

Community Building in Britain Newsletter

Number 50

November 1996

This Newsletter is issued by a growing association of people who are, in conjunction with the Foundation for Community Encouragement of the USA (FCE), committed to developing community building in Britain beyond that originally described in Dr. M. Scott Peck's book, 'The Different Drum'.

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From the Editor

I have just returned from our belated summer holiday in Rhodes, and I was delighted to find lots of letters from CB friends waiting for me. Thanks to you all - for contributions to the newsletter, new subscriptions and requests for the Ongoing Groups booklet (of which we have now sold 9 copies).

My family and I are going away again from mid December and will return just after Christmas. I would like to get the next edition out as soon after I return as possible, so I have put the deadline for receiving articles as 14th December 1996. Although anything received before I return stands a chance of being included, I suggest you plan to get everything to me before all the Christmas activities overtake you!

Joint meeting

I was sorry not to be able to make the joint meeting held recently, and there are some notes from this in this edition. It seems to have been a positive experience for those who attended, and I look forward to the effects being felt in the wider network. Would anyone else like to let me have their own reflections on the event?

By the way Anne Rutherford has asked me to let people know that she is staying at Anne and Colin's caravan (School House, Kilmington, Wilts BA12 6RB tel: 01985 844297); and that requests for money from CBiB between 15/1/97 and 15/4/97 should be sent to her at this address.

Gift subscriptions

As we are near Christmas, I have included a little form in this edition for any of you who would like to give a CBiB newsletter subscription to friends. Just cut it out, fill it in and send it to me, and I will make sure your friends receive a card and each of the newsletters up to March 1998.

While talking about subscriptions, if any of you would like to receive more than one copy to the same address this can be arranged for a reduced fee because it saves on postage. Just give me a call and we can set it up

International news

You may not know but copies of this newsletter go to USA, Australia, Portugal, South Africa, Canada and Holland.

I have just had an email from Frederik in Sweden, who came across my World-wide web page about CBiB and asks if anyone knows of any community building groups in Sweden. If you would like to make contact with Frederik I can email him for you.

We have also had contact from David Williams in Jamaica who is very interested in leadership training. His address is B Suite, 141, S3, Miranda Ridge, 36 Gloucester Avenue, Montego Bay, Jamaica tel: 809 952 8179, fax: 809 940 2351. I am sure he would be delighted to hear from you, if you felt moved. I doubt however if funds are available from CBiB to sponsor a visit there!!

Miscellaneous

It might be appropriate someday to give our newsletter a name, and I have already received one suggestion - 'Making Space'. Any other suggestions will be gratefully received.

I have also been asked whether the newsletter could be used to give news, or publicise activities, other than strictly CB items. I see it as one avenue through which we can keep in touch with each other, as people just as much as 'community builders', so I am very happy to receive items of general interest. Of course the normal practices of editorial discretion, and possibly charging a fee for a commercial advertisement, would still apply.

Ongoing groups

We have had several items in the past about groups, but would anyone like to give me up to date feedback on how their ongoing group is going, and anything about the issues they are facing, or the benefits they feel are accruing?

I suspect that the next phase of CB could involve the establishment of a network of ongoing groups, and that this is one of the challenges that we currently face.

Peter Cooper (details on back page)

Note that several UK events for 1997 are in the planning stages. In America there is a Community Building in Organizations Conference in May, and a Community Building Skills Seminar (CBSS) in June. If you are interested I can give you further information.

Booklet for Sale
Ongoing Community
(Small Share/Support Groups)
Formation and Maintenance

Fourth edition June 1994 By Jerry L. Hampton - 48 pages

Includes

How to start an ongoing group

Model Meetings

Guidelines for meeting conduct

Ideas for group starters

Group maintenance

Ongoing groups and their characteristics

Why some groups fail

Forming groups in a workshop

What now? - After the CBW

Books on community

Study Guide - 'The Different Drum'

Copies available now from Peter Cooper (address on back page)
for only £5 including post and packing. Cheques payable to
'CBiB' please.

Jerry Hampton (who has had a long association with community building in the
USA) has licenced me to sell copies of his guide, which is now in its fourth
edition, and I am making copies available at cost because of the importance I
attach to nurturing ongoing groups.

This was a meeting of members of the holding group (Ruth Goffe, Anthony Kirke, Cliff Jordan), facilitator group (Christopher Cooke, Erica von Bottenstern, Mike Roth, Angelo Faria, Debbie Collins, Anne Rutherford - and Anthony as a member of both groups), and other people who felt interested in the proposed agenda (Johnny Hoggett, Richard Benzie,

Matthew Dodswell, Armando Magnino, Peter Laxton). It was held on 18th-20th October 1996 at HolyRood House in Yorkshire.

