

A Lawyer's Provocative and Reflective Journey into Social Constructionism and Not-Knowing

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Abstract

An Australian corporate lawyer and parent of four adult children, the author, recently engaged in an experiential journey into social constructionism and collaborative dialogue. This prompted him to re-discover who he is becoming and re-storying where he has been. Along the way he developed what he calls "in the moment reflections ah!" or "IMRAHs" that assist him to perform each of his life roles, particularly within his family relationships. Being conscious of these IMRAHs has resulted in him adopting "relational mentoring" as the active process to enrich relationships.

Key Words: *social constructionism, way of being, reflection, not-knowing, witness, hosting, family, relational mentoring.*

Context

I am a 61 year old Australian corporate lawyer and executive, married with four adult children. Over the past three years my process of becoming has been enlivened by two interrelated and parallel journeys, which I refer to as my social constructionist journey. One journey has been an experiential exploration of solution focussed, narrative, creative arts and process oriented therapies in a family therapy clinic (with reflecting teams) while studying a Master of Counseling.¹ The other journey has been with my partner, Margi Brown Ash,² attending several Taos Institute and Houston Galveston Institute sponsored conferences and seminars.³ It was here through observation, building relationships and conversations that I became alive to *social constructionism* and *collaborative dialogue*. "Social constructionism" attracts a "broad church" of schools of thought (Lock & Strong, 2010, p. 6). For me its basic premise is that our realities (our customs, values, theories and practices) are socially constructed through relationships and conversations (Gergen, 2008, 2009, 2011). This can be very empowering as it provides a space in our relationships and conversations to create new realities that better suit our lives, whether at home, work or within our communities (while at the same time recognising other realities may better suit others' lives). "Collaborative dialogue" can be described as exemplary listening, hearing and speaking resulting in transformative, generative and mutually influencing conversations, whether at an individual, family, group or public level (Anderson, 2007b, DeFehr, 2008, p. 330 and Gergen, McNamee & Barrett, 2001).

My studies required me to write papers reflecting on my counseling practice. As I am not a practicing counselor, I reflected on my life roles as parent, partner, lawyer,

corporate executive, mentor and friend. Adopting Harlene Anderson's term, I call these life roles my various *social occasions*, where each is informed by relationship and conversation in the context or agenda in which it is performed (Anderson, 2012, p. 20). As I reflect how I perform across all these *social occasions* I find it useful to understand *social constructionism* as a "*metatheory*, or a general orientation to life" (Gergen, 2011, p.1), "a 'philosophy of life' in action" (Anderson, 2007c, p.43) or an "umbrella under which all traditions of meaning and action are sheltered" (Gergen & Gergen, 2008, p.23 and see Anderson, 2007a), with this "way of being" or "way of becoming" being informed by *collaborative dialogue*. I find it exciting to understand how the conversational process and the more general concept of collaboration have the potential effortlessly to enrich each of these *social occasions* (see Anderson, 2007c, p. 55; London, St. George & Wulff, 2009 and St. George & Wulff, 2007).

After researching Harlene Anderson's and Harry Goolishian's "unintentional provocations" of "not-knowing" and the "client as the expert" (Anderson, 2005, p. 498) (which I refer to as the *not-knowing concept*), I began to frame my own *intentional* provocations and reflections to assist me in performing in and reflecting on these *social occasions*, namely:

- *Is this an appropriate "truth"?*
- *When should "I know"?*
- *How am I travelling with the other?*
- *How am I creating a nurturing environment?*

I name these *In the Moment Reflections, Ah* or *IMRAHs*. I am amazed how this naming has created a personal space where stories that are already seeded grow, in the same way that a counselor, coach or mentor may provide a space for clients' stories to grow, permitting them to understand and build upon their strengths in their own process of becoming.

What do I mean by these *IMRAHs*? How do they inform my performances especially in my family *social occasion*? And most excitingly, how have they given birth to a process I name *relational mentoring*, a term that came to me through my reflections on my family conversations and relationships, but which I understand has been devised for other *social occasions* (discussed below)? Before I answer these questions, I shall outline why I am telling my story?

