

Appendix 1a. Section Five: African & Asian approaches to the world as compared to the European

This is the table that I shared with the group of authors and which was subsequently published in the book *Managing the Unknown by Creating New Futures* (Charles, 1994d) that we put together.

**AFRICAN/ASIAN APPROACHES TO BEING IN THE WORLD
COMPARED TO THE EUROPEAN**

European	African and Asian
Either / or	Both / and
Reductionist	Holistic
Separation of the spiritual from the everyday	Integration of the spiritual into the everyday & the everyday into the spiritual
Striving for constant growth	Striving for balance
Control over	Accepting, live with
Life's goals achieved through the acquisition of external material things	Life's purpose as being about acquiring wisdom and inner peace
Greater value put on left brain operations	Greater valuing of right brain operations
Mind - body split, dualism	The human organism is a totality
Individualism, Me oriented	Individuality within a group context
Learn facts, computational	Learn to be wise, the ability to operate effectively in the world
A need for certainty. All things are knowable, plannable	Accepting of uncertainty
Function before style	Style is inseparable from function
Linear	Circular, rhythmic
Detachment, objectivity	Involvement, engagement
Emphasis on the young and new	Valuing of the past, age & experience as well as the new
Speed; Valuing of doing things quickly.	Valuing of doing things well.
The end justifies the means	The path, the way is as important as the end

The columns in this table are, of course, not mutually exclusive. They record generalised differences in order to show that differences do in fact exist. The very table is in a form geared towards the western mindset. Most African and Asian perspectives would not polarise them and then view them as opposite but as differences to be internalised and held alongside each other. I use the table merely to support my position that Africa and Asia have, within their indigenous ways of viewing the world, tremendous wisdom to offer the world that could help it survive and grow in wisdom, peace and satisfaction. (Charles, 1994c, 125-146)

Appendix 1b. Section Five: African approaches to the world as compared to the European - redesigned

African approaches to the world as compared to the European

European

Either / or Reductionist

Separation of the spiritual from the everyday

Striving for constant growth

Control over

Life's goals achieved through the acquisition of external material things

Greater value put on left brain operations

Mind - body split, dualism

Individualism, "Me" oriented

A need for certainty. All things are knowable, plannable

Function before style

Linear

Detachment, objectivity

Emphasis on the young and new

Speed; Valuing of doing things quickly.

The end justifies the means

African

Both / and Holistic

Integration of the spiritual into the everyday & the everyday into the spiritual

Striving for balance

Accepting, live with

Life's' purpose as being about acquiring wisdom and inner peace

Greater valuing of right brain operations

The human organism is a totality

Individuality within a group context

Accepting of uncertainty and contradiction

Style is inseparable from function

Circular, rhythmic

Involvement, engagement

Valuing of the past, age & experience as well as the new

Valuing of doing things well.

The path, the 'way' is as important as the end.

Appendix 2. Section Five: Explaining and evolving

I am speaking to a group of young people. I say that what I am doing is 3-fold. I am looking at African history as a source of inspiration, as a source of information of ways of thinking that can contribute to our existing strategies and ... before I can conclude I am challenged. I am not used to being challenged so early in my presentation or with such apparent anger. I'm asked, "What can that do for us today?"

I am thrown. I thought I had stated this really clearly that it should be unnecessary to have to repeat it.

I struggle to find the words though and that is informative. I try to answer his question but as I sit down to write this account, less than an hour after it happened I am aware that I was unhappy with something about the explanations that I was giving. I do not feel convincing. I listen more closely to where the questions are coming from.

"Today, as they insult us with live 8 and tell us that we need their 'aid' in order to survive, that we cannot do anything for ourselves, how can knowledge of African history that feels so far away, a thousand years ago, how can that help us now?"

I respond

"Well, first we have to have a belief that we can make a difference to our lives and we can use that history, the knowledge that we have once achieved to tell us that we can do so again".

"A thousand years ago though",

"Well, every peoples have to have a sense of identity they have to say that we were or are descended from something great. That's why, in this country (the UK) they spend so much time on their museums and hero worship people like Queen Boadacia who fought against the Romans. There seems to be some kind of psychological need.

I feel myself shifting gear. Something is changing inside myself. My mind is not consciously calculating what it will say next, but the words come out with more 'flow'.

"We can make it again, because we made it before – look at Egypt – a Black civilisation for most of its period of greatness. It lasted for at least three thousand years before it was defeated, and still it rose again to greatness. It provided the foundation for much of western European civilisation and the Greek civilisation emerged out of it and built upon its foundations. Europeans defeated us after hundreds of years of resistance. Slavery robbed us of many of our best peoples. Even so we never accepted colonialism. We were never completely defeated. We fought against it until they had to give us 'independence'. However, the independence they 'gave' us was a sham. They left behind a ruling class that served western political and economic interests.

They tied us up with trade 'agreements' and with banking and other economic policies that extracted maximum profits for people outside of Africa and prevented us from having real control of our economies.

We did not just accept this though. Even the people they left behind to control the societies in Western interests sometimes rebelled against their masters and tried to implement policies more in keeping with national interests. Most often, when they did they overthrew them by direct military interventions, sponsoring coups and civil wars. They undermined the future integrity of these societies.

The absence of internal control over our economies and policies led to even greater poverty as 'our' efforts were geared to serve European interests rather than our own.

That is why we have to understand our history because if we don't when we look around at people of African origin, what explanations will we have for our condition? Will we not have to accept the notion that we are somehow inferior?

The way out of this is to believe in ourselves, to have different stories about ourselves that honour our past and explain our presents in ways that empower and strengthen us. to recognise that we can be great again if we "see the world through our own eyes", i.e. view the world through perspectives that enhance our individual and collective well-being. We have to love ourselves not so much for what other peoples say and by their standards, but by our own standards. We, you, have a critical role to play. As I look at you I have hope for the future. You are so beautiful and intelligent and full of possibility. I want to see that flourish and not be crushed because of naïve vulnerability. I hope that we will move forward as peoples in this world and have great lives. I hope that you will build your own dreams upon the foundations and sacrifices that your parents have made in order for you to be where you are in the world today. I hope that you honour their sacrifices and efforts. When you are successful will you forget where you have come from or will you use your position and the knowledge I am trying to introduce you to to create futures in which justice and equality and our African and Asian personalities and needs are more fairly reflected or will you help compound inequality"?

