
PERSPECTIVES

PERSPECTIVES is a special feature included in this issue of Journal of Creativity in Mental Health that provides mental health professionals with an opportunity to discuss their positions on a variety of creativity-related topics. Roben Torosyan shares his perspective and self reflections after participating in a training program on group dynamics facilitation.

Self-Reflections on Group Dynamics

Roben Torosyan

ABSTRACT. This article provides a first-person account of a training program in group dynamics. It is deliberately written in the first-person to capture the highly personal nature of group dynamic analysis. Proceeding through an intensive account of six days of T-groups, module facilitation,

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I am indebted to Bogusia Molina for her invaluable encouragement and astute guidance and to my mother Kohar Allen who has modeled empathic caring my whole life. Thanks also to Judy Malamud for buoying me so supportively throughout so many pitfalls and pathways in my evolving process.

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Journal of Creativity in Mental Health, Vol. 3(1) 2008

Available online at <http://jcmh.haworthpress.com>

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doi:10.1080/15401380802019504

and facilitator feedback sessions, the author examines painful emotions and complicated reasoning that arose in encountering several relational and intrapsychic conflicts. In particular, feelings such as needing approval and leaping to respond to various “triggers” are emphasized and several alternatives are suggested. Applications are implied for teachers, psychotherapists, and facilitators of groups of many kinds.

KEYWORDS. Creativity, counseling, facilitators, group leaders, group process, group dynamics, group counseling, T-groups, laboratory training groups

I once participated in a powerfully transformative group training seminar designed to prepare enrollees to run group experiences. Below is my personal account of the experience. It is my attempt to authentically describe one person’s responses to new situations, differences, and change.

To begin the process of our week together, ten participants sat in a circle along with the trainer. We began our sessions by planning ways to develop our own learning experiences and act as trainers (facilitators, leaders, and teachers) for each other. Unfortunately, we hardly began discussing the subject of “Human Interaction Laboratory Design and Development” before I started to assess people in the group and think of ways in which they could be holding us back. In my mind, I labeled them as obstacles to our progress. Regrettably, they were virtually transfigured into evil “ogres.” I noticed, too, that my feelings ranged from total excitement about what was coming to fear and loathing of conflicts that were sure to ensue. “If only people weren’t so different, quirky, unpredictable, and unreliable,” I wrote in my journal. “You never know when they’ll turn on you, or turn irrelevant and unproductive.” I was not aware of my haughtiness and insecurity at the time. Nor was I anticipating how much my view of difference and conflict would change.

We discussed the fact that each of us would have to run a “module” or more tacit learning experience for the group. We considered questions like “Are we, as facilitators, willing to be surprised by the data: all of the information, verbal and nonverbal, expected and unexpected, that we receive in a group?”, “Will we be comfortable having our hypotheses challenged?”, and “How can I ask a question to generate here and now data?” This was, in fact, the theme of the entire *laboratory education*

philosophy: Could we refrain from discussing past and future issues and focus on what is happening here with us right now, in this place, at this very time, as we proceed? Such “here and now” attention aims to help us learn about ourselves and others in groups and how we communicate in different contexts.

The next day, we shifted gears and had what was technically our first laboratory training group. Such groups originated in 1946 when Kurt Lewin and colleagues led a workshop on strengthening grass-roots community work (Bradford, Gibb, & Benne, 1964). Graduate students met each evening to discuss the group dynamics they observed during the day. When participants joined these debriefings and shared their own intentions, the discussions grew increasingly involved. Eventually all 50 participants joined, and the “observations fed back” to them about “individual and group behavior . . . seemed to do more to stimulate . . . learning and change than did the formal program itself” (Benne, Bradford, Gibb, & Lippitt, 1975, p. 4). Thus evolved what was initially referenced as “sensitivity training,” sensitizing people to the impact of their behavior on others, and what was eventually termed a laboratory training group or “T-group” (Johnson & Johnson, 2002). Participants generally spend twelve hours a day together for several days straight, usually leading to intense interactions and insights.

