and respect for humans and all living creatures and the planet (Koetzsch, 2004, p.5).   Te Ra focuses on experiential learning with emphasis on values of morality and spirituality. Yet it exists within a wider template that, Lips-Wiersma (2002) argues, denies expression of spirituality and results in compartmentalisation of people's lives, p.385). Kelsey (2003, ¶¶ 5-7) and Gore (2006) are amongst the growing number of critics of the damage that has been wrought by this fragmented society of 'driven' consumers of material goods and competitive 'achievers'. They are helping to alert those who choose to listen to the colossal problem of pollution that has resulted from material waste and the plundering the Earth's resources, and has been exacerbated by population explosion. When Schumacher (1999) originally wrote his book in 1973, he raised concerns that in man's excitement over the "unfolding of his scientific and technological powers, modern man has built a system of production that ravishes nature and a type of society that mutilates man."   He suggested that no matter how much lip-service is paid to non-material values, they take second place to goals of production and monetary wealth (Schumacher, 1999, p.248),. Functioning within such society the people at Te Ra aspire to the wealth that Steiner promulgated can arise from non-material values, such as justice, peace, harmony, beauty and health.

What energy does it take and how much compromise is involved, for the people within Te Ra to be able to sustain a healthy dance to their own rhythm within this wider template – 'the defining political economic paradigm of our lives' (McChesney, 1998, p.1). This template impinges on them in a myriad ways from Ministry of Education accountability requirements for funding, to council rodent regulations, media persuasion and economic and community pressures. It seems as though B and the members of the Kapiti Waldorf Trust are the main people who face the challenges of having to remain "vigilant of possible negative impacts upon their 'special character' from the high level of external accountability that is associated with being integrated with the state" (Munro 1999). They bear the responsibility for compliance with Ministry of Education for meeting curriculum, funding and regulatory requirements. The parents who volunteer for the Board of Trustees work are responsible for governance in accordance with Te Ra's Charter that outlines their legal educational requirements and philosophical intentions, and for adherence to a large number of administrative, legal and reporting requirements from employment law to building codes. While most of this work is done 'behind the scenes', staff members are directly affected by the levels of accountability to the Education Review Office for the curriculum, with ERO reviews which conducted every three years.

Te Ra has been integrated into the state education system since it was founded eleven years ago. This has worked well in many ways for them, providing the crucial financial support enabling them to grow, and employ twenty five teachers to provide a wide spectrum curriculum. The first Te Rawhiti kindergarten began in 1993 and the Te Ra school in 1996. In 2002 Te Ra purchased new land and today on this site there stands a three-classroom kindergarten, seven school classrooms, an office block, community hall used for eurythmy amongst other activities, rooms for woodwork, handcraft, cooking, and specialist child support, a staff room, a tool shed and a library. However, as Munro (1999) outlines, Government funding is sufficient to cover teachers' salaries and some operational costs, so the remainder of revenue is sourced from loans and other fundraising activities, which is typical of most schools, and from parents' "special character" annual donations of $2060 for the first child, reducing for subsequent children. The former Labour Prime Minister Lange stated in 1999 that he thought parents should pay for 'private' education. The Human Rights Commission in their Action Plan for 2005-2010 challenges the pressure on parents to pay school 'donations' and supports and seeks legislation to establish free primary and secondary education. The intent is that "every child has equitable access to appropriate quality education services" (pp.12-13). This raises the question of who decides what is 'appropriate'. For parents of Te Ra, Waldorf education is chosen for the appropriateness to the perceived needs and aspirations for their children. For them main stream education is not appropriate. They pay for the 'privilege' of dancing to a different rhythm.

The Education Review Office reports on both Te Rawhiti[2] in 2005 and Te Ra[3] in 2000 indicate government's enforcement of policies, plans and programmes, including those for curriculum, assessment and staff professional development from National Education Guidelines. While the 'special character' of Te Ra is acknowledged, the tone of the reports is hierarchical, authoritative and demanding e.g. "Immediate actions to be taken"…   "In order to meet its agreed accountabilities, the Board of Trustees of Te Ra School must:.." and goes on to outline a number of imperatives, quoting relevant sections of Acts, National Education Guidelines and Policies. It seems as though the price for being an integrated school is an exacting one. Hence vigilance is essential to prevent bureaucratic undermining and submerging of the agreed 'special character'. I continue to wonder just how much inner tension is created from such attention to

[2]http://www.ero.govt.nz/ERO/reppub.nsf/0/4C9FF6FB985F477DCC2570B60009148F/$File/55275.htm?OpenElement (Retrieved 10 November 2006)

[3]http://www.ero.govt.nz/ERO/reppub.nsf/0/86AA160319EFF5D9CC2569D700101F9E/$File/1613.htm?OpenElement#_Toc504291512 ((Retrieved 10 November 2006)

vigilance and how that impacts on staff wellbeing. From B's comments about the difficulty in finding time for the required report writing it appeared to impact on her significantly. While relationships within this community are her priority, she expressed a sense of her time being compromised by this attention to paperwork. Another tension for B that comes from being the interface between the Ministry of Education, the 'authority' on national education policies and practices, and Kapiti Waldorf Trust, the 'authority' on anthroposophical education and living. Being informed of the acts, guidelines and policies and walking the fine line to ensure Integration Regulations are met while sustaining the essence of anthroposophy in her relationships with all players, requires a constant balancing act and awareness of compromise. Indeed, she and other staff described her balancing of responsibilities like the act of a juggler spinning plates on the tops of sticks, flitting from one to another to keep all the plates spinning so none will fall.

B attends weekly College of Teachers Meetings, Faculty Meetings, Administration staff meetings, and eight Board of Trustees meetings per year, as well as participating in small groups that are mandated for certain functions such as the Fair Core Group. She views her relationships with staff, parents and children as the "number one priority". With over two hundred children now enrolled at the two kindergartens and the school there is a vast network of interconnected relationships, and high levels of communication necessary to sustain those relationships. Parents may also be contending with subtle conflicting impulses with regard to parenting their children in harmony with anthroposophy while living within the wider Aotearoa New Zealand neo-liberal societal template. Staff are subjected to similar conflicting impulses, and also support parents affected by this macro-context in their anthroposophical quest.

