

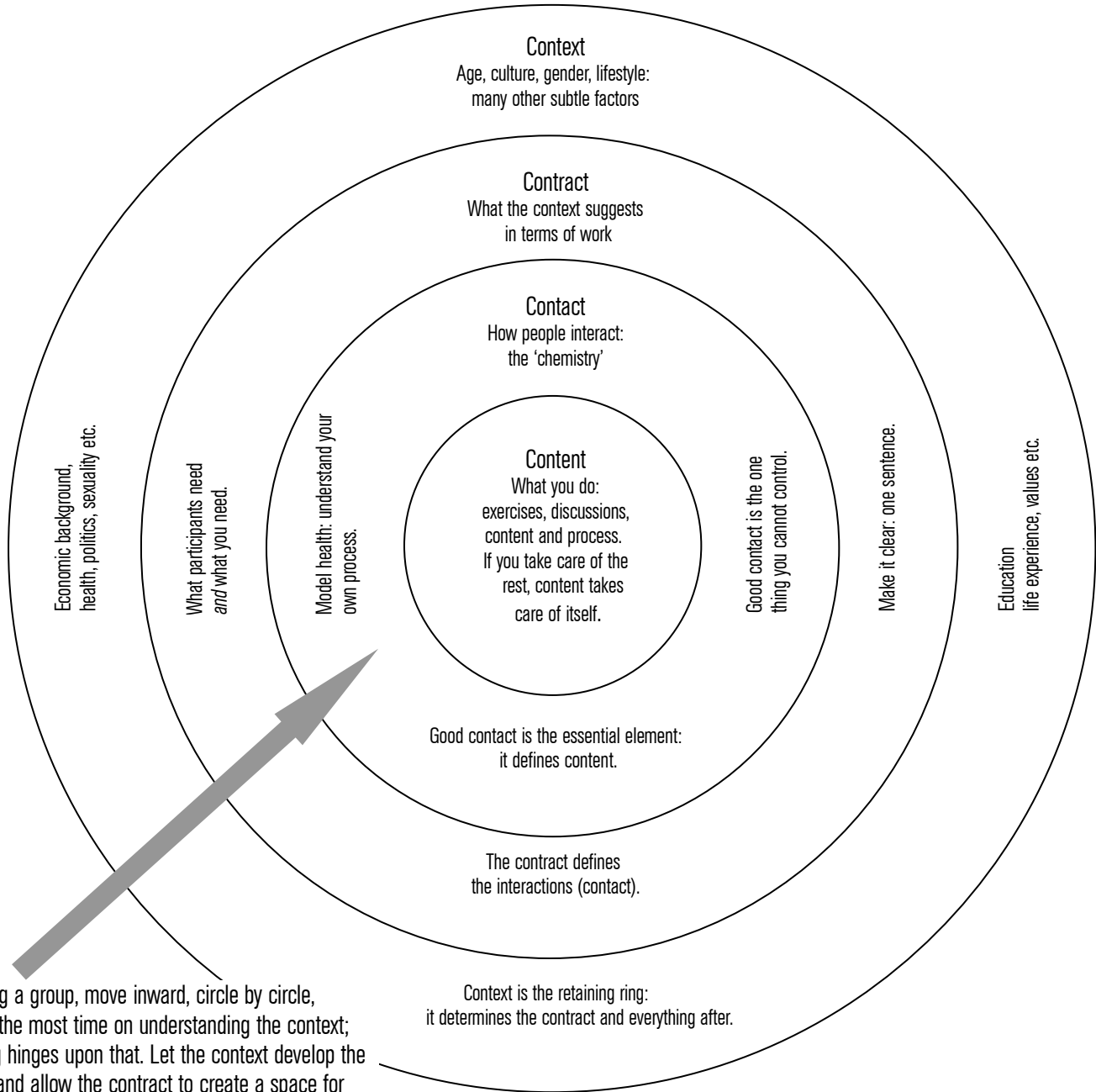
GROUP COUNSELING READER

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OVERVIEW

Working with groups is immensely rewarding and uniquely challenging, requiring of the facilitator a particular blend of professional skills and self-awareness that develops only through practice and experiment. This course is designed to offer learners a wide spectrum of both theoretical and experiential approaches to group work, focusing especially on core facilitation skills. We will examine group dynamics and evolution, interpersonal relationships (e.g. conflicts, alliances and other structures), leadership styles, curriculum development, and the role of health and healing practices. Particular attention will be given to developing effective facilitation strategies through achieving greater self-awareness and active sensing. Participants will also learn about the emerging models of group work which focus on collaboration, community-building and creativity.

THE MANDALA AS A NON-LINEAR VIEW OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT



A MAP FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT (AND GROUP DEVELOPMENT)

Personal Development	Health and Healing	Group Process	Archetypes & Symbols
Leaving the Sanctuary			
The Call to change	The sudden onslaught	Presenting life theme	The Letter
Refusing the Call	Fighting the illness demons	Finding ways to be busy	Business as usual
Receiving help	Compassionate assistance	Helpful advice	The stranger on the road
Crossing the threshold	Toward surrender	Showing up (late!)	The gate, Wind (I Ching)
Into the unknown	The spiral down	Nervous, polite anticipation	The Unfathomable (IC)
Initiation			
The labyrinth of trials	Death's long road	Internal conflicts and work	Deep water (IC)
Meeting inner challenges	Fevers and hallucinations	Conflicts in the group	Thunder (IC)
Making peace with the past	Taking your own medicine	Toward integration	Shallows (IC)
Shattering the mirror	Imperative wisdom	Insights and relationship	Meeting the god/goddess
The still point	The still point	The still point	Mountain (IC)
Return			
Refusing to return	The badge of vulnerability	Attachment, Identification	The eternal traveler
The mysterious journey	A magical transformation	The world intervenes	Fire (IC)
Receiving help (again)	The compassionate hand	More helpful advice	The god/ess of compassion
Crossing the return threshold	A quiet rebirth	Conscious farewell: the gift	Earth (IC)
The path to freedom	The cycle of becoming	Out into the world	Becoming the stranger

The patterns of emergence, growth and integration expressed by group work are more complex than the traditional formula of honeymoon/transition/working/closure. In any well-functioning group, all the cycles above are active all of the time; there is no specific linear progression. Because of this complexity, group work is more like riding a wave than managing a crowd. You can't control the wave, or perceive all of its many parts—hidden and visible, in the depths or riding the foam—but you can learn to ride the wave by using proper timing, awareness, action and relaxation. If you try to control too much, to catch the wave too soon, it will pass beneath you and leave you behind. On the other hand, if you neglect to act at the right moment, if you wait too long to catch the wave, it will rise up and tumble you into the surf. The balance between action and inaction, between fluidity and structure, between perception and mystery, is what makes groups so exciting (and challenging). You can learn to surf. Here are the rules:

1. Be centered, grounded and boundaried in yourself.
2. Trust the process; allow the group to form itself.
3. Lead from behind; intervene only when necessary—but when you do intervene, do so quickly and decisively.
4. If you handle problems when they are small, you will never have any large problems.
5. Ask your group to explore in ways that you like to explore; be a group participant yourself, learn from the inside.
6. Practice.

THERAPEUTIC RESPONSES TO BUILD CONTAINMENT, SAFETY, AND TRUST

PART ONE: WORKING WITH ADULTS

(or, why Therapeutic Modalities are Equivalent to Re-Parenting)

(consult part two, beginning on page 20, for matching statements for children)

Existence (2nd trimester to 1 month after birth)

I want you to feel safe and comfortable.

Take the time you need to trust me, and to trust the process.

I will be fully present with you, and I will not distance when things get tough.

I invite you to be in the world, to neither distance into the spirit nor retreat deep into your own core.

I want you to be here.

Needs (1 month to eight months)

I want to help you discover and meet your needs.

I will help you learn to ask for what you need, and to be specific.

I will try to meet your therapeutic needs, and will help you build a support system to meet other needs.

I will help you work toward balanced need fulfilment, so that you are neither giving up on the world nor retreating from it.

I support your boundaries, as I do my own, and we will work together toward establishing a balanced, healthy relationship.

I want you to trust me.

Autonomy (8 months to 2.5 years)

I will work with you so that you do not become overly dependent nor overtly distant.

I will help you build motivation, so that you may discover mystery and wonder.

I will stand in and be present with you, whatever happens.

I will help you slow down when you speed up too much, or when you get overwhelmed.

Will (2 to 4 years)

I support and want to see the full extent of your power.

I won't ask you to sacrifice your power, or to hide it, and I will not be afraid of it when it emerges.

Your power is yours to take into the world.

I will help you find a way to contain and express your energy.

If you need to fight with me, I will stand in and not run away ; but neither will I sacrifice my own boundaries and power.

Love/Sensuality (3 to 6 years)

Your loving and sensual feelings are yours; they are a part of your own intimate world.
I support the power of your sensual life, and I will appropriately help you to discover it.
I want you to discover and develop intimacy in your life.

Opinions (5 to 8 years)

I support your self-expression, and I believe in your knowledge.
I will discuss many things with you, in a forum of ideas and values, and I will trust that the relationship between us will be strong enough to contain our differences.
I will not belittle or deride you; nor will I sacrifice my own beliefs.
I believe in the power of ideas and of dialog, and I will try to find joy in these things together with you.
I want you to find your own voice, and to articulate your own truth.

Solidarity/Performance (7 to 12 years)

I recognize your uniqueness and the special contributions you make.
I want you to perceive and celebrate your uniqueness.
I also want you to find solidarity and support in groups and in your family, so that you may feel connected and free of the pressure to perform.
I want you to discover your potential, to find your place, and to find balance.

Integration (12 to 19, or 12 to 28-32)

I want you to understand and integrate the experiences you have had.
I will help you recover from fragmentation and confusion.
I understand the cycles of activation and relaxation, and I will assist you to understand and deal with these.
I will help you understand your life as a process, as a continual unfolding of layers upon layers, so that you perceive the nature of your lifelong learning.
I want you to plan and envision your life, and I will help you find ways of manifesting your goals.

THE TRAUMA VORTEX

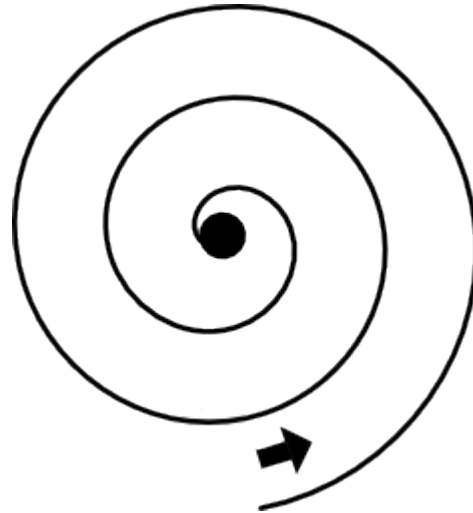
Trauma occurs when stress exceeds an individual's containment capacity. Physiological (i.e. emotional) energy breaks through the containment and splits off into the trauma vortex.