The silence at the start of our first T-group was deafening. I was surprised by how nervous I was in the group. Why, I wondered, do I feel so delicate and insecure? Eventually, I pondered some “learnings” (as we were to call our insights and discoveries). We asked ourselves what our choices would be if we became uncomfortable as a trainer, presenter, or leader. We also considered alternative ways to pose questions. As a trainer, I have pet passions that can take hold of me, but these may not necessarily be in line with my assessment of the group. One member said, “I’m OK with it. I trust in the process.” At the time, I wished I could have known what he meant.

In laboratory education, group members are both the laboratory subjects and the scientists, and the experiment is our interactions with each other. As Bradford et al. (1964) described, “In the T-Group it is not the trainer who controls process and gives direction to interaction; rather, it is the method of inquiry itself” (p. 209). Every interaction is grist for the mill of discussion, reflection, or learning. The trainer trusts the process will develop, even with little intervention. The participants develop trust so they can self-disclose and bring their full selves to the group. Members experiment with behaviors and observations, both experiencing and reflecting on experience. A T-group is notably not for group therapy, as it is not intended to address current disturbances needing treatment. As one

of several kinds of “growth groups” (Johnson & Johnson, 2002, p. 507), the experience is less about healing than about learning how others see you and how you see yourself in a group. T-groups differ from those in the Tavistock tradition, the other major school of group dynamics education (Bion, 1961; Klein, 1957). A “Tavi conference” focuses on strict boundaries and roles in order to deliberately highlight psychoanalytic and often irrational issues (of authority, borders, and margins) as its overriding goal, whereas T-groups emphasize learning concretely to communicate and maintain relationships effectively.

WHAT DO WE DO?

On the second day, as I realized we’d each be responsible for facilitating some of our sessions, I wondered what I was supposed to do. Were there some clear guidelines we’re supposed to follow as facilitators? When were we not to participate or answer questions from the group? What did we do? It became clear that these questions were precisely what we were there to think through for ourselves. How do I use my own feelings even as the trainer? There were no *dos* or *don’ts*. Rather, the point was to ask ourselves, “Am I acting or not acting merely out of habit, or am I instead acting or not acting because I have chosen my behavior?”

Our choice as trainers, then, is whether to bring the unconscious to the surface and confront it. I learned that one objective when intervening (taking specific action, such as speaking or using body language) as a trainer is to support owning of desires and motivations: using words that own up to our responsibility for expressions rather than phrasing them as if they were someone else’s. For example, rather than say “You are not being very understanding,” we might say something like “I’m realizing that I feel misunderstood, and I am probably contributing to the miscommunication.” We could also draw attention to the effects of our actions on ourselves and on others.

BEING HUMAN WHILE FACILITATING: HOW TO EXPAND OUR CHOICE OF BEHAVIORS

We learned, too, about common trainer tendencies or “intervention traps” (Benne et al., 1975, p. 268). A common pattern among facilitators involves focusing on one individual to the degree that we lose track of the group as a whole. We learned that it is often wiser to try and reach a place

where we can shift genuinely (moving from “the head” to “the heart”) in our felt intention from the individual to the group. I learned I must beware of feeling good while working with one group member at the expense of the group as a whole. Furthermore, I began to ask myself what it means to be seen doing this special connecting with one individual. Is my intervention clear, direct, and relevant? Upon asking such questions, I noticed that I personally have a pull to be *seen* as empathic, understanding, and nice, but I must ask myself if that best helps others’ learning. I need to be aware of my own draws and impulses to be nice when they manifest at the expense of my own authenticity and others’ learning from difference.

