

## Chapter 7: Journeys to a Community of Our Whole

### How Do You Develop Community of the Whole?

When you have been charting your individual journeys have you realized that there were many connections, between the threads, and the quadrant maps? Have you seen how the individual threads have intertwined in each domain? And have you realized the extent to which each domain was mirroring the other three quadrants?

You can have a look for yourself on the following pages. Lay out the maps, one on top of the other so you can see what we're talking about (or pull out your maps from the previous four chapters and lay them out so they are aligned with one another).

When we compare our maps with those of other people, it will become quickly obvious that our group is a mixture of wellness levels in all four quadrants. It is one of the realities that makes community so complex. It is also the cause of the balance (or imbalance) between individuals and the collective. Community cannot emerge without congruence of a critical mass of individuals in all four quadrants. Wholeness gained in one quadrant only, will always be at the expense of wholeness in the other quadrants. This kind of incongruence will eventually cause an imbalance and a breakdown of community as a living system.

Breakdown will manifest itself as:

- Inability to survive (the community dies – it can't maintain identity – it can't maintain boundaries and/or characteristics of living system; eg. Russia)
- Inability to reproduce (it can't create the next generation; eg. Apartheid in South Africa)

- Inability to connect with the environment (the community dies because it loses its source of nourishment; eg. Newfoundland fishing towns).

Different levels of wellness at different times seem to ebb and flow across the individuals in a group. Such variations often offset one another and provide a hidden capacity to survive as a group in times of crisis.

One place to start building community is by exploring the threads woven in the warp and the woof of the Journeys to Wellness maps. Start by retracing your own four charts, on the following pages, and look at the threads of your own history of wholeness in each quadrant. Then post your Journeys to Wellness on the **Journeys to Wellness Wall**. Make room for others to set out their charts on the wall, so that you can view them all together.

When you are ready to share your reflections on your Journeys, join others in a horseshoe around the **Journeys to Wellness Wall**. Give yourselves time to notice the patterns that have emerged in individual lives and also in the group. Share with each others in dyads, small groups and/or as a large group the Reflections that follow on Pages 87 and 88. Start to notice the commonalities and differences, in your experiences of wellness, that bind you and separate you.

**JOURNEYS TO INNER WELLNESS: Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Journeys of Intentional Wholeness in My Life:**

%									
100									
90									
80									
70									
60									
50									
40									
30									
20									
10									
0									
Age:	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90
Decade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Years:									

**Journeys of Cultural Wholeness in My Life:**

%									
100									
90									
80									
70									
60									
50									
40									
30									
20									
10									
0									
Age:	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90
Decade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Years:									

**JOURNEYS TO OUTER WELLNESS: Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Journeys of Bio-Physical Wholeness in My Life:**

%									
100									
90									
80									
70									
60									
50									
40									
30									
20									
10									
0									
Age:	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90
Decade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Years:									

**Journeys of Social Wholeness in My Life:**

%									
100									
90									
80									
70									
60									
50									
40									
30									
20									
10									
0									
Age:	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90
Decade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Years:									

## Reflection:

*When you have finished plotting the quadrants, ask yourself:*

- *Where were the low points on each of these quadrants? What was happening then?*
- *Where were the high points on each of these quadrants? What was happening then?*
- *Where were the times of greatest divergence in these quadrants? Why was this so?*
- *Where were the times of greatest convergence; ie. community in these quadrants? Why was this so?*
- *What can I do to increase wellness in my life right now?*
- *With whom else can I share these insights, to increase wellness in my life?*
- *What similarities of history do I share with others in my organization? What strengths does this give us? What blindnesses does this create for us?*
- *What differences of history do I have from others in my organization? What can I learn from others because they have different stories?*
- *How can we help each other to build greater community?*

## **Guiding principles for integral practices.**

As a final learning on our Journeys to Wellness, it is time to stop and reflect, *How can we gain the necessary skills to live in ecological balance?* It seems natural that any approach would have to be an integral one – practices full of integrity and respect for all of the quadrants.

In the *Future of the Body*, author, Michael Murphy lists sixteen guiding principles for integral practices. They are listed below with brief explanations regarding each one. Murphy defines an integral practice as “A discipline to cultivate the physical, vital, affective, cognitive, volitional and transpersonal dimensions of human functioning in an integrative way.”<sup>i</sup>

### **1. Diversity**

Integral practices need to suit each practitioner’s makeup. Each person has unique strengths, weaknesses and potentials. Moreover, any group of people whom they might be leading in an integral practice (eg. tai chi) will have their own distinctive nature. Not only must the practitioner utilize flexibility in selecting integral practices that match their strengths, weaknesses and stages of growth, they must keep in mind the people whom they may be leading. “if experience has shown that flexibility is necessary to accomplish narrow ends, it emphatically teaches us that a many-sided development of human nature requires rich, diverse and adaptable practices.”<sup>ii</sup>

### **2. Promotion of simultaneous development**

Integral practices tend to have an effect on the whole mind-body complex. For example, what may appear to be a purely religious practice may also strengthen us physically.

