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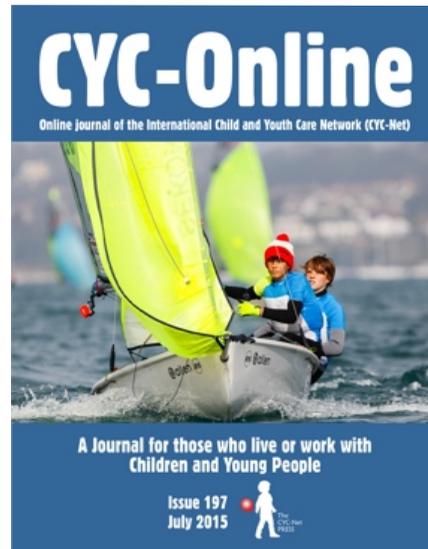
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**A Journal for those who live or work with
Children and Young People**

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Going Home

Celebrating 40 years
of Child and Youth Care Work

Celebrating
40 years 

So, as I write this I am packing my bags and figuring out the logistics of going to South Africa for the "Celebrating 40 Years of Child and Youth Care Work" Conference. It feels like 'going home'.

I have been going to South Africa, and the NACCW Conference since 1987, when Apartheid was still in place and it was a more dangerous world in which to be supportive of 'all' people. And yet, even then the NACCW was one of the few legally integrated associations in South Africa.

I remember those early visits – connecting with people in different sectors, hanging out in restricted places, raising my fist in support of equality as the men with machine guns watched us, moving quickly off the streets of Soweto as the tanks rolled by. Damn! Those were scary moments for a foreigner – and everyday life for those who lived there.

In the midst of all this madness which I did not understand, there was the NACCW Conference.

As people walked into the meeting place singing and carrying their regional flags, heads up high, joy evident and voices loud, I felt the spirit of South African Child and Youth Care.

A spirit of joy, of belief, of hope and commitment.

It felt like home to me.

I have been back to the NACCW con-

ference a number of times – and always it is the same – joy, hope, optimism and a belief that we, as Child and Youth care workers, can change the world in which we live. CYCs in South Africa seem to believe that it is their responsibility to participate in changing the world in which they live. Ah, that we should all hold such a belief!

Imagine! Having a belief that you can change the world! And believing that your work, as a CYC, is doing just that!

As I sat in that meeting place, all those years ago, and let the joy, the belief and the spirit roll over me, I felt, as I have said before, that I was 'at home'. At home in the sense that I was with people who shared the same beliefs, values, and whatever, that I did. It felt, simply, like family.

So now, as you read this, I am in Cape Town. Once again I am at the NACCW conference – but there is a difference this time – many of my Canadian colleagues are here with me. I can only hope that they might experience the spirit – and bring it home.

For me whether I am embedded in CYC in Canada, or in South Africa, I feel like I am at home. At home with caring, love and people who want to make the world a better place for children.

Thank you all!

Thom





A Tribute to an Amazing Residential Team

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It is with a heavy heart that I write my column this month. Sadly, another young person who largely grew up in residential group care has gone to another world; hopefully one that is peaceful, filled with love, and devoid of pain. Her departure

was sudden and unexpected, and only a few short days after moving on from her long-term residential placement where she had spent the previous four years. She was, by all accounts, a caring, generous, giving and deeply thoughtful young woman, with

a feisty character, an impressively broad vocabulary of somewhat insulting words and phrases, and always willing to do battle and also to apologize for any wrongs she might have done. Trust was a difficult concept for her, but she found ways of trusting the child and youth workers she woke up to, spend her days with, and under whose watch she fell asleep night after night. I am told she was extraordinarily creative, and had thoughts about a career in fashion or in design. And she was a lover of nature, coming to life in glowing and shimmering ways when participating in camp trips, paddling a canoe or just staring out on the lake.

She laughed when she could, but significant parts of her life were about pain. Difficult pain, complicated pain, hard to tackle sort of pain. As she approached the latter parts of childhood, she faced her toughest battle yet; demons appeared in her mind, unsettled her, scared her, and perhaps, one might speculate, ultimately controlled her in that moment her journey here with us ended abruptly.

This wonderful young woman leaves behind a mother and siblings; difficult relationships to be sure, but also meaningful ones, caring ones, and relationships that likely were central in her time here amongst us. She also leaves behind a group of other young people who had lived with her, some for years, others for months, and some for just weeks. And she leaves behind a team of child and youth care practitioners; this is the team I want to write about.

I have known this team for quite some

time, and I spend a few hours with the team once per month to reflect on the work, the experience of the work, and sometimes just to be together and enjoy the moment. It is not hard to enjoy the moment in the presence of this team; rarely in my career have I encountered a group of practitioners who are as reflective, determined, committed and caring as this team. Over the years, they have battled each other on various perspectives about the work, the values that drive the work, the best ways of being helpful to the young people, and the many ways of creating a team dynamic that is healthy, rewarding and ultimately to the benefit of the young people in the residence. Their battles have often been hard and pointed: Structure versus flexibility, rules versus conversation, consequences versus process. The team has no free loaders; not one individual who asks others to fight their battles. Everyone is in; everyone wants to ensure that the standard of evaluating the care, the relational context and every day life in the residence starts with awesome and ends with life altering. Everyone is prepared to be vulnerable. Our conversations have covered values, beliefs, fears, anxieties, and many other reflections on Self — Self in practice, Self in the moment, Self in relationship, Self in judgment, Self in culture.

This team has what I like to think of as a magic potion; an ingredient that cannot be replicated, that is unique to this group of people, to the now embedded culture of the house, and to the relationships that were, are and will be present here. I love



that they never agree entirely on anything. This gives me confidence that young people will never be subject to the oppression of adult consensus. They are learning about and have moved miles in their practices related to youth voice, power, engagement, and identity, not to mention rights. They are committed to being present, being engaged, playing, guiding, coaching, advising, and also sharing, crying, laughing and advocating with the young people in the house. They know the young people and the young people know them. They have liberated themselves, and their residential context, from absurd and arbitrary rules about boundaries, consequences, crowd control measures, discharge policies, and other forms of exclusion, marginalization or oppression. They LOVE in practice, and they are very proud of it.

Of course they have their moments. Sometimes they grow tired; sometimes, they wonder what the point of it all is. Often they desperately want to revert to older ways of doing things – back to the structure, the rules and control. I admire the team members who dare to question the new values and directions, who wonder aloud what is lost when we move toward relational practices, a focus on daily events in life, on simply being present. And I love the other team members who

are open to the conversation, ready to reflect, to question and to consider seriously and with respect what their colleagues are saying. I also love the leadership of this team that manages, sometimes brilliantly and sometimes awkwardly, to steer these conversations and debates, and to maintain them within an overarching commitment to recognizing the wonders, the beauty and the amazement of sharing these journeys together, different adults, different youth, in often dangerously inadequate systems and inter-organizational interactions.

These are difficult times confronting this wonderful team. There is great sadness, many tears, a sense of profound loss. There are regrets, feelings of guilt, shame and powerlessness. There are questions that will never be answered. Inevitably, there will be feelings of anger; a sense that a system failed, a process once again proved inadequate, and ultimately, that no one will be responsible. Just another young person gone. Once again the demons have won, and we have been caught watching.

None of this, however, can undo the moments of giving that unfolded all around the young woman. One team member spoke to her challenges with respect to expressing intimacy, and then recalled that moment just a few days before the young woman moved from the residence when she overcame that challenge of intimacy

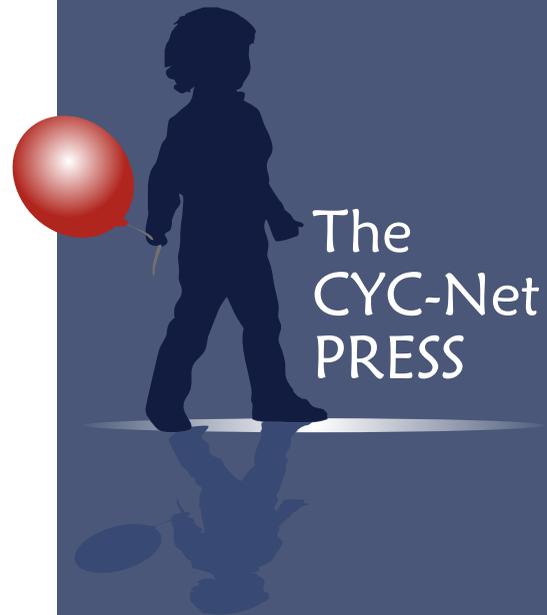


and spontaneously gave the young woman a strong, powerful hug. Another team member recalled her battles with the young woman in the early mornings, and the gradual development of mutual respect and connection as time went on; yet another team member recalled her moments with the young woman while camping, and the transformative power of the connection to nature. And on it went. Stories about love, caring, connections, and the very best of being with young people. As one team member struggled to hold back tears, another provided touch, gently and with love.

Time has a way of healing wounds. The team will remember our young woman, and honour that memory by focusing on the moments that made life worth living. This team will have to mourn the loss of a loved one; but they will do this together, and they will do this with grace. This team is a team of hope, of strength, of comfort in vulnerability, and of commitment and love that is unparalleled. This month I pay tribute to this team that represents the best of residential child and youth care practice; every member of this team, full time, part time, relief, supervisor and Director, tutor and therapist. Shed the tears you need to shed, but hold your heads high when the moment comes. And know that your efforts, your work, your struggles and your victories are the stories of heroes.

To Emily, may you rest in peace, and may your existence, in whatever form, unfold without pain and without demons from now until eternity.

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Professional CYC practice often looks counter-intuitive. What you see is often not what is actually happening. Obvious examples are youth that get loud and boastful when they are feeling small and scared, or aggressive because they fear attack, not because they want to inflict pain.

A useful example is a youth who gets mad at the staff because he /she did not meet program expectations (curfew, task completion) and when confronted state that it is your fault for expecting too much of them.

The youth is more right than not, and we need to hear this as less of an excuse and more of an accurate self-assessment. Our response will be more helpful if it includes an apology and some discussion of how to manage things better on both ends.

We need to be aware of the lack of other awareness and the neediness of youth who have experienced abuse and neglect. Adults often overestimate the social awareness of our youth and expect too much empathy for others, based on our own beliefs and values. Simple things like expecting a sincere apology when a youth has hurt someone else is experienced by the youth as bullying and coercion which simply demonstrates the

adult's ability to push them around, since they have no need to consider anyone else. Just because you want them to be considerate of others will not create this, and forcing them to be "socially appropriate in their interactions with others" is worse than useless.

Youth and families get asked about useful approaches occasionally, and the most frequent quality of a good worker is 'someone who listens to me'. This does not mean the counseling mantra of unconditional positive regard, which only works in an antiseptic environment like an office,

but rather someone who appreciates my point of view and can hear me when I state unpopular opinions. CYC staff who are not yet professional often believe that they have a strength based focus, but they only see strength in behaviors that comply with program or social expectations. Case notes and log entries list good moments, evaluated as good by the writer, which usually means in compliance with program expectations.

Professional CYC practice would not promote anger management groups, but anger expression groups, since anger is the basic energy driving much of the pain based behavior of our youth (see Jim Anglin's work). Mature practitioners are

Simple Complexity in CYC Practice

Jack Phelan

not uncomfortable with difficult behavior, but curious and open to the message being expressed.

Mark Krueger liked to refer to “lunch ideas” which created complex results from simple situations. He would value the worker who made a point of forgiving easily and doing little acts of kindness when a youth was particularly annoying, in order to create moments of cognitive dissonance about the belief that no one cared for him. How you sat together at meals and passed food and made food an example of caring and connection even when everyone worried about getting his fair share was a skill that he valued.

When what looks simple gets positive results in life space work, there is often a complex strategy behind it.