I initially assumed that trainers must follow prescriptive roles and guidelines at the expense of simply being an authentic person. When I began to experience connection, however, this perception was dispelled. In fact, rather than dehumanize authority, members were able to acknowledge their mutual humanity. As the trainer I can, for example, let myself have a preoccupation, some nagging feeling (even feeling sleepy), and put it out there for the group. At the same time, I can then let it go. Such naming of feelings allows me to use my individual gut reactions as informative data, voicing such rumblings to prompt people’s reflection and learning. I learned to trust my gut first and to then consciously choose how I will make observations, ask questions, or otherwise take action.

According to research, here and now interventions and behaviors are by no means easy to learn (Bradford et al., 1964). The variety of skills and abilities available to a trainer remain relatively unexplored by most of us. For example, it helps as a trainer to be able to be unpopular without having the members walk out (physically or mentally). Ideally, in such cases, I need to know I will pay the price of feeling badly about complaints while having done my job well, helping the group’s learning. Developing such fortitude takes practice.

By day four, one member remarked, “We are putting people on trial. I don’t like the experience.” In my mind I agreed. I also wondered how a group can create an experience that enough members can like or learn from without causing anyone excessive pain.

MY BREAKTHROUGH: SAYING WHAT I HAVE TO SAY, FULLY

One day during the week I had a dramatic breakthrough. My handwriting suddenly changed in my journal to bold, longhand script: “My experiment: To let myself speak without censoring, without preface, and without

backpedaling afterwards.” My writing was physically larger, like my emerging confidence. Since then I’ve had more moments of such boldness, authenticity, and unapologetic “letting myself be.” In a meeting at work, for instance, I asserted that I thought we were being unproductive. Rather than speak around my point and sound mealy-mouthed, as I often had, this time I simply said outright, “We need to do more listening. I for one did not feel heard.” When someone denied it, I even re-emphasized the point by saying, “Yes, you may disagree because you felt understood. But I did not feel I was understood.”

It has saved immense mental energy to realize I don’t have to be accepted to be okay. I can learn from conflicts, if they arise, and grow in personal connection through them. I further realized that I have a pull to leap to the task at hand and avoid going through conflict in discussing it. I learned, however, that dealing with strong disagreements need not be terrifying.

On the day of my breakthrough, one member expressed, “This may well be the most powerful learning experience I have ever had.” In my journal I concurred. I thought, “If only I can just stay with this transformation, this renewal and coming out of my shell. Actually, even if I can’t keep it up, at least it would help to notice when I stop myself, or deflect to others, and think and choose whether that’s how I want to continue.” On this theme of dealing with difference, I had three “most major learnings” as people gave me feedback on my behavior:

1. I tend to deflect and avoid staying with a question rather than explore it. If an issue seems intense to others, or to me, I often change the subject or disrupt the flow in some way.
2. I sometimes couch what I say, disclaim as I say it, and phrase things indirectly. Again, it’s as if I’m avoiding something—in this case my own powerful message or authentic expression. It’s as if I’m convinced the others can’t take it straight on, and as if I can’t take the potential anger or rejection I might get in return. Relational-Cultural Theory would say that my authentic expression is impacted by my relational images—those images or expectations I have of others in relation to me (Jordan, 2001). To avoid experiencing rejection, I engage in a strategy of disconnection that keeps me not only inauthentic but also out of relation with others (Jordan, 2001). This results in a painful paradoxical experience where I remain hidden.
3. I can, in fact, express myself quite freely, boldly even. Although I have to understand that my words do impact others, I can express

myself responsibly, knowing that authentic connection results from genuinely working through conflicts and disconnections. I can speak, and have since done so increasingly, in a more forthright manner. And I can handle what may come after I do so.

BEING NICE IS NOT ALWAYS NICE: DEALING WITH DIFFERENCES EXPLICITLY

In a related vein, we talked about ways to surface differences effectively rather than avoid or hide from them. When, for example, I differ with one person and favor another person's response, I would do well to own and voice my own struggle to empathize and then name what the group may be struggling with similarly. On one hand, I can say something like, "I'm unable to resonate with John and am only resonating with Jane. That's *my* struggle right now. I wonder what others might be struggling with?" On the other hand, such remarks from a trainer might end up causing others to feel isolated, or even ostracized, because the trainer is not resonating with them. Still, if I take responsibility for my own struggle to empathize, I may provoke others to reflect similarly on their *own* struggles and those of the group as a whole.

