

ILP

Humane Communication Styles in Activism

An Independent Learning Project

Presented by

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To

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In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

Master of Education

Cambridge College

Cambridge, Massachusetts

2007

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Acknowledgements

I would like to give an ongoing thank you to my husband Jim Lydick who has spent countless hours, many trips and quality insight into putting me back on the right track again. Also, a huge dose of love goes out to all the activists who have helped to train me for the last two years, especially my mentor Mary Aldern.

Mahatma Gandhi and Dalai Lama receive special thanks for the spiritual insight that draws me into this labor of love in helping to create a more compassionate world.

Finally, my mother and father I thank for helping to form me into the soul that I am today. Their support creates the ethical foundation from which I have built my life and this paper.

Humane Communication Styles in Activism

Kathleen Beck

Abstract

The focus of this thesis is on communication styles within activism. The intention of this study is to understand the atmosphere that is created by the language used in activism. Humane ethics seek to create a more compassionate world. Are some communication styles in activism more in alignment with the goal of humane ethics? Activists in the San Diego community are interviewed to ascertain their communication styles. An attempt is made to understand their communication style and whether they are theoretically more aligned to a conflict or a functionalist style in doing activism to create social change. An attempt is made to understand whether or not activists practice non-violent language and/or non-violent actions in doing activist work. The process of Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha is explored as one path to achieving a humane communication style in activism. Communication styles are broadly defined in a pamphlet created in this thesis on *Building Humane Community in Activism*. This pamphlet has been developed as a result of these interviews and may be used in the activist community to deepen understanding of styles in communication. Further studies in usage of non-violent language may be indicated for the activist community.

Chapter one

Introduction

Rationale

The purpose of this Independent Learning Project is to study humane communication. By bringing awareness to various communication styles we may better understand the atmosphere that we create. As we attempt to move in the direction of a humane world, are there some communication styles in activism that are more in alignment with humane values? Are there ways to communicate in activism that will bring about the social changes we wish to make, in a style that is in keeping with humane values?

The History of the Problem

This paper is an attempt at understanding the underlying structures that keep us from communicating effectively. Throughout the course of human history there have been wars. Peace seems to come at great cost, as violence begets further violence and peace is only temporarily achieved. One element in these conflicts may well be miscommunication. It is often said that conflict is based on intolerance, power struggles and religious differences. Many believe that lack of respect for other cultures lies at the genesis of war. Much lies beneath the visible surface of written history as to the actual moment when a people took up their swords against their enemy. We often tell ourselves there was nothing more we could have done in our

efforts at peaceful communications. Is this true? Was there perhaps a moment when the right words would have led to a more peaceful solution?

Many theories of social change suggest that conflict is necessary for change. Ann Contrell (1985) states that, “The conflict perspective emphasizes the element of opposition in human life, following Marx’s view of society” (p. 47). Marx had a significant influence on our ideas for social change dynamics. The conflict perspective influences how we communicate by emphasizing the idea of struggle. However, there are other ways to frame our understanding of human interactions and the problems that we may encounter in communication. One of these theories about social change dynamics is called functionalism.

Functionalism is also referred to as consensus or equilibrium theory. In functionalism, social systems exist in a state of “dynamic equilibrium” such that adjustment to forces impinging on the system is made with minimal change within the system at any given time. Because there are always forces impinging on the system, perfect integration is never realized. Change is an adaptive process rather than a revolutionary shift. Human society is seen as an organism composed of many parts integrating themselves throughout time. Evolution is the paradigm, rather than revolution.

In this thesis, the call for a functionalist process in the form of humane communication is put forth as an alternative to a conflict theorist form of communication. The paradigms are different for framing the problems in miscommunication. This is a call for a less conflict-oriented process of change, rooted

in the desire to create a more compassionate world through an exchange of ideas rather than a revolution of new ideas pitted one against the other.

Humane communication may be used as an agent of functionalist change in our evolutionary journey. Humane communication is defined here as a style of communication that creates an atmosphere of understanding through the use of non-violent communication skills. These skills include an understanding of emotional literacy and compassion training.

The Center for Non-violent Communication (Rosenberg, 2005) defines non-violent communication as a way of communication that leads us to give from the heart. Rosenberg uses Gandhi's term non-violence to refer to our natural state of compassion when violence has subsided from the heart. The process for training involves 1) observation of what is actually being said or done, 2) stating how we actually feel when we observe this situation, 3) stating what needs are connected to the feelings we identify, and 4) stating a specific request.

In order to achieve non-violent communication an understanding of emotional literacy is necessary. Emotional literacy refers to recognizing and understanding our emotions, and it is essential for effective communication. If we do not understand our own feelings we will be unable to interpret our own or others feelings in a given situation, and we will be unable to communicate how we feel. This can stand in the way of effective humane communication. In emotional literacy Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is called into play. If the student's needs for security and safety are not being met, this will be the starting point in understanding where ones emotional

response may be coming from. The student of emotional literacy learns to identify and give language to their feelings upon understanding where the feelings may be originating from.

Compassion training is training an individual to be more compassionate. The model I refer to is a Buddhist one, which involves focused meditation on giving from the heart. In this meditation a person or persons are imagined to be surrounded by love that a practitioner is sending mentally to them. It is a visualization technique that allows the practitioner to alter their perceptions of that person. In practicing this art the practitioner gradually learns to be more accepting of the actual person. This is not to say that the behavior is accepted, but that the person is.

As a student of psychology and philosophy I began to wonder why communication skills were not taught at all grade levels. It seemed to me that there was a great need. As I progressed in my knowledge of various communication arenas, including but not limited to education and activism, I began to see that lines of communication are, to some degree, either open or closed. An open line of communication is one in which the listener is truly listening, while a closed line is one where the listener has stopped listening. These lines may be detected, for instance, by the look in someone's eyes and other cues. A listener's expressions, mannerisms, and gestures may indicate that she or he is either attentive or inattentive to what is being communicated. For example, a person may look away or at the ground as if denying the reality of a given situation. Although this same gesture may reflect that the individual is considering what is being said, it may also be an indicator

that the speaker has lost the listener. The closing of the eyes can sometimes show the closing of the mind, although it must be noted that this could be a reflective moment as well, as some people need the inner landscape to reflect on what is going on. In Paul Ekman's, *Unmasking the Face* (1975), he states that one can use the knowledge of facial expressions, "to learn about your own face, to become more aware of what your face is telling you about how you feel and what your face is telling others"(p. 1). In order for communication to be effective, then, the speaker must be attentive and responsive to the cues of the listener, keeping the lines of communication open. To me, humane communication is effective communication.

The effects of closed communication are often manifested in a turning off of the mind, tuning out or resisting the information being presented. The shutting down of the mind may lead to a refusal to participate in an interaction. I have observed this in family communications, workplaces, and in the Green Party, People's Powerlink, and the Coalition United for Sensible Power meetings that I have participated in. People's Power Link and Coalition United for Sensible Power are two organizations in San Diego that are opposing a 500 kilovolt, 150-mile long transmission line.

I became aware of the different types of approaches in achieving social change from a class I took on social change many years ago. I was fascinated with the possibilities. I also saw the movie, "Gandhi" at that time. I left the theater elated by how Gandhi had accomplished his goals. It was in this time of growth that I conceived that I would someday like to be more involved with social change from utilizing a more peaceful approach.

More recently, I began an organization to oppose an electric company project. From the inception, we were aware of the kind of behavior with which we wished to proceed. We wanted to be inclusive. We invited the power company to engage in dialogue with us. We allowed anyone to attend our meetings. We called ourselves People's Powerlink.

As more members participated and the movement grew, oppositions within the splinter groups opposing the power company began to develop as some members wished to keep others out. Some members began using language that resembled the language of war. At one particular meeting, the book, *The Art of War* (Sun-Tzu, 2006), was passed around as suggested reading by a member of the Sierra Club. Other members began using expressions of war to describe future actions (e.g., "First blood" in winning a "battle"; finding the "silver bullet", etc). I began to feel alienated, yet did my best to keep the group together, and I discussed what I saw as the underlying problem of language and the resulting behavior.

I believe that it is important to research ways of communicating non-violently among those who wish to work toward a non-violent society. As humane educators, we need to understand the dynamics of communication that contribute to the opening and closing of minds. By understanding these dynamics we may begin the approach to the creation of a more humane style of communication. It is also important that we come across to our audience as congruent in our values and practices, and language is a practice. In humane education, compassion is the value that we hold in the highest esteem and our language should reflect this. Moreover, activists are often given a bad

rap for their fervor. Outsiders, knowing little about a situation, will be less likely to align themselves with outrage and violent language. Thus, it could only benefit the humane activist and/or the humane educator to learn a language that does not portray the opposite of what she or he may be trying to achieve—namely, a more compassionate lifestyle.

This information can be useful to anyone with teaching compassion as her or his objective. So often in the past, I have stumbled over my words, not knowing what I might have said better. Diagnosing the problem is not always easy. With a few skills at hand, the activist and/or educator may become more aligned with her or his compassionate values.

Problem Statement

Some forms of activism are based on the assumption that there needs to be an opposite point against which the activist is working in order to bring about change. This approach is fraught with ideas of "us" and "them". Because of this perception, activists may be more likely to utilize a divisive process. In dividing the world into us and them, members of a group may also carry that perception forth when addressing concerns within their own group. Factions may form, and the group will sometimes end up "eating their own children", as my mentor Jim Bell once said.

A more functionalist approach seems necessary if the goal is to create a more compassionate world. In this project I advocate a more functionalist approach, as I maintain that the ends do not justify the means. I believe that this problem of us and

them can be avoided in part by creating an art of non-violent communication from the start, and hold to a process where the means is in every moment. If our ideals are intact along the path of the means by which we accomplish our goals, I believe the ends will be that much more powerful as we will then be consistent with our beliefs about creating compassion. Consistency in how we choose our language and our actions may speak volumes. Sometimes we will miss the mark, and at other times we will gain ground towards this compassion-oriented goal. Any means with which any end is ever truly achieved must aim toward compassion in humane education for it to be considered humane. This seems to follow logically.

Language is rarely given the value it deserves in activism. In the book, *In the Tiger's Mouth*, Shields (1994) attempts to bring awareness to communication. Yet even here, the idea of language is not fully explored. There is no mention of the importance of choice of words in framing our arguments. It is my contention that language shapes our ideas about the world in which we live. If we continue to use the language of war as we proceed to change the world through our activism, we may continue to uphold the divisions that we see that contribute to our detachment from nature and each other.

