

CYC-Online

e-journal of the International Child and Youth Care Network (CYC-Net)



**Contradictions
and Antagonisms**

**Relational
Conversations
and Explorations**

**Why Relationships
are left out of
Evaluations**

**A Journal for those who live or work
with Children and Young People**

Issue 227 / January 2018



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Ready, Set, Go!

James Freeman

“Bring a change of clothes and important things to the kitchen table.” That’s what I said to my kids when the possibility of an evacuation emerged in the late evening. Fires had surrounded our entire county. Every direction we looked there was a cloud of smoke rising. Some of it was white, which was a good sign. White smoke, as we learned growing up, means the brush on the hillsides was burning. But some was black. Black smoke is a sign that a structure (possibly someone’s home) was burning.

The fire has since grown to the largest in the history of our state. Over 1,000 structures were destroyed and thousands of homes evacuated.

In California we prepare for earthquakes and fires. It is normal to practice monthly earthquake drills in elementary school. ‘Drop, cover, and hold on’ is the standard procedure. More recently experts have identified the ‘triangle of life’. It’s the triangle-shaped space next to walls or large furniture created by falling debris where one can find safety in a severe earthquake. For wildfires, the mantra is ‘Ready, Set, Go!’. Ready your home by clearing brush and keeping the landscape fire retardant. Set yourself up by organizing belongings that are important, and be ready to go when the evacuation is ordered. It’s all familiar preparation when growing up in a region that is as dry and has the potential for severe winds as we do in southern California.

It’s happened before. Last time I had left town to drive a few hours north to facilitate a training day with CYC practitioners. Around mid-day Julie, my partner of over 20 years, called and asked, “What do you need?”. She was asking what I



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wanted from our home because the fire was approaching within sight (and feel) and was leaving not knowing if our home would be there when we returned.

As my friend, Andy Munoz, reminded me this morning, these past memories can resurface when we relive similar experiences. The day before I had looked at pictures with my kids of the burned landscape from the previous fire. They are young and (I am hopeful) are typically healthy kids. Yet, the memories are there to stay.

Over at our residential program, we were not only dealing with the typical program planning, but also staff and families who were affected by evacuated neighborhoods, cancelled school days, and the stress and fear of what the fires will do next with the presence of erratic and unpredictable winds. Over a dozen of our residential workers spent multiple nights wondering if their home would be standing the next morning or had an immediate family member experience the total loss of their home.

Every region across the world has it's dangers. It may not be earthquakes and fires, but may be floods, freezing conditions, lack of clean water, tornadoes, drought, or otherwise. Whatever your local potential tragedy may be, continue to be prepared. Plan ahead so that you can care for yourself and continue to care for those you care about. At the same time, don't forget to live in the moment. The only guarantee we have in life is the present moment. None of us have a promise of a future.

This month a few hundred CYC practitioners will be gathering in Ventura for the third CYC World Conference. The main gathering space for the conference is on the twelfth floor of the Crown Plaza hotel. Built in 1972, this historic building provides a beautiful overlook of the Ventura hillsides and the Channel Islands off the coast of California. Participants in the conference won't get to hike the beautiful hillside botanic gardens, as they were devoured by the fire. But perhaps the burned landscape will be a reminder of what so many lives would be like if our worldwide clan of CYC practitioners were not present and active in the lives of children, youth, and families each and every day.

Be thankful for your safety and lives,



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A Tribute to Brian Gannon

Merle Allsopp

This speech was given by Merle at Brian's memorial in October 2017.

As we trace the threads of all of our different relationships with Brian today, we all know and celebrate different facets of this most talented man ... Brian the musician, Brian the artist, Brian the writer, Brian the editor, Brian the publisher, Brian the mentor and Brian the friend.

But I would like to celebrate Brian Gannon, the father of the child and youth care profession in South Africa.

Since 1975 when the first conference gathered 100 people involved in residential care from across the country, and the National Association of Child Care Workers was officially started, the child and youth care profession has come a long, long way. We have over 10,000 child and youth care workers in the country, CYCWs must be registered with a statutory body, and they must undertake formal, nationally recognised qualifications. And the NACCW has just held its 21st Biennial Conference, the twentieth such event (after that initial visionary gathering) which is looked forward to by child and youth care workers across the country as an essential biennial professional inspirational injection.

I am not sure if this is what Brian and the other early founders envisaged those 42 years ago, but I do know for sure that it is hard to accurately articulate how central Brian was to initiating what is often called a child and youth care *movement* in South Africa, and how integral he was in the early development of the field in our country.



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I was fortunate enough to meet Brian in 1981, just after he had initiated the first formal training course in child and youth care work. I had met clever people before then, but Brian was truly in a league of his own. That was because in him was combined a fearsome intellect, superb oratory skills, loads of charisma and an interest in ordinary people.

Brian taught child and youth care work in a wild and delicious manner.

He peeled away illusions to allow people to see the world differently – through the eyes of a hurting child or parent. He did for so many people what (I think) we all really want – he illuminated a true understanding of another’s reality, and helped people to really connect with each other.

Brian was a gifted teacher. He was able to take a modest, humble and sometimes distorted offering by a student and find in it something valuable and profound. Most good teachers can do this. What was different about Brian was that he did it so unaffectedly, so sincerely – and *all the time*. The elements of this extraordinary capacity are qualities, not skills to be taught – compassion, empathy and a fundamental belief in people’s capacity to grow and change. But in Brian, added to these qualities was the sense of timing and the story-telling skill of a stand-up comedian!

There is no doubt in my mind that the NACCW could become what it is today because people in child and youth care work were drawn together around Brian.

And if one looks back at the organisational records, it is obvious that he had a very strong vision for the organisation. The conference proceedings of 1975 show that a total of 98 conference resolutions were taken – so Brian formed the NACCW with the express vision of changing the world! Further testimony to his visionary capacity is the fact that the NACCW constitution that was born out of that first conference is still largely unchanged today.

I recall in those early NACCW days how hard-working Brian was. He loved to work. He loved child and youth care work. And he was very, very generous with his time. I recall him helping child and youth care workers with their assignments



on a Sunday, and how he would attend meeting after meeting to help children's homes to do the work they were doing better.