If instead of addressing differences I only sympathize, make "nice," and smooth over troubles, then I risk avoiding what's important. Actions like soothing others, closing uncomfortable issues, and capping negative feelings are neither nurturing nor growth-fostering. They promote a norm where disagreement and difference is undesirable, but if I struggle to be nurturing when people differ, it opens possibilities for exploration and growth.

Another question I ask myself is "What is it in me that creates fear of conflict and occasional desperate reliance on others' approval?" I ask this not to get rid of this tendency—not to act out the father in me from childhood, criticizing me, catching me "doing something stupid," impatient for me to change or "move!" as my father had barked. Instead, I can simply be with that issue of authority. I can just sit with it and see what comes when I'm free of an imagined terror bearing over me.

LET'S TABLE ROBEN: THE INCREDIBLE PERSONAL VALUE OF NON-ACTION

A while after I interjected in a discussion, a curious incident occurred. Several people made other comments, and then someone asked to "table

or bookmark Roben” for the rest of a session. Others went along. My first thought was that there were about 45 minutes left in our session, so this shouldn’t last too long. But I soon felt moments of anxiety as to whether I was to blame for this action. As the leader later put it, the group had, in fact, treated me as the problem child, and I realized that this matched my doubting image of myself. That made me feel so sad, as if I had no choice but to fall into a role or script from childhood, where I was habitually either rejected by my father or bullied and chased home from school for being a misfit.

At the same time, during this silencing, I truly felt a new sense of being okay with it all, including not being quite “all-okay” myself. Instead of feeling predominantly fragile, I was able to be with my feelings and not feel destroyed, telling myself I’d just see how things would go. I felt, by the group’s almost forcefully shutting me up for a moment, that I was freed from having to do. It relaxed me to not speak or feel I have to speak so often, to not have to do anything at all. From this I realized that, even when asked something, I don’t necessarily have to respond or speak immediately. I can either say, “I am not quite ready to respond. I just need a moment,” or I can pause, remain silent, and choose to think or simply be with my thoughts. How freeing such new behaviors felt to me! Still today they liberate me from leaping to respond.

When another member in the group said she often felt that if she’s not formidable, she’s not useful, I realized I felt similarly. I see now that rather than submerge deep feelings of pain and rejection, I can tap into them to empathize and connect with others. This requires more than simply recognizing feelings. It asks me to have the capacity to stay with uncomfortable emotions and sensations for a while.

Many questions began crystallizing for me. I wondered, for example, “How can I relate to people I experience as radically different from me?” When I experienced one member, for example, as stiff in movements and facial expressions, I imagined in his voice a buried harshness. After I spoke in the T-Group, he turned to me and said, rather abruptly as I perceived it, “Why do you say that?” Rather than hear him asking for more from me, however, I heard an accusation that I said something objectionable. Typically when I imagine such a difference, I have a strong propensity to want to know first that “I’m okay; it was okay what I did.” Instead, I realized, I could stay with the potential “conflict” and possibility of further connection for a moment.

This led me to ask myself, “How can I give up feeling in control as a trainer?” The charge could be: to let myself be and yet be highly aware of

what else is needed right now other than what helps me be. When I feel a question, problem, paradox, or tension arise, how can I stay with the ambiguous undecided moment? If I am to authentically negotiate such issues, I have to stop frustrating myself or cutting off my reflections before taking the risk of experiencing painful uncertainty. I can instead begin by refraining from using polish when I speak. Furthermore, if I can be with my state of worry without acting on it, I can get over the need to create self-worth by influencing others. Although my feelings of worth are developed as I engage in growth-fostering relationships and negotiate our disconnections, I can also, at times, find or feel my own self-worth in here, for myself, by myself. How can I do so more often?