There were various large and small group discussions of which different people made notes. This account is not definitive, or necessarily agreed by all those at the meeting. I hope that others will feel able to send notes or

We discussed this and people came up with various understandings:

- 1 That the Leader Group is opened on an occasional basis to new members.
- 2 That the Holding Group and the Leader Group merge and become one group.
- 3 That the Holding Group and the Leader Group meet in the same venue for some issues and apart for others.
- 4 To make a commitment for CBiB groups (Holding, Facilitator, Training etc...) to meet together regularly to communicate.
- 5 CBiB “management” groups as one large group which contains the various

“task/issue” groups (See Diagram)

- 6 That ‘CBiB’ training be looked at; for CBiB in general and potential new facilitators in particular, this partly in response to people going to the USA for the FCE training.
- 7 We acknowledged the importance of the joint meeting for communication and explored other possibilities such as meeting together more regularly without finally concluding anything.
- 8 *My Learning (I think)* Readiness TO CARE by meeting eighteen monthly (?) with all-comers together.

Issue: What is the purpose of CBiB?

Who Attended: Chris

Outcome of Discussion:

Through convening the session and finding myself working alone I found myself working through the following questions:

The more I work with the CB model the greater the mystery;

How do I integrate with CBiB?

Trusting the process;

Holding from a distance;

Exclusion / inclusion;

Why am I sat here alone?

What is the most appropriate way to enable self organisation?

Current thoughts on Purpose of CBiB;

To serve the people who are called to explore the application of the FCE model.

To discover how to become better in this service.

The session also gave me space to read Geri's letter, and encourages me to offer a Regional Support.

Comment: We organise CB events, workshops and occasional CBSS. We have organisation with a structure (which we have not found constant satisfaction with) within a network, that enables this to happen. Within this network people are inspired to use this model and work with other people in this network in

"The other group"

Present: Armando, Matthew, Christopher, Angelo, Debbie, John.

This group were left together when others had gone off to groups on particular issues. (For more information about what came out please see Armando's article on the following page.)

To take steps to arrange a group to meet regularly to explore CB model/ skill. To make them conscious and explicit (by a process of 'tweaking out') leading to ongoing learning opportunities?

Issue: General Meeting 1997?

Who Attended: Chris, Anthony, Richard, Johnny, Peter

Purpose:

Improve communications

Improve networking

Get more people involved

Provide recruitment, new blood - new sponsors, new holding group, new facilitator material.

FUN

Continuity: It should be followed by another in 12 to 24 months, or some similar specified time.

Date: Summer Holidays?

Weekend/Monday to Thursday? 3-day Residential

Venue: Central between Scotland and South of England. Peter Laxton and Christopher Cooke to research self-catering option

Constituency: Any person who has attended a CB event

Policy on family: Provision for families to be offered

Price: Variable: from single room to camping: Cheap but not grotty!

Publicity: Flyer to mailing list in a spring mail shot, newsletter: January onwards

Sponsor team: Anthony Kirke, Ian Davidson, Peter Laxton, Christopher Cooke, Sharon Usher, (Johnny Hoggett?)

Constitution:

The constitution of CBiB is a point of concern for the meeting. Anthony Kirke has undertaken to explore this issue further with the intention of bringing a proposal to the General Meeting in 1997. He will consider whether to raise the matter in the Holding Group in the interim. Richard Benzie expressed an interest in the question of a Constitution and will discuss it further with Anthony.

Issue: Money

Present: Anne, Cliff, Erica, Richard, Ruth, Anthony

Outcome Of Discussion:

- 1 Anne Rutherford to join Cliff and Erica as signatory on the main account and to hold the check book in Erica's absence.
- 2 Anthony to sort out insurance policies
- 3 Preparation of account analysis and summary: Erica will meet with Cliff and Ruth to hopefully produce a report for next spring.
- 4 The leader training group is coming to the end of the money it raised to support itself. The holding group is making a contribution of £1000 to the

leader training group (LTG). Erica made 3 alternative proposals for the holding group to consider to put this fund on a sustainable basis.

- A) 10% of each events proceeds to go to LTG
- B) £1000/year to go to LTG
- C) LTG expenses to come out of main account as needed to a limit of £1000 per year.

I went to the joint meeting without a clear understanding of what I wanted. Yes, I had read the letter/agenda - I thought many of the items very interesting and worth discussing ... but what did I want? why was I there?

Going further

I was there because after being involved in Community Building for four years (almost to the day) I wanted to find out how to go further. How to learn more about this process, its applications, its effects on my life.... I thought often of joining the holding group, I thought of somehow setting wheels in motion to train as a facilitator, and still neither option felt like what I wanted.

And on the Sunday, it suddenly (?) became clear: what I want is a chance to explore the 'living from emptiness' model further than it is possible on a workshop. A way of making the process (my process) more explicit - of becoming more aware of what skills, principles, modes of being, feelings I use/practice in a workshop, so that I can make the process conscious in my everyday life.

An ongoing group

And so, from the discussion, the idea was born of setting up an ongoing group with the task of answering these questions, or 'tweaking out'

the essentials of community building, of exploring the model, making it more explicit for ourselves and for others.