Added to all of this talent, Brian was able to write beautifully. His writing is fluid, light, easy to read, and at the same time, often profound. In the local journal he started on a single sheet of paper, now known as *Child and Youth Care Work*, we still regularly reprint his early writings because of their enduring relevance and value. It was that publication that kept the threads of the NACCW together across time and space, and his commitment to this work is apparent in the stylishness, attractiveness and readability of those first two decades of journals.

I think, I don't know for sure, that Brian did not care for the strife – the politics – that inevitably comes with trying to keep a large number of people cooperating across competing interests, and he moved out of the NACCW, to focus his interests on CYC-Net. This endeavour provided the South African field with key ingredients for growing academically and professionally – access to child and youth care work literature, and an opportunity to connect with a bigger child and youth care world. Brian had, in the 80s, opened a portal for the local field into the developed child and youth care world, and his work on CYC-Net widened that access, and helped the local field to be seen as committed players in the international child and youth care work arena.

Some time ago I interviewed Brian during some research I was doing on the NACCW, and typically self-effacing and firm as he could at once be, he refused to be drawn on his centrality in the development of the organisation. He brushed aside my allusion to his charismatic leadership with “oh no...once you start things they take on a life of their own...other people come in and they bring their skills and the organisation gets going”.

On the last occasion when I saw him in the nursing home I tried – for the umpteenth time – to link him definitively to the achievements of the NACCW. During that visit he was not always himself, but on this he responded clearly, characteristically and firmly as only Brian could, “Oh no, it was everybody – it was everybody”.



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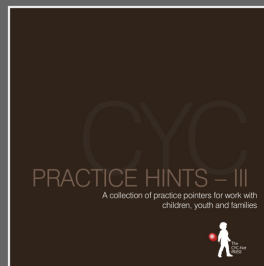
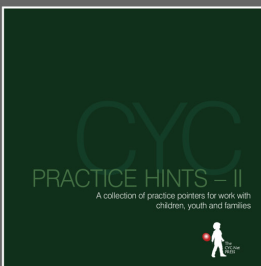
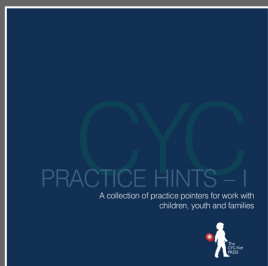
But Brian... without you nobody would have been there... there would not have been an 'everybody'...

We give thanks for, and celebrate the life of Brian Gannon, the founder of the NACCW and father of the child and youth care profession in South Africa.

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AVAILABLE FROM THE CYC-Net PRESS

A collection of pointers written by Brian Gannon
for work with children, youth and families



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Contradictions and Antagonisms

Hans Skott-Myhre

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I was listening to one of my favorite radio programs the other day, *Fresh Air* with Terry Gross. Terry had an interview with Father Greg Boyle who runs a gang intervention program in East Los Angeles called Homeboy Industries. The program is comprised of a number of businesses that hire and train gang members who want to get out of the life. The businesses are run by employers who had belonged to rival gangs. The thinking is, that if former gang rivals have to work together and set aside their gang affiliation, they will find ways to work towards the common good. According to the interview, “It’s now the largest gang intervention and re-entry program in the U.S.”

I was really taken by what Father Boyle had to say about the work he has been doing over the past thirty years. I recognized it as what we would call child and youth care or youth work. It struck me, that in his description of the work he does, there are principles of CYC work that appear to be deeply imbedded in the philosophy of the program and its development over time.

For example, in a recent column here, I proposed that community based CYC work would include the actual members of the community serving in leadership positions in the program or agency. Such work would draw on the expressed needs and the desires of the community to drive program development. As I noted above, Homeboy Industries has former gang members in leadership positions across the agency. It is overtly and intentionally driven by what the organization hears as the needs and desires of the community it serves. A case in point is the fact that the agency arose in response to hearing young people in the community



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say that if they could get employment, the pull of gang life wouldn't be as powerful. The originating motto was that "nothing stops a bullet like a job."

So, Homeboy Industries was developed to create those jobs. But they didn't stop there. They kept paying attention to what was happening to those young people who got jobs. They began to notice that the young people did pretty well initially once they were employed, until something went wrong or became contentious in the workplace. When this happened, "they would unravel . . . and they would go right back to gang life or go back to prison." (Fresh Air)

Of course, this unravelling could be interpreted as resistance or as a need for greater discipline and structure on the job sites. The conclusion could have been drawn that, for some of these young people, the pull of the street was just too seductive. Perhaps these young people simply have neurological deficits, such as inadequate impulse control based in incomplete development of the frontal lobe leading to impulsive and self-destructive behavior.

However, none of these explanations were taken up. Instead, it was hypothesized that maybe the suffering and trauma in the lives of these young people made it difficult for them to manage conflict and uncertainty. As Father Boyle put it in the interview,

So, we kind of altered in an essential way that if people don't have a foundational, fundamental healing, you know, then it's going to be really difficult for them to navigate their lives. And so, we altered our kind of fundamental stance from just finding a job for every gang member or employing them with us but also trying to have them come to terms with whatever suffering they've been through and trauma.

Of course, this attention to the context of young people's lives, as central to understanding their responses to the world, is fundamental to our thinking about working with young people in CYC. How we manage suffering and trauma in our work is centered in an ecological understanding of young people as situated



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relationally. However, in some programs, the discovery that young people have experienced severe and ongoing trauma in their lives can sometimes lead to requirements that traumatized young people get professional counseling, psychotherapy, psychiatric intervention or even medication. The approach at Homeboy Industries is a bit different. They follow a relational model in which they institute what they term “an irresistible culture of tenderness.” They conceive of their programs as spaces of containment. As father Boyle put it in the interview,

And they all come with, you know, kind of chronic, toxic stress that's attached to them like a big, old heavy backpack. And if they can find relief then they no longer have to actually operate out of survivor brain, and then they can find our place as something of a sanctuary, and they can come to terms with what was done to them and also what they did.

The programmatic impetus is on healing not discipline. The drive is to create sanctuary where pain can be transformed rather than continually transmitted and perpetuated. The approach is to focus on breaking the cycle of trauma through relationally producing a sense of sanctuary that could be transferred into the daily lived patterns beyond the program. In a term, trauma is not seen as located within the individual, but is seen contextually and collectively. Trauma and suffering is something in which we are all complicit, but also something to which we can be accountable, through the provision of sanctuary and interrelational tenderness.

