

Transformative Learning in Human Resource Development: Successes in Scholarly Practitioner Applications: Conflict Management, Discursive Processes in Diversity and Leadership Development

*Beth Fisher-Yoshida, PhD, CCS
Teachers College, Columbia University*

*Kathy D. Geller, PhD.
Areté Leadership International. Ltd.*

*Ilene C. Wasserman, PhD.
ICW Consulting Group*

Today's complex global environment calls for leaders to be agile decision makers, to engage in critical self-reflection, integrating reflection with action, and to partner with those who are different in significant ways. These capabilities and skills are the core qualities of transformative learning. This session weaves together research findings that explores transformative learning in the context of managing conflict, leveraging diversity and relational leadership. The interactive design of this session will demonstrate how three practitioners have designed structured processes to foster transformative learning.

Keywords: transformative conflict, diversity, leadership

In a recent edition of Advances in Developing Human Resources, (Brooks, 2004), Brooks purports that transformative learning is a viable theory and research approach for developing human resources. She asserts that transformative learning provides a basis for developing people, so that a change in level of conscious awareness occurs and is appropriate in a variety of contexts, such as managing across national boundaries and learning to be part of a diverse workforce, dealing with complexity, motivating others, and changes in the psychological work contract. Those who challenge Brooks's assertion question whether one can structure experiences to be transformative. Marsick et al, (2003) in making points about transformative action learning as it affects both organizational and personal transformation, recognizes that there are constraints in place that work against these transformations, such as a strong organizational desire to maintain the status quo and on an individual level, resistance to change (p. 218). This panel will describe specific case examples that support Brooks's assertion, while taking into consideration restrictions highlighted by others. The case examples are based on the work of three scholar practitioners who applied what they learned in their research on transformative learning to interventions with managers and leaders. This paper provides an overview of the research and application of transformative learning theory to human resource development.

We begin by identifying six dynamics that serve to operationalize transformative learning theory. These six dynamics provide a context for the design of specific interventions and are considered at all stages of the design, both at a higher meta-level and at the detail level. What makes our experiences unique is that we have applied transformative learning in both North American and global (Asian, African and Middle Eastern) contexts. Human resource development programs designed intentionally to incorporate the transformative learning process positively impact both individual and organizational transformations. Our experience informs us of the utility of transformative learning practices across cultures, despite being an area that is under developed in the research literature. (Taylor, 2003).

The Dynamics of Transformative Learning

The theory of transformative learning has developed over the last quarter of the 20th century into a leading theory of adult learning. Transformative learning offers a multifaceted process through which learners identify, deconstruct and give new meaning to their experiences. The current conceptualization of transformative learning refers to the process "by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets)

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to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action” (Mezirow & Associates, 2000).

Transformative learning theory incorporates a constructivist focus on individual development and rational thought and reflection, while bringing to the fore the importance of cultural context, group learning, and discourse (Cranton, 1994; Mezirow & Associates, 1991). The process fosters the development of socially responsible, clear-thinking decision-makers who more effectively use self-understanding and critical reflection to challenge assumptions, engage complex situations, question conformity, embrace change, and align their actions toward the betterment of society (Brookfield, 1987; Dirkx, 1997; Kasl & Yorks, 2002; Marsick, 1990; Mezirow, 2000; Mezirow & Associates, 2000, 1990). Through dialogic conversation and conscious development of mutuality, participants in a structured transformative learning process supported by learning coaches who provide feedback and challenges, gain awareness of their personal beliefs, values, and feelings. The mutuality of their encounter ensures they gain an appreciation of the range of beliefs, values, and feelings of “the other,” as well.

Transformative learning affirms the importance of reflection in the workplace although opportunities for reflection are scarce. As Marsick (1990) points out, “...paradoxically, reflection is becoming more part of the lifeblood of organizations in today's turbulent economic environment ... Frequently trained to implement policies rationally, managers are being called upon to make subjective judgments, take risks, and question the assumptions on which they have operated” (p. 23). Transformative learning provides a theory of adult learning that guides the development of leaders and associates who are willing to challenge the status quo and actively question what and why they are doing what they are doing (Argyris, 1993). The catalysts to challenge one's choices and enactments foster organizationally and socially responsible decision-making and culture change.

