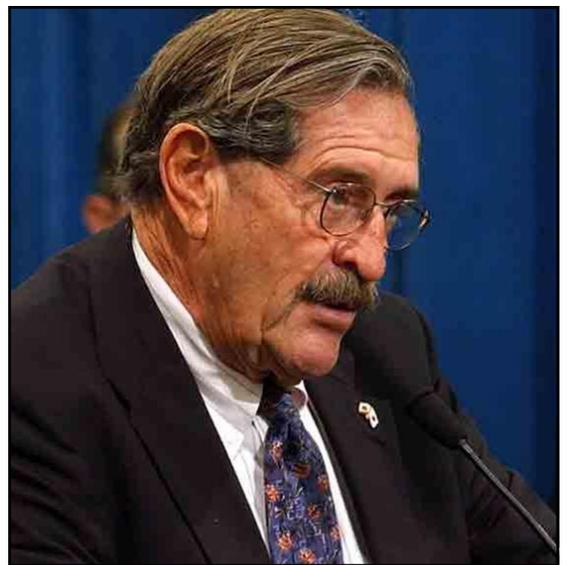
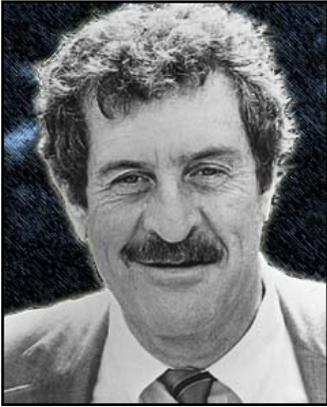




John Vasconcellos 1932-2014







When I first met John (1986) I was immediately impressed by how present and presence-seeking he was. Looking deep into my eyes, he seemed powerful, challenging, and yet, welcoming and friendly. We came right to the point: John saw the central human crisis as an outgrowth of our failure to appreciate self-esteem (healthy selves) - I saw the central human crisis as an outgrowth of our failure to appreciate learning (how we learn to become who we become—individually and collectively). We never persuaded each other, instead we each gained clarity and strength as we respectfully explored our differences and celebrated our similarities.

I could write a book about our friendship. We trekked around California, Maui, Kauai, and China. We hiked Yosemite. We had many dozens of wee hour walk-n-talks on the streets of Santa Clara. **We enjoyed helping each other learn to become better versions of ourselves.**

There is simply no way to do justice to our time together in this little booklet. Over the near 30 years of our friendship we engaged in hundreds of face-to-face, phone, and email dialogues. In celebration of his life and as a way of sharing something of who he was with those close to me, here are a few exhibits:

My Friend John - A 1989 journal entry about my friend

Dialogue: Self Esteem and Learning (2002-2005)

Dialogue: The Ethics of Mutual Learning in Government and Corporations (2001-2002)

Dialogue: Politics, Democracy, Technology and Learning (1991-2001)

Learners Unlimited (1989)

For John...with love, gratitude, and in celebration of his life and work.

David Boulton, June 11th 2014

MY FRIEND JOHN (From: <http://implicity.org/DavidLearn.htm> - May 1989)

My life, owing in large part to my somewhat unique vocation, enables me to be in dialogue with people about the essence of learning (for me the process of the content of consciousness) 20 to 30 hours a week. It has been so for nearly 3 years and I can't express enough the gratitude I feel for having had such a wonderful environment of challenging and encouraging friends and family. One special new friend I am particularly grateful for is John Vasconcellos.

John is a very unique human being. Not only does he enjoy and become animate in dialogue about our shared human condition, he has had some remarkable and insightful personal experiences which illuminate and inform his gentle and encouraging but challenging nature. John has a somewhat different view of the significance of learning than I and exploring that view has indeed been enriching. **John has had personally validating experiences about the relationship between psychological rigidity and patterns of bodily, physical, organizations. His process of being more open and alive, of overcoming what he learned before he was aware of learning - of becoming more open, is what he calls body-work.**

The underlying philosophy about John's body-work arises from the fact that human beings are more than what is behind the brow. That human experience is a full being phenomena, extending throughout our whole physicality. This of course is not a new idea, the fact that our whole nervous system is one with the brain and with the body is most certainly true, we only separate them in classifying - they are all integral in a larger whole. But what John is saying is that those of us who are aware that we are "blocked", obstructed from being open enough to truly be ourselves and experience the world, shouldn't confine our inquiry to the space between the ears. That, emotions and thoughts are process of the whole body, and thus so are the blocks. **That these learned blocks can best be seen as patterns of physical organization which we have acquired to brace ourselves from unpleasant experiences. Trying to stop from crying, stiffening our shoulders in fear, tightening our whole body to avoid trauma, these things we did as children left patterns of organized knots in our physicality which persist into adult hood and tether our capacity for whole experience. From such a perspective these blocks combine to act like a psycho-physical straightjacket, which by its nature excludes our conscious awareness of its existence.**

Having somehow experienced this wholly, not just the idea, John has been doing his body work for some 14 years. A great deal of that time he worked with a somatic therapist ([Stanley Keleman http://www.centerpress.com](http://www.centerpress.com)) who taught him that the first step in untying the knots or blocks was becoming sensitive to their existence. The therapist uses a descriptive example roughly like this:

Imagine that you have clinched your fist very tightly and for so long that you are no longer aware of doing it. To unclench it, you must first become aware that it is clinched and then proceed to clench it even tighter. In the act of clinching it tighter you reestablish awareness and proprioception and can then relax it.

John has come to feel this must happen to a vast network of subtle knots distributed throughout the body.

I had, before that day we spent together, understood the logic of all this, what John did was make me experience its reality. By talking me into a deep breathing state of relaxation he asked me to focus my awareness on every little muscle in my neck and shoulders. Then, as my awareness was tuning in, to slowly move my shoulders searching for little pockets of resistance.

As I encountered them he said, breathe deeply with the pocket focused in awareness - deepen your perception of it. Finally, as the awareness of the block was deepest, he said to move my body in ways that I felt would relax it. I did this and had the definite experience of a vivifying bubble burst - an expansion to the dimension and richness of awareness.

That experience, others from that day and since, have co-implicated the relationship between learning and being, and the fact the human being's first learning is bodily organizations. In addition to having a process revealed, this experience served to deepen my sense of conviction that human learning is initially time-blind, indeed constructs time, for here again was evidence that as small children we learn in ways which constrain our capacities for learning.

PART 1 - DIALOGUE ON SELF ESTEEM AND LEARNING

What is self-esteem? Is it a self-concept, a self-image, a set of self-affirmations? Is self-esteem learned? Can self-esteem be 'pumped up' or must it grow through achievement? What is the role of learning in the development of emotional and intellectual well being? This is a dialogue and exploration about the relationship between learning and self-esteem that includes a number of leaders from the national self-esteem movement.

If we value independence, if we are disturbed by the growing conformity of knowledge, of values, of attitudes, which our present system induces, then we may wish to set up conditions of learning which make for uniqueness, for self-direction, and for self-initiated learning.

- Carl Rogers

We don't receive wisdom; we must discover it for ourselves after a journey that no one can take for us or spare us from.

—Marcel Proust

** Indicates the messages that best convey our orientation and thought about self-esteem.

Page 3 — #1 - John Vasconcellos (California Senator/National Self-Esteem Champion) raises the alarm - in the wake of a report claiming self esteem is not a correlate for many of the social ills its proponents claim, John asks the self esteem community to rally.

Page 4 — #2 - David Boulton articulates his view of self-esteem** - in response to the above David describes **self esteem as: human nature free from the self-disesteeming psychological reflexes we learn to modulate our negative-to-self, feelings and thoughts.**

Page 5 — #3 - John agrees with David's descriptions and asks " HOW DO WE ASSURE EACH CHILD A SET AND SERIES OF RELATIONSHIPS WHICH ACCEPT AND ENCOURAGE HER/HIM TO APPRECIATE AND TRUST THEMSELVES, IN THEIR ENTIRETY? David responds: **We can't control the relationship they are in - we can help them develop the inner-life skills to process their experiences so as to immunize them (just like a vaccine works from the inside -out) to be able to grow through the shame rather than avoid it or displace it in ways that result in the kinds of self-assumptions that accumulate into self-disesteem.**

Page 6 — #4 - Elaine King (retired California Master Teacher) + David** We can't make a child's environment free from the risk of injury and we certainly can't create environments free from the risk of negative-to-self experiences. What we can do is: **1) help people become aware of how critical this kind of learning is and how they could be more alert and conscious in their relating to children when they are going through negative-self terrain 2) we must help children grow through this great barrier reef by supporting their inside-out learning within the actual happening of negative to self feelings and thoughts.**

Page 8 — #5 - John to David **- Acknowledging the learning opportunity to redefine self-esteem rather than attack the opponents of its current definition.

Page 9 — #6 Elaine King + David** - Self esteem is not as deep a fulcrum as learning is: **the best and most cost-efficient /optimal way to facilitate the learning of: X (whatever 'X' is) is to resource 'students' in their inside-out participating in learning about 'X'**

Page 12 — #7 - Kirk VandenBerghe ('Trust Your Heart' Master Therapist) to David** - The misdirection of our attention into **nominalizations** and the **importance of becoming inside-out oriented.**

Page 13 — #8 - David to Kirk - Lets explore the role of nominalizations in inner well beingness.

Page 14 — #9 Gary David (Philosopher, Theorist, Epistemologist, Affect Therapist, Life coach) to David and Elaine** - **it is not the shame-affect, but the shame of shame that is involved with self-dis-esteem.**

Page 16 — #10 David to Gary re Jack Canfield (author: chicken soup for the soul books) to Vasconcellos comments - reveals the communication gap within the unfolding conversation.

Page 17 — #11 Elaine + David Thread** : we learn to learn in similar ways - we develop unconscious reflexes that guide the process - the question then becomes **what modes of conscious participation will develop these faster than consciousness reflexes in ways that are intrinsically learning-oriented rather than mechanical?**

Page 20 — #12 Elaine to Gary and David: Nathaniel Branden's definition of self esteem the conviction that one is competent to live and worthy of living.

Page 21 — #13 Gary's response to Elaine and Branden's definition: I try to reach the actual impediments to the inner flow **without a goal-image of self-esteem as defined by those such as Branden.**

Page 23 — #14 Elaine's response to Gary: I am also more generally (and passionately) involved with our interrelationships and our modes of communicating, connecting and understanding one another. **Maybe you "guys" and your intellects need a little female fumbling here too.**

Page 25 — #15 The Rebuttal Article by Josh Holcomb: **Defending the Efficacy of Healthy Self-Esteem, Vasconcellos et al**

Page 29 — #16 Elaine's critique of the Article: Did I miss something? I really didn't know what to expect of the article; I take it your "inside-out" view hasn't been assimilated into this ongoing work.

Page 30 — #17 John Vasconcellos + David thread: revisiting David's definition letter

.... One year later....

Page 32 — #18 Sharon Begley's Wall Street Journal Article on Self-Esteem - "an intervention that encourages them to feel good about themselves regardless of work may remove the reason to work hard -- resulting in poorer performance,"

Page 34 — #19 David's response to the WSJ Article -** "What the self-esteem movement did was direct our attention to what is developing on the inside of our children.**How a child learns to be her or his self, shapes their ability to be effective participants in everything they do in school and later in life.** I think we went wrong when we formulated self-esteem as something to build up. I think what we have learned is that, quite the contrary, **self-esteem is a lack of building up. It is not about the boosting the accumulation of positive feelings, self-imagery or self-concepts, its about the minimizing the accumulation of negative feelings, self-imagery and self-concepts.** More and more we are coming to see that we human beings would naturally gravitate to healthy psychological well being if we didn't learn otherwise.

Page 35 — #20 Response to David's Response to WSJ - "I think what we have learned is that, quite the contrary, self-esteem is a lack of building up. It is not about boosting the accumulation of positive feelings, self-imagery or self-concepts, it's about minimizing the accumulation of negative feelings, self-imagery and self-concepts. SADLY, DAVID, TRAGICALLY, ONLY SOME OF US - SO FAR - - - AMEN!"

...2 years later...

Page 37 — #21 David's response to January 2005 Scientific American Article: Exploding the Self-Esteem Myth** **"Who doesn't want 'inner-health' and 'outer success' for themselves and their children? Clearly, they are related and the potential benefit of deepening our understanding of how they're related warrants serious scientific inquiry.** The question here is whether the 'self-esteem' discussion is taking us there. Unfortunately, both sides appear lost in the mythic assumptions that A) 'self-esteem' is a good 'domain-name' for a serious scientific inquiry into 'inner/subjective health' and B) that whatever we mean by it, it's something that is accumulated and built up into an edifice."

1- Letter to Self Esteem Team from John Vasconcellos in response to 'alarm' raised in the appended email

I VERY MUCH APPRECIATE YOUR CALL TO ACTION IN THIS ([below](#)) EMAIL -

ONLY EXACERBATED BY LAST SUNDAY'S NEW YORK TIMES SUNDAY MAGAZINE SECTION DIATRIBE AGAINST OUR SELF ESTEEM WORK. I'M HOPING YOU + MICHELE BORBA + JACK CANFIELD + I (WITH ALL HELP WE CAN GET FROM OUR ENTIRE SELF ESTEEM ROSTER) WILL RIGHT AWAY COMMIT OURSELVES TO PREPARING A MAJOR REBUTTAL (ESPECIALLY 2 THE NEW YORK TIMES PIECE - EVEN IN HOPES OF GETTING THEM TO PRINT IT). SHALL WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO DONG THIS TOGETHER?

- IF SO, WHEN? (RIGHT NOW!)

- IF SO, HOW?

- IF SO, BY WHOM?

- IS THERE SOME ONE OF US (I EXPECT IT'S YOU, BOB) WHO CAN RIGHT AWAY COMPOSE

A THOROUGH-GOING POINT-BY-POINT REBUTTAL OF THE NEW YORK TIMES PIECE (INCLUDING ANY POINTS RAISED BY THE OTHER ARTICLES YOU CITE - WHICH OUGHT BE REFUTED)?

- THAT ESPECIALLY JACK & MICHELE & I COULD THEN IMMEDIATELY CRITIQUE TOWARD MORE FULL RE-FINEMENT, ADOPTION?

- THAT ANY OTHER MEMBER OF OUR TEAM COULD AS WELL CRITIQUE?

- LET'S ALTOGETHER ENGAGE OURSELVES IN A DIALOGUE THAT HAS US BY MONDAY AT LEAST DECIDING WHETHER - AND IF SO, HOW - WE'RE GOING TO TAKE ON THIS ENORMOUS - HISTORIC - LIFE-SAVING - TASK.

JOHN (VASCONCELLOS)

In a message dated 1/14/02 2:46:14 PM, Esteem 1 writes:

<< Dear Friends,

Self-esteem is again under sustained attack following a research assessment for the Rowntree Foundation in the UK by Professor Emler. It claims to show that low self-esteem is not a risk factor for delinquency, violence, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, educational under-attainment or racism. (For the original report see <http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/n71.asp>) However, several journalists and academics are abusing this research to condemn all efforts to raise self-esteem, the most recent being Polly Toynbee in the Guardian <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Columnists/Column/0,5673,625237,00.html>

Titus Alexander, a member of our International Council for Self-Esteem and organizer of the Self-Esteem Network in the U.K. sent out a plea for individuals in the field to respond. In his memo he states, "I think these kinds of critiques are also a real "heads up" for people in the field. We need to more rigorously understand and do better ourselves in describing what we mean by self esteem, and what learned ways of thinking people pick up that can easily be confused with self esteem, and certainly have been confused with self esteem in the literature and the research cited by Polly." I agree with Titus and felt that I would take this opportunity to see to what degree we can agree on what self-esteem is and how we should define it. Hence I am writing to you to ask about your perception and your response as to what self-esteem is.

2 — David Boulton to California Senator John Vasconcellos - Self Esteem 2

-----Original Message-----

Sent: Sunday, February 10, 2002 11:40 PM

Subject: Self-esteem - how I think about it

John,

This is a more up to date version of what I shared with you in our early conversations about 15+ years ago.

I think...

Self esteem is the buoyant absence of negative-to-self, emotional and intellectual, self-assumptions. A flowing from within channeled and focused by learning and not automated by the reflexes of wounded self-imagery.

Self-esteem is a term that describes the ground of our relationship with ourselves. Its not accumulative, it is the lack of a certain kind of accumulation.

John, I have long felt that people make a confusion by trying to define self-esteem in terms of its positive attributes. I am concerned with how it is our children learn negative to self assumptions. To use your vaccine metaphor, how do we 'vaccinate' the child against the in-form-ation of negative-to-self-assumptions.

By exposing our bodies to 'safe' doses of a pathogen, vaccines create learning environments for our immune systems. They function like 'simulators' - they give us a chance to work out a response without being in a life-threatening situation.

In order to develop a vaccine to the disease of self-disesteem, some appear to argue for accumulating self-positive knowledge and experience. This is then dismissed by the 'other side' as being over generalized and not specifically earned - there is a fear that it leads to self-inflation by principle rather than via healthy feedback. I think you would get more universal agreement if the thrust of self-esteem was more on reducing self-disesteem.

How do we immunize self learning from the ravages of self-disesteem? To do that I think that we have to get closer to how our learning nature, in the fields of our learning environment circumstances (home, school...) unconsciously learns strategies to avoid the shame and pain felt. "Oh, I am just no good at...." "I am not good looking" "I am not a loveable person" - "I am not smart" -

I believe what you mean by the term self-esteem is simply: human nature free from the self-disesteeming psychological reflexes we learn to modulate our negative-to-self, feelings and thoughts. If so, the question becomes how do we create environments in which children have the opportunity to learn to participate rather than be passengers in their feelings and thoughts.

Getting self-esteem on the map was a huge step for all of us. I congratulate you again for driving that into happening and for being the champion and hub of this noble effort to defend the self-esteem movement.

David

3 — Threaded email John Vasconcellos & David Boulton - Self-Esteem 3

P
A
R
T

Thread Order - DB in regular, JV in ALL CAPS, DB again in BLUE CAPS

-----Original Message-----

Sent: Saturday, March 16, 2002 5:17 AM

1

Subject: Re: FW: Self-esteem - how I think about it

DEAR DAVID - GOOD HEARING FROM YOU -

HERE'S THE KEY OF WHAT YOU WROTE ME THEN: ([link to](#))

'I believe what you mean by the term self-esteem is simply: human nature free from the self-disesteeming psychological reflexes we learn to modulate our negative-to-self, feelings and thoughts. AGREED.

If so, the question becomes how do we create environments in which children have the opportunity to learn to participate rather than be passengers in their feelings and thoughts.

- AND/OR HOW DO WE ASSURE EACH CHILD A SET AND SERIES OF RELATIONSHIPS WHICH ACCEPT AND ENCOURAGE HER/HIM TO APPRECIATE AND TRUST THEMSELVES, IN THEIR ENTIRETY?

WE CAN ASPIRE TO THIS BUT THE VACCINE HAS TO ASSUME THAT TRY AS WE MIGHT CHILDREN WILL STILL BE EXPOSED - WE CAN'T CONTROL THE RELATIONSHIPS THEY ARE IN - WE CAN HELP THEM DEVELOP THE INNER-LIFE SKILLS TO PROCESS THEIR EXPERIENCES SO AS TO IMMUNIZE THEM (JUST LIKE A VACCINE WORKS FROM THE INSIDE-OUT) TO BE ABLE TO GROW THROUGH THE SHAME RATHER THAN AVOID IT OR DISPLACE IT IN WAYS THAT RESULT IN THE SELF-ASSUMPTIONS THAT ACCUMULATE INTO SELF-DISESTEEM. I KNOW THE NORMAL WISDOM OF PREVENTION AND I THINK IN THIS CASE PREVENTION NEEDS TO BE 2ND ORDER TO LEARNING FROM WITHIN - THE VACCINE.

Getting self-esteem on the map was a huge step for all of us. I congratulate you again for driving that into happening and for being the champion and hub of this noble effort to defend the self-esteem movement.'

THANK YOU, DAVID - IT SEEMS TO BE ESCALATING INTO WHAT I HOPE COULD BECOME A RENEWED NATIONAL FOCUS AND DIALOGUE - - -

I HOPE SO TOO JOHN - THIS IS OUR MOST PRECIOUS CLOSEST OVERLAP AND I WOULD LOVE TO CONTRIBUTE MORE OF MYSELF (AND GARY IS A MASTER IN THIS SPACE) BUT WE HAVE TO GET THE CONVERSATION TO GROUND ITSELF DEEPER IN WHATS HAPPENING TO THE CHILDREN (INSIDE-OUT) RATHER THAN OUTSIDE-IN FROM THE STATS OR PLATITUDES.

Elaine King & David Boulton - Self-Esteem 4
thread order - **DB in blue**, Elaine in black using **red** to refer to DB's earlier letter

P
A
R
T

1

Sent: Saturday, March 16, 2002 6:02 PM
Elaine
Cc: Gary David; John Vasconcellos;
Subject: Thanks Elaine!

Hello Elaine,

A great pleasure to read you again - I like how you have drawn us out - thank you Gary for passing her words along to me. I am in BLUE

----- you said -----

what particularly struck me was the following question in [David's letter](#):

--how do we create environments in which children have the opportunity to learn to participate rather than be passengers in their feelings and thoughts?

That is such an important ingredient to a child's learning, and living, flow of making meaning out of his/her life. And the direction schools are now forced to take is its complete antithesis.

I just now received the further Self-Esteem correspondence, so my responses are becoming a little disjointed. But respond I must. I'm so glad you got yourself involved in this, since shame has always been such a missing link here. David and John agreed on a definition of self-esteem that said:

'I believe what you mean by the term self-esteem is simply: human nature free from the self-disesteeming psychological reflexes we learn to modulate our negative-to-self, feelings and thoughts.

"Negative-to-self feelings and thoughts" can be accepted as important tools of self-learning by parents who are trying to learn that fact for themselves.

YES, negative to self feelings and thoughts are natural - we can't stop having them any more than we can stop feeling 'ouch' when we stub our toe or skin our knees. We can't make a child's environment free from the risk of injury and we certainly can't create environments free from the risk of negative-to-self experiences. What we can do is:

1) help people become aware of how critical this kind of learning is and how they could be more alert and conscious in their relating to children when they are going through negative-self terrain (wouldn't so abuse them here by their added shaming) - The greatest benefit of the 'self-esteem movement' was/is that it raises the 'general consciousness' to a sensitivity level in this area that it didn't have before and that we need. Such is the stuff of John's legacy - taking on and bringing to a greater general awareness needed challenges.