Another example is the practice of bodywork, which can release deep-seated emotions

and lead to a re-balancing of the whole being psychologically, emotionally, physically and spiritually. These changes in turn may manifest themselves in changes in our interpersonal relations.

### **3. Use of several mentors**

“... a drive toward wholeness and a hunger for many-sided fulfillment”<sup>iii</sup> may lead people to seek multiple mentors or teachers. This is a natural and healthy aspect to transformation, as each person travels a unique journey, requiring different guides at different stages of the journey. The saying, “when the student is ready, the teacher appears” can be supported by the student with an attitude of openness and expectation that counsel is available from many. In fact, in most cases it is available for the asking.

### **4. Strong and developing autonomy**

It is an irony of integral practices that as the practitioner grows in his/her understanding of integrity and wholeness, he/she also becomes progressively more distinct. A growing connection to all is matched by a growing autonomy. Autonomy arises in two ways: self-reference and self-responsibility.

In the case of self-reference the person becomes grounded and centered in his/her universe and interprets his/her integral practice in reference to internal loci of control.

In the case of self-responsibility the practitioner who has this internal loci of control feels confident and driven to assume responsibility for his/her self-development. Though he/she may accept the guidance of others, he/she remains separate and responsible for discovery and development of personal learnings, direction and intensity of experience. Such a person has a healthy regard for mistakes, set-backs and

inappropriate advice. At the same time he/she is likely to grow in discernment and internal resources.

## **5. Promotion of creativity**

Creativity is the partner of diversity. In a universe where diversity manifests itself in infinite creative acts, individual transformation can come through choosing to practice creativity in numerous ways. The creative experience in and of itself is transformative, putting us in touch with powers beyond the normal self who operates on a non-creative (purely operational) plane. Promoting creativity in others creates an environment with no expectations and no limitations.

Murphy lists a number of traits that artists, scientists and others “who produce work separate from themselves” tend to manifest (eg. “ ... tolerance of ambiguity... attraction to complexity and asymmetry ... flexibility of perception and ego boundaries ... unusual capacities for intuition ... feelings of oneness with others”). By extension, he implies that a person seeking to practice these traits is likely in turn to become more creative and exhibit more of the traits.

## **6. Surrender to transformative agencies**

Even the discipline of a Twelve Step Program teaches participants to “let go and let God”. Transformative practices inevitably lead a practitioner to a place where they choose to surrender their self-control, drop their ego boundaries and release themselves to a power greater than themselves. This release of control brings surprising insights, connections, creations and may move our relationship with self and/or other(s) to a whole new level.

## **7. Self-discipline**

Transformative shifts often occur after a lengthy commitment to a practice that initially does not seem to yield results. For example, the deep peace and connectedness that can result from the daily practice of meditation may come only after months or years of regular practice. This is no different in principle than the development of musical ability and/or spontaneity after years of practicing “five finger exercises”. The value of self-discipline was badly eroded in the self-indulgent “me-too” era of the eighties. More characteristic of the attitude of “short term pain for long term gain”, self-discipline for some people is a difficult challenge without the guidance of a mentor, who can show (or better yet, model) to the practitioner the reality of the long term gains.

#### **8. All-at-once responses**

Some transformative practices produce a multiplicity of responses that can lead to quantum jumps in our ability and/or willingness to change. “... a simple running program produces several dozen kinds of hormonal, cardiopulmonary, and muscular improvement.”<sup>iv</sup> All-at-once responses have much in common with the aspect of simultaneous development discussed in Item 2 above.

#### **9. Use of changes generated by images and altered states**

Images and altered states can lead practitioners to realize quantum leaps in their integral abilities. It is as if the unusual pictures, overwhelming emotions, new psychological experiences create new possibilities for the practitioner. The new possibilities open doors to the unexpected, novel and creative. They remove limitations and inspire radical change.

#### **10. Use multiple means to achieve particular outcomes**

Integral practitioners often develop a versatility in achieving particular metanormal outcomes. This versatility presents them with multiple opportunities and pathways to arrive at a particular destination. For example, a Christian faith healer might effect healing through prayer, therapeutic touch (laying on of hands) or prophetic blessing. This versatility of practice is an illustration of putting the diversity trait (discussed above) into practice.