In the interview, Terry Gross inquires as to how this culture of tenderness works in an employment context. Don't employees need to be disciplined for behavioral infractions? Father Boyle says,

We don't get tripped up so much by behavior. Even gang violence itself is a language. You want to - well, what language is it speaking? You know, it's not about the flying of bullets. It's about a lethal absence of hope. So, let's address the despair. And the same thing is with behavior.



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This doesn't mean that all young people make it in the employment context of Homeboy Industries the first time around. But, the job of the program staff is to instill a sense of hope that they will be there long term for young people, so that they can have repeated opportunities to succeed. The focus is not on the negative behaviors leading to being asked to leave but on the possibility of returning.

And once that kind of steady harmonizing love infiltrates the place where they show up every day and they kind of have a palpable sense of no matter what-ness, that these folks are even in my corner even if they have to let me go - in fact the people, a lot of people kind of relapse in that sense. And homies come back. You know, third time is the charm sometimes. Then it takes because it takes what it takes. People have to be responsive and fully cooperative in the healing. If it's too hard for them, well, come back when you're ready to do this. And I would say they almost always do, which is a sign that somehow they got a dose of something that they want more of.

The interview goes on to talk about the role guns play in gang violence and how to deal with the death of the young people they serve. Father Boyle talks about the struggle involved in having both victims of gun violence and perpetrators within the program and the community. He describes the compassion and the love for both those killed and those who have killed. There is also personal reflection on the role of faith and prayer in Father Boyle's own lived experience of the work.

So, I finished listening to the interview and quite frankly I was quite inspired. I couldn't wait to share the interview with my students and colleagues. But then, I started to reflect on what has been called the erasure of certain peoples or perspectives from our work. I began to think about the recent column here, by Kiaras Gharabaghi, on whiteness as a form of erasure in CYC scholarship. And I began to wonder about the erasure of both peoples and perspectives in the Homeboy story. I wondered, where were the women and the queer community?



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So, I began to look on the website. I did find some recognition of home girls, but the descriptions of women's roles appeared to be very traditionally situated within a patriarchal discourse (home girl cafe with a picture of a young woman serving food or the centering of the father as central to the stability of the family for example). I was unable to find any mention of the queer community at all. That group of young people was entirely erased as though there were never any gay kids in gangs in east L.A. These erasures are not obvious on first glance and because of this I would argue they are even more dangerous and powerful. In looking across the rather extensive media portrayals of Homeboy Industries no one seems to have noticed these erasures or commented on them. In the current media environment, I would suggest that this is actually somewhat surprising. In the case of *Fresh Air* it was truly astonishing.

Perhaps even more surprising, was the absence of any political analysis of poverty and violence. There was no reference to racial profiling or to issues pertaining to immigration or community activism or resistance. This struck me, in particular, as in stark contrast to the documentary *Flying Cut Sleeves* about gang life in New York in the late twentieth century. In that documentary, gangs were able to move beyond intergang violence through becoming engaged in overt political advocacy on behalf of their communities. In the Homeboy narrative, there was no mention of the complex colonial relationship between the Catholic church, which father Boyle represents, and the disenfranchised and marginalized communities in California. The agency story was one that erased the political dimensions of struggle and contestation. That story was replaced by the dominant narrative of work both in the sense of a job and in the sense of working on one's self to overcome trauma.

It is Marx who points out that all systems are inherently riddled with contradictions and antagonisms. He suggests that it is the discovery and recognition of these limitations and struggles that opens the door to significant shifts in social configuration or in another term revolutionary change. What struck me in reflecting on Homeboy Industries and the work of father Boyle, was that one could



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do really excellent and compelling work that meets many of the key characteristics of CYC work and yet still manage to participate in significant erasure of the “other.” That one could be tender and compassionate on a one to one basis with the young people we serve and do significant social and cultural violence at a broader level. I think this is one of the most powerful contradictions and antagonisms we face in CYC and one that ethically we must wrestle with if we are to truly provide sanctuary with a fully “irresistible culture of tenderness.”

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Relational Conversations and Explorations

Jack Phelan

We describe the essential piece of our practice as the ability to work relationally with people who are conditioned by profound negative life experiences to resist and reject any invitation to become connected. Even as I write this, I am struck by how daunting a journey we are challenging ourselves to embark upon.

Every person who attempts to become an effective CYC practitioner has a unique combination of attachment experiences in their own life, fears of rejection and loving connections with others, a temperament that works or is toxic to certain other temperaments, etc., which he/she brings with him/herself into every encounter. How then, do we as a field create the supervision and training necessary to develop skilled practitioners and build an ongoing process of refining and enhancing the relational capacity of every practitioner over the course of a life-long career?

I believe that relational conversations and explorations, initiated by skilled supervisors, mentors and teachers, can be a useful process. I would like to describe some ideas that I have about this focus on relational capacity and how it can be delivered in team discussions, classrooms and during individual supervision.

Residential staff team meetings can predictably focus on what went wrong, which behaviors are most problematic, and what external control techniques are needed to address these issues. The discussion is focused externally, on what other people are doing and the requirements of the program. Relational programs (which really should include most programs) can expect each staff member to



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discuss the quality of his/her relationship with specific youth and to reflect on why it is that way, and what can be done to enhance it. Different staff people will compare the strength and quality of the relationship they have with a specific youth and create ways to build capacity in that youth through being more or less involved in relationship with him. The notion that we all have to act the same or else we won't be "consistent" is no longer a legitimate rationale.

Family support programs are important places to work relationally and staff members can describe the differing levels of relational energy between themselves and each member of a family, reflecting collaboratively on the dynamics that exist. Team meetings and individual supervisory sessions can be used very effectively to explore relational practice.

Teachers in classrooms or trainers in workshops can use relational knowledge to model the kinds of interactions that build closeness, such as knowing the student's names, creating a belief in each person that their learning is important to you and that you see each of them as capable and important.

Supervisors can resist conversations that focus on problem behavior and ask relational questions that redirect the agenda in supervision. Comments like, "Describe your relationship with that person", and then asking, "How would that person describe their relationship with you?" can become more useful in building capacity than the typical problem-solving agenda. Supervisors can begin to have more flexible and close boundaries with staff who are ready to practice relationally, using the supervisory session to discuss the relationship that actually exists between the staff member and herself.