Why am I telling my story?

During my social constructionist journey I have been especially interested in my journey as a spouse and parent and sought to relate all my readings to this journey. Three memories resonate as the impetus for telling my story. The first flows from how Carl Rogers found power in another person's stories "if only in sharpening my realization that my directions are different" (2004, p. 16). This led him to tell his stories. The second flows from William Doherty's observation as to "how little we share the challenges, strategies and joys of marriage" (2003, p. xv), though I would expand "marriage" to life partnerships. The third flows from John Locke describing it as his duty to offer his thoughts on education "if it be but to excite others" (2004, location 50). Similarly Jean-Jacques Rousseau

also saw it his duty to publish his thoughts on education “even if my own ideas are mistaken [for] my time will not have been wasted if I stir up others to form right ideas” (2012, location 7), though I would reframe this to say “if I stir up others to develop useful ideas or possibilities for their own reflection and becoming”.

This all came together as I journeyed with Margi’s development of her play *Home*, where using storytelling, she re-imagines her life and in the process uncovers the extraordinariness of an ordinary life where the audience awakens to their own stories.⁴ In a similar way I hope my story awakens readers to their own stories and informs their journeys of reflection and becoming.

The *In the Moment Reflections, Ah*

I discuss each of these *IMRAHs* separately. However, as I consider how they have been present under different guises within my life, I realise that they work in tandem to enrich conversations and relationships.

IMRAH One: Is this an appropriate “truth”?

Spending three days with Kenneth and Mary Gergen in June 2010 workshopping how our realities are constructed, followed by reading Kenneth Gergen's seminal work *Relational Being: Beyond Self and Community* (2009) helped me to understand my own process of challenging norms or truths, be they espoused as local or global (see for example, Gergen & Gergen, 2008, pp. 19-21; Anderson, 2007a, pp. 8-9). I came to understand how to declare something as “true” can set a conversation or a relationship into a “deep freeze” and how this can have profound ramifications within the family where the “walls of tradition [can] become those of a prison” (Gergen & Gergen, 2008, p. 25 and Gergen, 2008, p. 189). An example may be where parents impose, often unintentionally, restraints around their children’s exploration of their sexual identity that is set within a traditional framework of there being only one “truth” of heterosexual identity.

I also experienced the excitement of exploring other possibilities and how “truths” can be restored. Out of this process came my *IMRAH is this an appropriate “truth”?* that serves as a challenge to me whenever I see certainties espoused, whether they are my own or society’s.

Reflecting on my life, the ease with which I have embraced what I understand as *social constructionism* does not come as a surprise. The only text I remember from my lunchtime learning of Greek when I was 16 is Socrates’ exhortation *ὁ δὲ ἀνεξέταστος βίος οὐ βιωτὸς ἀνθρώπῳ* (the unexamined life is not worth living). This and Socrates’ method of teaching through transformative questioning have stayed with me, including in parenting.⁵

Reading Gergen and Gergen’s challenge that “most of the biases in our curriculum support the ways of life favored by the majority” (Gergen & Gergen, 2008, p. 61 and see Gergen, 2009, Chapter 8) reminds me of another influential exhortation, “education, the great mumbo-jumbo and fraud of the age”, from

Malcolm Muggeridge's *Jesus Rediscovered*⁶ (which I read in my late teens). As parents seeking the best education for our children, Margi and I have always struggled with "what tradition has dished onto our plate" (Gergen & Gergen, 2008, p. 47). We considered home schooling but found a local parent-run Montessori primary school whose philosophy was consistent with ours, namely "help me to help myself", where the adult "is there to create the environment to stimulate the child and fulfil their needs".⁷