2) we must help children grow through this great barrier reef by supporting their inside-out learning within the actual happening of negative to self feelings and thoughts. To do this parents and teachers need to have an inside-out orientation inversion - they have to stop thinking they have something to teach (out here from me/us) that is more important than how the child is actually participating in their learning (inside-out from within them) - it is I believe this very point that is the glue that holds together the framework in which the self-disesteeming assumptions take roots and get so well reinforced.

I believe so strongly that the child who is valued, not shamed, from day 1 for his or her (DB red bolded) **every expression** of affect, feeling and thought is the child who takes the "vaccination" of self-esteem with him/her into relationships with others and into situations that others may find to be "rejecting."

Its not just the pervasive lack of being shamed. We will be shamed. We will experience shame regardless of other's intentions. The question is how will we learn to participate in our shame so as to not be co-opted by shame - to feel it and see it and know it without getting lost in or become subject to it? (same with fear and the other affects)

Granted, that child is not out there in huge numbers, but they are there, and their very presence may help the world understand. I am not talking here about over-valuing (over-inflating their importance and accomplishments) or about "telling" them they are valued when they feel otherwise. Once shame has begun to pervade their thought processes and resulting scripts, they need more help than "telling" can ever accomplish. **YES!!** I also believe this kind of nurturing self-esteem is so far superior to the kind they may work very hard to develop later in life, it is worth trying to "teach" parents who may not feel that kind of value within themselves.

Very little extra effort needs to be put into creating the right learning environment for children with self-esteem, because they carry that environment within them.

Elaine, I agree with your main intent here and I don't think in terms of 'children with self-esteem' - 'self esteem' is not a possession - this I feel is the trap the movement fell into and what makes it so vulnerable today. Children don't have self-esteem - **children are more healthy who they are when they are not 'caught' within negative to self feelings and thoughts.** As we can't prevent them from having episodes of negative-to-self feelings and thoughts the work is to help them learn how to learn through them when they are happening.

This is where we must focus much effort - without the right kind of learning environment we humans are susceptible to developing self-dis-esteeming assumptions (nuclear scripts). I think we need to develop an explicit awareness campaign and a working pedagogical scaffolding through which parents and teachers orient themselves and learn to respond to and resource children in their learning into shame - we need to explicitly intend to learn to do this - as a species, as a body politic, as a loving parent or as an ethical teacher. We can't wait for the adults to change - this is how they will change.

For those already riddled with shame and doubt, an environment of trust and acceptance becomes so big an issue, no school, as presently designed, can begin to furnish it. So where do we start? And how do we begin to undo the damage that continues to escalate every day of a child's life?

We drop the past - the damage done is how they learned to process/manager their affects - the only way out is through learning when its happening - we need to create environments that are analogous to 'performance support systems' for learning-guide-resourcing their participating in negative to self feelings and thoughts.

I intend to look up the reference to the Rowntree study, but it's hard for me to even take seriously any study that tells us

"low self-esteem is not a risk factor for delinquency, violence, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, educational under-attainment or racism."

RIGHT ON ENERGETICALLY - I AM WITH YOU and your passion - AND - we must take it very seriously because what we are really attempting to do here is beyond political polarity if its understood deeply enough. They aren't necessarily stupid or uncaring - they are pointing to the holes in how 'self-esteem' is a, though helpful and relevant at the time, mislabel of what we are really trying to address: 'healthy inner well being' These anti-self esteem articles have their ground in the misattributions of what we really meant by 'self-esteem'. They are great learning opportunities if we don't attack or dismiss them - but come from a place more implicate and communicate back through them. I believe if we were in a dialogue with the 'other side' our values systems could come to agreement about our real intention.

Nice to read you again - I can see that retirement is not diminishing your passion - thank you for being so alive and caring.

John Vasconcellos to David Boulton - Self Esteem 5

-----Original Message-----

Sent: Sunday, March 17, 2002 6:04 AM

Subject: ++ DAVID BOULTON, + DEEPER SENSE RE CHILD NATURE & POTENTIAL

DAVID -

- I ENJOYED, APPRECIATED OUR RECONNECTION, CONVERSATION, LAST NITE - + ESPECIALLY ENJOY THIS FURTHER ELABORATION ([previous message](#)) REGARDING THE NATURE OF A CHILD ANDHER/HIS DISPOSITION TOWARD LEARNING, AND HOW ESPECIALLY 'SHAME' DISABLES A CHILD AND LEARNING.

- I ESPECIALLY APPRECIATE THE EFFORT HERE TO GET US TO RECOGNIZE WHAT'S AT THE ROOT OF THE AWFUL DIATRIBE AND DISCONNECTED DIALOGUE REGARDING SELF ESTEEM, AND THE SUGGESTION WE COULD (OUGHT) RECOGNIZE AND UTILIZE THIS AS ITSELF A LEARNING OPPORTUNITY, FROM WHICH WE COULD GO DEEPER, AND RATHER THAN REJECT 'THEM AND THEIR ARGUMENTS,' INSTEAD CREATE OUR OWN DEEPER RESTATEMENT OF WHAT WE MEAN BY SELF ESTEEM, AND THEREBY HOPEFULLY PUT ALL THIS ONTO A SOUNDER HEALTHIER (AND HEALTH MODEL) FOOTING, FOR FUTURE ELABORATION, AND HOPEFULLY PROGRESS TOWARD A MORE WIDESPREAD RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION OF THE NATURE AND DISPOSITION OF EACH CHILD.

- I'M ASKING JOSHUA HOLCOMB (WHO'S MANAGING OUR LEGACY PROJECT) TO CONSIDER WHETHER WE MIGHT (OUGHT) SLIGHTLY RECAST OUR RESPONSE ESSAY, TO INCORPORATE YOUR SUGGESTION.

- HERE'S HOPING WE WILL, IN OUR LIFETIME, FIND A WAY TO LEAD 'THE POWERS THAT BE' INTO A HEALTHIER APPRECIATION OF AND APPROACH TO THE INNATE GOODNESS AND LEARNING DISPOSITION OF EACH/ EVERY CHILD!

JOHN

P
A
R
T

1

Elaine King & David Boulton - Self-Esteem 6

thread order - DB in blue (1st), Elaine in black (2nd), DB in this color (3rd)

At 09:31 PM 3/16/02 -1000, you wrote:

Elaine - you are cohering for me - coming in ever more clear and very beautifully so. I WILL BE IN THIS COLOR

Thanks for the thanks, David. My passion for the subject of education is endless, since it started in a one-room country school in 1946 and has been tested through every movement that came along through the years.

I am well acquainted with John Vasconcellos hard work in the area of self-esteem and have been rooting for him all the way. I have corresponded with a friend of his, Carl Rogers, and even made my way through the results of John's research, The Social Importance of Self-Esteem. I was sorry it couldn't have been more definitive; people are so hard to convince, especially with the kinds of misunderstandings that surfaced in the New York Times articles. So many people came out of that era believing self-esteem could be "glued on," * and that's where it got bogged down, in my view.

Hope you don't mind if I break up your message to respond to a few specific points. **Not at all**

2) we must help children grow through this great barrier reef by supporting their inside-out learning within the actual happening of negative to self feelings and thoughts. To do this parents and teachers need to have an inside-out orientation inversion - they have to stop thinking they have something to teach (out here from me/us) that is more important than how the child is actually participating in their learning (inside-out from within them) - it is I believe this very point that is the glue that holds together the framework in which the self-disesteeming assumptions take roots and get so well reinforced.

I fully agree with that assessment, **but** every movement I have seen so far, and am seeing now (I am very closely in touch with teachers now in the system), keeps heading in the opposite direction. **I share your frustration with what has happened AND I think we need to learn into bringing this into social political focus. I am not so sure that 'self-esteem' is THE fulcrum of getting us to 'inside-out'. I am more inclined to think that the pathway lies in the economic value associated with educational success. The case I want to make, in addition to the self-esteem, reading and other works, is that purely in economic (cost of schooling, life incomes,...) and academic performance (test scores and gpas) terms, the best and most cost-efficient /optimal way to facilitate the learning of: X (whatever 'X' is) is to resource 'students' in their inside-out participating in learning about 'X'. The orientation inversion has powerful economic advantages. I am in this for the spirit of children AND I believe there is miraculously powerful potential for alignment between those that care about money and performance and those that care about deep well being - they both end up in the same place: learning to learn from the inside-out. I want to demonstrate that in ways that act like spark plugs in the ignition system of the inversion.**

I believe so strongly that the child who is valued, not shamed, from day 1 for his or her every expression of affect, feeling and thought is the child who takes the "vaccination" of self-esteem with him/her into relationships with others and into situations that others may find to be "rejecting."

Its not just the pervasive lack of being shamed. We will be shamed. We will experience shame regardless of other's intentions. The question is how will we learn to participate in our shame so as to not be co-opted by shame - to feel it and see it and know it without getting lost in or become subject to it? (same with fear and the other affects)

Yes, we will be shamed and we are being shamed. It's presently the way of the world. Teachers use shame liberally as a behavior modification technique and because the "vaccination" you spoke of hasn't taken place, it works. And in the process, the minds of our children are being retarded rather than inspired and expanded, as the research on rejection and lower I.Q. scores suggested. That's why I feel that either the "vaccination" process has to begin in the home and from the moment of birth, or the entire school process has to undergo a huge transformation society is not yet ready for. Inside-out learning, unless its brought with the child from the very beginning, is a very difficult concept for the average, shamed individual to grasp.

I understand, again am home in your passion, and I see these as the same process: to help in the home or in the school, we need to respond to their inner need not entrain them in our models. How are we to help a toddler deal with shame? There is no protocol. We can say above else do no harm (not add to the shame), which is helpful, but if we want to help them learn their way through these feelings we must meet them in the flow of their actual experiencing them - we have to respond to their inside-out participation. It doesn't matter whether its an algebra test, learning to read or a toddler whose face is contorted from the shame of mommies careless tone - we have to get alongside their inside experience - we have to intend to do that for any of the vaccination to work just as for reading to work.

Children don't have self-esteem - children are more healthily who they are when they are not 'caught' within negative to self feelings and thoughts. As we can't prevent them from having episodes of negative-to-self feelings and thoughts the work is to help them learn how to learn through them when they are happening.

I'm willing to debate this point, but I believe children do have self-esteem.

This would be most helpful to explore. What is self-esteem? Are you saying its in our genes? Is it a psychological formation apriori learning - a virtual organ? When you make it an attribute of being, give it thingness, I think you are expressing self-esteem in a way that is precisely the problem. I may be wrong. I would like to learn into this. I respect that you may be seeing something I am not. As a metaphor, lets take intestinal health. Is it the result of something I am holding within or the lack of holding within? I think the later. Our bodies function and feel best when we are not 'clogged'. I see self-esteem in the same way. We have a natural self-bouyancy that might be described by many of the qualities so frequently attributed to self-esteem. This natural bouyancy is not based on an internally held inventory of self-reflections - its how we are when we are transparent to who we are being and doing. I am inclined to see it inside-out - that its the weight of negative-to-self learning that leads to self-disesteeming habits. Once we think self-esteem is a 'thing' within us that can be 'taught' or 'boosted' or we are on the path the critics rightfully challenge. Self-esteem is not something to learn - self-dis-esteem is what we must be careful to learn to not learn.

It is taken from them so early in life by caretakers who truly believe they are guiding them or teaching them when they criticize and get angry at things small children don't understand, we don't see it. When a mother or father holds an infant closely and smiles, that self-esteem is being verified and reinforced. When parents understand the developing mind and use shame sparingly, a child learns from that shame and accepts it as part and parcel of the feelings they live with every day of their lives. My 4 year old niece said, "I can do anything I want to do," my 3 year old daughter said "I can't do that now. But maybe I can tomorrow," and my 4 year old granddaughter said, "I'm very creative, you know." Little boys have a harder time retaining and developing that kind of self-esteem because their physical energies make them easier targets for provoking shame from tired parents.

Well said - I hear you. I have a 29, 27, 17, and 8 year old. 2 grandkids. 7 brothers and sisters and 15 nieces and nephews. I never met a child who wasn't a genius (feeling wise as well as)

We drop the past - the damage done is how they learned to process/manager their affects - the only way out is through learning when its happening - we need to create environments that are analogous to 'performance support systems' for learning-guide-resourcing their participating in negative to self feelings and thoughts.

Well said - I hear you. I have a 29, 27, 17, and 8 year old. 2 grandkids. 7 brothers and sisters and 15 nieces and nephews. I never met a child who wasn't a genius (feeling wise as well as)

We drop the past - the damage done is how they learned to process/manager their affects - the only way out is through learning when its happening - we need to create environments that are analogous to 'performance support systems' for learning-guide-resourcing their participating in negative to self feelings and thoughts.

I really wish we could do that. We haven't yet found a way to do it consistently and in a way that will keep working, especially for large groups of children. **We are fundamentally mis-oriented.** Repairing damage that's already been done is so much more difficult than doing it right from the beginning.

Yes

I appreciate being able to participate in the dialogue you are doing such a good job of promoting on this problem. It's people like you who create movement. **Thank you**

Its teachers like you that have touched the hearts and minds of our generations that I am so grateful for. As the changes gather and cohere the people who show up will be the ones who were touched (within) by their teachers - given the alpha version of the vaccine.

My best wishes to you

Elaine

And, to you my warm best wishes - David

Kirk Vandenberghe to David Boulton - Self Esteem 7

Thanks for including me in this thread, DB. I see the nominalization distinction as primary (self-esteem as an object). I *have* observed that we (people) have a network of beliefs about self that can be labeled "self-concept" (self-concepting as process). "Are you an honest person?" "How do you know?" These types of questions will bring forth habitual inner representations about self (and certainly the generalizations will include massive deletion and distortion based on the network of other generalizations). When elicited, the answers can appear to be a generalized thing called "self-esteem" that can be plotted on a continuum of non-existent to high. It may be more generative to have our experience of ourselves be a "natural buoyancy (that) is not based on an internally held inventory of self-reflection" but in the current collective, we have to somehow make meaning of the vast menu of value-based nominalizations (integrity, honesty, kindness, anger). For example, I have my representation of "kindness" and a set of unconsciously selected personal reference experiences of my behavior in relation to the word. Shifting from "I am a kind/unkind person" to "In this specific instance I did some kindness" is a huge jump. I see the second jump from there as being able to experience the whole nominalizing process as unuseful and irrelevant; a system I wouldn't want to use to "rate" myself. Perhaps a child who is raised in an inside out kind of way would have such a strong sense of self that they would simply not be influenced by an other-based shaming expression like "You did/didn't do/have this thought/action so that means you are <nominalization> and will/won't be able to <action>."

I can see why for you children and education are your prime fulcrums; why it's more about having our present moment experience than learning "more, better, different" stuff. Kv

David Boulton to Kirk Vandenberghe - Self Esteem 8

Sent: Sunday, March 17, 2002 1:54 PM
To: Kirk Vandenberghe
Cc: Yuki; John Vasconcellos; Elaine King; Gary David
Subject: the role of nominalizations in inner well beingness

Kirk,

The way you brought in nominalizations to connect with my concern about the orientation of the self-esteem movement has been enriching for me. It opens the conversation into the utility-boundaries of nominalizations. Krishnamurti once made a distinction between the need for images in the world (running a business, driving a car, playing a game.....) and the need for a lack of them psychologically (He saw psychological self-measurement as a dangerous locked-loop oscillator that fragments being). In my article 'From Here to Implicity', I said:

Technology is not a substitute for (though it can at times augment) collaborative, co-mentoring, team teaching, group dialogue and of course, one on one, relationship processes. Similarly, actually contacting and caring for other forms of life like flowers and animals is entirely different than learning about them in text books or on video disks. But just as there are aspects of learning we need to minimally mediate, there are aspects of knowledge which by its nature is so abstract that it is best facilitated through

This connects right here. What we are all pointing to is this boundary.

So our dialogue goes on:

Lets explore the role of nominalizations in inner well beingness

What is the role of nominalizations in our inner most processes of being? Are they 'underneath' us? In 'front' or on 'top' of us? Nominalizations are one kind of thing another is the scripts and circuits implied in their patterns. Does consciousness emerge from nominalizations? Who is doing the nominalizing? What is doing the nominalizing? Its clear that my relationship with knowledge and all knowledge comes from nominalizations. Is there something in 'knowing' that is more than nominalizing nominalizations? Learning? What about my relationship with myself? Its obvious the value of nominalizations to measure and help me improve my performance in a sport or job - do I need them to know who I am - do they underlie me being who I am or weigh me down - both? Is being trapped in this what people have meant by the 'original sin'?

So we begin another tunnel - this one into the OS our being has learned to en-self.

Thank you for so enriching it - by what you bring to being in it with me - my friend.

David

Gary David to Elaine King and David Boulton - Self Esteem 9

P
A
R
T

1

Much has been said, and I will make only a few comments in green.

David Wrote: I believe what you mean by the term self-esteem is simply: human nature free from the self-disesteeming psychological reflexes we learn to modulate our negative-to-self, feelings and thoughts

Elaine wrote: I can't quite reconcile those two ideas. Doesn't your definition suggest that children do have self-esteem? I see children who "are more healthily who they are" as having self-esteem. Those "self-disesteeming psychological reflexes" have not yet taught them not to trust and believe in themselves. You said "I have never met a child who wasn't a genius (feeling wise as well as...)" --I guess I would say, "as well as close to that human nature that tells us how to learn and grow."

David: Children don't have self-esteem - children are more healthily who they are when they are not 'caught' within negative to self feelings and thoughts. As we can't prevent them from having episodes of negative-to-self feelings and thoughts the work is to help them learn how to learn through them when they are happening.

Elaine: I'm willing to debate this point, but I believe children do have self-esteem.

David: This would be most helpful to explore. What is self-esteem? Are you saying its in our genes? Is it a psychological formation apriori learning - a virtual organ? When you make it an attribute of being, give it thingness, I think you are expressing self-esteem in a way that is precisely the problem. . . . We have a natural self-bouyancy that might be described by many of the qualities so frequently attributed to self-esteem. This natural bouyancy is not based on an internally held inventory of self-reflections - its how we are when we are transparent to who we are being and doing. I am inclined to see it inside-out - that its the weight of negative-to-self learning that leads to self-disesteeming habits. Once we think self-esteem is a 'thing' within us that can be 'taught' or 'boosted' or we are on the path the critics rightfully challenge. Self-esteem is not something to learn - self-dis-esteem is what we must be careful to learn to not learn.

I understand David's point about children not "having" self-esteem. Primarily, I see the term "self-esteem" as a high order abstraction. It's a bookmark, not the "text" itself. It's a term that sums up many lower order processes at the affective level. I think it's helpful to distinguish between the affective *order* that lends itself to the *image* of self-esteem, which is the explicate order. We also need to know what kind of "self" we're dealing with. The natural buoyancy David speaks of I see as the maximization of affect flow(or minimizing the inhibition of affect.) Further, that buoyancy may also involve the ability to maximize positive affect (interest-excitement; enjoyment-joy) and to minimize negative affect in regard to one's "self." Education then is the process of developing the methods that support those three factors. Nathanson's formulation of the "empathic wall" is important to the process as well. He wrote in a message to David recently:

The empathic wall is a gravity shield that must work equally well for all affects and be capable of down-regulation whenever we wished deeper penetration into each other's mass. Whoever experiences shame in the company of another has not been taken over by the greater mass of that other but entered a warp preventing mutualization just as if s/he and that other suddenly had become entirely the south pole of a magnet with no north available.

I see that it has to do with movement of the 'core' sense of self -- the 'core' self I see as affective-perceptive-motoric *movement* both physically and psycho-logically, and both implicately and explicately. When kids can move freely within and without themselves with a minimum of inhibition, you have removed the dis-esteeming impediments.

The need for such a concept as self-esteem emerged from new conditions in evolution that arose from self-reflexive consciousness going out of coordination. All of this could be written as the history and evolution of shame in Western culture. Without those uncoordinating conditions, such a concept of self-esteem might never have been needed. Self-esteem, then, is not what we're talking about. I agree with David that it's dis-esteem that needs to be understood. I don't think cognitive explanations (script-based) are adequate to the task as exemplified by the article on rejection.

Elaine wrote: I believe so strongly that the child who is valued, not shamed, from day 1 for his or her **every expression** of affect, feeling and thought is the child who takes the "vaccination" of self-esteem with him/her into relationships with others and into situations that others may find to be "rejecting."

This is well put, and I also must emphasize and support that with the reminder that it is not shame-affect, but the shame of shame that is involved with self-dis-esteem. That, I think is Elaine's point above -- to not be shamed for feeling anything, and to speak and act to our children in ways that they can feel that most psychic impediments can become doorways.

Both of you are helping me see that BOTH the inside-out and the outside-in descriptions are necessary to complete the overall description.

Gary

P
A
R
T

1

David to Gary re Jack Canfield to Vasconcellos comments - Self Esteem 10

Gary,

This is the response from Jack Canfield the author of all those 'chicken soup for the soul and ____' books. His responses shine a light on our communication problems - many of his translations of the meanings are within the very trap he implies he is free from ('outside-in'). I suggest you bring Nathanson up to speed on this thread and proceed to get him and this group into dialogue. Canfield has a big public microphone. L, DB

-----Original Message-----

Sent: Sunday, March 17, 2002 10:32 PM

Subject: Re: DAVID BOULTON RE SELF ESTEEM - -

JACK - GOOD HEARING FROM YOU 2X - YES, WE ARE ON OUR WAY TO A DEEPENING DIALOGUE, A DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING, APPRECIATION OF AUTHENTIC SELF ESTEEM!

In a message dated 3/17/02 12:40:00 PM, jcanfield writes:

<< I really like everything David says here. Important concepts. This has always been my approach to self-esteem -- (as well as creating loving, safe environments) teaching kids (and adults) how to observe their own internal processes and reduce or eliminate the self-destructive ones and how to develop self-accepting and self-empowering ones. AMEN!

It is learning how to be in charge rather than reflexive in the area of beliefs, thoughts, self-judgements, internal images of self (as well as others and the world), expectations, intentions, etc.

AGAIN, AMEN!

+ IT ENTAILS OPENING UP DEEPLY ENOUGH WITHIN, TO OURSELVES, OUR EMOTIONS, OR BODIES - SO THAT EACH OF US TRULY BECOMES THE AUTHOR OF OUR CHOICES, ACTIONS.

I like the level of dialogue that is being created by all of this. Thanks, John. --

SURE, JACK - THAT'S ONE OF THE FINEST BENEFITS, OPPORTUNITIES, THIS POSITION PROVIDES ME - - -

Elaine > David > Elaine.... Self Esteem 11

David,

I would be happy to be "looped in" to any of the threads you are developing. Besides being so interested in your goals, I find your directions and the way your mind handles them to be fascinating.