According to the Whorfian hypothesis (Whorf-Sapir, 1940), words both reflect and reinforce our perception of the world. In learning a new way to communicate, we can help to alter our perceptions one word at a time. In observing our communication we may see the seeds of our own discontent mirrored in our language or we may see

that our language truly does reflect the intent we may have towards a more compassionate worldview.

How often I have heard an activist speak of battles lost or won, of minor skirmishes and the like. It always reminds me that these activists see themselves as warriors working against something.

In studying Buddhism, I have come to the conclusion that until we see the world as ourselves, we will continue to have problems with it, as we will always be seeing the divisions and not the whole. Living in this time of great divisions, I see evidence everywhere that we are reinforcing this situation. In *Culture of Make Believe* (2004), Jensen demonstrates the results of such assumptions: higher prison populations, power elite manipulations of the poor, domination of both people and nature. It does not have to be this way.

Goal

My goal is to develop a theoretical work that conjoins the art of communication with humane education in working toward a more compassionate path for educators and activists. I wish to develop a pamphlet based on humane communication styles that will meet the needs of those in my activist community.

I see humane education as aiming for the goals of the idealist and taking a path to those goals through pragmatic action. I wish to create a practical idealism that is both effective and in alignment with the values of the humane educator. In doing humane

education the means by which these actions are accomplished need to be consistent with the ends.

There is much work to be done. Activism and education which utilize non-violent communication skills is one way to get this work more effectively done. Imagine a triangle with communication, activism and humane education as its three points, reflecting a method of working toward a more compassionate planet.

Population

Potentially, everyone can benefit from this Independent Learning Project. Originally I conceived it as a work in progress for activists to use. I see it as a learning tool for humane educators as well. By helping humane educators to cultivate an awareness of language which can be drawn upon when doing activism, they may become more aware of their own language. By becoming aware of the messages that we send, we can more fully extend ourselves in the way we wish the world to become.

Methodology

Data Collection

In collecting data for this study I will review the literature on the subject of activism as well as on non-violent communication techniques. Websites such as that of the Center for Non-Violent Communication will provide more insight from on-

going chat rooms. I will attend workshops on non-violent communication skills. I will conduct interviews with activists in my community.

Throughout the interviews I wish to understand the connections between language, communication, and activism. In determining these connections I may better understand the techniques employed and the art of their communication systems. Do they use respectful communications? Are they using creative solutions in achieving their goals? Are they compassionate towards the system that they are seeking to change? These are some of the questions that I am trying to answer here.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study is that the interviews will be from individuals only from San Diego County in which many people hold liberal values. Moreover, I am biased in that I am a native of this region and have been so conditioned by my culture. The humane communication techniques I present may not work in different populations or in crisis situations where conditions may be more desperate, requiring more immediate solutions.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the data I will attempt to keep an open mind to other forms of thought and perceptions that do not agree with my own. At the same time, I am attempting to develop a template. Because of this, I will be fitting together pieces of information that I find towards a positive solution mind set for situations that humane educators may face.

In choosing words that are more closely aligned with humane education values, I will attempt to synthesize a vocabulary that can assist the humane activist and the humane educator in her or his work. This language can be experimented with by humane educators and activists to see if it is effective as a tool in aiding the work towards a more compassionate world.

Organization of the Project

I will proceed with this work in several phases. In the first phase, I will read all accessible information. I will search through libraries and use the Internet.

In the second phase I will conduct my interviews. In interviewing activists I wish to bring awareness to the purpose of my project. I will then discuss the "tactics" that they most often use when confronting a problem either within or without their organizations. In determining their "strategies" I will become aware of the forms of thought that they use to perceive the world and the solutions to their problems. I will note the language used and document phraseology. I am also interested in whether or not they see themselves as pragmatists or idealists or any combination thereof. I will perceive whether they see themselves as conflict theorists or functionalist theorists and ask them why they believe the way they do. I will ask them if they practice non-violent communication.

In the third phase I will create a pamphlet to be used by my members of my community. This pamphlet will help to underscore humane approaches to building

community. The interviews conducted will create an outline for the pamphlet, depending on what I find in the interviews.

Through the workshops on non-violent communications I will seek to understand more fully the communication and language that I can use in developing a more compassionate dialogue with the world. I will seek to implement these skills and note the responses that I get in my everyday interactions. I will implement these skills in the activist group of which I am a part. I hold as a firm belief that until I change the way that I interact with the world, my part of the world will not change. I will test out this hypothesis during the duration of my ILP.

Chapter two

Literature Review

The Role of Language in Perception

A child learns what she or he lives, and lives what she or he learns. In studying the philosophy of language, I have learned that a child views the world through the filter of language (Whorf-Sapir, 1940), as she is taught to see and name life from the earliest experiences. Through this experience she becomes aware of ways in which to transfer meaning to all of her everyday interactions. How we do this transferring in order to effect change in our social constructs is determined in part by our ability to communicate.

Ludwig Wittgenstein (2006), a philosopher post WW1, wrote about how language shapes human development from early childhood through death. Wittgenstein is asking how much languages influence knowledge of the world and how one acts in it. There are many linguists, philosophers and psychologists who debate the role that language plays in our perception of reality.

Aaron T. Beck (1967) developed his cognitive therapy around the belief that emotions and behavior are caused by our internal dialogue. Our internal dialogue is made up of the semantics we have learned and the language we therefore use. He claims that we can change ourselves if only we can learn to challenge and restructure our own “dysfunctional” thoughts. He refers to these thoughts as cognitive distortions. These thoughts can easily influence us in directions not healthy for the

individual or the community. I maintain that wars are fought in part on the cognitive distortions which result from our inability to frame our beliefs in a more peaceful language. I believe that these cognitive distortions can influence how we communicate.

Some languages are constructed without the verb “to be,” such as with Russian and Arabic. Could the world be perceived differently by a speaker who would not differentiate themselves continually from the rest of the world by saying, “I am”?

E-prime is a recently constructed language of English origin without the verb “to be” (Bourland Sr., 1991). E-prime claims that dogmatic thinking seems to rely on “to be” language constructs. Perhaps the dogmatic habits of some thoughts are more prone to lead us into a conflict-oriented society; dogmatic thoughts based on “us” and “them”. Are there correlations in our speech patterns that precondition us to divide the world more absolutely?

The Whorfian hypothesis (Chandler, 2006) states that our language and the use of it influences our thought forms. This creates a linguistic relativity among speakers. This follows the mould theory in philosophy that believes language to be a mould which shapes our thought categories. This is in opposition to the cloak theory which sees language as the dressing for thought.

Romanine (1994) refutes the suppositions of the Whorfian Hypothesis. She believes that the Whorfian hypothesis is saying that language is the very thing that shapes our ideas and world views and therefore the hypothesis can be refuted by evidence to the contrary. If one can think outside the confines of their language culture then she sees this as evidence to refute the Whorfian hypothesis.

Romanine believes that foreign countries ability to communicate trade negotiations may be evidence that refutes the Whorfian hypothesis. I would have to say that joint ventures and current world trade agreements might point to the opposite conclusion; that perhaps the Whorfian Hypothesis is the reason for our difficulties in creating a world that works for everyone. She presumes no difficulties in the article, and defends the substance of ideas expressed between people of different languages as evidence that the universal language of law and science is helping people communicate effectively from all over the world. She is using different evidence than I would in creating her conclusions. I would tend to point to the exploitation inherent in world trade as evidence that communications are a problem between countries and that perhaps our semantics may have something to do with that.

Romanine critiques the idea that we cannot think outside the framework of our language. Although I agree with her, that we can indeed think/feel outside of our language, I do not believe that we can communicate to our greatest effectiveness when we do not have the voice in which to express our thoughts. Because of this difficulty we are thrown into the arena of poetry, music, art, sign language, nonsense, or perhaps, miscommunication.

For this very reason, we should honor the artists of any given society as they provide a very important function: That of exploring the outer regions of what we can and need to express. Perhaps the poets and artists of the day can help with understanding a new expression toward a humane future.

The purpose of this ILP is to bring awareness to the language we use. Through an analysis of activist language I am asking, “is some of the language we use breeding

the very mentality to which activists are opposed?’

The Role that Perception and Thought Play in the Process of Communication

In the movie, “Navigating the Rabbit Hole” Michael Ledwith (2006) asks whether it is possible to create one’s own life. I believe he means this in a very concrete sense. Through quantum mechanics Ledwith explains how we change the very fabric of reality by the focus of thoughts and words we choose to frame a given reality. If this is true, then there appears to be a lot at stake when we use conflict-oriented communication. Is it true that when we perceive conflict we somehow create a paradigm for setting those forces into action?

What would happen if we perceived our interactions as opportunities for engagement rather than conflict? If our problems create opportunities then the process that we use to solve these opportunities becomes very important.

Alinsky (1971) has written one of the leading works in doing activism. In *Rules for Radicals* (1971) he has a whole section in his book that outlines how an activist could rationalize the means they use to achieve their goals. Alinsky appears to be a process oriented problem solver. He uses the chapter title, “Of means and Ends”, with which to explain his ideas. He then goes on to defend the idea that the end justifies the means.

“One’s concern with the ethics of means or ends varies inversely with one’s personal interest in the issue” (Alinsky, 1971, p.27). This person-centered interest may be a fact of current society and its values, but does it necessarily need to be this way? Cannot society develop more of a conscience? If so, it may be up to certain

humane educators to promote this change.

“In war the end justifies almost any means. Ethical standards must be elastic to stretch with the times” (Alinsky, 1971, p.27). Alinsky wrote this before the atrocities of Vietnam were fully disclosed. Would he have approved of the governments tactics and the decisions of some of the warriors on the ground? In order for him to be consistent with his own philosophy would he therefore allow any government any means with which to achieve their goals? Surely the morality factor must come into place if we are trying to create a better society.

His argument for a straight utilitarian basis is not a call for growth as I define growth. His way to use morality seems to be as a tool only, after the fact, for the benefit of the press. “You do what you can with what you have and clothe it with moral garments” (p.39). The book, *Rules for Radicals*, having been written in 1971, shows that there is potential for growth in movements of social change for the humane educator.

Alinsky tries to prove his point that Gandhi only used non-violence because he did not have the armaments to achieve his goal of independence for India. The judgment was made after the fact; the fact is that Gandhi did achieve success without advocating or supporting violence. This is history.

Alinsky has created a “Law of Partiality.” This reminds me of Jensen’s *Culture of Make Believe* (2004). Jensen states, “The answers are particular, flowing from particular people in particular circumstances in particular places” (p. 603). Alinsky asks, “Does this particular end justify this particular means?”(p. 40) I believe that Gandhians would have a problem with this moral relativism. There is a part of me

that has not been convinced that moral relativism should be avoided at all costs, yet it seems that in keeping with a humane activist ethic moral relativism could be suspect due to its changing morals.