Incomplete responses (fight, flee, freeze, orient) are locked in the trauma vortex and contribute to the continued erosion of containment. Subsequent traumas are evoked by and contribute to these frozen response patterns.

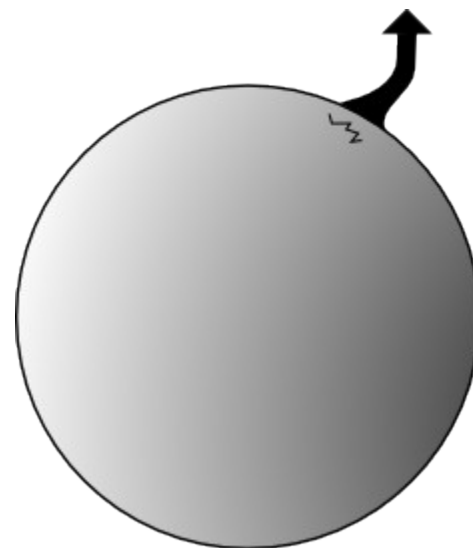
In the work of trauma healing, energy is slowly reclaimed from the trauma vortex and reintroduced to a newly-stabilized container (by way of careful titration). This requires the completion of locked response patterns and the development of new adaptations for dealing with similarly stressful situations. This sequence follows the evolutionary imperative toward healing.

Healthy containment involves the development of core relational, consciousness, and body awareness skills. These include grounding, centering, and boundaries. When combined in the spirit of authentic inquiry and relationship, these skills deliver presence, emotional management, safety of feelings, and overall psychological health.

Fragmentation, Overwhelm
Dissociation, Recursion



TITRATION

A vertical arrow pointing downwards, indicating the process of titration.

CONTAINER

SUGGESTIONS FOR WORKING WITH TRAUMATIZED CLIENTS

Practice grounding, centering, and boundaries in yourself
Be contained, and prevent your own activation
Practice energetic reinforcement in yourself (the ball exercise, for example)
Work with the client to build containment in the present moment
Work on safety and developing a safe space in the client's life
Teach the client grounding, centering, and boundaries
Work with the client on developing body sensation skills
Educate the client about trauma and the healing process (use map)
Help the client contain dissociation, overwhelm, and fear
Treat memories empathically, but preserve uncertainty
Teach the client to expand their range of nervous system responses:
(for example, many fighters need to learn how to freeze or flee,
many freezers need to fight or flee, and many fleers need to
freeze or fight)
Encourage the client to do physical activities (such as sports) to learn a wider
range of response choices
Help the client to develop a support system in their community
Get more training in trauma work (see resources)

Suggested Activities

Fight response: relaxation (to activate the freeze response), non-competitive games, games involving containment and expression simultaneously (e.g. backgammon, tennis), meditation, horseback riding, walking, Tai Chi, Chi Kung

Flight response: running (to complete the flight response), competitive games (to activate the fight response), squash, soccer, frisbee, judo, aikido

Freeze response: running (to unlock the fight response), martial arts (Wu Shu, Tai Chi), windsurfing, weight training, soccer, hiking, aerobics

Orient response: activities involving active choosing (e.g. orienteering), all team sports, all of the above

Things to Avoid

Do not revisit or reactivate the trauma (i.e. by “telling the story”)
Do not focus discussions on the past (build containment in the present)
Do not use unstructured or spontaneous expressive techniques (get training)
Do not validate or discount recovered memories (treat them as “in process”)

TRAUMA RESPONSES, ADDICTION, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Substance abuse is a kind of trauma (to which adolescents are particularly prone). Healing activities for trauma should assist clients to complete unresolved impulses (fight, flight, freeze, orient) and to expand their range of choice and action. This involves helping them to understand their habitual trauma responses, the ways in which substances contribute to those patterns, and the means by which they can learn other ways of dealing with stress and trauma.

<i>Trauma Response</i>	<i>Likely Substance Use</i>	<i>Healing Activities</i>
Fight Nervous system overly activated Tendency for conflict Poor containment	Stimulants Cocaine Alcohol Phencyclidine (pcp) Ritalin, Amphetamines Methamphetamines Coffee Steroids	Relaxation (to activate the freeze response) Non-competitive games Games with containment and expression (tennis, backgammon) Meditation Horseback riding, Walking Tai Chi, Chi Kung
Flight Nervous system overly activated Dissociation Containment in imagination	Hallucinogens Entactogens LSD Ecstasy (MDMA) MDE (Eve) Ketamine	Running (to complete the flight response) Competitive games (to activate the fight response) Squash, soccer, frisbee judo, aikido
Freeze Nervous system "paralyzed" Tendency for collapse Poor containment	Opiates Heroin, Methadone Valium GHB Rohypnol OxyContin Talwin	Running (to unlock the flight response) Martial arts (Wu Shu, Tai Chi) Windsurfing Weight training Soccer, hiking, aerobics
Orient Nervous system hypervigilant Tendency for anxiety Anxious containment	Marijuana	Activities involving active choosing (orienteering) All team sports All of the above

A MAP FOR ADDICTION AND RECOVERY

Stages	What Happens	Essential Tasks
<i>Integration of Childhood Developmental Themes</i>		
Spiritual engagement	Ambivalence, trauma or neglect	Creating a safe and sacred ground
Seven developmental stages (0-12)	Early developmental trauma or difficulty	Effective parenting and schooling
Transition toward adult ego (12-28)	Stress: physical, emotional, spiritual; delay	Dependable mentorship
The integrated self (28-32)	Jumpstart of integration followed by overwhelm	Out into the world
<i>Journey of Recovery: Leaving the Sanctuary</i>		
The Call to change	The sudden onslaught: stress and upheaval	The letter, the sign, the car crash, jail
Refusing the Call	Fighting the demons: substance as saviour	Retreat from the world, and from the self
Receiving help	Rejecting compassionate assistance	Finding the stranger on the road
Crossing the threshold	Toward collapse	Toward surrender: the gate
Into the unknown	The spiral down; abandoning spirit	Recklessness and hope
<i>Initiation</i>		
The labyrinth of trials	Death's long road; the relapse cycle	Deep water: drowning, but trusting
Meeting inner challenges	Fevers and hallucinations	Waking from the nightmare
Making peace with the past	Taking your own medicine; the drug of spirit	Shallows; emotional clarity and joy
Shattering the mirror	Accepting the self	Meeting the god/goddess
The still point	The still point; spiritual alignment	Conscious engagement
<i>Return</i>		
Refusing to return	The badge of vulnerability: I am an ...	The eternal traveler, talker, healer
The mysterious journey	A magical transformation; what the day brings	Dealing with familiarity and novelty
Receiving help (again)	Time to let go	The god/ess of compassion
Crossing the return threshold	Quiet rebirth into a simple life	Earth, grounding
The path to freedom	The rejoicing spirit	Becoming the stranger

CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND ADULT SUBSTANCE ABUSE CHOICES
(not a comprehensive list...)

Age (approx.)	Theme	Completion: Collapse (▼), Tightness (▲), Healthy (■)	Drug(s) of Choice
Intra-uterine to one month after birth	Existence: spiritual engagement and life purpose; basic safety and trust; sense of belonging	▼ Dissociation and retreat: I don't belong ▲ Present but explosive: I want to test the world, and push it away ■ Sense of security, belonging, safety and spiritual presence	Hallucinogens Shamanic drugs LSD Ecstasy (and Crystal Meth) Substances that evoke altered consciousness
One month to eight months	Need fulfillment; bonding, nurturing, nourishment	▼ Despair and collapse: I'll never get my needs met ▲ Distrust and retreat: Only I can meet my needs ■ Filling out the heart; sense of contact, connection and balance of need fulfillment (giving and receiving)	Heroin (and other opiates) Valium; medications to reduce nervous system activation; cigarettes
Eight months to 2.5 years	Autonomy: balance between intimacy and independence	▼ Loss of motivation to explore; cloistered ▲ Energy and drive, but frazzled and incomplete; alone ■ Healthy connection and separation; balancing completion and commitment	Cocaine Substances that elevate and activate the nervous system; coffee Crystal Meth
Two to four years	Will and Power: balance between dominance, submission and equality	▼ Surrender one's own aims in service of others ▲ Overwhelming and dominating others ■ Expressive and collaborative, mutually supportive	Alcohol (amplifies self expression in most people; addresses the ▲ stage of the Will age—power and control) Crystal Meth
Three to six years	Love, Sensuality and Sexuality	▼ Retreat from sensuality into the heart: romantic ▲ Retreat from the heart into sexuality: seductive ■ Balancing heart and sensual/sexual nature	Ecstasy, marijuana
Four to seven years	Opinions; cognitive expression	▼ Withhold self-expression, but be internally judging (this is the typical Canadian adaptation) ▲ Be opinionated, and unable to withhold opinions (the typical American adaptation) ■ Emphasis on dialog, not on who's right or wrong; can hold opinions and develop new opinions in dialog	Alcohol
Seven to twelve years	Groups: balancing solidarity with performance	▼ Support others, but refrain from expressing ▲ Lead others, but refrain from supporting ■ Can support others, and be supported	Steroids Cocaine (in entertainment industry, for example)
Twelve to 19, 28-32	Integration	▼ Fragmentation; self does not develop ▲ Development of false self; the mask ■ Development of integrated adult self	Marijuana

Interlude

(from the introduction to Ross A. Laird's upcoming book on addictions)

The morning is warm, though it is not yet summer. Roofs on the south side of the street make sharp, dark outlines against a cloudless sky. A bright corona above a storefront on the southeast corner indicates where the sun will climb above the skyline. A row of tumbledown brick buildings lies farther down the street, and beyond these, far to the west, I glimpse the towers of downtown. I imagine the rush and hum of the business district; but here it's quiet, as though the reckless vibrancy of the neighborhood has been suspended.

A large man in a long, thick coat, ragged and torn on the right cuff, crosses the street ahead of me. I've seen him around; I remember his mane of straggling hair, grown long enough that the matted lump at its end bounces off his lower back as he walks. I glimpse two figures in a doorway on the north side, warming themselves as the sun reaches toward them over the city. Down by the corner, three ambling and disconnected figures walk slowly toward the park. It's not clear if they are companions or coincidental wanderers.

I make my way along the street and toward the clinic, feeling the languid slowness of the day, moving into it as a swimmer strokes down into cooler water. And I hear that same high-pitched hum I sometimes notice underwater: a clear, sustained tone at the threshold of my hearing. Perhaps its source is the power lines that cluster and snake along the lane. A few days ago, when I was walking in another part of the city, early, when it was still dark, I saw a man power washing the sidewalk. I notice now that the sidewalks of this neighborhood are decorated with countless flattened pieces of gum and dark marks and streaks from who knows what. No power washing here, but a calligraphy of stains and colors and wayward shapes.

