

Sample coded material from Co-operative Inquiry

its quite interesting like we just assumed that just writing the questions actually began to feel quite emotional. And I think there is something about ... I think when you start to cry, you come close to so that's when you realize how far away you can be, just connected. So there is a sad of ... I felt [IB] and quite moved just in over five minutes. And just kind of thinking finally what are the questions that you are carrying over there? Very well formulated but it's so easy to have but for me just to ... The emotional feeling then is who I am. It's again the integrating bit. So I think one of my questions is how my body and my feelings would be part of my enquiry.

Comment [s1]: 1 5 10 11

it's one of the challenges it's I'm offering is we may say well lets you know you might say lets have the umbrella question about consulting practice how we improved what is it we can do individually together to enquiring to improving our practice as these things called consulting is proved consultant may not become comfortable with that what so ever.

Comment [s2]: 1

David Whyte, do you remember David Whyte the poet really lovely amazing poet and writer, [IB] actually as well, he wrote a book called the three marriages and it's about bringing together conversation with yourself, conversation with your vocation and a conversation with your say significant other, [IB] partnership and rather in life [IB] it's about the ability to integrate those three conversation in a way and it becomes the marriage of those three in a way, three marriages and I suppose that's what my... I suppose [IB] around that sort of conversation and myself where I stage my whole vocation and also the relationship and how do I... that tension I suppose between those three and hold that attention and rather look at how much time I spend kind of just the physical energy, as well as the emotional, yeah so much around work, but when I'm doing what I'm actually in my... in the zone, doing what I feel I'm really good at.

Comment [s3]: 1

I [IB] that I'm flourishing, so I don't know, yeah I suppose that feels some expectations in the sense of doing what feel cool to do, I feel I'm some ways doing a lot, a lot of that and I do get nourishing from that, but I also see a cost I terms of the physical, emotional [IB] I spend in a way and what it takes a way from other things are important to me, so there's a real [IB] feels that attention really, so in terms of life as a whole, it feels flourishing but there's a core, when I feel I have permission and I have the space and I think that's where I struggle with OPN and that's why I take the interface as critical part of my practice, because it's dealing with that mess, is dealing with that tension that I can't set, it's... there's [IB] feel part of what we are dealing with, we're taking more, I don't know systemic view, whatever we're doing is going to be the bigger field that we would be impacting on us, when [IB], so how our work [IB] kind of tensions and dilemmas and part of that tension is about OPN and I'm still left with this word and what [IB] got me this week is that, I expect spending time on quality, I've seen self indulgent and I just so cuts me... [IB] just does not speak to what's important for me, so I don't know I, yeah I'm not sure where I'm going with this really but it's just [IB] about just question of flourish and I think it's a good one and ultimately I'd like to see my clients flourishing and I'd like to see the communities they are certainly flourishing and that's what kind of keeps me in there really.

Comment [s4]: 1

that the [IB] spoke and how she fixed that was I'm not talking about during the business but about go and have good conversations, , good conversation build relationships and that's was what kind of

is really that's what was given the value and permissioning and if we get business out there great but that's really and pay attention to those and that's where we need to focus our energy and I just thought wow that's was such a kind of strong I don't know so underpinning for a different way it is. It's a...and I think you

Comment [s5]: 1

I think the integration stuff is really important right; we need to do it in a conscious and a different and allow for a range of diversity in who we do it.

Comment [s6]: 1

what does being an inquirer mean to me, alongside what does being a consultant meant to me. To

Comment [s7]: 5 11

15th april 11

research is not separate from conversation.

Comment [s8]: 1

relationship with a client about planning work is one area—cant say that I am because I have not done it consciously ---I guess the time when I have done some planning has been when I set about creating a relationship with a client—

Comment [s9]: 1 2

something coming through is about paying attention—staying awake to the conversation— something around your identity and purpose—a theme you are carrying—you were discriminating between LMD work and consulting

Comment [s10]: 1 6

looked at my notes on trains—been more alert to conversations—been buzzing around my head--- each time I have run a workshop I have reflected more—have a stronger sense of myself in the room than I have had before—a more greater sense of what I can achieve in my work and more confidence—being more in the moment with whatever is going on---had some really good experiences in the workshops—being in tune with people—people have got something out of what I have done---still really really have not got away from the politics at the moment and that makes me question what I am doing—so these experiences have been nourishing—

Comment [s11]: 1 3 6 7 8

conversations with people about the politics—often not in the session but outside of it—I am not denying my own feelings —am obviously tuning into people who also have I can see that what I am doing is of use to people—still seriously questioning what I am doing in this political climate—am helping people to cope —don't know how long that is tenable without it wearing me down—this is interesting I am having more open similar worries—so many people thinking its difficult and bad— when they let their guard down its helpful for other people—why arent these conversations happening within the sessions rather than outside? In the last afternoon we had a interesting conversation about what they need to do—it felt courageous—when I take a risk and do something more connected with people-9 out of 10 something useful happens for people and that is telling me something. I don't think im risk averse but I am —confidence has grown a lot since the last session—

Comment [s12]: 1 3 4 5 6

Comment [s13]: 1 2 3 7 8

Comment [s14]: 7 9

—I didn't really lack it before—but Im suddenly tuning in to how much I know---starting to come out—people are giving me feedback—I do know quite a lot—did a team coaching with a council and that was like going out on a plank—it was fanatastic—just talking about what they wanted to talk

about—found connections between them and what they were were thinking and also between me and them and what I was thinking—really miles away from how I would have worked 5 years ago—scares me to death—fear that it would fall flat—nourishment—getting nourished in ways I did not notice before—so that is in contrast to the systemic things—

we need to find ways we don't kill ourselves /burn ourselves out emotionally working with people who have to deal with these things—so pick the bones out of that

Comment [s15]: 1 3 5 6

finding your voice—opening for you to express what is important—it is nourishing for you—its conversations about things that really matter not just conversation for conversation sake—what stops that happening within the session-relevant about OPM too—thank you

Comment [s16]: 1 5 2

Comment [s17]: 12

i know that the things around nourishing is something for me and so I took some extended time away—stuff has happened and how I have rolled with that—its been about cultivating a conversation with myself—wanted to come home to myself more—r

Comment [s18]: 1 5

the more I am in relationship with self the more I can be in convo with others—the conversations I have had in work and how I can loose myself—judgements about myself—catching myself when I loose connection with myself—links to to being more connected with my body—just letting your body express how you are feeling—not interrupting it—let the body doing the speaking—more intuitive sense of knowing—wondering about how to explore it—so much of our work is rational and a I want to explore the intuitive—feel in a limbo

Comment [s19]: 1 5 6

how when you are in the place of vulnerability to still be open to conversations with others—so much is about relationship—perhaps explore them more in a way that does not seem too off beam—staying in tune and not cutting off—feel at the office there is something opening up that feels important and I am tender—not efforting so much to get it right—it can be a kind of—needs to come from a different place—comes from being grounded in myself—trusting what needs to arise will—how to be open to what needs to emerge—ther

Comment [s20]: 1 5

Comment [s21]: 1 5

one thing you said is the personal aspects of this are very important—if you are not steady in yourself then difficult to be steady with others—clear in our purpose---being too cerebral/organised and scheduled---conv convo is not just another model with 6 steps but encountering people with ourselves-proactive and reactive—we get too cerebral—the whole world of consultancy

Comment [s22]: 1 5 6

M-i

becoming reflective is what is all about it—I sometimes panic because there is so much that has happened and I feel I don not have enough time to write it all down—for example I have been doing some work at the university of east london and I was asked to do some work hosting conversations for people preapring presentations—no one wanted to talk—I just held a space and asked people how is it going and is there anything you want to talk about coaching ---and what they decided to do was share how they came to divorce their partners—how did that happen? What happened in the moment that they made decision—

Comment [s23]: 13 1 5

Comment [s24]: 1 6

the quality of the space for reflection is the same as the quality of space for conversation. Just as in conversation things will emerge—im very reflective I will create space to reflect—that's what I fill the space up with—just create the space to reflect—I think like in the conversation you are in a

Comment [s25]: 1 5

different position—if we allow conversation to happen it will be as good as it can be—it is the release—letting it be what it is going to be —

Comment [s26]: 1 5

I am just have a conversation with a Ceo---want emergence but feel trapped in a typical strategic planning process—I could take the first question into the session—s

Comment [s27]: 5 1

I've been reflecting – im very introverted in myers briggs terms—like to spend a lot of time in my head—have been asking why I often need to have a conversation to bring out what I am thinking out to surface what lies below the surface in my brain—making connections is part of my – because I am an INFPthe bit I do extrovert is my intuition —so it is accessed by interaction with people—often when I have a convo I do get access to my intuition which I often don't get when I am sitting on my own just thinking—so I am quite taken by that thing about intuition so its about accessing that part of the brain that is creative that we ofeten don't do very well|

Comment [s28]: 1 5 6

of our org processes are set up with the assumption that we can plan—their business processes are set up in such a way that if you want to do anything to change you have to make out a business case and Capita get a bit of the benefit—much change you want to bring about you don't know what you want to do —a lot of what we do is emergent —

Comment [s29]: 1

it always facinates me about organisations about how creative people find way round systems.