Taylor (2000; 2003) offers an extensive review of the current research on transformative learning theory identifying several themes that arise naturally from the empirical perspective. As he notes, “Essential to making meaning is an understanding of one's frame of reference, the role of the disorienting dilemma, critical reflection, dialogue with others, and conditions that foster transformative learning to name a few” (p. 287). Taylor (2003) cited Carter's (2002) research that asserts women have four categories of relationship in the workplace with love relationships proving the most relevant to transformative learning (p.3). Building off Taylor's (2003) analytical and empirical reviews and conducting a thorough review of this family of theory, research and practice we identified six dynamics that operationalize transformative learning theory for human resource development practitioners (Geller, 2004). The first is identifying and reflecting on the key influences on one's frames of reference or worldview. Critical reflection is the second dynamic. It provides the means for identifying and challenging assumptions, and exploring and imagining alternatives. Brookfield (1987) notes, “When we become critical thinkers ... we become sceptical of quick-fix solutions, of single answers to problems, and of claims to universal truth. In this process the person develops alternative ways of looking at and behaving in the world (p. ix).”

Praxis, reflection on action, is the third dynamic of transformative learning. Praxis is the process for learning through the reconstruction of experience. When action and reflection are integrated, actions are considered not in light of the *how* do we do this, but rather what do we believe taking this action will *do*, why are we *choosing* this action; what *alternatives* are there that we have yet to consider? Praxis involves taking the time to deepen one's understanding of the implications and longer-term impact before taking action.

The fourth and fifth dynamics of transformative learning - dialogue and empathy - have their basis in reflective discourse. Dialogue involves “the assessment of beliefs, feelings and ... [it] involves an intrapersonal process, drawing on the information one has about the speaker ... [it] also involves an interpersonal dimension, using feedback to adapt messages to the other's perspective” (Mezirow, 2003 p. 59-60). Empathy is the act of creating understanding amongst a group through the creation of a horizontal relationship based on mutual trust and solidarity (Freire, 1970).

The sixth and final dynamic of transformative learning is intercultural appreciation. Transformative learning is based in the contextual understanding of the self and the other, intrapersonal and interpersonal understanding of frames of reference. Frames of reference are initially developed through socio-cultural beliefs, values and perspectives acquired in our family of origin, cultural assimilation, and stereotypic representations within our society. This final dynamic illuminated by transformative learning highlights cultural, linguistic and style differences. In the process of exploring frames of reference, people develop an understanding and appreciation of difference.

Human resource development programs support personal and organizational transformations by illuminating beliefs, values and assumptions for the self and the other; broadening understanding that truth is not an absolute, but contextually influenced and personally constructed; engaging people in the communal process of dialogue; and surfacing the higher purpose against which decisions are assessed and their implications understood (Cranton, 1994; Mezirow & Associates, 1991, 2000, 1990). The catalyst for transformative learning is the joining of self-reflection, critical thinking, praxis, empathy, dialogue and intercultural appreciation.

Transformative Learning in Practice

Researchers and practitioners in the field of transformative learning question whether it is possible to structure an experience that is transformative. Yet some environments, structures and processes have demonstrated they can nourish a transformative learning process. The use of dialogue, feedback, role playing and story telling fosters relationships and dynamics that broaden perspectives and transformative experiences. Facilitators acting as learning coaches assess the participants and determine potentially transformative moments in which they guide the participants through critical reflection, causing them to surface their assumptions and evaluate their actions in light of fulfilling their intentions.

What follows is a discussion of the application of transformative learning theory in three contexts: conflict management, diversity, and leadership. In each example it is evident that people learn from each other in relationships. The trainer becomes a “facilitator of reasoning in a learning situation and a cultural activist fostering the social, economic, and political conditions required for fuller, freer participation in critical reflection and discourse ...”(Mezirow, 2003 p. 63). The transformative learning methodology includes the use of critical incidents, metaphors – from literature, music and art, appreciative inquiry, dialogue, and group participation in social action (Cranton, 1994; Mezirow, 1997, Taylor, 2000). The learning process occurs through intentional effort designed to “foster critically reflective thought, imaginative problem posing, and discourse that is learner centered, participatory and interactive ... Instructional materials reflect real-life experiences ... Learning contracts, group projects, role play, case studies, and simulations are all methods associated with transformative education” (Mezirow, 1997, p.11).