When you say:

the question then becomes what modes of conscious participation will develop these faster than consciousness reflexes in ways that are intrinsically learning-oriented rather than mechanical?

I find myself quite curious as to how you might go about that.

May "the flow" be with you!

Elaine

Elaine,

Its been a real pleasure to travel this space together. I think we are in deep sync accord. For me our next frontier is understanding how everything we are talking about here (self-esteem and learning to learn from the inside-out) runs very deep into the micro-time, faster than we are conscious of, reflexes that regulate our attention. As in reading where I describe one aspect of the process as:

To read well our minds must process letters into sounds, sounds into words, words into meanings and meanings into a stream of comprehensions **faster than we can consciously participate in the process**. This implies, as we are not evolutionarily adapted for reading, that **we must learn mental reflexes or 'scripts'** that will perform the unconscious processing for us. In order to develop these, faster-than-conscious-reflexes, we need 'training'. The question is what kind of training?

I believe we learn to learn in similar ways - we develop unconscious reflexes that guide the process - the question then becomes what modes of conscious participation will develop these faster than consciousness reflexes in ways that are intrinsically learning-oriented rather than mechanical? With reading its easier because its comparatively static.

If you are interested in this thread I will loop you in as it develops.

Thanks so much dear lady - David

-----Original Message-----

From: Elaine King

Sent: Sunday, March 17, 2002 2:05 PM

To: David Boulton

Cc: Gary David

Subject: Re: self-esteem

Hi Elaine,

Thank you and it should be said that Gary and you have been the catalysts in this round - THANK YOU! I will be in this color again (magenta?)

Gary was the catalyst, and he is now remaining strangely silent. Gary? Silent?

. My belief is that the child's mind, in its own sometimes stumbling (and stuttering) way, is working to learn and to become whole and that it should be trusted. **Yes, and its even more important that we create environments in which children learn to tune and instrument a trust in their own 'minds'**. Children won't necessarily learn all they need to learn by proceeding exclusively from trusting themselves. There is a legitimate role for curriculum.

There is a legitimate role for stimulation in many areas of learning, and curriculum serves the purpose, at least for now. Without that, we could do away with teachers. I'm not about to get myself in that much trouble with my teacher friends, as well as with my daughter and sister-in-law.

Though educators, and curriculum-planners, can sometimes be convinced, a teacher who faces far too many students every day, many of them too shamed to participate, feels quite differently. During the peak of the self-esteem movement in the 60s and 70s, many classrooms and various types of curricula were designed to foster inside-out learning,

I think this may have been true in spirit, it obviously is and was in the intention of teacher like you, however, I wonder if we ever went deep enough in our understanding of 'inside-out learning' more specifically the bottom line: healthy learning reflexes are developed in relation to the learner's participation in the flow of their learning - this happens in a time scape and at a level of subtlety we have been largely oblivious to - our curriculum needs to create gross navigational scaffolding and thereafter acknowledge, respond to learn from what learner's are needing to resource their ever more optimal participation from their inside-out experience. I think the problems are still mis-orientations. I understand that its a huge challenge to support so many learners at once - yet I think it can actually be made easier by coming from the orientation we are describing.

You are so right about that. I have seen it done only once - by a sixth grade male teacher - and it was beautifully done. Once the preliminary work of re-orienting a group of students to understand that their participation was expected and valued, the teacher's work was extremely minimalized. He was relaxed and happy and thoroughly enjoyed his students. He attracted media attention and the other teachers in the school became unhappy (shamed) with his success and what they considered to be a chaotic learning environment. He was, through a number of unfortunate circumstances, finally forced to leave.

but they generally failed because so many teachers were unable to understand the concept. They completely believed that children are lazy, unwilling to learn, and in need of constant training (outside-in learning) and punishment (calling it discipline).

Yes and I understand that, given the way it all works now to take children away from their inner process rather than support them in participating in it, children are unwilling and disinterested (ever read my 'insidious curriculum piece'? I'm not sure. I've read much of your impressive work and will check this one out. <http://www.implicit.com/insidious.htm>) we haven't met them in a way that feels to them resonant with how their natures are oriented to learn - they don't want to be in 'kid prison' (as many kids have described it to me)

"Kid prison" is becoming a more apt label every day, with the present fears about shootings.

I fervently hope some of that attitude is changing, and I stand with you every step of the way in finding the common ground everyone can embrace.

You also said

I believe what you mean by the term self-esteem is simply: human nature free from the self-disesteeming psychological reflexes we learn to modulate our negative-to-self, feelings and thoughts and

Children don't have self-esteem - **children are more healthily who they are when they are not 'caught' within negative to self feelings and thoughts.**

I can't quite reconcile those two ideas. Doesn't your definition suggest that children do have self-esteem? I see children who "are more healthily who they are" as having self-esteem. Those "self-disesteeming psychological reflexes" have not yet taught them not to trust and believe in themselves. You said "I have never met a child who wasn't a genius (feeling wise as well as...)" --I guess I would say, "as well as close to that human nature that tells us how to learn and grow."

Elaine see my conversation with Kirk about nominalizations - he created a good descent scaffolding for us to get into sync here. Respond to that thread on this point and we will travel wherever it takes us.

Yes, Kirk is exactly right about nominalizations in regard to self-esteem. It was funny; I had just been talking to my other daughter, who counsels the very shame-filled parents of drug and alcohol-syndrome babies, about self-esteem. She made the same point. If we think in terms of self-esteeming, maybe we can make this work. It's the root of self-esteem that I see growing in a baby or small child who has not yet developed "self-disesteeming" scripts and patterns of behavior.

I always liked the following appraisal of a child who is "self-esteeming" by Nathaniel Branden, in his book "The Psychology of Self-Esteem," published way back in 1969.

The hallmark of healthy self-assertiveness in a child is his visible delight in the action of his mind, his desire for the new, the unexplored, the challenging,- his refusal to accept on faith the platitudes of his elders and his insistent use of the word "Why?" his boredom with routine, his indifference toward the undemanding, his obsession with questions, his hunger for (mind and body growth). ---He is a self-generator.

P
A
R
T

Thank you for showing up in this Elaine for helping me learn and hopefully for helping all of us grow into this emerging new stage. - David

1

Repeat those words but signed Elaine

Elaine >to Gary + David: Self Esteem 12

Gary and David

I would be interested in your responses to this definition of self-esteem --from Nathaniel Branden, The Dis-owned Self - 1972

Elaine

CHAPTER 3: Self-Acceptance and Self-Awareness

Self-esteem has two interrelated aspects: a sense of personal efficacy and a sense of personal worth. It is the conviction that one is competent to live and worthy of living. The conviction that one is competent to live means: confidence in the functioning of one's mind; confidence in one's ability to understand and judge the facts of reality (within the sphere of one's interests and needs); intellectual self-reliance. The conviction that one is worthy of living means- an affirmative attitude toward one's right to live and to be happy; a self-respect derived from the conviction that one practices the virtues one's life and happiness require.

Self-esteem is a basic need of man, a cardinal requirement of his mental health and psychological well-being. There is no value judgment more important to man than the estimate he passes on himself. This estimate is ordinarily experienced by him, not in the form of a conscious, verbalized judgment, but in the form of a feeling, a feeling that can be hard to isolate and identify because he experiences it constantly: it is part of every other feeling. It is involved in his every emotional response.

An emotion is the product of an evaluation: it reflects an appraisal of the beneficial or harmful relationship of some aspect of reality to oneself. Thus, a man's view of himself is necessarily implicit in all his value-responses. Any judgment entailing the issue, "Is this for me or against me?" entails a view of the "me" involved. His self-evaluation is an omnipresent factor in man's psychology

Gary to Elaine Self Esteem 13

Elaining

Thanks for the Rogers' article. I sent it on to David.

I was thinking in terms of the "shame viruses" others try to infect kids with. The vaccine of self-valuing provides you with a script that says you are not deserving of the attack and helps you determine if you need to do anything differently. Does that make any sense? I didn't think so.

It makes perfect sense. I guess where we differ is in our "approaches" to the inquiry, and not in values to an outcome. I can't speak for you as to your approach, but mine is what I might call a "structural" approach. I want to have an understanding of the *impediments* to human freedom. My sense is that humans, being creatures who not only live in space, live in time, both innately and invented. Left to our own devices, we will seek freedom of movement in time. Cognition, on the other hand (no pun intended) seeks limiting conditions for its transformative powers to function. Cognition is closely related to the motoric, perception, symbol-making, and memory, so that what we learn in one spacetime can be transferred to other contexts. Affect is always NOW and wherever "we" go, our affects are there ready to meet the contingencies of any environment.

My orientation is, I admit, influenced by an overriding passion for freedom of movement at all levels of my becoming since my childhood. I had some freedom as a child, but many, many limiting conditions imposed on me. I think that humans will go to great lengths to seek movement. Affects are like water and will seep through the cracks of any opening even if it's temporary.

There are usually two descriptions that must be accounted for in human affairs: the description of an observer (from the outside in), and the description of a participant (from the inside out). I am with you on your descriptions of "self-esteem" from the standpoint of an observer. What I, and I think David, too, are attempting to come to is a description from the standpoint of a participant -- from the inside out. From this perspective, I try to reach the actual impediments to the inner flow without a goal-image of self-esteem as defined by those such as Branden: Self-esteem has two interrelated aspects: a sense of personal efficacy and a sense of personal worth. It is the conviction that one is competent to live and worthy of living.

From the inside, self-esteem is not a state or condition but a sense of participation, accomplishment, and mastery in the processes that lead to freedom of meaning-movement. I use the word participation since much of this "mastery" is in the form of cooperation with those aspects that are beyond voluntary control.

Tomkins wrote:

"Control rests, of course, not only on the mastery of internal neurological circuitry but on the coordination of this knowledge with an equally efficient knowledge of the nature of the external environment. We have stressed the internal circuitry since it is the relatively constant means to the mastery of the great variety of other domains that are variable. It is the language of achievement. If one does not master this language, one masters nothing else. It is paradoxical that it is the external world that is the teacher of the language of the internal world. Again, the external world must be reproduced within this circuitry if it is to be assimilable and use to the individual so that ultimately the dichotomy between the inner and outer domain becomes a dichotomy within the inner world. We do not embrace solipsism in this any more than does the biochemist who studies the transformations that are necessary before foodstuffs can be used by the body. Because of the great variety of domains that can be learned, the characterization of these domains presents an endless task for analysis, whereas the principal varieties of internal transformations are more limited."

I don't think parents can "learn" to provide the conditions for self-esteem for their children for the most part. They may be able to learn a few "techniques," but I think of it more as a "conversion" (like in a religious conversion) where they see the light of the importance of affect in their own lives, and can empathize with what their children are living. It's a different way of life.

I see Branden's views such as: The conviction that one is competent to live means: confidence in the functioning of one's mind; confidence in one's ability to understand and judge the facts of reality (within the sphere of one's interests and needs); intellectual self-reliance. *creating more confusion than clarity. It's the old cognitive explanation of self-esteem. In my view, the main impediment to self-esteem lies in the realm of affect in general and shame in particular. An emotion is the product of an evaluation. It depends what he means by "evaluation." Again, I think he is referring to cognitive evaluations, and not other non-intellectual evaluations. And the statement that emotion coming from cognition is plain wrong in light of today's knowledge.*

Self-esteem is a basic need of man, a cardinal requirement of his mental health and psychological well-being. There is no value judgment more important to man than the estimate he passes on himself. This estimate is ordinarily experienced by him, not in the form of a conscious, verbalized judgment, but in the form of a feeling, a feeling that can be hard to isolate and identify because he experiences it constantly: it is part of every other feeling. It is involved in his every emotional response.

From the viewpoint of an observer, this statement makes some sense. But the "feeling" he is talking about is not as difficult to formulate as he says. I can't go into it now, but it involves what Polanyi calls "personal knowledge," proprioception in the "virtual" domain of minding, etc. I agree that it's not in the form of a conscious, verbalized judgment. Also, I don't know what self he means by Any judgment entailing the issue, "Is this for me or against me?" entails a view of the "me" involved. His self-evaluation is an omnipresent factor in man's psychology.

Elaine to Gary: Self Esteem 14

On first reading of Gary's strong statement, I must admit to feeling a bit "ganged-up on" and misunderstood, along with a sudden surge of shame for my lack of knowledge and expertise in areas you have both mastered so well. I will take the opportunity to explain myself, as Gary has just done.

First of all, I did not send Branden's definition of self-esteem as representative of my own. I sent it because he is the only philosopher/psychologist I know who has taken the time to think about it to the extent of writing 2 books on the subject. Without knowing the views of others, we can't know how to approach the area or make our views known to others who may have been taken in by them.

You wrote:

My orientation is, I admit, influenced by an overriding passion for freedom of movement at all levels of my becoming since my childhood. I had some freedom as a child, but many, many limiting conditions imposed on me. I think that humans will go to great lengths to seek movement. Affects are like water and will seep through the cracks of any opening even if it's temporary.

My freedom of physical movement as a child was vast, by today's standards. We lived in small towns of 100 to 200, where everyone knew everyone and children generally had a protective eye on them but few restrictions. Within that space frame, we were free to do and think and talk about whatever we chose, limited only by the restrictions and values we carried with us from home. Today's kids are badly in need of that kind of freedom. The restrictions that held me back were in the area of affect, and because restricted affect results in thought and behavior that often is not "free," I, too, became extremely interested in why I, and seemingly everyone else I knew, so often communicated and behaved in ways we didn't really intend.

There are usually two descriptions that must be accounted for in human affairs: the description of an observer (from the outside in), and the description of a participant (from the inside out). I am with you on your descriptions of "self-esteem" from the standpoint of an observer. What I, and I think David, too, are attempting to come to is a description from the standpoint of a participant -- from the inside out.

Branden's descriptions are not "my" descriptions, though he may well have summed up all aspects of an observer's descriptions better than anyone else. David's definition: **human nature free from the self-disesteeming psychological reflexes we learn to modulate our negative-to-self, feelings and thoughts** is an excellent one, and if I have implied otherwise, I didn't intend to. I did feel the need to include the basic feeling about ourselves we, as individuals, carry with us that was transmitted to us in our very earliest contacts with our caretakers, **before we have become limited by any "self-disesteeming psychological reflexes."** I said, "Nothing could be more inside-out than that feeling you carry within you throughout your life and use to meet challenges and rejections with equanimity." **For me, that is about as inside-out as I can get, because it moves me from within and greatly affects my relationships, as well as my inner orientation to life, despite, and in addition to, the many "self-disteeming" reflexes I later developed. If I had been neglected and rejected as an infant, I cannot imagine that my general orientation to life and my "self-disesteeming psychological reflexes" wouldn't be quite different.**

From the inside, self-esteem is not a state or condition but a sense of participation, accomplishment, and mastery in the processes that lead to freedom of meaning-movement. I use the word participation since much of this "mastery" is in the form of cooperation with those aspects that are beyond voluntary control.

The feeling of self-worth, of human worth, I am talking about is the very matrix of my sense of participation and accomplishment, underlying and helping me continue to move a little more freely in time and space. Rather than learning self-disteeming reflexes, can't our human nature be met with the kind of care that will help us trust and believe in its thrust toward growth and participation? Don't we need to look, too, at the kind of self-esteeming inner world that helps us trust our own formative directions? And I see my views as being very closely tied in with Polanyi's "personal knowledge."

I don't think parents can "learn" to provide the conditions for self-esteem for their children for the most part. They may be able to learn a few "techniques," but I think of it more as a "conversion" (like in a religious conversion) where they see the light of the importance of affect in their own lives, and can empathize with what their children are living. It's a different way of life.

There is no doubt within my own mind that "conversion" (transformation, maybe) is the only truly effective way to learn about affect. And that must always be what we work toward. Anything else is "glued on," to use a term I've used before. But I am very concerned about what is continuing to happen in the meantime. I want to find ways to transmit some of what infants and toddlers are feeling now, because the lack of empathy that now exists is not only being passed on through generations, it is escalating in frightening numbers and ways -- a little like the stray cats in my back yard.

If you feel my own (not Branden's) addition to the self-esteem mix somehow runs counter to yours, you'll have to find another way to convince me, because I'm not yet convinced. I am in awe of the knowledge both of you possess in our minds' inner workings, and I love learning what I can along with you. But I am also more generally (and passionately) involved with our interrelationships and our modes of communicating, connecting and understanding one another. Maybe you "guys" and your intellects need a little female fumbling here too.

Loving regards to both of you.

Elaine

Defending the Efficacy of Healthy Self-Esteem Self Esteem 15

John,

I added a data-byte that Bob gave me the other day. Bob also gave me a wonderful personal story, which I think works nicely at the beginning.

Thanks to Jack for his encouragement to do this.

I have also added verbiage on 'shame' per David Boulton. I chose not to include the article on rejection lowering IQ because it speaks about self-control rather than self-esteem, and I don't think it will dramatically improve what we already have. I've also included a citation of that awful Psychology Today article, putting it in the same (sinking) boat as Slater's. I've verified all our sources. Take a read next time you're at the pool...

Let's shop it! Any luck contacting the NYT editor?

-Joshua

DEFENDING THE EFFICACY OF HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM

Senator John Vasconcellos

Robert Reasoner

Michele Borba, Ed.D.

Len Duhl, M.D.

Jack Canfield

"I grew up in a predominantly Italian immigrant section of Brooklyn. It was a neighborhood of working class people, but there were several seedy pool halls, street gangs and hoods. I entered the seventh grade at P.S. 259 with a school history that included mediocre grades, atrocious conduct and a flip attitude that reflected 'School is for creeps!'

For a long time I was viewed as a hopeless student until I was placed in Miss Lawson's class. She turned me away from the streets to books. Until then I had hated books and dreaded reading. My uncles distrusted book learning and said that too much reading makes a person go crazy. My Ma and Pa seldom read anything except True Confessions and the Daily Mirror. All my friends considered reading a drag. But as a result of Miss Lawson's personal interest in me and the concern and confidence she expressed in me I eventually achieved the highest grade average in junior high school.

I dropped out of school to take on back-breaking jobs in warehouses, piers, factories, railroad yards and construction. Because of the memory of Miss Lawson and the academic aptitude she nurtured in me I decided to continue school. I graduated and went on to college, where I graduated magna cum laude, to UCLA for my master's degree, to Oxford for further study, and finally graduated from Harvard Law School, where I was selected as the class valedictorian.

Fom my own experience I know that by fostering self-esteem and caring enough, a dedicated inspiring teacher can change a young person's life from one of misery to one of success."

Judge Joseph Sorrentino, Criminal Prosecutor, Author, Los Angeles, CA^[1]

The Trouble with 'The Trouble with Self-Esteem'

The New York Times Sunday Magazine has, by its February 3 publication of Lauren Slater's article *The Trouble With Self-Esteem*, performed a valuable service by bringing into public debate the issue of whether we can cultivate a constructive, self-realizing, responsible society by developing in individuals a healthy, authentic self-esteem. Slater's cynical and deeply misguided appraisal of self-esteem deserves a published response by an opposing coalition of leaders in the field, so the people of America (especially our parents and their children) are fully apprised of both sides of this proactive debate.

The emotional needs of young people today are in a state of crisis. In 30 years we've seen a 300% increase in adolescent suicide and a 1000% increase in adolescent depression^[2]—higher than any other country in the world. We all decry the rising social epidemics of school violence and drug abuse, which decades of reseach have shown to be clearly related to the breakdown of family and community support systems used to nurture healthy self-esteem in our youth. Fact is most educators, parents, and community leaders agree on the qualities that are most important to develop in young people, and high self-esteem is one of those qualities most commonly mentioned. Although perspectives on how to develop these desired qualities in our children vary widely, each is tethered to a centuries-old debate about our essential human nature, going as far back as Comenius^[3] in the 1590's. Comenius believed that a newly born child does not arrive into this world as an empty vessel, but is more like a seed awaiting to be nourished. We affirm this faithful view of humanity, and believe that through love and nurturance we are all innately inclined to becoming more life-affirming, constructive, responsible and trustworthy.

Drawing upon a long tradition of social theory and research, we further believe that nurturing a healthy self-concept based on pride and positive thinking is a sensible alternative to the shame, self-degradation and hopelessness that has become so pervasive in our youth today. We remain steadfast in our belief that the self-esteem movement represents the cutting edge in the development of human potential. For parents, policy makers and community leaders it also represents our most propitious and effective means of building social capital and developing sustainable solutions to the major social challenges with which we are faced.

Toward a more constructive definition of self-esteem:

Authorities in the fields of psychology, education, and healthcare have attempted to clarify what is meant by *high* self-esteem. They agree that high self-esteem implies the healthy, authentic nature of self-esteem, rather than just "liking yourself a lot" or "feeling good about oneself" as Lauren Slater's article suggests. Characteristics such as conceit, egotism, arrogance, narcissism, or a sense of superiority should not be considered aspects of high self-esteem. Such characteristics are more indicative of defensive, pseudo, or low self-esteem.

Most authorities now agree with Nathaniel Branden Ph.D., world reknown psychotherapist and author, who defined self-esteem several years ago as "the disposition to experience oneself as being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and being worthy of happiness." This definition was acknowledged by psychology professor Christopher Mruk Ph.D. of Bowling Green University in his book Self-Esteem: Research, Theory, and Practice to be the one sound definition that has withstood the test of time.

Our sense of competence is grounded in the belief that we are generally capable of producing desired results. It arises from being secure in the efficacy of our mind, our ability to think, to make appropriate choices and decisions. It comes as a by-product to trusting ourselves, living consciously, striving to be 'realistic' in how we view ourselves and others, and by taking pride in our accomplishments. Having confidence in ourselves makes other less threatening, which enables us to be more tolerant and respectful of others, to be accountable, fair and open-minded.

Our sense of worthiness is tethered to our core beliefs about ourselves and our human nature. To believe we are all worthy of love, life, and liberty is to believe we are all deserving of respect, nurturance, and happiness. Authentic self-esteem is life affirming, not to be dismissed as some "romantic, sometimes silly...belief that we are special from head to toe," and certainly not some scam by psychotherapists to retain their clientele, as Slater's article suggests. Rather, it's a by-product of taking pride in who we are and what we do.

Parents, educators, and counseling professionals are continually being encouraged to establish conditions that foster healthy self-esteem, and for several compelling reasons.