I would say the biggest—the thing I am most proud of is that they are now able to have the conversation amongst the top thirty people. What its showed us is that if you create the right environment and get the right people in to have the conversations they need and the conversations do move them.

Comment [s30]: 1 6

Comment [s31]: 81

why not be upfront and having a tough conversation about experiences and how the world works— if you don't do that it becomes devious and manipulative—

Comment [s32]: 1 2 5 6

its disempowering to the whole organisation and everyone is walking around pretending there is not the elephant in the room. Like we cant talk about Capita because the CE does not want conflict—

Comment [s33]: 1 5 6

the phrase for me “difficult conversation” winds me up —what does the phrase mean —what are people talking about? What is a diff conversation—one person contrary to another—holding a difficult convo—something about fear—I think its about the emotional investment we have in the view we hold—its not the cognitive difference that makses us angry its the emotional position we hold—do you think it's the emoptional investment that has been set aside in favour of holding to the rational view| (Reflection whilst typing this up---is it the case in a work conversation we expect rationality to be in charge—that's what governs the relationship—the difficult conversation is where we anticipate emotion to not only be present but to be expressed by others in a way that may make it irrational—and maybe uncontainable within the social norms of the work environment?I think is this quite a key insight—so where does the notion of emotional intelligence come into it?)

Comment [s34]: 1 5 6

Comment [s35]: 1 5 6

perhaps part of the conversational proacess Is helping people to connect with their feelings—also we are habituated to their feelings—if someone says what I am doing is rubbish then I have a pattern response to how I feel my feelings.P When we ar

Comment [s36]: 1 5 6

awkward moments in conversation where there is a pause in what is being spoken about. What was fascinating was that the energy came back in the room as we talked about it—lets acknowledge it.

Comment [s37]: 1 5 6

CE said earlier in the day that we need to start seeing the council not as an organisation but a series of relationships (*very interesting metaphor here—very powerful for me as I reflect on conversational leadership and its implications for consulting*). S It was interesting working with a senior manager in childrens services –he talked in the coaching session about the dept being a basket case –and I asked him what that meant—what was being a basket case look like and feel like---unpicked that as a way of looking at power and cultural stuff – P it’s a really good question—some people don’t appreciate that when we talking about conversation and conversational enquiry we are not talking about something loose and fluffy but difficult and challenging people about the way they use language and words—

Comment [s38]: 1 5 6

we could do more to help people access what they are thinking—rich pictures have been powerful—surprised me how powerful they are with really senior people –how do we help people have powerful conversation—its in there –how we help people help things emerge when they don’t know what will emрге—that ability to access it don’t know how to frame that if you could help that would be good—how do we get people to access stuff they arent able to do.S

Comment [s39]: 1 5 6

3rd meeting 11 june

have been consciously using stuff around conversation lots of good stuff emerged for them and energising and read the notes f

Comment [s40]: 1

in at the end when a lot of what we were talking about in terms of connecting with the intuitive level and then your questions kind of almost flowed into the conversation into

Comment [s41]: 1

it can be that in the moment stuff are we having the conversation we need to have in order to be helpful to you—just very simple stuff—S just had an aha momnet—just thi

Comment [s42]: 1 5

I had the question from you guys in some shape or form and in the energy in the room within half an hour was phenomenal –so where did that learning come from—it came form conversations with you –then swirling it around in my head and then the situation—the thing I want to say you munira—im more nervous now about doing this work now than I was twenty years ago—why is that/--its because im more aware of it—

Comment [s43]: 1 5

its how we can connect models with what really concerns people—heres a book or heres a model— if you have peopels commitment or enthusiasim that’s where we have to get to L –im conscious that we could have talked about elected members very analytically and in an abstruse way I just thought it needed something else—like the constellations idea a bit more risky but that’s what people remembered and shifted the conversation I don’t know if I was working on my own and feeling ok I suppose –if I was working with someone else who was less comfortable with it I might have been less corageous just an example I might not have done it –im just giving that as an example really—is that what we are talking about as to how this

Comment [s44]: 1 7

-----29th july

term and yeah I've written that and yeah quite like what I've my perspectives on topics. Any of those eureka moments when you are looking at these things and saying well how do they fit and do they fit and why are they there and these suddenly have **some glimpses of what the bigger conversation is** and where this fits and that and that's been the case as where [IB] about that. Well it's about pleased to be here.

Comment [s45]: 1

There is a [IB] of about meaning about reality about what is real and what are the things mean and how do we understand what things mean so like David said he talked about the micro culture how does it manifest itself you were talking about the [IB] you would talk about things as though they're real and that should come to constructs of what reality is, which then left the...it means I cannot be able in what sense do we define real if

Comment [s46]: 1

So what exactly it's the conclusion I reach so what it's an abstract intellectual question nothing particularly grounded in The question is... my question is so to noticed so it wasn't really a question it was an activity to notice when I think and talk as if something's real and what that means for the conversation I'm engaged in which is a very abstract...

I understand all the stuff about not having energy and it may not be a phrase but surely it has some relevance to the whole issue of conversations in organizations and you know conversation consulting generally doesn't it? I mean I am not making a massive lead there am I?

Comment [s47]: 1

Yeah because conservational consulting seems to me to partly be about sufacing what is seen as reality isn't it? That's... and you may collude with that or challenge I sort of you know I felt yeah there may have been issues about phrasing and how it was structured but it sort of felt okay in terms of for me but that's my perspective on your question and you've written different...

Comment [s48]: 1 5

And is it more about its multiple realities that you are trying to make the space for whereas individualistic potentially I suppose which certainly if there is a [IB] with maybe my assumptions around the conversation consulting that might be saying something more of that, how I understand conversation [IB] , does that make sense?

Comment [s49]: 1 5

No what that threw me into was the reflection around the sort of shared inquiry process here and how we work with one another around questions that are connected it back to the [IB] transcript and well you know I think it's probably a function of time perhaps, It's partly a function of preference maybe I mean it goes back to the your point of about and my question what would it take us to go deeper you know and in maybe that working on our own questions in this context for a bit longer time than we have done historically is what would enable us to go deep like maybe one of the roots into that and maybe about the challenge that comes with the questions of we frame perhaps using an action learning set of moments. You know so each of us presents the question and then that's an opportunity for questions to be asked by other group members around that question.

Comment [s50]: 9 11 1

Yeah it's when for me it's when that cross over comes but I may be anxiously negatively anxious for a number of hours and then I get into it and I'm feeling that I'm getting a response from whatever and I can move on from.

Comment [s51]: 1 5

Then I thought that she didn't quite come out although a few several did talk about how we use the anxiety to actually use to get their adrenalin that to perform well so that it perform poor

Comment [s52]: 1

The point that because David he was talking and if you listen to an expert and we are in it together, a bit we didn't say or I think it's critical the feedback we get is that people feel safe with it, it feels like we have created a sea of space and in par maybe in par the fact that we are a little bit anxious or more anxious to go with less experience means that we are able to share some of that vulnerability with people and that creates that space into which they can come because if we are representing ourselves as the great expert to not. It makes it quite scary place for anyone to come. So we didn't explore that at the time but my guess is that that is also part of this what we are trying to do to with conversational consulting we are trying to present an approach which everyone can engage with and not just a few experts we are trying to solve that I would just say I was...

Comment [s53]: 1 3 4

it's mainly about how we stay connected with ourselves which also includes our own feelings makes us more able to stay connected to other. So just picking up where when something especially sadness you may have to pick your own sadness, we you are able to stay moving along beside somebody else and I think the bit that came through towards the end when we felt important I think all picked up it was around one of the things we are best at is when we relate to people in their humanness and that is an important part what we bring.

Comment [s54]: 1 5 6

And I was getting that this guy Peter Block [IB] he had who was it I had somebody that interviewed you but he was getting really tired of OD that he was saying actually or I'm interested about whether the organization is creating humanizing spaces I just really like that idea about creating is kind of humanizes and spaces in order to do that they need about how we connected with their own humanity our own vulnerability our own who [IB] I suppose but the end so then I had empathy with other and I thought there was that feeling level that maybe speaking as an F preference to but I felt that how we connect in and harness that is a really important part about I think how he will actually, we talk about being the...what's real in terms of that connecting that whole side and some of the...he will reference to I think I made a reference to that embodied sense of knowing part of that is also what we experience physically as well not just a feeling level but the physical so much of what often we expect to do, what we expect to do is the head stuff. And [IB] I think he's culturally I think the value is given to big brains and analysis so what else we used to be brought into balance or alignment what maybe this conversation consulting with something else into the [IB] or maybe is needed as well.