In *In the Tigers Mouth*, Shields (1994) speaks of the use of listening posts.

Listening posts were set up during the course of a protest in order for people to be able to have someone listen to them in a non-judgmental setting. Shields relates the positive use of listening posts during the course of a protest where people who are counter-protesting are getting violent. They were developed for use during protests to offer protection for people and a chance for women and men to get in touch with themselves and others in trying to get down to the essence of what they really mean by being there.

Shields provides attentive listening exercises: asking infrequent, open-ended questions aimed at encouraging the speakers to go deeper. As one listens, short phrases are reflected back to the speaker to check for understanding. Carl Rogers (1952) used this to great effect in his empathetic listening therapies; “I” statements are encouraged with a non-judgmental style. This forces the speaker to realize that she or he is in control of the thoughts she or he is having. According to the professors in, “Navigating the Rabbit Hole” (2006), control over ones own thoughts is all that is really real in quantum physics perception studies. Though this may be taking things a bit far, it is good to remember who controls our emotions. In attentive listening exercises the speaker can slowly come to realize the perceptual framework of reality that they have constructed throughout their lives.

In, “Navigating the Rabbit Hole” (2006) there were mind and matter studies

conducted on a group of meditating people. Their thoughts were said to be captured in an electric diode box to be taken later to an experimental site 2,000 miles away. The “mediators” were said to influence pH in water at an experimental site where they had previously focused their intentions. I have not followed up this study from the movie but would like to do so as it relates fully with what it is that I am trying to say here. If our thoughts and language can determine the pH of water, what effect might they have on our communications with others at the level of human consciousness? Can we flip the activating switch on in people’s receptivity with just a few kind words?

Communication Skills

Alinsky (1971) states that, “Communication is a two way process. If you try to get your ideas across to others without paying attention to what they have to say to you, you can forget about the whole thing. People only understand things in terms of their experience, which means that you have to get within their experience”(p. 81). This commonality of understanding is what the Center for Non-violent Communication is aiming for; as is the philosophy of Shields (1994).

Shields quotes Thich Nhat Hanh:

Can the peace movement talk in loving speech? Showing the way to peace? I think that will depend on whether people in the peace movement can be peace. We cannot do anything for peace without ourselves being peace (quoted in Shields, 1994, p. 55).

I had the pleasure of hearing Thich Nhat Hanh speak. He speaks in very peaceful tones that reflect his consciousness. I believe that tone has everything to do with where a person’s conscience is coming from. I have since become aware of my own

tones and the messages that are being sent.

Shields (1994) states that, "...it is vital to develop cooperative processes and techniques for communication..." (p. 82). Striving to be compassionate in one's intent, words and tone will go much further in creating a bridge with those we seek to change. When we seek in this direction we are creating the atmosphere of compassion that the humane educator wishes for the world. If we listen with an open heart and not lay our prejudices on the other, we can hear more clearly what is being said beneath the apparent language.

Shields (1994) also states that loosening the grip of our projection strikes at the underlying causes of the problems in our world. As we examine ourselves we come face to face with the reality that we have created our personal conflicts to a great extent. By doing the hard work of psychology on ourselves we can change the way we communicate.

Emotional literacy education (Zimmerman, 2006) is a training course that seeks to teach the student ways of understanding the emotional forces within us that contribute to our cycles of fear, apathy and hatred. He puts a lot of emphasis on class discrimination and the ways that this contributes to our emotional set and resulting behaviors. Emotional literacy helps by giving names to the forces of emotion that move within us. This could result in better empathetic listening skills. By having the tools to understanding the emotions that reside within us we may better know them in others through relating.

The aims of Non-violent communication as framed by Marshall Rosenberg, Ph.D. (2006), are to guide us in reframing the way we express ourselves and listen to others.

By focusing on what we are observing, feeling, wanting, and requesting, we can better understand others as well as ourselves. This style of communication attempts to replace old patterns of speech and to create new ways to see others and ourselves as we strive to create a better world. In this technique I hope to find a template for humane dialogue, which can be applied to the everyday activities and interactions that we have, as well as the societal and international conflicts made manifest. These techniques can be applied to activism as a language with which to both request social change, and to hear what the other is saying.

In Marc Barasch's *Field notes on the Compassionate Life* (2005), he has a quote from Father Thomas Keating: "If one completes the journey to one's own heart, one will find oneself in the heart of everyone else" (p. 7). I believe that compassionate people the world over understand this very basic truth. Understand your own conundrums and you understand the world better.

In *Organizing for Social Change* (2001), there is not one reference in the glossary to communication skills. Although the Midwest Academy has put much good material into the nuts and bolts of organizing structures for organizations in the book, little attention has been given to humane communications within the group. On supervision techniques, the book seems to support a chain of command style of communication with little emphasis on listening for understanding.

Katrina Shields (1994) and Marshall Rosenberg (2006) both have an excellent recipe for communication within and without the group structure. This contributes greatly to the development of a humane communication system within activism.

The Future for a Humane Communication Style in Activism

My inspiration for a humane communication ethic in activism came from the works of Sharif Abdullah in *Creating a World that Works for All* (1999), “With a common language, our ability to see and then do something about our predicament increases dramatically” (p.136). What does this common language look like if we want it to be the best that we can imagine it to be? What might a framework for compassionate conversation look like?

If we are concerned about non-sustainable lifestyles will we continue to rail against proponents of petroleum products or will we choose an activism based on the creation of healthy communications between the two points of view? Perhaps the accumulation of wisdom to this point in evolution has created an illusion of polarities that only appears opposite due to our dualistic way of perceiving. What if we were to perceive the solution in a more holistic mind-set? How would we communicate this to others? What language would we use? Which words and phrases could we synthesize into a language we could all accept? How much better can we translate our vision for a positive society?

In answering these questions, *The Power and the Promise of Humane Education*, Weil (2004) provides a framework for doing the research necessary. There are four basic steps in doing humane education according to Weil. The first involves education on the subject at hand. By focusing on information obtained in this thesis from the activist’s experience, I will be able to fashion a template for compassionate communication that leaves all parties better informed and working towards positive solutions.

The second step involves fostering the 3 “C”s of curiosity, creativity and critical thinking. Through the curiosity and creativity of myself and the activists I work with I will create a work of linguistic art. Critical thinking provides the tool with which to carve out a work that delivers a compassionate activism.

We may also add a fourth C; that of communication. In creating humane communications within activism, who are we if not compassionate? And if we are compassionate will others know it if we continue to use the language of dualism?

The third step involves trying to instill the 3 “R”s of reverence, respect and responsibility. Can we truly achieve these goals with our force of will? Or do we need to begin our conversations with ‘soft eyes’ and open hearts, allowing for “us” and “them” to break down into a listening receptivity to the needs of the other? Will listening promote movements in reverence and respect for the other?

How you communicate; the words that you use; the tones you convey; these all tell others much about your level of respect and reverence for others. This will decide whether people will believe you and be open to your message, or whether they will close the door and ‘batten down the hatches’.

I believe that Gandhi has developed an excellent, beautiful communication style in what he calls, Satyagraha. The basic concept is to redirect the focus of a fight from individuals to principles (Juergensmeyer, 2005). This idea parallels Weil’s fourth idea of meeting a positive solution based on a synthesis of ideas.

Gandhi’s method encourages people to imagine a positive solution that brings the best out of both sides in an interaction, moving towards an evolutionary improvement in the situation. To be at one with the movement is very important. In this way the

means and the end is in every moment.

“Gandhi believed that the very process of fighting would bring into bold relief the truth and the deception of both sides” (Juergensmeyer, 2005, p. 14) This has been the case time and time again through-out history.

In the beginning of my studies in humane education I called myself a moral relativist, due to my understanding of Taoist teachings. It is written in the *Tao te Ching*, “True mastery can be gained by letting things go their own way” (Mitchell, 1988, p.48). Juergensmeyer (2005) writes that “A Gandhian fight calls into question the truthfulness of every position, no matter how vaunted” (p. 20). Moral relativism is a philosophical position that denies the possibility of objective truth independent of social framework. This is an area I will investigate further in this thesis as it pertains to the ‘ends justifies the means’ argument.

“Gandhi would resolutely refuse to allow us to consider opponents as enemies”, says Juergensmeyer. (2005, p. 36). There are many parallels here in *Field notes on the Compassionate Life*, by Marc Ian Barasch (2005), in regards to seeing your “enemy” as yourself. The solution that Barasch discovers, I have found for myself. Your enemy sometimes has more in common with you than you may originally believe. For this reason it does not benefit one to denigrate ones enemy. Gandhi promotes holding the integrity of ones adversary.

“The ideal Gandhian way of thinking about the matter, is to do away with the distinction between means and ends altogether” (Juergensmeyer 2005, p. 41). I have always believed that doing away with the ideas of means and ends is important if we are to move beyond our current conflict oriented conceptions. To make the ends your

yardstick for success does not make sense to me as the means and ends are in every moment.

Gandhi speaks of moral fortitude in a way that reminds us to be ever aware that our involvement here is not to do harm. Even the integrity of the opponent must be kept in mind. Coercion is seen like a chess move towards war. Non-violent force is seen as a power that withdraws consent and energy from a bad situation. Gandhian participants involve themselves by trying to convince the other of their principles of truth in any given situation. Unfortunately, throughout *Gandhi's Way* (Juergensmeyer, 2005), words are used like, "Gandhian fighter", "combat", "ultimate weapon", etc. These are words of inherent violence. These are words that may be inconsistent with a non-violent approach. Alternative words may include "participant", "interaction", etc.

In Gene Sharp's book, *The Politics of non-violent action* (1973), the ways to produce non-violent actions are only limited by one's imagination. He suggests: formal statements, public forums, use of dramas and music; symbolic acts; processions; withdrawal and renunciation. He gives examples such as total personal non-cooperation; economic boycotts; policies of austerity. These are all examples of humane communication techniques in my opinion.

Some styles of communication are non-violent methods aimed at social change through non-cooperation, towards the system one wishes to change. Many of these methods are currently being practiced by humane educators today. Economic boycotts of Nike, Wal-Mart and other human rights abusers have been particularly effective. These methods are in alignment with the Gandhian ideal of Satyagraha.

Satyagraha is in alignment with the humane education ideal of seeking positive solutions towards a better world.