I reach the recessed entryway of the clinic, look through the security grille behind the front window, and see no one at the reception desk. The waiting area is empty and the door is locked. There is no movement in the back; the corridor dwindles to shadows. I'm early, and I don't mind waiting. The street, which sometimes feels saturated with threat, seems more forgiving this morning. Perhaps it's just the weather, or my own carelessness.

But hanging around the entrance to an addictions clinic is bound to attract attention. While I've been ruminating on sunshine and chewing gum, waiting for the clinic to open, a trio of men has noticed and begun to approach me. They walk with the gangly, halting gait common to many substance users. The one on the right scans up and down the street, darting his head back and forth, sensitive to the sudden and the peripheral. His movements are quick and jittery, and I make a guess – two hours – about how long it's been since his last hit of cocaine. The other two are slower, more withdrawn. Their

shoulders are rolled forward – not hunched, but eased downward, as though their strength cannot resist the gravity of collapse. Even at this distance, thirty feet or so, I can see that they are shuttered inside, protected by heroin and methadone and whatever else they can find to turn down the noise. And now it is morning, time to find some more.

The three men approach, but not too close. They know precisely the distance of civility in this neighborhood: two broad steps, two seconds to flee or flail. The jittery one, with his grungy baseball cap pulled down to shade his eyes from the slanting sun, asks me if the clinic is open. He speaks quickly, clipping the consonants, sliding over the word ‘clinic’ as though the letter ‘n’ does not belong:

“Cli’i’c open yet?”

I tell him no, it’s still a couple of minutes early. But now a little crew is gathering, people from the corner and the other side of the street. They’re making their way purposefully toward us, settling near the door. And though it’s clear that many know each other, there’s not much in the way of conversation. Just a patient, shuffled waiting as they surrender themselves into the current of this cool and liquid morning.

I ease my way out to the sidewalk again, sidestepping the loose knot of supplicants. The sun has made its way halfway across the street, but on this side the buildings are still casting shadows. A young woman walks slowly alongside the curb, looking downward, searching. She stutters forward, pauses, reaches down for the discarded stub of a cigarette, and gathers it up with slender fingers: precise, economical, and entirely instinctual. She reminds me of a bird gathering seeds. As she passes, I see that the bones of her skull have been slightly shifted, skewed out of true. One of her cheekbones stretches out from her face while the other recedes. Her head, with its crown of short and patchy hair, is more prominently rounded on one side than the other. It’s not a deformity as such, nothing you’d notice at a quick glance; but you’d see it if she looked you in the eye. Her skin, drawn tight over the errant architecture of her head, is pale, clear, and smooth.

She drops, gathers, comes up again, and moves on. I watch her go, wondering how much pressure, how much measured and overwhelming force, must be applied to the body and to the psyche to create such results. She has the look of someone who was born into this business.

I look toward the front window of the clinic and see movement inside. Asad has come in from the back door and is settling his gear at a desk. Out front, the crowd has thinned and I have no trouble making my way to the entrance. I tap on the glass of the locked door – lightly, once, twice – and Asad looks up. He waves, smiles, and comes forward. He unlocks and opens the door, and there’s a brief, delicate moment in which he explains to the gathered company that the clinic is not yet open. Five more minutes. Then he opens

the door wider and ushers me in. I smile awkwardly as I pass. The folks waiting in the street don't know why I'm jumping the queue, and they don't care. I want to be polite, to explain the situation to them, especially in this environment so bereft of social niceties. They've been living out, many of them, sleeping on the street or in the park, dealing with attacks and illness and hunger. Some have tiny apartments, or rooms in grungy hotels a few blocks down, and they are all used to being invisible. The back of the line is where they live.

In my earnestness not to offend, I consider an explanation. But the door is open, Asad is waiting, and if the door stays open for more than two or three seconds the small crowd will surge forward with their daily urgencies: housing, medical issues, money. And juice. Always, first and foremost, in the natural order of things, juice.

I point to Asad, as though this will explain everything, and move quickly through the door. He closes it, locks it again, mouths *five more minutes* through the glass, offers a warm smile and a wave, then turns toward me.

We head down the corridor and into the coolness of the back offices. The clinic is small, and none of the rooms has much space, but as we have the place to ourselves, we choose the largest of the examination rooms in which to sit and talk. Once a month I meet with the counseling staff – a dozen spread across four methadone clinics – but sometimes issues arise between meetings, and occasionally I find myself meeting with individual staff members. Today Asad wants to talk about opening a resource center next door, a place where clients can come for support groups, to learn how to use a computer, to explore any number of activities that seem straightforward to most people but are bewildering to those who have been swept up by the tide of substance use.

It's exciting to discuss the possibilities with Asad, to speculate on the positive benefits that might come from such an initiative. For the addicted, the rituals of substance use – smoke, inject, snort, swallow – are a currency for which there are no equivalents. But sometimes exchanges are made, between substance use and other, healthier pursuits, and the brokering of those deals typically involves social and community ties. Recovery is a renegotiation of the deal, and the dealer. The resource center might give a few clients a place to haggle.

I hear keys in the front lock, then the sound of the security grille being pulled back. The receptionist is here, and in a few minutes clients will fill the waiting room with its pamphlet rack displaying community services the clients mostly ignore. The broad continuum of help eludes them: appointments, goals, initiatives. They can't handle such complexity. For them, daily life has been distilled down into a single, irresistible polarity: loaded or not loaded. It's a simple formula: not loaded leads to loaded, and loaded leads to not loaded. Then it's time to get loaded again. Easy. And far from easy.

Asad excuses himself to let the receptionist know we're in the back. He heads down the hallway and I am left alone momentarily with the anti-smoking posters and illustrations showing the progress of hepatitis. Much of Asad's counseling work is done on the street, and his office here in the clinic is a cramped alcove near the back door, so I'm glad for the extra space the examination room offers. But it is spare, and not particularly inviting. I get up to take a closer look at the various stages of decay shown on the liver illustration. The final phase shows a section of liver in the guise of rotting meat. I turn from this object lesson and make my way back to the chair, but before I get there I glimpse something scrawled on the wall. A smattering of penciled words in the corner of the room, almost hidden by the wall's shadow. The letters are raked hard over, their angles rounded into curves. A declaration written with haste, in secrecy, and yet intended, I think, for an audience. It says:

"I will kill myself today."

How long has this been here? And who, among the hundreds of clients who come to the clinic, stood in this corner – alone, desperate, yet without the means and perhaps the will to speak directly to a staff member – and wrote these words? And where is the author now?

I fetch Asad from the front office, where a score of clients waits for their appointments, their daily moment of clarity, their juice. The trio from the sidewalk is there: one tapping foot and two slumped forms. Back in the examination room, I point to the note and ask Asad if he knows anything about it. He rubs his chin, squints, leans forward, and reads. Then he nods, looks up, and tells me that he didn't know about the note – but its likely author is a client from yesterday, a guy who came in festooned with crises and without a shred of hope. Asad smiles and tells me that yesterday was a crazy day. When he's tired, or when the stress of this place cracks through the shield of his humor, his Somalian accent sounds stronger. It must be twenty years since Asad fled, though the facts of his voluntary exile are scarce in my mind.

The guy came in, says Asad, jacked up on crystal meth and cocaine, shouting at the staff, scratching his scalp, trying to make sense of his crazy pain. Like so many of the folks we've known: lost, looking, angry.

Asad spent time with the man, drew him out, listened as the emotional pressure came down – but not before the obligatory doctor's visit, in this examination room, not before the doctor left the room to fetch the client's file. A few spare moments, that was all, in which some primal instinct – to make a testament, a stand, a final defiance of the avalanche – urged the man to get up from the chair, snatch the pencil from the desk, cross the room, and write frantically into the corner. Ten seconds, perhaps less. Then back into the chair: withdrawn, silent as the doctor came back into the room to ask how things

were going. No mention of the note, no discussion of the means or mechanism of the planned suicide. The doctor picked up the pencil and ticked off the client's name on the schedule.

Asad is pretty sure the client did not kill himself yesterday. He left the clinic, after a long talk with Asad, and seemed calmer, less desperate. But there's no way for us to establish if the man is alive today. He has no phone, no regular home, and no interest in establishing reliable routes of contact. He wanders. And for now, at least, he's gone.

People disappear into their addictions. They become unreachable, or the marks and messages they leave are not discovered until it's too late, after they have vanished. Sometimes the impulse for peace, for the end of the long struggle, becomes a wish for death.

I walk to the sink, crank the handle on the paper towel dispenser, spool out a handful, and run it briefly under the tap. I stand over the running water, ruminating on the similarity of this moment to so many others, thinking about all the obscure gestures and misdirected appeals I've seen and heard. The late night phone call, at home, from a client who said "I have a handful of pills, and I want one good reason not to swallow them." The client who brought her pills to my office, carried in a small wicker box like sacred relics, and surrendered them to me for safekeeping. I think of those who have wandered off, led by dreams and nightmares, carried off by cocaine and heroin and, most of all, by alcohol, the spirit of spirits.

It's always the same, this moment, with its familiar bewilderment – why write into a corner? – its resignation, and its sad repetition. Asad is quiet. Like me, he has been here too many times. I walk back toward him, to the writing on the wall, and I slowly erase the message with the paper towel. It comes off easily. Only the first few letters require any rubbing. When I'm done, only the faintest impression of the *I* remains. And it occurs to me that this is the essence of addiction: the slow erasure of the *I*, an escape from the troubled self, an easing of the struggle – and within that easing, the germination of a lifetime's worth of turmoil. They're looking for the same things as most of us: solace, intimacy, a release from suffering, a glimpse of the glorious flash that answers the unanswerable. And they do find it. For a moment, an hour, a day. But a great light casts a great shadow, and it is this shadow that comes to inhabit the daily life of those on the paths of addiction.

Such paths are mythological quests: Icarus, seeking escape and flying too close to the sun; Orpheus, descending to the underworld. The addict and the alcoholic are unwitting companions to the spiritual seeker, the warrior, the traveler: reckless and desperate and heroic all at once. But where the paths of the hero and the heroine are chronicled and celebrated in the mythologies of every culture, addiction as a spiritual quest remains

largely unexamined. Yet it has never seemed accidental to me that heroin contains the word *hero*, that alcohol is called *spirits*, that cocaine and all the other commonly abused substances are attributed with divine, mythological origins in traditional cultures.

Addiction is the search for wonder by way of the shadow path.