In the wider dance template of the 'production' society of individuals that Galbraith (1978) alludes to, lip service is given to collective wellbeing. Within the Te Ra community there is very real concerned attention given to sustainable holistic health and wellness. Indeed, together we discovered that there exists a strong foundation of wellbeing. B expressed concern over levels of sickness amongst staff and the challenge of finding replacement staff at short notice at these times that is a common pressure in teaching especially in winter. Creatively and intuitively, staff are employed and utilized to meet curriculum needs, but with awareness and support of "individuals as whole human beings" (Steiner, 1919) in the context of their whole lives, illustrating the strong commitment to support staff wellbeing.

Many of the staff grew up within the predominant hegemony of the competitive individualism, and limited rationality associated with capitalism and have been, and continue to be, consciously and unconsciously influenced by this regime. Our researchers placed high value on their study of anthroposophy as essential to their development.   Perhaps the strengthening the anthroposophical 'heart beat' of individual dancers may heighten their wellbeing within the wider the template of neo-liberalism in which they live.

> To a dancer, the most important truth is found in the beat of the music, which determines the timing of the movement. It is the only rule. The beat is held with respect; it is clean and decisive. For dancers it is more important to be able to recognise the beat through the feel of the music rather than through hearing. It vibrates through the dancer's organs and spills out from the heart, ricocheting from bone to bone until the whole body is surrounded. Whether the music is fast or slow, no matter what the rhythm, the beat is constant, recognisable and identifiable.   O'Connor (2003, pp.23-24)

For these dancers at Te Ra, their 'music' is found in the rhythms of anthroposophy as well as their own personal 'heart beat'. Stiglitz (2002) suggests that for a paradigm shift to occur people need to be not only concerned about the "environment, democracy, human rights and social justice" but are living in accordance with these principles and actively teaching them to the future generations (p.20). I suggest that this is the aspiration of those in the Te Ra community. Rudolf Steiner encouraged individual and collective courage choose this democratic freedom.

> If one seriously desires to transform the present order of society into one in which social attitudes prevail, then one must not be afraid to place the spiritual-cultural life (including the school and educational system) under its own independent control, because from such a free, independent system within the social organism men and women will go forth with joy and zeal to take part in all its life.   Steiner (1919) cited by Munro (1999).

How much independent control do the community of Te Ra have over the practising of their anthroposophical beliefs and values within State Integration requirements? In the day to day functioning of Te Ra that was visible to me, the staff appeared to feel relatively free and independent, and stated that B was a "buffer" for them enabling them to focus on their work rather than being distracted by bureaucracy. Questions that could be opened for dialogue are "What are the Shadows of integration into the State system?" "How are financial prosperity and

curriculum accountability linked to sustainability of staff wellbeing?" "How much joy and zeal do staff experience in their lives at Te Ra?" Giroux (2003) states that most people view the neo-liberal paradigm as "implacable and irreversible logic of social reality" (p157). Through their commitment to anthroposophy, these people have the courage to question and stand tall within this social reality. They are intent on supporting people to "better understand their inner nature and develop courage for and insight into life tasks" (Te Ra Information Brochure, p. 7). How much energy, strength and courage is required to be committed to that aspiration, when we are immersed in and surrounded by this mechanistic, material and market based culture?

Wellbeing – Dancing from the Heart

To Dance

To take an empty space
An empty mind
An empty body
And fill it with life
Explosions of energy
Poetry of movement
To give mind over to body
In a glorious moment
Of spontaneous self
To dance …
I have fern frond legs
And a seaweed spine
I am a babbling brook
Running through soft mossy banks
I am floating out to sea
In a hundred different pieces.
Here it is again
The voluptuous flow between conscious and unconscious
Sliding and flying
Earth and sky.
I pour myself across parts of my body
I have never felt before
As I follow momentum
In her beautiful undulating arcs
And I am gravity's slave no longer.
Instead I play with him
I tempt and provoke him
In all I do.
I am the sculptor's clay.
A sensitised awareness
An exhilarated being

Caroline Plummer (undated)

Plummer's articulation of her expression of her soul through dance is the antithesis of Laing's (1967) description of people as being "shrivelled desiccated fragments" of their potential (Reason & Bradbury, 2001, p11). Instead, her poem dances with images of her connection with nature, the interconnected-ness of the conscious and the unconscious in the creation of hope, possibility, emancipation and aliveness – of wellbeing. Such too is the aspiration of the people who serve the children and adults in the Te Ra community.

My interest in staff wellbeing arose from my awareness of and attention to management practices that are experienced as incongruent with the ideals of staff and client wellbeing often espoused in organisational mission and vision statements. Through my reading of the writing of critical theorists I found a lens to interpret this incongruence. Critical theorists foster vigilance of "inequalities and injustices in organisations and society with the intent to understand and change them" (Parker, 1995). Through exploring the Shadows of dominant management practices and discourse, it appears that many workplaces currently contribute to the [perhaps] unconscious domestication of human beings through the appeal of a lexicon of efficiency and productivity. My concern arises from observation, research and experience of people's conversations around workplace wellbeing: wellbeing that has become shrivelled, potential that has been reduced to a dried fragment of what it could be and the resulting disconnection with themselves, others and the earth. Our research highlighted that even in an organisation with a strong commitment to wellbeing of staff, students, parents and environment, the unconscious domestication of our instrumental western neo-liberalism Shadows everyday reality. This instrumental approach to relationships is not our only option. The Bishop of London, the Right Reverend Richard Chartres stated at the Global Poverty Forum in 2003 that "when we turn from treating people as objects and start treating people as fellow participants in the web of life, there is hope". This consciousness of inter-relatedness is expressed across all cultures:

> Mankind is interdependent, and the happiness of each depends upon the happiness of all, and it is this lesson that humanity has to learn today as the first and the last lesson.
>
> Sufi Inayat Khan, (1962, pp.88-89)

How is it that many workplaces are so far removed from such aspiration of interdependence? And even arms-length, ambulance- at-the-bottom-of-the-cliff legislation for health and safety in employment fails to achieve the intent of providing safe, supportive workplaces where people's wellbeing is paramount? Needham's research (2003) seems to indicate that there is an urgent need in Aotearoa New Zealand, to explore *with* staff how to create safe and healthy

organisational cultures. The intent of our research processes at Te Ra, was to explore *with* staff what factors were influencing their wellbeing and how those might be transformed.