### **11. Limits, negotiated not forced**

A practitioner can overcome self-imposed boundaries by persistent negotiation and need not use force. In fact, nature shows that everywhere in nature the forces of collaboration are more effective and longer-lived than the forces of competition or force (Capra, 1996).

Negotiation may require the enlistment of many other integral practices, such as self-discipline, creativity and use of mentors. And it may share much in common with the willingness to surrender to a larger cause and/or higher power. Ultimately, negotiation of physical strength, emotional fulfillment, or volitional readiness results in an open state to acquire metanormal capabilities.

Negotiation also involves an awareness of the developmental tendency of all things. A self-awareness of one's stage of development and the stages of development through which others have passed can assist practitioners to be patient enough to persevere with negotiation and overcome the temptation to resort to force (which may damage body, mind and relationships).

### **12. Improvisation**

Improvisation is a close cousin of creativity. Improvisation stems from a practitioner's willingness to try new roads, combinations or associations. It is situational and often inspirational. "Necessity is the mother of invention", may be the practitioner's underlying frame of reference that encourages improvisation. Its practice can lead to diversity, versatility and fun. In fact improvisation can be the antidote to too much negotiation. Improvisation leads to the sudden insight, unexpected conclusion and new invention.

### **13. Use of images of unity**

Images can be used not only to expand (as discussed above) but also to focus. Contemplation of or use of the images of unity can lead to a personal experience of unity that transforms the practitioner. It is as though an image of unity has the wisdom of a mentor frozen in time. The image transcends words and physical presence and acts as a currency of connectedness. Images embedded in cultural mythologies can have an especially powerful effect and lead to significant transformations (eg. the cross, mandalas, chants).

### **14. Facilitation of transitions between states of consciousness**

A practitioner's growing sense of self-awareness of his/her own states of consciousness can expand their facility of changing them at will. The changes can be as simple as using neurolinguistic programming (NLP) to change a state of depression to one of excitement. Or they can be as challenging as an alcoholic recognizing the situations and cravings that lead to addictive behavior. Or they can be as complex as consciously moving from alpha, to beta, to theta states of consciousness for the purposes of intense learning. "By extending unbroken awareness through all our activities, such

practices open connections between our dissociated parts, give us more command of habitual behaviors, promote access to our subliminal depths, and deepen realization of a subjectivity beyond all mental or physical happenings.”<sup>v</sup>

### **15. Awareness transcending psychological and somatic functioning**

While many socially acceptable transformative processes focus on psychological or physical development, true integral practices go beyond these spheres into emotional, spiritual and transpersonal development. Transformative change leads practitioners into integral practices that involve the whole person, whether they expect it or not. A common example, might be the “runner’s high”, which is an experience involving the whole person (not just the body), whether the individual initially recognizes it as such or not. The decision to walk through the doors that are opened by transcendent experiences, is always an individual decision. And the practitioner who uses multiple mentors is more likely to be encouraged to see beyond the immediate gains of mere psychological or physical practice to the rewards of transcendent experience.

### **16. All integral practices orienting us to extraordinary life contained in us**

Vitality gains real meaning to people who engage in integral practices. The experience of wholeness, connectedness, love, unity, courage, creativity, versatility and flexibility is an exhilarating one. Any and all of these experiences can make us feel truly alive for the first time. Usually it is a feeling we want to experience again and again. It makes us delighted with the vital force of life itself that is contained within us. It advances our readiness and willingness to seek other integral practices and it becomes a self-fulfilling journey, where the destination is the experience of the journey itself. “So that the full spectrum of grace can operate within [practitioners], they must be sustained

by a philosophy that embraces our many parts, by an aspiration for many-sided development, and by surrender to an existence greater than the one with which most of us are presently familiar.”

## Reflection:

*In order to develop, refine or alter an Integral Practice for yourself, ask yourself:*

- *What are my needs in the **Intentional Quadrant**?*
  - *What can I add, change or stop doing in my life to address those needs?*
- *What are my needs in the **Bio-Physical Quadrant**?*
  - *What can I add, change or stop doing in my life to address those needs?*
- *What are my needs in the **Cultural Quadrant**?*
  - *What can I add, change or stop doing in my life to address those needs?*
- *What are my needs in the **Social Quadrant**?*
  - *What can I add, change or stop doing in my life to address those needs?*
- *What do I need to change in my life to increase wellness in my life right now?*
  - *When will I do it by?*
  - *Who else does this involve? How can I get their agreement?*
  - *By making change(s) for wellness, what benefits will this give me?*

## Endnotes:

---

<sup>i</sup> Murphy, M., *Future of the Body*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1999, p. 588

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid, p. 579

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid, p. 580

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid, p. 582

<sup>v</sup> Ibid, p. 585