Comment [s55]: 1 2 3

Comment [s56]: 1 5 6

before she came along and I was feeling quite nervous and I thought why do I feel nervous? But I mean I had spent three hours with her a couple of months ago and I'm sitting there why do I feel this nervousness what is that? It's sort of anxiety and I just I'm interested to voice it when she came. She is quite, she is a huge physically she is a huge character. I mean she is just substantial and I just said

to her because I don't know why I do I feel a bit nervous about our meeting. She is [IB] I think just across the park.

Comment [s57]: 1 4 7

Discourse, exchange of views. Ping-Pong we had this really robust conversation during our two meetings and then afterwards because I have owned my feeling about what was happening before and I felt quite at ease with the sorts of the bouncing and the tension and the assertions on her part. And I felt much more able not jump in and dive in and be worked up. I felt able to say she is [climbing up here] actually but I like her, she's professional and I don't feel I want to just [IB] about not. And then at the end I said I realized why I felt anxious about the meeting. There was something to feel anxious about. It was okay.

Comment [s58]: 1 4 5 6

Person: It wasn't just you.

Person: It wasn't just me there was good reasons to feel anxious about this and sort of I mean it was okay. And I was able to push back to someone who really wanted to sort of steam roll. Yeah she

Comment [s59]: 1 4

What I'm trying to understand is how could you look at something without the classification and the construct so you can understand it in pure form which is I guess it's why it feels like [IB].

Comment [s60]: 1 5 6

Person: Well, that is what I am saying that there is process [IB] I guess I always argued or thought that everything is seen through particular mindsets or constructs. And all you could do is be aware of them and view things through different ones. You see in different perspectives rather than seeing a pure form of looking at something which wasn't dependant on some kind of construct or I don't know. So, it's important because the stuff that we teach them ON THE OD rprogram [IB] associated.

Comment [s61]: 1 5

Person: It is but it is interesting...because to me it is interesting to me to [IB] too theatrical but into dots around dialogue David [IB] when he talks about this idea of there is some kind of a primary imminent [hold] that we need to connect into. So, we have all these ways of looking at things that's why we have dialogue but by holding a space something will emerge which is that primary marginal meaning. So, it is whereas the more post social constructions, everything is, nothing is real then you would just say well that is not that doesn't hold. So, to me there are two different and [completely] two different statements.

But I think it's that ability I mean it's like holding in balance that more... There are different ways of constructing, looking and perceiving things and we need to be [totally like] impose.

Comment [s62]: 1 5 6

[IB] this is a big debate and I was in the [IB] program and one of the things that maybe some gave me which I find quite helpful is to try and kind of learn it is an acorn grows into an oak tree doesn't grow into a plane or a train it grows into an oak tree it has an apparent sense of wholeness and is becoming. So, there's different ways of looking at it but still there is something there is it would turn into an oak tree not into something else. So, that was used as a way of ... of that's been illustrating

this idea of something inherently. It's inherently an oak tree it's never going to be anything else. And then what allows it then to become that. Does that help at all is that [helpful] in any way?

Comment [s63]: 1 4

. It's my job but I just wanted to post the fact that I'm struggling with that and it's something it isn't purely an intellectually problematic thing. It's something that's quite important because actually when we're teaching this on the program we're talking about different lenses and mindsets and so on and so on. And actually therefore if we're arguing that there is a way of taking them all off and having a pure look at something in a purer way it's so that we can be open to a primary marginal [myth] and that I need to understand how we do that [that's right].

Comment [s64]: 1 5 6

Let's just say the [you can lighten it a bit but the] importance of the transcript was ... is about [finding a really hard] question but also it's [that just] helping others found their inquiry question is an important part of what I see from the central [IB] of that because I have to [and that] [IB] I think you raised that somewhere in your transcript [issue]. I think it's important that's why

Comment [s65]: 1 4 5 3

And one of the things I was looking at in supervision around a piece of work recently is just this question about, what role is being passed on through this system that I or the other is kind of carrying. There's something about it's not just you as an individual but you're carrying a role on behalf of the system which gets repeated in different incidents and I just wanted to that is what I'm just quite interest at the moment when I'm looking at how I get hooked or take it to personally rather than try to see it more about what role am I carrying or its just an individual now carrying it's moving from the chief exec now to this person you know now what role are they carrying and how does that repeat of the part. So, I just wondered in the way we reflect on it and how that kind of ... that seems to spin at you and my interest in terms of me to bring at and just really interesting. But that's as far as... I don't know a lot of people think about that notion of what role you are carrying on behalf of the system and what's getting heated and does that resonate.

Comment [s66]: 1 2 3

I think you I am supposed to reframe it for myself in terms of what's the flow of conversation that's going on and where am I in that flow and what role am I playing within the flow. Making an assumption about there being a conversation going on right away through the system, already. So questions being implied into or assumptions being made and I am here now who am I in this conversation? When I'm baton as it were, who am I picking up the baton from? And where am I passing the baton to almost and sort of got that. Because I am only there for a time aren't I in the system generally speaking in this world physically I am there for a time.

Comment [s67]: 1 2 3 4

Person: I suppose I heard one of you just talking something about, you many not have seen this but something about a burden and something around a feeling that can be difficult to get rid of really. And it may not always be appropriate the role that you are taking in the system may not always be appropriate or right. I don't know that's what I got from that.

Comment [s68]: 1 2 3

Person: Well, either me or how I see it getting kind of played out, kind of that, what role is being carried by where they are saying one thing which sounds quite good. But then you see actually in their behaviors there is something quite different going on and you almost feel they are carrying something which [IB] but it's getting played out now in that. And I give it like [an example for] little

practice areas. But I suppose I am just kind of interested in that where it goes beyond the individual making a kind of conscious. Doing so consciously and there is something that's unconscious though you start to play out realizing it.

Comment [s69]: 1 2 3

I thought since I did my when I see back in 1980's the roles and being what they in a sense cause to do inside an organization. Because you have that role and how people interpret what they hear from you. But however it's all extremely something really quite significant. And so I guess that's what I'm saying is yes I agree with you. I am just working with [IB] [to help out] someone who is going to be ... I going to be supporting and reasonably facilitating the session that I previously facilitated. But he is also of course the senior manager. And actually so he is going to now be facilitating and giving some of the challenge to people so they hear it differently, definitively something which they find very difficult. Will they see that as okay in a way that says its okay for me to do it because I was an outsider. I have a career there. Will you be okay to do it? And if you just do it, just do it well. People might still see him grinding particular axe. They might if he doesn't do it to anyone's liking it might be career limiting. So all that stuff about the rules and the extent to which what we do in one role isn't affected by what we do in another role. So I think that's all really, I think sort of powerful stuff. But what I haven't seen until... [well, quite clearly] until you just said it Stephan is that you are seeing how the conversation acts as a kind of connector between people in different roles inside the system. And actually in shifting some of the conversation so you can shift some of the role expectations about how that role is fulfilled actually. So, I am seeing that [quite so clearly] all there.

Comment [s70]: 1 2 3 6

. And it really struck me that I had choices to make as I entered that space about what conversation I was going to sort of inaugurate and pick up. Because they are already in conversation

Comment [s71]: 1 2 3 5 6

And it was quite interesting [I was like] well, actually if I can try something out differently I can say, well, one part of the conversation I have heard so far is this. From my reading of your literature from my sort of conversation I have already had. But actually as we are speaking here there is something else that emerges that it seems to be interesting that it's been absent. And that has been about the new building. They've just moved in to a massive new building which has required a complete change in practice for all their staff and yet we are talking about leadership of the organization. There was no reference to it at all in terms of what was needed in the leadership conference for two and a half days.

I think but I suppose I am interested about what gets repeated and replicated so like when I have worked with the senior management team they have a certain view of the next rung down. And even with the next ran down they have a certain view of the SMT and it just keeps... So it's a kind of power role thing. And people then start to act out those roles. And it's kind of what we are going to shift to move beyond that in a way. So, it's not a power role it's also like a psychological roles of we've had people who have played the role of mother in the family or father in the family or that people sort of start acting out different roles which kind of go beyond the individual. But somebody needs to play the parent in this situation or is a light... so that I suppose interests me.

Comment [s72]: 1 4

And I suppose everything is about how the roles get repeated in that sort of disability organization at the moment and it's very about that activists and rights. So, you will have the activists playing out their role as the activists for the organization. I mean you get others which go beyond their job roles which is something the system is kind of expecting it to happen. Or it needs to get played somewhere. So, how does conversational approaches sort of bring that into awareness and maybe to look at different ways of shifting that maybe? So, it kind of goes beyond the job roles to other kind of roles. Does that make sense?

