

GENTLE ACTION

Generating Mutual Trust, Coherent
Movement, and Creative Change.

Naresh Singh. December 9th , 2017.

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Points of departure :

- Bohm's underlying **implicate order**: this background is the totality of causes and conditions that contribute to the creation and dissolution of each temporary "thing". (the **explicate order**) Each thing has its own relatively stable substructure but a potentially unlimited context as well. The interaction gives levels to new levels of complexity and order : the qualitative infinity of nature > an infinite number of laws, qualities, properties.
- The **mechanistic world view** deals only with the explicate order based on universal laws of Newton and others.
- **Quantum physics** provide new insights on the way the observer influences the observed; entanglement etc. with close parallels to spiritual insights from all the major traditions of the worlds and from the growing science and non-duality community.
- **Complexity theory** draws attention to : emergence, self-organisation, non-linearity, uncertainty. Complex vs complicated.
- **Integral Meta-theory** (Ken Wilber) provides a framework for integration through the AQAL approach.
- **Generative Dialogue** (Bohm)

Science and Non-Duality

I am not the body, not even the mind. (The mind body world is in the explicate order)

I am pure consciousness, pure knowing, pure awareness. (implicate order)

This consciousness is not individual but a single shared consciousness..

The separate self or ego (false I) is imaginary (a fiction), yet plays such an important role in most people's lives.

I searched for God and found only myself; I searched for myself and found only God. (Rumi).

Ideas here consistent with the quantum physics, implicate/explicate orders, and with mystical Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism.

What is GA? :Creative Ripples metaphor Gentle Action (Peat 2008)

- Wavelets in a pond from a stone dissipate each other.
- What if the wavelets at edge of a pond could come together to form a soliton wave?
- In social and economic systems action would emerge out of the natural dynamics of the whole system; arising in a highly intelligent and sensitive way and consisting of small corrective movements and minimal interventions
- Rather than impose change externally, GA would operate within the dynamics and meanings of the entire system.
- Coherence, superconductors use weak attractions vs light bulb

Gentle Action in Action(1) : Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

1. Starts with what people have not needs, Assets Mapping
2. Facilitate a vision of what community sees as more sustainable livelihoods with indicators for measuring change.
3. People define what they can do on their own to get to their vision
4. Only then what help is need from outsiders is negotiated.
5. Local and external action plans are integrated in a participatory manner to ensure synergies, inclusion, gender equality etc.

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GA in Action (2) Appreciative Inquiry (AI): (1) Principles (Locating the energy for change)

- *Constructionist* : what we believe determines what we do. Inquiry is to stimulate new beliefs, stories, and so new possibilities for action
- *Simultaneity* : As we inquire into human systems we change them. The seeds of change are implicit in the very first questions we ask.
- *Poetic*: Organisational life is expressed in the stories people tell each other. The words used in AI are to enliven and inspire best in people
- *Anticipatory*: What we do today is guided by our image of the future. AI uses positive imagery to refashion anticipatory reality.
- *Positivity*: increases openness to new ideas and cognitive flexibility. Strengthens relationships including between groups in conflict.

GA in Action (2) AI (2) Action Steps. (4Ds). Connecting to the energy for change. Focus on what could be than to fix what is.

- *Discovery*: Discuss the best of what is. Interviewer and interviewee exchange roles. Results in an affirmative topic/idea
- *Dream*: Participants are asked to imagine their organisation or community at its best in relation to above. = Common dream.
- *Design*: Concrete change proposals for new organisational state. Provocative propositions (generative theory); Possibility statements.
- *Delivery/Destiny*: Everyone is authorised to take action. (No action plans or committees). Leadership's role is to support innovations they want to nurture and create events and processes to energise emergent and self-organising change

GA in Action(3): Self-Empowerment. (Making Power a Positive Sum Game)

- “Toppling power isn’t about storming the Bastille these days, it’s about changing the way people talk and think”.
- Mobilisation : people form groups around issues of common concern
- Articulation : of the issues, leading to common positions
- Contestation: Violent in the past. Worked against the system. GA implies :Public Spirited Leadership, Making Power a Positive Sum Game. (Vern will comment as well)
- Confirmation in Law. So future generations don’t have to fight the same battles.