I am pleased with the effect that my words have. As I am speaking I am moving my gaze around the room at these beautiful young people who are about to start their careers. I want so much for them. I feel a connectivity between us. I 'know' that they appreciate something about the way that I am speaking. They smile and nod. I am impressed myself by the way that the words come together. I strain to express love to them, for them and for *our* future

I focus again at the 'angry man'. I look at him closely. Is that anger I see in his eyes? Or is it frustration not with my answer but with the condition of African peoples in the world. I ask myself whether he wants to be angry with me because I do not have explanations that can give him what he wants. In my head the assumption starts to form that he has read more than the rest of the group probably as he has that understanding of the ways in which charity giving through events like Live8 are a kind on insult to African peoples because they build on the notion that we need help because of our own inadequacy rather than because of the manipulations of our economies and psyches for colonial interests.

One of the young women in the group starts to speak:

“But I want to find out about my history. We have never been told some of the things you were saying. At school they never taught us...”
“But what good does it do?” interrupts the angry man.

I try to give an explanation. I cannot remember it now. I cannot remember the words that I used. I remember that most of the group seemed happy with it, but the strongest memory I have is of that young mans eyes burning with questions and this feeling that I had failed.

I talk to myself. “What I need to be able to do is to tell simple stories that explain this to people/ that explains and empowers. That explain what happened to us and why in a way that does not make us feel inferior to others and offers ways of thinking about another future for ourselves in ways that encourage our reemergence..

My role is both to help formulate that story and to find ways of telling it that have the type of impact that will contribute significantly to our re-emergence as a people. (whatever that might mean)

A critical part of my practice/my story is about me developing my ability to influence social formations and people that are thought leaders that have an impact upon ‘us’ directly and indirectly.

My particular strength is not in telling the story well, it’s also in my ability to help others see it as in their interest to support this re-emergence. This is based on a desire to maintain my humanity and because I do not believe that oppositional politics work in a sustainable way. My thesis is largely about not proving the above is true as much as how I can work with others in ways that help transform our present and future realities. This is one reason that a study of my presentational practice is a critical part of my study. How I live and embody this is crucial to the influence that I seek to have.

Extract from log; reflections on presentation to applicants. 15.12.2003

Appendix 3 Section Five: Email from participant on course

Subject: Thank you
Date: Wednesday, August 17, 2005 17:10
From: Removed>
To: <edencharles@XXXXXX.com>
Conversation: Thank you

Eden,

How are you? I hope all is well.

We met at the XXXX on XXXX training from the 3rd- 5th August. I guess the easiest way of letting you put a face to the name is that I'm XXXXX's sister.

I really would like to thank you for your contribution to the residential training, it was truly refreshing. For me it served several functions from improving my self confidence to giving me ideas about how to succeed as a young Black professional. The residential has easily been the best learning part of my placement.

I asked you about a possible reading list on African history. I was really interested when you talked of our history as its long been a subject I'd like to learn more about. It started when I was in France and was going to give my class a lesson about Ghana, I was really excited thinking that it would give me the opportunity to learn Ghana's rich ancestry, fables and customs and pass that information on. I was however, really really disappointed to find that after hours of trawling the internet, I was only able to find three post colonial dates. I'd be really grateful for any direction you could give me regarding the subject.

It was really good to meet you and I wish you all the best for the future. Perhaps we'll have the pleasure of meeting again,

Kind regards,

Name removed

Appendix 4 Section Five: From: 'Towards An Anti Colonial Approach To Therapy' to: 'Thoughts On A Transformational Approach To Our Work'.

A discussion paper for the Living And Working With The Effects of Child Sexual Abuse In The Black Community conference

10th October 1994.

Part 1

Since agreeing to participate in this conference I have had cause to ask myself on more than one occasion why? I have tremendous respect for some that I know who work in this area. They have done some excellent thinking and theorising that is of immense value to the future character of survivors and the wider Black community. Will these people want to hear what I have to say?

Well, I have an opinion, a truth, that I want to offer for debate with others. It is based on my experience of Counselling, from both sides. It is based on my study of influential people and theories in the sphere of human growth; Freud, Rogers, Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Gestalt, Transactional Analysis, Assertion theory, organisational psychology, the whole New Age trip and a whole bunch of other ideas and practices that are around and influencing the way so many people are conceiving themselves, society and the future. It is based on my experience as an activist in the movement of Black liberation and my understanding of political theory and an African Centred way of understanding phenomena. It is based on tough personal experiences that have put me through periods of reflection and rebuilding of my life. It is based on my sense of myself as a Black male in a world dominated by White males. It is based on feelings of not wanting to make the same mistakes again; of wanting to not waste any more time going down blind and destructive alleys; to learn from the past and finally manage to make a change that makes a change; (a desire to follow our own signposts not those provided for us by equal opportunities, anti racist policies and the like). We have done enough surviving, we need to thrive.

What I want to say is very simple:

- Therapy and social policy as it affects Black people in this (and other) societies reflects a dominant world view that serves the global interests of the dominant European elite. This world view is more than an ideology of domination; It is a way of being in the world. This world view and way of being in the world are not in our interests. Both individually and socially they encourage dependency and external definition of self
- At a time when we (African peoples) are arguably under greater threat globally than at any time in our history we need to have approaches that can transform our situation and focus on meeting our specific needs. I believe that these can be drawn from our cosmologies which can also point to and remind us of other ways of being.
- If we focus down to this society we see fundamental structural changes taking place largely as a result of relative economic decline. Even if there was the will to

do so these changes will have a fundamental affect on the ability of central and local government to provide social services, education and other traditional social provision.

- Given the above, I believe that it is appropriate at this time to work on creating the conditions within the Black community that will enable us to establish greater independence of thought and means. Strategies based on equal opportunities, anti racism and the like are about integration and integrating us within a cycle of our own oppression. They foster dependency and addiction. They can be effective as means to an end (tactics, rather than strategies), but only if we remain clear as to what that end is. We need to move from dependency to independence.

Part of what this might mean in the context of this conference is to take on the responsibility of integrating within the mind set of the entire Black population not just the horror of child sexual assault but the responsibility for reducing it's incidence. To work towards establishing an on going mass open conversation aimed at increasing understanding; at spreading commitment towards believing, valuing and appropriately supporting survivors. Of taking back the power and responsibility for defining and transforming our situation

This is about transforming aspects of ourselves as individuals and a community. It is about self definition and self activity. It is about enabling our flowering in all our differences. It is moving away from being anti this and anti that and being **for** ourselves. It is about the transformation of the 'professional', confined by the definitions of their profession, into an individual working as part of a movement of growth and development of ourselves. This might involve the building of independent institutions (and we can define what an institution is) at the same time as working in state organisations.