These are just a few ideas that can support a process of building relational capacity in practitioners across a few domains. The ability to create this learning assumes that the supervisors, teachers, trainers and mentors are already skillful relational practitioners, which may need to be the capacity building focus before we get too far ahead of ourselves.



Moving on Into a New World

Kiaras Gharabaghi

Another year has started; it will be 12 months long, feature 52 weeks, 365 days and endless moments. In Canada alone, about 5000 child and youth care practitioners will graduate from post-secondary institutions. Some will land great, permanent jobs in residential care, day treatment, hospitals, schools and the community. Others will do shifts in four or five different places with limited job security and a moderate income. Some young people will experience positive things in their lives, some won't. We will continue to debate professionalization, regulation, the best way to deliver child and youth care curriculum, the undervaluing of our field, the differences between our practice and that of other professions, the merits and problems associated with evidence-based practices, and many other topics. And then it will be 2019, and we start all over again.

There is both comfort and frustration in the routine of our field. There is comfort because through that routine, we have built communities of like-minded people, with similar values, commitments and approaches to being with young people. At the global conference in Ventura, and then the National/International Conference in Vancouver, our local communities will come together and celebrate our global connections. This will be fun, meaningful, and useful. But there is also frustration, because we have all been here before. Last year, the year before, ten years before that. I am not suggesting that nothing is changing; things do change – we have today far more nuanced and complex articulations of what our field is, what relational practice is, how to work in the moment, how to engage life-space than we have ever had before. Thanks to the work of many friends and colleagues, we are making progress. But that progress is not really reflected in the everyday reality of young people or of practitioners engaged with young people. The former



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still find themselves largely voiceless, subject to the decisions of others, often facing quite abusive and catastrophic circumstances, and thoroughly disempowered in their way of being in the world. The latter, the practitioners, also still find themselves wondering how they belong, to whom they belong, who does and does not belong, and how their work can ever be recognized for its true value and meaning in societal contexts that are moving in the opposite direction of what child and youth care is and wants to be.

And so one has to ask: Is there anything going on these days that will disrupt the routine? What signs are there that we will move beyond our fairly white, fairly middle class, fairly institutional and colonial way of being with others? How do we interrupt the increasing sterilization of curriculum in post-secondary institutions? How do we stay true to our foundations as a field that sees meaning in the everyday moments spent with young people when we are also a field that has not yet figured out how to mitigate its own contributions to the impositions of power, of racism, of ableism, of heterosexist thinking and of institutional hegemony in its everyday practice?

Sometimes I wonder why we seem endlessly stuck in cyclical processes that seem to only perpetuate two things – first, our complicity in the very things we criticize the systems of child and youth services for, including the systematic process of giving value to entirely normative and ideologically predetermined procedures; and second, our well-intended and often very effective everyday practices with young people only to see those young people encounter the rest of the world that is decidedly not relational, that is not centered on a respectful contemplation of Self, and that seems to steadfastly refuse a reflective approach to the use of power.

This year, I want to focus my columns a little, in the hopes of earning a few comrades willing to contemplate something a little more disruptive than the nuanced development of child and youth care theory. Specifically, I want to use each column starting in February to consider the implications of a single dramatic change in the context of our practice. Such change could be about the institutions



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in which we do our work, or it could be about how we learn to do our work, or it could even be about doing our work under entirely different models of service provision. What all the columns will have in common is a starting point that changes everything. I think this is necessary to find a pathway for a better child and youth care field, a better community, and a better global society. It is also a way of approaching change not through critique but through disruptive innovation.

So, you may choose to ignore my column entirely this year if you are not up for some mind-busting, creative, imaginative but also inherently revolutionary articulation of a new world. Or you could participate by getting in touch and talking further about some of what I am contemplating. To give you a sense of where I want to go this year, here are a few of the topics I will engage:

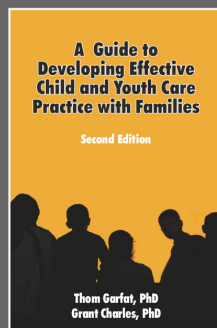
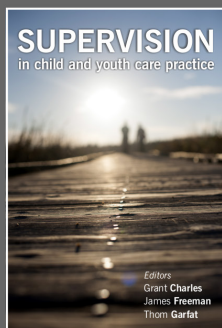
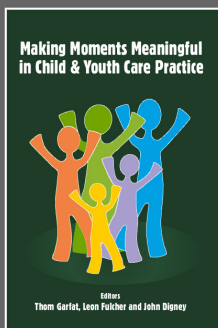
- Imagine a world with no schools; not a world with no education, but rather with approaches to education that render the long standing practice of jamming hundreds of young people into a building and putting a teacher in a position of absolute power is replaced with a totally different way of exploration, learning and locating oneself in relation to others and the world
- Let us never talk of treatment again; let us separate entirely from the world of expert-driven thought control and create instead a field driven entirely by the desire to facilitate autonomy and community as the basis for meaningful relational practices;
- What if we rebuilt our field entirely on the history of intellectual thought and practice-based approaches of those subjected to marginalization and/or objectified as commodities in the development of colonial, neo-colonial and post-colonial social relations? A field that prioritizes solutions driven by lived experiences over truth borne out of privilege?
- Imagine we stopped trying to become regulated by government and instead developed collective strength and power to such a degree that we could regulate government? Sort of like the corporate elites? Could we learn something from them?



These are just some of the topics I want explore in the coming year. I think it is important to have a space for disruptive thinking. Child and youth care is a wonderful field, but it has not yet reached its potential. This year, I want to do more to push those of you willing, and to be pushed back by those of you not willing.

KIARAS GHARABAGHI is the director of the School of Child and Youth Care at Ryerson University and a regular writer for CYC-Net. He is the author of the chapter 'External Models of Supervision' in the recently released book, *Supervision in Child and Youth Care Practice* (Charles, Freeman & Garfat, 2016). The book is available at <http://press.cyc-net.org/books/supervision.aspx>

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Why Relationships are left out of Evaluations

Doug Magnuson

Because relational practice is so important to Canadian writers about CYC and to Canadian CYC higher education programs, most of which include some variation of relational practice in their self-description, we might expect to find relationships in most practice evaluations and in much of the research. Two measurable components of relationships should appear – a process, activity, and experience that is a practiced skill set – and also an outcome; the relationships have qualities that are in themselves the goal of practice.