Comment [s73]: 4 1

Person: It does, yeah

Person: So again I suppose I am interested with ... in your Woodland Trust. Yeah I would be interested to hear what kind of roles were being played out there. I'm sure you can.

Comment [s74]: 1

I did and I have been complete absorbed by it actually, and it made me realize how much we're miss in everyday conversation, how much we just throw away because we don't capture and mainly reflect on I show you some, work we've been doing for another councils, like complex things like equalities work and we have been interviewing people and actually what I have done is what you have done which is take them and transcribed it. Other colleagues have just listened and given their summary of it and I think we'll have missed so much of the nuances [IB] the insights, the commonality actually which I would...and so I was just immersed in that actually.

Comment [s75]: 1 5 6

Comment [s76]: 1

Person: That's really interesting, that's really, really interesting I mean Paul gave his take on the sort of what he saw as four themes about meaning making the one of themes, contracting and understanding what contracting is about, I'll write them down actually. And the other two were... oh yeah the other two were what we feel about what we do and how we understand our role in helping people learn.

Comment [s77]: 1

Person: But if conversation consulting is what this is about, how do we capture that richness, is now a huge question?

Comment [s78]: 1

different I was just sort of... so where was the listening then Stephan, where was the being present to where she was at how did you acknowledge that, what was all this [riveting] on about you know?

Comment [s79]: 1 2 6

Person: No she was [riveting]?

I felt it was important, I think there was something about, this was before I heard the news about what was happening you know that way she got to around the lead or anything, so I felt it was really important to give while I was here [IB] that she needed to feel that I was on her side and supporting but to say I was at her side that I was yeah I was as you said as chief executive that I was good to her

and her team, and in order to do that well I needed to build a good working alliance with her, and so that's partly what I wanted to have, half [IB]

Comment [s80]: 1 2 3 5

Well all I felt I could do was because she was very, you know she's having she's got a... two face... you know blinded I'm going to take on the leader tonight and I'm going to tell her I cannot work here if I'm going to be undermined this way. And so I just kind of this is a very important conversation and just we've done some work before about having difficult conversations about how to relate to members. This is what was really interesting and it is like that very thing was now here it was. So I just said is there anything from what we've done around just look how you might shift that conversation in a way that actually might allow for something different, would do anything, is there anything from my work today. So I was just trying to bring it back to some of the things that we had explored in the group.

Comment [s81]: 3 1

sharp relief we talk about how do you create conditions for having difficult conversations and all that. And then what do you do when you're faced with that scenario where you just have... you ought to take that opportunity what is it actually is it the right conditions.

Comment [s82]: 1 2 3 5 6

I have this major [IB] thinking about roles, that was for me the repeat of the things that came out and that the role and roles we play, I mean we inter-change between them in a conversation, just it strikes as a so fundamental, I think the next for me with what I'll introduce in my checking about this friend who is going through a nervous breakdown and what my role was in those conversations, the role of comforter, the role of challenger, the role of professional diagnostician as best as I'm able, a whole series of roles that required a different type of conversation after a different moments and constantly moving and flexing between them in response to the reaction of the other individual, so it's not just the topic or the way I am in my authentic, who I am, is what role the concession will... is required on me and

Comment [s83]: 1 2 5

Comment [s84]: 1 2 5

I suppose all that [IB] was how there's a conversational consulting, how hard it is to move someone from a pattern of conversation that they've got in to and certainly try to use that in short time frame, a short telephone conversation, is unlikely, it seems to me to be successful and you got someone here who has a dominant narrative in their head, they have a way of [IB], they have a way of talking which reinforces that dominant narrative and how they are with others and how others are with them, all those things help keep it place and used somehow are expected to work toward the magic one which none of that changes, but the world is supposed to be different and well yeah, alright okay, that's what I [IB]

Comment [s85]: 1 3 5 6

But it's interesting quite a bit of conversation consulting how you're working with a very fixed government narrative which there's a lot of personal investment in, it's very bound up, what that calls for, you know to... or the challenge I think just of how to work with that really, when it's a story an individual in the past and history it's so... it's so locked, or feels so locked.

Comment [s86]: 1 5 6 3

So what I hear is that, with the notion of conversational consulting it's held in my heart, it this optimistic I'm able, there's almost an open space that is created as I engage with someone which might be a complete fallacy, because the reality might be that this it is entirely boundaried in all sorts of ways.

Comment [s87]: 1 5 6

So I actually try and the only way, I mean, the way stupidly it didn't come out then so after I thought was leaving, but actually the only way she would deal with that was actually to have had that conversation, not the conversations that we used to have, somebody comes in about what is that's going on between us that makes it impossible for us to move beyond the patterns of conversation that we have they're unhelpful then we could perhaps had a different conversation, so I'm thinking that is just so, it's just...

Comment [s88]: 1 2

you actually do that, how do you instigate that kind of conversation that means you don't replay what you've replayed a number of time, but you actually move into, this isn't quite working is it, what could we do to sort of conversation aligned to you I'm feeling really bad about this, this is six, seven years ago....

Comment [s89]: 1 5 6

. And what I really, really don't know is that ... and actually its very hard to move with them because actually you can't get the time that you need in the environment that you need in the space that you need to help a person feel safe enough to move then and it [IB] disturbed where I think its very hard. So if this is a really interesting challenge for that conversational consulting stuff and when we are in that moment of fear, when we are in that place of stuck, and the client is struggling to allow us to get that space to have that conversation how could we think about ways to unlock it, that would be real. That's just that would be on their thing [IB] but that's just formulating for me its actually it's quite a big challenge for a lot of hours.

Comment [s90]: 1 3 5 6

They began to see it differently but that just seems to go out the window when the more dominant narrative just takes the floor again. So its how to ... I suppose when you are able to create space for a different conversation its that ... that's not enough you know there is something about, how is that being reinforced and [lenitive] and influenced in that more dominant narrative which one things are under threat will just... it just kicks in. I suppose when a deep part of you its these...it's that threading its somehow it has multiplicity of conversations that can lead to some shift but it is not the one off, its not the away day its what happens in those little micro interactions

Comment [s91]: 1 3 4 5 6

. And that's where I think is that translation and that's to me the test the way the world café works. To me that's not enough it has to kind of inform us every day, that's where its, that's to me where the cultural shift happens. And it's hard to kind of bring the two, to see the links and help meet those links. I suppose I just, its people being just conscious as they're going into it like how was I conscious about where I was going to get hooked, what was

Comment [s92]: 4 1 5 6

[IB] really interesting stuff really, really interesting stuff because I was sort of checking it through the notion of learning I was learning and learning culture the environment had

Comment [s93]: 1 2

is I've been asking people to put their attention on the nature of the conversations they are having so just actually in a moment we're reflecting we'll... if we accept [IB] I think there is always and perhaps to do with the culture of all the organization largely estimation of all

Comment [s94]: 1 5 6

couldn't we just think about what kind of conversations we are having because we're shifting those conversations we're at a different one. So, its' going to put their attention on that asking them to be more aware of [IB] what is the reality what they are also experiencing

Comment [s95]: 1 5 6

and these lines have been creating a focus for a different so I didn't sell it to them like this which [IB] actually been about creating a focus for a different set of conversations and how they work with the citizens and their board supervision. So I think that's yeah that about...

Comment [s96]: 1 5 6

like the right question because most senior people find it comforting to retreat into the abstratcion of doing a strategy doing the policy and to do something that you need to control, to control though I'm real did do anything really but it gives you the illusion of control at least as opposed to the mercy on reality of chaos. So I think that still feels like the right person and it feels

Comment [s97]: 1 2

, what I got is what helps me keep connected with my more kind of intuitive and felt sense and what happens when I become disconnected so and I was just thinking when I was doing my enquiry view when was I staying connected and when I was just connecting I think it was interesting [IB] I think when I go into places how could I have done this better I can get a bit disconnected as well as in my work appliance so I think by example

Comment [s98]: 1 5 6

levels I think after that kind of disconnecting the connection is also individual group you know what's going on in the wider system so going on simultaneously past, present, future so yeah so I don't know I need to have make it a bit more work a bit future the question or without to say this and we are not just to have [IB] and I'm not are sure.

Comment [s99]: 1 4 5

And want to be behind that there is a number of questions but use [IB] so what contributes to that and how may I support myself or do I notice physically when that's happening and I bring myself back in connection so which a bit myself and not bringing myself in the connecting what is that.

Comment [s100]: 1 4 5

Again I still really think there is something inherently disconnected in a system in a way that they almost...that we need to be more curious about when it's not...when there is that disconnection, well isn't that interesting? It's data rather than we've got to make it. We have to make it. Maybe that's ... yeah. But I think there's still something about doing

Comment [s101]: 1 5 6 8

place you remain curious and when you're not your attention goes away from that kind of curiosity to what's going on in that interaction and so on.