Cliff has often raised the issue of 'ongoing learning opportunities' and I feel I haven't checked out clearly with him if this group would answer his need. I hope so. There are issues to be solved yet. How often to meet? Where? For how long? It was suggested that the group might have a limited 'life-span'. That this group might meet with the holding group and facilitators group at joint meetings.

Starting the process

I'm not going to make these decisions, but Matthew and I are willing to start the process of getting a group of people together - and just do it.

The weekend of the 7 & 8 December has been suggested as a possible first meeting. Any takers?

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Two days after the C.B.E. and once again I'm opened up, vulnerable and euphoric even though I didn't experience the full-on joy of community as I have before.

Saturday

During the first day I was full of the urge to throw myself into the circle and experienced a lot of discomfort in the turbulence of the debating society. I started to feel strong connection with certain people in the group and a familiar, wild, crazy, grieving, needy part of myself started to emerge.

During Saturday night that part of myself took me over and I had doubts about being in the C.B.E. and at times regretted my commitment to the event. My yearning for intimacy and the peace of community arises so painfully and my self-doubt and feelings of inadequacy in obtaining it are so strong that

I'm reflecting on what I have carried away and what has stayed with me from the experience.

Firstly my sense of the **desirability of openness** has increased. The extent to which I am able to be open in giving and receiving directly affects my feeling of being alive and of well-being. This is true whether the situation that I am in is positive or negative in terms of the emotions produced. I can experience well-being whilst feeling anger or fear as long as I am a channel rather than a blockage, aware rather than repressed and expressing emotions consciously rather than losing control.

Secondly, I have to make an **effort to be open**, in the sense of 'opening the door' and consciously stepping over my boundaries. These boundaries frequently take the form of inbuilt ideas of propriety and are based on my pride and / or insecurity.

Thirdly, and here I find myself echoing Jemima's thoughts, I have discovered the **importance of being aware** in pseudo-

letting go or emptying seem impossible.

Sunday

I felt weary and defeated for most of Sunday. I was reluctant to share the intensity of what I had felt in the night, it's monstrosity and sexuality, in a group that did not feel receptive. I experienced parts of the circle as closed, non-reflective, dead.

I felt drained of initiative and had the desire to seek out in the breaks those who I had felt connection with in the circle. At the end I identified with E.S's suggestion that the group had not achieved 'critical mass' during the process.

I feel that I experienced strongly the process of community if not on this occasion it's flowering. As to what I or others or the group could have done to advance or deepen the process

community, chaos and emptiness rather than striving for community. It's the hanging on in there that's important and keeping the attention on the moment rather than in the future. Pseudo-community and community seem to me to be more states of being whereas chaos and emptiness are more to do with process or respectively doing and undoing.

Fourthly, I find that in the process of building community I have to **confront my aloneness** and that this has so far been extremely painful. There seems always to be a point at which I ask the question 'Is it all worth it?' So far the answer has always been 'Yes', largely due to the feelings of aliveness and vitality that come with the opening and heightened awareness of the community building process.

To close I offer one of my favourite quotes - from Yves Klein, artist, ranking martial artist, pyrotechnician and conceptualist.

WITH THE VOID, FULL

Two years ago I came away from what I perceived to be a completely chaotic and untidy CBW fairly disillusioned with the idea of getting people together over three days and expecting them as individuals and a group to change and grow using the circle model / four stage process.

I gave it another go

Fortunately, I didn't lose hope in the process itself; and decided to give it another go at the recent CBW for church going Christians, at Hothorpe Hall in Leicestershire.

I think there was probably as much pain and brokenness, and as many differences to be accepted and made room for, as in 'inclusive' (Tomlinson, April/May 1996) events and, to be honest, I don't know how much difference the sharing of one Faith made to the actual process which worked so wonderfully, but I do know it was, for me, an extremely encouraging, positive, exhausting, challenging, painful and joyful time, sometimes simultaneously! The knowledge, in the back of my mind all the time, that we were all 'in the same carriage' gave me the extra strength I needed to strip away a layer of behavioural defence/barrier/mask or whatever one likes to call it, and become more authentically ME.

I had many experiences

The chance to carry on the process outside the circle, at meal times and in the evenings was also a real bonus, and, as no-one was rushing off, smaller groups were able to organize an impromptu Communion, volleyball sessions, Bible teaching and a musical soiree, among other things, which, I felt, greatly enhanced the overall experience.

The British adaptation of the FCE model

Definition 4. (taken from LEP Participants prework manual --dated Sept. 1994)

A Learning Community is a group that can live the experience of authentic community. Competent and capable of vulnerable and authentic communication, individuals have developed their capacity to attend simultaneously to their own and the group-as-a-whole's

worked a treat, with everything the group wanted being fitted in with a minimum amount of 'phaff' and maximum amount of Grace and sensitivity on the part of the three facilitators.

I experienced the model

I even experienced a three minute cameo of how the model works on a one to one basis in the 'real world' and how one (how far do you/I delete 'we' statements'?) can work from emptiness/openness (Jacobs, July/August, 1996)/stillness/Sabbath Rest on a day to day basis.