First, low self-esteem has been closely associated with so many problem behaviors, especially among adolescents. Robert Rothman reported in *Education Week*^[4] that as many as 50% of the nation's adolescents are considered to be 'at risk' of engaging in a variety of problems due to low self-esteem. According to his report, adolescents with low self-esteem typically suffer from a crisis of self-confidence that manifests through a variety of behaviors. They are easily influenced or manipulated by others, and are often subject to being scapegoated by their peers. They can be observed either withdrawing from social contacts or attempting to prove their significance by showing off, engaging in risky behavior, bullying others, or developing notions of grandiosity to compensate for their low self-esteem.

Second, research studies have clearly identified low self-esteem as a major risk factor for a number of psychological conditions. Keagan reported in his article "Positive Self-Esteem" that low self-esteem either causes or contributes to anxiety, defensiveness, drug abuse and alcoholism, depression, interpersonal problems as well as low academic achievement.^[5] Gurnery in his research review published in *Educational Research* found there was a close link between low self-esteem and juvenile delinquency, violent crime, drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, and chronic welfare dependency.^[6]

The statistical coupling of low self-respect with depression, suicide, teenage pregnancy, school dropouts, eating disorders, and economic outcomes has all been well documented. There are some researchers who have not found this to be true. Most empirical deviations are likely the result of using different definitions of self-esteem. Regardless, proving that low self-esteem is a major causal factor will always be nebulous since negative behavior will always be impacted by multiple factors. Nevertheless, low self-esteem is found to be a common factor in most cases.

A third reason for the significance of self-esteem is that it is a primary factor in behavioral change. Individuals are not likely to change their behavior unless they first change how they see themselves. If a child accepts the position that s/he doesn't have the capability to succeed in school, chances of academic success are obviously diminished, regardless of intellectual ability. For this reason, virtually all remediation programs designed to correct problem behaviors, whether in children or adults, incorporates a self-esteem component.

Fourth, numerous research studies have documented that children who turn out to be highly successful, contributing adults and who lead generally happy lives come from those families who have established conditions that foster high self-esteem. One such longitudinal study was conducted by University of California professor and author Stanley Cooper-Smith, who followed up on 1739 adolescents and published his findings in his book *The Antecedents of Self-Esteem*. He found that creating family standards of behavior that are clearly defined and consistently enforced, providing unconditional love and respect, and having high expectations were leading factors in developing high self-esteem.

Fifth, schools that have implemented self-esteem programs report positive changes in their students. In a 12 year study by Hawkins reported in the *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine* and published in the New York Times, it was reported that enhancing self-esteem in 1st through 6th graders reduced risky behaviors and improved school performance and attendance.^[7] Children participating in the study were 19% less likely to have committed violent acts, 38% less likely to indulge in heavy drinking, 31% less likely to engage in sexual intercourse, and 35% less likely to have caused a pregnancy or to have become pregnant.

In an article published in *The School Executive* it was reported that a three-year control study found that schools that implemented the *Building Self-Esteem* program had less anti-social behavior among the general student population, less absenteeism, more positive leadership, and higher academic motivation.^[8] When this program was implemented on a district-wide basis, average daily attendance increased to 99.7%, achievement test scores increased 10-15%, dropout rate declined from 18% to 4.5%, drug abuse declined, and the percentage of students going on to college increased from 65% to 89%.

In a control study of over 1,000 students by Michele Borba, Ed.D. it was found that the number of students in school who were considered to be "at risk" of school failure or involvement in social problems was reduced by 66% as a result of their participation in a schoolwide, skill-based self-esteem program that focused on five elements: security, identity, affiliation or belonging, a sense of purpose, and skills of competence.^[9] There was also a 41% reduction in student physical aggression and a 46% reduction in student detentions for misbehavior. Clearly, research has demonstrated that self-esteem programs can make a difference.

Finally, *Fortune* magazine has reported that companies are stressing the need for individuals who adjust easily to change, work cooperatively, exhibit tolerance and respect for others, take on challenges, and show initiative and self-motivation. For that reason they consider high self-esteem to be one of the essential characteristics they look for in new employees.

In a longitudinal study of all the children born in the UK in 1970 with follow-ups every five years thereafter, researchers found that low self-esteem was a strong indicator of unemployment as adults.^[10] Boys with high self-esteem as young children reduced the likelihood of unemployment as adults. The report concludes that more attention should be paid to self-esteem and non-academic behaviors as a means of identifying future difficulties in society. Moreover, they found self-esteem to have a far greater impact on future success than talent or intelligence.

Opposing the cynical view of self-esteem:

Recently a few authors have taken the position of discounting the efficacy of self-esteem and have raised doubts regarding its significance. Nicholas Emler Ph.D. in *Psychology Today*^[11] and Lauren Slater both report on research where the authors associate high self-esteem with having an inflated ego, and with behaviors more commonly associated with insecurity such as arrogance and conceit. When researchers use such absurd definitions for self-esteem, it's no surprise they conclude that "people with high self-esteem pose a greater threat to those around them than people with low self-esteem."

Further, Slater reports that the main objective of school self-esteem programs is "to dole out huge heapings of praise, regardless of actual accomplishment." Anyone who's knowledgeable about the published programs knows that this is not the case. Most programs are designed to develop attitudes and skills based on reality and actual accomplishment, not heapings of undue praise. Such programs seek to enable students to make better decisions, engage in goal setting, develop more effective social skills, and see themselves realistically. The author trivializes efforts to foster self-esteem by profiling affirmations such as "I adore myself" or "Today I will accept myself for who I am, not who I wish I were." She ignores all the other strategies that are required to foster high self-esteem.

Lauren Slater concludes that self-esteem and pride can be bad for your health—a ridiculous notion! When she refers to self-esteem as a quasi religion, and implies that mental health professionals propagate the value of self-esteem for personal gain, she does a great disservice to all those who search for ways of increasing the chances that our youth will have a healthy, productive, and satisfying life.

Fact is we're losing approximately one-third of our youth to problems such as school failure, teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, crime, violence, and suicide. These are social problems that we each and all have a stake in. They are a common concern of most all parents, educators, civic leaders, and mental health professionals who believe that developing healthy self-esteem in young people is one of our few effective approaches for reducing such problems.

In conclusion, Slater suggests that developing self-control, responsibility, and critical self-appraisal should be an alternative to developing self-esteem. What she doesn't realize is that several years ago Nathaniel Branden identified those same traits as critical steps to developing and retaining healthy self-esteem. It's time this debate moves on from whether self-esteem is important to how we use positive research on self-esteem to develop strategies that effectively build a healthy and inclusive society. Clearly, self-esteem is a topic for serious on-going research. And for those who dare, it invites us to examine our most basic beliefs about our essential human nature. Ask yourself, are we each and all deserving of a healthy, authentic self-esteem?

About the Authors

Senator John Vasconcellos is a 35-year veteran of the California State Legislature, chair of the Senate Committee on Education, and originator of the California Task Force on Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility.

Robert Reasoner is President of the International Council for Self-Esteem, former school superintendent, and author of *Self-Esteem and Youth: What Research Has To Say About It*.

Michele Borba, Ed.D., is an educational consultant and author of *Building Moral Intelligence* and *Parents Do Make a Difference*.

Len Duhi, M.D., is a psychiatrist, UC Berkeley professor of public health and urban planning, and professor of psychiatry at UC San Francisco.

Jack Canfield, M. Ed., is co-author of the best-selling Chicken Soup for the Soul series and Chairs of the Foundation for Self-Esteem in Culver City, California.

[1] Excerpt from Mentors, Masters and Mrs. Mac'Gregor by Jane Bluestein

[2] Source J. Cloud, *What Can the Schools Do?* Time, May 3, 1999 pp. 38-40

[3] Source Alec Meiklejohn, Education Between Two Worlds

[4] August 1, 1990

[5] Published in Guidepost, February 19, 1987

[6] 1987: 29(2): 130-136

[7] March 15, 1999

[8] April, 1992

[9] Michele Borba, Ed.D., *Effectiveness of a School-wide Self-Esteem Program on Elementary Students' Behavior and Academic Self-Concept*, 1992, unpublished

[10] Report delivered by Leon Feinstein, "Economic importance of academic, psychological and behavioral attributes developed in childhood" at the Labour Economics Seminar at the CEP and EEEG Annual Conference, 1999 in Swansea, England.

[11] Nicholas Emlier, *Bursting the Self-Esteem Bubble*, Psychology Today, April, 2002. P. 16.

Elaine to Gary and David Re: Defending the Efficacy of Healthy Self-Esteem Self Esteem 16

P
A
R
T

Appreciated receiving the current draft on the Self-esteem article. Certainly well-written and pretty comprehensive, but where was the "verbiage on shame?" Did I miss something? I think this sensible statement did effectively dispel the idea that there could be any value in defining self-esteem as Emler and Slater did. I really didn't know what to expect of the article; I take it your "inside-out" view hasn't been assimilated into this ongoing work.

As far as this article went, my views were best represented by the phrases, "being worthy of happiness" (Branden), "trusting ourselves," (p.2) and believing that "we are all deserving of respect, nurturance and happiness." (p.3) Coopersmith's findings that "**creating family standards of behavior that are clearly defined and consistently enforced, providing unconditional love and respect, and having high expectations were leading factors in developing high self-esteem**" (p.4) are certainly related to the broad definition that was put forth, but I preferred his words from that same book that "Parents (of children with hi self-esteem) are most concerned and accepting of their children and least likely to be severe in their punishment. They may insist on running a tight ship, but they appear merkedly different from parents who are authoritative in practice and character structure." (my emphasis) The difference lies in placing more emphasis on the child than on parental expectations.

1

The basic beliefs that I feel must be present in any discussion of self-esteem are partially summed up on page 2 when Comenius is cited with the follow-up "**We affirm this faithful view of humanity, and believe that through love and nurturance we are all innately inclined to becoming more life-affirming, constructive, responsible and trustworthy,**" and the closing statement, "**And for those who dare, it invites us to examine our most basic beliefs about our essential human nature.**" And that takes us right back to David's more cogent and concise definition: **human nature free from the self-disesteeming psychological reflexes we learn to modulate our negative-to-self, feelings and thoughts.**

Elaine

John Vasconcellos & David Thread Self Esteem 17

Order David normal (1st) John ALL CAPS (2nd) David **Blue** (3rd)

P
A
R
T

-----Original Message-----

Sent: Wednesday, April 03, 2002 7:57 PM
Subject: Re: Self-esteem - per david Boulton

1

ALOHA DAVID - I JUST REDISCOVERED YOUR OLDER MESSAGE OF YOURS - -

Subj: Self-esteem - how I think about it
Date: Monday, February 11, 2002 1:42:09 AM

John,

This is a more up to date version of what I shared with you in our early conversations about 15+ years ago - WOW, DAVID - IT'S BEEN THAT LONG ALREADY WE'VE BEEN FRIENDS . . . **. yes - it seems like yesterday and at the same time like we have known each other forever - I am grateful for our years**

I think...

Self esteem is the buoyant absence of negative-to-self, emotional and intellectual, self-assumptions. A flowing from within channeled and focused by learning and not automated by the reflexes of wounded self-imagery. OKAY

Self-esteem is a term that describes the ground of our relationship with ourselves. Its not accumulative, it is the lack of a certain kind of accumulation.

YEP - IT IS WHO WE ARE BY NATURE - - **and the nature in who we are**

John, I have long felt that people make a confusion by trying to define self-esteem in terms of its positive attributes. I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN HERE, DAVID - AND SHARE IT SOMEWHAT - THO IN OUR SOCIETY:

- WHERE 'BEING' IS SCORNED & SHAMED, AND '
- WHERE HAVING' HAS BECOME WORSHIPPED ALMOST AS A GOD,
- SOME FORMS OF 'DOING' ARE AT LEAST CONDUVCIVE TO HEALTHY CONSTRUCTIVE

LIVING.

I understand what you are saying but I don't think we can't advocate for 'having' self-esteem as a compensation for 'being shamed' or it will not only fall into the very trap you (and the critics) lament, it will channel our learning through the wrong orientation. I think characterizing self-esteem as a possession rather than a freedom from being possessed (via negative-to-self, affective and cognitive habits) is mis-orienting - I don't think its what you mean - I think you accept it as a tacital-relevance necessity. We need to develop ways to help children 'learn their way through' the negative-to-self feelings and thoughts they will inevitably encounter.

Yes, the 'doing' - emphasis on the 'ing'

I am concerned with how it is our children learn negative to self assumptions. THAT OUGHT BE OUR PRIMARY CONCERN -

- AND I SUSPECT IT HAPPENS AT THE HANDS OF WELL-INTENTIONED PRINCIPAL PRESENCES IN THE LIFE OF THE CHILD, WHO ARE PROJECTING THEIR OWN LACK OF SELF ESTEEM . . .

To use your vaccine metaphor -

ACTUALLY, OUR SELF ESTEEM TASK FORCE CAME UP WITH THAT, AND I THEN CHECKED IT OUT WITH JONAS SALK, WHO ALLOWED AS HOW IT IS AN APPROPRIATE METAPHOR - -

- how do we 'vaccinate' the child against the in-form-ation of negative-to-self-assumptions.

OH, DAVID, HOW I WISH I KNEW - - - OR CERTAINLY MY EXPERIENCE AS A CHILD WAS JUST THE CONTRARY - WHEREBY I INCORPORATED 'NEGATIVE-TO-SELF ASSUMPTIONS TOTALLY!

By exposing our bodies to 'safe' doses of a pathogen, vaccines create learning environments for our immune systems. They function like 'simulators' - they give us a chance to work out a response without being in a life-threatening situation. THAT'S HELPFUL TO KNOW, A VALUABLE PLACE TO BEGIN FROM . . .

In order to develop a vaccine to the disease of self-disesteem, some appear to argue for accumulating self-positive knowledge and experience. This is then dismissed by the 'other side' as being over generalized and not specifically earned - there is a fear that it leads to self-inflation by principle rather than via healthy feedback. THAT SEEMS TO BE THE COMMON WAY IT OPERATES, DAVID - AND THAT'S PART OF WHY I KEEP ON TRYING TO BRING THE DIALOGUE BACK AND DOWN EXPLICITLY TO OUR BASIC VIEW OF OUR HUMAN NATURE - FOR THEREIN IS TO BE FOUND THE FUEL OF ALL OUR EXPECTATIONS AND CHOICES AND ACTIONS, TOWARD OURSELVES AND TOWARD EACH & EVERY OTHER, ESPECIALLY INCLUDING OUR CHILDREN . . .

I think you would get more universal agreement if the thrust of self-esteem was more on reducing self-disesteem. I WONDER WHEHER WE WOULD - - - -

How do we immunize self learning from the ravages of self-disesteem?
AGAIN, YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED ONE OF (IF NOT THE VERY MOST) CENTRAL ISSUES WE FACE.

To do that I think that we have to get closer to how our learning nature, in the fields of our learning environment circumstances (home, school...) unconsciously learns strategies to avoid the shame and pain felt. "Oh, I am just no good at..." "I am not good looking" "I am not a loveable person" - "I am not smart" - I'M NOT PICKING UP ON WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO TEACH ME HERE, DAVID - -

I believe what you mean by the term self-esteem is simply: human nature free from the self-disesteeming psychological reflexes we learn to modulate our negative-to-self, feelings and thoughts.
AMEN - YOU GOT ME CLEAR!

If so, the question becomes how do we create environments in which children have the opportunity to learn to participate rather than be passengers in their feelings and thoughts.
OR - 'HOW DO WE CREATE ENVIRONMENTS IN WHICH CHILDREN ARE ENCOURAGED TO BE OPEN TO THEMSELVES AND THEIR OWN FELINGS AND EXPERIENCING, AND LIVE FROM WITHIN THEM, RATHER THAN BE DICTATED TO BY OUTSIDE 'SHOULD'S' & 'SHOULDN'T'S.'

Getting self-esteem on the map was a huge step for all of us.
ABSOLUTELY! HISTORIC! GROUND-BREAKING (LITERALLY AS WELL AS FIGURATIVELY)!
LIBERATING! PROMISING! INSPIRING! THAT 'HUGE STEP ENABLED EACH OF US TO SHIFT OUR PATH ONTO A WHOLLY CONTRARY PATH, TOWARD RECOGNIZING OUR OWN INHERENT TRUSTWORTHINESS, TOWARD REALIZING OUR OWN INNATE HUMAN POTENTIAL - FOR GOOD!

I congratulate you again for driving that into happening and for being the champion and hub of this noble effort to defend the self-esteem movement.
THANK YOU, DAVID, IT'S MY PLEASURE!
AND IT IS OURS - EACH & ALL OF OURS ON THIS PRECIOUS TEAM WE HAVE CONVENED - IT IS OUR CHALLENGE, OUR MISSION, OUR LIVES - TO SO LEAD OUR LIVES AS TO DEMONSTRATE BEYOND DOUBT TO/FOR ALL THE SKEPTICS & ESPECIALLY TO ALL THE CYNICS - THAT WE HUMANS CAN AFFORD (AND CANNOT AFFORD NOT TO) LEADS LIVES OF FAITH, AND OF HOPE, AND OF COURSE OF LOVE - INDIVIDUALLY, AND ALTOGETHER.

ONDELAY!

BTW - my single most significant concern in the learning to read process is related to 'self-esteem'. In China they call reading English out loud, 'red facing'.

HOW CURIOUS . . .

[#18 Sharon Begley's Wall Street Journal Article on Self-Esteem](#)

The Wall Street Journal
April 18, 2003
Science Journal
by Sharon Begley

P
A
R
T

1

Real Self-Esteem Builds On Real Achievement

At the annual meeting of psychology researchers in Boston three years ago, two scientists weighed in on a question that seemed to be as much in need of investigation as whether the sun rises in the east.

The pair had asked a professor to send weekly e-mail messages to students of his who had done poorly on their first exam for the class. Each missive included a review question. In addition, one-third of the students, chosen at random, also received a message -- advice to study, for example -- suggesting that how well they did in the course was under their own control. The other third received the review question plus a "You're too smart to get a D!" pep talk aimed at raising their self-esteem, which everyone knows boosts academic performance.

Oops.

Compared with the other e-mail recipients, the D and F students who got the self-esteem injection performed notably worse on later tests.

It has been 20 years since self-esteem became a household word and an educational mantra. The watershed moment came in 1986, when California funded a task force to increase the self-esteem of state residents, based on arguments that the \$245,000 annual cost would more than pay for itself in reduced welfare dependency, unwanted pregnancy, school failure, crime and drug addiction.

With that, the self-esteem movement was off and running, preaching that one's beliefs about oneself have important consequences no matter what the underlying reality. Healthy self-esteem was to be the wellspring from which wonderful outcomes flowed.

Now, the most exhaustive study ever finds that programs to raise self-esteem fall woefully, even comically, short.

In the case of the struggling students, the likely reason the self-esteem intervention backfired speaks volumes. Students work hard partly because it helps them do better academically; 95s feel better than 65s. But "an intervention that encourages them to feel good about themselves regardless of work may remove the reason to work hard -- resulting in poorer performance," suggest psychologist Roy Baumeister and colleagues in a monograph to be published next month in *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*. (The four were tapped by the American Psychological Society to undertake the study.) If you get to feel good without learning Maxwell's equations or the causes of the Korean War, why bother?

It isn't just school performance. From the 200-plus studies they analyzed, the APS group found no evidence that boosting self-esteem (by therapeutic interventions or school programs) results in better job performance, lowered aggression or reduced delinquency. And "high self-esteem does not prevent children from smoking, drinking, taking drugs, or engaging in early sex," it concluded.

Of course, self-esteem and school or job performance is correlated. But long overdue scientific scrutiny points out the foolishness of supposing that people's opinion of themselves can be the cause of achievement. Rather, high-esteem is the result of good performance.

Boosting self-esteem without helping people learn more or perform better does not bring higher achievement at school or work (and can backfire, as our D and F students show). And speaking of backfiring, high self-esteem fosters experimentation, which may increase teenage indulgence in sex, alcohol or drugs.

One solid link does seem to exist between higher self-esteem and performance. The higher your opinion of yourself, the more likely you are to persist in the face of failure. It is left as an exercise for the reader to decide whether this is a desirable character trait. Sometimes, isn't it better to just cut and run?

Self-esteem proponents have also fallen into the trap of taking people at their word. People high in self-esteem report that they're more likable and have better relationships than do those with low self-esteem. But "this is true mainly in their own minds," says Prof. Baumeister, a psychology professor at Florida State University, Tallahassee. Objective measures typically find the opposite, undercutting the claim that high self-esteem brings superior social skills.

P
A
R
T

Even the National Association for Self-Esteem is backpedaling. President J.D. Hawkins, who criticizes scientists for confusing "healthy self-esteem" with narcissism, argues that "self-esteem is more than just feeling good about yourself. It's about being socially and individually responsible."

1

Still, it's a popular product. "People contact us daily saying they need help with their self-esteem," says Mr. Hawkins, who notes the widespread use of the "Esteem Builders" program in K-12 education.

Amid the ashes of self-esteem, the APS team finds one benefit: High self-esteem makes you happier. But that jolly outcome ensues whether your self-esteem is justified or delusional.

As we persist in praising children even for mediocre work and trivial accomplishments, I can't resist ending with a plea from the APS scientists: "Psychologists should reduce their own self-esteem a bit and humbly resolve that next time they will wait for a more thorough and solid empirical basis before making policy recommendations to the American public."

#19 David's response to the WSJ Article on Self Esteem

P
A
R
T
1

-----Original Message-----

From: David Boulton [<mailto:dboulton@implicity.org>]

Sent: Sunday, April 20, 2003 3:29 PM

To: sciencejournal

Subject: Re: Real Self-Esteem Builds on Achievement, Not Praise for Slackers

Dear Editors,

Regarding the Friday April 18th 2003 article: Real Self-Esteem Builds on Achievement, Not Praise for Slackers

I understand and agree that artificially boosting self-esteem has been misleading and perhaps in some cases harmful. However, I think to be balanced, an article such as this one should acknowledge the great benefit of the self-esteem movement. The movement put 'inner psychological well being' on the political map. It proposed that many of our society's behavioral problems are related to if not caused by unhealthy psychological structures. It connected the dots: how a child learns to be her or his self, effects their ability to be effective participants in everything they do in school and later in life. What the self-esteem movement did was direct our attention to what is developing on the inside of our children - not just because it was a profoundly good thing to do, but also because the economic cost of the behaviors of psychologically unhealthy persons is so staggering. The underlying fulcrum equation is solid: if we spend x dollars helping children develop more healthy selves, we will get it back many times over in social expense savings.