This paper sets out to explore some of the above in greater detail. The initial concern of this paper was to do with therapy and approaches to healing. However, the very paradigm that I am using and the journey I have taken in writing this paper has forced a change in title and a broader emphasis.

Part 2

This conference is called Living And Working With The Effects of Sexual Abuse In The Black Community. It is for 'Black Women And Men Professionals'. My focus in this paper is on addressing these 'professionals'.

When working with survivors and making other related interventions in the lives of others I think it is important to be aware of the effects of the underlying assumptions of the approach that is being used. Good intentions are not enough. Kamalu makes a valuable and relevant point;

Despite the African origins of Christianity and Islam the fact is not changed of their use as tools of colonisation by Europeans and Arabs respectively. Today some Africans believing that their faith is under

attack defend these abuses of Christianity and Islam by claiming that these are African religions.....¹

Likewise, though many of the theories that we use have their roots in African traditions and philosophy they come to us mediated by Europeans. Even when they may wish otherwise, the message/ information they pass on is influenced by the way they see the world and their awareness of their interests.

Often those Black people that defend the theories do so because they see the value that they have been to helping people through traumatic experiences. I do not wish to deny the value of the help that counsellors and other associated professionals have been to members of the Black community. My concern is that this help has also been passing on values that are potentially damaging for us.

From my own experience of being counselled, I remember feeling that I was being asked to change my values about community, social change, myself and much more, when all I thought I wanted was help through a difficult time. I was to take responsibility for what had happened, it was my responsibility to learn to love myself enough to never allow others to take advantage of me again. Now I believe in all of that but what about developing ways of stopping others committing such betrayals? What was to happen to the perpetrators? That is not in the realm of counselling and therapy and is just one of the weaknesses inherent in an approach that treats the individual in isolation from society. That, in fact views the individual personality as independent from society and environment!

It is not that there is any thing intrinsically 'wrong' with these theories; they have helped many and have valuable insights to offer. It's what they bring with them, the music behind the words, the unstated assumptions about what society is; what the individual is; the self etc. that can undermine and subvert the establishment of a Black independence that is essential to our survival and a necessary precursor to building human relations based on respect and equality.

Jeffrey Masson² lays bare the simple fact, denied only by the most evangelical and naive or disingenuous of therapists, that therapy aims to change people. It is impossible for the therapists' values, world view and prejudices not to operate and be influencing the 'client'. The world view, the underlying assumptions, of most approaches to therapy is that which is often labelled the European World View.

We live in a world dominated by this World View. This way of conceiving the world and acting within it serves (what they perceive as) the interests of the dominant western powers. It is a total world view that permeates every section of our society and is even manifest in the way in which we undertake the activity of therapy. Its assumptions are based not on an objective reality of what the self is and what society is. They are rooted in the particular set of interests and perceptions of the dominant ideology.

¹ Foundations of African Thought. Chukwunyere Kamalu. 1990. Karnak House.

² Against Therapy. Jeffrey Masson. Fontana. 1990.

I want to examine some of the consequences of working within that paradigm and suggest that there are other ways of conceiving our situation that can provide alternatives to the strategies we presently engage in.

One of the best ways we can begin to understand the dominant world view is to compare it with other ways of being in and conceiving being in the world from other cosmologies; that level beneath culture, it becomes obvious that they are only one way of viewing being in the world and not necessarily the best or right one. What it can also do is help integrate what is labelled therapy into a broader range of activities that are about our liberation as a people. The table that follows gives some comparisons.

AFRICAN/ASIAN APPROACHES TO BEING IN THE WORLD COMPARED TO THE EUROPEAN	
European	African/Asian
Either / or	Both / and
Reductionist	Holistic
Striving for constant growth	Striving for balance
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Speed; Valuing of doing things quickly.	Valuing of doing things well.
The end justifies the means	The path, the way is as important as the end

The columns in this table are, of course, not mutually exclusive. They record generalised differences in order to show that differences do in fact exist. The very table is in a form geared towards the western mind set. Most African and Asian perspectives would not polarise them and then view them as opposite but as differences to be internalised and held alongside each other. I use the table merely to support my position that Africa and Asia have, within their indigenous ways of viewing the world, tremendous wisdom to offer the world that could help it survive and grow in wisdom, peace and satisfaction.

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How can the world view drawn from African and Asian cosmologies help us establish the principles of what I believe could be a more appropriate approach to child sexual assault? It will involve challenging some basic assumptions and thinking broadly and creatively.

Below are some initial thoughts.

- A holistic approach would mean that we would view the activity of healing, therapy whatever, as part of the growth, becoming, flowering, thriving upon this planet of our people.
- What it can also do is help integrate what is labelled therapy into a broader range of activities.
- It can lead to a re thinking notions of what the 'self' is and recognise that these are culturally and historically defined. It would view the individual as part of a whole, the self as socially as well as personally defined and constructed.
- It can help in challenging approaches that help the individual 're - integrate' into the values and priorities of a sick society.
- In thinking about treatment, individual and social ritual and rites of passage can be included amongst the range of approaches
- It can foster the understanding that focusing on individual change in isolation from environmental change is almost impossible to sustain.
- we might move from 'victim' phrases like 'illness' and 'healing' to something like 'recreating'.
- It might encourage greater independence from state and qualification sanctioned professionals; less alienation from cultural, social and familial reference points and greater emphasis on being an effective social actor.
- It can place the spiritual and social context within the realm of attention.
- It can help feed optimism and a belief that we can change our world that has been replaced with cynicism, stress and the growth of individualism as an ideology. This is reflected in the focus of many approaches to therapy, personal growth and psychiatric practice.
- If we work from the position that we are still a colonised people experiencing sustained psychological and physical assault then we can view (some) 'mental illness' as an appropriate or at least understandable response to abuse. This might allow for greater respect for the perceptions of someone who is 'distressed' or 'ill'. In fact, if we are in a crazy society could not those who move away from it's defined ways of being be the 'sane' ones? It might recognise that much of what this society sees as abnormal and 'crazy', 'inappropriate' behaviour is seen as normal in other societies and cultures in the world.
- Moving from an 'either/ or' approach would allow us to consider greater possibilities of response and initiation.
- It can support the undermining of the role of the therapist, counsellor, healer to exercise power of definition over the 'client'.
- It might ditch the word therapist