Gergen and Gergen's challenge reached its pinnacle when a group of parents sought to create a curriculum for a Montessori High School, sourced in Montessori, International Baccalaureate⁸ and the Dalton Plan.⁹ The timing meant our youngest child could attend, but unfortunately, the high school lasted only two years. There were many reasons but the overriding one was financial. How well I remember a board member declare in one meeting that he did not want to "lose his house" through insolvency of the school and how quickly a 13-year old responded: "you may fear losing your house but what you have done is to take away our home". I marvel even now at these words. As I reflect on those two years, I believe an underlying reason for the failure of the high school was the inability of the parents to engage in conversations informed by *collaborative dialogue*. What brings about these conversations? Or, influenced by the words of Lynn Hoffman and Margi as a creative artist, how do I engage in a conversation that has a "quality of open-endedness together with an emphasis on spontaneity, more like the way a creative artist works than a trained professional" (Hoffman, 2007, p.77)? To assist me in this process I have developed another *In the Moment Reflection, Ah*, namely *when should "I know"?*

IMRAH Two: When Should "I know"?

Perhaps the most fun I have had in my social constructionist journey has been grappling with the *not-knowing concept*, so much so I wonder if it was really developed by Anderson and Goolishian as an intentional provocation, rather than as an "unintentional provocation" as they suggest (Anderson, 2005, p. 498)! My first challenge was to understand why I did not dismiss it out of hand. Surely the *not-knowing concept* is absurd for any self-respecting professional for whom being an expert and espousing that expertise goes to the very core of professionalism. However as I ponder my life, I see seeds for this *IMRAH* forming in my early years.

As a 20-year old articled clerk in a Sydney law firm, I was asked to write a letter of advice to a client. When I handed in the draft, the partner asked, "do I need to read this?" I begin to reframe this conversation 40 years later using my new found *IMRAH when should "I know"?*: for the partner, "do I need to be the expert and review the letter" or "do I trust Bill to know"? For me, "do I trust myself" or "should I rely on the partner to be the expert"? Back then I boldly replied, "no, you do not need to read it". He signed the letter without reading it and I commenced the never ending journey of learning to trust myself and others such as my partner, children and those who report to me in my corporate life. I have not always got this right, for example when failing to realise how one of our children or an employee may be struggling and needs firm and clear direction. With my understanding of *collaborative dialogue* I now see this

process more clearly as a conversation or negotiation with that child or employee to reach the balance as to *when should “I know”*?

As a parent I now realise that Margi and I were introduced to *when should “I know”*? at an early stage in our relationship by a Rabbi who used *Formosa* as a way of questioning when to intervene in a situation. Most countries did not recognise Formosa (now Taiwan) as a separate state from China. I remember the Rabbi saying “when, against rules, I see my child sneak down to the kitchen and drink some soft drink during the night, I adopt *Formosa*, look the other way”! *Formosa* has informed our way of being as parents. This has at times been difficult. For example, trust has been one non-negotiable value for us. But what if we think a child is not being fully transparent? How far do we pursue our line of questioning, for is there not a risk of breaking down relationships if the child thinks we do not trust him/her? This is always a challenging judgment call, such as when you may suspect your teenager is smoking marijuana or drinking alcohol to excess. Do you trust your children to have values that will confine this to an experiment or odd social taking, or do you indicate you do not trust their ability to cope, their answers or their choice of friends? We chose many times to adopt *Formosa* when other parents may have intervened. We had a couple of occasions when another parent did not want her child to stay overnight at our house as we were perceived as being too liberal. Have we always got it right? We certainly have had challenging times. Should we have acted differently on some occasions? Who knows, as all “relational engagements” (a wonderful term adopted from Sheila McNamee, 2004, p. 14) have their own time, context and stories. All I do know is that we all do it differently as parents, but for us, *Formosa*, now transformed into *when should “I know”*?, has been a fundamental provocation and guide for Margi’s and my way of being as parents.