***LISTEN TO ME, BUT DON'T EXPOSE ME:
KNOWING MY OWN PARADOXES***

I asked at the time, “How can I avoid creating my own traps, these strategies that keep me out of connection with others?” A classic script of mine would go like this, “Hey, I need to be acknowledged and heard; I have something to say.” Then I’d eventually say, in effect, “All right, stop, please don’t make me feel so exposed with all this attention.” In the six years since this T-group I saw that I repeated this pattern many times, with new colleagues, with family, and with friends. I often still feel a rush to undo the potential impact of a negative response. I’d like, instead, to monitor that inclination, perhaps even hold it in check. Actually, I have experimented with this. Once, when teaching a leadership course, we watched a video recording of two trainees running a workshop. The trainees lamented a moment where participants ganged up on one disagreeable member. I reminded the trainees that they themselves had a role in allowing that to happen. Their felt disagreement with the member helped them allow others to dismiss that member’s views. For me to say something critical like this was, and is, a breakthrough: to stay with the tension of not being liked for the moment in order to provide and receive growth-fostering, authentic feedback.

Confronting such fears made me wonder what I do or feel that effectively protects me in my role as trainer. When do I allow myself to undo the impact of strong emotions? For example, when I hear feedback, how often do I jump to either agree or disagree? Can I, instead, do neither? Can I stop nodding in meetings? I also considered what I do when strong feelings arise in me; sometimes, I overwhelm myself with emotion.

Instead, at such moments I can ask myself, “Are these tears of self-pity or tears of realization?” At the same time, I can assume I’m competent enough to take care of myself and self-soothe, as one can when anxieties are triggered (Schnarch, 1997).

Prior to our final debriefings, I realized “what I wished this group would accept or allow” (as I put it in my journal). I felt at the time there was little room for us to share in a celebratory way what we learned, to enumerate and reflect without interrogating or pushing each other, just for a bit. Granted, I did not propose this, in part due to my own reluctance to risk rejection of such an idea, but knowing my fear of rejection only made me feel sadder, as if I should act cool and detached, without fear of confrontation—as if I need not be affected by other’s opinions of me. Only in rewriting this article itself did I see another alternative. I can let myself be affected and afraid. Yet I can also know I will survive such twinges and learn from the challenge.

SITTING ON FEELINGS CAN BE TORTURE: STAYING WITH PAIN IN ORDER TO LEARN

On the fifth and final day of the process, we gave and received feedback, telling each other how we came across as trainers. After my feedback session the leader went out of her way, with great urgency, to clarify something she had said to me. She wanted me to know that she “was not saying three times what another member had said already” about me. Her intent was to be crystal clear that such was not her point. Regrettably, I did not understand her point. Wondering what she meant, I asked her to clarify, but she only repeated what it was she “didn’t mean.” I was baffled. Why this focus on making sure only that I didn’t confuse her points with someone else’s and no interest in my understanding the feedback itself?

This was the beginning of a period of nearly “TWO HOURS OF TORTURE,” as I wrote in huge capitals in my journal. After the leader refused to allow me to press my question of what she did mean, I felt like weeping. I felt so misunderstood. It seemed no one cared whether I felt understood or not. I felt deep sorrow and then a dull numbness. I held back from bounding to action, despite how excruciatingly painful it felt not to do so. I decided consciously to try and be with my feeling rather than leap to express it. We moved on to give feedback to someone else, so I was aware that to bring up my own misery would likely deflect focus from feedback other members were entitled to now.

While running through this internal dialogue, I experienced extreme anxiety. I felt I was bottling my anger up with no release in sight. My nerves felt raw and vulnerable. It was very painful to simply leave my need there, without support. A member reflected on our training, matching my unspoken feelings, he said, "It's huge to impact humans . . . Am I competent?" During those two hours of festering anger and despondency, I shut off part of myself. I felt, "Poor me. I don't like how sad I feel, and how pathetic. I didn't get the nourishment I needed or expected from these people."