I met and connected with some Great personalities who have enriched my life enormously and, as a result of these few days, I now feel I have the fortitude to attend another inclusive event and give more of my time and energy to a network and process I have regained faith in and respect for. (So count me in!). (Or rather I count myself in and will work out how in the near future).

*Teän Stuttaford
The Boathouse
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(Editor's note: I came across this in 'Caux: Healing the past - forging the future', a publication of a group called Moral Rearmament. They have been going since the second world war, and have achieved significant results in bringing people together from many different backgrounds. This article is by Joseph V Montville, Senior Associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC, and is reproduced by permission. The centre they have in Caux, Switzerland was converted from a derelict hotel, and has been used for many years for 'events' of many kinds. I know little more about it, but can sense something of the same vision in Scott Peck's writings.)

Caux has been one of the rare magical places where the human aspiration to integrity and community has been allowed to flourish. There, self-seeking and sectarian defensiveness have been subordinated to a much broader vision of the universal community of souls. Year after year Caux serves as a model for multicultural social integrity.

Founding the Common Market

But Caux has made an even more important contribution to our potential for community by encouraging standards of political leadership which elude even the oldest democracies. For all its current problems the European Union remains the system to which all nations aspire in the post-Cold War era. The genius of Jean Monnet, and the moral commitment of Robert Schuman and Konrad Adenauer, in conceiving of community in a Europe savaged by ethnic conflict is one of the greatest achievements in human history.

These political leaders, of rare moral strength and integrity, found that Caux shared and nourished their vision. But non-political leaders also came to Caux representing commerce, labor, industry, journalism, arts and religion to play their critical role in building the practical aspects of multicultural community. If there were gaps in political leadership, the non-politicians did not hesitate to show the way.

Building the world

The model of European Union nurtured at Caux is a standing invitation to build community between Islam, the West and Hindu India; to accelerate reconciliation between the Latin Church and Orthodoxy; to welcome Russia generously into Europe and help her bridge the civilisations of Central Asia and Europe. Caux stands always at the service of brotherhood and sisterhood amongst Africans and between them and the rest of the world; and is ready to help European descendants in the Americas build genuine community with first nations and the descendants of Africans.

Caux is a precious resource for humankind.

consciousness.

Definition 5. (from Community Insights - the little booklet given at the end of an FCE workshop)

(The stage of) Community is the goal. When this stage is reached the full range of emotions can be expressed. Even though community is the goal, it is not a static state that

Dear Reader

I want to answer the question: “What is happening to community building in London?” from my vantage point.

The September CBE was, for me, a failure - I failed to meet my own expectations and felt hurt. I decided not to put myself on the high altar of sacrifice again without support. I have let go of the idea of a residential in North London next Spring (I had a tentative booking with Damascus House for April 4-6th 1997).

The Future: Any individual or group of individuals who put themselves forward to sponsor future events will have my support in the form of information on what worked and what did not work for me. I feel the need for new ways of marketing and so I welcome new blood as a possible source of renewal.

Venue: As a gesture of support for my efforts Suzy Adderley has been researching

possible London venues and has found one venue that she believes could be very suitable. She also has information on several other possibilities. Her phone number is 01734 478653. Under certain circumstances Suzy may also be interested in collaboration with others in sponsoring a future event.

Further letting go: 14 Crown Road will no longer be available as a venue for the ongoing community group as from January 1997 (the 1996 November and December dates still hold). The average number of participants in recent months has been three and that does not feel like community to me. As a result of my withdrawal I am hoping that Margaret’s group gets more support.

With love

*Tom Deevy
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It may require patience and persistence but the outcome will be worth it. One attendee described how he gave his manager a copy of The Different Drum and how that resulted in some discussions about community over a three year period. The discussions concerned prejudices, expectations, judgements, scapegoating and acceptance of the positive traits of each person. He also told how he introduced the consensual decision making process of resolving problems and setting goals. **Community can be contagious** and spread from one person to another and cause real changes in your relationships.

The community-building experience is sometimes the first experience many people have with real listening. It may be the first time you felt really listened to and perhaps the first time you really listened to another. It may be the first time you felt accepted for just who you are without judgment. These result in good feelings that frequently do not exist in our day to day experience. Your inner awareness will usually be heightened following a workshop

and you will come away knowing more about yourself, others and the group process. You can learn to have these feelings every day of your life by involving yourself in the **attitude of community**. Listen well, be accepting, encourage others, and constantly look for the bright side of life.

When you have attended more than one workshop, you may compare one to the other. All workshops will feel different because of your personal participation and the makeup of each group. You probably will rate the most successful workshop as the one you participated in the most. Community intensity may be felt to different degrees in different workshops depending on how open you are to the process. Community is community and is not dependent on the depths of your feelings.

Community-Building is a human process of learning how to relate well and honestly with others. It is dynamic, never static, and always available for those that seek it. **Community does take time and commitment**. Community starts with you. It is an attitude for life. It is

Gift Subscriptions

To Peter Cooper
Editor CBiB Newsletter
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I learned as a small boy that if I wanted something I had to ask for it. That didn't mean that I would get it. But because I asked, I believe I got more than I would otherwise.