Comment [s102]: 1 5 6 8

miss them and what does listening for me, look and feel like when it reaches [IB] or you are not always [IB] so generally to listening on how might I encourage myself and/or others to listen well. So I think I've got a number of client activities between now and probably the next

Comment [s103]: 1 3 8

recollected some detail interaction, the physicality of the interaction where we sat and the timing and her interruption for the sandwich order and how that sort of cut into where we're at and how we're achieving that and the CEO cut short but there was a number of things that came out of it but I had not given much promise to but I realized that actually they played their own part in all this which needed to get relief as I say at one point in this.

Comment [s104]: 1 6

12th oct-----

I don't feel like I am having to leave all the stuff behind because I think what we are going to talk about are going to help me carry some of my work forward what I think I am more conscious of is the need for us to think more about the physical—what I am experiencing is real exhaustion in my body. The brain says no but the body is saying we need to lie down—so I think the physical bit is so important—that partly came out of our conversation last time about being conscious of our body—I am checking

Comment [s105]: 1 6

how do we create a legitimate space for us to have conversation and raise that with our clients if we constantly police ourselves that we should spend all our time handling work coming in all directions without spending time in conversation—

Comment [s106]: 1 3 12b

. L—that question is in the OD programme who is the client—who is the ultimate client—there is something bigger that goes you know beyond that who and what are we serving?—I suppose that gives me the helicopter and steps out of the madness—how do we have some sense of what we are contributing towards—goes back to values and deepens for me—a bit deeper I suppose—a spiritual question—we have some of those things here connecting /using this time well actually helps to getting better social results not any sr in the way we have tended to use it at OPm —whatever the client decides are social results—L—I find social results turns me cold—may be about language M—it has no texture. L—I am shifting a bit —humanising spaces in organisations—just creating humanising space—I feel some contribution towards that —that would give some sense going beyond the pressing demand of the client or talking about social results. P—in a sense talking about the

Comment [s107]: 2 1 3

Comment [s108]: 1 6

40 M what are the things that give people nourishment , physically emotionally maybe that is what clients are asking of us and we are asking of one another and you are asking of Stefan P—they have moved —that group has moved —they say they leave with more energy they resented listening to boring presentations to turn that into space where people created energy for themselves—now you can have a conversation with them because they have seen something that has changed—we often have this conversation with a client about how can you be close enough to a client to offer them something nourishing whilst being distant enough 42 we walked in offering nourishing spaces but we didn't we responded to their request for some development and we co-created it with them and got the client to lead it and now they understand the conversation L would be

Comment [s109]: 5 1

Comment [s110]: 4 1 6

. P I am interested in inquiring into where that feeling of legitimacy might come from and what we can do to create it—from the feedback of the OD prog people valued that human space and we re-created in members day—id be quite up for that as an inquiry just so that we don't lose that bit of the question you are asking —what the client

Comment [s111]: 1 2

. S I'm bursting just link it this humanising spaces and we were having a conversation before you came in about the contract win form the client Caroline—she wants to know specifics but she wants more to know that you are in tune with her values—that's what she is craving—what do people actually want form us—do they want to know me they like part of this relationship to know me rather than my ideas or as a blank sheet and part of that I'm wondering is their desire to be known what is perhaps happening in our world is that people aren't be heard. There is a project on their part that they desire to heard- B in the organisation

Comment [s112]: 1 3

S what does humanising mean and how does that occur in practice—psychology has

Comment [s113]: 1 6

---it isn't just I think I give them the space to be human to be seen and heard as people to an extent
th---it isn't just I think I give them the space to be human to be seen and heard as people to an
extent that they don't always get inside the organisation—

S just drawing lessons form that —is it possible that what we are offering to clients to warm
humanness intimacy which wraps around the content so as we are able to build those relationship
we have a lot of that stuff built into it—it's not spoken about or acknowledged generally---some —
but perhaps of happening more of that so when people meet us —when I met the woodland trust
and they were scared of doing something different 102S they warned me not to try any wood jokes
—the wrapping

Comment [s114]: 1 2

the train up with my Danish friend we were taking about philosophy there is something about the
flow of conversation and how that manifests itself all the way through and that this is a conversation
that had already started elsewhere —the questions psychologists posed 100 years ago are still
present so for us how does conversation occur in a stream rather than in blocks —consultant/client/
pitch which are all tightly defined things M

Comment [s115]: 1

you have to make a judgement —there was a lady who went to the audit commission we went to a
pitch ---we got the work—you just seemed to have such a good time working together in the room
we got on really well and we were enjoying ourselves together in room—So making THE
RELATIONSHIP EXPLICIT IN THE relationship with clients B we sort of focussing on pitches can I just
have one little intervention it's about relationships it was a framework contract we won but we
didn't get the leadership development for Deans Helen and David had the relationship there were
five of us on the team and I'm really conscious that the four of us HB HF BB and DL

WE DON'T PUT INTO OUR PREP what type of relationship we want between us B if there is a bit of
banter or smiles we hope that will translate top the client rather than asking that solid question. S do
we have a container that will help us cope with the answers that might come out—actually D and I
after the pitch played through our perspectives—oh if we had done that beforehand—we

Comment [s116]: 2 1

-----3rd feb

around conversation has been part of change process, then actually to be able to have a
conversation you've got to equalize, whoever is in the [room], yeah and at the time that you are
having the kind of development or you are having a conversation that might lead to change and
therefore for us, the challenge is how can we do that all the time, yeah and in a sense the experience
we've been through, I don't think we we've practice that yeah because we went into this kind of a
line structure, because we do you know, so its not to criticize it is to now became aware of it and to
say that actually you know how do we do it differently, so you can think that actually even though
we might have a line, how do we equalize this, to have a really good quality conversation.

Comment [s117]: 1 6 8 10 12

And that balance of honoring somebody's view about keeping something confidential because it's
important and has all those effects, in a situation where quite rightly people are... collectively people
are looking for you know more information or clearer view of what's going on and what's coming
out of the conversations. So that's has been its like coaching only in a different sense you know that
holding that balance of what's available, what's open, what's not, it's part of judgment.

Comment [s118]: 1 5

surprise actually I was checking [IB] surprised I knew that they weren't winning as much but then the presentation was we were making 400,000 or whatever it was and then suddenly [Pod] wasn't doing [IB]. Now before that they would have been questions and it would have been nice to have known what those questions are because actually if you don't know those things all you can do is to work on trust and being an employee organization there is a greater level of trust that there is if its not an employee or an organization. So

Comment [s119]: 1 4 6 v

How prepared are you to allow from your questions to emerge. Now if you

Comment [s120]: 1 5 8

it's a process I mean what's important to me now is that we continued that dialogue and conversation rather than assume that it stopped or that because that we didn't do it right we get angry about it. My feeling is that if we didn't get it right well let's reflect on it and try it again right. Which means keeping the conversation going. And having appetite for it and having some energy around it because if there is one [IB] there is no energy just becomes [IB] because so. But that's what I mean I think from what is going.

Comment [s121]: 1 6

Comment [s122]: 1 6

I wonder you see that people, and they are big bodies that are against all this , what I don't have is sense of what are the questions and can we help articulate some of those questions, I don't know, do we know enough to do it? Well that's what's interesting and will create bridges that are needed.

Comment [s123]: 1 4 5 6

It's really... it's somehow sort of beginning to see that actually they need a understanding system in order to both help them make decisions but also gain some legitimacy for both, because it's a question of legitimacy, actually. Who are you to say no to my treatment?

Comment [s124]: 1 4 5 6

Person: Yes.

Person: What gives you the right to do that?

Person: Yes.

Person: And that sort of a question that's behind that sort of a question about anxiety and I'm faithful about my health and my family's health and what is it like to be living this country at the moment. There's a whole range of other questions sort of lurking behind that.

Comment [s125]: 1 4 5 6

client and for me it's actually about constant self awareness. A deeper kind of awareness of yourself encouraging the client to have a deeper awareness of themselves and therefore can operate much

Comment [s126]: 1 6

more authentically and a more deeper knowledge and understanding of others and how whatever the challenges is impacting on them. So I think that actually it would take us to a different level than the level that we operate at. Both at a personal and at an organization and system level. And I think that actually if we had more of that we would make better decisions I think we would have more compassion for each other and the kind of dreams that we've had about being more humanist in how we even talk to each other and treat each other becomes more of the norm and my goodness that would be such a lovely place to be in wouldn't it. So that would be my dream.

Comment [s127]: 1 6

Comment [s128]: 1 6

Comment [s129]: 1 6

Interviewer: Fantastic Phil.