Managing Emotionally Stressful Situations

Where To Start	What To Notice	What To Do	What To Say
Phase One: 90% of all situations			
Find a private space for you and the client to meet. While doing this, pay attention to your own emotions and take a moment to settle down. Breathe, move your body, focus on your center (your "gut feelings"). Try to be grounded, or as "present" as you can be. Work toward feeling neutral and open. Be aware of your boundaries. Notice your thoughts and try to slow them down. Try to be aware of your tendency in this kind of situation (fight, flight, freeze) and try not to do it. <i>Do not get angry</i> , or avoid the situation. Stay neutral. Focus on containment, safety, and trust. Voluntarily suspend your judgments, beliefs, and biases.	The "vibe" (energy) between the client (or within the client) and others seems uncomfortable. Body language and eye contact patterns are obvious. You become aware of intensity, discomfort, isolation, etc. Conflict inevitably begins with a series of such small cues early on. Your own own habits of conflict or evasion arise. You have an emotional response to the situation, which typically includes tightening up with anxiety. Notice the client's signals about safety and trust (body language, verbal cues, action). Notice the reactions of the rest of the client group; everyone is involved (especially those who claim not to be). Consider your actions carefully.	Deal with the situation as soon as you receive the first cue. <i>Do not wait</i> . It will not go away, or resolve itself without your intervention. Make dedicated time to talk (about 20 minutes). Remind yourself to be open and neutral. Take a couple of deep breaths, then start with small talk (if possible). Gently ease closer to the issue as the client begins to feel safe. Focus on the quality of your voice and presence. Do not allow your own feelings to take control. At this stage you are simply listening, being supportive, and letting the client "steam off." Your own views have no place yet. Trust the process. Let the client lead the conversation. Don't set goals (yet). Stay loose.	Emphasize neutrality and good will: "How are things going?" "I want to check in with you to see how you're doing with..." "It sounds like you're feeling..." "Tell me more about..." "I'm curious about..." Use feeling words and empathy. Cultivate the charged "hm." Use metaphors. Let the client steam off (10 minutes, usually less). Ask if there's more. When there's no more, ask if the client would be comfortable with your feedback. Be neutral, empathic, and supportive. Trust and good will are your best assets. Avoid advice. Be proactive.
Phase Two: When situations are more tricky (8% more)			
The situation seems more troubled or tense. Your previous conversation seems not to have helped. You (or others) seem to say the wrong thing. The client's activation or resistance rises. Re-focus on yourself, your own process and reactions. Think of the principle of non-resistance, of flow.	Your own activation begins. You easily lose your own center, and your relationship with the client is therefore compromised. Your voice tightens slightly. You're getting annoyed, anxious, uncertain, frustrated. Notice your tendency, at this stage, to either avoid or punish. Resist both. Think about how hard it is to change.	<i>Slow down</i> . Return to your own center, your own feelings. Pay attention to your heart (a good general principle). Take some time for yourself to re-establish a sense of neutrality and support. Avoid judgmental or critical language. Ask yourself if this is just about the client, or also about you. Use the "Columbo" approach.	Stay collaborative. Use "we..." "I want to check-in..." "I'm curious, I wonder about..." "I'm not sure about..." "It seems like we're struggling..." "I wonder if we should..." Take ownership of part of the issue, and ask the same. Make a specific, measurable contract. Use gentle advice.
Phase Three: Difficult situations (the remaining 2%)			
You are stymied, frustrated, and angry. You have the impulse to distance and to punish. The relationship seems to go wrong at every turn. You begin to dislike the client, as do some others. The group displays many kinds of adaptive behaviours to avoid the client.	The relationship feels fraught by resistance and heaviness. It's difficult to find your center. You question your own ability and skill. You start to shut down emotionally, and you think of punitive measures for the client. Resentment creeps in. You wonder what others are thinking about the situation.	Speak the unspoken. Share your frustration honestly, privately, and with diplomacy. Do not triangulate. Be honest, clear, and direct. Do your own personal homework. Make a firm verbal contract that meets your needs. If you are unable to resolve the situation at this stage, seek appropriate assistance.	"It seems like things are difficult." "I'm not sure what else to do." "My impulse is to distance, but I don't want to do that." "Let's talk about what's happening. Let's do it now." "This is what I need: ..." "I need you to help me with this..."

MANAGING DIFFICULT GROUP SITUATIONS

Where To Start	What To Notice	What To Do	What To Say
Phase One : 90% of all situations			
Screen all of participants before the group begins (look for containment, the basic prerequisite). After starting, notice as much as you can. Pay attention to your center. Scan the group about every minute.	The “vibe” (energy), patterns of behaviour, intensity, discomfort, cliques, isolation, etc. Pay particular attention to your own habits of conflict or evasion; watch for them.	Begin in the first session talking at the break to those who you notice. Be receptive, generous, self-questioning. Take 5 minutes.	“I notice...” “I’m glad about...” “I’m curious about...” “I’m wondering if...” “What do you think?” Make a contract.
Be internally supportive; find something to like. Always return to your own center. Trust in the process.	Notice the follow-through of the contract. Be subtle, and be supportive.	Let the contract work itself into the process. Give it one or two sessions to solidify (but no more than two). Check in.	Use the language of diplomacy. Let the participant blend with the group.
Phase Two: more difficult scenarios (8% more)			
The contract has not worked. Notice and deal with your own frustration. Approach the participant without bias.	The behavior is still present, either by design or internal resistance. It begins to affect other group members.	Take the participant aside again, at a break or after the session. Be receptive and firm. Use the “Columbo” approach.	“I want to check-in...” “I notice...” “I’m curious...” “We need to work on it.” Make a new contract.
Maintain a collaborative approach.	Notice the follow-through. Pay attention to your own growing annoyance and let it go.	Be more active in fulfilling the contract. Be supportive and assertive on an individual basis. Check in at every session.	Use the language of diplomacy. If the participant agrees, have them mention the contract to the group.
Phase Three: the most difficult situations (the remaining 2%)			
The contract has not worked. The participant is unable or unwilling to change. You are ready to kick the participant out — but try never to do this. <i>Don’t</i> “take it to the group.”	You are frustrated. The group is increasingly affected. The participant has managed to stall the group process. There’s a lack of safety. (Remember, it’s only 2%.)	Share your frustration with the participant (privately). Shift from a collaborative approach to a conditional approach, e.g. “You must decide to either change the behavior or decide to leave the group.”	“I’m not sure what else to do...” “I’ve tried everything I can think of...” “You need to decide what is going to work for you, but this is the bottom line of what I need...”

PARENTING AND MENTORING RESPONSES PART TWO: WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Many children experience significant difficulty with the emotional themes of childhood (for many reasons). When such themes remain incomplete (i.e. when the imprinting is not entirely successful), the themes remain active, and are carried forward through adolescence and into adulthood. One challenge for parents and caregivers of children is to understand which aspects of imprinting remain incomplete and to assist the child (or adolescent, or adult) in finding ways of working with those themes.

The following list shows the developmental themes alongside matching phrases and/or body-oriented strategies. These are general suggestions, and must be adapted for the unique character and temperament of the caregiver or parent. In situations where “we” seems more appropriate than “I,” this substitution may be made for each of the statements.. Remember that for the early stages, when a child does not yet fully comprehend language, the messages spoken by parents and caregivers carry an emotional weight beyond the meaning of the words. It is this emotion that the child hears and to which he/she may respond.

The chart which begins on the next page may be used for children at the specific ages noted or for those seeking to work with incomplete early imprinting in older children, adolescents, or adults.

Note: during adolescence, the childhood themes are revisited by all children undergoing transition toward adulthood. The rapid mood cycling of adolescents is a result of underlying psychological, neurological and hormonal imperatives to revisit and attempt resolution of unfinished themes. In those with developmental challenges (FASD, for example, or autism), this cycling is often amplified, and is accompanied by emotional overwhelm.

Age	Theme	Phrases & Strategies
From in utero to one month after birth	<i>Basic Safety and Trust</i> Do I belong? Will I be loved? Will I be safe? Can I trust?	<p><i>Phrases</i></p> <p>I want you to feel safe and comfortable.</p> <p>I want you to trust me.</p> <p>I want to be here with you.</p> <p>I will not abandon you.</p> <p>You are safe.</p> <p>I want you to be here.</p> <p>We (or I) welcome you with love.</p> <p><i>Strategies</i></p> <p>Holding, with particular emphasis on the “bonding point” which is located between the shoulder blades, on the crest of the back. For many children, the bonding point is the location which first comes into contact with the inner surface of the womb. Gentle touch on the bonding point may promote feelings of safety and support (this is why many people instinctively touch this spot on others when showing empathy, caring or support).</p> <p>Creation of safe space.</p> <p>For fostering or adoption: secure, reliable placement.</p> <p>Quiet, non-intrusive atmosphere.</p>
One month to eight months	<i>Need Fulfillment</i> Will my needs be met? Will my caregivers understand my 150 cries? Can I depend on my caregivers to respond?	<p><i>Phrases</i></p> <p>I want to help you meet your needs.</p> <p>I will help you learn to ask for what you need.</p> <p>I cannot meet all of your needs.</p> <p>I will help you find others who may also help you with your needs.</p> <p>Don’t give up.</p> <p>Don’t retreat.</p> <p>I want you to trust me.</p> <p>We (or I) will meet your needs with love.</p>

Age	Theme	Phrases & Strategies
One month to eight months (cont'd)	At approximately five or six months of age, infant brain development causes control of behavior to shift to the cortex. This is the age at which executive functioning begins to develop.	<p><i>Strategies</i></p> <p>Infants use as many as 150 different cries, each of which has a specific meaning, is a specific request, or represents a specific expression. Awareness of the vocabulary of this language of cries is a central task of caregivers of infants. The tendency is to interpret many cries as requests for food. Only a small number of cries derive from hunger; most involve requests for interaction, or emotional comfort, or simply for being together, which is the main ingredient of healthy dependency. (And, sometimes, babies just cry, for no apparent reason; usually in the evening, inconsolably, for durations of up to a couple of hours. This pattern is not currently understood.)</p> <p>Many people with unfinished imprinting from this age have chronic problems staying warm, particularly in the hands and feet. They often enjoy warm water, in hot tubs and baths.</p>
Eight months to 2.5 years	<p><i>Autonomy</i></p> <p>Can I explore the world safely?</p> <p>Can I establish my own boundaries?</p> <p>Can I crawl, and walk, and run?</p> <p>Can I explore, and return again to safety?</p>	<p><i>Phrases</i></p> <p>I want you to depend on me for some things, yet do some things on your own.</p> <p>The world is an amazing place.</p> <p>I want you to be motivated to explore the world and to find interesting people and experiences.</p> <p>I will help you slow down when you speed up too much, or become overwhelmed.</p> <p>We (or I) support your individuality with love.</p> <p><i>Strategies</i></p> <p>Cross-pattern movement: this is any type of movement that utilizes opposite sides of the body at the same time, for example the left hand and the right foot. The most common types of cross-pattern movement are crawling, walking and running.</p> <p>Intentional crawling (in which crawling is a game, and the adult crawls too).</p> <p>Nature and cultural experiences: will expand a child's experience of the world.</p> <p>Physical exercise: anything with cross-patterning.</p>