Gentle Action 4. From Violence to Peace : Mimetic Theory

- Mimetic Desire
- Mimetic Rivalry
- Mimetic Consciousness
- Mimetic Exemplars

Gentle Action 4 : Aphetic Mimesis

- Receptive
- Letting go
- Adoption of perspective of other—welcoming the intruder—similarity of interior states
- Mimesis of attention
- Forgoing a need for mimetic vengeance (justice)

GA in Action (5): Applying a whole systems approach to peace building. (R.L Flood)

- Systems of structures (which hinder or help)
- Systems of processes (inclusive, respectful,....)
- Systems of meaning. Is there shared understanding?
- Systems of knowledge and power
- Prismatic thought: bringing the strands together

GA in Action (7): Using Complex Adaptive Systems and Mimetic Structures of Blessing in international programs

- Making policy in the face of complexity
- Developmental Evaluations to deal with uncertainty and support innovation
- Designing programs to deal with complex systems situations: going beyond the log-frame.
- Applications to Conflict in Syria (Robert Logie)
- Applications to South China Seas (Aulia)

GA in Action (6) Acting From the Emerging Future (Theory U-Otto Scharmer)

- Existing learning methods rely on learning from the past. Leadership requires letting go of the past in order to connect with and learn from emerging future possibilities. (Kaufman adjacent possible)
- Listening 4 levels.
- Presencing (*sensing* future possibility while being *present* in the now)
- Shift attention from what we want to avoid to what we want.
- U : observe, retreat and reflect, act.
- Go to edges of the Self: open mind, open heart, open will.

Fundamental Divides

- Ecological Divide: disconnect between self and nature: consequences
- Social Divide: self and other : poverty and inequality
- Spiritual Divide : between self and Self
- Some systemic disconnects : financial (US1.5 quadrillion in foreign exchange transactions) and only 20T in international trade. AUM is about 200T.
- Leading from the emerging future; consciousness shift from ego-system to eco system
- Transforming capitalism.

7 Theory U Leadership Capacities

- **Listening** : to oneself, to others, open space for meaning to emerge
- **Observing**: Suspending judgement. Prep for sensing.
- **Sensing**: Open Mind, Open Heart, Open Will. Sensing the system from the edges. Open mind allows collective sensing, open heart sensing whole as it is; open will sensing the whole that is emerging.
- **Presencing**: The capacity to connect to the deepest sources of self—to go to the inner place of stillness where knowing comes to surface. Where self resonates with Self and becomes One Self. (Awareness)
- **Crystallizing**: When a small group of change makers commit to a shared purpose, the power of their intention creates an energy field that attracts people, opportunities, and resources that make things happen.
- **Prototyping** and **Co-creating**.

What can an Ottawa based group do?

- You cannot understand a system unless you change it (K. Lewin)
- You cannot change a system unless you transform consciousness (from egosystem to ecosystem; separate self to One Self, Awareness, Consciousness.
- You cannot transform consciousness unless you make a system see and sense itself (Theory U) [#ulab](#).
- Awareness based systems change : (presencing.org) based on bridging the ecological, social and spiritual divides.
- Establishing a coaching circle

Theory U: Learning from the Emerging Future

1. Co-Initiating

Build Common Intend
stop and listen to
others and to what life
calls you to

2. Co-Sensing

Observe, Observe, Observe
go to the places of most
potential and listen with
your mind and heart wide
open.

3. Presencing

Connect to the Source of Inspiration and Will
go to the place of silence and allow the inner
knowing to emerge

5. Co-Evolving

Embody the New in
Ecosystems
that facilitate seeing
and acting from the
whole

4. Co-Creating

Prototype the New
in living examples to
explore the future by doing



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