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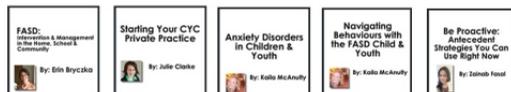
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Ensuring Inclusion of Children from Marginalised Communities in India

Malay Dewanji

The Right to Education Act, 2009 and the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (Amendment) 2012, in India guarantee free and compulsory education to all children of India between the age group of 6 – 14 years. Yet, 8.1 million children are out of school. Moreover, 40% of children drop out of school before completing 8 years of education. (For details see <https://www.savethechildren.in/14-sample-data-articles/236-bvlgari.html>)

Today a good number of NGOs including those, as members of FICE India, have been working to ensure that children from all the marginalized and excluded communities attain their Right to Education. The main objective of these NGOs is to dedicate themselves to tackling the exclusion of all marginalised groups from education in a strategic manner, in line with Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2 to achieve universal primary education, the Education for All (EFA) goals, and international human rights instruments such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

FICE-India was established in 1990s, as the Indian country unit of FICE-Interna-

tional, (International Federation of Educative Communities) under the leadership of the “Liberal Association for Movement of People (LAMP). As FICE International was established in 1948, under the auspices of the UNESCO, for network development of the child care and development activities, FICE-India also has been established as a network of child care institutions and child care workers from different parts of India with LAMP providing infrastructural support for FICE-India’s office at New Delhi.

FICE-India and its member organizations believe that poverty, marginalisation, and social exclusion are inextricably linked. Therefore, many child care institutions

have adopted equity and inclusion as core principles, intrinsic to a rights-based approach, to establish an egalitarian and democratic society.

Inclusion is the process of ensuring that all are able to participate fully in all spheres. Inclusion is a development issue. The process of inclusion is not just about improving access to services, but also supporting people – including those who are discriminated against and marginalised – to engage in wider processes to ensure that their rights and needs are recognised.

Ultimately the groups who are marginalised need to be integrated into the political system in order to uphold their rights of access to all the resources. Equity and inclusion are therefore interrelated. In the Annual General Meeting-2012 of FICE-India, all the members agreed that addressing these issues requires:

- better recognition and understanding of the differential needs of individuals and groups;
- identifying and tackling the root causes of exclusion;
- promoting and supporting marginalized peoples' inclusion in decision-making processes; and
- identifying and implementing appropriate and sustainable solutions.

A needs-based approach aims to change people's situation of deprivation or lack of access to services, viewing people as passive 'recipients' or 'beneficiaries'. This approach may satisfy the needs of that group of people for now but there

are no guarantees that improvements in access will be sustained.

A rights-based approach is a transformational development process in which people are the drivers and subjects of their own development. Moving to a rights-based approach implies focusing on the relationship between the state and civil society. A rights-based approach is about improving wider systems of governance which determine progress towards our vision of a world where everyone has access to the same resources. It implies a change in the power dynamics between those without access and the state power controllers. It aims to bring about sustainable and long term structural change in policies, procedures and laws, as well as changes in attitudes and behaviours. There are also incremental benefits in implementing a rights-based approach and considerable potential for multiplier effects by focusing at a number of different levels.

In India, the enrolment of children for 6-14 years age group is 98% of the total children of the same age group, but the enrolment of children for 11 to 14 years age group is only 58% of the total children in this age group, because many enrolled children leave their schools within five years of enrolment. Only 70% of children who had been enrolled attend school regularly. Scheduled Castes were formerly considered as untouchable castes within the Hindu community in colonial India. Now after independence, the Government of India has finalized a schedule of those formerly untouchable castes and has been

providing some positive economic, educational and political benefits for their overall development.

Scheduled Tribes, originally indigenous communities, are now recognized as a group of tribal communities by the Government of India.

The Government has been providing some affirmative economic, educational and political benefits to these scheduled tribe communities as well, for their development.

These are two groups of people who have been excluded and oppressed historically in social, cultural, economic and political affairs of India. Scheduled castes communities generally used to do menial jobs like sweeping, scavenging, disposing of dead animals, tanner, shoe-maker, burning corpses etc. within the Hindu religious community, but the Scheduled tribe communities were not part of the Hindu community. Today the Scheduled castes population and Scheduled tribe population in the whole of India are about 16% and 8% of the population respectively. Illiteracy among the scheduled castes and scheduled tribe children is mostly due to the historical caste system in India. (For details about the Rights of Children to free and compulsory education Act, see



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right_of_Children_to_Free_and_Compulsory_Education_Act²

The caste system in India is a system of social stratification, which historically separated communities into thousands of

endogamous hereditary groups called *Jatis*, usually translated into English as “castes”. The *jatis* are thought of as being grouped into four “*Varnas*” – Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. Certain

groups, now known as “*Dalits*”, were excluded from the *Varna* system altogether, ostracized as untouchables.

Traditional scholars identified the caste system with Hinduism in the Indian subcontinent, but the system is found in other religions, albeit on a smaller scale including in Sikhism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam in the Indian subcontinent.

(Caste in India: for details go to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/caste>³

In addition, there has been another large group referred to as the “other backward castes/class (OBCs) in India, who were earlier considered as “*Shudras*”, who were placed just above the untouchable castes but below the high castes (Brahmin, Vaidyas, Kayastha/Khatriya, Vaishyas etc.) and some social, educational

and economic benefits are also given to these castes. These OBCs were generally physical laboring castes, and the high castes of India were generally owners-castes, who normally did not do any physical labour in the Indian society, but enjoyed the major share of socio-cultural and economic benefits.

Some Indian sociologists/educationists also refer to these OBC communities/castes as “other backward classes”, because some groups of the Muslim religious community are also included within the OBC group, due to their economic “backwardness”.

Between 1860 and 1920, the British segregated Indians by caste, granting administrative jobs and senior appointments only to the upper castes. Social unrest during the 1920s led to a change in this policy. From then on, the colonial administration began a policy of positive

discrimination by reserving a certain percentage of government jobs for the lower castes. After India achieved independence, this policy of caste-based reservation of jobs was

formalised with lists of Scheduled Castes (*Dalits*) and Scheduled Tribes (*Adivasis*)

Article 15 of the Constitution of India prohibits discrimination based on caste and Article 17 declared the practice of



untouchability to be illegal. In 1955, India enacted the Untouchability (Offences) Act (renamed in 1976, as the Protection of Civil Rights Act). It extended the reach of law from intent to mandatory enforcement. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act was passed in India in 1989.

India tracks violence against *Dalits* nationwide; in 2011, the crime prevalence rate against Dalits was 2.8 per 100,000. Since 1950, the country has enacted many laws and social initiatives to protect and improve the socio-economic conditions of its lower caste population. These caste classifications for college admission quotas, job reservations and other affirmative action initiatives, according to the Supreme Court of India, are based on heredity and are not changeable. These initiatives by India, over time, have led to many lower caste members being elected to the high-

est political offices including the election of K.R. Narayanan, a Dalit, as President of the nation from 1997 to 2002. In 2007, India elected K. G. Balakrishnan, a Dalit, to the

office of Chief Justice.

In 2007, Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state of India, elected Mayawati Kumari as the Chief Minister, the highest elected office of the state. BBC claims,

“Mayawati Kumari is an icon for millions of India’s Dalits, or untouchables as they used to be known.” In 2009, the Indian parliament unanimously elected a Dalit, Meira Kumar, as the first female speaker. The National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was established to investigate, monitor, advise, and evaluate the socio-economic progress of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

In addition to taking affirmative action for people of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, India has expanded its effort to include people from poor, “backward” castes in its economic and social mainstream. The Mandal Commission, established by the Government of India, covered more than 3,000 castes under OBC category, regardless of their affluence or economic status and stated that OBCs form around 52% of the Indian population. However, the National Sample Survey puts the figure at 32%. There is substantial debate over the exact number of OBCs in India; it is generally estimated to be sizable, but many believe that it is lower than the figures quoted by either the Mandal Commission or the National Sample Survey. In 1990, the government reserved 27% of job positions in government-owned enterprises and agencies for OBCs on the basis of the Mandal Commission’s recommendations, and this system is ongoing. The 27 percent reservation is in addition to 22.5 percent set aside for India’s lowest castes for the last 50 years.

In order to guarantee free and compulsory education to all children of India in the 6-14 year age group, the Government

of India passed “The Right to Education Act in 2009”, and the “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (Amendment) in 2012”. As a first step in the exercise of bringing children from marginalised communities into the mainstream school system, a careful mapping of the marginalised children – who they are and where they live – has been undertaken systematically. (Right to Education in India: For details see <http://mhrd.gov.in/rte4>)

Understanding exclusionary practices

An in-depth understanding of the realities of the situation faced by marginalised children at the community and school level, including an identification of all the points of exclusion from the level of the household up to education system, requires further information and explanation.

Exclusionary practices mostly begin even before a child reaches the school premises. A Dalit child especially a girl, for instance, traveling through an upper caste village on her way to school may face harassment on her way that could well discourage her, and dissuade her parents from sending her to school. Parents of children from Muslim and tribal families may also have similar inhibitions in sending their children to schools that are located in areas dominated by the majority community. The safety of children regularly subjected to derogatory name calling, rebuking, even physical harassment, is a significant factor in determining the participation of children from such backgrounds

in school. Children from Dalit (Scheduled Castes), Scheduled Tribes and Muslim communities have common as well as unique needs and challenges impeding attempts to their inclusion.

Following is a brief account of needs and the nature of exclusion pertaining to each community as extracted from the Report of the Committee on Implementation of RTE (Right to Education) and Resultant Revamp of Sarva Siksha Abhijan (SSA) to achieve education for all. SSA is the government of India's flagship programme for achievement of Universalization of Elementary Education. This listing of examples was identified by the member organizations of FICE- India, in a meeting held in December, 2012:

Exclusion by Teachers

- (i) Segregated seating arrangements in the classroom with Scheduled Castes (Dalits) children made to sit separately and typically at the back of the classroom.
- (ii) Undue harshness in reprimanding Scheduled Castes (Dalits) children, especially in relation to upper caste children. Examples include: scolding children for coming late to school, in resolving fights between children, condoning name-calling by upper caste children, and so forth.
- (iii) Not giving time and attention to Scheduled Castes (Dalits) children in the classroom, such as not checking their homework or class work, not answering their queries – even

rebuking them for asking questions in class.

- (iv) Excluding Scheduled Castes (Dalits) children from public functions in the school. These include non-participation in the morning assembly or other public events such as on Republic Day or Independence Day. Routinely making them sit at the back of the classroom.
- (v) Making derogatory remarks about Scheduled Castes (Dalits) children and their supposed inability to keep up with academic work.



- (vi) Denying Scheduled Castes (Dalits) children the use of school facilities, including water sources. Keeping water segregated; even preventing Scheduled Castes (Dalits) children from using the school taps or containers used to store drinking water has been reported from many areas.
- (vii) Asking Scheduled Castes (Dalits) children to do menial tasks in school,

including cleaning the school premises and even the toilets.

Exclusion by peer group

- (i) Calling Scheduled Castes (Dalits) children by caste names.
- (ii) Not including Scheduled Castes (Dalits) children in games and play activities in the classroom or in break time when children go out to play; Scheduled Castes (Dalits) children often return to their own neighborhoods to play with non-enrolled Scheduled Castes (Dalits) children there.
- (iii) Not sitting with Scheduled Castes (Dalits) children in the classroom.



Exclusion by the system

- (i) Incentives schemes meant for Scheduled Castes (Dalits) children not being implemented in full.
- (ii) Lack of acknowledgement of Scheduled Castes (Dalits) role models in the curriculum or by teachers.

- (iii) Reinforcing caste characteristics in syllabi and textbooks.
- (iv) Lack of sensitisation of teachers in teacher education and training.
- (v) Insufficient recruitment of Scheduled Castes (Dalits) teachers.