Age	Theme	Phrases & Strategies
Two to four years	<p><i>Will and Power</i></p> <p>Can I be who I am?</p> <p>Am I too much?</p> <p>Will I overwhelm others?</p> <p>Will I be overwhelmed?</p> <p>Can I use my aggression?</p> <p>Can I be dominant, or must I submit to others?</p>	<p><i>Phrases</i></p> <p>You are strong.</p> <p>I see your power.</p> <p>I want you to express yourself.</p> <p>You do not need to hide your power.</p> <p>I am not afraid of you.</p> <p>I will stop you if you become unsafe.</p> <p>If you need to fight with me, I will stand in and not run away;</p> <p>but I won't sacrifice my own boundaries or safety.</p> <p>I won't give up my power for you.</p> <p>I want you to feel strong without needing to hurt yourself or others.</p> <p>We (or I) see your power, and love your power.</p> <p><i>Strategies</i></p> <p>Strong self-awareness, relaxation, and containment on the part of caregivers.</p> <p>Combining parental kindness with firmness.</p> <p>Conversations about power (physical, emotional, verbal): discuss what power is, how to use it, when to avoid using it.</p> <p>Wrestling (using Aikido-type principles, in which conflict is perceived as flow, or energy).</p> <p>Non-competitive games, or games in which success depends upon co-operation and collaboration (for example, Frizbee, tossing a ball, Lego-building).</p>
Three to six years	<p><i>Love and Intimacy</i></p> <p>Development of romantic ideas and fantasies.</p> <p>Growing awareness of physical intimacy and sensuality.</p> <p>Development of ideas about what love means.</p> <p>Expression of love as an ideal.</p> <p>Exploration of the body.</p>	<p><i>Phrases</i></p> <p>Your body is yours.</p> <p>Your sensations are yours.</p> <p>Intimacy and sensuality are normal, healthy feelings.</p> <p>Intimate feelings must be shared carefully and appropriately.</p> <p>We (or I) see and feel your loving feelings and support them.</p> <p><i>Strategies</i></p> <p>Conversations about sensual boundaries, safety in the community, norms and behaviors, etc.</p>

Age	Theme	Phrases & Strategies
Five to eight years	<p><i>Opinions and Expression</i></p> <p>Conscious development of ideas, opinions, values.</p> <p>Passion for debate and discourse.</p> <p>Desire to be right.</p> <p>Desire to know.</p> <p>Tendency for absolute expressions.</p>	<p><i>Phrases</i></p> <p>You are smart!</p> <p>You know many things.</p> <p>You have strong beliefs.</p> <p>I have strong beliefs.</p> <p>If our beliefs are different, that's OK.</p> <p>I will not belittle you or your ideas.</p> <p>I believe in the power of ideas.</p> <p>I will try to find joy in ideas together with you.</p> <p>I want you to find your own voice, your own truth.</p> <p>I love your ideas and your way of sharing them.</p> <p><i>Strategies</i></p> <p>Strong self-awareness on the part of caregivers: differing views/opinions must be OK.</p> <p>Recognition that it does not matter who is right; the relationship is the important thing.</p> <p>Encouragement of conversation, debate, dialog.</p> <p>Provision of educational opportunities.</p>
Seven to twelve years	<p><i>Groups</i></p> <p>Exploring the balance between solidarity (being an equal group member) and performance (being unique and special).</p> <p>Can I be unique, and different?</p> <p>Can I join with others, and be one with the crowd?</p> <p>Can I be a leader?</p> <p>Can I follow?</p>	<p><i>Phrases</i></p> <p>You are unique.</p> <p>I want you to discover and value your unique gifts and talents.</p> <p>I want you to find a healthy group of peers.</p> <p>I want you to excel at things you enjoy, and sometimes to push yourself to excel at things you find difficult.</p> <p>I want you to discover your potential, and to find your place in the world.</p> <p>I love to see you in groups and also doing your own thing.</p>

Age	Theme	Phrases & Strategies
Seven to twelve years (cont'd)		<p><i>Strategies</i></p> <p>School involvement.</p> <p>Coaching.</p> <p>Support of friends and the peer group (in other words, being an involved parent or caregiver).</p> <p>Assistance with finding a skill at which the child excels.</p> <p>Assistance with the complexities of peer group relationships.</p> <p>Humour, playfulness, relaxation.</p>
<p>12 to 19: First integration of childhood themes</p> <p>19 to 28: Transition to adult ego</p> <p>28-32: Choosing of life path</p> <p>32-35: Final choices toward adulthood</p> <p>35: Adulthood</p>	<p><i>Integration</i></p> <p>Many children and adolescents struggle with completion of this long and complex stage. In children affected by various developmental challenges, this stage often takes longer and sometimes cannot be completed at all. This does not mean the work should not be undertaken.</p> <p>As a result of complexities in the modern world, the achievement of adulthood has shifted from age 19 to age 35 since WW II.</p> <p>The central task of this stage is to integrate one's life experience, including the unresolved childhood themes, and to develop a sense of the path one will choose in life.</p>	<p><i>Phrases</i></p> <p>I want you to understand who you are.</p> <p>I want you to know yourself.</p> <p>I understand that sometimes things can be overwhelming, and I will assist you to understand and deal with this when it happens.</p> <p>I will help you become a lifelong learner.</p> <p>I will help you find ways of reaching your goals.</p> <p>I want you to plan and envision your life with joy.</p> <p>We (or I) love to see who you are becoming, and to be a part of it.</p> <p>I (or we) love you for who you are.</p> <p><i>Strategies</i></p> <p>Dependable adult mentoring. (Appropriate mentoring is one of the most difficult psychological skills to master, because it depends so much on the self-awareness of the mentor.)</p> <p>Neutrality (the essence of mentoring).</p> <p>Assistance in choosing education, jobs, and careers, without pressure and unspoken preferences and expectations.</p>

Age	Theme	Phrases & Strategies
Integration (cont'd)	<p>Broadly speaking, this is consistent with what psychologists call the adult ego, or adult observing ego.</p> <p>This stage is the beginning of one's "life wisdom."</p>	<p>The search for dependable adult mentors is hard-wired into children by evolution. Similarly, research has shown that the role of mentor is hard-wired into adults, particularly grandparents. In the absence of adult mentors, adolescents seek to mentor one another. They may form a youth gang and defer to the most dominant among them to be their leader.</p>

CREATIVE PROCESS EXERCISES

Designed by Ross Laird, Ph.D.

These exercises are designed to be facilitated in group or individual settings in which partner arrangements are appropriate. The exercises work best with participants who possess solid emotional containment and good communication skills. Sometimes, the exercises can be combined as a series, stretching over a couple of hours, in which the participants do each one in sequence with the same partner. Obviously, the sequence presented below is not the only one possible.

Some of the exercises involve one participant working actively while the other one waits. The nature of 'waiting' is very much a facilitation choice: the non-active participant can observe their partner, turn inward to their own process, or follow any one of a number suggestions given by the facilitator. The instructions provided for each exercise are designed to be read by the participants: usually this is accomplished by having them select, at random, slips of paper with the exercises written on them. The following format includes cut lines for separating the exercises into slips.

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- 1 Ask your partner for three words.
In 10 minutes, incorporating these three words, write one paragraph of a myth.
Read it to your partner. Discuss the process.
 - 2 Ask your partner to make three movements. Based on the three movements,
draw or paint the story they tell. Take 10 minutes. Feel free to embellish. Show
your partner what you created. Discuss the process.
 - 3 Ask your partner to make three sounds.
Adapting the three sounds, and other sounds and words (if you like)
of your own, write a one-verse song in 10 minutes. Sing the song to your partner.
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- 4 Ask your partner to describe three images. Using the three images, compose a story about how the world began. Take 10 minutes. Write it down if you like. Tell your partner the story. Discuss the process.
-

- 5 Ask your partner to describe two smells and two tastes. Using the smells and tastes (and other images of your own choosing), write a non-rhyming poem of about 12-20 lines. Take 10 minutes to write, then read the poem to your partner. Discuss the process.
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- 6 In this exercise, the partners work together.
Partner A: read these instructions through, then close your eyes:

Ask partner B to request an object from the facilitator. Have partner B place the object into your hands, gently, making sure you don't see it (your eyes are closed).

Partner A: touch the object, without opening your eyes. Describe how it affects you, what it makes you remember, or imagine. Take 10 minutes.

Partner B: writes down what Partner A says, in note form.

After 10 minutes, partner A opens their eyes; together the partners look at the object and the words. Discuss the process.

- 7 Ask your partner to describe one memory. Using the memory as your own, make a set of 5 ritualized movements based on it. Create and practice for 10 minutes. When you're ready, show your partner the movements.
-

PARABLE OF THE WARRIOR PRINCESS

(adapted from Tibetan Buddhism)

A young warrior princess completed her training under a renowned teacher and was accorded the title Princess of Five Weapons. Armed appropriately, and embodying her forty-two virtues, she set out on the road leading to the eternal city.

The road led the princess west, across the wide desert and into a forest. At twilight she reached the first trees, where she found other travelers who warned her to turn back. They spoke in fearful tones about an ogre, an eater of hearts, who lurked along the most shadowed paths, killing all those who happened by. But the princess was confident of her training. Fearless, she pressed on.

At a dark place, where branches overhung a stagnant stream, the ogre emerged from the underbrush. It was a phantom, a wraith, a brute with crushing hands. The princess deployed her five weapons, but the ogre was strong (and crafty) – one by one, the weapons of the princess were defeated. But she did not relent. After each weapon was spent and lay broken on the ground, the princess resumed the battle, challenging the ogre again and again.

Finally, the ogre paused, and asked her, “Youth, why are you not afraid?”

“Ogre,” replied the princess. “Why should I be afraid? For in life, death is absolutely certain. What’s more, ...

THE GOLDEN KEY

(last tale of the Brothers Grimm)

Once in the wintertime when the snow was very deep, a poor boy had to go out and fetch wood on a sled. After he had gathered it together and loaded it, he did not want to go straight home, because he was so frozen, but instead decided to make a fire and warm himself a little first. So he scraped the snow away, and while he was clearing the ground he found a small golden key. Now he believed that where there was a key, there must also be a lock, so he dug in the ground and found a little iron chest. "If only the key fits!" he thought. "Certainly there are valuable things in the chest." He looked, but there was no keyhole. Finally he found one, but so small that it could scarcely be seen. He tried the key, and fortunately it fitted. Then he turned the lock once, the lid popped open, and in the chest the boy saw...