Phil: I guess I'm in you said this quite earlier on about the equalizing to make conversational consulting work well like a something really made aware of that at Shropshire this week where you got to see the manager who comes out the front and talks about the future of council and then you are expecting people to engage in productive conversations. But they have almost been tantalized with a bit of the answer do you know what I mean. So I guess for me it would be and I haven't got the complete answer here but how can we make things how can we equalize things so people feel much more able to particularly engage with the dream phase where they might feel the other people have got the answers in the dreams already buttoned. If to use AI as an example. Something about the equalization we getting people warmed up and feeling that their contributions are important.

Comment [s130]: 1 6

Comment [s131]: 1 6

Person: That's how you value people actually isn't it.

Comment [s132]: 1 6

Person: Can I just ask what do you feel that says for you about your own needs and own person as a conversation consultant in the ideal world which is what we are talking about would you always feel equal to who is there and how they are and who you are with them.

Comment [s133]: 1 6

Person: No probably not. I think I need to... I guess I need to do quite a bit more thinking about where sometimes I feel I stand.

Comment [s134]: 1 6

Person: But in the ideal world because this is [IB] this is dreaming about how the... how our perfect life might be would the fact should be if you like you being equal a sense of equality for you with whomever.

Person: I don't know if I used the word equality I give the honesty the kind of robust exchanges on this exchanges between client and commissioner if I can separate those two because sometimes

they are different and me. But I guess in a perfect world it means I'm very in tune with the issues that might get in the way of conversational consulting being as good as it can be.

Comment [s135]: 1 2 6

Person: I think there is something that we have talked what is about making some of these things essentially [IB] about equality here what I [IB] so [IB] I'm not here to sell something I'm here conversation with you about certain topics. If we end up doing business together on [IB] part of this conversation is not steer you to a position where you buy something [IB]. Being open about some of those things helps to create relationship [IB].

Comment [s136]: 1 2 6

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Comment [s137]: 1 2 6

Person: I think we've talked about how we need to think about practice when we are doing this yeah and part of our practice is about how empowered we make other people feel. Now I think there is a bit of a catch 22 here because of our relationship to how we see people as superior to us in a sense so you are kind of buying something from a consultant but you are buying it on a basis that you are understanding that there are better at it than you are yes. So there is a kind of an inbuilt perception but then the challenge to us is how do we conduct ourselves where we are then equalizing it yeah. Because actually when I think about myself I tend to like people that I think are smarter, brighter all of those things when I'm working right. And I expect the same for the client and therefore how can then in my practice how I can bring out their smartness in a sense to equalize how we move forward. Whether the time can appreciate that I can't but hope and dream so that's the mindset shift we all need to make about how we work with other people how we value how we can then listen to them how can we be non judgmental all of those things come into play and if they could come into play for lots of people that's well that will help us achieve our dream.

Comment [s138]: 1 2 6

Comment [s139]: 1 2 6

Person: [IB] I was talking about at the end which was sort of as a sort of spiral [IB] they may be aware of spiral learning as a sort of and the notion that so that actually conversational consulting could be described as learning consulting. So that actually what we are about is learning both learning in contracting process, learning about one another. And if we're open to learning and the [IB] is open to learning then we're both in a spiral... And the thought was that actually conversational consulting the spirals are overlapping and the generative question has a potential to create energy in the middle of the spirals where they overlap. That it then we find ourselves in that place of equal and a sort of equalness of learning. So in an ideal world every client I admit would be open for learning and I would be open for learning with them. And that we would readily contract at the outset to learn with one another and from one

Comment [s140]: 1 2 3 6

Comment [s141]: 1 2 6

another. Using conversation as the, as the vehicle if you like for that learning the manifestation of that learning.

Comment [s142]: 1 2 6

Person: What I would add to that is that how... making those conversations clean because I think that often they're not clean because you know, it's not that we haven't contracted to be more judgmental. We don't have unconditional positive regard we don't pay attention to equality inclusion, it's all of those things that kind of make it clean and create that context in which this learning can happen.

Comment [s143]: 1 2 4 5 6

Person: I suppose this all [IB] from coaching in this in one way and it moves it's not like, doesn't become the coach it becomes a conversationalist but adopting coaching values and principles that support learning. But David was talking about how in an ideal world you put yourself in that relationship, when you yourself are affected. So the conversation where learning shifts you it doesn't... it's not you doing it for or to the clients that there is an... [ego] self shift. You learn you're learning and you're in a place where you're open to that.

Comment [s144]: 1 5 6

Person: And so now we're talking about in the more it confirms me of thinking that but having a conversation about the relationship, getting an idea of, well having a conversation about the relationship you're building with this person or do whatever it is you're planning to do collaboratively together. It's crucial, the best relationships I've got with clients and where I'm quite open and honest about a whole bunch of things. To do with, we're working together to do what we're talking about. I'm where I feel able to say something quite strong role maybe after all well, things that the plans are going expected a consultants to say... and [IB] often say things about I'm not going to push also on you, if we look if I don't think we can do the work I'll suggest something else you we go somewhere else. But getting well doing what you need to do to get people to trust and believe and recognizing that they're having a different kind of relationship with you it is crucial I think [IB] the heart of this. That's hard to get to because as you were saying some clients expect right what are we going to do tell us what we're going to do we're paying you money tell us what to do, we're going to do it. Well you're going to do it first.

Comment [s145]: 1 2 5 6

Comment [s146]: 1 2 5

Comment [s147]: 1 2 5

Person: You know when people say the coaching program saying that is life changing for me.

Person: Yeah.

Person: Which is not just about becoming [IB] which is not becoming a conversationalist using some of these techniques, but actually it changes you as a person in terms of when you start adopting the behaviors so how can I be talk you and where I'm not judging you, I don't know what's going on in your mind yeah. So and kind of consciously trying to behave in a different way which allows you to be you, so there is a lot of us preaching middle leadership training that authenticity is really a key. Yet we don't enable and empower people to be authentic, without kind of you know, jumping towards this

conclusions. And so it's you know for me it's always been about not just the learning from coaching has been phenomenon. But actually how it's made me think and behave as a person

Comment [s148]: 1 6 5

So your huge complex task is constructing something that captures that essence without it turning into something that's [IB] section kind of new model never had when we lose benefit to but it's not getting into the heart of what it's about.

Comment [s149]: 1 5 6

Person: We've already moved into the design phase here which is convenient give them a time [IB] to say so thank you [IB] but shifting that's brilliant and the way I framed that question what do we need to put in place in our practice, to enable the best of [constructing] consulting to become out in our clients reality day by day. So it's our practice who we're [IB].

Person: What I'm seeing is this kind of the spiral in the way you described with the bits that I have described that kind of are really the environment, that you need you create and the value [IB] they need to have in order to make this happen. So I can see that framework in place and if we can get more people to understand that, and to work at it which is really moving away from having a theoretical appreciation to actually doing it and being it that, that is what will enable the or that is what will help people work towards achieving the dream as it were.

Comment [s150]: 1 5 6

Person: Yes sorry because it's something about what to me what's going on for me is about clients, clients who actually don't want, clients want the packaged if they don't want to learn they want a problem solved and they want that consultant to come and our ability to shift that relationship or to withdraw or whatever it seems to me to be key. Because I can think of over my time on [IB] two or three clients who didn't really want to they didn't want to play with learning any kind of learning spiral. They wanted a delivery and they wanted you know us to then get out again I think.

Comment [s151]: 1 2 3 5 6

Person: You see this is where I think the yes but comes in and the yes part is actually a no, no right and you don't have to make the clients to say it because I think some of the experiences we were talking about earlier in OPM were a bit like that. Because sometimes actually the imperative will be to find the solution, will be to get this done in a given amount of time. So I think that actually not everybody would want to buy this. That doesn't mean that we don't sell it, I think some people will actually want this in the way that we are talking about to them describing it. But even where people want just a solution to be found. I think we can work with them and just push a little bit at the boundaries yeah because actually that's all you might be able to do and you might only be able to leave them with the question that they might ponder over. And that is job done, I don't think we need to

Comment [s152]: 1 2 3

Person: Agonize it.

Person: Agonize over it.

Interviewer: Now drop some thing.

Person: It's about contracting [IB].

Interviewer: In the context sort of how to provide just sort of capture it. So take this as the client's system. This is me as the learning conversation consultant. And I'm invited into the system, I knock on the door and I am allowed in and somewhere in the system there will be other people with their own spirals of whatever sorts.

Person: So they need to look different from yours because actually you are right they are different. Because you know if you are talking about it being a learning spiral some people will have it, some people won't have it.