Pema Chodron (2006), a Buddhist monk, speaks of how when we get in touch with where we are within ourselves, we begin to see others and understand them better. By becoming our own anger, we can interpret others anger better. We then can form a commonality from which to speak from. She speaks of “angry face” and how this can be seen in Greenpeace faces as well the KKK. Activists can use this self-knowledge to great effect in understanding the opposition. The opposition may not feel so far away when we speak a language that includes the other, based on this understanding.

Conclusion

War and peace start in the hearts of individuals. Chodron (2006) speaks of the paradox of trying to find a comfortable space in peace while creating a hardened heart. From animal activism, Environmental Liberation Front warriors, soldiers in Iraq, to peace activists, if there is an ‘us’ and ‘them’, there will be no end to the fighting. Compassion is the only way around it. Language, being how we communicate our inwardness to others, becomes crucial in making a link to the outside world. The only way out is in. When we understand our inward landscape we may better understand our communications to others. This ILP is an attempt to understand both the inward and the outward landscapes of those wishing to change the world.

Chapter Three

A Pamphlet on Building Humane Community in Activism

Building Humane Community in Activism

Introduction

In interviewing the activist community of which I am a part, I realized that there is an ethic blooming in this community that has begun to bear fruit. The community is San Diego and the fruit is Humane Community. There is awareness among many activists that local communities are the places where the seeds are kept. Local communities are where the power resides and where the power should reside. They are the only ones that can and should be in charge of their future. Activists are trying in many differing approaches to get this message across to those who would control their future. For this reason I have decided to create a pamphlet on Building Humane Community in Activism. My ILP is composed of ten chapters that comprise this pamphlet, and each chapter is based on an interview with one participant.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to use the phrases and words that activists use in the course of their work. In the course of the interviews it became quite clear that there was a consistency of words and phrases used throughout the individual interviews. The repeated words and ideas within those phrases created a theme, a style of communication that became a thread throughout the conversation.

There are many ways in which to analyze the activists and their words. I have chosen to allow their own terminology to determine the chapters of this pamphlet,

along with this forward that lends itself to their common denominator: that of cultivating an intentional activist community based on humane ethics for the ecosystems that surround them as well as social justice for those who live there.

The purpose of the interviews was to determine communication styles in reference to language, method and philosophical outlook—specifically, what words and phrases are used to define the methods and which methods are used that may correlate to the activists overall style. Some of the questions were asked to determine the language that an activist uses to describe what they do.

I studied activists who either lived in the area of southern California or who passed through this area in their activism. Volunteers and paid activists were both studied. Who I chose was determined by who had been in the local news within the last year. The interviews were taped and were about a half hour in length. I conducted ten interviews.

Questions asked were: What activism are you currently involved in? What types of actions do you employ to achieve your goals? Do you believe in the statement that “the end justifies the means”? What type of organizational style do you employ within your organization? Do you reach decisions by consensus, committee or majority vote? What is your communication style outside the group? Do you act on your own or do you represent the group consensus? Do you challenge authority figures publicly? Are you inclined to public debate? Do you believe in a conflict position when moving toward social change? Do you work within the system to resolve your situation? Do you believe in a functionalist approach to change? Do you practice non-violent actions when moving toward social change? Do you practice

non-violent language? How has your communication style changed over time? How would you define your philosophical outlook with regards to social change? Do you see yourself as more of an idealist or more of a pragmatist? What advice would you give to first-time activists?

All of these questions were asked in order to determine the activist's communication style. My suppositions were that their individualized style would determine the atmosphere that they ultimately create in going about the business of social change. I made the educated guess that most activists would use military style language, as that seemed to be in current usage in activist literature. I had experienced the usage of it in the activist community that I work in.

I guessed that most activists would see themselves as a combination of both pragmatist and idealist. Most activism is a belief in action and practical results defining that action, or so it seemed to me. Idealism creates the desire for a better world.

I was not sure how activists would respond to being referred to as conflict theorists or functionalist theorists. Some were familiar with this terminology but most were not.

The terms that I chose to use for social change dynamics came from definitions that I had learned in a class at San Diego State University in the late 1980s. The title of the class was *Social Change*. The definition for conflict theory was: "The conflict perspective emphasizes the element of opposition in human life, following Marx's view of society." Marx had a significant influence on our ideas for social change dynamics and therefore determined the vocabulary to a significant degree. The

conflict perspective influences how we communicate by emphasizing the idea of struggle. However, there are other ways to frame our understanding of human interactions and the problems that we may encounter in communication. One of these theories about social change dynamics is called functionalism.

Functionalism is also referred to as consensus or equilibrium theory. In functionalism, social systems exist in a state of “dynamic equilibrium” such that adjustment to forces impinging on the system is made with minimal change within the system at any given time. Because there are always forces impinging on the system, perfect integration is never realized. Change is an adaptive process rather than an evolutionary shift. Human society is seen as an organism composed of many parts integrating themselves throughout time. Evolution is the paradigm, rather than revolution.

As will be pointed out in the chapter, Evolutionary Biology, these ideas of conflict and functionalist theories get turned around and recombined in a synthesis that creates a theory of social change based on our understanding of how nature functions. This paradigm isn’t necessarily new, but renewed in this chapter.

As was expected, most activists referred to themselves as an equal combination of both pragmatist and idealist thought. There were two cases where idealism had a slightly greater influence. This did not surprise me, as I might agree that ideals push the pragmatic activist to the actions that they take, thereby providing the primary impetus to act.

What did surprise was the very little use of military style language throughout the interviews. Based on my review of activist literature, along with my personal

experience in working with activists, I had assumed that the militaristic terms such as: tactic; strategy; battle; attack; ammunition; campaign would come out to a much greater extent. I was pleasantly surprised that these terms came up briefly, if at all, in most of the interviews and only to a large degree in one of the interviews. In response to the questions on the use of non-violent language, all responded with, “I try”. This growing awareness of the language that we choose to define our thoughts and actions in activism is a hopeful turn in the direction toward a more peaceful humane future.

Pamphlet Chapter Titles

Building a Community through a Foundation Built on Principles

Building Community through Relationships

Building Community through Grassroots Consensus

Building Community through Education

Building Community through Non-violence

Building Community through Getting the Job Done

Building Community through Revolutionary Spirit

Building Community through Sustainability

Building Community through the Evolutionary Perspective

Building Community through the Intuitive Approach

Building Community through a Foundation Built on Principles

Duncan McFetridge

Duncan McFetridge considers himself to be a political activist. He states from the beginning, “SOFAR (Save Our Forests And Ranchlands) engages the subject matter in the only arena I know of where decisions are made; the political arena.” Duncan believes in taking legislative action into his own hands. He has written three initiatives for the ballot in the state of California and has had one of those initiatives passed. He also engages on the judicial level through the filing of lawsuits.

His group is dialogue based in communication style and he roots himself in his training in philosophy and the classics. “We participate in discussion. In the discussion, we council with our superiors because our decisions are scrutinized at all levels. When you get involved with city councils and county governments you have to be very clear on the facts. You simply can’t make mistakes. Our policy is to let the sun shine in. Knowledge is based on principle. Some subjects require serious dialogue, so I would say when we come to a decision we council with the people that know their subjects well.”

In Duncan’s communication style, dialogue is used with the debate system which is used to reveal the truth-the principles of the issue. “I am a contractor and am always referring to the foundation of a house. We call the foundation the principle and start to build on that. There’s a very important answer here in terms of communication; we are always looking for what is the appropriate structure that should be in place now. We immediately start at the point where we get saturated

with the history of planning, ranching history, natural history... We realize the politicians who are making decisions are making decisions on how it serves an interest. We keep at what ought to be. I constantly feel that all public forums legally are for educational purposes.” Duncan’s approach is to communicate in a fashion that brings the facts to light through dialogue and debate. “Its very essence is education.”

When asked if Duncan uses a functionalist approach to social change by working within the system he says, “I do, but you have to qualify that because in San Diego from the politician’s point of view, I’m considered Public Enemy Number One. I think what enrages these people is that I do work within the system. It goes back to other comments I make on classical philosophy, you can be a revolutionary like Copernicus. Copernicus worked within the system. You definitely have to say that he was a revolutionary. That truly was a revolution but no one died. It was an intellectual revolution.”

Duncan has created a hybrid in his communication style that recognizes the functionalist processes that create the boundaries in which he works; while at the same time using conflict processes to refine his principles toward a better world and create change within those systems. He uses the public arenas of city council and boards of supervisors in which to clarify the issues, and he is not afraid to use conflict as a tool. His many uses of the judicial system in filing lawsuits attest to this fact. Principles grounded in truth are worth the conflict for Duncan.

In reference to being a pragmatist or an idealist, he says, “Both. You can be a pragmatist, but you can’t steer the ship unless you know where the North Star is.” Principles guide his ship of community action.

“I would say I’ve become clearer on the word, community, as my basis for a philosophical outlook. In a nut shell, the entire environment and all its details can be considered environmental community. You can’t pull out the parts of it, right? So the word community is a terribly important term. For instance, in animals, all its actions are in response to their community surroundings. They are totally in tuned, so they are community beings; where we can be separated. Not only do we get sick, we go nuts too. The Greek term for a person who is isolated is idiot, someone who is outside the community. I mean we have just lost sight of that...so I think this is very important philosophically. What do we do when we go to a public meeting? We are always trying to bring out the issue that affects the community- transportation, resources, housing, health care--these all are signs of a healthy community. This is our philosophy and it is modeled on the environment. This is a famous statement by Leopold, ‘until we see land as part of our community we will never treat it with love and respect.’ Land is part of the community, folks”

The advice that Duncan gives to new activists is, “if you know there is something wrong, this isn’t working, you’ve got to go some place where you sense it is working. The activist has got to go somewhere to hear things that make sense to them.” Seeking out a situation, a book or a mentor and learning from that is what he suggests one do.

Building Community through Relationships

Diane Conklin

When community organizer, Diane Conklin of Ramona, California, was asked what type of organizational style she employs within her many community organizations, she quipped, “I think that you need to have the heart before you have the structure. I mean, because in a volunteer organization everybody is giving of their time and they can walk away and they should if they are abused.” Diane understands a basic building block in creating intentional community: that of building relationships.

Building relationship provides the foundation. “The point is that if you don’t trust each other, if you don’t make friends with each other and share each others food and dreams and even fun, then you will never have a really dynamic organization over a long period of time each protecting its own area.”

Her approach is one of the foundations in healthy family dynamics, religious groups and ultimately one of the principles of building solid community. The power within this approach should not be taken lightly, for it creates the cement that bonds the participants to continue to create a better world. There will be times in creating social actions where the motivation is low; perhaps due to a formidable oppositional element that appears insurmountable; perhaps due to clashes of ego within the group. The fortitude to continue can sometimes be renewed by a familial type gathering.