According to the decision taken in the FICE-India convention, held at Kolkata, India, in 2012, the interventions for children belonging to Scheduled Caste communities have to be based on the intensive micro-planning addressing the needs of every child. According to the Kolkata convention report, the following suggested list of interventions for inclusion of Scheduled Castes (Dalits) children can help in addressing the above-mentioned practices of discrimination and exclusion.

- (i) Establishing norms of behaviour within the school for teachers and students.
- (ii) Timely detection of the forms of discrimination practiced in a particular context by either teachers or students. This is not an easy task as many forms of discrimination have become part of accepted behaviour and go unnoticed and unchallenged by the majority. Finding ways of listening to children's voices would be crucial to this exercise. Setting up a system of reporting on discriminatory practices at the school level would be a place to start. Complaint boxes that are regularly dealt with at the LAMP's street children's school meetings are a suggested intervention.

- (iii) Timely redressing of instances of discrimination at the level of the school or Block/Area development office. Delays in taking action can lead to discouragement on the part of the parents and teachers.
- (iv) Escorts to school for Scheduled Castes (Dalits) children.
- (v) Establishing norms for classroom interactions such as seating patterns that ensure that children are not segregated on the basis of caste, community or gender. The 'Nali-Kali' model of multilevel learning, pioneered in Karnataka in the mid nineties, (based on the Rishi Valley School-in-a-bag programme, of Bengaluru, Karnataka) is worth revisiting and adopting as it allows children to sit in groups based on levels of learning. This not only breaks social barriers but it also allows for a rotation and thus inter-mingling as children move in and out of the learning circles.
- (vi) Co-curricular activities, such as sports, music and drama which tend to break social barriers among children need to be encouraged. They have remained a hugely neglected area and would be an important strategy for increasing the interaction of children as well as allowing children from varied backgrounds to exhibit their talents and get recognition
- (vii) Recognizing the agency of teachers. The teacher is a key figure in the school and can help to either perpetuate or obliterate discriminatory practices. But the



teacher's role in this process has been largely neglected so far. Interventions in the following areas would go a long way in overturning the current situation.

- (a) Sensitisation of teachers from the stage of pre-service training onwards. Special modules should be developed by recognized experts for use in teacher education and training programmes. Special in-service training within the mandated 20 days should be organised to deal with the specific problems of inclusion at the Block level.
- (b) Setting norms for teacher behaviour. Some norms related to corporal punishment and abuse have been included in the RTE (Right to Education Act, 2009). Strict monitoring and adherence to these norms would help eliminate some of the malpractices mentioned above, such as making Scheduled Castes (Dalits) children perform menial tasks.
- (viii) Helping the teacher develop pedagogical tools and classroom

practices that allow social barriers to be broken. Technical support in developing such tools should be sought from experts as well as civil society groups.

- (ix) Providing adequate infrastructure for elementary schooling in districts with concentration of Scheduled Castes (Dalits) population.
- (x) Opening schools in Scheduled Castes (Dalits) concentrated neighborhood wherever required.
- (xi) Special training as per need for age appropriate admission
- (xii) Interventions for specific categories of deprived children belonging to scheduled caste community living in difficult circumstances.
- (xiii) Monitoring attendance and retention of Scheduled Castes (Dalits) children regularly
- (xiv) Providing context-specific intervention in the form of a special facility like residential schools or transport as required.



Sarva Siksha Abhijan-SSA (Education for All) recognises that problems of exclusion often take highly local and context specific forms, and the above mentioned is a general list of issues that have emerged from

the studies conducted so far, which need to be addressed urgently.

Exclusion of Scheduled Tribe Children

Tribal children, besides facing some of the exclusionary practices mentioned above for Dalit children also face problems peculiar to their situation. Tribal populations tend to be concentrated in remote, hilly or heavily forested areas with dispersed populations where even physical access to schools is difficult. If there are schools and teachers, the teachers are unlikely to share the students' social and cultural background or to speak the students' language, leading to a sense of alienation among the children.

The biggest problem faced by tribal children is that of their own language. Analysis of the educational indicators shows that majority of tribal children drop out of the primary school due to the difference in the school and home language. Teaching materials and textbooks tend to be in a language the students do not understand; content of books and syllabi ignore the students' own knowledge and experience and focus only on the dominant language and culture. Not understanding the school language and therefore the course content, the children are unable to cope, end up repeating grades and eventually dropping out.

While instruction in the mother tongue is widely recognised as beneficial to language competencies in the first language, achievement in other subject areas, and second language learning, there is no explicit obligation on the states to institute mother tongue education. The “three language formula” that has been the cornerstone of the language policy in India has not been uniformly implemented across the country. In some states such as Jharkhand, Orissa and Chhattisgarh, which are linguistically diverse, the problem is compounded by the multiplicity of linguistic backgrounds represented in a single classroom.

The Tribal Welfare Ministry of the Government of India has tried to address this problem by establishing residential or ‘Ashram’ schools for tribal children; however, there is a need not just for many more residential schools but also for improved quality in these schools. With the notification of the RTE Act, ‘Ashram’ schools would also come under its purview and have to follow the prescribed norms and standards. Collaboration with the Education Department on residential schools for tribal dominated areas would be required to enable a strengthened and consolidated approach to this problem including recruitment of teachers of similar social and cultural backgrounds and provision of curricula and textbooks that are not alienating for tribal children.

The following suggested list of interventions for inclusion of tribal children which can help in addressing the above practices of discrimination and exclusion

were finalized in the tribal education conference, organized by FICE-India and LAMP, held at Bangriposi, Odisha, in January, 2013.

Teaching in the local tribal language by recruiting native tribal speakers.

- (i) Development of educational material in local tribal languages using resources available within the tribal community.
- (ii) Establishing resource centres in tribal dominated states for providing training, academic and other technical support for development of pedagogic tools and education materials catering to multilingual situations.
- (iv) Training of teachers in multilingual education.
- (v) Sensitisation of teachers to tribal cultures and practices.
- (vi) Incorporation of local tribal knowledge in the curriculum and textbooks.
- (vii) Creating spaces for cultural mingling within schools so as to recognise tribal cultures and practices and eliminate feelings of inferiority and alienation among tribal children.
- (viii) Involvement of tribal community members in school activities to reduce social distance between the school and the tribal community.
- (ix) Textbooks in mother tongue for tribal children at the beginning of Primary education where they do not understand the regional language.
- (x) Anganwadis and Balwadis must be established in each school in tribal areas, so that the tribal girls are not required to do baby-sitting.

- (xi) Special training for non-tribal teachers to work in tribal areas, including knowledge of the tribal dialect.
- (xii) Special plan for nomadic and migrant (regular migration takes place among nomadic tribes in the Central Indian and north-eastern tribal belt for getting work throughout the year) workers.

Exclusion of Muslim Children

Education of Muslim children continues to be a particularly neglected area in policy and programming in India today. As a result, their educational attainments are second only to those of the Scheduled Caste populations in most areas as mentioned in the Sachar Committee Report. (For details see Retired Chief Justice of Delhi High Court Rajinder Sachar Committee's Report:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sachar_Committee⁵)

Constraints felt by Muslim children, from the scattered bits of evidence that do exist, in addition to the general issues of discrimination and harassment faced by children from other disadvantaged and excluded groups, include:

- (i) Denial of admission.
- (ii) Unfriendly school and classroom environment.
- (iii) Cultural and religious domination.
- (iv) Early withdrawal of male children to enable them to apprentice with artisans, mechanics etc. to enable self-employment as discrimination in the organised labour market is a huge perceived concern.
- (v) Even earlier withdrawal of female children to enable them to find grooms more educated than themselves.
- (vi) Unfulfilled demand for adequate number of Urdu medium schools or at least Urdu as a second language.
- (vii) Lack of Urdu language teachers. (Minorities in India: for details see <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Minorities/UNDPMarginalisedMinorities.pdf>)⁶)

Some interventions for inclusion of Muslim children

- (i) Systematic and robust research on specific constraints faced by Muslim children in different areas. Muslims, like Scheduled Castes children and Scheduled Tribes children are not a



homogeneous community and exhibit wide differences in social and cultural practices in different states. A more thorough understanding of these issues will help formulate better interventions for inclusion of Muslim children into the education process.

- (ii) Opening of schools in Muslim concentrated neighbor hoods.
- (iii) Providing 'girls only' schools in Muslim concentrated neighbor hoods.
- (iv) Providing Urdu in middle schools in Muslim concentrated neighbor hoods.
- (v) Providing escort to Muslim girls, preferably through women from the community for safe school going
- (vi) Option of learning Urdu as a second language
- (vii) Recruitment of more Urdu teachers, especially in Muslim concentrated areas;
- (viii) Context specific and tailor made programmes for special training.
- (ix) Sensitisation of all teachers to issues of cultural and religious diversity especially in relation to Muslims.
- (x) Incorporation of practices, such as
 - (a) due representation of Muslim culture in curricular and pedagogical processes;
 - (b) encouraging discussion of Muslim cultural and religious practices in the school or classroom with the help of community members;
 - (c) celebration of Muslim festivals in the schools;
 - (d) sensitive handling of Muslim children during Ramzan when they may be fasting and

(e) adequate representation of Muslim parents in the SMC (Schools Management Committee).

A large part of exclusion results from social distance caused by lack of knowledge and understanding about minority communities. Finding spaces to break these information barriers would go a long way in reducing the hostilities and insecurities that exist.



Children belonging to most under-privileged groups

Sarva Siksha Abhijan (SSA) recognises the hierarchies among the poor. There are groups that are not only the most deprived and exploited, but also quite neglected. These groups deserve a special priority and focused action. SSA functionaries will have to carefully assess their needs and then plan context specific, innovative integrated interventions to make tangible progress in eliminating exclusion

of children belonging to these groups. (Inclusion of Marginalised children in private unaided schools : For details see <http://www.oxfamindia.org/sites/default/files/wp-inclusion-of-marginalised-children-in-private-unaided-schools-190317>)

The following groups have been identified by FICE-India, at its Annual General Meeting-2013, as among the most disadvantaged:

- i) Urban deprived children
- ii) Child labour, particularly bonded child labour and domestic workers
- iii) Children in ecologically deprived area where they are required to fetch fuel, water, fodder and do other household chores.
- iv) Children in very poor slum communities and uprooted urban habitations.
- v) Children of families of scavengers and other such stigmatised professions.
- vi) Children of itinerant or seasonal labour who have mobile and transient lifestyle like construction workers, road workers and workers on large construction site
- vii) Children of landless agriculture labour.
- viii) Nomadic communities and pastoralists.
- ix) Forests dwellers and tribals in remote areas and children residing in remote desert hamlets.
- x) Children in areas affected by civil strife.

A major issue concerning children in extremely difficult circumstances is sheer

lack of their voice due to their alienation from community and little representation in agencies and forums like the SMC (Schools Management Committee), PTA (Parents-Teachers Association) or VEC (Village Education Committee). SSA (Sarva Siksha Abhijan) would make efforts to address this issue by advocacy for a children's right to participation, by supporting the formation of support groups children's collectives, and, by encouraging efforts to accommodate their voices in planning, implementation and monitoring of interventions and strategies. (National Report on inclusive classroom – UNICEF Report on India: For details see http://www.unicef.org/india/I3_National_Report_on_Inclusive_Classroom.pdf⁸)

Education of children affected by migration

To address the issue of seasonal migration for varying periods for work in brick kilns, agriculture, sugarcane harvesting, construction, stone quarrying, salt pans etc. and its adverse effect on education of children who migrate with or without other members of the family, SSA encourages identification of districts, blocks and villages/cities or towns from where or to which there is a high incidence of migration. The RTE Act mandates bringing such children to regular schools both in districts where they stay or in districts to where they seasonally migrate. This would require innovative and effective strategies for special training to develop age appropriate competencies to facilitate children's

enrolment and retention in age-appropriate classes, and to coordinate between the education providing agencies at both the locations mentioned above.