Successes in Scholarly Practitioner Applications: Conflict Management

People seeking actions to resolve conflict choose from a variety of approaches. The word conflict as used here is defined as “the experience of incompatible activities” (Coleman, 2003), or “An incompatible activity that prevents, obstructs, interferes, injures or in some ways makes less likely or less effective another activity (Deutsch, 1973).” In any conflict there are different levels of engagement that determine what gets paid attention to and what gets resolved. In a problem-solving approach to conflict, the presenting issue is the focus. The conflict is addressed either directly by the people involved, or indirectly by a third party intervener, such as a mediator. The problem-solving approach is a single-loop learning process, amending the situation by changing behaviors or tactics being employed (Marsick, 1990; Schon, 1983). The transformational approach explores deeper levels of resolution. Rather than staying with the presenting issue, relationship issues themselves are addressed. In this approach, asking the question, “What is this conflict *really* about?” helps those involved shift the focus to other levels of engagement. This is a double-loop learning process as it calls into question the conceptual frameworks involved in making choices, such as basic assumptions and underlying values and beliefs. Through critical reflection, the double-loop learning process brings into question the frames of reference that are used to shape how we see, interpret and make sense of the world around us (Arygyris & Schon, 1974; Mezirow, 1990; Marsick, 2000).

Research has shown that everyone who attends a conflict resolution workshop experiences some degree of shift in their perspectives from a new awareness, to a change in attitude to this change actually manifesting itself in behavioral differences (Fisher-Yoshida, 2000). Role plays and shared insights create opportunities for disorienting dilemmas to occur, the cornerstone of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1990). Brookfield (1987) believes that there are four steps involved in transformative learning: identifying assumptions; checking their accuracy and validity; making alternative interpretations; and taking informed actions. He goes on to say that, “When we think critically, we come to judgments, choices and decisions for ourselves, instead of letting others do this on our behalf (1987).” Buber describes a tension in which we may find ourselves as we try to hold on to our beliefs, while at the same time provide an opening to entertain the beliefs of the person with whom we are interacting (Fisher-Yoshida, 2000). This too can provoke a disorienting dilemma.

In organizations, communities, academic institutions, families and other domains where people gather for specific purposes, many dynamics contribute to the emergence of conflicts. These include inhibitors that prevent most people from proactively seeking ways to develop better interpersonal relationships with others. One of these inhibitors in an organization, for example, is the perceived power dynamics that take place between and amongst people with different levels inside of a hierarchy. The belief systems of how one should behave in relation to one’s boss, colleague, direct report or client impact the risk the employee will be willing to take. Some of these attitudes and beliefs are culturally influenced (Hofstede, 1991).

Methodology for Conflict Management. Participants engaged in paired dialogues telling stories about conflicts they have had or are currently having and possible transformative moments they had in relationship to these conflicts. When their listening partner commented and openly questioned them about aspects of their conflict stories, the storytelling partner gained new insights and perspectives from which to view the conflict they had been living with. This provided a transformative experience as they considered their experiences in ways they hadn’t experienced

before. They often learned something about themselves or the other person that was an eye opener for them. This new learning was built upon with the introduction of theory and research to offer explanations as to why this happens (Benz & Shapiro, 1998; Mezirow & Associates, 1990).

A second approach focused on learning and practicing skills that enable the participants to better manage future conflicts and their interpersonal interactions. This approach honored the skill sets the participants brought with them by their confirming what is already working well for them, while allowing them to acquire new skills to enhance the tools they had in their toolkits. The value of honoring what participants know when introducing new skills echoes current discussions on adult learning processes. Skill building included enhancing awareness of what people create together in the process of communicating, dialogue skills and storytelling. These particular skills are the ones more likely to foster transformative learning experiences (Fisher-Yoshida, 2000; Mezirow & Associates, 2000).

Communication is a critical factor in both helping to create and escalate conflicts, as well as, working to resolve them. Dialogue is one type of communication that helps people really hear each other and communicate to resolve their issues. "Dialogue is a dimension of communication quality that keeps communicators more focused on mutuality and relationship than on self-interest, more concerned with discovering than disclosing, more interested in access than in domination" (Anderson, Cissna, & Arnett, 1994). There are four steps to fostering dialogues: invitation to participate; generative listening in paying close attention to what is said; observing the observer in paying close attention to our own thoughts; and suspending our assumptions so we clearly listen to the whole story (Issacs, 1999). Dialogue is a tool or process that allows the participants to explore their differences and at the same time, their common ground (Ellinor & Gerard, 1998). This provides the impetus for people in conflict to move closer together and realize they are not total adversaries. "Dialogue calls attention to what communicators are making together (Littlejohn & Domenici, 2001). Transformative dialogue (Gergen & McNamee, 2001) is described as a process that transforms a relationship to one in which common and solidifying realities are under construction.