In regards to her decision making structure she prefers a, “flat organization, where all people can speak; but then, there are times when you have to have a benevolent

dictatorship and that is because often times people just don't have the time. So if you are always talking to everybody all the time-and I have done that for years because I had to have 'buy in'- I would ask everybody, 'here is what I am thinking, what are you thinking?...do you think I should proceed?' So then over the years I have what is called 'buy in'. I call them up and say, 'this is what I am thinking' and they may say, 'Hey, Diane, do what you want this time. We trust you'. Then I don't have to call them up all the time. That's the kind of benevolent dictatorship I am talking about"

This may seem to be offensive as an approach on the surface of it as we have learned to distrust the idea of dictatorship, and for good reason. Yet what Diane is explaining here is a house that's very foundation rests on a solid foundation of goodwill. The proof is in the many accomplishments and good will within her organization. Of course, geniality is not the only skill in her toolbox. Her sense of honor compliments her friendliness.

When asked if she believes that the end justifies the means she responded, "It's better to lose something honorably than it is to win something dishonorably. The reason that's true is that these battles are long-term, they can change, and you may think you have won (dishonorably) and they come back and you haven't won and you've been dishonorable. So now you have a real problem."

I believe that sense of integrity helps to guide her course, thereby allowing people to give her the ability to practice a kind of benevolent dictatorship. "When it comes to reaching the big decisions the group practices consensus building. We cannot afford not to have everybody approve the decision. But then that is not as difficult as it might seem because we don't have that many people actively involved. We do it as

family. When you have a larger number of people, you don't ask for a decision there because you have too many people in the room and too much to discuss. You raise issues and then people get to think about it. At another time you have a smaller meeting and you usually have a group of people who really want to be involved and those are the people who make the decisions."

Consensus is not for every situation and certainly not for every type of organizer or organization. It takes many hours to reach a solution. Yet with this kind of foundation all are ultimately responsible for the decision, for better or worse. As Diane says, "Consensus shows respect for all involved. The issue is how much you respect other people's feelings and when you have been working with people for years you would never want to do anything that is jarring or anything that was not discussed beforehand"

This respect is extended to those she opposes. "I don't challenge authority figures publicly as a whole because I think that it is grandstanding. Challenging them privately however is quite different. I am inclined to challenge them privately. That means that I take them aside and tell them what I think. If they don't do what I think is right then they know that they will have a challenge and it will be something that they expect in a form that is part of the process. Then you can challenge in a way as to get something done. I think we need more public debate." If public debate is expected and practiced for everyone's better understanding, then it is appropriate and should be practiced.

The congenial approach to building coalition can cross into the playing fields of planning group meetings in the public sector and become an approach to social

change that is sometimes unexpected and always appreciated. It tends to open hearts and minds to the ideas put forth. To put good will into these sometimes dry landscapes is to recognize that everyone is playing their roles in these situations. If your role is one of good will then you will help the decision maker to understand more and open them to change. Change happens easier in an atmosphere of trust and good will.

On this point, the way in which we express our thoughts and the language that we use to express can open or shut minds; as the vocabulary that one uses can tend to sway or sway away from ones intended goal.

When asked about her use of non-violent language, Diane said, “That’s a very interesting question. I have recognized in myself an extraordinary need to vent privately; Then, a good judgment not to vent publicly with violent language. Now the reason that I think it’s not good to employ that type of language most of the time, is because that kind of language is usually based in some kind of ‘victim hood’. It is not based in power. It is a reactionary language and it comes out of weakness and the fact that I do it is stunning to me because I know that I’m doing it because I feel weak.”

Diane brings into the arena of language an understanding of possible motivations that are not commonly understood by the casual user of violent language.

Violent language is defined here as: an ordinate vehemence of expression or feeling; distortion of misrepresentation of content or meaning; language denoting severe or injurious treatment or action. The underlying psychological element may or may not be an expression of ‘victimhood’, but it is a worthy question for one to ask of oneself in such situations.

There may be times when using violent language helps one to get in touch with oneself. Diane adds a caveat to her previous statement, “I am fifty nine and I am a woman. I am not supposed to use those words. Sometimes I really enjoy using those words to those I trust!”

In terms of an overall philosophy Diane embraces the pragmatic idealist approach to change. “That means that I have ideals but I also realize that we have to be practical in realizing things. I don’t think anyone would be able to say that there are parts of you that are totally idealistic that you wouldn’t ignore; and parts of you that are practical that you wouldn’t ignore. But we always employ a little bit of both, I think”

As a community activist trying to protect her land and the community established around her she has seen the threats that have come to them from the outside and believes that this is one way to be motivated to action. “It could be a threat very close that you have to deal with. When you become active then you start realizing your own power. And then become more of who you are. I think that the only advice I would give a person who is beginning to grow up and engage something, is they should never doubt their initial impetus, because if you were not active before, something has moved you. When you become active in things you grow up and you recognize the world as it really is. This is all a part of becoming responsible for yourself and maybe helping others to become responsible for themselves, so that you can work together to achieve a mutually beneficial end.”

A mutually beneficial end is one based on the recognition of the interrelationships within the community. These can be maintained as the people within the community

continue the work of congeniality, trust and consensus building. In the world of Diane Conklin, social action begins here and forms the solid foundation of creating intentional community toward a better future for all concerned.

Building Community through Grassroots Consensus

Roland Blue

Roland Blue has been and continues to be involved in many community groups, including the Americans for the Department of Peace, a trans-partisan, non-political executive branch of the government equal in status with the Department of Defense.

“I like to liaison among the different groups; I do letter writing, especially email letter writing; more than that I have an email ministry that’s evolved where by I spend one and one half hours a day going to the library to receive environmental activists and political activist requests and send them out to eight email groups that I have constructed.” In this way Roland is reaching hundreds of people everyday.

“Last year I walked ten precincts. The year before, I walked five precincts on the governor’s propositions”. This year Roland is a progressive democratic delegate to the democratic convention in the state of California. These are all activities linked to the kind of community building through consensus that Roland does.

In terms of what structures work in making decisions within the groups of which he is a member, “I experience mostly bottom up, because those are the groups that sustain. Primarily in the progressive movement, most of the style that I’m involved in is grassroots where there’s allowance of equal participation of all of the members. I realize that the more you get into centrist type, entrenched groups, democrats or republicans, its top down.” In terms of the decision making process, “By consensus. I would say primarily by consensus, sometimes by majority vote depending on the group that I’m involved in” As a liaison Roland is a believer in cross-pollination, so

mainly he is informing one group of a political action that another group may be taking, or hosting a presentation from one group to another.

In terms of the conflict perspective, Roland comments, “I’m not involved in public debate on the basis of creating a path with it, yet I recognize the validity and the necessity of that. I am personally involved in the personal relationships and try to sustain and pray by the grace of God, to inspire others as they have inspired me, provide information to others and lift up each others spirits when we have down time.” Roland’s approach is a very soulful approach.

He practices non-violent actions as well as non-violent speech and sees that as part of his interpretation of the meaning of being a Christian. In reference to building relationships, “I have built these relationships over time where we have mutual respect so I can be more explicit. As time has gone on and I’ve had different experiences in the groups I’m involved with, I can be more direct.”

“I’m more of a functionalist because I’m trying to work within the system. My major time commitments are with the progressive movement groups which incline toward a give and take/bottom up agreement and therefore functionalism works more easily; even when I am in situations with people who have vastly different viewpoints I am a functionalist.”

“In terms of motivation, I’m an idealist. I am pragmatic in arriving at decisions by consensus and pragmatic in terms of knowing that no matter what number of ideas great or comprehensive that we share, unless they issue forth a meaningful action, it’s worthless.”

“I would tell first time activists to be open to being stretched. To being more involved than in your entire life in effort and energy. Do a lot of listening and study the issues and reach out to others. You surely can learn a lot when you reach out to other people and are open to them. They will necessarily inform you. Build relationships because that’s the core of the success of any pragmatic, progressive political involvement. It is in building the interpersonal relationships that you will provide each other with information; sustain yourself emotionally; and in you down time, inspire each other”

Building Community through Education

Kelly Fuller

Kelly Fuller has been working to oppose SDG&E's Sunrise Powerlink proposal here in Sand Diego. Currently she is doing volunteer work on ATV issues in Minnesota. She has been very active in the Sierra Club.

"I think that the most important thing is making sure that people have information. That has been my role more than anything else. That may mean calling up community leaders who have not heard about an issue before that's going to affect them. Not only letting them know that it is going to affect them but who else they can talk to, to do something about it. It means presentation to the public and outreach to the media. In my case it's meant spending a lot of time updating my blog on the Internet, trying to get good information to people so that they can make good decisions and take actions themselves." Kelly Fuller is also a teacher, "I am making sure that all of the tasks that are done are laid out and all of the people that are assigned to those tasks are being done so everybody knows what their responsibility is."

In terms of a conflict theory to social change Kelly says, "I wish I didn't have to do public confrontation." She contrasts San Diego to Minnesota. "If you are talking about San Diego, you absolutely can't trust the politicians to do the right thing for the environment or for the communities. You have to hold them accountable in public. Now in Minnesota it's a little different. Folks have mentioned to me that what they try to do is more of the behind the scenes stuff, rather than public confrontation. I think that has more to do with their working together to solve problems."

“I believe that you have to work with whatever public process has been set up. But then you have to try to get those processes made better. So, you work with whatever system’s there, but you push hard to make the system change. Sometimes you are out there outside the system appealing directly to the public, working on people’s hearts and minds. Sometimes that moves quickly, sometimes that moves slowly. It just depends on what the particular issue is and how much work has been done before you to get the public ready for a particular issue.”

Given a choice between the conflict theory to social change and the functionalist perspective Kelly puts herself more in line with the conflict theorists. This is why: “Because I do environmental activism and it is always on an extremely short time line; For instance, comments will be due on an environmental impact report or the government will be getting ready to make a decision on something and lots of times it is less than a year and you just don’t have time for an evolutionary consciousness changing thing. Once environmental damage is done you can never fix it; you can’t go back. I do more on the conflict end just because of the short time lines.”

Her advice to a new activist? “Talk to everybody you possibly can who has done this before and talk to enough people that you figure out who you want your teachers to be. Ask them to teach you. If you can get somebody to agree to be you teacher, I think that is an easier way to learn than to figure it out by yourself. The relationship formed between student to teacher, is very helpful in doing this work.”

Building Community through Non-Violence

Jeeni Criscenzo

Jeeni Criscenzo focuses her energies on anything that has to do with peace and justice, including the environment. “My first goal would be to communicate certain things to people-awareness, and to use non-violence in my communication.