Special Training strategies for these children would require very meticulous planning

Some strategies can be developed based on the following ideas:

- (a) seasonal hostels or residential camps to retain children in the sending villages/urban habitat during the period of migration,
- (b) transportation facility to and from the school in the vicinity of the worksite, and if it is not practical then work-site schools should be provided at the location where migrant families are engaged in work,
- (c) peripatetic educational volunteer/s who can move with the migrating families to take care of children's education during the period they are on move from school at one location to school at the other and,
- (d) strategies for tracking of children through migration cards or/other records to enable continuity in their



education before, during and after the migration.

The receiving district/State where migrant families are located for some period shall have responsibility for ensuring that education to the children in age appropriate classes continues during the period of migration. It is expected that the AWP&Bs (Annual Work Plan and Budgets) of these districts would include activities for education of such children, under a Special Training component. The involvement of NGOs in the processes of mapping of migration and planning and implementation

of interventions should be actively supported. Funds available under innovation can be used to support activities in an integrated strategy which are not supported under any other Norm of SSA.

Since migration takes place across districts and states, it would be necessary for sending and receiving districts and States to collaborate with each other to ensure continuity of education of such children and by other means such as providing appropriate text books, teachers who can teach in the language in which children have been receiving education. For this purpose "task forces" could be set up to effect regular coordination between States/districts.



Urban Deprived Children

SSA has been focusing on the growing problem of schooling of disadvantaged children in urban areas. Successive JRM (Joint Review Missions) have also dwelt on this component. Urban areas have special challenges such as the education of street children, the education of children who are rag pickers, homeless children, children whose parents are engaged in professions that makes children's education difficult, education of children living in urban working class slums, children who are working in industry, children working in households, children at tea shops, garages etc. Other city specific features are: very high cost of land, heterogeneous community and high opportunity cost, and so forth.

However, despite these initiatives, there is a growing need for systemic and coordinated efforts to provide solutions on an institutional basis to urban issues. Thus to implement RTE in urban areas, SSA would adopt a more holistic and systems approach. This approach would necessitate coordination and convergence of interventions across Departments, local bodies, civil society organisations and the private sector. SSA would encourage a diversity of

interventions planned and executed in an integrated, collaborative and cohesive manner to tackle the unique challenges in urban areas. This would require planning distinctively for the urban areas either as separate plans or as part of District Plans in the case of smaller towns. In either case, this would require partnership with NGOs, Municipal bodies and other relevant organizations. (Is the right to education a reality for India's street children? For details see

http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/is-the-right-to-education-a-reality-for-india-s-children-113091300395_1.html)



Children in areas affected by civil strife

This is a new area of growing concern that is leading to the marginalisation of large number of children from educational processes. The All India Association of Voluntary Agencies(AIAVA) and FICE-India along with their member organisations recognise the situation of these children as an alarming and significant problem, and advocates for concrete steps to ameliorate the situation as early as possible. Some measures to insulate children and their ed-

education from the impact of such situations must be undertaken with active involvement of Civil Society Groups, which could include the following:

- (i) prohibiting the use of school and other educational facilities for housing police, military or para-military forces.
- (ii) making schools safe zones by providing adequate security and emotional support to enable children to come to school and continue with their education undisturbed.
- (iii) If security cannot be provided, then alternative arrangements need to be made for all affected children to enable them to continue their education without a break. These arrangements could include providing residential schooling facilities or transportation to safer schools to children from the affected Areas.
- (iv) Organising special negotiations with leaders in these areas to ensure that schools are allowed to function uninterrupted.

Excluded among the excluded

SSA acknowledges that by no means have the above categories exhausted the whole list of children excluded from the education process. While children with special needs are being dealt with in a separate section, children from migrant families with nomadic background, children working as domestic help, children in conflict with law, children in protective institutions, children affected by HIV/AIDS,

children affected by natural disasters, to name a few, are some that have not been explicitly mentioned above or dealt with elsewhere. Special strategies to enable their participation will have to be developed. Support in developing these strategies, advocating for them and monitoring the continued participation of these children will be important elements of SSA's focus in the context of implementation of the RTE Act.

There are many active civil society groups like LAMP and other member organizations of the "All India Association of Voluntary Agencies - (AIAVA)" and FICE-India, that have gained substantial experience and knowledge of working with these children. Active involvement of these groups must be sought to enable their inclusion in the education process. A process of empanelling such groups for resource support would be a good starting point. However, more active engagement of the education department as well as NCPCR- National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (India). /SCPCR-



State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights or Right to Education Protection Authority (REPA) will be necessary to ensure that these children from marginalized communities do not remain excluded. (10th Joint Review Mission of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan , Government of India, 20th to 31st July,2009: For details see <http://www.educationforallinindia.com/10thJRM-SSA-July-2009.pdf>¹⁰

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Hide or Seek



Maxwell Smart and John Digney

The most important things to do in the world are to get something to eat, something to drink and somebody to love you.

Brendan Behan, Irish poet, short story writer, novelist and playwright.

The body is a house of many windows: there we all sit, showing ourselves and crying on the passers-by to come and love us.

Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson, Scottish novelist, poet, essayist, and travel writer.

'Let's Hide'

A number of years ago Brian Gannon introduced us both to the work of psychologist George Kelly, who had developed a style of psychology which placed emphasis on the importance of a *persons own experience of himself and where one views behaviour in terms of individual expectations*: 'Man [he states] predicts what will happen and if it happens his prediction is validated ... the grounds he used for predicting are strengthened, and he can venture further next time'.

Brian transposed this reasoning onto the experiences and *logic* of troubled youth, '... for young people whose world is not easy to understand, when it is inconsistent and unpredictable, and when the experiences it offers are hurtful and scary, their expectations are negative and anxi-

ety-producing ... (their) *whole make-up is based on the expectation that the worst will happen — and they defend themselves from further hurt*'.

If we extrapolate we can assert that in general people seek out experiences that can validate what they already believe or at least have come to expect (a particular 'response' or consequence to actions or occurrences). So, when we demonstrate love or caring to those who Brian has called 'love resistant youth', their view on the options available to them can seem somewhat limited, in effect have 2 choices: (i) 'I didn't expect this, that being said it feels OK so perhaps I should change my negative view of life', OR the more common response, (ii) 'I don't trust this, I must reject this'. We shall return to this issue as we progress this article.

Love Actually – ‘Let’s seek’

It seems that nothing motivates the creative arts more than the desire to articulate some aspect of love. This could be any form of art, such as a novel about unrequited love; a painting of two lovers in a simple loving embrace; a statue depicting a Roman or Greek Goddess of love; a poem - in which the poet cleverly describes an epic and joyous journey to finding love, or a heartbreaking country-and-western ditty of love betrayed. Indeed, the 1996 Hollywood movie with Angelina Jolie proclaimed, ‘Love Is All There Is.

Human beings appear to have a fixation with the entire concept of love – a thing that cannot even be seen by the human eye, as intangible a construct if ever there was one. And it is no wonder that we have such a fascination – after all, it is part and parcel of everything we are, it is indelibly pencilled into our psyche, as the 1960’s pop group “The Troggs” and, ‘Love is all around’, and clearly love can exist in many forms. But just as love can be sought, it can also be shunned, it can be offered and it can be accepted; Love can be rebuffed and rejected. So, to return to our earlier preamble where we noted George Kelly’s observation that people tend to seek out experiences that validate what they already believe and our reiteration of the view that responses available to ‘love resistant youth’ are often restricted to, ‘I don’t expect this, it feels OK, perhaps I should change my negative view of life’, OR ‘I don’t trust this, I reject this’. In this latter response, ‘love resistant youth’ would seem to be accepting of this

paradigm that the world is not a place for trust and love for it is not what they have experienced in life.

In nearly sixty years of continued direct practice with troubled youngsters (between us, we are not that old, honest) the writers have seen youth who resist overtures of warmth and affection but who gradually come to adult connection. To gain the necessary trust, the adult has usually fought hard and earned the right to be trusted by youth through a long process guided by patience and persistence. However we have also encountered young people whom despite all the best efforts of carers stand firm, holding onto their belief that no adult is worth trust ... it seems that ‘whilst we offer care and love, they continue to turn their backs on it’. So herein lies a challenge! The challenge is compounded by the fact that whilst we all have a ‘need’ to feel loved; to be cared for and about; we all need to be able to give love if we are to grow in a healthy way. So how do we as the carers for troubled youth create environments of love and connection?

Why the Wrong Places

We believe that we need to start by talking a little about basic human needs - the fundamental and universal human needs which show up in many ‘needs theories’. Love is amongst many, if not all, credible theories and we only need look as far as the theories posited by folks such as Glasser, Maslow, McClelland and Sternberg to recognise that love underpins



human survival. So, how can we reconcile these theories with that of Kelly?

We wish that the solution would be clear and simple but we all know that it is not (though some may think that it is). Why despite being offered love and affection do some youth chose to push us away and seek love in dangerous places and in turning to the medium of music to help make sense of 'why', we are given some hints in song lyrics, such as those from Johnny Lees' 'Looking for Love':

*I was lookin' for love in all the wrong places,
Lookin' for love in too many faces,
Searchin' their eyes, lookin' for traces,
Of what I'm dreamin' of.*

Those who are love resistant or love averse can actually (and need to) seek out love, but they will search for love from those who will not love back; they will hunt for love where it cannot exist; they will seek to validate their 'negative beliefs' by attempts to look for love - but in all the wrong places. Often we see this in adolescence, and it is there that we as practitioners and writers have encountered youth in this dilemma.

We all know that the teenage years are a struggle, with occasional feelings of being rejected, loneliness and of being misunderstood. Additionally there are the surges of hormones and the consequent mood swings that accompany this; the contradictory need to be the same and concurrently be different; the struggle to be independent whilst simultaneously being desperate for connection ... this all

makes ordinary teenage-hood very confusing. It is doubtful that either of the writers would ever wish to return to adolescence and indeed most sane adults 'wave these years bye-bye' with gratitude that they have survived.

Yet, throughout the struggles, most teens experience the anchoring connection of family and community, holding the difficulties and associated destructive forces in check. However what if family and community don't 'hold you' and your life disintegrates requiring you to live away from home in a place with full of strangers? Kids living in 'out of home care' (or even those living in family situations which are filled with abuse and neglect) can struggle to feel connected in a positive way and these kids will often seek out love and connection in the most dangerous of ways.

Desperate for love, often these kids are also desperately afraid of it. These are different to the 'love resistant' kids, this cohort are really looking for love and acceptance and will take it anywhere they can get it. So, when we refer to the 'wrong places' we are also referring to how in the desperate search for love, our kids can become paradoxically even more vulnerable, particularly if all they receive is continued rejection and insecurity in our care.



Austin & Halpin (1987), noted that, 'Children who come into care come from being out of care', an observation that children's needs have not been met

before they even encounter our services – where the unmet needs are generally not material needs (although poverty is also a common factor in admission). These unmet needs are mostly developmental and emotional; kids are delivered to our care in the first instance because of their traumatic experiences – they are kids who have been neglected, rejected, raped and abused. They have been hurt and suffered acute loss; struggling to belong at home or in community.

Our systems claim to seek to restore balance to the lives of our charges, though at times we are not seeing the true picture. We can, with blind optimism, ‘pump in the love’, without realising how it is being received and in fact we totally miss the point that the only type of love that is acceptable to youth is ‘faulty love’. If a young person is **looking in all the wrong places**, they may be seeking ways to validate a private logic which dictates to them that ‘love does not exist in a form that is pleasant and positive’. The net effect being that they will either not be able to believe our overt overtures (our telling them that we really care for them) or they will totally reject these overtures out of hand. Conversely, we also have the ‘love hungry’ youth, who will ‘snap off your hand’ at any sign of acceptance, caring or affection – misconstruing this as love. When this is shown to them by anyone, even the most undesirable of characters, they will lap it up.