Already embedded within the culture of Te Ra was an explicitly holistic illustration and articulated understanding of wellbeing and an intentionally enquiring attitude towards relationships and the environment. The beliefs and values of anthroposophy appeared to create a strong theme of hope, creativity, and connection to the world and to humanity. Their articulated concern to research sustainability of staff wellbeing seemed to provide a wonderful situation in which to explore, or dance with, what Shadows may exist within ourselves and organisations. Our aspiration was to find the courage to explore deeply enough to illuminate these Shadows. We were curious to understand how anthroposophy is lived out in terms of staff wellbeing. At Te Ra the focus is aligned to Capra's (1997) "deep ecological awareness" (p.8); the flow and changes of the seasons, spiritual awareness of the interconnectedness of and respect for all living things reflect the "stream of life that runs through the world" of those involved with Waldorf education. The vision of anthroposophy is to educate and instruct from a "living understanding of the *whole* human being" (Steiner, 1919) so that children learn who they are in the world they live in and have the will to become their potentiality.

The world view at Te Ra appeared to be a synthesis of masculine and feminine; the active and lineal composition of the curriculum structure and classroom arrangements and processes with receptive, artistic, empathetic and spiritual behaviours, responsive to seasons and other living creatures. The focus on sustainable development is intended to enhance the lives of future generations, through caring for and minimizing impact on their environment with the use of materials and resources, gardening, composting and recycling. The staff consciously work to create balance and harmony, which we affirmed contributed to a strong foundation of wellbeing for them. There was a strong collective ethic of caring for and supporting one another, expressed with sensitive awareness in their language which was congruent with their actions. This sensitive care, acceptance and support was extended to me during my whole research visit. During my mother's illness and especially near the end of the research period when my elderly aunt was hospitalized and subsequently died, I experienced the compassion, empathy and love from Te Ra staff.

Self responsibility was also evident in participants' ability to reflect deeply on their thoughts and actions, to seek their "inner motivational orientation" (Breton et al 2003) in order to contribute to their own and others wellbeing. Their well honed skills in sensitive observation and deep

reflection contributed to the deep personal contributions during our research dialogues. I observed a grounded "realness" (Wilson Schaef, 1995) from these practices and from the demonstrated attention to and action around people, seasons and ecology. Within this community they demonstrated intent to function democratically by supporting individual freedom within Te Ra's agreed principles and practices, those necessary to the collective functioning.

Almost half of the staff volunteered to participate in the research, an encouraging indication of concern for wellbeing, a willingness that reflected an openness to learning and a commitment to relational responsibility, characteristics that Senge (1990, p.3) suggests contribute to a "learning organisation". Many of the staff at Te Ra attended to their wellbeing through daily practices of observation, reflection and action supported by spiritual practices such as meditation, prayer, yoga, and being in nature. These augmented the practices of meeting physical, social, emotional and mental needs to nourish wellbeing. Some expressed concern that despite their conscious attention to their wellbeing, they became tired and stressed, so were continuing to seek ways to create more balance in their lives. One research participant expressed peacefulness around the achievement of personal wellbeing. This was attained through daily contemplation of what he described as his "**inner life, soul life, purpose**" and "**taking responsibility to seek out what I need for my own spiritual growth**." He viewed life "**as an awakening process**", which I interpreted as a willingness explore possible Shadows. Many participants expressed gratitude for their lives and for the abundance in nature, reflecting the importance to their wellbeing of "dancing with life… moving with the flow of our experiences…with a feeling of harmony, trust, gratitude and love" (Jeffers, 1997, p.3).

Collectively as an organisation, attention is paid to staff wellbeing in a wide variety of ways. Relieving staff are employed to enable staff to attend courses, visit their families overseas in countries of origin, and have extended unpaid leave breaks to attend to family or personal needs. Proactive attention to healthcare needs of staff is given through relief teachers being available to replace teachers when they start to get sick, and through massage, acupuncture, homeopathic remedies, and Vitamin C being available to staff. To address communication, educational and spiritual needs, daily and weekly meetings are held. Social gatherings such as dinners and parties are occasionally arranged which participants stated was helpful to connecting with each other and during the course of the research they initiated a mediaeval dinner. Conflict resolution processes are in place to meet relational and emotional needs. Y mentioned how helpful massages had been in the past and most commented on the usefulness of training days.

I found a wide diversity of nationalities amongst the staff at Te Ra with people originating from many different cultures: German, Dutch, Swiss, Irish, American, Maori, Russian, Brazilian and Pakeha. Along with the varying lengths of service to Waldorf Education, the longest being twenty-five years, this diversity created richness and suggested heightened levels of acceptance. Sometimes Waldorf teachers work in other schools around the world as part of their professional development and a visiting teacher from Australia was assisting in the school during our research fieldwork. Two former Waldorf students from overseas volunteering at Te Ra for a year brought their unique perspectives to our dialogues. Part of B's responsibilities is to ensure that this movement of staff flows with the least inconvenience to everyone and to support visiting staff to utilise their potential. While this sometimes creates challenges for B, she acknowledged that there are huge emotional, spiritual, physical and mental benefits to people going abroad and having visiting staff at Te Ra in terms of personal and professional satisfaction and stimulation and broadened curriculum. This reinforces the broad concept of the interconnectedness of all aspects of the whole (Capra, 1997).

Te Ra has established a number of processes designed to reduce professional isolation and enhance wellbeing. "Flip days" were talked about. Here a teacher is freed to go into another teacher's room to observe, discuss and learn. These seemed to happen less frequently than staff thought would be beneficial. Each teacher has a mentor with whom they can safely talk over their professional concerns. Some were finding this was working well, and others did not create the time for this. Informal mentoring seemed the norm for some. Teachers were supported to attend courses and conferences. One of the main times for assembling together as staff was the weekly Faculty Meeting. Staff roster to provide a nutritious afternoon tea, prior to this pedagogical meeting, where child studies "deepen and extend the teachers' understanding"[1] and through other shared activities, staff learned more about anthroposophical principles.

At the Faculty meeting on my initial visit I had been asked to lead a discussion on "What does personal wellbeing look like?" My intention was to draw on my experience as a group facilitator to start this process with an 'icebreaker' exercise. I was advised staff knew each other so well so this would be unnecessary. As I began to facilitate the exercise, some seemingly 'uninvolved' body language indicated to me that a brief discussion may 'warm' the group up to brainstorming the topic. Animated conversations in pairs was followed by a robust collection and recording of

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[1] Te Rawhiti Kindergartens and Te Ra School Information Brochure, p.31.

ideas, punctuated with laughter. This highlighted to me the value of "suspending individual assumptions" so that "collective consciousness is possible" (Bohm in Nichol, 2004). It also reminded me to listen and trust my tact knowledge of group work and to have confidence in the practice of transforming what is tacit into explicit (McNiff, 2000, p.51).