People like talking about themselves when there is an empathic listener on the receiving end. Storytelling became an important part of the paired experience the participants had in the workshop (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998), enabling participants to share their conflict with an empathic listener.

Successes in Scholarly Practitioner Applications: Discursive Practices in Diversity

The subject of diversity has been an active part of conversation among leaders in organizations, particularly human resource practitioners since the Hudson Institute Report in 1987 published projected changes in the composition of the workplace (Johnson & Packer, 1987). If the entering workforce was anticipated to shift to a mere 15% being white men, then how could organizations prepare for a shift in the available talent? Since then, the framing of diversity has been through several iterations from defining it through the lens of United States policies and practices of equal employment opportunity legislation, to exploring social identity group differences (Ferdman, 1995; Miller & Wasserman, 1994) and social styles. Elevating the subject of diversity as a workforce issue has provided the gift of illuminating the rich value of engaging diversity.

Diversity is ignited by a culture of inclusion. The qualities and characteristics of such cultures has been written about from structural, developmental and social perspectives (Holvino, Ferdman, & Merrill-Sands, In Press; Miller & Katz, 2002). Thomas and Ely (1996, 2002) named three paradigms of engaging diversity at the workplace: the *discrimination-and-fairness* paradigm which focuses on addressing federal requirements; the *access-and-legitimacy* paradigm which values diversity to better serve a wider pool of customers; and the *learning-and-effectiveness* paradigm which recognizes the various backgrounds and experiences that create people's identities and outlooks. The third paradigm promotes learning from differences in ways that incorporate skills at the workplace and skills in the marketplace. Along with the presence of diversity, it is the form of discourse that engaging diversity takes that can make the difference between *managing* diversity and *leveraging* diversity. This discussion focuses on how diversity is leveraged in the forms of engagement enacted through conversations and organizational culture to promote transformative learning.

Social construction theory and the Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) locate meaning as occurring in discourse in the ongoing processes of relating. These perspectives contend that our knowledge of the social world, and our way of knowing are constructed and sustained by social processes rather than prefabricated (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1999). The social construction approach invites us to see our way of knowing as one way of knowing, and to maintain a curious stance to other possibilities of knowing as well as to know *how* we know (Wasserman, 2004). Critical reflection enables the coordination of shared meaning in relationship with others.

We are faced on a daily basis with the complexity of a global society that manifests not only a difference in background and experience, but perhaps more importantly, differences in *how* we engage and construe meaning. Kegan (1994) has suggested, we need a curriculum or a guide that helps us address increasing levels of complexity for which we have not been prepared. We have to learn how to be more agile and fluent in the engagement of the social world of others who differ from us in significant ways. The very skills that managers are being called upon to

demonstrate in our current environment parallel those involved in engaging diversity and fostering transformative learning: questioning taken-for-granted assumptions, critical reflection, making subjective judgments and taking risks. *Relational agility*, or the capacity to move from monologic engagement, that is, engaging another as if an extension of oneself, to dialogic engagement, or acknowledging the unique presence, experience, and way of knowing of another, is a key competency in a culture of inclusion.

Methodology for Discursive Practices in Engaging Diversity. People participating in a pre-existing group specifically to explore social identity group differences were invited to engage in an *appreciative cooperative inquiry* to explore dialogic moments in the engagement of group related differences in dialogue (Wasserman, 2004). The phenomenon of a dialogic moment (Buber, 1958; Cissna & Anderson, 1998, 2002) was used to explore how one expands one's story of one's self in relationship with others who are different from them in significant ways. A dialogic moment is defined as the awakening of other-awareness that occurs in and through, a moment of meeting (Cissna & Anderson, 2002).

The Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) model (Pearce, 2004) was used to guide participants through a process of reflecting back on a time in their group when they recalled a *dialogic moment*, and, as a group, exploring that moment from each member's perspective. A moment that was already framed as significant and meaningful for individual participants was deepened by the experience of engaging with or coordinating with the meaning that others brought to the very same encounter. Both the meaning of the initial engagement and the stories of self and other that were construed, were transformed through shared reflection and meaning making with others.