I have some "wants" for community. Some of these may be "needs" or "wishes" but for now I will put them all together as one list. And it is not a complete list.

New Formats and Techniques

1. A format that allows perhaps a 1000 people to have some experience of community and go away with a listing of the principles of community. And for a low price. This could be complete church groups, youth groups, etc. [Have any of you ever attended any of John Bradshaw's workshops where he works with up to 1000 at once? The format he uses is one of many that could work]

2. Expand applications to all kinds of groups. [I have a list of a few I have thought of].

3. Adapt existing "technologies" and develop new technologies for formats that work just as well or better than the circle ritual. [For example: the use of dialogue, open space, focus groups, Focusing etc.]

4. Provide aspects of community that are not usually found in the present model. [I have attended and done several events that focused on humor and laughter as a way to community. I have included small segments in a CB that was "fun", creative, and created laughter.]

Ongoing Community, and Education

5. Promote ongoing communities in a number of ways.

- Start by giving every participant a booklet on "How to form your own community".
- Provide support for groups when they think they are in trouble.
- Provide small group facilitation training.
- etc.

From

Tel:

Please send gift subscriptions of the CBiB newsletter from December 1996 to March 1998 to the following people. I enclose a cheque payable to CBiB for £10 for each UK or European Union subscription (£15 for non-EU).

Name and Address (1):-

Name and Address (2):-

Name and Address (3):-

Please use this side to add further names and addresses for gift subscriptions, or any comments you would like to make, for example about any message you would like included.

6. Educate about community, including providing a mail “book store” for titles that are related to community. Perhaps even develop an ongoing community study guide about community.

Special Workshops

7. Develop special workshops for families, couples (married or otherwise), about the creativeness of chaos and how not to fear it but welcome it; etc. (Example: for those of you who are married or have been married, think about the stages of community in relationship to your history. Have you ever cycled through the 4 stages of community in your marriage? Have you or your spouse run from the chaos? If so, what would it have been like to come from emptiness at that point. etc. etc. etc. I believe a CB workshop can be developed just to address these kind of things and let people learn how to perhaps overcome some of the obstacles using the principles of community.) Also, there are many people that would like to experience CB as a spiritual event.

I also want special design for use with youth. I have done one workshop with 180 boys age 16 -19, using a different format, that worked well to give them their first taste of community. I know a person in Canada that has done several with youth ages 14 -15. What do you think this could do for gangs? I would really like to know.

New Thinking

8. Adapt the learning from Goldman's Emotional Intelligence to community building. For youth add in Martin Seligman's The Optimistic Child.

9. Develop a new language for terms used in community, perhaps even the word community itself. (In several weak moments, Peck has said he should have used something else.) The purpose of this is to have a language that the public can relate to easier and faster and therefore make community more acceptable. This may need to be done differently for different groups.

Jerry Hampton

(In the last issue I asked a question about building community in everyday life, and I also asked the same question in the 'Next Generation Community Building' forum on the internet of which I am part. Several of you have shared about this in the past, and I am grateful to Ivan Sokolov for his considered and thoughtful response, which is clearly based on his experiences over the years. If anyone else would like to comment or share experiences I would be delighted to publish them. Peter)

Peter, this is Ivan, and I am responding to your posting in which you asked:- "How, in very practical terms and with little training, do I help to build community where I am, with whomever I am with?"

(I fear this could be a long post, because although I have a sense of what I want to write, I am tired and suspect my thinking will come out a little fuzzily :-)

What is community?

To start with what is this thing we seek to build, if indeed it is a thing at all? I don't think it is just a physical group of people in a CB circle ritual any more than it is a physical group of people inhabiting an area so often referred to as a "local community" and in my once-upon-a-time fairly extensive experience of residential "communities" it wasn't that either. So what is it that makes the palpable sense that is sometimes experienced on a CB workshop so very different from that to be found in a physical "local community" or the commune variety?

For me, the difference is about relating at the level of heart and soul; it is the presence of spirit in the people "communiting" as well as in the spaces between the people; it is about love and acceptance of a level not so commonly experienced in daily life -- love and acceptance of self and other.

Playing my part

When I think of community in these terms, it is a little easier to see what I can do to play my part in building community, in being active in communiting.

* I can choose to open myself up first to

me and then to others. I can be prepared to take a good look inside myself and lovingly accept what I see, I can find a way to first recognise and then eventually avoid self-judgment, for then I have a chance of recognising when I am being judgmental of others -- so often the results of my projections.

* I can allow others to see me just and I can choose to really see others. I can take the risk of letting down some of my defences, softening the hard walls I built up through my childhood, whilst still accepting that they had a purpose all those years ago and need to be dismantled carefully and lovingly.

The process of emptying helps me in this; I can regularly ask myself the question "What can I put aside right now that might be stopping me being fully loving and open with this person I am with?"