The question was how to do it. I think we went wrong when we formulated self-esteem as something to 'build up'. I think what we have learned is that, quite the contrary, self-esteem is a lack of building up. It is not about boosting the accumulation of positive feelings, self-imagery or self-concepts, its about minimizing the accumulation of negative feelings, self-imagery and self-concepts. More and more we are coming to see that we human beings would naturally gravitate to healthy psychological well being *if we didn't learn otherwise*.

The following link leads to a dialogue on self-esteem in which California Senator John Vasconcellos (the original architect/leader of the self-esteem legislation that started it all in California) myself and a number of other thoughtful and diversely talented people further flesh out this conversation:

<http://www.implicity.org/selfesteem/index.htm>

PS. Please forward this email to Sharon Begley - thank you.
David Boulton

**#20: Response to David's Response to WSJ
David- Blue, John- ALL CAPS**

P
A
R
T

1

-----Original Message-----

From: Begley, Sharon [<mailto:Sharon.Begley@wsj.com>]
Sent: Monday, April 21, 2003 4:18 AM
To: 'David Boulton'
Subject: RE: Real Self-Esteem Builds on Achievement, Not Praise for Slackers

Thanks very much, Mr. Boulton. I will indeed read the dialogue---thanks again.

Sharon Begley
Science columnist
The Wall Street Journal
200 Liberty Street
NY NY 10281-1003
212-416-3268

-----Original Message-----

From: JV2work@aol.com [<mailto:JV2work@aol.com>]
Sent: Friday, June 13, 2003 3:35 AM
Subject: MAHALO, DAVID/Real Self-Esteem Builds on Achievement, Not Praise for Slackers

CATCHING UP HERE -

Don Nathanson, author of "Shame and Pride", sent me a copy of a Wall Street Journal article on Self-Esteem. The message below is my response to the article.

I APPRECIATE YOUR RESPONDING, DAVID, TO THIS NON-SENSE!
- DID THE JOURNAL HAVE THE INTEGRITY TO EVER PUBLISH YOUR TRUTH-TELLING?

-----Original Message-----

From: David Boulton [<mailto:dboulton@implicity.org>]
Sent: Sunday, April 20, 2003 9:29 AM, To: 'sciencejournal@wsj.com'
Subject: Re: Real Self-Esteem Builds on Achievement, Not Praise for Slackers

Dear Editors,

Regarding the Friday April 18th 2003 article: [Real Self-Esteem Builds on Achievement, Not Praise for Slackers](#), I understand and agree that artificially boosting self-esteem has been misleading and perhaps in some cases harmful.

YES, BARELY

However, I think to be balanced -

THAT IS A STANDARD THE JOURNAL HAS NEVER HONORED, DAVID.

- An article such as this one should acknowledge the great benefit of the self-esteem movement.

PROBABLY ESPECIALLY BECAUSE PERSONS WITH HEALTHY SELF ESTEEM COULDN'T BE SO WEDDED TO WEALTH & PROPOERTY FOR THEIR IDENTITY AS ARE THE FOLKS WHO MAKE UP THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

The movement put 'inner psychological well being' on the political map.

THAT IT HAS ACCOMPLISHED - MUCH TO THE CHAGRIN (FOR IT UTTERLY CHALLENGES THEIR SENSE OF THEMSELVES, THEIR IDENTITY) OF THE NAY-SAYING CYNICS . . .

It proposed that many of our society's behavioral problems are related to if not caused by unhealthy psychological structures.

THESE SICK FOLKS WOULD MUCH RATHER PERPETUATE THE SICKNESS . . .

It connected the dots: how a child learns to be her or his self, effects their ability to be effective participants in everything they do in school and later in life.

AND THEY'D LIKE ALL BUT CYNICS LIKE THEMSELVES TO DO POORLY -

- BOTH SO THAT THEIR CYNICAL VIEWS AREN'T CHALLENGED, CAN SUSTAIN;

- + BECAUSE SUCH DEFICIENT FOLKS HUNGER FOR FULFILLMENT VIA THEIR PECULIAR BRAND OF MATERIALISM (CF NORMAN O. BROWN'S 'LIFE AGAINST DEATH.')

What the self-esteem movement did was direct our attention to what is developing on the inside of our children -

DAVID - YOU'VE GOT TO BEAR IN MIND THAT FOR THESE FOLKS, NOTHING HAS DEVELOPED INSIDE, THEY HAVE NO EXPERIENCE OF THAT DIMENSION OF THEMSELVES, AND OF LIFE ITSELF!

- not just because it was a profoundly good thing to do, but also because the economic cost of the behaviors of psychologically unhealthy persons is so staggering.

THAT'S A COST THAT SUSTAINS THEIR PROSPERITY

The underlying fulcrum equation is solid: if we spend x dollars helping children develop more healthy selves, we will get it back many times over in social expense savings.

THEY THRIVE OFF OUR BANKRUPTING OURSELVES VIA SUCH SOCIAL EXPENSES

The question was how to do it.

AH, DAVID, YOU HAVE IT SO CORRECT!

I think we went wrong when we formulated self-esteem as something to build up.

AMEN!

I think what we -

SADLY, DAVID, TRAGICALLY, ONLY SOME OF US - SO FAR - - -

- have learned is that, quite the contrary, self-esteem is a lack of building up. It is not about boosting the accumulation of positive feelings, self-imagery or self-concepts, it's about minimizing the accumulation of negative feelings, self-imagery and self-concepts.

AMEN!

More and more we are coming to see that we human beings would naturally gravitate to healthy psychological well being if we didn't learn otherwise.

DAVID, YOU TRULY ARE A VISIONARY, YOU TRULY RECOGNIZE THE TRUTH REGARDING, AND WITHIN, OURSELVES!

The following link leads to a dialogue on self-esteem in which California Senator John Vasconcellos (the original architect/leader of the self-esteem legislation that started it all in California) myself and a number of other thoughtful and diversely talented people further flesh out this conversation: MAHALO, DEAR DAVID - - - -

<http://www.implicit.org/selfesteem/index.htm>

PS. Please forward this email to Sharon Begley - thank you.

AND I'M WILLING TO BET YOU NEVER HEARD A WORD IN RESPONSE, DAVID, RIGHT?

#21 David's Response to January 20, 2005 Scientific American Article:

[Exploding the Self-Esteem Myth](#)

www.sciam.com/article.cfm?chanID=sa006&collID=1&articleID=000CB565-F330-11BE-AD0683414B7F0000

Dear Editors of Scientific American,

January 21, 2005

Re: Exploding the Self-Esteem Myth - January 20th Article in Scientific American

I wish to thank you and the authors for this important contribution to the self-esteem dialogue. I would also like to share the following with you and the authors:

Who doesn't want 'inner-health' and 'outer success' for themselves and their children? Clearly, they are related and the potential benefit of deepening our understanding of how they're related warrants serious scientific inquiry. The question here is whether the 'self-esteem' discussion is taking us there. Unfortunately, both sides appear lost in the mythic assumptions that A) 'self-esteem' is a good 'domain-name' for a serious scientific inquiry into 'inner/subjective health' and B) that whatever we mean by it, it's something that is accumulated and built up into an edifice.

Modern neuroscience is proving that we are naturally oriented towards 'inner/subjective health'. However, maintaining that health depends on healthy-learning. **It is the accumulation of self-negative images, primitively imagined to protect ourselves from overwhelming feelings (inadequacy, fault, shame...) that stress and overwhelm the health of our learning.** When we become learning-disabled by our aversion to negative feelings, in ways fundamental to the learning/development of ourselves, we exhibit what is often referred to as 'low self-esteem' and its associated effects.

Our nation's reading crisis connects to our nation's educational difficulties and social pathologies via 'inner subjective health' / 'self-esteem' in ways that illustrates this:

It is not the absence of the positive effects of reading proficiency that are most responsible for the strong correlation between reading improficiency and social pathology. It's the collateral injurious effects of attempting to learn/improve reading proficiency that, more than only dis-enabling, are adversely effecting cognitive and emotional health. www.childrenofthecode.org

An aversion to shame evoked in insufficient learning environments results in 'learning aversions' that fundamentally harm cognitive and emotional health and development. Within affected dimensions of learning, learning aversions become, cognitively and emotionally, pathological learning disabilities. The affected dimensions (complex, abstract, mind-trust, learning-faith, 'self-esteem'...) are co-implicate in the developmental/unfolding learning of 'self' and in educational attainment. Social pathology is an inevitable effect of such personal learning disabilities.

All of which is to say, that in the emerging scientific model of education, one rapidly moving towards medicine (ala Flexner) and consequently challenging notions like 'self-esteem', I think our concern for 'self-esteem' (whatever we call it + more importantly the health of learning) can be best served by the first principle of medicine which is:

Above all else, do no harm

Thanks,
David Boulton

Producer, Children of the Code, A Public Television Documentary

www.childrenofthecode.org

www.implicit.org

Stewarding the Health of Our Children's Learning - The Code and the Challenge of Learning to Read It.

Please do forward this to the article's authors.

Part 2—DIALOGUE ON THE ETHICS OF MUTUAL LEARNING IN GOVERNMENT AND CORPORATIONS

This conversation began in a dialogue between David Boulton and Phil Ryan, a constitutional lawyer representing a software company interested in providing post 9-11 airport security systems in California. The conversation evolved from security to privacy (messages 1 thru 7) and thereafter to the ethics of business and society. ** Indicates the messages that best convey our orientation and thought about 'ethics'.

"We of the great modern democracies must strive unceasingly to make our several countries lands in which a poor man who works hard can live comfortably and honestly, and in which a rich man cannot live dishonestly nor in slothful avoidance of duty."

- Theodore Roosevelt

Page 3 — #1 - Phil Ryan's 'What if' paper to California Senator John Vasconcellos re Airport Security: the rationale for a new and more sophisticated airport security system - one that would have stopped 9-11 from happening.

Page 7 — #2 David Boulton to John Vasconcellos re Phil Ryan's 'What If' on Airport Security the issue isn't technology (we've had the technological ability) its privacy - the technology could migrate from airport security to other non intended areas.

Page 8 — #3 Phil Ryan to John Vasconcellos re David Boulton's comments on 'What If' asserts that the technology hasn't previously existed, acknowledges privacy issue and defends the proposed system.

Page 10 — #4 David Boulton to John Vasconcellos and Phil Ryan re Privacy The reason we don't have such a system isn't that we haven't had the technological means. We haven't had it before 9-11 because our perceived need for such a system didn't rise above the social and economic objections to implementing one.

Page 11 — #5 Phil Ryan to David Boulton and John Vasconcellos re Privacy David is correct that for 30 years we have lacked the political will to recognize that information is the sine qua non of public safety. It is tragically clear that un-communicated information is conveyed ignorance.

Page 12 — #6 David Boulton to Phil Ryan and John Vasconcellos et al re Privacy & Ethics will our society's learning keep pace with and help drive the ethical debate regarding the limits we impose on such systems? I think we must proceed here and I think before doing so the advocates should be engaged in a rigorous, non commercially prejudiced, dialogue into these issues with people who advocate the freedoms of privacy.

Page 13 — #7 Phil Ryan to David Boulton and John Vasconcellos et al re Privacy & Ethics I absolutely agree your notions of the privacy issues. It would be a national tragedy if we broke down J. Edgar Hoover's culture of secrecy from local law enforcement and created 500 hundred local Hoovers.

Business Ethics, Learning Conversation begins...

Page 14 — #8 David Boulton to Phil Ryan and John Vasconcellos et al re Ethics ** Its not the Hoovers that scare me its how much more dangerous corporations can become. **One of our most fundamental international business ethics assumes that businesses have the right to pursue their economic interests even to the extent of directing the thoughts and emotions of people with the clear intent of covertly manipulating their economic behavior.** What happens when corporations have these tools?

Page 15 — #9 John Vasconcellos to David Boulton and Phil Ryan et al re Ethics I FEAR WE'RE BEING SO DELUGED BY FRIGHT MESSAGES, PARANOIA, WE'RE ON THE VERGE OF BLITHELY SURRENDERING ALL OUR HUMAN CIVIL RIGHTS!

Page 10 — #10 John Vasconcellos to David Boulton and Phil Ryan et al re Ethics AMEN, DAVID, AMEN!!

Page 17 — #11 John Vasconcellos to Heather Barbour re David Boulton's Ethics SO WHO & HOW & WHEN & WHERE MIGHT WE INITIATE SUCH AN EXPLORATION?

Page 18 — #12 John Vasconcellos to all re DAN YANKELOVICH 'TRUST'/INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP FORUM;4/28/02 THEREFORE WE HAVE TODAY AN ENORMOUS AND GROWING PRESSING NEED FOR A NEW INSTITUTIONAL MORALITY

Page 21 — # 13 David Boulton to John Vasconcellos re Leadership Forum - Institutional Morality = Ethics * My view is that the deep fulcrum for liberating healthy change here is to address the 'ethic' underlying and organizing the 'morality'. **I think that the corporate behaviors we are concerned/outraged by are merely the logical consequences of an underlying ethic we take for granted.**

Page 22 — # 14 John Vasconcellos to David Boulton re Institutional Morality = Ethics OUCH - THAT'S FRIGHTENING! IT IS NOW TIME THAT EACH AND ALL OF US COME TOGETHER INTO A MOVEMENT THAT CHALLENGES THIS ETHIC, RECLAIMS OUR LIVES!

Page 23 — #15 Heather Barbour & David Boulton Thread re: Ethics and The Intrusion Explosion - Ethics 15 in global historic turns -- we're leading the way into the post-human rights period. homo economus.

Page 24 — #16 Josh Holcomb to John Vasconcellos and David Boulton - The Ethics of Trust? The emails have given rise to a very basic question: Is trust an ethic?

Page 25 — #17 David Boulton to Josh Holcomb and John Vasconcellos et al - The Ethics of Trust ** **Trust is 'inside' - ethics are 'outside'. In the middle of 19th century we, as a nation, had a conversation about our 'ethics' – we decided that people couldn't 'own' people. We decided that human beings are entitled to a freedom befitting their human beingness – that human beings can't be property – can't be slaves.150 years later we must again take up this conversation. Today we face the question are human beings 'assets'?**

Phil Ryan to California Senator John Vasconcellos re Airport Security WHAT IF By Phil Ryan - Ethics 1

On the morning of September 11, 2001, two terrorists boarded American commercial airliners destined for the west coast. A month earlier, the CIA had notified the INS to place these two individuals on their terrorist watch list. When they purchased their tickets for cash, neither airport law enforcement nor airlines security had any information of the danger they posed. It was therefore a failure of *intelligence* not a paucity of *security* that led to cruel mass murder at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

At the same time, some nineteen-suicide terrorists boarded four commercial jets, three employees of Callixa Corp., a San Francisco based information technology company with offices in New York City, were attending a major trade show featuring their company's software on the 105th Floor of the World Trade Center. Their names were: Naomi Solomon, the number two executive at Callixa and a resident of New York city, Wayne Evans, a veteran of the 82nd Airborne and combat in Desert Shield and Desert Storm, a resident of Virginia, and Chris Wemmers, originally from Hamburg, Germany, a resident of San Francisco. Along with thousands of others, they perished instantaneously when the first plane exploded into the World Trade Center.

It is an unfathomable irony that had Callixa's software, which these three people were about to display at the World Trade Center, been employed at Logan Airport, it would have prevented the two watch-list killers from boarding their fateful and fatal flight. Eulogies are always inadequate to the losses suffered, but Callixa's employees have offered a technology memorial to their fallen colleagues. Before America was attacked, Callixa's software provided enterprise information integration on a real time basis to the financial services industry. Callixa's product accesses any number of databases stored on different platforms in multiple languages and integrates this information instantaneously. How then can a technology designed to serve vast, international and multinational financial institutions provide airline passengers with a meaningful sense of security that air travel is safe from the madness of September 11th?

First, federal and local law enforcement and commercial airlines must recognize the horrific lesson of September 11th; namely, that bombers not baggage murdered thousands in New York and Washington, D.C. The history of American airport security is one of divided authority over the paramount public responsibility for human safety. From the airport parking garage to the ticket counter, local law enforcement has public safety jurisdiction. From ticket purchase through baggage checks to boarding, private airlines and their minimum wage contractors are the guardians of public safety. Once on the plane, federal jurisdiction assumes responsibility for passenger safety. Thus institutionally, a tripartite command structure has existed over air travel for more than thirty years at the very point of terrorist attacks.

President Bush has properly stated that we are at war. Yet our airport defenses, the mission of terrorists' attacks, are commanded by a disparate committee, part civilian and part paramilitary with conflicting responsibilities and interests and sparse intelligence communication. Thus even though the CIA and the INS possessed intelligence that at least two of the World Trade Center bombers were wanted terrorists, they did not and could not share this information with airlines' security, since law enforcement investigative material is prohibited from disclosure to non-law enforcement, non-governmental entities.

The post-September 11th congressional debate offers little in the way of restoring public confidence in the safety of air travel. Without questioning the sincerity of either the Democrat or Republican proposals, both miss the point that it is bad people who threaten Americans not the quality or content of their luggage. Both political parties propose, "federalizing" airport security and neither suggests federalizing much less sharing criminal intelligence. Predictably, Democrats insist that replacing minimum wage and minimally trained private security personnel with well-paid, civil service federal employees screening bags will restore public confidence in air safety. Republicans counter with the notion of a public/private partnership similar to the present system with direct oversight of private security employees by the federal government as the better plan. If September 11th teaches anything, it is that the means of mass murder are not stored in baggage but in the souls of evil passengers. In short, neither proposal invests public safety professionals with the power and authority to do their jobs – the jobs of crime prevention and public safety.

Congress has passed and the President signed into law the federalizing airport baggage checkers. Increasing luggage scrutiny has never prevented hijackers and killers from wreaking their havoc. What is missing from the public debate is the central and fundamental truth that security starts and ends with intelligence. No one would suggest that a military commander undertake an offensive or defensive operation without solid intelligence on the enemy. As the Al Qaeda terrorists plotted their mass murder and mayhem, numerous government agencies possessed information about their goals, identities and activities. Presumably the CIA was trying to recruit Al Qaeda comrades as informants and, a month before the bombings, notified the INS to place two of the terrorists on their watch list. The State Department has attempted to persuade Arab governments to arrest terrorists; the Treasury is freezing their assets. When they entered the United States, they had to go through U.S. Customs and the INS must have checked their names against the terrorists watch list.

In fact, there are forty-three different agencies that have at least some jurisdiction in the war on terror. But at the crucial moment when they boarded their chosen planes to transform them into flying bombs, none of these government agencies shared the information contained in their various databases with the frontline of airport security – **local police!** *Uncommunicated intelligence is conveyed ignorance.* And this, more than anything, is the cause of the enor-

Ambassador Mary Ryan (no relation to the author), head of the State Department Consular Affairs, has testified that American Embassies and Consulates could have stopped some of the terrorists from entering the country if agencies such as the CIA and FBI had shared information with the State Department. California Senator Dianne Feinstein has urged: “The agencies need to get together and create a single database with information about terrorists...I am concerned about continuing to appropriate money to systems that don’t talk to each other.”

Mayor Rudy Giuliani has been quoted in the New York Daily News, saying, “We need the information and we need it right now. We need **real-time information** about what is happening.” Former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, James Woolsey has said: “The Nation is in trouble if the agencies continue to create databases that cannot communicate with one another.” Sandy Berger, former Clinton National Security Advisor stated: “The first dollar I would spend would be on data integration.”

Thus America’s war on terror is faced with both policy and technical issues. New York Senators Schumer and Clinton have introduced legislation to break down the inarticulate barriers of multiple databases not on speaking terms with federal and local law enforcement. The State of Florida is discussing data warehousing, a technology primarily used for analysis of marketing of historical data, as a solution. But even assuming that federal agencies share their terrorists’ data with the state of Florida, such a project would take years and billions of dollars to complete. And, most significantly, the information would never be current! Former National Security Advisor Berger cut to the heart of the issue when he said: “*Real-time*, intelligent data-sharing among agencies such as the INS, Customs, Federal, state and local law enforcement is a must.” But Mr. Berger cautioned that real-time data integration faced formidable bureaucratic hurdles. “Sharing data presents policy and turf issues...give up part of your database and you lose part of your budget,” he said.

Callixa's **Airport Threat Detector** may be thought of as a *virtual data warehouse*. The moment a passenger's name is punched into an airline ticket computer Callixa's powerful **Threat Detector** accesses multiple databases and instantaneously determines if the passenger is on any watch lists. Callixa has built a prototype for a demonstration to San Francisco International Airport and the San Francisco Police Department. Callixa has propounded a series of questions to airport and local police officials. They are being asked:

What if there was a way for the background of every single American and foreign airline passenger at the airport to be checked against the FBI's databases?

And what if there was a way to simultaneously check this information against databases maintained by more than 40 federal agencies as well as state and local law enforcement agencies or even international agencies?

What if this could be done even though those databases are written in a variety of computer software platforms across an assortment of operating systems and even foreign languages?

What if there was a way to do all this by existing airlines personnel using existing passenger reservations systems at passenger check-in?

*And what if this could take place in real time, automatically notifying local law enforcement of any passengers matching potential threat profiles **before** they board the flight?*

What if you could do all of this while protecting the civil liberties and privacy of every passenger screened by the system?

And what if you could do this all now?

Perhaps the most sadly ironic admission by anti-terror officials was Transportation Secretary Minetta's recent statements that he doesn't have enough sniffing dogs and electronic baggage scanners to meet Congress' airport security requirements. What should be obvious in the 21st Century is that government measures that fail to improve and enhance law enforcement's abilities to prevent evil people from boarding American flights, is, in an old Texas expression, simply a dog that won't hunt.

David Boulton to John Vasconcellos re Phil Ryan's 'What If' on Airport Security - Ethics 2

From: David Boulton
Sent: Saturday, December 29, 2001 11:26 AM
Subject: RE: airport security

P
A
R
T

John,

2

I think their argument that the breakdown was a breakdown in intelligence (or the lack of availability of the intelligence that existed) is right. But the technical aspects of solving the problem have existed for quite a while. The issue hasn't been the inability to technologically provide the information (though on the surface they look to have a great system) it's been the 'privacy' issue. Proposals like theirs run right into the 'big brother' scare. Its very touchy stuff. It may be, like in so many other cases, the Bush administration will use the 9-11 crimes as the basis for pushing against citizen rights and be able to overcome the resistance from privacy advocates. Frankly and in theory, I would be all in favor of it in this limited case (boarding airlines) but its a hard thing to contain. What other circumstances will it bleed into? If you have someone in your circle you trust on the privacy frontier I suggest you get their thinking before you get involved with this.