Yet we rarely do. It seems the most important reason is simple: we do not measure it. Benjamin (2012) identified four “relational practices” performed by front-line practitioners: listening, naming, challenging, and linking, and then did a content analysis of 10 evaluation guides, looking for these four relational practices. Most did not include any. Instead,

... current outcome measurement frameworks direct nonprofits to track program activities completed (e.g., parenting education workshops completed) and the outcomes resulting from those program activities (e.g., parents support children with school work, delinquency rates decline). In contrast, accounts of frontline work show that nonprofit staff start by building a relationship with the person in front of them. This relational work is necessary for staff to adjust programs and strategies to better meet the goals and needs of the individual; to determine possible



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courses of action in light of the individual's circumstances and capacity; and to mobilize outside resources in support of the individual's goal (p. 432).

Benjamin says this is the reason front-line practitioners are often not interested in evaluations of their programs. Still, according to Benjamin three-quarters of agencies conduct their own evaluations, and if the non-measurement of relationships is a problem they ought to be doing it. Yet too often they do not. Why?

I have a few hypotheses based on my own experience. One is a result of the availability heuristic: we measure the things that are easiest—most available—instead of the things that are important. This is simply a variation of Benjamin's point. Agencies and agency staff are busy and often driven by deadlines. Related to this is that funders often ask for a chronicle of activities provided. Too often agencies stop with the minimum requirement rather than also including those experiences that are important. It would help if funders would support it. For decades evaluation experts have been recommending that funders give agencies a standard percentage of their budget dedicated solely to evaluation, and the recommendations have varied from 5-20 percent. Funders rarely deliver this.

A second reason is that there is a myth in CYC and in Social Work that relationships cannot be measured. This is simply not true. Many researchers in other fields are doing it. Part of our problem is the belief that every measurement has to capture every aspect of "relationship" or it is not valid. Benjamin operationalized four important elements of relationships, and they are measurable. There are other dimensions of relationships important in other contexts. They too can be measured. We also too often mistakenly believe that if measurement is not perfect it is not valid. Instead, the point of measurement is to "reduce uncertainty" (Hubbard, 2014) and errors in judgment. It does not have to be exact. Further, too often we foreclose on methods of documenting relationship, especially long interviews, which are expensive and time consuming. We can use observation,



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brief interviews, photos, documents, self-reports, self-anchored and standardized scales, ranking, and others.

There are other, more politically complicated reasons for the missing relationship variable. One is that many, many CYC programs are short-term supports and interventions, and relationships may not be important or relationships may be important but are not possible in a limited time. Another is that we have a classist language for youth. This is a bit of a simplification, but I am not sure it is much: Middle-class youth get relationships and long-term supports, and this happens in arts/culture, sports, religion, neighbourhood, and at school. Other youth get activity, prevention, intervention, labels (e.g., “at-risk”), skills, and harm reduction. This is a problem.

Front-line practitioners can evaluate the qualities of their relationships. There are tools and resources, and using them could be a core skill of practice. There is reason for hope and many opportunities. There is research about the importance of relationships. There are ways to measure relationships. There are theories about how relationships work in our own literature and in the literature in other fields. Benjamin’s work is a nice example of how the gaps between these can be closed.

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A Brief Background to Children's Rights

Tara Collins

The term of children's rights may connote various ideas in people's minds. As a result, following November's introduction, this column provides a brief general background to children's rights in order to ground future discussions on various topics, issues and populations. It outlines human rights generally and then focuses on the United Nations (UN, 1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), as well as some pertinent related issues.

There is a long history of the concept of rights with various sources and theories. In essence, rights describe what it means to be human and according to Galtung (1994), define the "rock bottom of human existence" (p. 2). Hart (1991) explains:

"the concept of human rights seems to express a shared sense of the natural, inherent, and inalienable rights of human beings, emanating from the intrinsic property of persons and given philosophical, social and political policy support throughout history..." (p. 55)

Traditionally, international law largely focussed on inter-state issues, primarily such "hard" issues between states as conflict, diplomatic immunity, and trade. But after World War II, various legal developments took place to affirm human rights. Consequently, human rights exist, as international law outlines, in order to recognize "the inherent dignity" and "the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family" (as cited in Collins and Gervais, 2016, pp. 170-171).

The human rights of children, or children's rights, are primarily enunciated in the CRC, that the UN adopted on November 20, 1989 (which is a date that is



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celebrated annually as Universal Children's Day around the world). The CRC has 196 states parties around the world that have ratified/acceded to it, with the only exception of the United States of America. Regional and international organizations have produced other valuable instruments that elaborate children's rights in specific regions including African Children's Charter (Organization of African States, 1990), or to address such specific areas or issues as discrimination in education (UNESCO, 1960). Due to its scope and significance around the world, the CRC tends to garner the most attention in children's rights dialogue.

In CRC article 1, a child is defined as "every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier." (It is noted however that many adolescents may have difficulty with being described or labelled as a child.) The CRC is commonly described as having three "Ps" of rights: provision, protection and participation that are span the typical categories of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. As Marjatta Bardy (2000) explains: provision relates to the sharing and distributing resources and services to support children in their lives; protection ensures that children can avoid harm from certain activities or influences; and participation involves the opportunity to express oneself and have those views be given "due weight" by adults in decision-making. The CRC has four influential general principles, which are rights in themselves as well as important in informing the interpretation and implementation of all other rights. These principles are non-discrimination, best interests of the child, maximum survival and development and views of the child/child participation (articles 2, 3, 6, and 12 respectively). As Badjan explains:

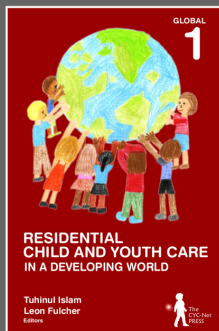
"These four principles contribute to a general attitude towards children and their rights. They are based on the notion that children too are equal as human beings. ...How do we grant children equal value and at the same time guarantee them the necessary protection? The answer lies in the implementation of the four general principles. Together they form



nothing less than a new attitude toward children. They give an ethical and ideological dimension to the convention.”