EIGHT PIECES OF SILK (PAL DAN GUM)

#	Name	System	Function	Movement
	Beginning preparation: turning attention inward, remembering to love, honor and respect oneself.	Orientation toward health and wellness from the perspective of Traditional Chinese Medicine	Integration of Mind, Body and Spirit	Listen to the breath. Raise arms up into prayer position above the head, draw down to heart level, bow slightly forward, return upright, open hands, lower arms.
1	Upholding Heaven with two hands	3 segments of trunk (Triple Warmer in Chinese medicine)	Internal organs: Improves circulation and provides energy	Begin with feet shoulder-width apart and arms at sides. Inhale, raise arms above the head, lace fingers together, turn palms up, stand on tiptoes (but not unstable!), come back down onto the feet, rotate palms down again, separate hands, return arms to sides.
2	Opening the bow	Lungs	Increases lung capacity, strengthens the chest and shoulders, balances energy in the body	Widen the stance slightly by stepping with the left foot. Bring hands up to the heart level, left hand overlapping right. Inhale and extend left arm as though reaching to the side. Exhale and return to center. Repeat for right side.
3	Connecting Heaven and Earth	Spleen and Stomach	Harmonizes energy of the spleen and stomach; strengthens digestion	Inhale, extend right arm and hand above the head, palm up, left arm and hand down, palm down. Exhale, return hands to the center, reverse position (left arm up, right arm down). Return hands to heart level.
4	Looking backward	Heart, pericardium, lung, spleen, pancreas, liver, kidney	Relieves fatigue	Inhale, open arms widely, look over right shoulder (without straining). Exhale, return to center, look over left shoulder. Return arms to sides.
5	Swinging the trunk and head	Stomach, bladder, gall bladder, heart	Relieves "fire" from heart, helps digestion	Inhale with head upright, exhale and lean head to the left. Gently swing it forward, then across to the right. Center head again, lean it forward and backward (do not rotate the head all the way around). Bend to the left from the hip, swing down and through center, to the right and up to center again.
6	Standing on the toes	Kidney, stomach	Strengthens kidney, assists with centering	Stand centered, stretch up on toes; exhale, return to the ground.
7	Punching with angry eyes	Liver, gall bladder	Relieves frustration and blockage	Widen stance, open eyes wide, bend elbows, bring hands into fists pointing forward. Inhale and center, exhale and punch forward with one arm (making sound if desired), retract, then come quickly forward with the other. Repeat two or three times.
8	Holding the toes and stretching back	Whole body	Energizes the whole body	With hands on hips, lean forward gently, allowing the weight of the head to pull the trunk forward into a stretch all the way down (not pushing!), possibly touching the toes. Center, inhale and slowly lift all the way up through the spine, one vertebra at a time. Exhale, bend as far back as comfortable. Return to center.
	Ending as beginning	Holistic body	Integration of mind, body and spirit	Listen to the breath. Raise arms up into prayer position above the head, draw down to heart level, bow slightly forward, return upright, open hands, lower arms.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING TEAM INTEGRATION AND HEALTH

1. *Meet Every Day*

Many working teams in both the corporate and social services fields spend time and money on so-called bonding activities (such as whitewater rafting) designed to help people become more familiar with each other. Almost universally, such practices do not work: they are superficial, brief, and contrived. Conversely, effective team integration derives from the same kinds of experiences as those that contribute to good family and community relationships: time spent together every day. Ideally, the team should meet at the beginning of every day for a meeting of about fifteen minutes. This is a time to hear about personal or professional items that may impact upon the day, to hear how people are doing generally, and simply to chat. It is extraordinarily difficult for a team to work well if a daily meeting is not held.

2. *Meet Once Every Season, and Once Per Year*

Longer meetings, such as planning sessions (one day) and retreats (two or three days) are also essential. We all spend too much time putting out fires in daily work to think about the big picture, but it's in the big picture that our vision of our work will eventually manifest. Without a sense of that vision and how it is unfolding, the work becomes drudgery.

3. *Place Boundaries around the Work*

In any social service setting, social service workers (who typically have poor boundaries anyway) face the occupational hazard that the work begins to find its way into all the areas it does not belong. This is why the typical career-life of a social service worker in a given position is less than five years. Burnout happens (see next item). The best way to avoid this is to create clear and strong boundaries in the work (energetic reinforcement, for example: see item 6). Create set hours for time with students/clients and stick to them. The sign on your door should say when you are in and when you are not. Fight for your space and time. Otherwise, it will be taken from you.

4. *Avoid Burnout*

Expect some type of burnout every three to five years. It's simply part of the territory of working with emotional situations (especially with children). Pay attention to the warning signs – compassion fatigue, cynicism, emotional shutdown, erosion of boundaries, health problems, guilt, depression – and try to catch them early, when there is still time to take a break. Know when you need a rest. If you miss the signs, you will damage yourself and others (obviously). Consider burnout as an occupational stage, not as a disability. Simply catch it early (transforming it from a potentially crippling experience into a relaxing break).

5. *Debrief*

In any context where emotional intensity is the norm, daily debriefing is a minimum requirement for all staff. You need to be able to go into the office of a colleague, shut the door, and talk for a few minutes about what has just happened. You also need to be able to call dependable mentors and peers (paid or otherwise) who will give you supportive and ethical feedback and advice. Without such support, you simply cannot preserve both your empathy and your presence.

6. *Practice Energetic Reinforcement*

Depending on your point of view about the nature of human interaction, you may or not believe in the energy system. But even if you do not subscribe to a model of energetic interaction, you are certainly familiar with the psychology of body language, boundaries, and personal space. Use a practice (before you meet with challenging students/clients, for example) that gives you the sense of being protected from emotional or energetic material you do not wish to absorb.

7. *Participate in Health Practices*

In the world of social services, counseling and education, successful teams have a few things in common (such as the previous items). Among the commonalities is commitment, as a group and individually, to some type of health and wellness practice (yoga, Tai Chi, running, gardening, whatever). The activity itself matters little; what's important is the intent to share and deepen team relationships by way of mutual activity.

8. *Train Together*

In the social services, psychology, and counseling arenas, things change quickly (and with many disagreements). As such, ongoing professional development is an absolutely essential requirement for professionalism. Team members who train together assist the team in two ways: personally, by way of enhanced skills and contributions; and synergistically, by way of deepened relationships.

9. *Avoid Politics*

The consistent poison in most organizations is politics: of unions, of management, of team dynamics, of “the way things are done.” The most effective way to diminish your personal sense of purpose and compromise your professional direction is to become involved in these squabbles, which do not end and which routinely fracture organizations.

10. *Fight the “Corrosion of Character”*

Modern management and union practices (see item 9) deliberately erode traditional work values such as loyalty, commitment, and team cohesion. Large organizations have great difficulty resisting this corrosion of character (a phrase from Richard Sennett), but individual teams can make different choices: at the local level, where a high degree of daily autonomy exists. The skills for management at the local level are soft skills – effective communication and conflict resolution mostly – and should be taught to every team member.

ENERGETIC REINFORCEMENT USING VISUALIZATION (OR ENERGY)

Sit comfortably, in a space that is quiet or private (or both, ideally).

Close your eyes, settle into yourself, and notice your breathing.

Imagine (or sense) that as you breathe, you draw energy (or vitality) into your body as you inhale.

Draw this energy down to your centre (your 'gut feeling' place; or to be precise about it, two finger-widths below your navel, in the centre of your body).

Imagine (or sense) that as you exhale, the energy from your inhalation – and from your own natural vitality – slowly expands like a balloon filling with air. Allow this ball of energy to grow with each breath.

After a few minutes, visualize (or sense) the ball expanding to the point that it fills your personal space, your boundary. This might be fairly close to your body, or it could be an arm's length or more away. Visualize the ball as completing enclosing and protecting you.

When you have made the ball the most comfortable size, visualize the inner surface in a soft, warm, blue colour. Visualize the outer surface of the ball as mirrored, so that all approaching intrusive energy bounces off. (Obviously, you can also visualize a filter, so that intrusive energy bounces off but welcome energy passes through.)

Continue to be aware of your boundary and reinforce your visualization of the ball as you go through your day (or through your encounters with challenging people).

THE MASK

The mask is the means by which you hide your true nature from the world, and from yourself. Everyone has a mask, and it is, in fact, an essential part of being a human being. Ideally, the mask is the mediator between the deepest part of yourself and the world, but in most people it operates as a protective shield, guarding your fears and vulnerabilities so that other people don't see them. The mask is the wall you put up, but the function of the wall is actually to hide yourself from yourself.

In most people, the mask takes one of several forms: politeness, confidence, competence, friendliness, superficiality. It can also take a shadow form: the tough person, the person who is untouched by life, the indifferent or careless person. This shadow form is very common in people who have experienced trauma.

The mask is what you project, what you want people to believe about you. It is false. It hides both the darkest and the brightest parts of you, the shadow and the authentic self. A strong mask results when someone believes they are unlovable, that if others only knew who they really are, everyone would turn away, and the person would be alone. The mask will do almost anything to keep control of your life.

Anyone who claims to be enlightened, or to have achieved some level of spiritual refinement, is operating out of the mask. True spiritual achievement derives from the authentic self, and is almost never expressed in words.

Even the claim of knowing about the mask and having worked on it is a mask! The mask is very tricky. You can't just take it away. It requires much patient, humbling work.

In our society of superficiality and spiritual bankruptcy, it's easy to find examples of the mask: fashion magazines, self-help gurus, movie stars, politicians. Given a choice, the mask will always take flash over substance.

THE SHADOW

The shadow is the source of much of your energy. It's the murky part, the part you don't like to look at. It's selfish, passionate, violent, belligerent, sexual, simple, and very powerful. The shadow is the dark side (to borrow a metaphor from Star Wars). It's like a vast pool in which all of your hidden fantasies, impulses, actions and fears swirl around. Every deed that haunts you is there in the pool, never going away, just floating and threatening to overcome you with guilt or fear.

The shadow is the home of fears and un-acted desires. This is the source of its energy: it is raw, uncontrolled and un-mediated passion. The mask tries to hide the shadow, but the more you try to hide the shadow, the more it comes at you sideways, in unexpected and self-sabotaging ways. You need the shadow; it's an essential part of you. But it's very difficult to acknowledge that the stuff in the pool really is a part of who we are: sexual fantasies, the desire to harm and kill, the drive for revenge—all the dark and scary impulses that we disown and try not to think about.

The tendency is for people to disown the shadow; to hide it in themselves and point out the shadow traits in others. This is called projection, and it is the central challenge of self-awareness work. We must learn to own the shadow, to acknowledge that we are in fact capable of the very acts we abhor in others. We are the whole world; everything we see is a reflection of our innermost natures. Coming to terms with this is the most difficult and most rewarding aspect of personal growth.

Try this: think about a person you strongly dislike. Consider the specific behavior this person does that bothers you. Try to accept that you yourself do this same behavior. You might hide it better, with the mask for example, but it's a cosmic rule of the psyche that we dislike in others what we possess, and hide, in ourselves. An old parable suggests that whenever you point the finger, remember that there are three fingers pointing back at you!