Of Baby Care & Lost Kids

In our consideration of why troubled youth seek out love in the wrong places we must also be open to thinking about why the right places have not been available to these kids. It can be true that some ‘not so well intentioned adults’ can easily see the desperation in vulnerable kids and use that desperation for their own ends. Whether it is to do their bidding to peddle drugs or to engage in other gang activities, or for sexual exploitation — some youngsters have experiences that serve to create within them a ‘faulty logic’ – a logic where they either strive for or reject love.

Where needs have gone unmet, there have always been deviants, willing to prey on kids like Fagan from the book *Oliver Twist*, to the more disturbing sexual predators we all too often read about. This is borne out in the statistical evidence that reveals how those looking for love (or proof that love is a ‘bogus’ construct) have had early sexual experiences and also end up having their own babies at very young ages. Young people, often seeking what they see as the unconditional love of a child, are demonstrating the level of their unmet needs.

To vulnerable youth, desperate to belong, offers of safety and protection from gangs may seem like love and acceptance, but such artificial ‘belonging’ is sometimes more desirable to troubled teens than no love at all. How many youth have their needs for status met in this way? How



many are given validation for competence in being able to steal or for their courage in being able to fight others, and to see this as a form of love and care, because they cannot be validated by our own systems. How many needs that have gone unmet become artificially met in these ways? A search for love in all the wrong places; of baby care not given, leading eventually to so many, 'lost kids'.

To Make the Right Places

The need for our services to provide connection, human warmth and affection as antidotes for the 'disconnect' that so many youth feel is implicit in relational care. Yet, we can inadvertently create cultures which can either reinforce past hurts (when their behaviours lead us to making a decision to reject and expel) rather than remediate them or where small acts of kindness are translated as demonstrations of love. Human bonding, connection and relationship are essential to all human survival and when we are deprived of these in 'normal' circumstances it is reasonable to assume these will be sought elsewhere.

If the roads to all the 'right places' are barricaded, is it any wonder that kids will 'look for love in all the wrong places'? We would assert that we are the ones that need offer the possibility of a right place to be given love and care. Relational practices offer healing connection with youth in great difficulty. When a former care experienced youngster said to us at the recent SIRCC conference, about what helped her come away from a culture of

drugs and hedonism, she simply replied, 'my key-worker came back and back again ... she came back when everybody else had given up, she persisted when others gave me up as a lost cause. She gave me love, despite my rejection and abuse. She understood me when I didn't understand myself'.

This account told us a lot about what we need to do, if also allowed us see just a little bit more clearly why kids can look for love in the wrong places. For love to be given in the right manner and amount we need to hang in and hang on, for the going is going to be tough.

But maybe another great lyricist can finish what we started, Billy Ocean sang, 'when the going gets tough, the tough get going'. Perhaps this should help us re-shape the notion of what 'tough love' should be – hard won connection with youth through love and persistence.

Maxie & Digs,

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Catching Up: CYC and the 21st Century

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I keep having this feeling that the 21st century is pulling ahead of the field of CYC at an astonishing rate. Part of this may reflect my own process of aging as I begin to understand that the world of young people is increasingly inaccessible to me as lived experience. Certainly this is true in the area of technology, where I have come to a moderately comfortable acknowledgement that I will never be able to be functionally immersed, as a digital native, in the global technological ecology as it is emerging. Unlike a number of my peers, I neither decry nor celebrate this emerging new social form. It is what it is becoming and that has an infinitude of possible futures beyond my explanatory or analytic capacities.

I have been reading a small book by Antonio Negri recently called *Art and the Multitude*. It is a collection of letters that he wrote in the late 80s to former comrades from the era of late 20th century revolt in Italy. In these letters he addresses

how we might think about the way capitalism has massively disrupted and re-shaped our social reality and what might be done about it. What impressed me about the letters is the way in which he repudiates any sense of nostalgia for what was and insists on a clear-eyed evaluation of what the world has become. Of course, it has been 30 years since he wrote these letters, but in many ways the problems and the call for a realistic analysis is still relevant. He writes,

So, the postmodern is the market. On our part we take the modern for what it is-a destiny of dejection-and [we regard] the postmodern as its abstract and strong limit - the only world possible today. I can never thank you enough for having reminded me of this- the solid reality of this empty world, this endless succession of forms which are no less real for being phantasmatic. A world of phantasms, but true. The difference between

reactionaries and revolutionaries consists in this: the former deny the massive ontological vacuity of the world, while the latter affirm it. The former reduce the stage of the world to an aesthetic trinket, the latter apprehend it practically. Consequently only revolutionaries can practice a critique of the world, because they have a true relationship with being. Because they recognize that it is we who have made this world, inhuman as it is. Because its lack of meaning is our lack of meaning and its vacuity is our vacuity. Only that. The limit is never just a limit—it is also an obstacle. The limit determines a terrible anguish, a ferocious fear—but it is there in the radical nature of the anguish, that the limit is experienced as a possibility of going beyond.
(p. 22-23)

There is a great deal we could say about this short passage, but there are a couple of things I want to point out in relation to CYC and the 21st century. In the first place, Negri does not shy away from an analysis of the emerging world of postmodern capitalism as a world of brutal abstract negation of actual living things. We should be clear though, that in using the term postmodern, he is not referring to the work of thinkers such as Foucault, Baudrillard, Derrida, Deleuze, Guattari and so on. These thinkers have a very similar analysis of postmodern capitalism to Negri's.

Negri is referring to a shift in the way capitalism operates as post-modernity; that is to say “after” modernity. In this, he

is saying two things 1) capitalism was built out of the science, technology and philosophies of modernity 2) it no longer operates this way although the new ways in which it operates are a logical extension of the modernist project.

For us in CYC there are a some connections and inferences here that are important for us to understand if we are to confront the challenge of youth-adult relations in the 21st century. The first is to recognize that just as science did not save us in the 20th century, it will not save us in the 21st.

That is not to say that science does not have a role in our understanding of our work, but when it becomes pre-eminent as the logic behind our work, it has a tendency to overshadow the actual living relations that compose what we do. In this sense, it is possibly useful to note that science does not come to us on its own, pre-formed and simply revealed, like scripture. We create it. It is a product of human endeavor and like all creative endeavors it comes to us incomplete and always partial.

We in CYC need to be cautious about any wholesale adoption of scientific approaches and theories about young people. Regrettably, the history of the last century is littered with failed and dangerous scientific theories and applications. One need only think of the applications of scientific Marxism in the old Soviet Union, or the science of eugenics in Nazi Germany, the refrigerator mother explanations of autism or the super predator theories about young African Americans.

To be sure, while any number of us still



found our work in the scientific theories and logics of modernist capitalism, Negri is telling us capitalism no longer functions this way. That does not mean that it no longer uses the faux logic of hierarchical and taxonomical thought that brought us the profoundly problematic categories of race, gender, sexuality and so on. It certainly still does this, but now it also deploys them in a different kind of way. Post-modern capitalism operates as a system that proliferates itself as a series of abstractions, simulations and “phantasmatic forms” to quote Negri. As Marx put rather famously put it in the *Communist Manifesto*,

Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.

In this prescient description, Marx describes our contemporary world, in which everything appears to be in a constant upheaval, in which old forms are reconstituted as new forms only to be swept aside by an incoming tide of even newer forms that reconstitute and package the old forms in new configurations.

For us in CYC this may be the hardest actuality of the 21st century. This is the world that children and young people are being born into. It is not an alien world for them. It is the way the world is.

I sometimes feel as though our field is in desperate scramble to find a foothold in this world that will supply a stable and constant set of beliefs, ideas and identity against the onslaught of kaleidoscopic social and technological reconfiguration. Hence our ongoing interest in codification, standards, professionalism, scientific explanations and the identity of our field. I would argue that these impetuses towards stratification are not only problematic in their own right, but irrelevant vestiges of the last century.

As an alternative, both Negri and Marx propose a sober and clear-eyed acceptance of the world of post-modern capitalism. Not a fatalistic acceptance, but the view of the strategist when assessing the strengths and weaknesses of an opponents position. In this, Marx sees an opportunity. He notes how the way in which post-modern capitalism sweeps away previous relations also clears previous prejudices and opinions. Now, we might argue that this is absurd given the resurgence of fundamentalist religious creeds, racist and reactionary hate groups, and xenophobic reactionaries across the globe. I would suggest that these are indeed specifically reactionary. That is to say, they come to such fruition as they recognize the threat to their continuance.

The question is, can we provide the alternative? The alternative cannot be

premised in the old ways of knowing and doing. Any alternative rooted in nostalgia or resentment of the coming world will suffer the same problems and failure of other reactionary formations. Any functional alternative must be built out of what Negri refers to as “having a true relation with being.” This is the foundation of any working critique. Such a relation is founded in the recognition that we have built this world. It is our creation not a world given to us. We created it this way and we can create in a different form if this one doesn’t work for us. Marx echoes this when he suggests that we have to face “with sober senses [the] real conditions of life, and [our] relations with [our] kind.” I would ask, are we in CYC even beginning to do this?

In his letters, Negri goes on to suggest the way in which such a process might be initiated. He states,

To accept the abstractness of the world, to endure its coldness, the desert of passions; and there on this empty horizon on which we move, rendered blind by our misery, to seek-to seek the real, always until it falls into our hands: an encounter, an event. Is it possible to determine the event? No, we can only search for it desperately. Determining it is only a matter of discovery. If luck and grace aid us, and only in that case, we will be able to think, vaguely, of a reopening of hope. (p. 10)

The first step then, is an acceptance of the world as it is with all its brutality. However, it is to also to seek-to seek, in this, the actuality of living relations through an encounter or an event. Here we are on the ground of fundamental CYC practice.

We have just such encounters and events in our work on a daily basis if we know how to pay attention to the revolutionary possibilities of the mundane encounter.

In a recent article about young people in Greece, Paul Mason tells us that young people no longer want power in the conventional sense of governmental and juridical force. Instead, they want to remake the world. He suggests that, “identity and integrity have replaced ideology.” These young people recognize that the world has changed and the forms of actual power have changed with it. These are young people whose world includes unstable and contingent employment, the importance of having the technological know how to negotiate a world of constantly shifting start-ups, and looser forms of intimacy and sexuality. Their response to the world we have been describing is not one of despair and resignation, but the instigation of a process to develop “a credible identity – a life lived according to a believed truth.” Mason proposes that this “has become a more significant badge in politics than a coherent set of ideas.”

I wonder if we as a global field of CYC have begun to apprehend this shift in our work. If the new modes of life that young people are being born into are registering within our own conceptions of who we are and what we do in our relations with young people. If we do not catch up soon, history will pass us by and that would be a shame. Because what young people appear to be seeking today is precisely what we as a field have been forgetting about ourselves since the end of the 20th century.





Time for Tea: Finding Meaning in the Rhythm of Mealtime Experiences

James Freeman

Abstract

Mealtimes provide an opportunity to promote a natural rhythm in the daily experience of children and youth. They are also everyday opportunities to create the experience of being cared for and a sense of belonging. This article briefly explores elements of mealtime routines and opportunities to promote rhythm and meaning in the mealtime experience.

Their voices made the journey down the hallway from the kitchen to the bedroom. They were familiar sounds. I could distinguish the voice of my parents and grandparents, yet they were just below the volume to understand what was being discussed. It was a pleasant morning conversation and I could tell the home was full of family members enjoying the morning. Accompanying the voices was the smell of applewood smoked bacon frying

in the pan and the sweet smell of a warm fire coming from the potbelly stove in the gathering room. I could hear the clanging of dishes as the morning meal was being prepared. I was around ten years old and waking to the beginning of a day visiting my grandparents. In the moment I felt cared for, that I belonged, and that there were no other pressures in the world other than waking up and embracing any adventures the day had in store.