Several discursive processes were found to catalyze dialogic moments and transformative learning in the engagement of diversity. Taking time for intentional reflection using storytelling and circular questions for mutual sense making both identified and created dialogic moments that were transformative. The opportunity to reflect collectively on encounters where there had been dissonance also created dialogic moments. Storytelling moved the person position of the reflection from the first to the third person such that the participants were at once the subject and the object of their stories. This enhanced emotional connecting and empathy with another's story and objectivity in relationship with one's own story. Consistency and shared norms of engaging were enabling conditions.

Leadership development requires one to enhance their capabilities and competency in relating, responding and decision-making in the moment. The principles and practice of doing so is described in the following section

Successes in Scholarly Practitioner Applications: Developing Relational Leaders

This application sought to provide a new perspective to the understanding of what is necessary to develop more capable, competent and caring leaders for multinational corporations in the 21st century. The charter assigned to the chief curriculum architect for one British multinational corporation's leadership development efforts was to create a curriculum that would prepare leaders across the world (Asia, Africa, Middle East, Europe and the Americas) for the exigencies of the 21st century and develop leaders to respond with agility and integrated responses to rapidly changing economic, social and political situations (Geller, 2004).

With increasing recognition of complexity, leaders play ever increasing importance in creating environments and cultures where it can be recognized that a single right answer no longer exists; where people feel valued for their talents and who they are; where others are freely and fully engaged toward a common and higher purpose; and where creativity flourishes and spirit is free. Organizational survival depends on managers and leaders who don't simply ask, *How do we do this?* and *Are we doing it right?* To survive, managers and leaders in organizations need to let go of defensive routines and consistently inquire *Why are we doing this?* and *Are we doing the right things?*

Research on leadership shows that sense of self and authentic connection to others, forms a cornerstone for 21st century leadership (Bass, 1985; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Burns, 1978; Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Activities of care - being there, listening, the willingness to help and the ability to understand - provide the basis for empowering both the self and the other (Gilligan, 1982; Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, & Surrey, 1991; Nodding, 1984). If the ethic of care can be learned, then organizations have the opportunity to develop a cadre of men and women with increased capacity to build engagement through caring relationships with associates.

As organizations become truly global, leaders will need to learn to recognize the value of and validate the *other*, or another who is different from the *self*. The *other* is someone who is different from one's self in gender, race, culture, geography and first language. A leadership development program that acknowledges the impact of culture and raises awareness of the context and confluence of diversity, serves a necessary and transformational role for those who are leaders in global corporations.

Brown and Posner (2001) explored the relationship of transformative learning and transformational leadership and concluded that leadership development programs and approaches need to reach leaders at a personal and emotional level, triggering critical self-reflection, and providing support for meaning making including creating learning and leadership mindsets, and for experimentation. They propose that transformative learning theory be used to assess, strengthen, and create leadership development programs that develop transformational leaders (p. 279).

Methodology for successful relational leadership programs. Building off the current research it was determined that through the development of relational leadership capabilities an organization establishes a common foundation for increasing levels of reflective action, intercultural appreciation, employee engagement and ethical action, all of which may positively influence business performance. Relational leadership development programs tailored to support a multinational corporation's values, strategic intent, business goals and its performance management approach are designed to build leader capabilities to question, accept; broaden; and consider the impact of business decisions, as well as, deepen self-understanding (Geller, 2004). Described here are a few examples of transformative learning interventions. While presented as distinct, each of these examples live within the context of larger learning interventions that are intentionally designed to develop the capabilities for the practices of relational leadership.

Experiencing a multifaceted self. Leadership development programs traditionally incorporate use of a psychological survey (e.g., MBTI, Motivation Orientation, Social Styles, ACUMEN), or measures of leadership (e.g., MLQ, LPI, Situational Leadership Survey), or to some extent 360° feedback (e.g., Benchmarks, Profiler or tailored questionnaires). Leaders report that when they reflect back on the prior leadership programs, the results from these surveys provide lasting information and, for some, the most meaningful contribution, of these efforts.

Relational leadership development suggests the need to evolve understanding of the self and other. Fostering relational leadership development through surveys, questionnaires and 360° feedback continues to hold value for providing insights to the self and the other. The differentiating factor in a relational leadership development intervention is the acknowledgement and appreciation for the complexity of people and, therefore, one survey is not enough. It is more effective when combined with a broad range of tools and experiences, each showing a "snapshot" of the individual, so that a more comprehensive and "3-dimensional" view of the leader emerges. The acquisition of these insights in a communal setting fostering reflection and dialogue leads to an awareness and appreciation of the full range of values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors for the self and toward acceptance of others.