- Would want to, would be engaged in the process of building a liberated Black reality.
- Would view themselves as more than (atomistic) therapist but as part of a movement of personal, spiritual, social transformation and liberation.
- The healer/therapist would see/feel operate from a sense of shared interests with the person to be healed i.e. it is in my interest for you to 'get better'. This approach is different from the mock and sham implicit in notions of 'unconditional positive regard'. It is also important that it does not become an excuse to deal with the personal needs, agenda and issues of the healer/therapist.
- Would see that the healers' development / training / preparation to be effective within the Black community would depend as much on their respect and understanding of the norms, values, culture of that community as on their professional training. Would move away from 'scientific', 'rational' theories and recognise that the 'treatment' that is often most needed is love and attention, real belonging and purpose, not being analysed by some methodology that gets its credibility from its conforming to scientific principles and taught how you can do it all yourself. They would look closely at where they get their sustenance from and what form it took. It is this that Bell Hooks refers to in the following paragraph;

Living and working in predominantly White settings, in situations where Black people seem confused and uncertain about politics and identity, I began to think deeply about the way in which the collective lives of Black people in contemporary White-supremacist patriarchy have become fundamentally estranged from life-affirming world views and life practices. Many Black people see themselves solely as victims with no capacity to shape and determine their own destiny.³

There is so much more to cover; much more that others are better equipped to conceive than I am. I do not end up with any other conclusion. This is a collection of ideas. I present it as a starting point; my initial contribution to a discussion I intend to learn from.

Following is a subjective collection of some of the characteristics of the context we operate in.

Notes on the context

CHARACTERISTICS

- A failure to recognise the depth of the present revolutionary changes taking place within and between societies and Nations.
- In Britain there is what we are all too tired as being reiterated about our situation; Education, housing, jobs, child care. There are other changes taking place that we should be aware of because they are having significant impact on our lives already and will have devastating effects in the future.

³ Sisters Of The Yam. Bell Hooks. 1993. Turnaround

The 80's saw the death of the position of the middle class in Britain as a class that was insured against recessions; they are now like the rest of us, caught up in the maelstrom of change. Their role as the model for the other classes to aspire to has gone. Today what is more respected than inherited wealth and position is earned power; the 'self made' person is treated with greater respect e.g. Branson, than the inherited wealthy. The models and norms that people traditionally aspired to no longer carry the same weight and people are developing alternatives. The model of decency is no longer what the middle classes once defined it as being. In the period of change some harp back to a previous era. The attempted return to conservative traditions and values in both the Black and White community is a reflection of a wish to return to more certain stable times when, though imperfect, the rules were known. It feels like every thing is 'up for grabs'

- The relative and inevitable, increasing impoverishment of the British and other Western Governments. The subsequent decline in their ability to finance the kind of public spending that has traditionally, acted as a kind of social adhesive. Social spending e.g. health, social Services and education is bound to fall over the next few years, irrespective of which government is in power.
- The weakening of the power of the state in the face of International, 'globalised' companies;
- International finance capital that can bring down governments and economies in even the 'developed' world.
- The rise of S.E. Asian economies that are introducing a level of competition to the western powers that they have never had to face before.
- In the wider African Diaspora 40 Million Africans to die as result of western policies in one calendar year.
- The sexualisation of society, the commercialisation & marketing of sex continues apace.
- Drugs and negative stereotypes of behaviour are being pumped at all sections of the world African community.
- The growth of many differing social foci, Nationalisms and nationality based conflict.

Appendix 5 Section Five: Feedback from men's course

5-6th March 2005

I like the relaxed style

You set a good pace with good attention to each individual delegate

Insightful comments that are always supportive and helpful

Talent for drawing lessons relevant to everybody from individuals in the room, rather than textbooks.

.....
It was if you were one of the delegates and everything we have been through in the 48 hours you have shared and experienced.

I like the way the group almost decided what we were doing to do and you just let it flow.

There appeared to be a very loose framework for the workshop, which you guided very well

.....
I have found you Eden to be extremely professional, challenging but in a relaxed and empathetic way, discreet and able to deal with tough emotional issues, for the group with a calmness and skill that I admire immensely. Your insights and the way you relate them back to the group is quite stunning.

.....
Eden, I greatly value your style- it has helped me learn a lot about myself.

I appreciate your listening, encouraging affirmative comments, and honest feedback and summaries.

You have encouraged us all to be ourselves and given us the belief that we can change, as well as helping us see how.

Thank You. You are a star. It's a valuable work you are doing.

.....
I like the quiet way you gain people's confidence so that they open up and lay bare aspects about themselves they would not share with others.

You obviously read and research extensively and can marry models with the real world.

I like the somewhat (apparently) unstructured approach - it takes as long as it takes- to the course. Things slowly get revealed to the group. I.e. he doesn't get panicked.

.....
I greatly appreciated your relaxed approach to the course in that it helped us to relax with you.

You come over in a very natural and caring way that is totally genuine.

I would certainly wish to come on a follow up course if you are the tutor, from what I have seen of how serious an alternative tutor could have been. I am delighted to have worked with you.

Many thanks for your time on the one-2-one.

Any one else arriving 20 minutes late for the start of the 2nd day would have frustrated me, but it did not with you...just part of your charm and style! Keep being you!

Many thanks and hope to meet again!

During this course, which was a residential one, on the final day, I went for a beautiful run in the forest and enjoyed it so much that I explored new routes marvelling at the beauty around me as I ran. I ended up getting quite lost and running many (well, two or three) more miles before I found my way back to the course! I remember telling myself not to panic because I had given the participants so much and they had got so much out of the course already that they would not allow this to distract them from their learning. I think that their feedback shows that this was the case, though I really do not make it a habit to be late on courses!

Appendix 6, Section Five: Inquiring in a meeting

I am sitting in this room in the London headquarters, by London Bridge, of a major international consultancy. Around the table is an assorted bunch of people. They represent about seven different management consultancies who have won the right to contribute to the National Health Services development programme for 'Black and ethnic minorities'. I spread my gaze around them. Some features bring themselves to my attention and stay in my mind more than others. There are around 15 people in the room. About 70% of them are White. Only one of the consultancies is 'Black-led. The rest of the people of colour here are, like me today, part of larger organisations. I am here representing Berkshire Consultancy Limited. I led their team in the bidding process for this piece of work and lead their diversity work. The work had been advertised amongst approved providers. I would not have been asked to tender for this piece of work in my own name because I am not on that list. Despite this, I am aware that I have feelings of resentment about this. I find myself uncomfortable with the role that I am playing. I am representing a 'White' organisation, in an area that I have sought passionately to create an independent 'Black' voice in. I tell myself that it is better to be here than not. I can at least make a contribution by being here, can't I? I can articulate a different perspective? I can help move this programme towards one that impacts more favourably upon the target population can't I?