Comment [s153]: 1 2 3

Interviewer: Yes and actually I might not ever meet them in the system so I might find myself very solitary in the system itself, so you don't really recognize me bye, bye off you go. But actually what might happen as I'm engaging in my spiral, in my being and who I am. I might click with...there might be...yeah a sort of stage two, my learning spiral meets someone's other learning spiral and the conversation happens in the middle there. And some magic happens in there and there is some relationship, there is some way of understanding, a mutual understanding a learning contract whatever you call it goes on there. And that starts to create an entity that

Comment [s154]: 1 2 3 6

What this is describing in your example to me is around the possibilities of client relationships building by the way that you are and you conduct yourself, so your initial consultancy piece might be in the way you were describing it may not have any impact, or no impact you would like. And therefore you leave, but you may connect to a person you then pursue that with. Which is slightly different I think, this is about building client relationships rather than doing the piece of consultancy work using conversational consulting which to me is looking at that spiral and setting it up in a way that other people connect to it and that the spiral then becomes a big thing in your organization. Do

Comment [s155]: 2 1

Comment [s156]:

Comment [s157]: 2 1

I think this describes actually what we are talking about when we say that people in previous programs have connected with us and then either call us back much later when they were in a position to do something. Or we connect back and say you know we might be able to do that. Because that's what must be going on there.

Comment [s158]: 1 2

I just wanted to add that this space for me has been qualitatively different to other space. And when we had our, there were two things that came to mind straightaway in terms of what helps you. In terms of us going to [AGMA] we had just had that session where we talked about relationships between colleagues going together whether you like each other or you don't like each other. And we were very mindful of that one way in terms of how we present it. So I think that was something concrete that we took away from this work.

Comment [s159]: 12 9

So the doing of that learning and that growing between us, becomes part of what happens then with the client.

Person: Yes.

Person: Yes.

Interviewer: So it's not unconnected so.

Person: No, no not at all.

Comment [s160]: 1 2 4 5 8 9

The reality is that if they say learning dynamic and learning spirals between us then that is in the system when we engage with our client. That's not a sort of just another fairy idea it is the reality of what is going on. Because our

Comment [s161]: 1 2 3 5 6

So what we bring is, I have written down learning energy the extent to which we are sort of natured and encouraged in developing our learning energy amongst ourselves is the extent to which we are likely to...more likely to find ourselves in the space where we connect with the learning energy and develop learning energy amongst others. By actually stimulating and create a spark and the spark may be the question. The spark for learning, a learning fire might be a question that shifts the client's attention. That changes the dynamic from I want you to come here and sort out those so and so's over there and whatever. Becomes a...well actually part of this might be about me as well...it's not just about them over the problem people, the problem managers.

Comment [s162]: 1 2 3 4

But its much more challenging to find those kind of questions that shift the client a bit and mean that we can get into it [IB]. So I really like, but that implies to me that I need to into the client meetings knowing in the kind of right ... with the right kind of energy learning all of that. Which is not always, not always easy. Because it's been a busy life and da-da-da.

Comment [s163]: 1 2 5 6

And we are learning all the time we are having these conversations about tuning into that.

Comment [s164]: 1 5 6

I think what's emerging for me is that really serious underlining of the building of that relationship with the client in the ways that were described through the spirals. Getting to a kind of openness. It won't always be possible but if that's what we are trying to aim for then we can go along that road a bit with people even if they are a bit reluctant to go the whole way.

Comment [s165]: 1 5 6

Person: For me what that will tend to lead to is tolerance and understanding of different approaches to how the client might have thought the problem could be solved. So that you are able to bring in different approaches when you are actually faced with a room full of people who have [OFF MIC CONVERSATION]

Comment [s166]: 1 3 5 6

Person: For me the question that's emerging relates somewhat to the kind of questions that I started off with which was trying to understand myself better. And the questions that are now emerging from is that actually in order for me to continue to know myself more and better realizing that actually in conversational consulting its about, that actually its not just about me, its about the other person. How can I marry what I want for me which is to know myself better, be more authentic achieve the kinds of things I want to achieve. How can I want that for the other person as well, and therefore connect with them in the way that there is the possibility that that will happen. So it's about wanting the same for other people and practicing that.

Comment [s167]: 1 2 3 5 6

Comment [s168]: 1 2 3 5 6

Wendi-----

Dialogic OD in practice: Conversational approaches to change in a UK

Primary School

Comment [s169]: 1

Setting the Scene

This case study explores what Dialogic OD looks and feels like in practice from the perspective of a client and an OD consultant. It charts the development

Comment [s170]: 1

Towards the end of a 20+ year career in healthcare management I took on a system transformation project that prompted me to reflect deeply, perhaps for the first time, on what was most impactful in my leadership and support for change. I came to the conclusion that the conversations I encouraged amongst professionals seemed to make the most difference. This insight prompted a decade-long personal, and at times collective, inquiry into how such conversations happen and how as change facilitator I can best enable them. The voyage

Comment [s171]: 5 1 6

For me, a dialogic approach means hosting both one-one conversations with clients as well as group or organisation-wide conversations helped along by processes like World Café(Brown & Isaacs, 2005) and Open Space(Owen, 2008). I use the term 'hosting' deliberately and prefer it to using the term consultant which tends to imply, in my mind, a more expert advisory role than that of 'host' which offers more possibility of a co-created process emerging between myself and those I am invited to work with. A conversational host, as I aim to be, pays attention to how spaces can be co-created in which mind-to-mind and heart-to-heart exchanges can generate new shared futures.

Comment [s172]: 4

Comment [s173]: 1 2

I do not describe myself as a naturally optimistic person, but have learned that by looking more to grow my strengths rather than diagnose my weaknesses I can look forward to better times. This also seems to resonate with the people I work with. By weaving Appreciative Inquiry (AI) with conversational processes I sense new opportunities to be of service to people.

Comment [s174]: 1 3

I have learned that if a client is open to the unknown, holding lightly to specific processes and frameworks then this augurs well for something really interesting to be co-created. It felt like you were offering the opportunity to inquire with you into what would work best for the school. I really

Comment [s175]: 2 3 4

warmed to your desire for us to work in partnership. I sensed freedom and potential emerging in our early contact. As I shared some initial ideas and we bounced them between us you signalled your interest and willingness to take fair risks and this left me excited at what conversational approaches might take shape. You also signalled that you saw this as a long term project rather than a one off assignment and that also opened up new possibilities in my mind.

Comment [s176]: 1 2 3 5

I use open questions to promote reflection and dialogue a lot in the training that I deliver to staff. Also I use collaborative group techniques to allow for greater interactions. I was therefore really interested in the World café approach during my early conversations with Stefan. I had not heard of this approach before and it fitted well with my own style of delivering training. An important factor for me in our initial discussions was discussing and mulling over ideas and Stefan guiding me with framing the most important questions to ask. The use of questions to promote conversation was absolutely key and Stefan used questioning and active listening techniques with me also to best understand what my aims were for developing the staff.

Comment [s177]: 1 2 3 5 6

Comment [s178]: 1 2 3 6

It began with carefully listening to all that you said to me in our initial telephone conversation. I was less concerned about the facts and more attentive to what I sensed or heard behind the narrative. I was paying attention to language and the description of relationships, attitudes and behaviours. I was interested in your reaction to the school and how it triggered various thoughts and feelings for you. As you spoke I sensed in myself a series of reactions. Sometimes empathy with the staff and children, sometimes for you, and sometimes recollections of my own life experiences that resonated with the situation. All of this 'data' enabled me to access my own thoughts about the questions that staff might be asking during this difficult time in the schools' life, and indeed for some in their own professional lives. Prior to speaking with

Comment [s179]: 1 2 3

Comment [s180]: 1 6 2 3

All these thoughts and impressions I held as I stepped back to take a reflexive position, to consider how and why I was reacting to what I was hearing. This deep listening was fundamental to developing a sense of what might be useful to offer you.

Comment [s181]: 1 2 6

These objectives I think reflect the tensions I sense in working conversationally. At one level, for me, the conversations between staff around questions that matter are the work. If that happens well then I am content that what needs to happen later will manifest itself. I personally have no pre-occupation with action lists in the context of relational changes. They can feel like a distraction. In this case Wendy I recall you thought that the staff and external stakeholders like the local education authority would feel much more confident in the future direction of the school if there were some clear recorded outcomes. In conversational OD the conversational processes and the changes that happen within them are the key focus. Holding to the familiar in peoples experience as they engage in conversational change also seems important. In designing days like this the skill is in holding with the client the tension between the old ways and the emerging new.

Comment [s182]: 1 2 6

Comment [s183]: 1 2 4 6

The objectives demonstrated our mutual intention to focus on strengths and to do all we could to help the staff to do likewise. There

Comment [s184]: 1 2

The main work for both of us was therefore less about the technicalities of the process and more about framing the questions that would form the focus for the conversations. I sent you a number of options

Comment [s185]: 1 2 3 6

Your suggestion Stefan to host a World Café style event resonated with me. I particularly liked the 'structure' of the AI approach and could visualise how the day would flow. The planning of the questions was fundamental. The structure of the day was important as it allowed for flexibility if staff needed to have longer conversations

You did not attend the morning session Stefan, but when you arrived you 'fitted into' co-hosting the session seamlessly. I feel this was due, in part, to the fact that we had planned the session so well together.