Phil Ryan to John Vasconcellos re David Boulton's comments on 'What If' - Ethics 3

John & David,
Here's a quick reply to David's email comments.
Phil Ryan

As a constitutional lawyer of more than three decades and whose original net worth arose from my defense of the now badly tattered 4th Amendment, I'd like to volunteer for your trusting circle on the "privacy frontier." But before commenting on the privacy issue, I must correct the notion that the technical aspects of intelligence data sharing has existed in a meaningful and timely way. There are forty-three federal agencies presently dealing with terrorism. Not only do these intelligence databases not talk to each other, as Senators Schumer, Clinton and Feinstein have pointed out, proposals for data warehousing will cost billions of dollars, five to ten years to produce and the intelligence will never be current. Callixa's software, on the other hand, creates a virtual data warehouse and provides intelligence information instantaneously in real time.

I share David's concern that the Bush administration and particularly the Attorney General have used the 9-11 horror to constrict our civil liberties and civil rights. It is also my view that this contraction of American liberties has added absolutely nothing to the war against terror. Ironically and sadly, any restrictions on our civil liberties must be considered a victory for the September 11th terrorists.

David appears to make two privacy points which I'd like the address. The first is the privacy issue at the airport. Callixa built a prototype for SFO using the existing airlines technology. Airline ticketing is done on a thirty year old computer system. Some years ago, the FAA and Northwest Airlines came up with the CAPS system, which frankly, is an ethnic and racial profiling system that is now being used by many airlines. The ACLU and other privacy advocates opposed this system and, frankly, I agree with them. To give you an example of the crudeness of airport intelligence, a few days after September 11th, a passenger purchased a ticket for Israel at SFO. The airlines' computer found that he had flown more than 200,000 miles in a year, primarily to the Middle East. A 917 call (airport version of 911 calls) was made to SFPD. The police responded, only to discover that the passenger was the CEO of Intel, which has plants in Israel! Callixa's technology does not rely on suspect passenger profiles or computer data from private carriers.

Here's how the Callixa *Threat Detector* works as demonstrated to SFPD. The local police department is the sponsor and licensee. When a passenger's name is entered into the carrier's ticketing computer, the police *Threat Detector* instantaneously checks the name against any law enforcement databases of terrorist suspect to which the police have been granted access. If there is no match, ticketing proceeds as usual. If, on the other hand, Boston police had had the *Threat Detector* on September 11th, Mohammed Otta, on CIA and INS watch lists, would have been prevented from boarding the deadly flight.[\[1\]](#) And the CEO of Intel would not have been pulled out of the ticket line. Moreover, because Callixa's software is a virtual database/warehouse, the millions of passengers checked at ticket counters are not even a blip on the screen.

David's point that this should be limited to boarding airlines, at first glance, seems a valid one. It should be noted, however, that a present the FBI still functions under the J. Edgar Hoover culture of denying local police vital intelligence information. The real problem will be changing the federal mentality to recognize that homeland security while keeping local police ignorant of terror intelligence is doomed to failure and further tragedy. With respect to containing the *Threat Detector* to airports, this is simply a matter of code restrictions and recognition that airport security is both a local and federal responsibility. As for local police extending the technology to routine police stops, it should be noted that police for twenty years have had the technical capacity to run warrant checks, CLETTS checks and now computerized fingerprint checks. Again, note that Callixa's data integration is virtual and therefore not a gatherer and storer of information.

Indeed, Callixa's *Threat Detector* is the only proposal I know of that protects the civil liberties and privacy of everyone screened by the technology. Only the bad guys get caught.

If you'd like, I can arrange a demonstration like the one we've provided SFPD for you, your staff and, most certainly for any civil libertarians like David.

My best,

Phil Ryan

[1] It is vital to note that California law enforcement routinely runs computer checks on CLETTs and through the FBI fingerprint database. Under federal and state laws, only law enforcement officers are entitled to investigative materials. The *Threat Detector* simply communicates existing law enforcement information to law enforcement officers at the airport before dangerous terrorists board. Any citizen or non-citizen not already a suspect will not even register on police screens.

John & Phil,

Phil Ryan's letter begins with wanting to correct the notion "that the technical aspects of intelligence data sharing has existed in a meaningful and timely way". I didn't mean to imply that the systems in place today have the technical capabilities to do what we need. Rather that the problem isn't a lack of technological capability in general. If our government wanted to have and pay for such a system it could have had one some time ago. The reason we don't have such a system isn't that we haven't had the technological means. Rather, we haven't had the social-economic-political will. We haven't had it before 9-11 because our perceived need for such a system didn't rise above the social and economic objections to implementing one. Since 9-11 the perceived need has grown to overpower the economic considerations and so the conversation turns to privacy and the related social issues involved.

David

P
A
R
T
2

Phil Ryan to David Boulton and John Vasconcellos re Privacy - Ethics 5

P
A
R
T
2

From a constitutional lawyer's perspective, the most attractive feature of Callixa's *Threat Detector* is that it does not access or convey information about anyone other than suspected terrorists about whom law enforcement has credible information and it **does not** single out people because of their race, religion or accent of speech! The only information the *Threat Detector* gathers from airlines is the personal information currently required to board a flight. The only information the *Threat Detector* gathers from the more than 40 federal agencies with terrorist jurisdiction is a suspected terrorist. And only law enforcement officials see this information. Thus, Mohammed Atta's "invaded privacy" keeps him off the plane!

I think David is correct that for 30 years we have lacked the political will to recognize that information is the sine qua non of public safety. It is equally true that data warehousing is a budget buster, takes years to install and is never current. Three years ago, Dr. Bitton introduced real-time data integration to the IT world. Sandy Berger, former National Security Advisor to President Clinton cut to the heart of the political problem when he said: "Real-time, intelligent data-sharing among agencies such as INS, Customs, Federal, state and local law enforcement is a must, but recognize the hurdles...sharing data presents policy and turf issues...give up part of your database and you lose part of your budget."

Mayor Guiliani said, "We need the information and we need it right away. We need real-time information about what is happening."

September 11th has seared a fundamental truth in the American consciousness. It is tragically clear that uncommunicated information is conveyed ignorance.

Phil Ryan

**David Boulton to Phil Ryan and John Vasconcellos et al re Privacy & Ethics
-Ethics 6**

Phil,

I like and agree with what you said. I agree 'un-communicated information is conveyed (systemic) ignorance'. I like Callixa's approach and I have actually recommended them to a significant client of mine. I think we should implement such a system for airline security. My only concern is that this kind of intelligence-information power can be abused. Once the disparate systems are subsumed and integrated to provide such on-demand power, the cost of mining that data for other non initially intended uses is comparatively low. The issue that emerges for me is similar to human cloning. Will our society's learning keep pace with and help drive the ethical debate regarding the limits we impose on such systems? I don't know.

I think we must proceed here and I think before doing so the advocates should be engaged in a rigorous, non commercially prejudiced, dialogue into these issues with people who advocate the freedoms of privacy.

- Best, David

**Phil Ryan to David Boulton and John Vasconcellos et al re Privacy & Ethics
- Ethics 7**

P
A
R
T

2

Sent: Friday, February 15, 2002 9:29 AM

Subject: Re: DAVID BOULTON'S RESPONSE TO airport security PROPOSAL

David,

I absolutely agree your notions of the privacy issues. Given the present Supreme Court and the current Attorney General, these concerns are not insignificant. It would be a national tragedy if we broke down J. Edgar Hoover's culture of secrecy from local law enforcement and created 500 hundred local Hoovers. I appreciate your thoughts. Keep them coming.

Phil Ryan

**David Boulton to Phil Ryan and John Vasconcellos et al re Privacy & Ethics
- Ethics 8**

P
A
R
T

From: David Boulton
Sent: Friday, February 15, 2002 12:43 PM
Subject: RE: DAVID BOULTON'S RESPONSE TO airport security PROPOSAL

2

Phil,

You asked me to keep them coming...

Its not the Hoovers that scare me its how much more dangerous corporations can become. One of our most fundamental international business ethics assumes that businesses have the right to pursue their economic interests even to the extent of directing the thoughts and emotions of people with the clear intent of tactically manipulating their economic behavior. We take this for granted. It's the "American Way" and yet it, more than terrorism, strangles our nation - it is an invisible crime that goes far beyond the scope of the FBI. Its a cancer on our national intelligence - our national learning - our ultimate national advantage.

We need more ways of being more extensively intelligent together. We need a situationally relevant, intelligence support system. We need to be able to detect threats as they move through our 'gates' and do so without unduly stuttering the flow of legal citizen behavior. One of my work threads involves distributed relationship architecture, I understand some of the implications of the underlying processing capabilities of such systems, and, I do think that they should be developed (and evolve) to respond to the needs of national intelligence. And saying all that, its *the national intelligence of our people* that concerns me most.

We have seen what Madison Ave. can do with tobacco company ethics, lucasfilm's technology concepts, Spielberg's attention direction and with the right 'star attractions'. We have a semi-hypnotized society - hypnotized into accepting manipulation as normal, hypnotized into a lack of respect for their own learning. What happens when these incredibly powerful interests, who place the right to make money above the injustice of manipulating people's lives, have access to the kind of intelligence powers these systems could provide?

The seedling concepts are being prototyped on the web today.

From what I have skim-gleaned of Callixa's underlying technology philosophy, I respect and appreciate them as a company and would like to get to know them better. We need a system such as theirs, and in the due course of more analysis, very possibly theirs in particular.

At the same time, there is substantial risk to America, in my view, of having the economics in this situation grandfather a lobby that leads to allowing such systems to be used for ever more purely economic reasons.

One question for me is will the companies that get involved in this 'market' behave respectfully or manipulatively? This is too dangerous a place for manipulations emanating from narrow economic interests. We need a much more extended dialogue here. However it is perfectly legitimate for companies who have relevant products to help inspire and resource such a social dialogue to help educate our people into the many contingencies involved. I trust, as in John's 'politics of trust', that that is your intent.

I appreciate the opportunity for dialogue that your participation and thought quality has made possible and I welcome more.

Sincerely - David

John Vasconcellos to David Boulton and Phil Ryan et al re Ethics - Ethics 9
John is in ALL CAPS - David in normal then blue

P
A
R
T

2

Sent: Saturday, April 06, 2002 12:23 PM

Subject: Re: DAVID BOULTON'S RESPONSE TO airport security PROPOSAL

ALOHA DAVID - CATCHING UP SOME MORE - -

In a message YOU WROTE - :

Phil Ryan's letter begins with wanting to correct the notion "that the technical aspects of intelligence data sharing has existed in a meaningful and timely way". I didn't mean to imply that the systems in place today have the technical capabilities to do what we need. Rather that the problem isn't a lack of technological capability in general. If our government wanted to have and pay for such a system it could have had one some time ago.

FAIR ENOUGH!

The reason we don't have such a system isn't that we haven't had the technological means. Rather, we haven't had the social-economic-political will. We haven't had it before 9-11 because our perceived need for such a system didn't rise above the social and economic objections to implementing one. Since 9-11 the perceived need has grown to overpower the economic considerations and so the conversation turns to privacy and the related social issues involved.

I FEAR WE'RE BEING SO DELUGED BY FRIGHT MESSAGES, PARANOIA, WE'RE ON THE VERGE OF BLITHELY SURRENDERING ALL OUR HUMAN CIVIL RIGHTS!

WHAT A TRAGEDY!

WHAT A TRULY FRIGHTENING TIME IN OUR LIVES, IN OUR WORLD - THE MOST SUCH IN MY ENTIRE LIFE TO DATE

JOHN

YES, I FEEL THAT FEAR. AND, I ALSO FEEL THAT WE ARE ON THE VERGE OF REDEFINING WHAT WE MEAN BY OUR 'HUMAN CIVIL RIGHTS'. THIS ERA WILL PASS AND WE WILL BE THE CLEARER, CLEANER AND STRONGER FOR IT. THE TRAGEDY IS THE MANGLING OF INNOCENT LIVES BY THE INSANITIES OF OUR SLOW-TO-LEARN NATIONAL MIND.

**John Vasconcellos to David Boulton and Phil Ryan et al re Ethics - Ethics 10
John is in ALL CAPS**

P
A
R
T

Sent: Saturday, April 06, 2002 12:28 PM
Subject: Re: DAVID BOULTON'S RESPONSE TO airport security PROPOSAL

HELLO AGAIN DAVID - PHIL -

2

In a message dated 3/12/02 6:06:54 PM,

David Boulton writes:

Phil, I like and agree with what you said. I agree 'un-communicated information is conveyed (systemic) ignorance'. I like Callixa's approach and I have actually recommended them to a significant client of mine. I think we should implement such a system for airline security. My only concern is that this kind of intelligence-information power can be abused. Once the disparate systems are subsumed and integrated to provide such on-demand power, the cost of mining that data for other non initially intended uses is comparatively low. The issue that emerges for me is similar to human cloning. Will our society's learning keep pace with and help drive the ethical debate regarding the limits we impose on such systems? I don't know. I think we must proceed here and I think before doing so the advocates should be engaged in a rigorous, non commercially prejudiced, dialogue into these issues with people who advocate the freedoms of privacy.

- Best, David

AMEN, DAVID, AMEN!!

John Vasconcellos to Heather.Barbour re David Boulton's Ethics 11
John responding in all CAPS

P
A
R
T

2

From: Heather.Barbour

John -

I finally got a chance to look at this proposal and the conversation thread spurred by it. At first glance, I am most compelled by David Boulton's critique.

OF COURSE.

Although I appreciate the security issues under debate, and the Callixa software sounds pretty good in that it seems to address civil rights and civil liberties issues as we Americans generally understand them, the larger question David raises -- at what price profit? -- is of increasing concern to me.

FAIR ENOUGH.

It seems to me we need to have an extended conversation about America's economic role in the world and our own values vis-a-vis economics, specifically as these things relate to technology products. Even if we could assure ourselves that Callixa's technology would be used in accordance with our American civil rights values here at home - how might China use it? What is our responsibility to other peoples and cultures?

We need to have an extended exploration of the ethics of emerging technologies and the global business climate.

SO WHO & HOW & WHEN & WHERE MIGHT WE INITIATE SUCH AN EXPLORATION?

John Vasconcellos to all re DAN YANKELOVICH 'TRUST'/INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP FORUM - 4/28/02 Ethics 12

P
A
R
T

Sent: Tuesday, April 30, 2002 10:25 PM

Subject: DAN YANKELOVICH 'TRUST'/INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP FORUM;4/28/02

THE MOST POWERFUL SOCIAL TRENDS ARE THOSE THAT CONVERGE

2

They are transforming, and they are enduring!

THE CONVERGING EFFECTS OF 9/11 + 'ENRONITIS' –

Our feeling of greater vulnerability;

More dependence on government;

Rise in patriotism and sense of community

Increasing trust in institutions –

Including government –

1970 - 73% of people trusted (in) government;

1994 - 17% of people trusted (in) government;

2001/Oct - 64% of people trusted (in) government.

'ENRONITIS'

Definition: An institutional propensity to betray the trust of your constituents.

Result - a rise in populism.

What's more notable than failure of Enron itself –

Is the failure of the entire series of watchdog institutions!

Adding to the growing (to epidemic levels) erosion (collapse) of trust is the Catholic Church's current scandals.

Note that the long-standing title of 'used car salesman' as the most distrusted profession –

Has been replaced - by HMO's;

SO ALTOGETHER WE ARE NOTING, EXPERIENCING, A REMARKABLE MAGNITUDE OF THE SHIFT DOWNWARD OF CONFIDENCE AND TRUST –

Both:

In government, +

In corporations.

Therefore we are experiencing an emergency, a profound lowering of, a crisis in trust amongst our people today –

Especially trust in the American brand of capitalism;

Compounded by Enron, Bernadine Healy, and Cardinal Law –

Each and all of whom were/are utterly isolated from all reality except their own!

And society is creating subcultures and siloes that are grounds for further mistrust.

THEREFORE WE HAVE TODAY AN ENORMOUS AND GROWING PRESSING NEED FOR A NEW INSTITUTIONAL MORALTY!

IN LIGHT OF OUR CURRENT SITUATION, AND CRISES - THERE ARE ONLY 4 LIKELY MAJOR SCENARIOS FOR OUR FUTURE:

Deepening cynicism, isolation and fear;

Moral Fundamentalism (a la John Ashcroft);

A 'law & order' repressive government (a la John Ashcroft);

One or a combination of the above 3 scenarios is the inevitable result of our inaction!!!

Correcting the abuses facing us in our society thru strengthening American society!

And the key to accomplishing this #4 is 'RESTORING TRUST!'

We must recognize that the favorite American solutions will not work, will not suffice:

Passing another law;

Adopting more regulations;

A technological fix.

TRUST CAN ONLY BE RESTORED THRU A NEW INSTITUTIONAL MORALITY.

All since our 1960's, we've been making efforts to adjust to and incorporate the blast openings of the 60's;

And we engaged in, achieved, much social learning –

Enabling us to outgrow the excesses of the '60's;

Self-corrective measures have worked at the level of us as individuals,

But have not worked societally!

So it grows clear now that 'TRUST' is much more than a sweet ideal!

It is the only real antidote, the only promising alternative, to the cynicism and chaos we are experiencing today in the United States

Trust has become a necessity for us if we are to rebuild American society

THEREFORE WE ARE EXPERIENCING TODAY STRONG PUBLIC PRESSURE TO:

Curb the excesses of individualism; +

Restore traditional American virtues.

THOSE TRADITIONAL AMERICAN VALUES INCLUDE:

Honesty;

Respect;

Corporate good citizenship;

Paying your taxes, and obeying the law;

Conserving our environment;

Being a good neighbor, having a sense of community;

Transparency;

Humanization.

INSTITUTIONS LEGITIMATE AND ENCOURAGE SOME OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S WORST EXCESSES.

How curb excesses?

Self correction has not proven sufficient;

Such correction must begin at the top

Even as it must reflect the morals of our people themselves.

THE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS OF THE 1960'S & 1970'S TRANSFORMED THE MORAL CLIMATE OF AMERICA:

Civil rights movement –

Including feminism;

environmental movement;

Consumer movement;

Anti-war movement.

SO ALTOGETHER THAT IS AS FAR AS I HAVE PROCEEDED IN MY STUDY AND ANALYSIS OF THE MAJOR TRENDS EMERGING IN THE UNITED STATES TODAY –

I conclude that altogether we are experiencing a crisis of distrust – and

The only real promising hopeful alternative antidote is 'TRUST.'

I HAVE NOT YET PROCEEDED INTO THE NEXT LOGICAL STEP - HOW TO ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF 'TRUST' IN AMERICA

Yet I want to offer you in closing, with the question, 'Is this the way?'

John Vasconcellos quotation, call, challenge, in his LEGACY PROJECT, calling for a new "POLITICS OF TRUST" - 'What will best constitute this (desired, committed to) living legacy (of mine) is the generation of a new movement in American politics, grounded in the belief that (we) human beings are innately inclined toward becoming life-affirming, constructive, responsible and trustworthy. This faithful view of our human nature gives rise to a whole new series of policies, programs and political processes that serve to empower the healthy growth and development of each and every person in our state and nation (as well as that of our communities themselves).'

(FOLLOWING POINTS MADE BY DAN YANKOLOVICH DURING GROUP DISCUSSION)

HOW CAN WE LAUNCH THIS NEW SOCIALMOVEMENT?

How can we make it work, speak to our people –

Speak even to high school students, our citizens of tomorrow?

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS BEGIN WITH A SENSE OF OUTRAGE –

JV - isn't that the old paradigm once again?

Couldn't we envision a new methodology befitting who we are becoming as persons –

An energy, a movement, propelled proactively, by our own growing human yearning for self-realization and deeper sense of community?

Social movements are the result of a combination of:

The passionate expressions of @4% of the people, +

A much larger majority response, who find themselves saying (of the 4%), 'Well, they have a point!'

This majority having no place to go, growing ever angrier, gradually becoming a tinder box.

Our challenge now: how to enlist & mobilize this small impassioned minority?

Inquiry: how come we are not finding such in our college students today, who are largely dispassionate –

Especially incongruous in the face of the hugely passionate Islam kids.

The truth is that there is plenty of passion out there today –

Better yet, in here, within us –

If we could only sound the right call –

Which would speak to them, be heard by them, serve to unify them, serve to organize them altogether.

People insisting on their rights is not the path to the future!

DICK FARSON: HOW ABOUT USING THE INTERNET TO SPREAD THE WORD, AND TO MOBILIZE, AROUND THIS NEW UNIFYING PRINCIPLE OF TRUST?

We owe it to ourselves, we have to learn how to use it for these purposes

SO ALTOGETHER, OUR FORMULA FOR THIS NEW MOVEMENT OF TRUST:

Faithful inspired visionary leadership; +

The outraged and ready masses; +

The Internet to provide us the means, the glue, to find each other, to spread the good news, to all come together, enlist & mobilize, generate this new movement.

IT'S A MYTH THAT PROGRESSIVES ARE HARD TO AWAKEN, MOBILIZE –

Cf woman, civil rights groups, anti-war folks, environmentalists.

All Progressives today are in disarray –

We may have lost our self-confidence –

But it is still there, we are still here.

We have not gotten out act together –

We simply must get our act together!

We desperately need a new organizing unifying principles –

Why not make that - 'TRUST?'

DEMOCRATS HAVE TRADITIONALLY SHIED AWAY FROM DISCUSSION OF VALUES – TO THEIR PERIL –

Democrats have discussed, espoused values - only economically.

But values are all of where it's at today –

And Democrats must go there if they hope to succeed!

(WALT ANDERSON) - WE FACE THE LACK OF VISION OF THE FUTUER TOWARD WHICH WE WANT TO PROGRESS.

A truly compelling new Progressive agenda has to go beyond domestic concerns & challenges –

To Include the international scene –

Including the JIHAD.

How do we include that?

We must recognize we are facing a real clash of civilizations.

(DAN Y) - THIS IS AN EXTRAORDINARY GENERATION OF AMERICANS –

But not being used well now.

WE MUST BE CAREFUL TO RECOGNIZE THE MORE MODERATE VIEWPOINTS EXISTING WITHIN THE CIVILIAN POPULATIONS INTERNATIONALLY.

(JV) - AGAIN, WE MUST RECOGNIZE, OWN UP TO THE REALITY THAT:

We laud our 'new demography,'

We praise our 'new economy,'

We cherish our 'new consciousness' –

And yet we are stuck with our same old cynical divisive politics!