People are speaking. They are introducing themselves. I am aware of tensions inside of myself. I am tense and excited. I am aware of my belief that I have something really important to offer this whole area of work. I believe that I have made innovative formulations of ideas from my experiences and reflections. But how do I use this in this business setting that most characterise as competitive? I do not want to compete. I tell myself, but I also do not want my voice to not be heard and my contribution to not be made. How do I do this?

I notice the people in the room. There is a light-skinned man, probably mixed race, I tell myself. He is our host and is representing the major consultancy that is hosting the meeting. He looks confident. Maybe he is in his early 30's. I ask myself what I am feeling as I look at him. I am both pleased at the fact that a 'person of colour' is in a job like this and I am wondering if this means that he has adopted the perspectives of his consultancy. In earlier years I would have used words like "sell-out". I do not feel that so strongly now. I am wondering though whether he is bringing anything different to the party or whether his is yet another mainstream organisation that views 'diversity' as yet another product to market. Is diversity yet another form through which they can sell their usual offerings cloaked in a different label but essentially offering the same product.

He is good looking smartly dressed in a conventional business suit. His categorisation, by myself, as a 'clone', a White man in dark skin is only partially mitigated by the lack of a tie. Even that might be a sign of membership and confidence in the dominant culture though, I continue to myself. I notice the pattern of my thinking. I try to stop it and ask myself to consider that all of these people are human beings and that if I am to work effectively with them and be the influence that I want to be I need to see the good in them. I need to avoid stereotyping. I need to seek common ground from which I can build rapport and then influence from that place.

A large Asian man enters the room. He is wearing a grey jacket. It is smart and not executive type smart. He carries a certain amount of gravitas about him I think. He is tall

and broad with a paunch. He has a neatly trimmed beard. I find myself wondering about him. He looks I tell myself as if he could be one of those people who the British would get to administer something in India during the colonial times. Is he a kind of Equal Opportunity Commission person? Is he playing the role of somebody dark doing the White man's job for him? His age and calm power might cause me problems if we get into a debate about key principles I tell myself. He looks like somebody who could hold his ground with a reasonable calmness that would be very attractive.

I continue to scan the room, making notes while I look. Is this crazy? I write about myself writing as I experience, trying to capture my noticing and feeling in the moment. There are two Black women to my right. I want to reach out and connect with them but I am concerned about how that might be interpreted. Also, I want to be able to exert an influence in this meeting and if I start to talk with them and find out that I like them, I might find it hard to disagree with them later in the meeting! I am unhappy about this thought and want to shift it. But it stays a little too long for my comfort. What if they see me as being non-professional because of my dreadlocks? I am not in the mood to be condescended to. I filter the thought and tell myself that I will need to avoid being seen as a hothead. I want to be seen as credible, professional and able to work within a different paradigm from the implicit one that I felt invisibly ordering behaviour and contributions in this meeting.

This is a business meeting for most of the people around the room. It is the means by which they earn their living. Meetings like this are probably a critical site for them to demonstrate and develop an identity for themselves that they value and which is externally valued by significant others. It is the means through which I too earn my living and try to exert an influence that subverts the dominant paradigm, the dominant configurations of power, and seeks to contribute to the re-emergence of the denied. In seeking to do so am I being unfair to these people? They have a right to earn a living after all. How can I articulate the values that I wish to in a way that respects their right to be who they are? I am still tense. I feel coiled up, I long to speak, to begin the meeting to get to the point that I want to get to. But there is a structure to the meeting. The chair is a guy that I want to value my perspective. I think that that perspective could be of critical value to the job he has in changing the culture and demographic profile of senior management in the NHS.

An Asian woman sits to my right. She is too close to me for me to be able to get a really good look at her. She is dressed smartly and formally. She looks the part of a management consultant in the mainstream. She is from the organisation that won the contract to run the development centres, the first stage in the series of activities, run by different 'providers' that collectively comprise the 'Breaking Through' programme. It is a 'White' organisation in the sense that is owned by White directors and does work for organisations in a wide range of professional areas. I had been told that at a previous meeting that I had not attended that the consultancies had been behaving competitively in subtle and unhelpful ways. Like us, I suppose, they too had wanted to run the whole damn programme. That is what we had thought we were bidding for. The NHS, in their wisdom had decided to divide the contract between the consultancies spread around the table. I was disappointed because I felt that this would hamper cohesion. I could see the advantage from the NHS point of view. This arrangement, getting competing consultancies to collaborate in the programme would keep us all on our toes.

My continued description of the meeting	Abduls thoughts
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We go through a process on introductions. It's just a quick round with each person saying their name and the organisation they are from. I give the same amount of information about myself as I feel others are. The large Asian man introduces himself "Abdul Chowdry". I look up. I'm almost startled. I stare at him. Could this be my Abdul, the friend that I had had at college and whom I had not heard from for over twenty years? I look at him; really look at him. He smiles and nods. This is a very formal meeting at this stage, and his nod fits into the culture whilst at the same time screaming out to me that I have re-found my mate. It is he! I want to get up and give him a bear hug. I want to shout out and make noise. I want to tell everybody in the room that I have longed to see this guy for so many years.

As I enter the room my antennae are out and as I sit down from the core of a buried memory, in a hurtling elevator of empowering intensity, comes the name of this man – "Eden Charles". I am SO pleased and ALSO almost inevitably unsurprised to see him in this terrain; knowing without fear of contravention that this is precisely the arena – at the heart of thinking of how sustainable desirable change can come about - that we were destined, programmed to connect into/ via. He is performing in his pre-eminent mode, capturing the 'floating power' in an undeniable whirlpool of engaging collectivistic enterprise. INCREDIBLE!! I've been thinking a fair bit of Eden in recent months and weeks and finally he finally clocks me. How could he not see me under the largeness and before the words came? He was always a genuinely generous and giving man; a builder for all!

I sit on my visible emotions but my mood has changed. I feel more powerful. I am excited. I try to remain focussed. I am sure that Abdul has positive memories of me. I had been a relatively uncomplicated person in those days, committed to 'the struggle' and prepared to do whatever it took to make it work. I do not want the excitement of seeing him cause me to lose my equilibrium. This meeting is an important inquiry for me and I want to conduct myself well in it.

I process what is going on inside me. I want to try to be positive I tell myself. The process of selection has produced contradictions that are almost designed to generate competition and conflict between us. I am mindful that a) I want the work and b) I want to be able to influence it so that it serves to give the participants an experience that values their uniquenesses, is addressed to their specific needs and is actually capable of generating changes that make changes both in the ethnic demography and the culture of the organisation.