Comment [s186]: 1 3 6

An extremely important part of the afternoon session for me when we were co-hosting and you asked me 'coaching style' questions about the staff when they were in discussion. For example, you asked me to reflect on their 'energy' and their use of body language. This was powerful indeed as often one is caught up with delivering training and not always reflective enough on one's own practice.

Comment [s187]: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I learned that the process must be the servant of the participants rather than my treasured possession to hold onto at all costs. It is, I confess, how I feel at times after spending much effort of designing a day. On this

Comment [s188]: 1 4

It was great meeting someone like you Wendy who really 'gets' conversational approaches to OD. You get it with your mind and your heart and there was never a need for me to struggle to explain what we might be attempting to do. This meant that we could enjoy lively creative conversations. It also meant that we did not need to spend a great deal of time between us trying to negotiate a compromise. We both had a sense of excitement about the possibilities of the day and the longer term.

Comment [s189]: 2 1

The consequence has been a growing emphasis on listening to others and seeking to understand the questions in the organisation, and indeed the wider system. Alongside this is a practice of listening to our own intuitions and responding appropriately. So emotions, gut instincts, past narratives, longings for a better future and a passion to further develop ourselves and those around us all contributed to the liveliness in conversation we both enjoyed with one another and in some strange way infected those we worked with.

Comment [s190]: 1 4 5 6 7 8

Diary-----

What does it mean to connect?

How do I know I am in connection?

How do we know we are in connection?

What role do the senses have in supporting connection?

What else supports connection?

What need or needs are met when we connect?

Is there a quality of connection?

How might I know more connection?

Comment [s191]: 1 2 6

:"change can only occur when the pattern of conversation changes because it is this that organises the individuals experience" (Strategic Management and Org Dynamics:the challenge of complexity 2007).This I find intriguing and worthy of further inquiry.

Comment [s192]: 1 4

was how to engage participants in my research and I mentioned the possibility of developing a community of practice and using Participative Inquiry approaches to engage one another in research. Liz responded well to this and I found myself exploring in my mind how this inquiry or research approach could both be an integral part of my own research but also offer development for others and the OPM community of OD practitioners.

Comment [s193]: 1 4 9 10

others but trust that the conversational process will ultimately support my objectives. Opportunism I think figures largely in consulting work, we look for work where we can find it and then seek to use each opportunity for greatest impact and learning. So I think that a doctorate on conversational consultancy is likely to be opportunistic in its approach and I will need to work out how to accommodate that in my handling of my time and the programme of research.

Comment [s194]: 1 5

At the end of the week I found myself irritated—and even angry—with a client. I had offered them a programme which included a conversation café and they said that would rather have something much more facilitated than hosted as I had done in the past. They thought there was a need to be much more directive and less open. This

Comment [s195]: 1 2

Conversations at work—a recent meeting when we were discussing a research proposal a colleague made the comment—we could include conversation into one of the themes. It looks like conversation is making an impact in more and more people's awareness.

Comment [s196]: 1 2

Concern about language and understandability seems to be about how I speak rather than asking the question based on what I have heard about what is actually needed.

Comment [s197]: 1

The concentration on outputs from conversations makes me fear that the conversation is being devalued as a process of change in itself. It buys into—or feels like it does—the myth that once you have the report—then you have done something productive. We need to be clearer about what productive in this new age is really all about—we are wedded to producing stuff as though that is main thing. The more I write this the more angry I feel myself becoming—the factory mindset is deeply engrained in all of us—what is that will make us satisfied with conversation—why the restless need to produce?—and that in a service culture where actually it is service that we are looking for from and

Comment [s198]: 1 2

- . I tend to refer to myself as a host of conversations and the act of physically serving someone encourages them to incline towards you---to be attentive and open to contact. I have watched some waiters and their approach is very formal and distant—its just about serving the coffee—whereas for a me the intention of serving I think becomes noticeable and opens up people.

Comment [s199]: 15

I think it is probably not possible to disconnect the notion of conversation from leadership. Indeed in what I think is a seminal article Brown et al develop the notion of conversational leadership² The article which I think requires a deeper critiquing at some point challenges me to think about a broader concept of leadership development—one that helps leaders to effectively host conversations and practice conversational leadership---so at its simplest what we need to offer is help for people to network, connect, converse, innovate with others, engage deeply. Leadership development which is focussed on machine metaphor models of leadership will simply not do the job. So, as someone who works as a leadership development c

Comment [s200]: 1 5

onsultant I need to re-evaluate the offerings I make and see what is to co-create development opportunities which help people learn for themselves what it is to become a conversational leader.

Comment [s201]: 1 5

amongst colleagues so I find their interest in what I am doing growing. I tend to talk in terms of learning about what works best in consulting relationships whilst also commenting that my belief is focussed on conversational approaches that might build an effective consulting relationship. This has grown recently since I sent

Comment [s202]: 5 1 8

There is a growing worldwide interest in new forms of participatory leadership and of approaches to employee and community involvement that significantly and speedily shift behaviours and outcomes. My sense is that a conversational approach to consulting will offer support and encouragement to these emergent approaches to change. I am excited at what there is to be discovered.

Comment [s203]: 1 4 5

. Of course, there are limitations, sometimes people are busy, pre-occupied, not in that “zone” but sometimes they are and a short conversation focussed on learning from practice opens up a world of energy and interest and moments of insight.

I assume people want more than their own experience of something to convince them to use an approach but perhaps I under-estimate the pragmatism of the consultant. If it works lets use it seems to be the way amongst my colleagues—the search for an evidence base beyond that seems very limited. Perhaps here is a reality of consulting—its whats available here and now and do I have an idea on how to use it. I think this is what is innovative in consulting—at least in our type of work. Here we are with a client making a request and we grasp what is nearest. I have done that recently with something called Open Strategy. I have a short read about it , get a feel for it as a concept then re-translate it into my own preferred style and approach to consulting.

Comment [s204]: 1 2

but I note my own preference as a researcher to retain an emotionally positive spirit and one of co-operation. In my ideal consulting relationship I recognise that I am looking for mutual positive engagement. Without it it seems as though creativity is stifled and I become guarded in the conversation—an inclination which is understandable to self protect. I am looking forward to exploring this further in research. I also want to note that many people are talking at work about Appreciative Inquiry—I detect a shift is happening quietly in our culture and I note that conversational approaches to change often have a quietness and an imperceptibility about them. No noise and no loud brash trumpets but rather marked yet at times subtle shifts in behaviour and attitude.

Comment [s205]: 1 5 6

- Do I want every conversation to be harmonious?
- How do I react to tension? I think I hold back from surfacing it. As a host what is my role when tension or difficulty emerge? Listening for the questions maybe and checking out to see if they click with folk
- People often refer to the need for difficult conversations—what are they—why are they difficult—why do people hesitate and why do they want to label them difficult? And why does this label irritate me? When have I been in a difficult conversation and have I recognised it as such? There is a big business around such conversations? What is it about apparent conflict or anticipated conflict
- Have the two people who talked about respect resolved their differences—are they resolvable—do they need to be resolvable or can a conversation be used to let them go?

Comment [s206]: 1 2

It felt like a several stage process;

- The gathering of people in one space
- The opening up of the space (the hosting)
- The signally of safety to share personal matters
- The speaking and responding
- The closing down of conversation
- The dispersal

Comment [s207]: 1

My role as host in each of these:

- GATHERING---being present—acting as a focus—ensuring chairs available—but also being where people physically are
- OPENING—social questions—nothing heavy—opening the flow
- SIGNALLING—complex but I think there was mutual tacit signally that it was ok to share personal stuff—my role—I think to ask a gentle but generative question in response to my response to what I had heard with my eyes and ears
- SPEAKING—to dive in to open up the question and hear new emerging questions
- CLOSING---to take the lead from others when they started to change subject
- DISPERSAL—to signal informally through body language that I was content to move on—on supporting role rather than a lead role

Comment [s208]: 6

Interesting.

Visited a student friend of mine in oxford—walked through the colleges and enjoyed the sunshine—good conversation although I felt slightly disconnected. He made an interesting comment—he felt it was great to meet in an environment where we had not met before. Previously we had met one another in the context of our church—now we were on different territory—there is something that throws you slightly off balance—meeting in a context that you are not used too—how does that impact on conversation?

- So what emerges for me is an awareness of a range of contracts impacting on the supervision session that perhaps only become seriously evident in execution in the room. I suspects this simplifies it somewhat but the interaction of contracting relationships and how they have a bearing on my learning and development is intriguing for me

Comment [s209]: 2 1