Listening to and trusting this "connected knowing" (Belenky et al, 1986, cited in Reason & Bradbury, 2001, p.9) relies on an empathetic, receptive eye and responding to the spirit of what is happening from an inner understanding. During my time at Te Ra, I observed that my ability to flow with this knowledge was strengthened contributing to a heightened sense of my wellbeing. Another factor that increased my confidence was the return of my ability to remember people's names in this environment. A characteristic of the Te Ra community is greeting people by name and at the beginning and end of the day each teacher shakes hands with and greets each child using their name and they respond in kind. In this way they "see" each other, validating their "connection to each other" (Capra, 1996) and the reinforcement of 'we', while they live within a western culture that is more individually focused on 'you' and 'me'.

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I was interested to note that parents at Te Ra introduced their children to me, which appeared to acknowledge their place in the world whereas in our New Zealand culture many adults relegate them to be "humans becoming adults" diminishing the intrinsic value of childhood (Debski et al, forthcoming). I noticed that most of the staff, male and female, smiled and greeted me readily. I reflected on my own discomfort and assumptions around the few people who were more reticent. This process enabled me to move past my discomfort and engage with these people. A staff member who had expressed distress during my initial visit was visibly more relaxed and reported increased wellbeing from the support she had sought. I noted that there appeared to be a high level of acceptance and respect amongst the teachers, demonstrated by sharing work spaces, eye contact when talking, verbalized concern and consideration for others, and not speaking on behalf of others without their permission or about others in their absence. This workplace pays attention to "sustainable workloads, feelings of choice and control, recognition and reward, a sense of community, fairness, respect and justice and meaningful and valued work" that Maslach and Leiter (1997, p.149) suggest is essential for staff wellbeing. I experienced a "**gentle energy**" as most staff moved about their workplace quietly and calmly.

While we were conscious of time constraints, research participants demonstrated a willingness to allocate time to our dialogues during the 'free' periods and after school. This willingness to give their time and the expressed enjoyment in talking about wellbeing could have indicated that the very act of talking together was already enhancing wellbeing.

After ten days of formal and informal conversations with the participants, and being in the Te Ra environs, I spent two days around a weekend more focused on my extended family. This met my need for companionship that was separate from our research and provided a relaxing interlude in the research dance before some intense and unexpected personal experiences that followed. Immediately after this planned weekend away from Te Ra my own mother was hospitalized in Auckland, 600 kilometres away. Although the family there assured me that it was an episode from which she would recover, I was anxious and confused about whether to go to her bedside. I continued daily phone and email conversations and was relieved when she was discharged into family care four days later.

I recognized that my concern about my mother's ill health had impacted on my own wellbeing and my ability to be a supportive research member. I was experiencing the "cognitive and emotional vulnerability" that Dutton and Dukerich (2006) suggest can accompany researchers in the process of their interdependent learning, heightened by concern for my mother. I refocused through talking about my concerns to a couple of staff and attending to my spiritual, physical and emotional needs. Also I reminded myself of my responsibilities as the research facilitator; to respect, listen, acknowledge concerns, suspend my thoughts and opinions and ask clarifying questions (Isaacs, 1999). This seemed to restore my sense of wellbeing and focus.

As researchers we concur with the view that human wellbeing is not static or consistent, but changeable like the seasons and it is important to be able to flow reflexively with that reality. We acknowledged that through the shared ontology and the epistemology of anthroposophy, Te Ra staff were collectively focused on creating a secure foundation of wellbeing. Through our dialogues, we were able to reflect on collected concerns: the un-restful nature of staffroom mostly because of the physical layout; the low attendance at morning verse; the uncertainty about how well faculty meetings were meeting the staff's needs; a need for greater clarity and increased levels of communication; and the desire for even greater acceptance and trust in some relationships and people being "on the same side". These concerns and aspirations indicated that participants desired even greater cohesion amongst staff.

Within the Te Ra community staff invest a lot of time and energy to maintain relationships and appeared to communicate frequently and well through face to face contact, newsletters, staff bulletin board in the staffroom. They gave a lot of attention to sustain relationships with the children and support their emotional, physical, spiritual and mental development during three years in the kindergarten and seven years in the school, and this took energy. They also developed close relationships with the parents of the children they taught, and visited their homes as well as seeing them at school regularly. Our research highlighted that some jobs are inherently stressful (Beehr and Glazier, 2005) requiring greater attention to nourish relationships and wellbeing. We learned that sometimes people felt a sense of aloneness, separation, and alienation and that there is a thirst to know each other more deeply so that communication could be enhanced. Through our dialogues we set the intention that through giving focused attention to one another, listening compassionately and responding with awareness, consciously reaching out to others, and being more welcoming, individuals could get to know each other better.

I discovered that the people in Te Ra were comfortable with an emotional and spiritual lexicon that included relational words such as love, trust, compassion, acceptance, tolerance, empathy. In conjunction with this articulation, they explicitly demonstrated levels of wellbeing that my research indicates are uncommon in most western workplaces based on instrumental logic expressed through a more functionalist lexicon (Humphries, forthcoming; Reason & Bradbury, 2001). A focus on compassion is a key factor in cultivating positive and healthy organisations (Frost et al, 2005). As a community of people, we thought that through commitment, a number of actions could be initiated in order to deepen their connection and foster being more 'present' with each other. These included "**spending time at the beginning of each term looking back and looking forward; strengthening links between school and kindergarten through flip days, coming to assembly, school coming into kindergarten; having faculty in different rooms to get a feel for each other and our spaces; sharing more deeply through staff autobiographies/temperaments at faculty meetings; airing subjects at faculty meetings; having puppet shows and other activities like the shepherds play that involve everyone; having a wellbeing workshop; ensuring that orientation of new staff enables them to know who to go to for support and information, what roles staff have, with processes expressed verbally and in written form; and afternoon information talks."**

> I think part of the attraction of repeated, rhythmic dancing ... is the amazing power of collective movement. It's such an amazing buzz to see the whole room full of people move as one, and to feel that you make up a part of this whole, pulsating creature. Perhaps we feel we have formed a herd once more, and it gives us a strong sense of unity and strength.   Plummer (undated)

Our research concurs with Reason and Bradbury's (2001) statement that the "primary purpose of human inquiry is not so much to search for truth, but to heal…the alienation, the split that characterizes modern experience" (p10). The intention and commitment to research sustainability of wellbeing as a strategic goal reinforces awareness of the value of caring for each other within the community, the interconnectedness of everything, the deep ecology of "web of life" that is enriched when each person is 'dancing from the heart'. This spiritual experience can result from simple openness and awareness to the everyday ways we participate in life, recognising the inseparable seamlessness of all.