The Shadow Carrier

In every family, in every group, someone is generally disliked: they are cranky, or aggressive, or troublesome. People don't like dealing with such people, who in fact exert great unspoken psychological influence and control many situations without realizing it. They tend to be isolated, angry, misunderstood, disrespected. Such people are *shadow carriers*: they hold, by way of projection, the shadow material of a group. They are essential features of any human community, and are important people to befriend. They are straight talkers, they know what's going on behind the scenes, and they are strong. Dealing with them teaches you about yourself, shows you how to own your own shadow, and instructs you in humanity. Developing relationships with shadow carriers can be a

profound spiritual path: it is generally much more effective than meditation...

THE AUTHENTIC SELF

The psychologist Carl Jung called the authentic self ‘individuated,’ in the sense that a person who is in touch with this part of themselves is truly an individual: awake and alive to their own feelings, impulses, and experiences. The authentic self is similar to what you might call the soul, or the spirit of a person. It exists without you having to work on it. It’s something essential to your nature, but can be buried under many layers created by the mask and the shadow.

The authentic self is like an observer in your life. It watches what you do, without passing judgement, and is more or less indifferent about the way things turn out. The authentic self is not attached to worldly success, money, fame, or power. It understands that your life is a matter of choice, that your experience is what you make of it, and that you are here on this earth to learn what it means to be a human being.

The authentic self emerges when the mask and the shadow have come to terms and stopped fighting for control of your life. The mask is no longer hiding who you really are (and hiding the shadow), and the shadow has stopped finding troublesome ways to make itself known in your life. The authentic self appears when there is an alignment, a congruency, between the various parts of yourself.

Awareness and expression of the authentic self are the result of personal evolution and self-awareness. The layers are peeled away, and there it is, shining and clear.

SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is the result of a combination of factors having to do with the way in which your childhood and adult development put you in relationship, or out of relationship, with your authentic nature. Most children and adults are diverted from the authentic self by the things that happen to them: wounds, trauma, shame, etc. Our society, devoted to the mask and not to the authentic self, makes it possible for people to forget altogether that they have a core: innocent, unviolated, impossible to harm or destroy.

Negative self-esteem is the result of feelings of unexamined fear, insecurity, guilt, vulnerability, doubt, inadequacy, and so on. The person usually makes some effort to hide these feelings with the mask. But sometimes the mask can take the form of the expression of these feelings, what might be called the victim mentality. No one is truly a victim; in the face of difficult or overwhelming challenges, you can either collapse, in which case you abandon yourself, or you can fight back, in which case you become not a victim but a warrior. This fighting back from trauma and feelings of vulnerability, of weakness, is an appeal to the authentic self, which can handle anything life has to offer.

Essentially, low self-esteem is a situation where the person is aware of the shadow, and perhaps the mask, but not aware of the authentic self. They might feel as though the shadow is the largest part of them, or that it poisons everything else. The person feels they are bad, or unlovable, or stupid, or ineffectual—there's an inexhaustible list of things one can manufacture to feel bad about oneself.

Self-esteem that is too high—what we might call a person with a 'big ego'—is just the mask. The shadow, in this case, is hidden, as is the authentic self. One cosmic rule about the psyche is that whatever you see on the surface is the opposite of what's underneath; this is how the mask works. It hides the stuff underneath. So, someone who displays a flamboyant or elevated self-esteem, who wants everyone to know how great they are, is actually feeling vulnerable and unlovable inside.

Healthy self-esteem is the alignment of the mask, the shadow, and the authentic self. These aspects of the self are interlinked: the more in line they are, the more whole and integrated you are. The less aligned they are, the more fragmented you become. When they line up, when your actions agree with your nature, everything is coordinated and working together. The individuated self then becomes like a deep well that reaches right down into the soul.

LEADING FROM DESIRE: A MISCELLANY OF STRATEGIES FOR EDUCATION AND FACILITATION

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Teaching (in its various forms) is one of the most influential roles in society. After parenting, it is perhaps the most crucial, for all ages. And yet, teaching – whether to children or adults – is a profession in which few practitioners have any substantial training. Some instructors have certificates or degrees in teaching, but there’s so much to know about the subject that most good instructors pick up their best skills after training, in the field, thinking on their feet and trying to keep learners awake.

In the West, we have a kind of reverse educational system. Many of the things we do (learners sitting in chairs for long periods, then writing exams; instructors droning on to massive groups of disinterested learners) are precisely the opposite to what is known to work better (learners involved actively, encouraged to make substantive commitments to the process, evaluated by way of collaborative assessment). Most good instructors eventually learn to turn the system around, to craft an environment that is both more holistic and effective. Here are my 40 suggestions for how to accomplish this; one for each week of the year that the average instructor spends in the classroom.

1. Approach Teaching as a Devotion

The quality of an instructor’s presence has more impact on the learning environment than any other single factor. Love what you do, acknowledge the potentially profound role you play in a learner’s life. Get past the politics and the drudgery and the unpaid hours. Develop and bring into the classroom your sense of the sacred trust of learning. It does change the world.

2. Lead From Desire

The French philosopher Simone Weil once said that “the intelligence must be led by desire.” At heart, learning is an emotional endeavor. In turn, good instruction engages our feelings and sympathies and dreams. The most effective teachers and facilitators are those who openly express and evoke such feelings. Their passion – for the subject, for the interactions – is infectious. This is why most dedicated instructors credit a great teacher in their own past as a primary inspiration (thank-you, Lee Whitehead).

3. Lead From Behind

Borrowing a phrase from Gandhi, a good leader leads from behind. Diminish your own authority, create collaborative projects, allow learners to teach each other. A good instructor displays precisely the same interpersonal skills as a good leader. The only difference is that an instructor leads with the imagination.

4. Do What You Love

The content of any course you teach should reflect your own interests. Always teach courses that have been customized to your own style and approach. Part of this customization involves bringing to the learning environment activities and practices that, on the surface, have nothing to do with the subject but which interest you greatly. If you like skateboarding or badminton or wood-turning, find a way to bring these into your teaching. They will imprint the learning environment with your own energy and passion.

5. Fight the Inertia of Seats

Learners sitting in chairs, with an instructor talking at the front, is the worst way to impart anything useful. Yet everyone does it (me included, sometimes). But if you've ever learned to play the piano, or windsurf, or program in HTML, or become accomplished at any task requiring a complex set of skills, you will know that the most effective learning derives from casting about, from pacing, from a bodily immersion in the activity. In a classroom, slouching in chairs and talking for any length of time over about 30 minutes is a recipe for somnolence. Try something new: get learners out of the classroom, into the street or the coffee shop or the park. Walk, play, experiment, collaborate. Cook a meal together. Watch a movie. Make the subject what it should be: immensely interesting.

6. Build Containmentment

Your capacity to hold the energy of learning, to respect and nurture fragile interpersonal connections in the classroom, is a function of your containment capacity; how grounded you can be, with clear boundaries, with sensitivity and gentleness. A good instructor is comfortable with emotions, is adept at encouraging and managing debates, is consistently neutral and clear in dealing with everyone. A good instructor makes the environment feel safe, and this is one of the most difficult teaching skills to master.

7. Make Progress Contingent Upon Opposition

William Blake, the 19th century poet who invented the modern mind, wrote that “without contraries is no progression.” In the learning environment, progress means debate, disagreement, dialog, negotiation, and spirited engagement with the process. Encourage these in your classroom. If you make it safe to do so – if you protect, in other words, the sanctity of diverse views – learners will discover how to think; and, more importantly, how to believe.

8. Talk Less, Facilitate More

At any given time in the typical classroom, only about a fifth of the learners are actually listening to the instructor (remember the film *Farris Bueller’s Day Off*?). Besides, those who *are* listening will forget most of what they’ve heard within a few days or weeks. But if you engage them in an unusual process that requires attention and dedication (i.e. by having learners teach each other), they will remember almost everything, and for a long time. If you have specific content that you must impart, break it down into small blocks each of which takes no more than half an hour. Then do something else. If the content cannot be broken down, make it participatory and collaborative.

9. Focus on Process More Than Content

If the educational process feels safe to learners, if it’s challenging and supportive in equal measure, the content is easy. Facts and systems unfold and are readily digested by a cohesive and committed group of learners. Delivering good content is a matter of building it into the process, of integrating it with the activities and aims of the group.

10. Let Learners Teach Each Other (and You)

Learners who have the opportunity to teach each other consistently demonstrate higher levels of skill and knowledge in a given subject. In the classroom, about half the time can be devoted to this collaborative teaching. It’s more fun, more useful, and more lasting. Besides, the instructor gets to learn some new things also.

11. Encourage Learner Responsibility

The learning environment is developed by two main forces: the learners, and the instructor. Each is responsible for half the energy. Typically, instructors take too much. They control too tightly, and they're anxious about asking learners to do too much. But learners also make the experience for themselves, and if they do not take responsibility – for their own participation, for greater involvement in discussions, for ownership of the space – then everything falls flat. As an instructor, you agree to take half; ask your learners to do the same.

12. Prefer Instincts Over Facts

In all fields, the best scholars or practitioners are those with the most highly developed instincts for their subject – not those who know the most factual details. Paradoxically, the evaluation system in most educational institutions tests solely for facts while completely ignoring instincts. As an instructor, pay attention to this imbalance and attempt to remedy it.

13. Expect Complaints

Always, there will be a few learners who are unhappy with your style of teaching. That's fine; the relationship between you should be strong enough to contain your differences. But sometimes it's not. In those cases, and especially if you are teaching in an unconventional (i.e. engaging) style, it can be easy to fall prey to the criticism that you are not like everyone else (especially if the complaining learner approaches the administration, which happens to me about once a year). Of course, you shouldn't be like everyone else. You should be thoroughly unique. A few weeks ago, I heard a third-hand report of someone describing my teaching style as "crazy." I couldn't have been more proud.

14. Give Impossible Assignments

The greatest discoveries begin with seeming impossibilities, paradoxes, conundra. Every subject has its own collection of them (how did the Egyptians build the pyramids, where did life on Earth come from, how can electrons be in multiple places at the same time). Find them in your subject, use them as assignments, and watch learners unfold mystery with wonder.

15. Assign Useful Homework

The best learning happens when there is no fixed boundary between the classroom and the world at large. Listlessly reading a textbook with a hi-liter in hand is not a very impassioned activity, and its results are typically impoverished. Another approach is to make homework applicable to the lives of learners, to their daily experience, to the things that matter to them. Make every homework assignment a field trip, or a research junket, or a personalized work of scholarly writing. As an instructor, an essential part of your job is to discover how to hook the spirit of the learner to the subject. This won't happen unless you bring the subject out of the classroom and into the learner's own life.

16. Don't use Power Point

Or, if you do, know how to design and deliver an engaging and lively presentation. Instructional aids of the project-onto-a-screen type are typically evasions from actual involvement with learners. They are, to put it directly, symptoms of laziness and the abrogation of emotional commitment.