There are numerous pertinent issues that relate to children’s rights. For instance, despite the success of children’s rights around the world, there is a lot of “discomfort”, as Mark Smith (2007) enunciates, and several critiques that exist for various reasons. As examples, there is the concern that children’s rights conflict with the family, give too much power to young people, and that they are culturally inappropriate or “Western”. It is not possible to identify or respond comprehensively to all these and other issues in this brief piece but there will be opportunities to engage further in future columns. Without dismissing these perspectives, for now, suffice it to say that children’s rights are simply about respecting children and youth. Children’s rights depend upon family, caregivers and government to implement them. They are not zero-sum in relation to adults. And they have been enthusiastically developed, advocated and implemented around the world.

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There is a tension in the world of international child protection where children's rights language is used to reflect or impose certain ideas of what a "proper" or "normal" childhood should look like but it is stressed that this is not a problem of children's rights. Rather, the issue is the interpretation of children's rights. Consequently, there is vigorous debate occurring among researchers and practitioners in order to better support young people in their practices.

While it is common in many educational efforts to automatically connect rights with responsibilities, this practice should be challenged and resisted. Rights are what is accrued or due to a person by virtue of being a human being. If rights are tied with being responsible, they can more easily be ignored or dismissed when a young person is deemed "irresponsible" or "unworthy". All young people are entitled to be respected. As Child and Youth Care practitioners (CYCPs) know well, certain behaviours that are deemed problematic should never define a young person, but rather be understood and responded to as appropriate in relation to that person's context, relationships and realities.

Moreover, the CRC and children's rights more generally, should not be dismissed because they are a part of international law. Children's rights are not just for lawyers since they have more significance beyond the legal sphere. While rights are typically incorporated into legislation and, for instance, residential care policies, it is important to note that these obligations are outlined and implemented in order to respect these rights. Yet, due to power relations, they can easily be ignored. However, the question remains about whether children even know about these rights in a meaningful way, much less be able to have them respected, which highlights the critical role of CYCPs. Hence, there is a need to expand understanding of children's rights using a multidisciplinary approach beyond the original legal framework.

This column will be a regular attempt to support this understanding. The aim is that all those concerned with young people can appreciate the relevance of children's rights in their relationships and practice with children and youth and potentially influence understanding, attitudes, and behaviour as well as advance



respect of young people. To be clear, as James Anglin (1992) identified, children's rights are about relationship and that in front-line work, "personal or individual advocacy becomes, or needs to become, part of the very fabric and being of each and every child and youth care worker. In a very real sense, every interaction we have with a child is an opportunity for advocacy" (p. 3).

In closing, I turn to the words of young Chelsea Howard (as cited in UNICEF, 2009): "We say we value children – but what do our actions and decisions reflect?" (p. 24).

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Supervision – A Matter of Leadership or Management?

Luke Carty

Abstract

Child and Youth Care Supervision is a vital process for the growth and development of child and youth care practitioners, yet is not always practiced effectively, if at all (Garfat & Fulcher, 2012). Despite the acknowledgement that effective supervision is closely linked to the core concepts of effective child and youth care practice, many supervisors struggle to engage in effective supervision practices (Charles, 2016). This paper will introduce the concepts of both leadership and management as a basis for a further exploration into different supervision styles. The similarities and differences between the concepts of leadership and management will be analyzed and the tension caused by the differences will form the basis for an explanation as to why supervision is often focused on management processes rather than leadership processes. This paper proposes that an effective supervisor should be focused on leadership traits rather than management during the supervisory encounter to encourage growth in the child and youth care practitioners they supervise.

Introduction

Effective child and youth care (CYC) supervision is acknowledged as crucial to the growth of child and youth care practitioners, yet it is practiced inconsistently (Gharabaghi, Trocme, & Newman, 2016). A review of the discussion board on CYC-Net shows a great deal of frustration amongst novice and experienced Child and Youth Care practitioners (CYCPs) about the lack of professional clinical



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supervision by a qualified professional. Many CYCPs within the educational milieu receive no supervision from a qualified CYCP, often relying on an allied profession such as teaching or an educational assistant (Gharabaghi, 2011a).

When supervision does occur, it is often focused on the minute tasks of the work, and acts more as a process to get the worker ‘in trouble’ or ensure that they are up to date on the most recent policies and procedures (Kavanaugh, 2016). Effective supervision should be focused on the growth of the CYCP as a working professional. It should be a space of relational safety, encouragement and accountability (Garfat, 2015). While there is a great deal of literature on the merits of effective supervision, yet it is another issue on child and youth care that is happening in a theoretical frame but not in practice. As a way to address some of these concerns Garfat, Fulcher and Freeman (2016) proposed a daily-life events approach to supervision. This would allow supervisors to intervene in the moment, making the most of the limited amount of time they have to supervise. This also allows the supervision method to most closely relate to the core characteristics of child and youth care (Freeman & Garfat, 2014).

Much of the literature explains that relational child and youth care practice provides a foundation for effective supervision (Charles, 2016, Garfat, Fulcher, & Freeman, 2016). As Charles (2016) outlines, many of the skills learned as front-line practitioners can be directly translated into our practice as supervisors. As CYCPs, we are taking a needs-based approach with the young people in care. This needs-based approach can translate to managing of an adult staff team as well. This stands in contrast to many other professions where the technical skills of the job may not translate into managerial roles. Given this natural transition from front-line skills to supervisory skills, the question then must be asked - if CYCPs are in the best position to become effective supervisors, why are there so many instances of ineffective supervisory practices and experiences (Kavanaugh, 2016)? The answer could lie in the concepts of leadership and management. When an effective worker is promoted to a managerial position, they may feel a pull to focus on management and administrative tasks than leadership and supervisory tasks. Gharabaghi (2011b)



stresses that CYCPs must not abandon their core values when moving onto managerial positions. There is a concern that the act of management is pragmatic by nature, causing a challenge for a front-line worker to abandon some of their core values and beliefs (Gharabaghi, 2011b).

In reaction to these issues regarding effective supervision, this paper will explore the concepts of leadership and management in child and youth care practice and how they might apply to child and youth care supervision. This paper will explore the theoretical tenets of leadership and management, and discuss both their areas of congruence and conflict.

Leadership Theories and Styles

The term leadership itself has been critiqued as being inherently unethical as it implies that there must be followers (Seel, 2014). These followers may be manipulated and asked to do tasks that they don't feel comfortable with. Leadership at its worst is a method used to control through power, this is a common theme in much of the literature in the early 20th century (Northouse, 2012). As the theory of leadership evolved, it focused more on influence and how an individual acts within a group.