One by one, each of the organisations in the room introduces the work that they will be doing with participants on the programme. I listen intently. When the Asian woman to my left introduces the work that they have already done at the development centre my stomach tightens. I am both disappointed and feel my position justified by her description of the development centre that they have run. It sounds very professional and thorough. What it does not sound is any different to any other good development centre – I tell myself. The woman is strong in voice. She knows her stuff and her presentation of self is impressive.

As I write now, I cannot remember my verbal reaction to her presentation. I might have asked questions, I cannot remember. As we go around the room and other people introduce the work that they will be doing, some with PowerPoint presentations and fancy graphics of the process, I feel my sense of anticipation rising and my desire to comment on what

they are proposing. “What is different about it”! “How does that design reflect the issues of power inequities, deliberate blocking of the participants, issues to do with internalised oppression?” I long to say. I have this strong sense that the NHS is being sold programmes that have been used with White managers or mixed groups in the past and have only changed the colour of the people presenting here today, not the composition, strategies or assumptions of their designs.

<p>My continued description of the meeting I look at the faces of the people in the room and manage to connect with their humanity. I see the softness in their widely differing skin tones the strengths and vulnerabilities. I see people trying to do their job and doing the best that they can do. I open my mouth and after each person speaks I find something positive to say about his or her presentation. “What I like about your design/approach is...” I do that for all but one of the presentations. I am aware that I am the only person doing so – and I feel OK about this though I do start to worry that I might sound arrogant. Who am I to say that I like what they have done? Is that not patronising? I decide to continue with this approach anyway. I am seeking the positives the ‘best of what is’. I sense that people are OK with it. I am disappointed though that I cannot find anything to say about one of the presentations particularly as it is by a Black woman. I want to be honest though and work with integrity if I am going to feel strong within myself in this meeting.</p>	<p>Abduls thoughts</p> <p>I don’t have to deny you to be me. A key tenet of dysfunctional ‘White’ organisational psyche has been and remains that ‘my identity is derived by denying yours’. This is a major value contributor to the sense of decline that is inherent in distorted senses of ‘White’ identities and the confused, sometimes terrorised, senses of ‘Black’ and ‘other’ internalisations of unresonating dominant ways of thinking, feeling, being and doing.</p> <p>Having captured it you held the floating power presentation after presentation – modelling an inclusivity with your generosity of comment and spirit that both disarmed and inspired the objects of your spirit and you were never seriously challenged.</p>
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It comes around to my time. My stomach tenses and I relax at the same time. I have watched the PowerPoint presentations. I have seen the diagrams, well presented. I want to model and live some of the values I claim to hold. I have not prepared a presentation. Minutes earlier I had started to worry about that, but I have told myself that I do not need one here. I want to be spontaneous and prepared – those are values I hold, not being dictated to by machines. I want to be seen as credible at the same time though and so I want to demonstrate that I am knowledgeable in their terms as well as carrying/embodying another type of credibility. I am aware as I prepare myself to speak of the temptation to launch into what people would probably see as a radical diatribe that could be dismissed as naïve or reflecting an unprofessional ‘chip-on-my-shoulder’. I so want to introduce a different perspective. I know that I have to language it in terms that value the people in the room; both because I do and because failure to do so will result in me being unheard.

It is my turn. I look at the programme design in front of me on a piece of paper. This is my score that I will improvise from. I start to speak. I say something like this:

“ I do not want to speak about the design of the programme in detail at this point” I say. “ I prefer to speak about the philosophy of our approach”

Nobody has talked about philosophy so far. I read out the headings in the programme design. I have tried to infuse as many as I can with the word ‘success’. I want to project the feeling that success is possible, that the programme is about becoming more successful. It is not just a programme for those who want to experience a good course, but is a part of the process through which they achieve the positions and outcomes that they want for themselves.

“First of all I want to say that we start off from the premise that the organisation is not perfect. We recognise that even if the participants on the programme work really hard and achieve all of the things they are supposed to learn, in relation to the competences, then they will still have to deal with a variety of obstacles that are to do with discrimination. So our approach is about helping develop the skills they need to succeed in an environment that is both friendly and unfriendly, that both wants and blocks their progress. Not to do so is to be saying to participants that the reason for your lack of progress is because you do not have skills and knowledge; something is wrong with you. This is the deficit model. We like to work with an approach that is about starting from strengths. We want to give people on the programme an affirming experience in which their unique qualities are identified, valued and seen as positive qualities that they bring to their prospective positions as leaders”.

“A history of Success: If this programme is going to reflect the aspirations and cultures of the managers in its fibre, position, design and structure then it has to be more than an off-the-shelf programme, used in other situations and given a Black face. It has to be a transformational programme that gives participants positive messages about themselves, their histories and their future possibilities. So we will draw from past success in their histories and cultures, however they choose to define these, to give the message that they have achieved great things before and so they can do so again. We also want to give the message that the strengths you draw upon mean that you bring differences to your leadership position that can be of benefit to the wider organisation. The message here is that you do not have to lose your soul in order to be successful. Or, more properly, your past, if you value it, enables you to contribute in unique ways that are of value to you and to the organisation.

I continue; I mention notions that we will be using from Appreciative Inquiry. I speak of an ‘opportunity matrix’, to make the point that even within this less than perfect world there are opportunities that can be taken if they can be seen as such. “So we need to help people generate ways of seeing and feeling that enable them to work effectively with the contradiction between discriminatory practices and opportunities to succeed”.

I mention the approach to working with power that I have rediscovered from the work of radical feminists and third World transformational activists of the nineteen sixties through to the nineties and quoted in a report by Zoë Oxaal. I outline the different conceptual approaches to power identified by Oxaal in her research; Power Over, Power To, Power With and Power Within (Zoë Oxaal, 1997). I explain that for this programme to be true to its transformational objectives we want to work with the latter three notions of power.

“We work from the position that people cannot develop one, without the other. You cannot develop Power Within in a way that makes a difference in the world without developing Power With others. This form of power is about making an impact in the world that achieves objectives. This is the ‘Power to’. So in this module we will be working with people on ways of developing their power within, their self-belief and love, through the process of working with others to enable different outcomes in their lives and worlds. It’s a waste of time focussing only on ‘the power within’ – as many positive action programmes do, because that does not necessarily take you anywhere.”