And I can learn...

* I can learn ways to communicate with ever greater authenticity; I can learn to listen in order to hear rather than those old ways I was taught in school of listening to always be prepared to respond when put on the spot. It was a famous American sociologist (name eludes me right now) who said "conversation is a battle in which the first person to draw breath is declared the listener".

* I can learn to be straight with people, finding the courage to say what I think and feel, be assertive and challenging, always prepared to help people with the discomfort they may feel as a result of my communication, never taking the easy way out offered by some of the early "new age" assertiveness teachings that say we can walk away from other people's reactions to our assertions.

And I can love...

* I can love people enough to be challenging of them in the most loving way I can summon up, rather than passing by and telling myself that I am not my brother's keeper let alone my next door neighbour's keeper so have no right to question ever so gently whether how they are in the world is really civil, honest, loving or anything else we

may perceive. For years I struggled with the paradox of wanting to accept that people have chosen their way and need to be accepted for who they are, yet also at times seeing how they could be so much more not just for them but also for the glory of humanity, community and spirit.

I am fortunate enough to have had a range of situations in the last 15 years when people have asked me why I took so much effort to help them, to encourage them to grow, one of my responses is to tell the story of Michelangelo and the statue (as I know it) when a small boy was watching him carving a huge chunk of marble. The boy asked him what he was doing and the artist answered that he was carving an angel. When asked why, he answered "because there is an angel inside crying to get out".

* I can choose to practise civility as much of the time as possible. When I get impatient with someone at work I can cultivate the habit of stopping in my tracks, taking a moment or two to reflect and question how conscious I was being of my reactions to them, how my behaviour might have looked to an "ideal observer" -- was I being loving and accepting, "ethical in submission to a higher power"?

And I can be open...

* I can question myself frequently as to how far I am operating in integrity? Does the way I am being with these people really reflect my core values, what I hold true, or am I falling into the common trap of espousing one thing in theory and acting another in practice.

* I can share with people what I know about this process of relating that we call community even as I do my best (being only human) to model it. I can cultivate the art of giving people constructive feedback that will help them as well as me to grow and develop. I can acknowledge and appreciate them for the ways they relate to me that I feel good about, and I can gently point out to them what it is about their behaviour that I find unuseful when they do it. I can help them to understand both the concepts and above all the behaviours that make up this whole style of relating. It will probably be most useful if I do this by sharing of my experiences, what makes the real

difference in how I relate with people, rather than falling into the trap of lecturing. I can tell them how I would like us to relate together and what I will do about it and what they can do about it, trusting that if they appreciate the deeper sense of community between us they will start to operate that way with others.

And in groups...

Most of the above is focused on the one-to-one relationship and yet I hope you can see how to translate it into the one to many.

* I can start to suggest different ways for the groups I work with to operate. I don't have to jump into long complicated explanations of this thing called "community". I can start by sharing the minor frustrations I have with the way our meetings operate and make one suggestion at a time for improving them. I can ask for a couple of minutes silence between topics on an agenda so I can both make sense of what we have been talking about and clear myself for the next item. At the end of the meeting I can share one thing I really appreciated about how we worked together and one thing I found difficult, not even demanding that others do the same.

I can ask for feedback from the people around me at work and give it lovingly even when not asked for it. I can talk about my vision for how the little things in our working relationships could be different

But I fail...

I could go on, yet have a sense that it is time to stop. I do want to end by saying that I can do all these things, yet I don't always! Even with many years of being trained in communication skills, all the years of self-exploration and development, all the years of training others, counselling, mentoring, coaching, facilitating, consulting and everything else, I frequently fail to be aware of what is going on in me and others, fail to operate with integrity and fail to live up to my aspirations for building community wherever I go.

I believe I fail less and less often as time goes on, and I get increasingly gentle on myself when I recognise that I am not living up to my own expectations. It is a hard road to tread, yet the more I open myself to spirit, the

(The following was brought back from the recent CCC conference in Toronto, in which issues relating to diversity were discussed. I understand some of these issues have been addressed in the facilitation group from time to time. Peter)

What are the barriers to more diverse participation in FCE?

- * obvious economic barriers
- * 'traditional' process too slow
- * 'traditional' process involves limited range of expression - e.g. little movement, little use of music, song, drama, visual means of expression
- * ethos of non-intervention - there is a high presumption of this within the model - can allow oppressive behaviour to go unchallenged
- * comes from a therapy culture
- * may be suggesting that peace can be obtained without attending to justice
- * need to enliven the oppressor about the costs of oppression
- * FCE model is context dependent - incorporating diversity will inevitably mean change, that things will be different - may need to consider its symbols, its metaphors, its language, its representatives, its assumptions
- * Questioning the luxury of neutrality in facilitation/leadership

Model (work in progress)

...suggested by Pat Callair and Ron Hopson

It begins to question the present paradigm within FCE

There is a discrepancy between our ideals and reality which is coped with by denial.

In pseudo-community, denial continues. Familiar order maintained. Stasis (deadening).