Leadership has also been a difficult concept to describe. There are two dominant categories of leadership descriptions, being *trait* or *process* (Northouse, 2012). Trait leadership assumes that individuals are born with certain traits, which make them natural leaders. This description of leadership can lead to issues of racism and sexism along with other traits or characteristics out of our control such as height and weight. This definition does not fit well with CYCP strength-based beliefs, as the leader is simply assigned based on his or her traits.

Process leadership, describes leadership as a process which can be both taught and learned. It is a more interactional description of leadership, in that both parties contribute to the leadership process (Northouse, 2012). This description more closely aligns with child and youth care belief that there is ability in every person; it simply needs to be fostered and encouraged. This description also fits with modern



definitions of supervision, in that supervision is seen as an interactional process where both parties can learn about themselves. This approach replaces the top-down authoritarian method of imposing beliefs and values.

Specific to human services organizations, Schmid (2006) has studied leadership styles and broke them down into four quadrants. The two questions Schmid (2006) asked about leadership style: is the leadership role task-oriented or people-oriented? Is the leadership role internally-oriented or externally-oriented? This presents a common dilemma for the program manager, who is often a middle manager. Their role is to support their front-line staff, while at the same time they are accountable to their own manager. An effective supervisor has to be nimble and explore the four quadrants of effective leadership.

Figure 1: Types of Leadership and Patterns of Management

Task-oriented – internal focus	Task-oriented – external focus
People-oriented – internal focus	People-oriented – external focus

Adapted from: Schmid (2006)

In the case of the traditional front-line supervisor, they need to be flexible to meet all these needs of leadership. There are times where they need to be internally focus and people-oriented, especially during team-building activities or if there is a crisis within the CYC team. There will also be times where the supervisor needs to be task-oriented and externally focused. This could be during a period of licensing, where the supervisor needs to accomplish a certain number of tasks in order to satisfy an external auditor.

From a CYC perspective, Reinsilber (2002) proposes that despite all the different studies of leadership, that any study begins with oneself. This aligns with the emphasis on the use of self in child and youth care practice. If we know ourselves well, then we are able to help others more effectively (Garfat & Charles,



2007). Supervisory leadership is an act of exerting a positive influence on the daily performance of others.

Freeman (2016) explores the servant leadership model, in which supervisors measure their effectiveness based on the growth of the workers that they lead. He proposes placing the needs of others before oneself, and serving others as the priority of any leader or supervisor. This re-orientation of the concept of leadership, that is, the leader as a server to his followers, can provide a supervisor a new frame of reference in which to judge their effectiveness. By creating a culture of servitude, the workers will feel cared for and this will filter down to the young people and families in the program.

Management

With this abundance of theoretical and practical knowledge about leadership, the question must be asked - why is supervision not being carried out effectively in the field? It would appear that much of the conceptualization of leadership lines up with effective supervision. Perhaps it is a larger structural matter, or a focus on management rather than leadership.

Management is similar to leadership in some ways, both terms focus on influence of the leader on group dynamics and behaviour. It is interesting to note that the term 'management' is a relatively new term and came about during the industrialization of modern society (Northouse, 2012). With the creation of large organizations there was a need for order and control, so levels of management were created. The main function of management is to produce order and consistency. Northouse (2012) lists several of the functions of management to include planning and budgeting, organizing and staffing, controlling and problem solving. While these are all important functions in an organization, they are not functions, which allow a supervisor to help a young worker grow and develop. They correspond to Phelan (2016) levels of development, as closer to a level one supervisor. These are the functions that a level one supervisor would focus on to ensure their own safety and consistency.



This focus on management processes may be the root of why there is a dearth of effective CYC supervision in the field. The middle manager is focused on order and consistency, which runs in contrast to leadership, which is focused on change and movement. One of the primary goals of CYC supervision is the growth and change of the CYCP, which cannot be achieved with a management focus.

This contrast between the purpose of management and the purpose of leadership could be the root cause of poor supervision experiences for a large amount of CYCPs in the field (Kavanaugh, 2016). An effective supervisor needs to work on balancing out their management and leadership roles within an organization, and likely swing towards leadership rather than management. A forward-thinking organization would rename the position program *leader* rather than program *manager*. A supervisor focused on management tasks would lead to an environment of order and control. Whereas, a supervisor focused on leadership tasks would create an environment of support and inspiration. This support would then lead to autonomy and a sense of mastery for the front-line CYCP.

Conclusion

While the roles of management are essential for a functioning organization, many of these functions do not apply to the supervisory encounter. When engaged in a supervisory encounter, a supervisor must focus on the functions of leadership rather than management. Supervision should be a time to encourage and provoke change rather than focus on consistency and organization. Given the hierarchical nature of many children's mental health agencies, it is easy for supervisors to fall into the pattern of management rather than leadership. The CYC profession needs supervisors who are willing to take a risk and be true leaders.

Freeman (2016) discusses a piece of seminal leadership work by Middleman and Rhodes (1985). "(Leaders) create excitement in the workplace and seek out risk and danger, especially where the opportunities and rewards seem high." (Middleman & Rhodes, 1985, p. 78-79 as cited in Freeman, 2016). This quote provides an ideal for a child and youth care supervisor to strive towards in



providing supervision. Unfortunately, effective management does not seek out terms like risk and danger. However, in the field of child and youth care, we recognize that in order to grow both children and young workers need to be exposed to challenges.

“Leaders see problems as opportunities for turning failures into successes. They inspire others, attempt to produce change and even encourage and provoke change.” (Middleman & Rhodes, 1985, p. 78-79 as cited in Freeman, 2016). This quote also inspires, but is rarely seen in child and youth care supervision practice. In our increasingly litigious work environment, failures are seen as liabilities rather than as a learning experience for young CYCPs. The concept of safety is stressed and little room for error is allowed to a young worker. In practice, change is not often encouraged and provoked by a supervisor. It is safer to focus on management tasks, which you can control than to cause change, which may upset the staff team. However, change is an essential component of growth and must be encouraged in all supervisory encounters.