Sometimes it takes different ways of doing that. There are wonderful ways to reach people on the Internet through writing. I am a gifted writer and it is a gift I get to use. So I reach people with my writing. But I also try to find other ways that will also serve as an example of non-violent communication”

In regards to the end justifying the means question Jeeni says, “We must always be congruent with what we are about. I have a big problem with people who use violence to talk about peace-or any kind of change, any kind of injustice. Violence isn’t just hitting people over the head. Violence is in our language and in our body language. When people use critical language that reflects anger and doesn’t leave room for some one to make a change, they become defensive and you are not going to get the end that you want. So the means is extremely important.”

In terms of a conflict position as it pertains to social change, “I definitely don’t believe in a conflict position. I like to use the position that everybody walks away feeling like they got their needs met. That’s what non-violent communication is all about. I think it’s possible. When we look at why people do things, it’s almost always about making choices. Everything we do is based on making choices and almost always people will choose that thing that will make them feel most wonderful. So, if

we are respectful of that, we can find ways of meeting each persons needs and they can feel wonderful about the decisions that they make.”

In terms of taking a more functionalist position and working within the system, Jeeni quotes Buckminster Fuller and uses this phrase in her signature file on line: “You can’t change things by changing the existing reality, you have to create a new model that makes the old system obsolete.” “Working within the political system I am loosing faith in, but within the community and building community on the local level- I think we can be successful. Then it’s not fighting the system but it’s not using the system either, it’s a new model.” The system Jeeni is proposing is to work to create a different system based on intentional community. It is not conflict oriented. And it is working here in San Diego within the Peace and Justice movement, creating ripples of change.

One of Jeeni’s projects is “Bring our Buddies Home.” The project is a silent vigil, a visual image of all of the servicemen and women who have had their lives taken in the Iraq invasion.

In terms of non-violent language and non-violent action she is consistent in her philosophy. She does not drive a car and takes public transportation. “I try to be non-violent in everything I do. Not just in my activism but in my life. That’s why I’m a vegetarian; that’s why I try to make the very smallest footprint as possible on the planet in everything I do.”

“The important thing is that you do something. The universe will give you everything you need including the support of wonderful people. I get my inspiration and energy from all the people around me and they get their energy and inspiration

from the people around them. So, don't be afraid, just go out there and do something."

Building Community through Getting the Job Done

Dana Lyons

“My normal mode of activism is singing. I perform songs that focus on environmental and social justice issues. My music communicates my activism. My main focus of activism right now is working on a youth website that will list specific projects that students are doing in different schools that can easily be repeated by other schools,” says Dana Lyons.

“Through my music I am telling stories and letting songs open people’s hearts—to feeling alive and feeling part of what’s happening to them in their communities.”

Although this is not all of the work that Dana does, it provides a core from which to work from.

In terms of the organizational structure that he works from, “It depends on the project. I am of the frame of mind that if you are working with someone who is more knowledgeable than you and a leader in a certain way, you let them lead on that aspect. Then you support them in whatever ways they need support. I like working with teams, letting the obvious expert lead in that particular field. Put the most talented person at the head of their fields.”

In terms of the process for decision-making, “There are certain situations where it is wise and productive to make decisions by consensus. There are certain situations where I consult the team and then have to make a decision, or someone else has to make a decision. It depends.”

In terms of a functionalist perspective Dana comments, “It depends on what is warranted. There are times when a society is in a state that allows for rapid change, a quick revolution or giant shift in the culture. My job is to get the job done, so if the society is lined up to do it very quickly, when I would say do it quickly. Usually societal change takes a long time, a cultural change. So you have to plow and prepare the ground for a long time. It just depends on the landscape.”

“I practice non-violent language because I never want to provoke a violent situation. On the other hand there are some people within the environmental community who feel conflict is violent. I have no trouble with conflict.” In this perspective, conflict is allowed as a paradigm for change.

“Societal changes that do not involve a transfer of power can be done in a gentle way, for example like what I am doing to get schools to recycle-use 100% post consumer product. Very few people are going to argue with that. Mostly we are organizing to get it done; it costs a little more, so we’ve got to get it done so the school budget can handle it. It is not really a conflict situation. A conflict situation that might arise in this project might be the use of Styrofoam verses reusable dishes because of the oil in the plastics industry, in my opinion, has basically conned the schools into using their products saying that they are cheaper when they are actually not. So in that case we are actually struggling over a power issue of profitability; the money issue. It is going to be convincing school officials that this is the right way to go. People have all the power. All we have to do is to decide to implement it. For example with global warming right now the oil companies don’t want to give up their profits. The people of the world have to conflict with them so that they will change.

One way of doing that is by depriving them of their profits.” Boycotting is one aspect of doing activism that is non-violent yet conflicting in the sense that it may not be a win-win situation for the companies.

In terms of advice for new activists, “I would pick the issue that is closest to you heart and focus on it. Study it and work at it, and meet with people who have similar interests and learn about your issue. Then, organize people for you cause and plan on victory. You may not win, but plan on it anyway.”

Building the Environmental Community through Revolutionary Spirit

David Hogan

David Hogan does environmental activism. “I do policy work where I am commenting on government documents and proposals. I ask the government to do certain things. It’s extremely important that we succeed in protecting environmental values and I believe that very strongly. Sometimes those environmental values need to trump the right of any particular person, but I no longer feel that in environmental protection it always has to be this way. It’s a mixture of activism to conserve the environment, but at the same time to be sensitive to the needs of people in recognizing people’s patterns and habits and working with them in a positive way to adjust those patterns and habits for a better world. It’s a much less war-like mentality and I’ve grown to believe that’s the only way we are going to succeed.”

On the subject of decision-making, “We reach decisions independently at the Center for Biological Diversity. There is a level of decisions that I am authorize to make and I make them, or I go to the superior; all the way to the top depending on the importance of a particular issue. Then there are organizations that I volunteer with such as the Sierra Club or the League of Conservation Voters which have their own decision making structures. At the Sierra Club there’s a range from consensus to majority vote. It’s a very democratic process; it’s very transparent.”

“My working at the Center has become a career and a profession but it originated, and still is, something I do from my heart and there is very little separation between those things.” This is where the cross over comes between the revolutionary heart and

the person who is part of an organization where processes are adhered to. “The Center for Biological Diversity is comprised of people that feel very strongly about what they do and are very glad to have the opportunity to be professionally employed to do it.”

In terms of conflict, “I believe that conflict is inevitable, and sometimes helpful to achieve social and environmental change. That said, I’ve made it a personal mission to reduce personalization of that conflict. To make it less about someone being bad, and more about someone’s actions being bad. That helps to improve interactions with others and to improve our rate of success. The vast majority of our work is in conflict-litigation-with government authorities. I think that I am inclined to a more classic revolutionary sense-in the intellectual and professional sense. I don’t mean bomb throwing or violent revolution. I think today I am more of what you describe as a functionalist approach to things but still guided by the knowledge of what is necessary-guided by a revolutionary love and vision of how the world could be for people and nature.”

On the functionalist perspective David adds, “Functionalism is like the inevitable, and that reduces frustration and burnout (in me). It means that I am not expecting the world to be perfect tomorrow, and so therefore I can keep pressing on with incremental changes. I also recognize that the way to success is polarization, to clearly define what is right and wrong in any particular issue and to press, for example, decision makers to make the right decision instead of the wrong decision. That gets people lined up on both sides, very clearly identify people that are for

corporate profit, for example, over public good. It makes it much easier to get those decisions made.”

David has changed over time, “Today I feel like I have a better feel for more compassion for other people’s positions. More compassion as to how they got to those positions and a greater desire to try to work positively for change.”

The advice that David would give to new activists would be classic Edward Abby, “Be a reluctant activist. Don’t take yourself too seriously, and make sure that you take care of yourself and enjoy the things that you are fighting to protect-if its nature that means getting out in nature as much as possible to remind yourself why you are doing what you do. I think it builds off of that. The more seriously you take yourself, the more self absorbed one becomes and the more likely you are going to burn out because you are going to be frustrated that you might not be successful in achieving your goals overnight, or even in you lifetime.”

Building Community through Sustainability

Jim Bell

Jim Bell is a member of the Apollo Project, which seeks to create sustainability in reaching our energy needs. “My work is focused on the regional picture and ultimately the global picture because we need to have a way of living that is consistent with our planets life support systems.”

“Mainly the action I take to create social change is to be involved in my community trying to do good things and lend my support where I can. I write books and papers to educate the public and give opportunities to be aware of how to have a strong economy and have a healthy life support system. It’s all about education. It is about teaching people about how the planet works and how that knowledge can be used to create a sustainable future.” Jim Bell has a plan for San Diego County to become net-metered-out energy self sufficient as a county.

Does he believe that the end justifies the means? “No, absolutely not. If you have the wrong means the ends will turn sour. The only way to get good ends is to have the highest standards. I always think, I don’t even want to hurt anyone’s feelings-hurt them violently or in an economic way-it just doesn’t seem to make sense.”

Jim’s consensus style is in keeping with the more solo project style of the Apollo Alliance. “It is more of a consensus style even when I am a principle writer of a paper. I get as much feedback as I can because it helps improve the product. It helps me to figure out if I am communicating clearly. We are working on our own projects.

We don't put out anything that others haven't had the chance to look at before we put our name on it."

"I guess I believe in a common sense perspective. I try to tell the truth in as clearly and as intelligent approach as I know how. It's not about being against people it's about pointing out things that aren't going the right direction and trying to help figure out what direction we should be going. I am not against (the power companies) SDG&E and SEMPRA, though I think that their modus operandi needs to be cleaned up. It is not personally against 'them' and in fact we need 'them' to help us become energy self-sufficient. So that is my goal to get them really and truly on board."

In terms of a functionalist perspective, "You have to work within the system; you have to work outside the system. If you think you have a better idea you have to convince enough other people that the idea is sound and good and in the public's interest in general in order to move the idea forward. If people are enthusiastic about it then chances of it succeeding are very high."

As regards the question to non-violent actions and non-violent language, "I do as best as I understand how to do it and I try to communicate ideas in ways so as not to push other people's buttons. I think I learn from other people because I am consciously trying to work on hearing and learning in every part of my life. I don't want my, or someone else's confusion to get in the way of communicating. Ultimately we would all like to do the right thing if we knew what it was; if we weren't so confused about it."

"I think that I have gotten better at communicating what is in my heart; Getting less and less of 'them' and 'us' and more and more of 'us'. I guess I am a pragmatic

idealist. I see the human potential. I see it in myself and how we are kind of distracted and confused for the most part, yet I see the potential and I want to bring it out in everybody.”