Because of this seamlessness inseparability of everything I suggest that with the very best intentions and practices to enhance wellbeing, the staff at Te Ra are affected by the tension of living within the overlaying template of neo-liberal economic policies and practices.   The encroaching pressure of consumerism and technology has domesticated most New Zealanders to this way of being. Anthroposophy offers a holistic way of life within this template. Barnes et al (1991) cite Steiner, who suggested that "all that is happening in the outside world and in the life of men, must arouse our interest" (pp.55-56). This exacts heightened awareness of 'being in this world but not of this world' and making adjustments and compromises. Most of parents are very supportive to staff and the beliefs and values of Te Ra, and they also rely on the staff to guide them in their quest to live by anthroposophical principles within the larger fragmented, profit and efficiency focused culture.

The participants' willingness to make time within their busy work and sometimes personal time, indicated a thirst for this dialogue about wellbeing. Our action research was the catalyst for opening the topic up for discussion but without these processes the focus on wellbeing waned and two months later some staff reported that they had not thought about it since, while others had occasionally. This raises the question about the challenge of maintaining this focus. What needs to happen to provide people in workplaces with the time to care, talk and listen to one another as they work together? Our research highlighted that 'connection with one another' was

key to the researchers' wellbeing. This research indicates that as Senge et al (2004) suggests, many people are longing for this connection – to be understood and to understand, to be cared about and to care about others, to trust and be trusted, to love and respect and receive that in return.

Even in a culture that is people-centred, holistic, organic in nature, the invisible hand of the neo-liberal social, political and economic reality, subtly shapes the wellbeing of the people within organisation, their processes and their environs. Therefore we are left with questions to consider. If this organisation with such a strong foundation and aspiration for wellbeing for all people is experiencing isolation and separation, how are staff in other workplaces faring? If Capra's deep ecological "Web of Life" (1997) approach was to be embraced, if the paradigm shift that Senge et al (2004) suggested involving a "change of heart", how different might workplaces be? Is sustainability of wellbeing possible or do we need to accept the ebb and flow of the human condition? As with other creatures and plants do we have times of hibernation, times of growth and times of stillness? Is it time to accept that we are living creatures, not human cogs in the fast turning economic political machine? Is it time, as Schumacher suggested in *Small is Beautiful* in 1973 to have "economics as if people mattered"? What is our intergenerational responsibility for planetary and human wellbeing?

With increasing global concern for sustainability of people and the planet it is heartening to experience being in an organisation whose values and beliefs have this as a core focus. I am aware of observable shifts in consciousness about sustainability within myself, my community, in local and national government and propose that communities such as Te Ra are exemplary in their quest for wellbeing.

Contemporary Dance

Reflections and conclusions, stretching one's boundaries of imagination and comfort to bring new and different ideas as commonly are associated with this dance form.

Susanne Bentley in *Bent Object.*

Themes of Reflective Shadow Dances

Susanne Bentley, Contemporary Dancer/Singer

This we know.

All things are connected

like blood

which unites one family…

What befalls the Earth,

befalls the sons and daughters of the Earth.

Man did not weave the web of life;

he is merely a strand in it.

Whatever he does to the web,

he does to himself.

Ted Perry. Inspired by Chief Seattle, cited in Capra (1996, Introduction)

And so, in my specific task as researcher with interests and commitments beyond the activities at Te Ra, I draw together all the connections in this writing. I know full well that this is a merest strand in the web of life. I commit this study to print in the hope that it will give the reader pause to consider their own wellbeing in relation to their interconnectedness with all of life and in whatever forums we meet each other, I invite ongoing dialogue about the issues I have raised in this research. Through research into wellbeing within one organisation, I now bring five specific themes for further observation, reflection and dialogue in subsequent research – the corrosive impact of current competitive individualism and economic rationality on wellbeing and the challenges of aspiring to human and planetary wellbeing from within this context, the transformational potential of PAR, the advocating of a broader conceptualization of wellbeing in the employment environment, and the reinforcement from this research that strong foundations of wellbeing are possible within workplaces.

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Our joint enquiry at Te Ra highlighted that even though this robustly value-based organisation has expressed commitment to collective wellbeing; it is embedded in and affected by the domesticating forces of the global neo-liberal economic, social and political context that has characterised the macro context in Aotearoa New Zealand for two decades. The transformation of education into a commodity, a market(able) product, so lamented by Lange (1999) is replicated across all social service sectors. Competing for funding in education, health and social services dehumanized these services in the instrumental push for efficiency and effectiveness. Efficiency and effectiveness, in this discourse, are invested with limited and limiting meaning. The market model implies and encourages a ruthless, falsely Darwinian evolutionary metaphor based on the supposed efficiency of winners and elimination of supposed losers from this model. This fundamental story, despite its current infatuation with the notion of sustainability, is not couched or choreographed in terms of human or planetary wellbeing.

The people in the community of Te Ra dance with compromise between their anthroposophical rhythms founded on and grounded in practical application of education, ecological and spiritual principles and personal priorities and the intrinsic and extrinsic pressures to integrate immutable social, economic, political and educative policies.   While they are partially insulated from some extrinsic pressures, the ethos of neo-liberalism surrounds both their personal and professional lives, exacting a continual, delicate, conscious and unconscious balancing act, one which they courageously choose to incorporate into their dance.

As Senge (2004) clearly articulates, while the impact of such pressures may be felt, this larger context can be very difficult to define and articulate when emersed in it: "until people can start to see their habitual ways of interpreting a situation, they cannot really step into a new awareness" (p.45). What are the options available to the staff at Te Ra? Do they have to accept that given the extrinsic pressures, they are doing the best they can? Do they seek ways to maintain focus on wellbeing so that despite external pressures they can thrive? Or do they continue to foster the evolving intergenerational work of challenging the way people live by offering an alternative that is in harmony with human and planetary wellbeing?

Our qualitative research confirmed that through dances of dialogue, reflection, observation and action, Participatory Action Research (PAR) has transformative relational potential. All participants expressed, and some demonstrated, shifts in their wellbeing during the research processes. While there were significant restraints on these people's time with work and family commitments, their willingness and commitment to participate highlighted the value they placed on our dialogues. Their competency in self reflective, cyclical processes enabled them to engage in this research at a deep level. The research processes were emancipatory in that participants were able to affect some collaborative actions within their environment and changes within themselves. Within the time frame limitations, the field work was a catalyst for enhancing existing levels of staff wellbeing. To achieve sustainable wellbeing that comes from maintaining awareness and practice, we postulate that commitment, time and resources to ongoing engagement in such participatory qualitative research processes could achieve paradigm shifts that, with enactment, could sustain greater influence on the desired workplace wellbeing.