Creating learning partnerships that frame the experience of mindful interactions. Creating learning partnerships provides value for developing meaningful interactions with the other. Through the design of a structured interview, leaders gain an appreciative view of the other. The interview identifies what the leader is doing that supports these practices and indirectly gains information on opportunities where the individual can increase their use. The learning partnership provides each person with a view of themselves through the eyes of the other. The other is an interested but dispassionate person who sees both strengths and limitations in a broader context. The partnership with a colleague in the same organization, provides a shared knowledge of the contextual realities of the setting and is a supportive affiliation for learning in which encouragement and challenge is given and received in confidence.

The initial process of establishing the partnership is as important as the interviews themselves; it is about creating a mutually responsive and empathic relationship. Partners are asked to share personal insights, they are encouraged to set ground rules for how they will work together, and to agree a plan of action that each commits to fulfilling for the other. Setting a context is a critical part of the pre-interview process. Partners are encouraged to share background information on their leadership performance.

The partner personally contacts the selected interviewees and conducts conversations to gain answers to the agreed questions. The interviewer then has the responsibility for reflecting on this data and synthesizing it in preparation for sharing in a one-on-one extended conversation held within a larger learning intervention. The two share their insights and gain increased awareness of how each, as a person, and as a leader, is experienced by others. The conversations require mindfulness of the other, empathy and mutual responsiveness, respect and even appreciation for differences, an ethical approach to confidentiality and naturally incorporate elements of dialogue.

Using art as a means to learn about the self, other and practices of relationship. Art is a powerful and creative way to take a group to a deeper understanding of the interplay of the self and other. Masks play an important role in many cultures. At the same time, it is a challenge as it is outside of most people's comfort zones. The activity is very personal and even intimate, and requires that people are willing to "trust the process," and honor each other. Thus, incorporating this experience assumes that a foundation for trust and care has been established.

Using plaster cast materials and working in partners, each person creates a form of the other's face. The intimacy requires maintaining mindfulness of the other's thoughts – "can I allow myself to be touched", "am I claustrophobic", - and the self's thoughts as well – "is this mask good enough", "I've never touched another man's face before". The activity requires empathic responsiveness to the other. The two-way process creates fosters mutuality and care. Follow up activities with the masks involve interpretation of one's own mask decorations and of others. Throughout the experience participants "trust the process," and at its conclusion they note the value of developing an evolving sense of self experienced within the context of the other in this process. They have developed an appreciation for the thinking and feeling behind the faces of others, and have built a sense of communal "we-ness."

Conclusions

We found that leading participants through these programs leads them to experience their situations in different and sometimes transformative ways. The transformation manifests in that the participants no longer view themselves in the same way they did prior to the designed learning process. The shift in perspective taking allows the participants to expand their points of view, a core element of Mezirow's (1990) definition of transformative learning. They begin to recognize that their way of perceiving and interpreting the world around them cannot be taken for granted, and that others may not see the world in the same way. Therefore, the frames with which they view the world have been permanently altered, a characteristic that is enduring and irreversible supported by research done by Courtenay, Merriam, Reeves and Baumgartner (2000) cited in Taylor (2003). It does not mean they will not select the same behaviors or actions, but that they have an expanded understanding of themselves, others and the world around them.

The opportunity to sit back and experience guided reflection allows the participants to gain new insights. Schon (1983) talks about theories in action (what is actually being used) as compared with espoused theories (those that we say we apply, but may not). We believe and have witnessed time and time again, that when people have the chance to reflect on action, they will be better prepared to act in action, so that there becomes a better alignment between the theories in action and those espoused.

Do these workshops resolve all conflicts, change all perspectives or develop truly relational leadership? Perhaps not. Do the participants leave so highly skilled that they will manage every subsequent relationship better than before? Not necessarily. What these interventions do is equip the participants with more tools in their tool kit, so that they are not always acting out of habit. It allows the participants to take more ownership of the choices they make, with full knowledge that there are consequences with every choice. It strengthens the personal witness within. Based on our experiences and the testimonials of participants this process is exciting, empowering and transforming.

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