My journey with *collaborative dialogue* has provided me guides to inform *when should “I know”*?:

- entering a conversation with an open mind;
- being curious about the other;
- not being too quick to tell my story or espouse my knowledge;
- being mindful that methods successful in one *social occasion* may not be useful in another;
- offering my “knowledge” as one of several possibilities;
- not being too quick to form a view about the other; and
- being open with my thoughts or internal conversations (what Anderson calls “being public”), a quality I see as being so crucial in family and work relationships (see Anderson (2012) for a brief discussion of these guides; Anderson & Gehart (2007) for the approaches of a variety of authors; and DeFehr (2008) for a fascinating channelling of “the voices of 14 Collaborative therapists from 6 different countries ... in response to the ... question: “How could you describe your practice as generative and transforming for yourself?”).

These guides developed during my journey as a Master of Counseling student. For example, as I sought to apply “preplanned” formulations of solution

focussed, narrative, creative arts or process oriented therapies in the family therapy clinic, I welcomed Tom Andersen's caution that "the problems with methods are that they are preplanned in another context and at another point in time than where the practice happens" (Andersen, 2007, p. 82), or in my vernacular, one size does not fit all. This transposes so well to parenting where we are inundated with the views of experts. Margi and I learned very early that while an expert's view on a particular issue such as how to get a baby to sleep may stimulate our thinking, rarely would it be effective if blindly followed as the only solution.

I laughed out loud when in my research I came across the warning that one "can be too *knowing* about not-knowing" (DeFehr, Adan, Barros, Rodriguez & Wai, 2012, p. 79) as I endeavoured to refrain from being "too quick" to know what the client was talking about (McNamee, quoted in Guanaes & Rasera, 2006, p. 129, and see Anderson, 2012, p. 18). It was salutary to read Anderson's caution to her students that as counselors we need to be wary about interpreting the effect on the client of our sessions (Anderson, 2007b, p. 39), for as students in our post-client debrief we would so easily launch into interpretations and judgements only to be jolted into some other area in the next session with that client. In this context, I find Miguel Ruiz' (1997) third of his four agreements ("don't make assumptions") as a wonderful reminder, especially as a parent!

I saw time and time again in the family therapy clinic the power of reflecting team members offering knowledge or expertise as one possibility among many (see Anderson, 2012, pp. 18-19 and Anderson, 2007b, pp. 33-41). In most cases clients would dream on one or more of those possibilities and consequently gain ownership of their preferred solution. This is akin to the Montessori philosophy of "help me to help myself". In the context of parenting, by offering their "knowledge" as one of several possibilities, parents are likely not to have to enforce a child's preferred solution, but rather be fellow travellers in the child's journey, a process akin to *witness* I discuss below.

Given the controversy that the *not-knowing concept* has generated, it is important to stress what I regard it as not being about. In the therapy context it is not intended to imply that "the therapist has no history, no biases, and no ethical or moral stance that s/he brings to the therapeutic conversation" (McNamee, quoted in Guanaes & Rasera, 2006, p. 129). Nor does it detract from me ever striving for knowledge. As noted by George Pulliam, "the more resources you have, the more possibilities you have" (quoted in Gardner & Neugebauer, 2007, p. 354). Most importantly, it does not mean that I ignore that some "clients do not always want to be positioned as experts on their lives" (DeFehr, Adan, Barros, Rodriguez & Wai, 2012, p. 79). A client or as I noted above a child or employee, may be struggling, so much so that firm and clear direction is required. And going one step further, as a corporate lawyer in some cases I would be professionally negligent in not clearly articulating what I see as the solution or "truth" and requiring it to be implemented. To assist in understanding the process inherent in *when should "I know"*? I find it useful to ask *how am I travelling with the other?*

IMRAH Three: How am I travelling with the other?