David Boulton to John Vasconcellos re DAN YANKELOVICH 'TRUST'/INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP FORUM - 4/28/02 - Institutional Morality = Ethics - Ethics 13

From: David Boulton
Sent: Wednesday, May 01, 2002 1:32 PM

Aloha John,

From your notes and comments it seems this was quite an event.

I want to comment (somewhat soapbox) on the threads of 'institutional morality' and 'internationality'. My view is that the deep fulcrum for liberating healthy change here is to address the 'ethic' underlying and organizing the 'morality'. I think that the corporate behaviors we are concerned/outraged by are merely the logical consequences of an underlying ethic we take for granted.

Our most fundamental business ethic assumes that businesses have the right to pursue their economic interests even to the extent of directing the thoughts and emotions of people with the clear intent of manipulating their purchasing behavior. Think about this. Its considered business as usual, 'nothing personal' for business to manipulate our behaviors to serve their profit interests. We take it for granted.

When this ethic becomes empowered by modern behavioral sciences and information technology and excused from responsibility by multi-national legal status, its frightening. We have seen what Madison Ave. can do with tobacco company ethics, Lucasfilm's multimedia, Spielberg's masterful attention direction and with the right 'star attractions'. We have a semi-hypnotized society - hypnotized into accepting manipulation as normal, hypnotized into a lack of respect for their own learning and discernment.

What happens when these incredibly powerful interests, who place the right to make money above the injustice of manipulating people's lives, have access to the kind of intelligence powers tomorrow's information systems will provide?

Its this ethic, in my view, that we must challenge out into the open. So long as it remains the 'American way' we will live in a world of predatory economics where the economies of scale will favor the interests of the corporations.

We abolished slavery in the overt sense. We agreed people shouldn't own people. Every human being has rights as a human being. I think this ethic is the underlying mechanism of today's economic slavery.

----- relatedly -----international ethics of America-----

Why not treat the citizens of the world the way we treat the citizens of the United States? - treat all citizens of the earth as if they have the same rights as US citizens? We obviously don't grant them the financial support entitlements of US citizens. But why not treat them as if their rights as human beings are no different than our own. Regardless of whether their governments do, shouldn't our ethic demand that we do?

Why should products, prohibited by law in the US because they are harmful or dangerous, be sold to people in other countries simply because their governments haven't caught up with our standards?

In the US, no matter how 'wanted' the mass murderer in one house the police wouldn't think of getting him or her by using weapons that would kill people walking around the neighborhood. Why does this sensible, ethical restraint to the use of lethal force stop at our borders? Does not being a citizen of the United States, change the rights a human being is entitled to in the conscience of the United States? WHY?

Developing an international ethic for our governmental and US based corporate behaviors would, I believe, go a long way toward opening up the international dialogue - would -precipitate the beginnings of our trustworthiness beyond our self-interests.

**John Vasconcellos to David Boulton re Institutional Morality = Ethics - Ethics 14
John in ALL CAPS**

P
A
R
T

2

ALOHA DAVID -

In a message dated 5/1/02 4:32:38 PM, dboulton@implicity.com writes:
<< Aloha John,>From your notes and comments it seems this was quite an event.

IT WAS!

I want to comment (somewhat soapbox) on the threads of 'institutional morality' and 'internationality'. My view is that the deep fulcrum for liberating healthy change here is to address the 'ethic' underlying and organizing the 'morality'. I think that the corporate behaviors we are concerned/outraged by are merely the logical consequences of an underlying ethic we take for granted.

THAT'S LIKELY TRUE OF JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING IN OUR LIVES, DAVID - -

Our most fundamental business ethic assumes that businesses have the right to pursue their economic interests even to the extent of directing the thoughts and emotions of people with the clear intent of manipulating their purchasing behavior. Think about this. Its considered business as usual, 'nothing personal' for business to manipulate our behaviors to serve their profit interests. We take it for granted.

THAT'S OUR SAD TRUTH OF OUR LIVES TODAY IN THIS CULTURE!

When this ethic becomes empowered by modern behavioral sciences and information technology and excused from responsibility by multi-national legal status, its frightening. We have seen what Madison Ave. can do with tobacco company ethics, lucasfilm's multimedia, Spielberg's masterful attention direction and with the right 'star attractions'. We have a semi-hypnotized society - hypnotized into accepting manipulation as normal, hypnotized into a lack of respect for their own learning and discernment.

HOW SAD, HOW TRUE!

What happens when these incredibly powerful interests, who place the right to make money above the injustice of manipulating people's lives, have access to the kind of intelligence powers tomorrow's information systems will provide?

OUCH - THAT'S FRIGHTENING! AND ISN'T THE ONLY TRULY REAL EFFECTIVE SUSTAINING ANTIDOTE - THE PREPARATION OF EACH OF OUR CHILDREN TO SO FULLY BE OPEN TO KNOWING AND BEING THEMSELVES, THAT THEY HAVE THE VISION TO RECOGNIZE & SEE THRU ALL OF THIS, AND THE RESILIENCE TO MOVE ON THRU & BEYOND IT - HEALTHFULLY?

It's this ethic, in my view, that we must challenge out into the open.

ABSOLUTELY!

So long as it remains the 'American way' we will live in a world of predatory economics where the economies of scale will favor the interests of the corporations.

YEP!

We abolished slavery in the overt sense. We agreed people shouldn't own people. Every human being has rights as a human being. I think this ethic is the underlying mechanism of today's economic slavery.

AND IT IS NOW TIME THAT EACH AND ALL OF US COME TOGETHER INTO A MOVEMENT THAT CHALLENGES THIS ETHIC, RECLAIMS OUR LIVES!

Heather Barbour & David Boulton Thread re: Ethics and The Intrusion Explosion - Ethics 15

Sent: Thursday, May 02, 2002 8:28 AM

Subject: NYTimes.com Article: The Intrusion Explosion

This article from NYTimes.com

From Heather to David

David - the more I read from you about this stuff the more I think we are using the same brain. :-) Thought you might appreciate this piece.

Heather Barbour (w/Sen. Vasconcellos) hbarbour@earthlink.net

The Intrusion Explosion

May 2, 2002

By WILLIAM SAFIRE

President Bush's retreat on privacy was a triumph for the intrusion lobby.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/05/02/opinion/02SAFI.html?ex=1021364087&ei=1&en=f77dc7c64480e80c>

From David to Heather

On Thu, 2 May 2002 14:09:32 -1000 David Boulton wrote:

We are using the same brain :-) - thanks - good piece - it's amazing to me that this dog can sleep so well - David

From Heather to David

It's the culture - we're becoming a nation glued together by greed and encouraging the world to do the same in global historic turns -- we're leading the way into the post-human rights period. homo economus.

People just don't see this conversation for what it is - they think it's about spam, when it's really about defining a new notion, applied across all cultures, of a universal "person;" and establishing human rights that transcend geographical and national boundaries, and therefore escape sovereign power.

The problem is - different cultures handle these issues in very different ways and our inability to accept this results in increased conflict.

Josh Holcomb to John Vasconcellos and David Boulton: The Ethic of Trust? Ethics 16

P
A
R
T

From: Josh Holcomb
Sent: Tuesday, May 07, 2002 1:23 PM

Subject: The ethic of trust?

2

John V, John Steiner, Fred, David:

Conversations like these continually deepen my understanding of the Politics of Trust.

- (1) Fred refers to 'the ethic of compassion' in the Dalai Lama book.
- (2) David Boulton recently wrote about our ethics informs our sense of ourselves/others.

The two emails have given rise to a very basic question: Is trust an ethic?
Aren't we looking at how 'the ethic of trust' informs our sense of ourselves/others?

Joshua

David Boulton to Josh Holcomb and John Vasconcellos et al: The Ethic of Trust? Ethics 17

From: David Boulton
Sent: Tuesday, May 07, 2002 5:18 PM
To: John Vasconcellos
Cc: John Steiner; Subject: RE: The ethic of trust?

Joshua,

Good to read you. Great question.

"Is trust an ethic?"

I would love to flesh this out in greater length with all who are interested. I would come back to the relationship between ethics and our sense of ourselves another time.

For the moment, in my view, the simple answer would be 'I don't think so'.

Trust is a natural phenomena of beings. We are born unconditionally trusting. We learn not to trust - we learn to be on self-alert in areas where our trust has proven insufficient to our needs.

Trust is 'inside' - ethics is 'outside'

Ethics are the 'fine print', implicitly, of our relationship covenants and agreements (expressed and unexpressed). On the one hand its against the law for children to be employed to do dangerous work. On the other, its perfectly OK for corporations to manipulate the emotions of children so as to provoke in them a desire to consume things known to be dangerous to their health and well being. Its very insidious and intricate.

In the middle of 19th century we, as a nation, had a conversation about our 'ethics' – we decided that people couldn't 'own' people. We decided that human beings are entitled to a freedom befitting their human beingness – that human beings can't be property –can't be slaves.

150 years later we must again take up this conversation. Today we face the question are human being's 'assets'? Do we agree that a person or group of people, may, in the pursuit of their separate economic interests, engage in the intentional manipulation of the behavior of other human beings?

This is the primary regulating ethic of international business and, at its deeper levels, it is the very same ethic we outlawed, in its earlier form, in our civil war.

Today, we have a new kind of Madison Ave: supported by the financial muscle of wall street, informed by state-of-the-art-behavioral-science using Lucasfilm like media effects under Spielberg-like mastery of attention direction To manipulate the emotions and thoughts of people toward spending their money on whatever it is that is being sold. On top of all of this, we now add the power of modern information technology to inform how the whole system tailors itself to each individual and maximizes the relevancy of its 'pitch'.

This is what we human are really up against. As most of the world's money and power is aligned behind it.

There is no question about the basic legitimacy of business. Developing ever better ways to exchange with one another so as to support and enrich the lives of all is necessary. The question is whether business is legitimate, ethically, when its intention is to manipulate a buying behavior, rather than to resource learning in a customer initiated buying process. I say no. Its out of line for a business to operate from such an orientation. To do so is to reduce people to the status of manipulable assets – a subtler, better hidden ethic, but essentially the same as: people are property.

All over the world corporations are coming into existence with a new and different ethic. The new ethic is based on mutual respect and mutual learning. In this ethic, a company's business is based on a learning oriented dialogue with their existing and potential customers. They are learning to ever more optimally evolve the value they bring their customers and they are supporting their customers in ever more optimally learning to differentiate and appreciate the value they are bringing.

We need to bring the ethical differences I am pointing towards to the attention of our nation. And, to the world. We need to call out into the open, like the issues of abortion or ecology, how our politicians think about this.

I believe this distinction in ethics can form the basis for galvanizing the 'cultural creatives' whose values, I believe, would for the most part, align with the mutuality ethic. In other words there is a market waiting to be identified for the products of companies who function ethically.

I think the way to change the balance of power, to free ourselves from the tyranny of the prevailing ethic, is to call it out into the open, co create a new ethic and then help it become the ever more significant basis for competitive distinction. Until there is a fundamental shift in this prevailing ethic, in what do we trust? How do you connect the deep human interior meaning of 'trust' to institutions, that by their constitutional ethic, function by reducing human beings to assets? I don't trust people or organizations coming from that ethic.

Thanks Joshua,
David

Part 3 - Dialogue Into Politics, Democracy, Technology and Learning

This dialogue is primarily with California State Senator [John Vasconcellos](#) about the future of politics, the role of technology in the evolution of government, the role of government in the evolution of technology, and the role of learning in the evolution of both.

"The Gothic idea that we were to look backwards instead of forwards for the improvement of the human mind, and to recur to the annals of our ancestors for what is most perfect in government, in religion and in learning, is worthy of those bigots in religion and government by whom it has been recommended, and whose purposes it would answer. But it is not an idea which this country will endure." --[Thomas Jefferson](#)

"Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other". [John F. Kennedy](#), speech prepared for delivery in Dallas the day of his assassination, November 22, 1963

Page 2 — #1: 1991 - A Proposal to Assemblyman John Vasconcellos If we could jump 20 years down the road and take an aerial view of the new politics one of its most obvious differences from the old would be the degree to which the "WE THE PEOPLE" part were actually engaged in doing it - indeed that **the very idea of "political participation" had been transformed.**

Page 3 — #2: 1994 - Virtual Nation - The Ethics of Interface - Fort Ord, Ca. Its signature difference will be the level of participation possible (granularity and frequency). Its foundational assumption that **radically changing the quality of participation possible will effect the dialogue in ways reframing and rehashing issues can no longer address.**

Page 4 — #3: 1997 - Designing for Democracy Conference - Distributed Dialogue Processing (DDP): (Note this item is comparatively conceptually complex) DDP is a ground floor layer of communication infrastructure that **provides the constituents in a human system the means to engage one another in a contextually synchronized, situationally relevant, and low-overhead-to-participate, distributed dialogue.** DDP provide a means for processing the experiences of such a constituency and maximizing the opportunity for each contributor to learn from the experiences of each of their constituents. DDP provides each constituent with the means to exercise their core capacity to make and articulate the kind of meaningful distinctions characteristic of participating in a Dialogue while also providing 'owners' / facilitators the means to see the aggregate patterns of constituent experience in relation to their areas of responsibility and to respond to them individually or in groups that dynamically constell around common interests or needs.

Page 7 — #4: 2000 - Bill Bradley for President Technology & Governance Proposal Outline The future of humanity is being significantly influenced in every way and at every level by technology – who has it and who doesn't – what it could do in principal and what it will do constrained to the narrow economic interests of a few multi-national corporations. Given the enormous potential of technology **prudence demands that we get conscious, beyond the marketplace's invisible hand, to how and where to steward the technology's stewarding of us.**

Page 10 — #5: 2000 - The New Technology of Democracy - Senate and Assembly Joint Committee to Prepare California for the 21st Century. If we were to start over today and envision a new democracy that was design-enabled by the frequency and quality of citizen participation that modern technology makes possible what would it look like? How should California, situated as it uniquely is, right at the intersection between the evolution of technology and the evolution of democracy, be proactively involved in **defining the role of technology in the evolution of governance and the role of governance in the evolution of technology?**

Page 13 — #6: 2001 - A New Model of Democracy for the Cultural Creatives Brainstorming Meeting Many people seem to prefer to get behind - show up - for their particular issues and crusades, and yet for various reasons choose to stay out of the mainstream general political processes. I am such a one. They, like the individual stock traders, are ever less interested in buying into someone or some entities 'general' program. They want to 'invest' their precious life-attention-time where it feels like they can make a difference and where it means something to them. **What if we could offer them a way to participate in a constituency that isn't asking them to generally do or believe anything?**

"You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should be doing for themselves".
- [Abraham Lincoln](#)

#1: A Proposal to Assemblyman John Vasconcellos 8/25/91

John,

I think you are "right on" to seek a new human politics and I trust you know how much I agree with the merits if not always the centrality of the issues you have brought to the forefront. However, in my view the issues of the new politics are only one part of the equation, the other and perhaps equally important is the overall relationship that emerges between the people participating. In other words if we could jump 20 years down the road and take an aerial view of the new politics one of its most obvious differences from the old would be the degree to which the "WE THE PEOPLE" part were actually engaged in doing it - indeed that the very idea of "political participation" had been transformed.

We have spoken in the past of my belief that the future of politics will be dramatically changed by the role of technology. Not just technology as an issue - technology as a significant force in the mediation of collaboration and dialogue about issues. I believe technology is destined to mediate a heretofore impossible relationship between "representatives" and the "represented" - one that provides the people represented meaningful ways to participate (to think and feel included - value adding) while redefining the representative as a leader/facilitator of the dialogically focused collaboration based activities.

Given the fact that your matrix of relationships includes IBM, Apple, Tandem, H.P., Next, Pac Bell, Cal Leadership, Lou's work on collaboration, Tom Peters, Bill Isaacs - that you represent a district known throughout the world for its technical leadership - (in short that you have access to the world's leading resources on computing, communications, organizational design, collaboration, team learning & dialogue) it seems to me that you should convene these resources and propose the pioneering project of developing and locally testing (modeling for the state and the world) an entirely new relationship between yourself and your constituents. Somebody is going to do it. Given your ambitions and your connections and your district there is no one better situated anywhere in the world to catalyze this experiment.

I think you should propose this endeavor at your upcoming gala. I think it's the right call to action to engage many of your supporters - that its both relevant and future oriented. John, I don't think this takes anything away from the issues you have worked so hard to champion. On the contrary if you can help facilitate a dialogical/collaborative model for allowing people to share in the political process, a healthier, esteeming state can't help but emerge.

David

#2: Virtual Nation - The Ethics of Interface
December 02, 1994
(extracted from Fort Ord Proposal for Virtual University)

Background: Politics

To develop and model a virtual political process that radically redefines a representative as one whose is responsible for refining the fidelity of their representation by having an ongoing ever more extended and inclusive person to person, real-time and technologically distributed, dialogue with their constituents.

I think learning to employ and extend state of the art distance, distributed and dialogical learning "mediation" systems will create a new kind of infrastructure through which what we mean by "participating" in the political process will also undergo a radical reframe.

I believe a new form of politics will emerge. It will not emerge out of today's governmental system. It will emerge (initially in parallel) through a Virtual Nation (one forming today on the Internet and other large networks)

Its signature difference will be the level of participation possible (granularity and frequency). Its foundational assumption that radically changing the quality of participation possible will effect the dialogue in ways reframing and rehashing issues can no longer address.

The greater the level of participation possible (granularity and frequency) the less political "representation" required - the greater the need for education regarding participation (both how to and substantively about what)

This new relationship will be mediated by technology and technology always effects who uses it - the alphabet effect is a case - voter apathy is a case - not only are we "what we eat" - we become what we use - technology not only effects how humans do things it effects how humans internally relate to and process meanings.

Just as our current governmental systems are a form of technology - a crude form in which the issues of voting (in terms of the range of choice and the frequency of choosing) and representation and lawmaking and executing all reflect a distributed people mediation system (one designed for a kind of representation that was technically possible over 200 years ago [horseback and walking]) a new form of technologically mediating a political body of people is both possible and (as the recent election demonstrates) needed today.

As it is inevitable such a system will form it behooves us to consider its implications for both body politic and the ecology of the bodies & minds who will use it.

In essence I think that the underlying ETHIC of INTERFACE of such a system will be the "COMMON SENSE" and BILL OF RIGHTS of the next generation of government. In addition to the distributed and virtual political constituencies possible "on-line" I propose and think it critical that we establish an experimental virtual space in a common local space: Fort Ord. That we create a community within a community capable of testing out the tools and processes of a new kind of democracy and do it in a learning environment suited to that purpose

#3: Designing for Democracy: Distributed Dialogue Processing

Distributed Dialogue Processing

Background:

Distributed Dialogue Processing (DDP) is a ground floor layer of communication infrastructure that provides the constituents in a human system the means to engage one another in a contextually synchronized, situationally relevant, and low-overhead-to-participate, Distributed Dialogue™. DDP provide a means for processing the experiences of such a constituency and maximizing the opportunity for each contributor to learn from the experiences of each of their constituents. DDP also provides each constituent with the means to exercise their core capacity to make and articulate the kind of meaningful distinctions characteristic of participating in a Dialogue. The best way to understand the functional nature and design intent of Distributed Dialogue Processing is to understand its premises:

3

Premise 1) There is an implicit relationship between every person that contributes 'content' to a product, process, service or issue (thought in the form of words or work product in the form of artifacts) and the person(s) (constituents) who interact with that contribution. Each contribution defines a constituency. This constituency consists of all those involved or related to the creation and intention behind the contribution and all those who interact with the contribution. (Where 'contribution' can be broken down into elements as granular as a word)

Premise 2) In its most elemental form, relationships within the constituency are governed by the following 3 laws of human systems:

I) The success of any effort to design, develop or improve any 'system' ...

- curriculum, classroom, school district, pedagogy, project, product, process, service, issue, etc.

- in terms of its systemic performance:

organizational efficiency, cost-effectiveness, optimal achievement of intent

depends on the volume, dimensional extent (scope) and granularity (detail) of the feedback it can gather and learn from.

II) The volume, scope and detail of feedback flow in a system is inversely related to how difficult it is for its constituents...

actual "customers"; learners, teachers, parents, administrators, curriculum providers, assessors, superintendents, board members, stakeholders, etc.,

to articulate their feedback in the moment and in the context of their interactions with the system.

III) A system's ability to learn from the feedback it gathers is directly related to how well its "owners"...

- persons responsible for any one or all of the resources available in the system

- persons responsible for any one or all aspects of the implementation, mission or intent behind a system (above)

process and understand (in relation to their areas of responsibility and priorities) the feedback they receive.

Premise 3) Taken to its finest level of granularity, the optimal 'place' from which to design a dialogical relationship between members of a constituency is the 'stutter'. Stutter: A perturbation in the flow - an involuntary 'drop-out' or 'disconnect' in the flow of engaging or interacting.

Every "stutter" in the flow of an individual's interactions with any "resource" (contribution) intended to support or facilitate their learning, performing, participating, using or enjoying...

all or any aspects of: a product, process, service, i.e., a course, book, computer simulation game, etc.

is a great opportunity for both the individual and for all those involved in providing what he or she is interacting with. Each "stutter" represents the *best possible source* of information from which to become more intelligent and more effective (independently and in relationship with one another.)

For the individual interacting with a resource, each stutter is a internal feedback signal indicating that something is missing, needed or incomplete. It also provides, if reflected on and distilled (disambiguated), the *best possible source* of internal information from which to understand what is missing or needed and, given the available options, how to best proceed.

For the people and organizations that benefit, profit or are responsible for providing the "resources", the *best possible source* of information from which to intelligently evolve and cost-optimally improve them stems from understanding...

in precise relation the specific interaction locations they are responsible for

where and why people stutter.

Based on these premises (and others related to learning which can be found @ www.implicit.com) DDP's design is oriented toward mediating a feedback-based dialogue at the level of 'stutters'. The design intent is two-fold:

- 1) To reduce the barrier to constituent participation, by providing a context sensitive dialogue box that can be called in an instant and within which a constituent can see the patterns of previous constituent experience in relation to the exact context and situation they find themselves in. Should they find that their experience is not unique they can follow the paths of the constituents before them or reinforce an opinion or articulation of need as yet unsupported by the system. If there experience is unique then and only then do they spend any time articulating it (then time they spend is reduced dramatically because they don't have to articulate any of the context normally necessary to understand it).
- 2) To provide 'owners' / facilitators the means to see the aggregate patterns of constituent experience in relation to their areas of responsibility and to respond to them individually or in groups that dynamically constell around common interests or needs. DDP's visualization tools allow an owner to see the distribution of constituent needs as they cluster around the owner's area(s) of responsibility. Because the dialogue process on the other end allows constituents to reinforce previous experiences, the owner is spared the tedious work of wading through what would otherwise be redundant. The owner is always dealing with what is fresh or the patterns in what is known.