Creating Mealtime Experiences

Young people in care often miss these memorable yet difficult-to-describe moments. Since that day as a child I have worked alongside too many young people who worried where their next meal might come from, if they would have a place to sleep for the night, and if anyone - family or otherwise - even cared about them.

Mealtime experiences can provide a natural rhythm in the daily experience of young people. Around the globe we gather two to three times a day to pause, sit, and dine together. These moments are so centering in life that “it is impossible to create a good living environment if children and young people do not enjoy their food” (Kahan 1994, p.83). There is, perhaps, no greater element in creating routine and rhythm in daily life than mealtime routines.

During a recent visit to Harmeny School on the border of Peatland hills in Balerno, Scotland, I observed a mealtime at the residential school. One of the cottage groups had gathered for lunch. After preparing the food together, the group of young boys sat around the table with the adults. They enjoyed their meal, discussing the events of their day and laughing together. David Gibson, head of care at the school, had shown me the teaching kitchen at the school where the counters and cooking areas were built at the height a young boy could easily reach and where they learned how to source, prepare, and serve meals to one another.

“If a young person can’t control anything else in life”, David said, “he can

control what goes into his body.” The residential school believes these experiences are critical moments in daily life for each young person (Harmeny School, 2015). We talked about and observed some of the the sounds, smells, and experiences of mealtime as a vital element of childhood experience and one that is critical to our development and feeling cared for in life.

Meaning in the Present and Learning for the Future

There is a deep “significance of food in human development and how trust and attachment are often rooted in feeding [and mealtimes are] a vital part of building trust and connections with youth who might have experienced little of either” (Krueger, 2006). Consider how the act of sitting down together is equalizing in a way. Power can be set aside and the moment becomes intimate and interpersonal. Bids for connection are made and responded to as food is shared and passed. Equality and caring is communicated in “the movement of the arm and smile saying ‘I am here with youth having this lunch, making sure you are fed’” (Krueger, 2006).

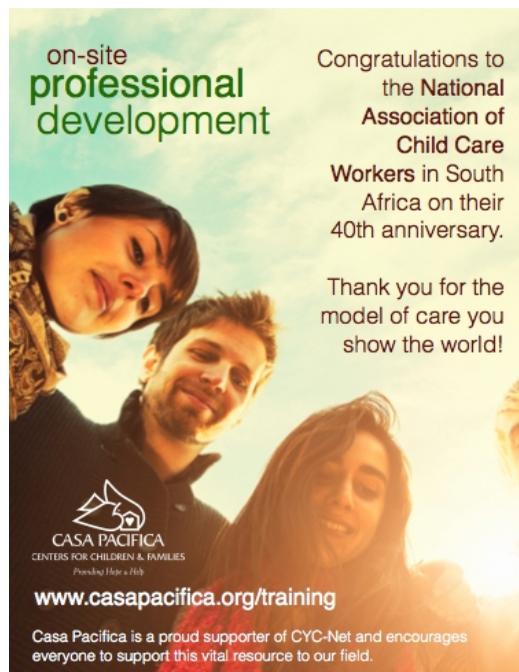
When we pause and reflect on the mealtime experience we realize there are many elements promoting connection and engagement. Meals are an “important place for children to learn about behaviour, to acquire skills, and to feel connected to one another and their carers” (Smith, Fulcher & Doran, 2013, p. 47). There is the process of gathering and transition from other activities. The weekly and daily planning of



menus. Shopping and preparation of ingredients. Listening to one another and learning the likes and dislikes we each have related to food. Understanding the memories - whether joyful, fearful, or missing - of past mealtime experiences. Planning, gathering, and experiencing meals together then is “a golden opportunity to further connections, skills and relationships for the present and future.” (Krueger, 2006)

Intentionality of Action

Being intentional in our approach to mealtimes can create experiences which encourage relational engagement and create a meaningful experiences for one another. They are full of opportunities for connection and mutuality of conversation.



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The source of the food, for example, might be mentioned. Inquiry into tastes that the youth like or dislike might be discussed. Plans for future meals and activities might be made as well.

Mealtime approaches vary, perhaps extremely, across the field of child and youth care. Let's begin to think critically about what aspects of these daily rituals and rhythms might most impact the development and life experiences of young people in our care.

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Unplugged: Life without Social Media

A Qualitative Exploration

**Cassandra Nader, Catherine Hedlin,
Donna Jamieson and Gerard Bellefeuille**

Abstract

Social media has become a taken for granted part of life for many people. The current generation of young people, in particular, has been “plugged in” for most of their lives. This article reports the findings from a qualitative exploratory study that asked a group comprised primarily of child and youth care (CYC) students to give up all forms of social media for a one-week period and to share their reactions to this experience.

Keywords: child and youth care, social media, qualitative, unplugged

Introduction

For most Canadians information technology, including social media, is simply part of their everyday lives. For some, life without social media sites is almost inconceivable. Walk through any public space and you will be hard-pressed to find people without cell phones. Most are busy texting, Tweeting, or updating their Facebook statuses. The latest Facebook statistics suggest that Canadian youth and adults are spending more time on online

than almost anyone else on Earth (Dewing, 2012, p.1). Over 19 million Canadians are on Facebook and more than 14 million of these visit the site on a daily basis. On a per-capita basis, this makes Canada one of the principal Facebook users in the world (Wadsworth, 2013, para 1). In fact, according to Dewing, the average Canadian has 225 “friends” on the social network while the median number of friends for older adolescent Facebook users is 300 (Madden et al, 2013, p. 6).



The virtual world has become an integral component of the lifespace of young people (Gharabaghi & Stuart, 2013, p.16). Most teens (92%) go online daily with a quarter of them stating they spend almost all of their time online. With 77% of 14-17 year old teens reporting using Facebook (Lenhart, 2015, p. 26), social media has become a way of life for the North American adolescent.

According to Dr. Paul Booth (as cited in Keller, 2013, p.10), social media has fundamentally altered the way we engage and communicate with one another across all age groups and circumstances. Online mediated communication rather than face-to-face interaction appears to be rapidly becoming a preferred communication modality. However, Booth believes that interactions on social media have actually weakened our ties because we no longer feel as personally connected. We are likely to see other people as removed from us and our personal concerns. Ironically, we are brought closer to people who normally would not be a part of our daily lives while being distanced from those that in the past we would have attempted to regularly meet face-to-face. This change in how we communicate has led to a shift in human relationships. We are communicating more, but the increase in quantity may be leading to a decrease in quality. We have many more superficial “friends,” but fewer



meaningful relationships. Sherry Turkle (2012), a researcher in the area of interpersonal communication, maintains that while technology has made communicating easier, it has diminished humans' abilities to communicate and interact on a more significant, intimate level. In the article *The Flight from Conversation*, Turkle woefully asserts that, “We’ve become accustomed to a way of being ‘alone together’” (para. 4). This is obvious to anyone who has watched two people sitting at a candlelit restaurant table, ignoring each other while they stare fascinated at their phones. Without our devices, we feel disconnected and out of touch, almost panicked about what we may be missing (Turkle, 2011).

As researchers, we wondered about the implications of increased dependence on social media for child and youth care (CYC) practice, which has traditionally relied on relational “in the moment” lifespace intervention to facilitate change. Is it possible that current child and youth care students and graduates are more tied to technology than to other people? Or is technology a way of enhancing links to others in their virtual lifespace? If social media has affected the way in which CYC students view themselves and how they relate to others, what is the impact of connectivity dependence on relational- centred CYC practice?

This study was exploratory, and very time-limited, and therefore unable to visit the above questions directly. However, it provided a starting point by investigating the experience of a small sample of CYC students who agreed to be partially “unplugged” from social networking sites for a period of one week.

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative, cross-sectional design to explore participants’ perceptions of their experiences of being “unplugged” from social networking sites for a period of one week. The research was situated in the interpretive paradigm (Taylor, 2008). Research paradigms are theoretical frameworks that influence the way knowledge is understood, studied and interpreted (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Understanding human experiences within an interpretive paradigm requires flexible research structures that are receptive to capturing meaning (MacKenzie & Knipe, 2006). The goal of interpretive research is to understand and interpret meaning within a specific circumstance rather than to generalize or predict causal relationships.

Originally, the purpose of this study was to explore the positive effects for CYC students living without social networking for a brief period of time. However, during the process both positive and negative emotions arose. Participants were allowed to send and receive e-mails and text messages during this period, as for many this was a requirement of their

employment. Thus are we ever able to ‘unplug’? Our specific research question was: What are the emotional and psychosocial effects of giving-up social media for a period of one week?

Sample Method

A non-probability convenience sample was used to recruit 15 individuals to participate. This is considered an appropriate sampling strategy for exploratory studies which aim to assure inclusion of the people best able to provide the necessary data in order to gather as much unique data on a research question as possible (Polit & Beck, 2004). All except 4 participants were students in the Bachelor of Child and Youth Care (BCYC) program. One of the participants chose to leave the study prior to completion. Results are based on the remaining 14 subjects.

Data Collection Methodology

Data was collected in two distinctive phases, using a variety of collection methods, which are described below. The technique of employing multiple data sources to provide different viewpoints, known as methodological triangulation, was used to strengthen the credibility of the study (Koch 1998). The core strength of methodological triangulation is the potential for discovering meaningful information or subtle differences that may remain hidden with the use of a single approach to data collection (Denzin, 1989).



Phase 1: Creative Journaling

The initial phase of the data collection process involved research participants maintaining a daily creative journal in which to record their thoughts and feelings in relation to being unplugged from social media sites. Each participant was provided with an empty journal and encouraged to draw, write, or log their entries in the manner that best worked for them rather than simply using verbal descriptions. Though we often think of verbal dialogue or observation as the optimal means by which to collect data, the use of arts-based data collection methods is shifting our understanding of what counts as evidence and offers “powerful learning experiences by opening up a new meaning-making space, that can generate insights and understandings that traditional linguistic-based research methods cannot” (Bellefeuille, Ekdahl, Kent and Kluczny, 2014, p.3).

Phase 2: Focus Group

The second phase of the data collection process involved an opened-ended series of 3 focus groups, which included all fourteen research participants. These groups discussed the themes that emerged from the researcher’s analysis of the creative journals. A positive feature of this data collection strategy is that it provides a social forum, allowing participants to hear and consider other opinions (Krueger, 2009).



As this study was exploratory in nature, looking at the relatively new phenomena of social media, focus groups provided a “lively collective interaction [which] may bring forth more spontaneous expressive and emotional views than in individual, often more cognitive, interviews” (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 150). The focus groups also served as one aspect of the aforementioned analysis triangulation.

Data Analysis

Once all of the expressive journals were collected the initial phase of thematic analysis was used to guide interpretations of the research. Since the participants had been invited to journal in any way that fit for them, many of them drew very creative pictures and symbols representing their ideas and experiences. The process involved reviewing the expressive journals thoroughly to establish familiarization, allowing for recurring themes and experiences to be drawn out from both the text and images in order to develop key themes. This process was repeated until no new themes emerged (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The themes were carefully reviewed to ensure that they related the research question.

Research participants were selected and invited to form focus groups to review and discuss this initial set of themes. This

aligned well with the interpretive research paradigm because it allowed for theme identification through multiple lenses. Both researchers and participants agreed on and expanded on common themes.

Results

All participants reported being challenged in meeting the limited social media for one-week guidelines. As mentioned earlier, one participant dropped out of the study immediately. Six out of the remaining 14 reported having accessed social media at least once during the study period. Eleven out of 14 reported that they intended to use social media less in the future.