I have derived this *IMRAH* from the concept of *witness* that has the pivotal connotation of travelling or knowing *with* the other which enhances the potential for transformative conversations (see Anderson, 2012; Shotter, 2012 and Hoffman, 2007). Margi, as an actor, has always talked about being in the moment with the other on stage, so it is with ease I understand Anderson describing a therapist's "way of being" or "philosophical stance" as "the therapist 'being in the moment' of the narrative fragments, moving within and along with them" (Anderson, 2012, p.13). The contrasting term "aboutness" implies detachment and objectivity, where something or someone is talked about, as if a subject (Anderson, 2007c, p. 45; Hoffman, 2007). This is a conversational or relational stance typical of an expert in many fields, and certainly for the legal profession, trained as we are to espouse the "truth". I have often found myself becoming detached as I lapsed into pontificating as a parent, those speeches unfortunately remembered so well by our children. *How am I travelling with the other?* now acts as a cautionary note in not allowing "dialogue or 'witness thinking' ... collapse into monologue or 'aboutness thinking'" (Anderson, 2007c, p. 51), or in my vernacular, into pontificating.

While researching *witness*, I was attracted to Shotter's idea that in "*witness-thinking* ... one functions as a participant within the very phenomena one is inquiring into" (2012, p. 8). This provides a context for Shotter's provocative question: "what if much of the world in which we live is vague, fluid, unspecific, diffuse, slippery, ephemeral, elusive or indistinct, emotional" (2012, p. 8)? Shotter's musings prompted me to reflect on how as parents we saw the "world" of education and how exciting it was to be a participant in that very "phenomena" as we travelled with our four children in their "fluid" educational journeys after leaving their Montessori primary school at around ages 10 or 11. At Montessori each had experienced independent learning in a collaborative environment (see London & Rodríguez- Jazcilevich, 2007) but through lack of alternatives attended traditional high schools. One child requested at age 14 to go to the Townshend International School in the Czech Republic, a school guided by Bahá'í principles.¹⁰ Another decided he wanted to leave high school in his second last year and explore life in Australia and abroad. As noted above our youngest attended the fledgling Montessori high school for two years until it closed when he was required to attend a more traditional high school. Our eldest did stay at her high school for five years, though only after we offered several other possibilities as we were not happy with the school. Upon reflection, each of the *IMRAHs* I have discussed above was at play here: *is this an appropriate "truth"*? (challenging educational norms), *when should "I know"*? (resisting the temptation as a parent to know and dictate what is best) and *how am I travelling with the other?* (travelling with each child in conversation and resisting my temptation to lapse into pontificating). None of these paths was easy for us as parents, nor for our children. However each collaborative decision has led to a wonderfully exciting journey for each participant, including Margi and me, as we have travelled and continue to travel where "there are no fixed points ... no closed system of beliefs, no unchanging set of principles which [we] hold [and where we are] always in process of becoming" (Rogers, 2004, p. 27).

Reflecting on this sometimes stressful, uncertain and challenging process of becoming, I have wondered why it has worked. A simple answer may lie in one constant underlying aspect, namely what I regard as the creation of a safe and nurturing space for Margi, me, the children and our friends, to engage in conversation.

IMRAH Four: How am I creating a nurturing environment?

I believe our huge outdoor round wooden table that served as our indoor dining table has been pivotal to our family way of being. This may not always have been apparent, as arguments, with some colourful language adorned with the odd flinging of food, raged from the minor to the major issues of the day. In this context I was amused to read Gergen's caution that children who take their "father's chair at dinner ... are ... entering dangerous territories" (2008, p. 188). But as with the round table used in the Vietnam War Paris peace negotiations,¹¹ it allowed no-one to have a physical position of power and provided a means for easy eye contact.

This round table, as well as the nurturing environment of a Montessori school classroom,¹² serve as a metaphor for *hosting* where to dream on Anderson's host-guest concept, each participant in a conversation treats the other as a guest while simultaneously that participant is a guest in the other's life, a process of "mutual inquiry ... an in-there-together process in which two or more people put their heads together to address the reason for the conversation" (Anderson, 2012, p. 15 and see Anderson, 2007c, p. 45). At this time in my becoming, how do I now describe this "in-there-together process" within our family?