Drain of energy, energy goes into void. Status quo and power relationships are

maintained. There is a resistance to change, and rigidity.

May need a negotiation

...about why we're here, for people who have experienced oppression.

Leads to the absence of a vital 'in the moment' encounter and encourages merely an intersection of histories.

Can lead to labelling behaviour as negative when it may not be so - e.g. 'fixing' as a label for something which might be a natural outreach (c.f. singing in South African workshops specifically with a healing purpose when a painful story is told).

Leads to an I - It relationship rather than an I-Thou encounter

Chaos is the key

...(rather than an unpleasant state which has to be endured and somehow got through)

In chaos there is greater truth-telling.

A multiplicity of voices - which can include placating, blaming, super reasonable

New key is dissonant by definition

It is a creative moment, an energetic engagement, characterised by spontaneity, unpredictable.

It is a transformative process and it does lead to a vital encounter

It is an opening into Emptiness

Emptiness is greater fullness

Do have to face potential despair in seeing the truth and removing blinkers

Leads to hope, new vitality, complexity, greater potential, authenticity, inclusivity, respect (re-seeing), compassion (with feeling)

When I first heard of the Scott Peck “community building workshops”, I remember being highly excited! This was because the idea of “community building” was one which I found stimulating and inspiring. It seemed part of, what for me was and is, the significant “missing” area between personal growth and ecological awareness, and how all three interact.

When I went on my first workshop in 1990, I thoroughly enjoyed it, and added it to my missionary toolkit! The process certainly could produce rewarding experiences of human social interactions in groups. But I was also intrigued that the actual techniques seemed to be very similar in some ways to the well-used T group process used by organisational and group process facilitators and trainers. And of course the phrase “community building” is used in many other contexts.

T groups

I subsequently discovered that Scott Peck had indeed used the T group model to develop these workshop techniques. I found this useful and interesting in reflecting on the dynamics of the CBiB workshops and their effects, and comparing the process with other developments of and from T group training approaches I wondered though whether there was anything special to the CBiB process. Was it perhaps just that there was a commonality in values and approaches on the CBiB workshop because of a sort of self-selection by Scott Peck readers, compared with a more random selection of participants on other T group training events?

Organisational development

Can I also remind you of the special issue that Armando Magnino and I are doing on ‘community building and personal relationships’, including committed partnerships. We will be working together on

I have noticed that organisational consultants and developers who are experiencing the CBiB model are exploring how it fits with other team building, group and organisational techniques. Not surprisingly, the CBiB techniques turn out to need a modified treatment, including preparation and follow-up, when used for communities of people who know each other already, and will continue to work or live together after the event. This creates very different dynamics from a group of strangers meeting in the workshop for the first time.

When Peter Cooper asked me if I would edit a special issue of the CBiB newsletter with him (towards the end of 1997), it seemed a good opportunity to draw out some of these kinds of experiences. They would help to enrich our understandings of the special features of the CBiB “experience”, and the not so special features, and how CBiB relates to other processes in helping groups of people to understand each other better and contribute to their “building community”.

Please contribute

So this is a call to all those who are interested in how the CBiB process fits in with or doesn’t, complements or doesn’t, other processes for team building and community building in groups, organisations or other communities.

Would you like to contribute a piece to the special issue from this perspective? Maybe you have something to say about the history, or the dynamics, or the role, or the experience, of the CBiB process. If you are interested, please contact me or Peter, to swap ideas.

Eileen Conn

it, aiming for the April 1997 issue. If you would like to contribute in some way, or find out more, then please contact Armando at 21 Aylesford Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV31 2AL Tel: 01926 337409.

At ‘Men Behaving Boldly’ last July there were three men from Malvern; we’ve met up again a couple of times, and decided to set up an ongoing group: an introductory evening followed by 3 evenings (once a month) for whatever group emerges from that first session.

A letter went out to about 30 people living within an hour’s travel of Malvern - mostly people who have attended a public CBiB event, plus a smattering of others we thought would be interested.

The group meeting

The morning of our meeting it seemed that nine of us might attend - all men! In fact we turned out to be a circle of 8 men and two women.

I introduced a definition or two, and some guidelines. In retrospect, I wish we (Ken, Julian and I) had given more attention to the question of facilitation. After speaking for ten minutes or so, I found it very difficult to put away my feelings of responsibility for the meeting. I was personally very daunted by the fact that I recognised most faces, and many lived within a couple of miles of me. I also started with a presumption that I was experienced in “the process” and that others would be comparative novices: I rapidly had to let go of that. I soon felt like a “lightweight”, who couldn’t cope with the length and intensity of silence that the group repeatedly sustained. A lot seemed to be happening that I had no handle on.

There was also stuff that I could consciously relate to easily. All in all I came away feeling supported in a few more faltering steps along my path.