17. Build 3D Learning Models

Instead of ubiquitous and mind-numbing on-screen presentations, build dynamic learning models in the classroom. This is not difficult to do: I carry skeins of wool and foam balls in the trunk of my car and use them to make massive diagrams on the floor, to symbolize interactions and dynamics between people, to make whatever images I require in the moment. I have also used found objects, forests, fire (though not in the forest), living sculptures of people, fruit of various kinds, stones, wood, eggs, Star Wars action figures, postcards, live cats, images of Curious George, and so on. You get the idea: more interesting (or more bizarre) equals more effective.

18. Learn and Teach Health Practices

Whether it's Tai Chi, Chi Kung, Yoga, Aikido, Pilates, or some integrated hybrid, health practices greatly facilitate learning. This is one of the most significant findings of educational research. Learners who move, who practice proper breathing, who take breaks to stretch and unwind – they consistently do better. As an instructor, one of the ways you can enhance the learning environment is by bringing health practices into the classroom. Such practices should be adaptable to any learner, relatively easy to do, and above all should be fun.

19. Connect Everything

Whether inside or outside the classroom, every aspect of every field is connected to every other. Find these connections and you find the means of making learning real.

20. Nothing is Off Topic

Because everything is connected.

21. Use Humor, but Never Try to be Funny

Humor is one of the most powerful teaching tools (as is fear; but fear teaches only the dynamics of fear, whereas humor can teach anything). And yet, humor is vastly underutilized in the educational environment. But it's a skill that can be learned. A complex skill, yes, possibly the most complex of the human social skills; nonetheless, it can be developed. The basic key to humor is playfulness, nothing more. Don't try too hard; just have fun.

22. Don't Try to Make Everyone Happy

In any given learning activity, the ideal spectrum of experience is one in which most learners are enjoying themselves but at least two are at opposite ends of a spectrum: one is ecstatic (because the learning activity feeds them in some profound way) and one is dejected (because temperamentally they are unsuited to the current activity). An ideal learning experience is one in which every group member generally occupies the center but visits both extremes at least once. A classroom without a shadow is false and dangerous.

23. Nurture the Shadow Carrier

In every classroom (and in every family, group, or organization), there is someone who is generally disliked: they are cranky, or aggressive, or troublesome. People don't like dealing with them; they tend to be isolated, sometimes angry, typically misunderstood, certainly disrespected. Such people are shadow carriers: they hold, by way of projection, the shadow material of a group. They are essential features of any human community, and they are the most important people to befriend. They are straight talkers, they know what's going on behind the scenes, and they are strong. Dealing with them teaches you about yourself, shows you how to take ownership of your own shadow, and instructs you in humanity. Developing relationships with shadow carriers can be a profound spiritual path, and is generally much more effective than meditation.

24. Fight the Corrosion of Character

Modern management and union practices, in education and elsewhere, have a tendency to erode traditional values such as loyalty, commitment, innovation, and creativity. Large educational organizations have great difficulty resisting this corrosion of character (a phrase from Richard Sennett), but individual instructors can make different choices: at the classroom level, where a high degree of daily autonomy exists. Insulate your teaching and your classroom process from those who would homogenize it, block its natural movement, apply arbitrary policies that curtail and diminish the learning experience.

25. Teach in at least Four Different Styles

Most instructors know that different learning styles are a reality, but few actually adapt their teaching to accommodate those styles. Personally, I like to use four different styles, each of which matches one of the four states of the human nervous system (fight, flight, freeze, orient). I introduce debates and spirited dialog for those who need to fight; I employ the imagination for those whose tendency is for flight; I cover material slowly, and with precision, for those who freeze; and I connect everything together so as to provide a framework for those who orient.

26. Know Your Own Style

Especially in stressful or conflictual situations, everyone reverts to one of the four coping styles of the nervous system (fight, flight, freeze, orient). It's what we learned in childhood, what has helped us to get out of similar situations in the past. But usually, we are so good at one approach that we neglect the others: fighters become rigid when they should back off, those with flight responses become avoidant under stress, freezers fail to act when they are startled, and those with orienting fail to follow through. In any given stressful situation, only one of the four responses is called for; as such, what we do by default is only correct one quarter of the time. Know what you do, what your default is, and learn to balance your approaches so that you can respond appropriately to any situation. In other words, learn to be able to choose and follow through on any of the responses. This is the essence of neutrality.

27. Assist Learners with Overall Health

Many learners are sleep-deprived, sit too long in chairs, and have too much going on in their lives. This is a social as well as an educational problem. As my contribution to its resolution, I frequently try to educate learners about achieving better sleep (which makes them better learners), stopping smoking (my ongoing worldwide campaign), or developing various other health improvement strategies. Everything, after all, is connected. Sometimes I give homework that involves dreams.

28. Learn the Art of Storytelling

Because, when the chatter and posturing of modern professionalism is stripped away, storytelling is what we do.

29. Avoid Terminal Burnout

Expect some type of burnout experience every three to five years. This is simply part of the territory of being deeply committed to what you do. Pay attention to the warning signs – compassion fatigue, cynicism, emotional shutdown, erosion of boundaries, health problems, depression – and try to catch them early, when there is still time to take a break. Know when you need a rest. If you miss the signs, you will damage yourself and others (obviously). Consider burnout as an occupational stage, not as a disability. Simply catch it early (transforming it from a potentially crippling experience into a relaxing break).

30. Debrief

In any context of emotional intensity or dedicated engagement to a shared task, daily debriefing is a minimum requirement. You need to be able to go into the office of a colleague, shut the door, and talk for a few minutes about whatever's on your mind. You also need to be able to call dependable mentors and peers (paid or otherwise) who will give you supportive and ethical feedback and advice. Without such support, you simply cannot preserve your empathy or your dedication.

31. Learn Communication and Conflict Resolution Skills

Most instructors have no formal interpersonal skills training. This is bizarre, given that teaching (children or adults) is one of the most interpersonal professions anyone can undertake. At a minimum, good instructors should have basic counseling and conflict resolution skills. They must be able to respond empathically, to establish and preserve safe containment for conflicts, to be decent in situations where otherwise they might hide in their authority. Above all, a good instructor is neutral in emotional situations, and this is simply a skill that most people do not possess. It must be learned.

32. Be a Beginner

Perhaps the best instructors are those who are open to their own new learning. Too often, we use the same approaches and materials (handouts, resources, assignments) far too long. We stagnate. Resolve to change one important aspect of your teaching every semester; over time, your entire curriculum will be freshened by new insights and strategies. Moreover, learners appreciate instructor experimentation; it gives them permission to try new things themselves. In the application of those new things, instructors and learners switch places.

33. Use your Quirks

In the educational world, eccentricity is a major virtue. Use it, be proud of it, share it.

34. Practice the Subtle Check-in

In any authentic learning environment, emotional situations arise that require immediate and private intervention (because learning, after all, is an emotional process). Overwhelm, depression, anxiety, and fatigue are perhaps the most common scenarios (though in conflictual situations, anger is most common). To respond to such circumstances, find a reasonably private space (an adjoining empty classroom, for example) in which you and the learner can meet before or after class, or during a break. Deal with emotional situations immediately; they will not go away, and usually will not resolve without your intervention. Make dedicated time to talk (about 10 minutes). Remind yourself to be open and neutral. Focus on the quality of your voice and presence. Trust the process. Let the learner lead the conversation. Emphasize neutrality and good will. Use diplomatic language: “How are things going?”, “I want to check in with you...”, “I notice that...”, “It sounds like you’re feeling...”, “I’m curious about...” Be aware of your tendency in this kind of situation (fight, flight, freeze) and try not to do it. Do not get angry, or avoid the situation. Stay neutral. Focus on containment, safety, and trust.

35. Openly Distribute Your Materials

In the contemporary climate of increasing restriction on copyright, learners face growing hurdles in accessing information that is essential to their learning (most journal articles, for example, cannot be freely copied and distributed by instructors). By creating and distributing customized course materials using an open source or 'share alike' philosophy, instructors honor their ethical obligation to place learning above politics. Post everything on a public website. Encourage the copying and sharing of your work (simply request that you be properly credited). Free sharing of ideas is the means by which the Western intellectual tradition evolved; we serve that tradition best by honoring its basic principles.

36. Make Participation Worth More

Dedicated participation is required for authentic learning; it is perhaps more important than any other aspect of the process. As such, the role of participation should be acknowledged. In for-credit courses that I teach, I try to make participation (in class, and by way of learner-led presentations) worth at least half of total evaluation. Also, giving more prominent weight to participation has the curious effect of motivating some learners.

37. Encourage Interdisciplinarity

The divisions between fields are entirely arbitrary and have nothing to do with learning. The most dedicated students discover this, and find ways to support their learning by forging diverse connections to other fields. In a world of increasing specialization, the generalist is becoming rare; and yet, generalized intelligence is the core of deep learning.

38. Explore the Mythologies of Your Subject

Every field is founded upon precepts that are a hybrid between solid research and myth-making. Typically, the myths remain unexamined and become accepted norms (which then work for and against the field). To discover the underlying philosophy and mythology (and there's not much difference between the two) of a given field is to transform it from an abstraction into a living system. Find the shadow of your field, its unspoken heresies and mistakes and limitations. Speak the unspoken.

39. Speak the Unspoken

As a storyteller, the instructor is a truth-speaker – but truthfulness must be delivered with safety, clarity, sensitivity. In any learning environment, and especially when circumstances are awkward or conflicted, the instructor’s job is to articulate what no one has yet voiced. In doing so, you demonstrate that the community is strong enough to contain its own energy.

40. Practice Good Design

Unique course materials that reflect the style and temperament of the instructor are a powerful means of enhancing the learning environment. But take care in such endeavors: poorly-designed materials do more harm than good. At the very least, they erode student enthusiasm and imply unprofessional instruction. Learn to design your documents with a basic level of proficiency (white space, typography, usability). As an instructor, every small thing you do is a holographic representation of your entire presentation. Make everything count.

RECOMMENDED READING FOR TRAUMA AND HEALING

Chia, M. *Awaken Healing Light of the Tao*
Danceen, T. *Manufacturing Victims*
Degler, T. *The Fiery Muse: Creativity and the Spiritual Quest*
Fox, J. *Poetic Medicine: The Healing Art of Poem-Making*
Hedges, Chris. *War is a Force that Gives us Meaning*
Horgan, J. *The Undiscovered Mind*
Laird, Ross A., *Grain of Truth: The Ancient Lessons of Craft*
A Stone's Throw: The Enduring Nature of Myth
Lorca, F.G. *In Search of Duende*
Levine, P. *Waking the Tiger*
Macnaughton, I., *Body, Breath, & Consciousness*
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GENERAL BOOK LIST FOR PSYCHOLOGY, CREATIVITY, SPIRITUALITY, ETC.

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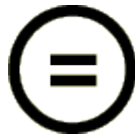
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