Practicing these *IMRAHs*: "Relational Mentoring"

As I ponder my journey as a parent, I see how easily much of what I have read in the *collaborative therapy*¹³ *social occasion* can be applied to the family *social occasion*. For example, I find it interesting to substitute therapist/client with parent/child in Anderson's description of therapy:

~~Therapy~~ Parenting is a mutually transforming process for all [family] members. Each person is under the influence of the other(s); hence, each is at-risk for change. The process is not an one-sided, unilateral ~~therapist~~ parent-driven activity, nor is the ~~therapist~~ parent merely passive and receptive. A ~~therapist~~ parent is actively involved in a complex interactive process of continuous response with the ~~client~~ child, as well as with his or her own inner talk and experience. As conversational partners we continually coordinate our actions as we respond with and thus affect each other. (2012, p. 20)

Pondering my relationship with Margi and our children, I dream on "mutually transforming" to *mutual mentoring* to connote a learning and transformative element of our journey as "conversational partners". This resonates with my own recent experiences as a mentor in formal corporate mentoring programs, where both I and my mentee have been enriched by the relationship. After naming this process *mutual mentoring*, to my surprise I discovered a body of learning around

mutual mentoring, describing it as “a two-way process [where participants] have complementary capacities and experiences that can enrich and enhance one another” (Schimel, 2003, p. 1). I see this “two-way process” (or where more than two are involved, “multi-way process”) of enrichment and enhancement in my own family relationships, most recently exemplified with me doing a Master of Counseling. As I espoused my views all family members became “actively involved in a complex interactive process of continuous response” that informed each of our journeys. For Margi it informed her own thinking around her writing and performing in *Home* (Brown Ash, 2012) and in this process we both felt “at-risk for change” as we questioned, danced and lived the ideas to the point of tears (Brown Ash, 2012).

However, as I sit at our large round dining table which I now use as a desk (as our children so often did with their studies), *mutual mentoring* does not seem adequate to describe what I am feeling about the “multi-way process” thriving within our family. The pivotal relationship aspect is missing, for as Gergen observes, “whatever value we place upon ourselves or others, and whatever hope we may have for the future, depends on the welfare of relationship (2009, p. 396). So I dream on *mutual mentoring* to *relational mentoring*, thinking again that I have invented a term! This was not to be as I discovered an emerging body of literature promoting *relational mentoring* as the highest form of mentoring where there is “the ability to develop empathic, empowering processes that create personal growth, development and enrichment for [all parties]” (Holland, 2009, p. 14). The key skills stated to be “prerequisites” for effective *relational mentoring* include “vulnerability, empathetic and emotional competence, fluid expertise, authenticity, and holistic thinking” (Kram & Ragins, 2007, p. 665). These skills are the same that underpin effective relationships across all *social occasions*. Belle Ragins is a leader in the development of the thinking around *relational mentoring* and it excites me when I read assertions such as “outcomes associated with relational mentoring have the capacity to transform other relationships in the individual’s developmental network” (2010, p. 3), for I see our “developmental network” as running across all our *social occasions*, all our conversations and relationships.

In this paper I have concentrated on my own family *social occasion* and reflect how the *IMRAHs* I have developed in my social constructionist journey have been at play albeit unknowingly. After being exposed to the literature of *relational mentoring*, I see how the *IMRAHs* can inform performance of the skills said to be “prerequisites” for effective *relational mentoring*. This resonates with me, especially when I read Ragins assert how “the best mentors probably incorporate mentoring into their identity. When we ask them “who are you”, mentoring becomes part of that answer” (quoted in Chandler & Ellis, 2011, p. 490). This feeds into my philosophical stance that collaboration is a way of being or way of becoming and how mentoring, be it named *mutual mentoring* or as I prefer *relational mentoring*, is part of the performance of collaboration that in turn is informed by the *IMRAHs*.

Epilogue

My process of becoming over these past three years while completing my Master of Counseling has caused me to reflect on whether I have been performing as a *social constructionist* or a *not-knowing* neophyte, especially within my family.