Jim Bell’s advice for new activists is, “I think the most important thing is to really look beneath the surface of the slogans. What do you believe in? Are your tactics going to make enemies or friends? Are you making an honest attempt to share a view with the world? I think a lot of people spend a lot time almost getting back at their parents. What I like is to raise consciousness across the board instead of blaming people for doing bad things; try to figure out ways they can manifest doing good things and try to bring that to the table. Ultimately it is about maximizing human potential and freedom in a way that is life support sustaining.”

Building Community through the Evolutionary Perspective

Paul Blackburn

“I work for a non-profit organization for increased ownership of wind energy resources and wind generation facilities by community people-by non-corporations; not by large foreign corporations. The situation is that most of the urban wind farms are owned by large foreign corporations, many which are large utilities that have fossil fuel interests or fossil fuel companies, such as Shell and British Petroleum. What happens is that rather than being wind farms they become wind plantations. So the money goes away from the people where the wind is. The other thing that I am working on is with the campaign to oppose the Sunrise Powerlink in a campaign coordination and strategic consulting capacity. So that means helping the people doing the campaign to understand what each other are doing and then helping to advise on how they can integrate their work and move ahead together in a stronger fashion.” Paul has a law degree and works in arbitration.

On the question of ‘does the end justify the means’, he says, “If you wanted to try to have the community be in charge, any lack of integrity in that process can result in a failure of achieving what you want. In that sense, the ends are the means, the means are the ends.”

On consensus building and decision-making, “The more one is trying to work with people to develop a position on an issue that is unknown or new, in order for that decision to have a lot of strength and integrity-to empower the community to motion- there needs to be a greater level of consensus. There needs to be a lot of education

and there needs to be a lot of conversation about that, especially issues related to values and societies changing values over time. On the other hand if it's not any question of values and figuring out what positions should be, but more of, 'we all agree that this particular position should be a-healthy, moral, just, fair, environmentally caring thing to do,' then its really important that people in those situations use hierarchy. In tactical works, there needs to be someone clearly in charge of getting things done. It actually helps to build peace within a community because everybody understands about how decisions are made. The midrange is where you do voting; when you aren't sure about strategic issues or how to prioritize your big issues of organization, like the Sierra Club. Try to understand what the structure needs to be and be aware of that situation and the people in it."

On the issue of conflict, "What usually happens is that activism arises out of conflict, and conflict is just what happens between human beings. If there are simply irreconcilable differences, there are going to be conflicts and one does need to challenge authority figure and bring up ones own leadership to be the authority figures. You just have to decide where your values are and just know why you're doing things; not doing things because you want to fight or want conflict; you're doing it because of the values, beliefs and the shared values and beliefs you have with your people."

On the issue of functionalism, "I sort of see it like the way nature/evolution works. That is that evolution tends to have revolutionary change periodically. So there will be some genetic mutation and a new species is created fairly quickly. Then over time it gradually evolves and fits into its nitch better and becomes a part of a bigger

ecosystem and I see that both kinds of change are possible and it just depends on the situation. There are going to be times that you will see revolutionary change, very dramatic changes in societies. Over time the rough edges are going to be worked out. It's going to have to try to adapt to changing situations. Sooner or later the particular structures of systems will no longer be adapted to the social situation in which it finds itself and there will be a revolution and the structures that were originally revolutionary will be thrown out or changed dramatically to adapt to the new situation. I see that functional change as you are defining it is a part of the way that things work. It isn't always the way things work and that dramatic, sudden change is always possible too. It all depends on the situation in which one finds oneself and it's not always possible to do radical revolutionary change. Sometimes that's what happens whether one wants it or not."

Paul further explains this philosophical approach within the idea of a kind of zeitgeist, or spirit of the times. "I don't think that one defines ones philosophical approach as much as the world defines ones philosophical approach. Like I said, evolution is not slow and adaptive. I was biology major and I studied evolution and what I learned then is that evolution is both. Rapid cycles happen at a certain point in times when a mutation happens and an entire new life begins. It happens at a particular moment. The human species is a great example of a very radical change of evolution and life on the planet. After those points of radical departure, then things are slow and more adaptive. I guess that is the way it is; that we don't define the times we're in; we don't define the conflicts that come to us. We don't define the conflicts around us; we don't define the situation we are in. Whatever the universe

has brought to you to face is going to determine whether you are a conflict theorist or a functionalist, I think. We all fit into an evolving culture of humanity just like the natural world; it goes through periods of time that define us. You can describe them afterwards, but they're really beyond the abilities of anyone to control."

In terms of his involvement with non-violence as a way to engage conflict, "Litigation is non-violent. It is part of the reason there are courts so that people don't resolve things with guns and dueling, and inner community wars. It is very important not to have violence happen between communities. In San Diego a lot of the reason I was there was to start building and having the experience of coalition building within the community, because it wasn't something that I felt happened much in San Diego but was more common in other places. The 'transit process' evolved out of the San Diego Foundation to try to bring peace and accord within the environmental community. It may seem violent at times; the action may be uncomfortable for people to hear and have their differences clarified. If you don't go through that process, then people don't build stronger relationships, they just build passive aggressive relationships." So the transit process evolved the relationships in the San Diego activist community. "I think that the Sunrise Powerlink campaign benefited tremendously from an acknowledgement of the importance of building stronger relationships and more honest relationships between people within the environmental community."

Paul sees himself as a pragmatic idealist. "The people that really survive as activists are the people that understand, there is only so much that one individual can do; its not that that individual can't do remarkable things, but that you have to realize

the community you are in and your own abilities at that time. Folks that have ideals but can't understand what practically can happen-the practical reality-simply don't survive as activists for very long because they get too frustrated."

The advice he gives to new activists is "They should spend some time being very clear about why they are doing what they are doing; they need to understand and be clear about what their calling is for their activism. The more they are connected to the reasons that they are doing things and the service that they are providing; who they are serving; what they are serving; what their calling is; the more sustained they are going to be; the more grounded they are going to be. ...usually activists are called because there is a need in the world. There's a need because there is pain and suffering and it's just really important that new activists be connected to other activists over time. Learn to be connected with who and what they are being called to serve. It is almost impossible to sustain long term activism without a very strong connection to your source; the roots of the rock on which you stand. There is a bigger motion wave that we are a part of."

Building Community through the Intuitive Approach

Jeanette Hartman

Jeanette Hartman is involved in the opposition to SDG&E's Sunrise Powerlink project, the People's Powerlink, for alternative energy in San Diego. She co-chairs the land use committee involved with various land use issues through the Sierra Club. She is also the director of C-3, a non-profit organization in San Diego.

Jeanette uses a lot of creative thinking. She spends a lot of time in bed thinking creatively. "I find that this is the best place to do that. I am actually putting things together in my mind and that is a very restful time when I don't have any other distractions on my mind and I can think creatively and mystically too; I feel like I am getting help on the spiritual dimensions so it is not uncommon for me to come up with a strategy during one of those sessions." Through quiet time she gains inspiration.

Her statement on the question of 'the end justifies the means', "I think that the means are the end and that they are always the end and that a person has to be ethically responsible each day in every situation that is presented to us and that in the end that is all that matters."

What her structure is defines who she is becoming: "...trust and respect and regard for everyone. It is that kind of environment that is most effective for people to work in. I work in other environments as well; I work in the Sierra Club which is more open and collegial than your average corporate office or your average non-profit even, and I also work for another non-profit which has lofty and respectable goals yet

there is a fair amount of competition and sparring you might say among the board members and it sets up an environment that is not as productive as it could be. This is where I get back to an earlier statement about good will needing to be. I have never been in an organization where people have such good will towards each other in setting the stage, as I have in People's Powerlink. I see that being open to everyone's opinion is good. When someone feels strongly about something you kind of sit with it, you don't go in a different direction, and it kind of rests there."

When asked what kind of communication style Jeanette uses she responds with, "I tend to be a kind of a free agent; that seems to be my personality." She seems to be making the most of her natural gifts with her response. "I see myself as an independent; yet if I am able to fit myself into an organization I really love that. I think that collaboration is the way to go and it is the best way to work; there is an old saying that, 'none of us is as smart as all of us'."

In respect to challenging others she replies, "I try to keep the challenge at the level of their acts and not them personally. I try to think about how I would want to be challenged; on the basis of my actions. That gives them a little maneuverability; if someone says that I am an idiot or a jerk it's going to be hard for me to change because of that; but if someone says, 'You are driving too fast you have to slow down', I can comprehend and I can do something about that. I think we all get lost. I have. There have been times when people have challenged me about something that I was doing and I was doing something wrong and I needed to change. That is what a true society is; we have open communication with one another. We need our neighbor to keep us in line because we never know when we have transgressed on someone

else and the other person needs to tell us, ‘ouch, get off’. We have to have that open communication and we can’t make it personal and that is the standard that the environmental activist should maintain. If you take a cosmic look at it we are all just playing different roles and this person may be just being called on to play a particular role for that particular situation and you need to respect that; kind of play your role and not be antagonistic.”

In reference to non-violent actions she states, “I definitely believe in non-violence-taking it to the extreme where as I say, you shouldn’t even attack people personally, which I think is a violent act; now you can have activist principles anywhere and can do it deep within an organization. What you are able to do is going to be defined by your situation if you are working for the city government--your range of activism might be pretty limited. A small thing within the city government might be quite powerful, however. If you are an activist from the outside you can’t get fired. So you can say that you can speak truths that you might not be able to say within an organization. It must depend on what you feel you want to do with your activism. You are going to find your window to operate in; it might be very narrow. But it might still be very important. I think that that is a personal orientation.”

In reference to practicing non-violent language, “Yes I do, and I try to practice non-violent thinking too and I try to catch myself when I am thinking negatively about someone and I try to unravel it and go back to the emotional source that is causing it and deal with my own feelings of anger and fear instead of transferring that into violent thought against that person even if it’s just a negative thought and not a violent action.”

In essence, Jeanette is very idealistically guided yet pragmatist in how we should get there. Within her approach there is a consistency in how she tries to deal within herself and how she tries to deal with others. Her intuitive approach to social change is manifest by what she models.

Afterward

There are probably as many ways in which to categorize a communication style as there are people on the planet. This pamphlet is intended merely as a starting place. It is my wish that others will use this work and take it further in creating a world that works for everyone. In seeing the world of activism as an evolving area of study, we may learn through our mentors and our own experiences how to become a more compassionate species.

Satyagraha as a method for social change is the formula that these activists are following to a large extent, whether consciously or unconsciously. Satyagraha is Mahatma Gandhi's way of doing conflict resolution where the focus of the engagement is on principles rather than persons.