Thematic analysis of the journals revealed three major themes:

1. Participants reported having more free time.
2. Participants felt that they were more aware of what was happening around them.
3. As the study progressed, participant urges to go on to social media decreased. Yet on the final day of being social media free all participants expressed eagerness to “catch up” the next day.

Discussion

Perhaps the most telling finding of the study was that one participant dropped out almost immediately and six of the others “cheated” and accessed a social media

site at least once during the study. This suggests that social media has become such an integral part of people’s lives that they are not able to survive for even brief periods of time without it. Many use it to make social engagements, communicate on school projects, fill in any blank spaces in their schedules, and overall, as a mechanism to address boredom.

In a profession that has always stressed face-to-face, in the moment relational practice, dependence on technology for relationship development could potentially pose some serious problems. Is it possible for the focused, genuine relationships believed to be central to CYC practice to be created and supported electronically? Traditional thinking would suggest not. Booth (as cited in Keller, 2013, p.10) states that while individuals do have more relationships thanks to online communication, these tend to be more superficial and less meaningful—the antithesis of what ideal CYC relationships are thought to be.

Yet if social media is as embedded in the lives of CYC students as it was for these students, how much time do the youth and families they serve spend on-line? If, as Gharabahghi and Stuart (2013) suggest, virtual space is embedded in the life space of youth, how do we make use of this new medium? Can CYC practitioners create a virtual presence that supports or even replaces the work in the physical lifespace? One research participant felt they lost an important support network when they were unable to use Facebook to share and receive feedback from “friends” about difficult events.



Another consideration is whether individuals who spend much of their time in online relationships at a distance are actually developing, or capable of developing, the kind of interpersonal skills needed to effectively counsel those in emotional distress. Can genuine empathy be experienced or demonstrated in a Facebook or text message? Problems at a distance often lack the immediacy or sense of urgency that one gets from face-to-face encounters. It is commonly believed that much of the real meaning of spoken messages is transmitted by facial expression, tone of voice, inflections in speech patterns and so on—this piece is typically missing in online communication. Without these elements it seems likely that misinterpretations and misunderstandings are more of a risk. Emoticons can only go so far. During the study, one participant wrote, “I found myself engaging in more conversations than normal... I am more aware when listening (active listening)”

There were three major themes that came out of the participants’ self reports and journals.

Firstly, the participants found that they had more free time when they were not continuously checking and responding to messages in social media. Interestingly most participants linked the lack of social media to increased incidents and longer duration of boredom. Some participants reported substituting a variety of activities when they felt the urge to go on social media sites: watching television, sleeping, doing homework, listening to music, baking, painting nails, reading, cleaning, and

talking to people, for example. Others sounded lonely and bored, “I stared at my phone [and] refreshed my email a few times.” Some replaced social media with similar activities, “I texted my friends.” It is difficult to say whether the participants appreciated or felt that they achieved more with the extra time. Some were clearly anxious to return to social media, “Admittedly, I feel relieved [now that the process is over].”

Secondly, participants felt that they were more aware of the world around them. This is not especially surprising since when they were not looking at electronic devices their focus would more likely be expanded to include more of the environment around themselves. Some reported noticing all of the other people engaged with their cell phones, and commented on how “rude” this behavior now seemed to them. Generally, they noticed what was happening beyond their own handheld device. Whether this meant that they also engaged more with the world, we cannot be sure, but at least they had the opportunity to notice and make a choice about how to respond. Participants wrote:

“It’s [social media] a huge barrier and makes me so distracted and unfocused on what’s around me.”

“It takes over, it becomes a main priority in life when really people should be focusing in real life.”

"I saw many cute children who were looking for attention as their parents just shared at their phones."

"...I was able to enjoy conversations more and listen better."

Thirdly, as the week progressed many reported being less anxious to check social media sites. The majority indicated that they became aware that social media was a "waste of time" and that they planned to reduce their usage in the future. If we view social media as an addiction for some individuals, it may be that they were actually "de-toxing" during this experiment and starting to find other interests to meet their needs for connection. In fact, one participant joked about being thankful that she had supportive "sponsors" to help her through the week. Some students' journal comments definitely have an addictive quality:

"Almost checked Facebook...can't stop thinking about it."

"I agreed to participate in this research study because I have been told that I am addicted to Facebook/ Instagram and wanted to challenge myself to abstain from using it...I am addicted



and I am wondering if I will be able to complete the week"

"Have started checking the Weather Network and TSN as an excuse to look at something on my phone."

On the other hand, a number of participants reported that they were able to give up social media fairly easily. It should be noted that although social media sites were off limits, participants were allowed to send and receive e-mail and text messages. It would be interesting to see

whether emails and text messaging increased for subjects during the week without social media, in which case participants may still have spent considerable time engaged with electronic

devices. Participants could not access YouTube but often replaced this with Netflix.



"I feel happy that I'm less dependent on social media. It isn't as much fun as I remember it being."

"My life consisted of it, but now will use it less."

"I feel like I won't be going on it as much or relying on it as much..."



Overall, the responses to being deprived of social

media for a one week period were quite varied, with some participants clearly anxious to be done with the study so they could return to their previous online activities, but the majority reporting that they planned to reduce their use of social media significantly in the future. Almost all of the participants reported an increased awareness of how much time they spent on social media sites, and many felt that this time could be better spent otherwise. It seemed that most participants had simply accepted social media as a part of their lives and had never actually questioned its worth or its effect on their daily lives.

It would be interesting to continue this research, perhaps looking at how many CYC practitioners use social media as part of their CYC role, and whether stopping this might impact their relational practice—for better or for worse. Further research is clearly required to determine the effects of social media on the quality of therapeutic relationships and on CYC practice in general. Clearly, social media is here to stay, and there needs to be a considered look at how it can be ethically incorporated into CYC practice without compromising the relationships between professionals, or between professionals and the people they serve.

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Personal Values

Kirsten Gibb

Abstract

Values give our lives meaning and allow us to believe in ourselves. Living by one's values results in a fulfilling, satisfying life. These are ideals that I hold, and in my day-to-day life and work with children and youth, the values and ideals which have the most significance are the ones that I try to follow each and every day. Exploring my values, and how they translate to action, undertook new meaning for me during a time of crisis, and here I share some strategies that helped me to focus my actions. I always try to live in the moment, love from within, and be impeccable with my word. I truly believe that as long as I stick to these core values I will have no regrets.

Exploring My Values

Living in the moment is simply focusing all of your attention on what is happening around you. Tolle (1999) wrote an entire book based on this value, and in it he explains that, "Nothing ever happened in the past; it happened in the Now. Nothing will ever happen in the future; it will happen in the Now" (p. 41). To live in the moment is to be present. It is so easy to get caught up in the past or the future, and often the result is that we miss what is happening in the present. It is a waste of time to dwell on the past since we cannot change it, or to worry about the future since we cannot predict it. If the current moment can be used to either fix what has happened, or to prepare for what is to come, then you are making the most of the present. If this isn't possible, then move on. Appreciate what is happening and live your life one

day at a time. Living in the moment also includes being present for others. This means focusing all of your attention on them, listening to what they have to say, and simply being there for them.

Meditation instructor Sharon Salzberg says, "The simple act of being completely present to another person is truly an act of love—no drama is required" (2007). The key to this value is to be genuine. To say you love someone does not make it true. True love is in your thoughts, feelings, and actions. In order to genuinely love others, to really know what love is, you must genuinely love yourself. The more love that you have within yourself, the more you have to give; not only to people, but to your surroundings, the environment, and humanity in general. This value is so important in everything we do, because it also embraces the ideals of compassion, empathy, forgiveness, acceptance, family,

friendship, appreciation, and countless others that are crucial to a meaningful life.

For life to be personally meaningful, there needs to be a purpose in everything that you do or say. To say something that you don't mean is an insult to those listening, as well as to yourself. This brings me to my third value, which is phrased best by Ruiz as being impeccable with your word (1997).

Being impeccable with your word includes the valuable qualities of honesty, integrity, commitment, pride, and respect. The inside cover of Ruiz's book *The Four Agreements* offers the following explanation of this value: "Speak with integrity. Say only what you mean. Avoid using the word to speak against yourself or to gossip about others. Use the power of your word in the direction of truth and love" (1997). Ruiz's definition is particularly accurate because the power of one's word is often underestimated. Whether a thought is positive or negative, true or false, to speak it out loud gives it power. This value should hold the most significance for us because one's word has the potential to do just as much harm as it does good. Because it is so easy for words to be misinterpreted, misunderstood or misconstrued, it is that much more important to be absolutely certain of what you are saying. If you cannot stand behind your word and take pride in it, then it is not worth saying.

Living in the moment, loving from within, and being impeccable with my word are the values that I follow every day. Understanding the impact of these values

has given new meaning to all of my words and actions, allowing me to take pride in myself. This understanding developed during a very significant period of my life.

Discovering My True Values

Most values are learned and developed throughout a person's life based on a variety of different experiences. For me however, it was the single experience of getting divorced which forced me to take stock, and make changes. During this time I found myself feeling isolated, depressed, and generally dissatisfied with my life. I was consumed with anger, bitterness, pity, judgment, and sadness. It didn't take long for these feelings to completely dominate every aspect of my life, to the point where it didn't feel like it was my life anymore.

To take back control of my life, and myself, I embarked on what some would consider a "spiritual journey". Instead of *thinking* about things I'd like to do to improve my life, I just did them. I went for morning hikes, practiced yoga and meditation, and read inspirational books. I used all my spare time to cook amazing, healthy cuisine, and to volunteer at an animal shelter.

All of these changes helped me realize the importance of living in the moment. I was no longer dwelling on the past, on what went wrong, or what could have been done differently. And I was no longer worrying about what I was going to do next. I was simply living. By doing this, by always holding on to the present moment, I was able to let go of everything else. I let



go of the disappointment, the regret, the worry, and the stress.

Once I was able to do this, I began to understand the value of loving from within. It started with being able to love myself. When I took control of my life and started living for myself, and doing what made me happy, I realized just how important I was. I realized the effect I could have on others when I was happy with myself. When I accepted myself and my faults, I was able to accept the faults in others. Dr. Martin Luther King (n.d.) once said:

We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies.

With this realization, I was able to really let go of all the negative feelings that I had been holding on to. I was able to forgive myself and my ex-husband, and forgive everything that had happened in the past. Once I let go of those feelings, I felt a whole new level of love within myself.

During this time, I found that writing things down helped me to express myself clearly and gain insight to my own thoughts, feelings, and values. One of the things that I began writing was a new journal. I had always had journals for writing down my thoughts and feelings, and now looking back, I couldn't help but notice that they had always been negative. I used them to vent, criticize, and complain. So I started a completely new journal, one specifically for positive thoughts. I directed a

lot of effort into collecting positive ideas, quotes, affirmations, and experiences. And if I was having a bad day, if I didn't have something positive to write, I read through the previous entries. By the time I was finished, my bad day wouldn't matter; I was reminded of all that I had to be thankful for.

This was how I learned the power of words. Whether you are speaking them out loud or writing them down, your thoughts are powerful, and committing them to words makes them even stronger. It doesn't matter if something is true or not; once it is written or spoken, it becomes the truth.

One day I had this incredibly small, simple experience which changed the way I think about words and language. I rode the bus every morning to work. I would bundle up against the cold and walk several freezing blocks. I would show my pass to the driver, who barely glanced up before wordlessly waiving me onto the silent bus. I would get off at my stop and proceed to work. Every day was the same joyless routine. Then one morning I caught an earlier bus. When I stepped on, to my surprise, the driver of this bus let out a booming, sincere "Good Morning!" And I smiled as I returned his greeting. For the rest of the trip, every time a new passenger got on that bus, he greeted them the exact same way, with the exact same enthusiasm. And every time, I couldn't help but smile. When I arrived at work that day, I had a huge smile on my face, and I passed that good morning on to everyone else I saw. I went out of my way to ride that same bus as

often as I could, and to pass on to others the impact those two simple little words can have on the rest of your day.