I now see my “way of being” or as I prefer my “way of becoming” within a *social constructionist* and *not-knowing* umbrella transcending all *social occasions*. I enjoy seeing how knowledge acquired within one *social occasion* may be applied across all *social occasions*, depending on the intent or agenda. For me, it is all about being alive to and growing connections, and allowing myself to glide effortlessly from one *social occasion* to another. Corporate leadership concepts are excellent examples of this, as leadership crops up in all *social occasions*, in all relationships, including parenting. Adapting these and other concepts and theories through challenging and exciting conversations, through *relational mentoring* with the assistance of my *IMRAHs*, is exciting. In this process I now understand my home, my world view for my continued becoming, for aren't I a work-in-progress? I am all of my past and all of my future, I am every person I've ever met, every place and time I've ever been. I am huge and so are you. (Brown Ash, 2012)

Remembering Rousseau, I will consider my time in telling my story has not been wasted if readers have found it useful to stir up possibilities for their own processes of becoming. It has been useful for me, for even as I bring this telling of my story to a close I am dreaming on my *IMRAHs* and wondering what other *IMRAHs* may be useful as my mind wanders across all my *social occasions*.

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Endnotes

¹ This is a part-time course at the Queensland University of Technology with the third year spent in a family therapy and counseling clinic, both as a counselor and a member of a reflecting team.

² Margi is a creative artist, including as an actor, director and writer. She is also a creative arts therapist and was a teacher during my Master of Counseling. Margi is an Associate of the Taos Institute.

³ There were several other sponsors, including Grupos Campos Eliseos and Instituto Kanankil.

⁴ Sourced from the publicity for the July 2013 production of *Home* at the La Boite Theatre, Brisbane, Australia.

⁵ See Strong (2011) for a discussion of Socrates in the context of “Collaborative Dialogue”. In the family context, Dole, Silbert, Mann & Whitney (2008) offer as their book title suggests, a myriad of “appreciative inquiry questions to bring out the best in questions”. I have found reading this book an interesting reflection on our parenting approach and how it may be informed by being more alive to the power of questioning.

⁶ I no longer have my copy but well remember these words, which were also included in the Observer, 26 June 1966. See <http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/mugridge/jred/jredch05.htm>, retrieved online January 23, 2013.

⁷ See <http://www.dailymontessori.com/dr-maria-montessori/>, retrieved online January 23, 2013. See London & Rodríguez- Jazcilevich, 2007 for a discussion of Montessori in the context of a collaborative learning community.

⁸ See <http://www.ibo.org/>, retrieved online January 23, 2013.

⁹ See <http://www.daltoninternational.org/daltoneducation.html>, retrieved online January 23, 2013.

¹⁰ See <http://www.townshend.cz/Abouttownshend.php> , retrieved online January 23, 2013.

¹¹ See, e.g., <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/procedural-questions-cause-difficulty-at-the-peace-talks>, retrieved online January 23, 2013.

¹² For images of a Montessori classroom in Mexico (which are consistent with my experience at the Brisbane Montessori School), see <http://www.google.com.au/search?q=Montessori+classroom+mexico&hl=en&tbo=u&tbm=isch&source=univ&sa=X&ei=a1ETUc6xH8GhiQep2IGIDQ&sqi=2&ved=0CF0QsAQ&biw=1920&bih=1028>, retrieved online January 23, 2013.

¹³ The basic premise of collaborative therapy is that clients are the “expert” on their lives and have the knowledge of their state of being, while the therapist is the “expert” on process by creating a nurturing and safe environment to explore that knowledge through collaborative dialogue (Anderson, 2007c). In my experience, collaborative therapy can be misunderstood by simply saying it relies on the “client being the expert” and, if interested, I encourage the reader to read more widely to understand its nuances (see Anderson (2005), Anderson & Gehart (2007)).

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Dedication

This article is dedicated to my partner Margi Brown Ash and our children Aleema, Houston, Micaela and Travis as we have danced and lived our lives together through transformative, generative and mutually influencing conversations. – Bill Ash