Rewriting this account, I recalled that five years prior to the T-group, I experienced a similar response during a weeklong intensive retreat on general semantics (see framework described in Torosyan, 1999). A trainer misinterpreted me publicly, dubbing me a "negativator," one who sees the negative in a situation. He didn't appear to want to rectify the misunderstanding, and I festered with my anger.

In hindsight, looking back at both experiences, I see that this stretch beyond my comfort zone seems precisely what I needed. Smarting as it smartens, the pain helps me with the following:

1. To know fully and in a felt sense that this is my issue: staying with discomfort, knowing I'll survive. If feeling rejection, I can restrain the impulse to immediately respond or deflect attention back to me. Furthermore, if uncomfortable with an unresolved question or problem in my mind, I can stay with it and resist rushing to a conclusion.
2. To understand that with greater awareness I become less a victim of pain and more able to delay a rush to action; thus I can choose to watch myself in pain rather than simply suffer. I can gain some distance from the pain itself and become more analytical, not detached and immune but reflective, carefully observing myself in an ongoing process.

In fact, no sooner had I written about my frustration with the session than I began making notes about ways to empathize as a trainer. I observed: As a trainer, if you feel sad you can say so in a way that shows you completely own it. You do not blame the group but, rather, express fully your feeling of sadness. Then see whether the group doesn't rise to take responsibility; members may express their own sadness or contribution to a group pattern. Ideally, every group member gets out of a group experience what he or she puts into it. And if you don't get what you want, as when I failed to get the support I wanted, then that's okay for now. It can still prompt great learning.

CONCLUSION: PATHWAYS AND PITFALLS FOR FACILITATION PROFESSIONALS

At the closing, on day six, we discussed “What you discovered about yourself as a trainer, in terms of pathways and pitfalls to being a good human interaction laboratory trainer.” What I noticed may have application for others responsible for facilitating personal & professional development. Others like me may “cry out,” figuratively or literally, at the internal pain of staying with a question or uncertainty or presumed wronging. Teachers or counselors may want to leap to action when lack of clarity about a situation goes on too long, or they may think in terms of seeking clear *dos* and *don'ts*. By contrast, our leader deliberately made a wise distinction. She emphasized “pathways and pitfalls” as opposed to “problems” and their appropriate “remedies.” Rather than act immediately to alleviate our own pain, we can leave undecided the issue of “what should you do?” and stay open to learning more in the moment.

As facilitators, we often fear that others will see our comments or interventions as wrong. As a result, we may hold back or distort our real intention or feeling. We may act out impulsively so we can simply blame the impulse and rushing. When, however, we fear people may reject what we have to say, we have an alternative. We can have faith that somehow we will just get it out there, and if not quite right, it will still be okay. We simply observe and process the response again, however it makes us feel.

Alternatively, as facilitators, we can remain quiet and sit with our desire to “get it out there.” We can listen and observe and know we will survive, and we may even learn more in silence than if we blurt out our thoughts. What has amazed me is that I have seen this insight many times since this experience. In psychotherapy I brought up the same fear of others thinking me wrong. I saw my fears acted out when facilitating countless faculty development sessions. Each time, I speak and feel this as if I’ve realized it for the first time. The very writing of this piece helps me notice my patterns more readily. It suggests how valuable it is for us to jot down reflections on our own practices and to routinely revisit them.

Reflecting, during that last day of the training program, I noticed other personal pitfalls that may apply to facilitators. I often want to be right or seen as right. I feel I can not be me but can only be my role (facilitator, teacher, and helper). In such a role-bound state any teacher, counselor, or other facilitator may say something to demonstrate expertise and overlook what the group needs and is ready to hear at that moment. We may have strong likes and dislikes with respect to people, preferences that sway our

observations and interpretations causing us to take sides, but fail to acknowledge them.