Values to Action

As described by Thumbadoo, values “colour our human reality with new ways of understanding, creating in us the passion to carry out our plans” (1997). Understanding our values is absolutely critical to developing the passion we need in order to be effective in the field of Child and Youth Care. Living by my values has given me an incredible sense of satisfaction and happiness. Most of the skills and attributes essential to establishing healthy, beneficial relationships with clients, as well as colleagues, can be classified as living in the moment, loving from within, or being impeccable with your word.

Values give meaning to the actions we carry out within our lives. By being true to our values, we are able to experience greater satisfaction with ourselves and a more fulfilling life. By understanding what it is that we value most in life, we gain extremely useful insight into the thoughts and feelings that drive our behavior. We are able to focus our attention on things in life which truly matter: the positive effect that we can have on others, the power of love, and life itself.

Remaining committed to your values will ensure that they are reflected in everything that you say and do. This congruence between your values and behavior establishes that you are a trustworthy person; a fact which will culti-

vate many beneficial relationships, especially those needed to become successful in Child and Youth Care.

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*Tell me what you
pay attention to
and I will tell you
who you are.*

José Ortega y Gasset





Just Say “No” to Lemon Gin

Nils Ling

A couple of weeks ago I was at a party. At one point in the evening I wandered over to the bar table. And there, on the table alongside the various bottles of scotch, rye, and wine was ... a pint of Lemon Gin. My stomach did a slow roll.

I have not been able to look at a bottle of Lemon Gin since I was a teenager. That would be, what - ten years? Okay, twenty. Okay ... more. But here I was, all those years later, staring at that flat green bottle with the yellow label, and my stomach started to feel just the way it did the *last* time I'd had a close encounter with a

mickey of Lemon Gin.

See, I don't know about you, but where I come from, Lemon Gin was the cocktail of choice for novice drinkers. I have no idea why this is. With all due respect to the people who make Lemon Gin, it is one of the most vile substances on the face of God's green earth. In fact, that may be the theory behind starting with Lemon Gin - if you can survive it, you can survive anything.

Or maybe we were just stupid. The more I think of it, the more I'm willing to go with that explanation. It covers a lot of

things I did when I was a teenager that I'm embarrassed about today.

Whatever the reason, we went to a lot of trouble to get our hands on some Lemon Gin. And I say "we" because none of the gang I ran with was rich enough to buy his own bottle. I mean, come on - it was three dollars and ten cents. What were we, the Rockefellers? So we'd go two or three on a mickey (or pint, as my American friends called it. Or, as my Brit friends would say, "a throgmorton") (I'm kidding. I have no idea what they called a small bottle. But "throgmorton" sounds about right.)

Once we'd popped for the bottle, we'd have to scrounge whatever we could find for mix. I've had Lemon Gin and 7-up, Lemon Gin and Coke, Lemon Gin and water. Fine natural emetics, all. But the worst drink I have ever willingly ingested - and I say this without a moment's hesitation - is Lemon Gin and Grape Juice.

Oh, that was a night. My buddy Gord's parents were out of town, so he had us all over, as long as we promised not to wreck anything. Well, of course we all promised. We were teenaged boys with illicit alcohol and no parental supervision. What could possibly go wrong?

It was the kind of January night you can only get on the Canadian prairies, where the snow crunches underfoot and your spit freezes before it hits the ground and you have to chip the dog off the fire hydrant. When we got to Gord's place, somebody broke out a couple of mickeys of Lemon Gin. We looked around for something to mix it with. Nothing. We

asked for volunteers to go out into the bitter wind and cold and walk the block to the store. Nobody raised his hand. Finally, Gord reached into the fridge and pulled out a pitcher of grape juice. We all stared at it silently.

I don't know who eventually poured the first drink, but we all passed it around and convinced one another that it "really wasn't all that bad". So we each had one, then another, and another and pretty soon it really *wasn't* all that bad.

Except it was. Really bad. You might be able to lie to your taste buds, but your stomach knows when it's getting something that isn't right. And your stomach has a way of communicating that to the rest of you, not to mention to the world at large. But Gord was petrified his parents would find out, so rather than let us use the washroom, he ordered us out into the back yard, hoping, in vain, that the cold air would cure us, would settle our stomachs.

It didn't. And if Gord really didn't want his parents to find out, he shouldn't have sent a bunch of teenaged boys loaded up with Lemon Gin and grape juice into a back yard covered with freshly fallen snow, if you get my drift. The case against him the next morning was clear ... and colourful. He was grounded for two months.

Later that night I promised God, face to face (well, okay, over the big white phone at home) that I would never, ever drink Lemon Gin again. And frankly, that's been the easiest promise I've ever had to keep.





Postcard from
Leon Fulcher

JULY 2015

Greetings to one and all! While some in the World hold their breath for a result in the NBA Championship – whether Golden State Warriors or Cleveland Cavaliers – a lot of us have stayed absolutely focused on the World's Youth playing *The Beautiful Game*, or Football (ok you North Americans, Soccer) on a World Stage, at the FIFA U-20 World Cup that started here at the end of May. As I write,



Sunset over Wellington Stadium for the quarterfinal match between Uzbekistan and Senegal

the competition is down to the last four teams playing – ready for the Semi-Finals. And what surprises!

Regardless of setting, anyone engaged in youth work knows to 'expect the unexpected' no matter what meaningful moments are unfolding in front of us. Go back to your world map or globe and see if you can locate 4 places. Try this as a youth group exercise. Find Mali, Serbia and Senegal. Then locate Brazil. What do you, or your youth group know about the youth of Mali? What sort of child and youth care services might be available to Mali youths? How might you and your youth group find out? Maybe some will be asking why bother?



Senegal celebrate their 2-0 quarterfinal victory over Uzbekistan!

How else do youth workers engage young people in ways that nurture a wider World-view than that to which they are daily accustomed. Is World Geography left to intermediate and secondary schools to teach? Well I hate to tell you but World Geography is no longer part of the Core Curriculum for North American high schools!



Germany Wait Anxiously during the Penalty Kick Shoot-Out against Mali

While you're still looking at the World map, and having located Senegal, what do you and your youth group notice about where Senegal is located, and about how close it is to Mali? Does anyone notice how close these two countries are to the centre of the Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa? What about the French colonial traditions that left Senegal as part of the old French Africa. Parles vous Francais?



Mali Team Celebrates Victory Over Germany after Extra Time and a 4-3 Penalty

Think about what it may have felt like as a member of the Mali national team, finishing 30 minutes extra-time, and still a drawn result. And then, imagine the elation' – *Tre Bon'*! – and also the devastation of that 4th Penalty Kick going in after 2 of Germany's kicks failed to score. Imagine what it might be like growing up in Civil War-torn Mali, learning to kick a football bare-footed, knocking out a World Power House team!



Portugal v Brazil players fighting for the ball in quarterfinal action before Portugal went out

Brazil is the only team left playing at the Semi-Finals stage of this World Cup competition that was seeded amongst the 24 strongest teams that began the competition. In many respects, Portugal out-played the Brazilian team but could not turn that advantage into a winning goal. In the end, these youths of Western Europe were knocked out of the World Cup during another Penalty Shoot-Out!

USA was the other Quarterfinalist Team to be knocked out of the competition, this time by Serbia – again through



Brazil team members celebrate their quarterfinal victory against Portugal

Penalty Shoot-Out. American players will have been devastated for not simply having kicks saved by the Goalkeeper, but also missing the goal mouth with their kicks! Serbia didn't even have to use their final kick, having won the shoot-out with only 4 shots on goal.



Serbia celebrates quarterfinal victory over the USA after extra time and penalty shoot-out

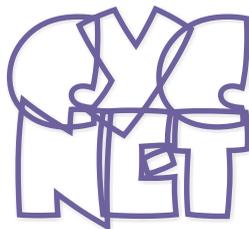
Think again about the 50 or so young men who were still playing in the FIFA U-20 World Cup at the time of writing this Postcard. Each of these players is

being 'stalked' by European Football Agents seeking to sign them to lucrative club contracts as future first team players across the German, Italian, Spanish, French, Dutch and English Football Leagues. Some are already playing for top ranked teams.



USA team distraught after losing on penalty kicks to Serbia

What preparation might someone in your care require in order to positively 'survive' such an opportunity? It's worth considering that ACL or Hamstring injuries present serious risks to a career that can be cut short in an instant? If you are involved with Youth Football or Soccer, please check out the FIFA 11+ Warm-Up Programme at <http://f-marc.com/11plus/home/>. It will reduce ACL and Hamstring injuries by 30-50 per cent!



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EndNotes

“A child’s imaginary playmate just might actually be there.”

— **Doug Dillon**

“Not only am I not my dad’s favorite child—I’m his only child.”

— **Jarod Kintz**, *Seriously delirious, but not at all serious*

“We must be careful not to discourage our twelve-year-olds by making them waste the best years of their lives preparing for examinations.”

— **Freeman Dyson**, *Infinite in All Directions*

“What she did have, after raising two children, was the equivalent of a PhD in mothering and my undying respect.”

— **Barbara Delinsky**, *Escape*

“Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don’t matter, and those who matter don’t mind.”

— **Bernard M. Baruch**

“You’ve gotta dance like there’s nobody watching,

Love like you’ll never be hurt,

Sing like there’s nobody listening,

And live like it’s heaven on earth.”

— **William W. Purkey**

“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”

— **Eleanor Roosevelt**

“Live as if you were to die tomorrow.

Learn as if you were to live forever.”

— **Mahatma Gandhi**

“Here’s to the crazy ones. The misfits.

The rebels. The troublemakers. The

round pegs in the square holes. The ones

who see things differently. They’re not

fond of rules. And they have no respect

for the status quo. You can quote them,

disagree with them, glorify or vilify them.

About the only thing you can’t do is ignore

them. Because they change things.

They push the human race forward. And

while some may see them as the crazy

ones, we see genius. Because the people

who are crazy enough to think they can

change the world, are the ones who do.”

— *Apple Inc.*

From the ashes a fire shall be woken,
A light from the shadows shall spring;
Renewed shall be blade that was broken,
The crownless again shall be king.”

— **J.R.R. Tolkien**

“Whenever you find yourself on the side
of the majority, it is time to pause and
reflect.”

— **Mark Twain**

Give the world the best you have and
you'll get kicked in the teeth.
Give the world the best you have any-
way.”

— **Kent M. Keith**, *The Silent
Revolution: Dynamic Leadership in the
Student Council*

“I may not have gone where I intended
to go, but I think I have ended up where I
needed to be.”

— **Douglas Adams**



“Love is that condition in which the
happiness of another person is essential to
your own.”

— **Robert A. Heinlein**

“When one door of happiness closes,
another opens; but often we look so long
at the closed door that we do not see the
one which has been opened for us.”

— **Helen Keller**

“I've learned that people will forget
what you said, people will forget what you
did, but people will never forget how you
made them feel.”

— **Maya Angelou**



information

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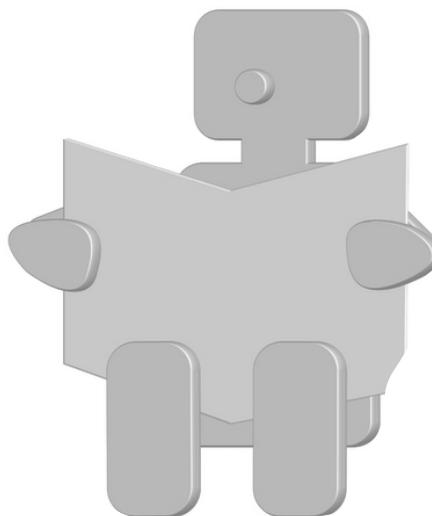
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