While I speak, I am aware of feeling good about the way that I am articulating. I feel that people are listening to me and valuing what I have to say. I feel that I am voicing and projecting my values in ways that are congruent with being the influence I want to be. I am saying different things to others, I am valuing what others have contributed and I am modelling a different way of being. Articulate, knowledgeable, smartly dressed, positioning a different perspective without disagreeing with others, radical and friendly, Black and with dreadlocks. I feel as if I a living my mission.

I say lots of other things that I feel sum up some of the key beliefs that have emerged for me in working with people in a learning context and in particular with peoples who have been excluded and devalued.

I notice that when I finish speaking I do not have that vulnerable sense that has so often followed me trying to articulate these sorts of values in public contexts (contested spaces). Is it because I have managed to find language that is acceptable in this context? No, I tell myself. Is it that the vulnerability was to do with a belief that I was opposing others at the same time as asking (begging?) them to share my perspective? Now I am working from a position in which I do not believe that I am opposing as much as I am contributing a different perspective and so I am taking the conflict out of my mind space and do not hold that tension in my body. I am also feeling sufficiently powerful, within myself and the ways that I have developed my thinking in this area, to feel more as if I am offering a partnership that would be of mutual benefit to all who wish to collaborate in it, rather than imploring people to get on board.

I have discussed this feeling of vulnerability with one of my critical friends, Joan. She questioned whether the feeling that I was experiencing actually was one of vulnerability. “What do you mean”? I asked her. “Well you don’t look vulnerable when you do that. You look powerful and engaged with people”. I have reflected upon this and I think that while the feeling I have is one of vulnerability, that is the emotion that I experience after another one. It is closer to a feeling of depletion or emotional exhaustion. It comes after intense emotional engagement. It is that spent feeling that leaves me feeling vulnerable. I have given my all and left myself temporarily unable to defend myself.

People around the table have been making comments on others’ presentations and some of them do so to me. I listen carefully to what their responses are. I do not take notes. I am spent. John Burgoyne is a participant at the meeting. The university he is working for are conducting ongoing evaluation of the wider project. He was my external supervisor for my post-graduate diploma in Management over twenty years earlier and a member of the tutorial team from Lancaster university for my MA in Management Learning about ten years ago. He makes comments that find a way through to me, probably because I have

been keen to re-connect with him and am keen to find out where he is at in his thinking and how he views my intervention. I do remember that he mentions that the inclusion of appreciative inquiry as part of our methodology would strengthen our ability to do something or the other. He is not effusive, but I hear what he has to say as positive.

In the ensuing break I seek to speak to him. On my way I am approached by people who want to thank me for what I had to say and who tell me how important it was. I feel affirmed. I am both proud and confused. What stopped them from articulating it then? I ask myself. A Black woman says to me “I can see that you are somebody that I will have to get to know better”. Another takes me outside to discuss the context in which we came to be here and share out mutual commitment to making this a programme that is “more than a rehashed White programme”. As we exchange thoughts we are collaborators, no longer competitors. We are linked by a common desire to make this a programme that meets the specific needs of the Black people who come on it. We both feel strongly that they should not experience the programme in a way that gives them the message that they have to change something fundamental about their identity in order to succeed. We both want them to get messages that it is their very difference and diversity that can assist them excel in leadership positions.

I feel that I must have achieved what I wanted to. I have been able to articulate the position that I wanted to in ways that were both challenging of the existing status quo and valuing of the people in the room.

Appendix 7 Section Five: Response from Paula.

Dear Eden

Thanks for the document about your meeting. You asked for feedback. Firstly, I can reassure you that despite your frustration of not being able to capture all the energy and emotions, you write in an extremely compelling way. I could feel the moments of tension that you experienced in that meeting. I don't think that you are necessarily a better orator than writer. I think you can do both. I think that you just miss the relationship with an audience when you write. You certainly do have a talent for engaging people who listen to you. It is not for nothing that we call you Mr. Charisma! The spoken word allows you to use all of your body and personality and to tap into the energy of those around you. The written word is per se different - more limited in terms of energy and spontaneity, which are your hallmarks. However, this is not the first time that I have been impressed by your ability to be articulate with the written word too.

Another point in your conclusion caught my attention. You talk about not wanting to create an independent Black voice, but to "embrace and extend, rather than exclude and reject." This for me is the core of what I would encourage you to do more of. You have a huge amount to share with all people on the subject of diversity. There are indeed moments where I feel excluded as a White person. Yet, I understand entirely where it comes from. I have been part of similar discussions in other contexts. I have been in groups where working class socialists reject "bourgeois socialists from rich families who don't really know what it is all about." That is just one example of how trying to right the balance can cause more divisiveness, if we are not careful. I also understand the need to increase the voice and visibility of those who have not been seen and heard. I do the same in my own practice (again in another completely different context). In two Belgian companies where I work have found myself "siding" with Wallonians (French-speakers), recognising that they are not listened to and that their culture is so different from the Anglo-Saxon Northern European one that their views are dismissed.

I guess what I want to say to you is that we White people need to understand how to open our minds to other cultural influences. We have to understand what is our role in creating a more just society that offers opportunities to all individuals. Our culture is inextricably linked with yours. I am from Liverpool. Don't forget that before becoming a city blighted by unemployment and poverty, Liverpool was a rich city that gained its wealth from shipping slaves across the ocean to the New World. Not exactly a history to be proud of! So how do we move on from that and learn from our fellow-citizens who come from a different cultural background? It is not about being condescending. It is about creating a world where we can all learn from each other, and where those not normally listened to (because of colour, social class or any other prejudice) are recognised for their contribution.

What I am saying, Eden is find ways to make the dialogue an inclusive dialogue. I know that is your intention. People from all communities have a lot to learn from you.

I hope all this long diatribe makes some kind of sense (writing is more difficult than talking!) In any case, a big thank you for sharing this document with us. I really appreciated reading it. All the best of luck. Berkshire are very lucky to have you. I know you will make a real difference. You are a remarkable thinker, speaker and teacher.

Love,

Paula

Appendix 8 Section Five: Feedback on my presentation.

Knowledge is important for self and own definition of success. Spiritual strength helps on reflecting who we are.

Eden: I found your talk uplifting, inspirational and a real eye opener to what can be achieved if you want it, and apply yourself accordingly.

Bless Tony S

Not always necessary to fight fire with fire.
In order to make a change we must do something.
Thankyou for sharing your experiences.

Eden

One of the key learning points for me from yesterday was that success is not a one way thing, you have to be aware of yourself, beliefs, competence, you need support, beliefs, spiritual strength and manage this factors together,

It was a very valuable speech.

Thanks for coming

Yetunde C Tlala

One key factor I have taken away with me is that I am in control of my destiny!