In this sense DDP is analogous to a context sensitive discussion group processor that can be embedded at any location within the content accessed by a constituency.

Current Implementation

DDP is being implemented by the 2way corporation in Seattle, Wa., for use as an Intranet solution. It consists of 2 components: 1) An authoring tool which will allow a lay person to create the "seed crystal" scaffolding for facilitating a dialogue. As simple to use as an outlining word processor, the authoring tool enables 'owners' to create a branching 'form' that will enable their constituents to interact in the ways previously described and to embed that form (via a hyperlink) into any html document. 2) A server tool that will organize any SQL database to store the 2way dialogue scaffolding, that will push a Dialogue box and its context specific contents to a client browser (requires javascript and frames) and that will generate html 'reports' about the patterns and contents of constituent experience relative to each interaction location. The tool set is scheduled for shipment in June of 97.

Proposed Use:

The internet is rapidly becoming the wide area network of the entire planet. Its ubiquitous nature and the inexpensive browsers now available to anyone with a computer, make it the ideal 'place' for facilitating Distributed Dialogues. Perhaps the most significant venue for the application of the ideas behind DDP is in the development of alternative forms of representational government.

It is clear that a new form of politics must emerge. Its signature difference will be the level of participation possible (granularity and frequency). Its foundational assumption that radically enhancing the quality of participation will effect the dialogue in ways reframing and rehashing issues can't address. The greater the level of participation possible (granularity and frequency) the less politicized "representation" required (though the greater the need for education regarding participation both how to and substantively about what).

Just as our current governmental systems are a form of technology - a crude form in which the issues of voting (in terms of the range of choice and the frequency of choosing) and representation, lawmaking and executing all reflect a distributed people mediation system (one designed for a kind of representation that was technically possible over 200 years ago [horseback and walking]) a new form of technologically mediating a political constituency is both possible and (as the recent election demonstrates) needed today.

As it is inevitable such a system will form it behooves us to consider its implications for both body politic and the ecology of the bodies & minds who will use it. In essence I think that the underlying ETHIC of INTERFACE of such a system will be the "COMMON SENSE" and BILL OF RIGHTS of the next generation of government.

DDP can offer the evolution of emerging new political processes a dialogical infrastructure that can facilitate the new level of participation between and among its constituents.

#4: Bill Bradley for President Technology & Governance Proposal Outline

P
A
R
T

3

From: David Boulton [mailto:dboulton@implicity.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 11, 2000 2:44 AM
To: John Vasconcellos; John Vasconcellos
Subject: Proposal sketches

John,

What follows is not ready for Bradley. It's for you and for the others you consider potential participants in your 'Bradley-IT team'

Background...

The issue isn't how to use the Internet as a tool for helping get Bradley (or anyone else) elected, its what is America's leadership role in applying this technology to the maximum benefit of everyone? How shall we make use of this new technology such that it furthers the cause of participative democracy, serves the American Vision and empowers our people?

When people of succeeding centuries and millennia look back on the last half of the 20th Century and the beginning of the 3rd Millennium they will think of this time as the beginning of the age of virtuality(1) – as the time when computers and the web combined to give birth to an entirely new kind of technology enabled, yet deeply human, social infrastructure.

From the grocery store to the stock market, technology is revolutionizing every aspect of our lives. Within a few years virtually every person in the united states will have devices in their homes, schools, work places, libraries and public spaces that will enable them to access and benefit from the opportunities and resources of the internet.

I am suggesting that an opportunity exists for Bradley to galvanize voters by providing visionary leadership regarding the role of government in the evolution of technology and, relatedly, the role of technology in the evolution of government. The right new social vision for the technology is, in itself, a powerful, fresh and still open-to-claim vision-proposition for getting elected.

Proposal #1...

Like the Space Program's Man on the Moon Mission – long range, a call to industry as well as government, a socially mobilizing vision, a bold goal for the evolution of mankind and a stimulus to the economy.

Like the Human Genome Project – long range, scientifically credible, recognizes the value of its leverage to uncountable endeavors.

Like the Library of Congress – vastness, the nation's most implicate index.

Like PBS – commercial free, a resource for everyone to learn from.

National educational technology challenge: A PBS for the WEB: **The Planetary Learning Library (PLL) (1). A place where anyone can go to understand anything they might be interested in, when they wish to do it, and without cost.** Think of it as a national(2) on-line supplement to the education system from Kindergarten through University (both as a resource for the people who work in education as well as for the individuals wanting to learn).

Like PBS there would be no commercials, no banners, no bandwidth drag for any reason other than the content intended. Unlike PBS this space would be alive – its content/knowledge/meaning wouldn't just be broadcast rather it would be made available in ways designed to foster interactive learning. It would enable people to join in distributed dialogues about the range of meanings and implications associated with any 'human understanding'. In effect a system that enables anyone who is interested in learning about anything to be able to enter whatever it is "_____.dia"(1) and enter a space devoid of any intent or content except that related to the sincere attempt to resource that individual's inquiry into understanding what is known and what is under dialogue about that _____.

Conceptually it might look like: a .dia(1) extension to the web that uses content organizing link-structure-standards that the browsers dynamically reconfigure themselves to on entry into the .dia1 space. The browsers would thus transform into learner-interface portals able to travel along explication or implication paths, rubinate through alternative representations, contextually relevant references and engage in auto-context synchronized distributed dialogues with anyone else in meaning space of a particular interest or need.

Obviously, this project is complex and I realize that there are many obstacles. I would argue that the obstacles are less than those faced when Kennedy proposed the moon mission, that they are less technically complex than mapping the human genome and that the project as a whole has the potential to do as much good for as many people as both of them.

There is much more I have to say on the subject – how to seed crystal its growth, how to design the interface, how to provide it with a distributed dialogue infrastructure... More on all that as the occasions warrant.

Proposal #2...

Inspire and lead a national dialogue that seeks to develop a policy illuminating vision regarding the role of technology in the evolution of government and the role of government in the evolution of technology.

Our government is a social-mediation machine (a low-tech WEB), the architecture and engineering of which is based on the number of representatives and frequency of congressing that was technically possible in the days of horse based transportation and mail delivery. If we were to start over today and envision a new democracy that was design-enabled by the frequency and quality of citizen participation that modern technology makes possible what would it look like?

The future of humanity is being significantly influenced in every way and at every level by technology – who has it and who doesn't – what it could do in principal and what it will do constrained to the narrow economic interests of a few multi-national corporations. Given the enormous potential of technology prudence demands that we get conscious, beyond the marketplace's invisible hand, to how and where to steward the technology's stewarding of us.

This dialogue would result in proposals for how the US should be involved with the emerging world of technology in the 21st Century. These might include:

National Cyberspace Agency(1)

Analogous to the Department of Transportation, NASA and the Department of the Treasury this agency would:

Develop strategies that could inform national policy on how to best leverage the emerging technologies to the benefit of national and international democracy.

Develop strategies that could inform national policy regarding the legal infrastructure of the emerging cyberworld.

Develop strategies for the US playing the role of strategic vision/venture capitalist with emerging technologies that have significant social or economic benefit.

Develop a new form of 'voting' on issues that is above 'tampering' suspicion and that is based on a frequency appropriate to the issues at hand not the term of the representatives involved.

Prototype a parallel representational democracy system (initially like non PAC driven governmental focus groups) that uses the web to enable people of common national and local interests to join and/or form constituencies and elect representatives responsible for facilitating ongoing distributed dialogues within the constituencies - dialogues that facilitate the mutual learning and actions of its members and that feed a different granularity of intelligence into the existing governmental system.

Here again there are many more things to add and to discuss. But I will leave it here until we get first reactions. John, again my apologies for the delay. I hope this is sufficient a sketch to take next steps with. Let me know how you want to proceed.

David

- 1) I am not attached to any names or labels. I have used PLL, .dia and National Cyberspace Agency as placeholders.
- 2) Possibly proposed as a United Nations project so everyone in the world with the (ever more inexpensively available) technology can participate, benefit from the learning it makes possible. This also positions Bradley as someone leading the US toward leading the WORLD. It also helps make news about the idea and Bradley's proposal of it -international news and international technical news. It's a way to contribute to the world significantly and cost-effectively and calls us into a working relationship with the rest of the world about human learning and how to responsibly facilitate and resource it.
- 3) For brevity I have made reference to some of my own earlier concepts some of the terms I have used like 'learner interface' most people will not be familiar with and will need to be replaced with long hand versions should we take this to next steps.

#5: Senate and Assembly Joint Committee to Prepare California for the 21st Century.

-----Original Message-----

Sent: Saturday, September 02, 2000 9:14 PM Subject: URGENT REQUEST

DAVID -

HELLO, FRIEND, HOW ARE YOU?

I'M OUT OF SESSION FINALLY FOR THE YEAR - TIL JAN 1 2001 - HURRAY! AND I JUST WOKE UP TO THE RECOGNITION THAT WE'RE CONDUCTING OUR FOUNDING RETREAT OF OUR MEMBERS OF OUR NEW JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE TO PREPARE CALIFORNIA FOR THE 21ST CENTURY - THIS COMING WED & THUR IN SANTA BARBARA.

I NEED YOUR HELP RIGHT AWAY WITH (AT LEAST) #2:

I'M ENCOURAGING MY COCHAIR SARAH REYES TO JOIN ME IN RECOMMENDING TO OUR MEMBERSHIP THAT WE FOCUS ON 2 INITIATIVES IN THE COMING YEAR:

- RACE & DIVERSITY & INCLUSION - FOCUSED ON THE THEME THAT SINCE WE'RE GOING TO BECOME A STATE WHOSE WORKING POPULATION WILL BE 2/3'S OF COLOR BY 2010 - THIS UTILIZATION OF ALL OUR TALENT IS ESSENTIAL FOR OUR ONGOING PROSPERITY. I EXPECT BRIAN WILL BE ESPECIALLY ABLE TO HELP US GET CLARITY ON THIS ONE.

- TECHNOLOGY - IN PARTICULAR (YOU'LL RECOGNIZE THE PHRASING) OBSERVING & HOPING TO HELP NUDGE THE CONTINUING INTERACTION OF THE CONTINUING EVOLUTION OF TECHNOLOGY AND OF GOVERNANCE - TOWARDS ENHANCING SELF-GOVERNANCE. HERE IS WHERE I COULD SURE USE YOUR HELP, DAVID - HAVE YOU WRITTEN A 1-PAGER (OR SOMETHING AKIN TO THAT) WHICH WE COULD USE (HEY, PLAGIARIZE) TO GIVE TO OUR MEMBERS FOR THEM TO CONSIDER, DISCUSS?

I'M ASKING MY STAFF TO GIVE SOME HEAVY DUTY ATTENTION TO THESE 2 TOPICS AND TO COME UP WITH DOCUMENTS PRESENTING EACH FOR OUR MEMBERS ON THURSDAY.

LET ME KNOW, MY GOOD FRIEND -

ALOHA - JOHN

-----Original Message-----

Sent: Sunday, September 03, 2000 7:48 PM

Subject: Re: RE: URGENT REQUEST

HI DAVID - GOOD FINDING YOUR MESSAGE -

WHAT I'M PARTICULARLY WANTING IS SOME FURTHER EXPLICATION OF THAT WONDERFUL FOCUS YOU PROVIDED ME EARLIER - ATTENDING TO NURTURING & MAXIMIZING THE INTERSECTION OF THE EVOLUTION OF TECHNOLOGY & OF GOVERNANCE - INTO A FORM I CAN PRESENT TO MY 21ST CENTURY JOINT COMMITTEE COLLEAGUES, HOPING THEY CHOOSE IT AS A PRIME TOPIC FOR US TO ILLUMINATE FOR ALL CALIFORNIANS.

JOHN

Paper in Support of California Senate Meetings Sept 4, 2000

The New Technology of Democracy

The future of humanity is being significantly influenced in every way and at every level by technology – who has it and who doesn't – what it could do in principal and what it can do constrained to the narrow interests of a few multi-national corporations. Given the enormous potential of technology and its unprecedented scope of influence over modern life, prudence demands that we become more conscious and intentional (beyond the marketplace's invisible hand) in stewarding the technology's stewarding of us.

What is our leadership responsibility in applying this technology to the maximum benefit of everyone? How shall we make use of this new technology such that it furthers the cause of participative democracy, serves the American Vision and empowers our people? **What is the role of technology in the evolution of governance and what is the role of government in the evolution of technology?**

Our 'system' of government is, after all, a complex social technology (a low-tech WEB). The 'architecture' and 'engineering' of this 'technology' was based on the number of representatives and frequency of congressing that was technically reasonable in the days of horse based transportation and mail delivery. **If we were to start over today and envision a new democracy that was design-enabled by the frequency and quality of citizen participation that modern technology makes possible what would it look like?**

It is clear that a new form of politics is already emerging. Its signature difference will be the level of citizen participation it makes possible (in detail and frequency). **Its foundational assumption: that radically enhancing the quality of participation will affect the governing dialogue in ways reframing and rehashing issues can't address.**

Technology is destined to enable a heretofore-impossible relationship between "representatives" and the "represented" - one that provides the people represented significantly more meaningful ways to participate (to think and feel included - value adding) while redefining the representative as a leader and facilitator of the new forms of constituency.

How should California, situated as it uniquely is, **right at the intersection between the evolution of technology and the evolution of democracy**, be proactively involved in defining the role of technology in the evolution of governance and the role of governance in the evolution of technology? How should we take up the challenge history has handed us? **It is California's destiny – our destiny as its leaders - to take up this challenge and become the architects of the new technology of democracy.**

Some starting points to explore:

California Cyberspace Agency (placeholder)

Develop strategies that could inform policy on how to best leverage the emerging technologies to the benefit of California and national democracy.

Develop strategies that could inform policy regarding the legal infrastructure of the emerging cyberworld.

Develop strategies for playing the role of strategic vision/venture capitalist with emerging technologies that have significant social or economic benefit.

Develop a new form of 'voting' on issues that is above 'tampering' suspicion and that is based on a frequency appropriate to the issues at hand not the term of the representatives involved.

Prototype a parallel representational democracy system (initially like non PAC driven governmental focus groups) that uses the web to enable people of common national and local interests to join and/or form constituencies and elect representatives responsible for facilitating ongoing distributed dialogues within the constituencies - dialogues that facilitate the mutual learning and actions of its members and that feed a different granularity of intelligence into the existing governmental system.

P
A
R
T

Partner with technology companies in envisioning and proto-architecting the new technology of democracy.

3

#6: A New Model of Democracy for the Cultural Creatives Brainstorming Meeting February 23rd 2001 - San Francisco Ca.

An alternative, additive 'organizing principle': CROSS CONNECTIONS

People have causes. They have many reasons: economic interest, moral crusade, justice and equality, association with personal or family crisis, personal satisfaction through participation...

Many people seem to prefer to get behind - show up - for their particular issues and crusades, and yet for various reasons choose to stay out of the mainstream general political processes. I am such a one.

They, like the individual stock traders, are ever less interested in buying into someone or some entities 'general' program. They want to 'invest' their precious life-attention-time where it feels like they can make a difference and where it means something to them.

Implicit in their particular interests are their values.

By identifying core values (probably involved) in the issues and causes that people are directly supporting we would see that there are commonly shared values. These common values are the normal 'glue' of a party or coalition. But, again, these people don't want 'over generalization' they are not wanting to jump on the bandwagon – they want to put their self-investment where its important to them.

What if we could offer them a way to participate in a constituency that isn't asking them to generally do or believe anything? What the constituency provides them is a way to locate themselves in a (many) virtual community(s) in which they share core values. For example – they are hot on sustainable agriculture and one of the 10 constituencies that includes sustainable agriculture also has 12 other issues they are in total agreement with (even though they wouldn't otherwise go out of their way to support them) The other constituencies have some value conflict for them so they join this one. By doing so, they agree/pledge that they will come to the aid (petitions, votes, possibly \$\$) for the other issues of this constituencies and conversely everyone else in this constituency is pledging to come to the aid of their issue. Like an insurance pool or a grocery coop – strength through number – yet differentiated and personally relevant.

An opportunity exists to provide these individual political actors a way to draw upon one another's strengths, as and when needed, by allowing them each to remain focused on the issues they are hot upon. Yet this 'system' in the aggregate is a party – is what we are talking about.

For every person who is hot about an issue this approach allows them to recruit help – to improve what it is they are up to. That means that the support for each issue in the matrix we are talking about goes up.

This isn't to be mistaken for on-line voting – though technology represents the mediating environment – that's all its doing – people can act in the world (and in cyber when evolved and ready).

Each person benefits, each cause benefits, a mediating institutional system evolves that is quantum-democratic – alignment via issues and value without imposed over generalization. The people we have been talking about would in effect be coming together to take and participate in a new politics and yet they would be doing it in a highly individualized way. Community via differentiated, individualized participation – I think that is what the Cultural Creatives and are looking for

I know this needs a lot of fleshing out and I am out of battery power as I am flying to SF –so look beyond this rough cut underdeveloped articulation – what do you think of the Jewel I am pointing to here?

**Learners Unlimited
Invitation from John Vasconcellos
June 29th, 1989**

Friend -

I invite you personally to participate in an ongoing conversation & brainstorming process regarding developing and legitimating an urgent basic California public agenda regarding

LEARNING!

George Brown and David Boulton and I began this process the weekend of June 9-10 in Santa Barbara - & hope to expand our conversation to include other concerned persons and to continue so long as necessary to enable us to unlock the secrets of human learning & in particular, the obstacles thereto!

George Brown is:

- a long-time friend and ally,
- a UCSB pioneering professor of education,
- a Gestalt therapist,
- a cofounder of Confluent Education (which is an administrator and teacher education doctoral and masters' program designed to enable an educator to develop within him/her self and as well within his/her students a confluence of cognitive and affective capacities),
- whose work played some part in the awakening of the leaders of Poland's Solidarity movement several years ago.

David Boulton is:

- a new friend and ally,
- inventor of a proposed 'learning book' intended to truly facilitate individualized learning on an inexpensive mass scale,
- committed especially to searching out the very roots of our innate human learning capacities and processes and the obstacles which keep us from realizing our learning potentials.

Our several conversations during the course of these two days led me to compose the following proposal for our own agenda:

A. I began to develop a clearer sense regarding how we can describe the urgency of our situation in such terms that it becomes clear and recognizable to every body, and in particular the persons with the most influence (including, increasingly, California's business leaders) on our public education system - so as to get everybody to join us in going past the band-aid surface symptomatic reforms and proceeding to the very heart of our human learning problem and challenge:

- (1) - The overall failures of our schools;
- (2) - The enormous illiteracy rate of our people and workforce;
- (3) - The changing demographic character of our work force & our especial need to find out how to arrest the terrible dropout rates amongst certain groups;
- (4) - The growing need for lifelong learning - since the average person will be changing work/careers 4 times during his/her working life; &
- (5) - The changing needs of our society -
 - (a) - from the industrial age with our manufacturing society need for trained clones to operate our factories -
 - (b) - to the information age with our societal need for creative individuals to keep us at the frontier of technology and competitiveness;
- (6) - A major access point is becoming our economic system and business sector and business leaders -

B. David proposes that we owe it to ourselves to self-consciously and openly address the very most basic questions (which always serve to inform our pedagogy, teacher training, curriculum development, etc.) - and he proposes the following basic answers:

- (1) - What are our beliefs about the nature of the learner?
 - (a) - That we human beings are innately learning beings who (barring some obstacle) would automatically learn all that we need to know to live meaningfully and productively and with satisfaction!
- (2) - What are our beliefs about the nature of learning?
 - (a) - That we are always learning, in every instant and situation! - and
 - (b) - That in each moment what we learn is a result of the convergence of the real situation in which we find ourselves, our innate capacity for learning, and our state of being on account of all our prior learning!
- (3) - What is the most basic purpose of the educational system and process?
 - (a) - To develop our appreciation for learning and our capacity for learning!
- (4) - What are the obstacles to our so realizing our innate learning capacities?

C. In addressing the 4th question, it came clear to me that we have three particular most basic questions to ask ourselves, to discover the operative answers for:

- (1) - What is the primary experience through which we learn - not to learn?
 - (a) - i. e., what experience causes us to shut down our innate spontaneous learning capacities?

(b) - How does the mechanism of nonlearning come to be in us?

(2) - What is the mechanism whereby we maintain our shut down nonlearning?

(a) - Where is it precisely located within us; &

(3) - By what process can we address and resolve (erode, melt, shed) our internal mechanism for nonlearning?

D. David proposed that we need to develop a schema whereby we figure out the most appropriate and effective curriculum - which is the best teaching tool/technique -

(1) - human teacher,

(2) - technology,

(3) - textbooks,

(4) - experience, etc. - ?

E. For each of the respective learning developments which we seek to facilitate:

(1) - Information;

(2) - Skills;

(3) - Understanding; &

(4) - Creativity.

G. George and David and I agreed that we would convene a group of pioneering persons from various human frontiers to brainstorm these questions and to design a strategy for advancing the state of our knowledge with respect to these questions & their answers -

(1) - beginning with a weekend workshop, perhaps at Esalen, this fall (2) - and continuing on a sustaining basis -

H. The persons we initially proposed to be included are:

(1) - George Brown, David Boulton, John Vasconcellos, Judith Brown, Brian Murphy, Stanley Keleman, Lou Pambianco, Sasha Shulgin, Michael Murphy;

(2) - I would propose the following persons be considered as well - Jack Canfield, Bert Bowers, Sandy Astin, Steve Scheier, Mitch Saunders, Tom Peters, George Leonard, Janet Lederman, Pat Callan, Mario Chacon, Bill Honig, Jonathan Kozol, Doug Stone &

(3) - I would suggest as (at least) members of an advisory team to review our progress
- Gary Hart, Becky Morgan, Bill Leonard, Sam Farr, Delaine Eastin, Jack O'Connell,
Avram Goldstein, David Barram, John Whiteley, Jim McGaw, Herb Carter, Doc Howe,
Joe Alibrandi, Marty Covington, Larry Wilson, Bob Suzuki, Don Johnson, Uvaldo Palomares,
Mike Kirst, John Heider, Harve Bennett, Ken Druck.

I am enclosing David Boulton's **LEARNINsiGhts** paper to provide you a particular sense of the path we are committing ourselves to and embarking upon.

I invite your response and critique, and especially your indication of whether you want to participate in our pioneering and hopefully historic endeavor.

I wish you well. Let me know if/when/how ever I can help.

John Vasconcellos