While Senge (2004) suggests that most people try to solve such complex societal questions through a process of intellectual abstracting, he cites Goethe's suggestion of "slowing down…taking time…" to see the connection between 'the part' and 'the whole'. Participants endorsed the value of taking the time to engage with others more consciously, compassionately and lovingly to enhance their ability to "see from the whole" (p.46) to support their collective wellbeing.

A broader conceptualization of wellbeing of humanity in the context of employment is advocated, one which acknowledges our wholeness and interconnection with all living creatures and the planet. How then, might we develop such a concept that goes beyond current fragmented descriptive devices to choreograph inclusive practices that embrace the mental, emotional,

physical and spiritual aspects of human wellbeing? How might we review wellbeing in relationship to Earth, holding a position that focuses on the nourishment of future generations, rather than the short term gains of current western world views? Capra (1997) suggests a possible way to go beyond our current prescript:

> Reconnecting with the web of life means building and nurturing sustainable communities in which we can satisfy our needs and aspirations without diminishing the chances of future generations. For this task we can learn valuable lessons from the study of ecosystems, which *are* sustainable communities of plants, animals, and micro-systems. To understand these lessons, we need to learn the basic principles of ecology…We need to revitalize our communities – including our education communities, business communities, and political communities – so that principles of ecology become manifest in them as principles of education, management and politics. (Author's italics, p.289)

Given increasing world concern over the impacts of globalization, it is timely to review the management discourse and practices of 'utilisation of human capital' in favour of an approach that promotes 'supporting wellness of human beings' in rhythm with and connected to all within the Earth's community.

Strong foundations of wellbeing are possible in an organisation where staff, students and stakeholders are an integral part of the commitment to that intent. There are many other organisations that are overtly 'people centred' and consciously fostering wellbeing with the level of awareness available within the current instrumental workplace template. I am aware of only a few organisations that have the dual intent of long term enhancement of the wellbeing of people AND the planet. Te Ra is one of them. How can organisations make this paradigm shift a relational focus represented by compassion, love, respect, appreciation, empathy and tolerance? Senge et al (2004) urge us to consider this question speculating that the alternative is the long-term prospect of global extinction of humans (p.24-25). He cites anthropologist Margaret Mead's belief that it only takes a few committed, concerned people to effect social change (p.138). This perhaps provides hope that organisations like Te Ra are making a significant contribution to this paradigm shift.

If this organisation, with its commitment to what Capra describes as 'deep ecology' (1996, p.6), is recognizing difficulties in sustaining staff wellbeing, how then are people faring in workplaces that

are far less proactive in their caring?   When individuals and communities unconsciously and subtlety collude with neo-liberal practices that do not emancipate people, but instead thwart their abilities to make choices, voice concerns and take action, our wellbeing is compromised. It is imperative that academics foster critique of such dehumanizing practices, to highlight alternative world views, to invite dialogue and to explore the possibilities of a general transformation of workplace wellbeing.

Williamson (2003) suggests that when people open their hearts so that humanity's pain and suffering moves them to respond to it as passionately as they used to defend against or deny it, then there can be transformation (p.221). However she posits that "individual acts of kindness and compassion will not of themselves provide enough loving to transform our civilization. Rather we must make love the centre of all our enterprises – collective as well as individual. When harmless-ness towards life, becomes a personal, social, economic, and political imperative, [then] we will be on our way at last to the restoration and regeneration of our civilization" (p.222).

The broad New Zealand environment with its defining template in which we as citizens, consumers, individuals and communities dance at present is collectively created and yet greatly influenced by the external global economy. Within that template together we create and influence our society by becoming more conscious of our choices to diminish or grow our full potential. Kelsey (1999) states that ultimately "the people of New Zealand have to decide what kind of society they wish to live in, and work together to create it"

When societies that are committed to the ideals of justice and emancipation of individuals and communities, engage in the re-conceptualising of people as 'human capital', and people and the Earth as infinitely exploitable resources, as mere commodities in the global money-making machine, the human potential of each individual and the life sustaining qualities of the Earth are seriously compromised. 'Dancing up close and personal with the Shadows' of the outcomes from such exploitation as demonstrated through this research sheds light on and offers possibilities for transformation and hope.

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Appendices

Appendix 1.   Universal Declaration of Human Rights. 1948.

Article 1.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 25.

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

Appendix 2

Health and Safety in Employment Amendment Act 2002. Implemented 5 May 2003.

http://www.osh.govt.nz/order/catalogue/808.shtml

Appendix 3 - Research Opportunity Information

Proposed Research Opportunity

Rosie Bentley
Student: Masters in Management Studies
University of Waikato.

March 2006

My interest is in human wellbeing and flourishing in the workplace. Last year I researched the question "How can organisations be re-framed as people-centred workplaces where human wellbeing and flourishing are priorities?" and I examined ways that organisations can move from a market driven efficiency and profitability priorities to a 'people-centred' focus. I used co-operative inquiry as a research method to explore what staff wellbeing looked like to four staff members of a community social service in Hamilton. With this Masters in Management Studies thesis, I want to find out more about what creates wellbeing and flourishing, and how the 'shadow' or what is not well being can be transformed within a whole organisation.

I see a need for healthier workplace frameworks that support human wellbeing and flourishing, because the human cost of current practices is unsustainable for people, communities and the planet. "The stress imposed on social and environmental systems by empires exploitation of people and nature has passed beyond the limits of social and environmental tolerance." (Korten, Perlas, and Shiva. 2004 cited by Humphries, 2004, p.2). We have had a mechanistic approach to living and working which for many people has created a tension of their vision being juxtaposed to their current reality (Senge, 1999).

What is meant by human wellbeing and flourishing? Here are some definitions to ponder –

- The Concise Oxford dictionary (1961, p1458) defines wellbeing as 'welfare'. Welfare means 'satisfactory state, health and prosperity, wellbeing' (ibid, p1457). Health, meaning "soundness or wholeness" (ibid, p.554), and wellbeing are often linked together.

- "Basic needs of housing, health, education and worthwhile work were met; that they belonged to a community where individuals experienced a sense of responsibility and choice about how they functioned in their everyday life; and had their ideas valued and respected." (1988 NZ Royal Commission for Social Policy)

- To flourish means to 'grow vigorously; thrive, prosper, be successful, be in one's prime, spend one's life, be active' (Concise Oxford dictionary, 1961, p.458.)