By examining such preferences, a facilitator can imagine why, for example, sexual attraction from a helping professional can so negatively affect learning; to act on such attraction violates basic values of not abusing the power conveyed by a role with which we are specially entrusted. Specifically, when we are given the power position of trainer (educator, boss, or any such authority figure in a helping role), we are expected to use that power to promote learning. To instead act on a sexual attraction is to take advantage of expectations unfairly, harming the learning experience, and the person, in the process. A certain trust is betrayed. Again, the vital value of laboratory education is that the more we build trust the better we examine our most vulnerable selves.

Other facilitation pitfalls can be avoided with heightened self-awareness. First, a counselor, for instance, may get impatient with a client who resists or is not making progress at the preferred speed. We can instead accept the other as they are and accept our own inability to influence him or her. Second, we can ask ourselves, "When are my competencies a barrier?" I noticed that I often need to demonstrate my competence outwardly. Even during the group's theoretical discussion of principles learned during the week, I leapt to take far more than my share of the floor, and I sprang repeatedly to voice what I learned. As facilitators, we need to monitor such temptations and draw out the voices of others. Third, facilitators should notice a pull to get involved in content rather than process. For example, we may get caught up in discussion of a reading and not see that the group is avoiding dealing with its conflicts. It is better to refocus attention on the immediate process: how a group of students or clients, for example, is interacting over any given issue. The point of such a focus on "the present" is to emphasize not content alone, but how people are addressing such content, what dynamics are contributing to the present interaction, and why they continue to choose the actions they do.

Other distinct pathways lead to this needed attention to "process." For instance, while teaching it is useful to put on hold, for the moment, some things one tends to feel. We can trust in the mystery of the group of learners, what it can bring out in individuals. A counselor, likewise, can assume humility; dissolve the ego; have blankness to one's own identity, credentials, and even desire to help; and yet retain a memory of what one is able to do. To do so, we can trust that the other (client or other learner) has the ability and skills to resolve what happens.

Throughout any facilitative relationship, we may stay with the tension of being and becoming, thinking and theorizing as opposed to feeling and

acting. We can see the spiritual work needed to stay in that place of love, peace, and good feeling, including acceptance of one's own being and that of others. Thus, rather than reduce our options to a dichotomy of choosing either one or the other, support or challenge, we can hold care-taking and risk-taking both at once in our way of being.

I learned that the first priority in leading a group of learners or other clients is to trust in the process: be able to prepare rigorously yet put aside my plans almost entirely, in the very moment of interaction, and take what people say and deal with that. I learned that my own patterns became more apparent as I transcribed my journal, rewriting it, revising my wording and thinking, and editing this final draft of this article itself. For many months and even years after the experience I still struggled with trying to assert myself in groups, often as if for the first time.

Over the intervening years, however, I believe I have changed. I now more bravely contribute observations and receive feedback. Although I still struggle to respect how others may deal with things very differently from me, I am increasingly at one with the fact that I have that struggle. I grow increasingly moved by how much more a community of learners can do than any one learner or facilitator alone. As Bradford (Bradford et al., 1964) put it, "Seldom in life does one share in the creation of a segment of society" (p. 190) as one does in a growth group. What makes a group experiences so profound is the togetherness of group creation coupled with the adventure of individual insight.

This taught me how vitally important it is as a facilitator to reflect not just in a course, or in a development workshop, but in a continual fashion on my growth and development in relation to others. My process of learning to facilitate never ends. At the same time, I am finding it important to learn how not to think about it, to just be with others, and in the here and now of what's going on to "live." It seems, then, impossible and ironic to claim to conclude such a reflection on my learning. The process, my observing and noticing, goes on. For me, this very writing and publishing is just a beginning.

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RECEIVED: 2/6/07

REVISED: 9/18/07

ACCEPTED: 10/15/07