Hi Everybody,

Here's a summary of the notes from Monday, hope it helps. We began our conversation with Roger suggesting that this quarter we might consider creativity as it relates to change, as a frame of reference.

Difference of point of view can arise during exploration of a topic in our workshop. Roger hopes that we can use that difference as a point of inquiry, recognizing our own model about why there is a difference. Perhaps we could suspend judgment about that. Being explicit about our models allows us the possibility to see the incongruence between the espoused model and the lived model. We can participate in expressing our models as a case study or just consider our workshop a dialogue in a safe space.

About 10 years ago, Roger’s father had a stroke. He’s different now than he used to be and recently asked Roger about creativity. Now we can think of our idea of creativity as a model and explore how we relate to it. What do we know about creativity? Are people more creative when they are tired? Go ahead and test this one yourself at home. What is underneath the question of creativity? Roger is corresponding with his father about creativity and will send these workshop notes to his folks. Hi Mom and Dad! Your son talks too much.

You need free attention and energy to enable change. But we have fixed attention as a habit. Looking at our fixed attention is very helpful. To do this, we test our assumptions through grounded talk with each other and exploring our models in homework that we talk about together.

Roger asks if anyone else has a suggestion for an exploration for the quarter. Dianne wants to examine what changes in debate, discussion and dialogue. Rachel says we should talk more about Aristotle’s causality. Liz wants to think slower or somehow do less iterative associative thought.

We try to define associative thought. It is always going on in waking consciousness and reinforces identity. It’s that non-stop tape that runs through your head that you can’t turn off. You might be able to turn it off if you are a Zen master, but don’t count on it happening to you in this class. So, we’ll be always having iterative, associative, immediate, habitual thought. And since we now want to enquire into it, we have Heisenberg to contend with. What can we do?

Well, Roger once engaged in an associative thought exercise where he endeavored to manage the quality of his attention while preparing food in a kitchen with a group of people. Every now and then someone would ask everyone “where is your attention at this moment?” Everyone made a note of it and went back to their task. Another example was about praying ceaselessly and noting what your attention does as you go about your daily routine.

The domain of associative thought itself is impermanent. Structural coupling is about imagining in any given moment that your experience is real or a hallucination. We don’t actually know, it all depends on our point of view. Structural coupling allows us to verify within the limits of our point of view, but unfortunately our point of view is not complete. Don’t try to get out of it, you can’t see all the sides of a sphere at the same time. You only have your point of view of the sphere. Your memory fills in the rest.

But are our thoughts our own, or are they shared? For example, Linda gets an impulse to go to a store and when she gets there, she sees someone she hasn’t seen in a long time. The intuitive moment lead mysteriously to serendipity. Or, it’s not mysterious, it’s just that intuition is a way for us to see things as a whole. Our point of view contracts what we are perceiving in a dialogue. You can test this. You are in a group and you have something that needs to be said. Either suspend it or wait to see if it gets said by someone else. Are we part of a whole or not? Find out and report on Monday!

The uppermost level is an event, a thought or a behavior. Below that are patterns that occur over time, the third level is about context and the lowest level, which gives you the biggest leverage, is about paradigms. Think of the levels as part of a triangle with 1 at the top and 2 at the bottom.

1) Event thought or behavior

2) Patterns and trends, events over time, memory or knowledge
3) Structure, context, culture, neurology, senses

4) Beliefs, identity, paradigm, state of consciousness

Homework for the workshop is generally about having us look at where attention is fixed and disrupt it, and watch what happens. We look at homework as a way to examine the ideas brought up in class. For this week we will investigate our utility. As in asking someone, what can you count on me for? Don’t do anything about it, just see it. Dissolving our utility to other people can be very informative. You are intervening in the system at the level of identity. You might create via interview a profile about things others count on you for. What are the unintended consequences of my success in utility? In other words, what is the shadow?

Consider three leaders.

The first is known for high moral integrity.
The second is known for great strategy.
The third is known for compassion.

What are their shadows?

The first is considered aloof, rigid, uncompromising, and judgmental.
The second is considered manipulative and scheming.
The third is considered nosy.

Be ready to do a reiteration of your utility interview and share your findings with a partner next week. Create a feedback loop as an intervention. However, be sure to make a commitment that when you interview someone about your utility that the conversation also serves the other person as well.

See you all on Monday with your stories, and note that we will meet on Tuesday Jan 22 from 2-4 pm instead of Monday the 21st.

All models are wrong, some are useful, Dianne