The joint meeting

The next morning I was collected by Peter Laxton for a long drive to North Yorkshire, for a weekend-long meeting (one of those aeons-long weekends). I have been putting energy for some time into this meeting, and especially to keeping “Power” at the forefront of the agenda. I came away feeling more powerful, and several others have said to me they feel likewise, which for me seems an excellent outcome. I look forward to noticing what the other participants make of the experience.

On Monday, at home.

Capable of very little - some shopping; wrote a couple of letters; asleep by 9pm. I went through a roller-coaster with my partner (I wonder if she sees herself as a ‘cb-widow’). Big dollops of warmth, appreciation, resentment, remorse in rapid succession. I’m just trying to keep myself together while she’s craving access and intimacy. And then we seem to be settling into a slightly revised version of our usual low-level warfare: we grind away at each other something awful. Maybe ‘awesome’ is a better word for it.

And now my mind is on the holes in the bathroom wall - I really must get them mortared up soon; and clip and lag the new

Resources Available

via Peter Cooper (see back page), cheques payable to CBiB

Book: “Ongoing Community” by Jerry Hampton - £5 inc p&p

Past copies of the CBiB newsletter, and index

Book lists and other FCE material on the internet

“mv2spk” on-line community

World-wide web page (<http://members.aol.com/petercbib>)

FCE and ACE newsletters

Paper: “Adventure Education: Two Approaches” by Armando Magnino

I am also trying to see if the following can be made available in the UK VHS format:

Video: “Searching for Community”

(From an FCE booklet: "Community Insights, A Post-Community Building Experience Handbook".)

You may find that you continue to have new insights and understandings about your response to the experience in the weeks after the event (CBW) is completed. Many participants report that their learning continues to unfold and their understanding of the process increases at deeper levels.

Whether this event was your first experience building community using FCE's model or your tenth, each experience adds insights and awareness that may not have been present before. Community building can cause real changes in your relationships with others and your relationship with yourself.

For some participants, building community where they live and/or work may seem like an impossible task. It is important that all community building begins with you. By focusing on how you communicate with others and how you listen, by expressing yourself honestly and vulnerably, by examining your expectations and assumptions, you can begin to build community in any environment.

Suggestions

Here are some suggestions to help integrate the community building experience into your daily life.

- o Not everybody is interested in or wants to build community. Take care of yourself by sharing your experience only with those whom you think will take the time to really listen to you.
- o Proselytizing is a form of fixing and will create resistance. You cannot convert

someone to a desire for community in their lives.

- o If the community building experience has touched you deeply, others will become aware of the effect more by how you behave toward them than by what you say. One way to avoid proselytizing is to wait until you have fully integrated your community building experience before trying to share it.
- o As time passes, you may tend to lose the momentum of the community building event unless you take steps to keep it alive within yourself. First, reflect on the experience and listen to your inner voice. Second, begin putting into practice what you have learned during the event. You may also want to engage in community building wherever it feels appropriate. Whatever approach you take, it is important to create a supportive environment for yourself.
- o You might consider starting an ongoing community group, if you do not already have one, that would meet on a regular basis.
- o You may want to attend another community building event in the future to re-experience community with a different group. Alumni of FCE workshops and conferences report that their understanding of the community building process deepens with each successive experience.

Definition 6. (Taken from the 1996 CCC brochure)

[sic] Emptiness is central to the community building process. A challenging place to enter and inhabit, emptiness is fertile ground for the growth of personal insights and deeper relationships. Community Building is a powerful process - a technology and a discipline -

Taunton: Contact Julia Forse 01823 257371

London: Both groups CB 2-6pm, bring lunch to share from 1pm if you wish, and a cushion. The South London group is no longer meeting. To connect with people who would like to build community regularly with others in South London contact Yvonne Poulson 0171 635 0181.

West Hampstead, North London - Second Sunday each month. 'A seeking after deep communion with others'. Contact Margaret Walsh 0171 794 9158.

Muswell Hill, North London - Usually last Sunday each month. Contact Tom Deevy 0181 444 9764. (This is the long established group which has been meeting in Finsbury Park at Angelo's.)

Leamington Spa: First Monday in the month, 8pm. New members welcome. Prior attendance at a CB event necessary. Contact Debbie or Armando on 01926 337 409.

Sheffield: Meets monthly. Contact Alison 0114 2301739.

North West England (including Darlington): First Sunday in the month. Road Less Travelled support group. Contact Indi Garcha 01325 468881.

Durham: Long established Road Less Travelled group. Fridays fortnightly. Contact Pat Watson 0191 388 8951.

General Enquiries

about Community Building in Britain or Community Building events:

Anthony Kirke, 125 Greenham Road, Newbury, Berks, RG14 7JE Tel/Fax: 01635 47377

Newsletter

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*Please send items for inclusion in the next issue to the same address by **14th December 1996**.*

For convenience of personal contact, the address and telephone number of letter-writers will normally be published, unless other instructions are given. Contributions of any sort (articles, pictures, poems, letters etc.), and of any length, are welcome from all involved in any way with the CBiB network. While every effort will be made to reproduce items in full, please realise that the editor may have to shorten or alter them for publication.