- A 'holism' approach to wellbeing that acknowledges that the 'whole is more than the sum of the parts through creative evolution' (Oxford Dictionary, 1961, p.570), also termed synergy (Covey, 1989, p.262-3), is useful to illustrate that when *all* aspects of people are recognized and valued, they are empowered to work more fully to their potential (Lips-Wiersma, 2002, p.385).

What does human wellbeing and flourishing in the workplace mean to you?

Participatory Action research
In participatory action research the researcher and participants are co-inquirers into their world and how to act in daily life. It highlights practical ways of knowing and being so that humans and the eco-systems of which we are a part, can flourish (Reason & Torbett, 2001, p.1-37).

For many years I have had a desire to better understand my life in relation to myself and others, and have been 'living my life as an inquiry' (Reason, 2001, p.1, and Marshall, 1999).   I have used processes of action, reflection, evaluation, modification with the aim not only to increase my understanding, wellbeing and flourishing but also to share this with others, formally as a teacher and manager and informally as a human being.

Thank you for your time and consideration into whether participating in this type of research interests you and how we might proceed together to foster the wellbeing and flourishing of everyone involved. University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Regulations 2005 will be adhered to.

Rosie Bentley
March 2006

References.

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Appendix 4 – Research at Te Ra Information

Staff wellbeing and flourishing at Te Ra

Information on Research Project:

Contact:
Rosie Bentley 824 1880 or 021 2536693   rosiebentley@ihug.co.nz

Supervisor:
Associate   Professor   Maria   Humphries,   University   of   Waikato
Mariah@waikato.ac.nz

Background:

In this research opportunity we are exploring staff wellbeing and flourishing in Te Ra. For me the project is two pronged: exploring the topic of human wellbeing and flourishing and learning about the methods of participatory action research. The research discussions could take place during May and June 2006 with the consent of the participants.

- The research will be based around methods we individually and collectively decide upon eg discussions, journals, conversations, drawings, etc.

- The total amount of time you spend on this research is your decision.

- The conversations we have will be recorded and erased after the research report is written, you have read and commented on it and the project is completed and marked.

- You will get the chance to see drafts of the written research so that you can suggest changes, especially if you feel your contribution has not been accurately portrayed or your anonymity is not adequately protected. Group confidentiality is essential.

- If at anytime you want to stop being involved in the discussions you can, but please try and let me know in advance.

<u>What happens to the research?</u>

- This research is being done as part of my study and writing towards a four-paper thesis for a Masters of Management Studies through Waikato University.

- The research methodology may be discussed online within the Management in the Not For Profit Post Graduate Diploma class. Participants' identity will be disguised in all reporting by using the initial letter of your first name or any other method that participants prefer.

- It is being supervised by Associate Professor Maria Humphries.

- The research will be written up as a part of my thesis that will be marked by Maria and an external examiner. A bound copy of the thesis will then be filed in the University of Waikato Library.

- You can also decide if some parts of the report (methods, outcomes) may be summarized and presented as a paper for publication in a journal or presentation at an academic conference.

Appendix 5   Consent Form

Consent Form for Participants

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Staff wellbeing and flourishing at Te Ra

Consent Form for Participants

I have read the Information Sheet for Participants for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the Information Sheet.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet form.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Name and contact information:

Rosie Bentley   824 1880 or 021 2536693   rosiebentley@ihug.co.nz

Supervisor's Name and contact information:
Associate Professor Maria Humphries, Waikato University Mariah@waikato.ac.nz

Appendix 6 - Wellbeing Group Discussion: Summary to Participants

Friday 19th May 2006

Thank you all for taking responsibility and initiative in creating a useful, informative, and inspiring discussion on Friday. Thank you again F and M for providing the tranquil and beautiful setting in your home. Action research is an evolving process based on discussion (and other processes such as writing, dance, music etc) and reflection. The manner in which the group discussion evolved reflected your commitment to exploring and understanding more about staff wellbeing and sustainability. I am learning with you and it felt very exciting to hear the discussion as it developed. I would like to continue our individual dialogues as your timeframes allow as well as having email and group discussions. What we will become clearer about towards the end of my visit (22nd June) is how to proceed from there. As I mentioned, we could continue via email/phone dialogues and I could revisit later in the year.

I have recorded what was written on the sheets (thank you scribes) so that you can reflect further on the discussion and I suggest that we meet on <u>Wednesday 31st May at 3.15 or 3.30pm for an hour (or hour and a half maximum?)</u> if it is convenient to discuss as a group the topic of communication which has been raised by a number of you in individual dialogues. Please can you let me know if this time would work for you.

To the question "How does staff wellbeing look or is reflected at Te Ra?" you said (no particular order):
- Possibilities of abundance
- Not jumping through beauracratic hoops
- Visual environment – gardens
- Architecture of the grounds
- Resources
- Appreciation
- Feeling representation of place
- "we" people
- Doris' leadership/guardianship
- Time
- Clear common well of wisdom
- Spiritual warmth
- Support for professional development is exceptional
- Fundamental basis.

- Anthroposophy - Clear common goal held in the consciousness of many
- We have come together to do our work – sacredness from way back
- Empathy, compassion
- Nurturing offerings – food, medicines
- Similar level of dogmatism
- Social events, camps, plays
- Support, facilitation
- A waiting circle
- Tangible sense of community
- Bigger family
- Similarity
- People coming back
- Common interest in the child's wellbeing
- The talent- partially untapped, but a huge pool of talent in a wide range of areas. Enthusiasm by individuals in those areas and thus energy.

Then we moved to what things would enhance staff wellbeing and sustainability. In all spheres of life there is the shadow, the part that we can dance with, explore, shine light on and transform or let go of. This is what you said again in no particular order:

- Tapping into one another
- Flip days and mentoring
- Team building
- Building of trust
- Keeping sheep in the fold (is this correct?)
- Be a trustworthy shepherd
- Get nourishment
- Making meetings suit - wanting to be at meetings, not having to
- Tiredness
- Building energy
- Social events
- Soften up, play,
- Letting it breathe
- Time to meet
- White house – very hard to get into – feng shui
- Sense of well and unwell
- Well – collectively focused together
- Unwell – staffroom, morning verse, faculty meeting, communication, acceptance, relationships, being on the same side, a bigger crying cupboard –rainbow room

What I would encourage you to do over the next few days, is to group and clarify for yourself what the main issues (2 or 3 max) are and what the next step is as you see it? I have suggested that we talk about communication, but we may decide collectively that there is another issue to explore first next Wednesday.