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Living Life Today

Brian Gannon

So many of the admonitions and corrections we offer to young people have to do with their futures. "You have to learn how to ..." , "One day you are going to have to ..." or "If you don't get good grades this year ..." Our message seems to be that childhood and youth are no more than periods of preparation for adulthood. Adulthood, in this view, is seen as the ambition and fulfilment of kids' lives.

Yes, it is true that we learn from one stage of development things which will be useful in succeeding stages. In fact we know that later stages are often tougher when we have not gained minimal learning and skills during the "work" of earlier stages. But there is no universal checklist on which we have to get 100% perfect grades before we can be admitted to the next stage. "Sorry, you cannot be enrolled in Late Adolescence 101 because you have done a lousy job of your previous grades!"

Some of the fiercest debates in education during the 20th century were about learning and examinations. "Am I learning this material because it is intrinsically useful or am I learning it to satisfy an examiner?" More to the point: "In my schooldays am I only learning things about life for later use, or am I already living life?"

Emphasising the dichotomy between childhood and adulthood contributes to the alienation of young people, to the barriers so often thrown up between us, to the feelings of hostility and exclusion so often experienced. In the modern age, because we seem to be doing such different things, we lose the continuity of human



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generations. There are mountains where there were earlier only passes, chasms where there were bridges.

But what has this to do with our practice today?

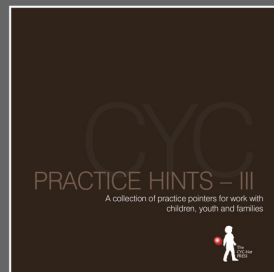
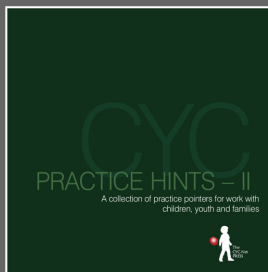
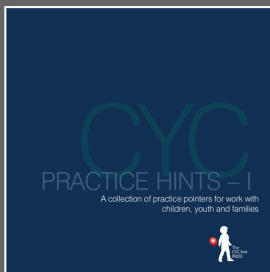
If we expect youngsters in our programs to be doing no more than jumping through the hoops of our curriculum to satisfy some future yardstick of society, then today will be grim and joyless indeed. These kids, especially these kids, cannot be motivated over such time-scales. But if we alter our perspective to acknowledge that today they are living life, not just preparing for life, maybe they can go to bed tonight with some small successes and encouragements, small gains in beliefs and skills, small experiences of acceptance and belonging.

They may not yet have learned sophisticated social, educational and employment qualities — but they will have learned something far more valuable for their futures: that there is hope and that life is worth living.

This Practice Hint is one of 192 Hints available as a collection below.

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A collection of pointers written by Brian Gannon
for work with children, youth and families



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Postcard from Leon Fulcher

Lake Waikaremoana, New Zealand

Greetings everyone! It is Hogmanay where we are and a beautiful Summer Day! We've established camp at the Lake Waikaremoana Holiday Park where we hope our tent will be standing (<http://www.doc.govt.nz/waikaremoana-holiday-park>) until early February. Call in!

Hogmanay becomes a time of reflection on that which has now gone before, and what – in child and youth care terms – we call 'anticipatory reflection', looking ahead to what may be forthcoming in the new year. As I reflect on 2017, I keep wondering about what was happening during the final year of World War I. Few of us who grew up in N. America have much idea about what The Great War meant, and how it transformed World Maps.

Maori – from most tribes – sent young men to join the First World



Manutuke Marae Complex and Centre for the Maori Battalion



Hinekura Marae Remembering the Tuhoe Ancestors who served in WWI



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War effort. The tribe amongst whom we live sent more than 75 young men, and because of historic racism, they were not allowed to carry rifles – only picks and spades – contributing to the War effort by digging trenches. Our local ceremony of remembrance involved a *powhiri* or traditional ritual of encounter whereby the local people – *tangata whenua* – welcome the visitors – *manuhiri*.

As that process was about to begin, two New Zealand Wood Pigeons known as *Kereru* or The Sacred Bird flew into the tree overseeing the ceremony. Sitting behind Koro James, we noted the spiritual significance that Maori, and especially *Tuhoe*, give to such 'happenings'.

After the speeches and *waiata* or songs, in this ritual of encounter between home and away people, the visitors come one by one to greet the home people. They share in a ritual of encounter known as *Hongi* which means to symbolically share the breath of life in peace.



Two Kereru or Sacred Birds (top right corner) observe Koro James on the Paepae



The Hongi as a ritual of encounter symbolises 'we share the breath of life'



Another reflection has me smiling after learning the significance of a simple road sign indicating the name of a stream over which a minor road passes. One friend suggested that it must be a good place for dog walkers, while another questioned how the local council came to assign particular names to particular bridges, no matter how obscure. Gourmets amongst you should ask for Maori potatoes if ever you can get them. They only look like dog turds!

Looking ahead, excitement grows around the international gathering of child and youth care workers at Ventura Beach, California for the 3rd CYC-Net World Conference in partnership with the California Community Services 4th Biennial Conference and Casa Pacifica Centers for Children and Families. If you can possibly get there, this is a not-to-miss opportunity!



Do a Google Search for the first Maori word!



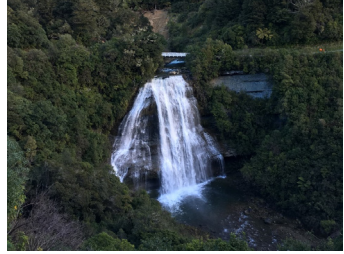
Tutae-kuri Potatoes were found growing at the top of this Waikaremoana stream



Anticipating what might be on offer at Ventura Beach, California, I am relieved to learn that the big fire that wiped out the California Avocado Crop is now under control thanks to the cadres of fire fighters and other first responders who helped save lives. Water is a very scarce commodity in our world, with draught – and the effects of draught – being massive!

As we think ahead to 2018, I wonder what might happen if we all made a special effort to engage more purposefully in energy-saving conversations with young people this year? Turning lights out? Shower times? Watering the garden? Saving rain water? Let's nurture the idea that climate change is a personal challenge we all face. Have a Happy Hogmanay!

Leon



Mokau Falls at Lake Waikaremoana



Hopuruahine Reach to the start of the Lake Waikaremoana Great Walk



Black Swans at Te Puna Cove on the Inner Lake at Waikaremoana



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