In chapter one on Building Community through a Foundation Built on Principles, Duncan mentions how important it is to build a foundation built on facts. Through Socratic dialogue, truth shall be known. This reminds of Gandhi's Satyagraha, in which the principles behind the cause become revealed in the light of scrutiny. As they surface, the truth shines forth.

Chapters two and three remind us of the importance of building relationships with all we work with and all we seek to change. We are not dealing with material objects in social change dynamics and to uphold everyone's integrity is the honorable path to change. It is the practical path as well. Juergensmeyer (2005) states that Gandhi would not allow people to consider opponents as enemies. To see the other as less

than a person with dignity would result in closing off communications. This in turn impedes the progress of reaching a solution that works for the whole.

Chapter four, *Building Community through Education* reaffirms Duncan McFetridge's points about laying a foundation built on facts. Kelly emphasizes the need to get these facts out into the light of the public eye as soon as possible. In Jeanette Hartman's words, "None of us is as smart as all of us".

In chapter five, Jeeni Criscenzo brings to light the reasons for using non-violence as a method for social change. In Gandhi's Satyagraha, non-violence is the chosen method that will sustain in the end. Gandhi says, "This world is what we have made of it. If it is ruthless today it is because we have made it ruthless by our attitudes. If we change ourselves we can change the world and changing ourselves begins with changing our language and methods of communication" (Rosenberg 2003. p. i).

Chapter Six highlights the aspect of getting the job done. Dana Lyons is a believer in affirmative action. By changing an awareness of what can be, and then following the experts, one becomes acquainted with the solution in bringing about social change. Dana also illustrates that it is important to be an optimist. In doing Satyagraha, Gandhi advises one to remain engaged to the end. In the process of bringing truth to light, the truth shall win out in the end.

In chapter seven, Dave Hogan's, 'love and vision of how the world can be for people and the environment', is truly inspiring. That love to the becoming aspect of social change is what drives many activists to do the work they do. Without that love, the work becomes dry and mundane

In the Building Community through Sustainability chapter, Jim Bell offers a very close parallel to Gandhi's Satyagraha. His principles are to see the opposing point of view as something to be integrated into the whole solution. It is in this approach that he is following his own advice about sustainability over the long term. "At the same time there is a refusal to give credit to people in authority the legitimacy that gives their position its power" (Juergensmeyer 2003, p. 48). When there is a critical mass of understanding for the new dynamic, change is possible.

Paul Blackburn brings an environmental evolutionary perspective to understanding social change dynamics. This understanding is a dynamic that folds in the functionalist, more slow and adaptive process, with the rapid change of conflict perspective where rapid change can happen given the critical mass potential for change within the population.

Jeanette Hartman, in Chapter 10, reminds us that of the idea that we should trust the process. This is a great way to end this reflection on social change because it is the insight that is needed to carry us forth when we do not think we have the strength; when we become discouraged. In trusting the process we can and will move in a direction at a pace that we don't control, but rather a pace that is dictated by the situation. Our job is to be aware of that flow, and to go forward in creating a world that works for all.

Chapter Four

I intend to do several things in this chapter. The first is to give the results of the interviews in accordance with the main questions asked in the interviews. The second task is to provide the intention for my project and a summary of the pamphlet to be used for the purposes of communication styles in activism. The third task is to provide some conclusions based on what I have learned in this ILP.

Results of the Interviews

In analyzing the data from the interviews I found that all but 1 practiced consensus in decision-making. The other interviewee practiced a self defined form of Socratic dialogue and debate in order to further clarify facts and to bring the truth to light, whereupon the truth becomes self evident.

In terms of the social change perspective in achieving ones goals, half defined themselves as both conflict and functionalist theorists. One defined themselves as a conflict theorist, yet with this caveat, “because I do environmental activism and it is always on an extremely short time frame”. Another interviewee defined themselves as strictly functionalist. This interviewee is a self-defined grassroots progressive. The other three questioned the labels and redefined themselves. One said, “...building community on the local level is where I think we can be successful. It’s not fighting the system but its not using the system either; it’s a new model. The answer is neither”. Another asked, “Would you call someone a functionalist who wouldn’t

participate in the CPUC process at all? I want to take my home off the grid and that's going to be my statement." In other words, dropping out of any process yet still taking an action that speaks. The third did not define themselves either way in answering the question, "You have to work within the system; you have to work outside the system. If you think you have a better idea you have to convince enough other people that the idea is sound and good and in the public's interest in general."

None of the interviewees agreed with the statement, "the end justifies the means" for a variety of reasons. The reasons all had to do with the suspect ethics that could be created by a dissonance with one's values while practicing such a philosophy.

Most referred to themselves as both idealist and pragmatist. One said closer to pragmatist, two said closer to idealist in philosophy. They all recognized a necessity of pragmatic actions and idealist guideposts.

In the question, "Do you practice non-violent actions?" All believed that this was true of them. In answer to, "Do you practice non-violent language?" most said that they try. Only two were able to say a definitive, "yes". One of the participants elaborated, "It depends on how you define non-violent language ... I practice non-violent language because I never want to provoke a violent situation. On the other hand there are some people within the environmental community who feel conflict is violent. I have no trouble with conflict." This idea of conflict is deeply embedded in our understanding of social actions.

In terms of words used throughout the interviews that were of a combative nature, one used them on several occasions. The words were: attack, ammunition, and fight. The phrase used was: under the gun. This was used to refer to how her group felt with

respect to projects imposed upon them. The words 'tactical' and 'strategy' came up once or twice in individual interviews. Overall the words associated with combat were minimal.

Intention for the Project

I decided to write a pamphlet on communication styles that focused more on the philosophical ideas toward social change that each interviewee emphasized throughout their interview, rather than focusing on the individual words used. Due to the fact that almost every interviewee emphasized the idea of community I named the pamphlet *Building Humane Community in Activism*.

I emphasize the atmosphere that is created by the individual communication styles. Through the repetition of certain phrases used by the interviewees I constructed a theme in each interviewee. Each person's communication was a separate chapter in the pamphlet. These themes were used to represent what I feel are some of the underlying philosophical underpinnings of each of the interviewees. This provides the reader with many possible ways in which to practice other forms of humane activism. The population that it serves will hopefully continue refining the pamphlet. It is intended as a starting point in understanding humane activism.

Summary of the Pamphlet

The majority of activists interviewed expressed an interest in the subject matter of this ILP. Non-violent language and functionalist/conflict theories as dynamics for social change seemed to be new concepts for them to ponder. Several activists

requested to see the thesis when finished. I feel that the idea of non-violent communication can in itself promote awareness in activists and perhaps change future communications.

What I have learned through this ILP is that there are many ways to affect social change in ways that are humane. I have also learned that there is a possible need for a linguistic study in helping to create a more humane terminology to define what activists are actually doing in communicating their activism to others.

Conflict theory can be a positive force in the form of public debate, as illustrated by Duncan FcFetridge. There are times, as in nature, where evolution moves slowly, yet there are times when we are defined by our times and a call to revolutionary shifts are required. It may be that times like this require a more swift conflict type approach. This was a new conception for me, illustrated quite well in the evolutionary biology perspective with Paul Blackburn.

Jeeni Criscenzo commented that she felt like neither a conflict, nor a functionalist theorist. As someone who ran for public office in the last election, she felt shut out by the functionalist approach, yet could not associate herself with a conflict approach either. Therefore, building local community in a functionalist way seemed the most viable option to her. It is here that I chose to build my thesis project.

In terms of non-violent language I feel that this area requires further study from someone who is linguistically adept at dissecting language and more able than I to generate vocabulary to promote a non-violent approach to activism. As my ability at dissecting language is limited, I chose instead to focus on a pragmatic piece of information that can be used in my local community.

Pragmatism and idealism are discussed in the interviews to provide a general outlook on approaching social change. As a philosophy, pragmatism is best practiced when the values one holds in esteem, are held in place as one proceeds. This sentiment is held by all throughout the interviews.

Satyagraha as a Humane Communication Style

Satyagraha is the activist approach that I choose to do my activism with. As was stated earlier, Gandhi's method encourages people to imagine solutions that include the best features of both sides and to be consistent in ones values in incorporating the solution into the process. I believe that by using the principles and not the people involved one can move more humanely in the direction of a more compassionate world and worldview. I have learned that although Satyagraha suits my personality best, there is no one ultimate best style that everyone should move toward in creating social change. Rather, I believe there are many roads to creating social change that can be considered humane.

I intend to practice the art of humane education by presenting the pamphlet to the activist community where I live, Activist San Diego. This pamphlet will also be read by members of my organization, People's Powerlink. Through the feedback I receive from these communities I will continue to refine the work of Humane Communication Styles.

Conclusions

The atmosphere that we create may move people in different ways. Differing atmospheres may be better suited for changing different populations of people, as was illustrated in the interview with Kelly Fuller.

Through education we learn to think. Through relationships we learn to feel. Through the intuitive process we allow ourselves to find our way by letting the pieces fall into place; thereby trusting the process. These, and other perspectives in this project, are all valuable processes.

All of the activists mentioned that their advice to new activists was to get out there and do something. I believe that activists learn very quickly that when they do answer the call to do something, they do change the world for the better. Listening is a preliminary path that will lead one in the ways in which one may alter their community for the better. This may be the common thread approach that everyone should take in the beginning.

How we do this is important. In learning about how people do social change, we learn about others. This empathy creates the glue that binds a community together. How we move together as community will create the world we want to live in. Humane communication styles with those we seek to change, and those we seek change with, will further our goals in creating a more compassionate future for all.

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Appendix A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What kind of activism are you now currently involved in?
2. What types of actions do you employ to reach your goals?
3. Do you believe in the statement that “the end justifies the means”?
4. What type of organizational style do you employ within your organization? Is there a lot of structure that clearly defines roles: Is there a top/down hierarchy? Is there a flat leadership style?
5. Do you reach decisions by consensus, committee or majority vote?
6. What is your communication style outside the group? Do you act on your own or do you represent the group consensus?
7. Do you challenge authority figures publicly? Are you inclined to public debate? Do you believe in a conflict position when moving toward social change?

8. Do you work within the system to resolve your situation? Do you believe in a functionalist approach to change?
9. Do you practice non-violent actions when moving toward social change?
10. Do you practice non-violent language?
11. How has your communication style changed over time?
12. How would you define your philosophical outlook with regards to social change? Would you define yourself as a conflict theorist? Would you define yourself as a functionalist? Why or why not?
13. Do you see yourself as more of an idealist or more of a pragmatist?
14. What advice would you give to first-time activists?