Finally, something else to reflect on is that in the Te Ra Waldorf School 2006 Annual Plan,

Charter Goal 7 on Personnel is to "Research what contributes to the well being and sustainability of teachers – having acknowledged that it is the key for the well being of students and that way the whole school."

Weekly actions to meet this goal include regular Class Teachers and Kindergarten Teachers meetings to provide professional development (curriculum) and support, weekly administration meetings to ensure a positive and efficient working climate in the office, college meetings and regular Faculty meetings for all staff to

- study and do artistic work together
- encourage work out of anthroposophy
- provide regular professional development
- conduct child studies
- provide opportunity for all staff to communicate and share.

How well are these actions contributing to well being and sustainability? What is your understanding of "sustainability"? How will you know that this goal is being achieved?

I feel very privileged to be in the Te Ra staff community – I am experiencing you as warm, caring, inspiring, creative, flexible, calm and centred people and for me that is nurturing and heart warming.

Please note in your diary the pot luck dinner/discussion on <u>Friday 9 June at 5pm</u>. I suggest we bring similar food – it was delicious!

Thank you
Rosie

(Phone numbers deleted)

Appendix 7

Summary of Projects suggested at Friday 19th May Group Discussion on Staff Wellbeing

☺�از☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺

Staffroom – the ideas expressed were
- Round table
- A sanctuary
- Rest place
- Ahhhh!
- Beauty
- Colourful
- Renewed place
- Enlivening
- Gather self
- Space for quiet – Do Not Disturb sign – up above
- A place to fall apart and come back together

Morning Verse – what do you need to know about this?

Faculty Meeting – how well is this meeting staff needs? We heard that there used to be a 'round robin' that allowed people to know where each other was on a personal or professional level. How would that contribute to the aspects of wellbeing to be enhanced that we identified (see previous list)?

☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺✬☺

The staffroom is transformed! Thank you, V, C and B for your enthusiasm, initiative, and energy in creating the change. What impact has that had on your wellbeing? What is the feedback from other staff who are not participating in the wellbeing opportunity?

I apologise for leaving these ideas out of the previous writing about the evening discussion. If these are the visible, tangible outcomes, what are the underlying issues of these projects?

Arohanui
Rosie

Appendix 8 - Faculty Flier 4 June

Staff Wellbeing at Te Ra

During the past four weeks that we have been discussing staff wellbeing, we have acknowledged that anthroposophy is a clear common goal held in the consciousness of many, providing sacredness in the work and a common interest in the child's wellbeing. This creates a foundation of wellbeing.

We recognised other existing aspects that create a wellspring of wellbeing - giving and receiving appreciation, spiritual warmth, empathy, compassion, fun, time, wisdom, talent, energy and support.

While the College and the Board have overall responsibility for managing the school, B's leadership or guardianship contributes to wellbeing of staff. Her belief in and creation of possibilities of abundance and her support and nurturing make a special contribution to staff wellbeing.

A strong "we" brings a tangible sense of community or bigger family, with people returning to share themselves in an organic way.

The architecture of the grounds and the visual surroundings also provide a nurturing place to be.

So the question is always, how can we grow this wellspring so that staff wellbeing is nurtured further and is sustained? Whenever we want to enhance something collectively, we can look inside ourselves first and ask what can I bring? Please share any thoughts you have on this with those who are exploring wellbeing –B, C, F, G, K, L, V, W, X, Y, Z and Rosie.

Appendix 9 – Parent Newsletter 8 June

During the past four weeks that we have been discussing staff wellbeing, we have acknowledged that anthroposophy is a clear common goal held in the consciousness of many, providing sacredness in the work and a common interest in the child's wellbeing. This creates a foundation of wellbeing.

In Te Ra and Te Rawhiti, the spiritual, mental, physical and whanau aspects of people are acknowledged and nurtured, unlike many work environments. As in any community or family, maintaining caring and supportive relationships is an everyday commitment. So we are exploring how can we grow this foundation, so that staff wellbeing is nurtured further and is sustained? This is an individual and a collective question.

It is a real privilege to be working with staff who have been so welcoming, and I am grateful for this opportunity. Rosie Bentley

Appendix 10

Summary of Group Dialogue on Wellbeing – 9th June at F and M's home

There is acknowledgement that staff wellbeing experiences dips and rises as in any life cycle eg the analogy use - seasons when fruit falls from the trees. The discussions on wellbeing have been a seed.......the beginnings of transformation, likened to the phoenix rising.

Staff members are on a spiritual path together with a shared goal of anthroposophy, based on individual freedom and collective responsibility for wellbeing of all. While there are strong roots of wellbeing and sense of community at Te Ra and Te Rawhiti, the energy given to work in Waldorf education requires similar levels of nourishment.

A question was asked – is it alright just to be here to do a job? That is a good question for each person to consider.

To find what is required to meet those levels of nourishment, we needed to explore the shadows.......what is unseen and sometimes unknown in ourselves and in Te Ra/Te Rawhiti. What we are learning

is that sometimes people feel a sense of aloneness, separation, and alienation and that there is a thirst to know each other more so that communication is enhanced.

On an individual level, getting to know each other better can happen through:

✿   Giving focused attention
✿   Listening compassionately and responding appropriately
✿   Consciously reaching out to others/touching/sharing
✿   Being welcoming
✿   Inquiring of others………do they want company or do they need space?

On a collective level, we can get to know each other better through:

✿   spending time at the beginning of each term looking back and looking forward
✿   strengthening links between school and kindergarten through flip days, coming to assembly, school coming into kindergarten
✿   having faculty in different spaces/rooms so that we get a feel for each other and our spaces
✿   sharing more deeply through staff biographies/autobiographies/temperaments at faculty meetings
✿   airing subjects at faculty meetings
✿   having puppet shows and other activities like the shepherds play that involve everyone
✿   having a wellbeing workshop
✿   ensuring that orientation of new staff enables them to know who to go to for support/information, what roles staff have, with processes expressed verbally and in written form
✿   information afternoon talks (can someone clarify this?)

J shared with us that in their Australian school, they have a social committee who are responsible for welcoming and mentoring staff, pastoral care, festivals, social events. What would be the strengths and drawbacks of a social committee for us?

While I am interpreting this document as well as I can as one member of this discussion, I invite you to contact me with any amendments that you want to make.

Arohanui
Rosie