Marye – Anne Williams

Eden

Thank you for the rather inspirational speech. As you stated the speech was to re-emphasise a lot of things & abilities within us.

However the tip to always acknowledge & and be influenced by who we are is of great value and should help when making decisions in our everyday life.

I don't recall listening attentively for over 2 hours.

Again many thanks!

Femi Brown

I have never been ashamed for being Black but yesterday Eden has given me facts + figures to be Black & proud. Although I have spent all my time working for money as I will be retiring soon. I do hope and believe now I should start to look into having my own business.

Any help, Eden???

Sharon Nbide 020 000000000

Things that I took from the talk

- That I come from greatness
- Bi – cultural competence
- African/Asian belief system
- “If something works, do it differently next time.”

Sola Belllen

Eden

1 From your life history I leant that anyone can succeed as long as he/she is willing to go that extra mile

2 I also leant that it is not what happened in the past but what you are willing to do with the present.

Take your own responsibility for your circumstances

Dear Eden

Thanks for your most wonderful & powerful talk. You brought out the true belief in me, and who I am. The other thing I understood from your talk is that you can do anything if you put your heart into it. Thanks

Nita.

Dear Eden, 13-6-02

There were many valuable insights and inspirational points to your much appreciated talk yesterday. One was “Think Differently” but what I really got the most from, was the fact that you were a strong intelligent Black man more than willing to share your wisdom with us.

Much respect + love

Not accepting blindly the establishment’s rules, criteria terminology

Appendix 8b, Section Five: The man crying

Let me give another example. I remember on another programme a man starting to cry during a session. I walked him out of the room and sat with him while he continued to cry. In between sobs he told me that he had been triggered by the conversation in the main group into remembering feelings that he wanted to forget. I told him that he could speak about it if he wanted to. He burst into even louder sobs. I was tempted to hug him but just got close to him and put my hand on his shoulder. He cried some more and then started to speak about him having been abused as a young boy by a member of his family, somebody whom his mother had great respect for. He couldn't tell anybody and had kept it inside himself for years, blaming himself. He must have done something wrong, he said. As he spoke I felt his pain and was angered for him. I spoke calmly and told him that he should not blame himself. "You did nothing wrong". He told me that this was the first time that he had ever told anybody about it. His body convulsed as the tears flowed and his voice became guttural with the emotion and the rawness.

"You did nothing wrong" I repeated.

"But he's a good man. He's well respected. Everybody thinks he's great. He helps people. I can't even be angry with him".

The thought came to me. "He needs to express his anger. He needs to feel that it's legitimate to be angry. He needs to feel that he was not culpable in the wrong that was committed against him". I held him more firmly by the shoulders and asked him

"Is he a good man?"

He almost screamed a choked "yes".

"He did this to you and he's a good man?"

I repeated the question about three times and then suddenly he screamed out "No, he's a fucking bastard!"

"What is he?"

"A fucking bastard".

"Was it your fault?"

He bent over and sobbed "no".

Then he looked up at me as if suddenly fearful of what he had said and wanting to take it back. In that split second before his gaze had time to leave my eyes I knew that I was going to do something different to my professional training. I was not going to maintain a professional objectivity and detachment neither was I going to refrain from expressing emotions that revealed my deeper values and which, at other times, I would feel lowered my barriers and defences.

"You were a boy. He was a man. What he did to you was wrong. You did nothing wrong. He is a fucking bastard".

He looked at me, confused? Hopeful?

"Yes he is. He's a fucking bastard who raped you and your dreams. You did nothing wrong. You were a child. He was supposed to look after you. He betrayed your trust. You get me? He's a bastard. Look at you. You're in fucking pain because this bastard fucked up your childhood and poisoned your adulthood. But you're a married man, scared to have children because of what might happen to

them and yet desperate for a future with children. You are more than the rape. You are more than what was done to you. You can have the life you want if you allow yourself to break away from your thoughts of guilt. You were guilty only of being a child who did what he was told! You were betrayed. But over this week, you've shown me and the other people on this course what a wonderful human being you are. You are fucking brilliant."

He bent over and sobbed violently again.

"Look at me" I said as sternly as I could muster, but by then my voice too was choked with emotion. I wanted so much for this man.

"You cry because I am telling you the truth. You cry because you want to believe it. Well I am no liar. You are fucking brilliant and you deserve the best that life has to offer and I'm telling you to go out and do whatever it takes, get a therapist if needs be, but do whatever it takes to get that bastard out of your nightmares and live the life that you were born to have."

I stayed with him for a while. Gradually he began to talk more and more. I calmed my voice down but took every opportunity I got to tell him how wonderful he was and how deserving he was. I stopped using swear words and softened my tone. We began to have a conversation and I outlined some of the work that I have done around sexual abuse and just how important and positive I felt it was that he had had the courage to finally put his feelings into words and share them with another human being.

He thanked me profusely at the end of the morning and said that if he had to "come out" to somebody he was really glad that it was me. I was touched and disturbed by that. I too felt drained. I had spent most of the morning with him. I also felt a kind of sadness not because I had given so fully of myself to a White man, I was glad and proud to have been able to help him. I would have loved to have Black people able to afford to come on a course such as this so that I could give them some of that quality of attention I had given this man. I did not resent him and I was, and am, happy that I was able to support him at this critical moment in his life. I suppose there was also a feeling in me that I would have liked to receive this quality of attention from somebody that I respected to help me shift past some of my conceptual and emotional barriers. I am acknowledging the mixture of thoughts and emotions I was experiencing in that moment. I was also uncomfortable I think because in order to help that man I had revealed myself more fully to him or, maybe it was that I had engaged with him more fully and authentically than I had become accustomed to. The barrier I had gone through in doing so that was causing me greatest discomfort was not the professional one, it was the one about being cautious in terms of how much I came out from behind myself in engaging with White people. I was confused and angry at the same time as feeling that I had done the right thing. The emotional intensity I experienced subsequent to my intervention with that man was evidence that I was holding contradictory positions located cognitively and bodily that were starting to undermine the 'sensorimotor action schemes' or 'schemata' (Piaget et al., 1969) or mental models (Senge, 1990) that I held.

Appendix 9 Section Five: Dickens & Dickens

“the following list, originally designed by Dickens & Dickens to assist Black managers to make it in the corporate world, presents ways to manage racist behavior. Each strategy lists one or more specific techniques used by Black managers to become successful in White organizations.

Manage Racist Behavior by Strategy

- Recognize racist behavior and implement a plan to neutralize it. Be proactive rather than reactive.
- Use effectively controlled anger as a tool for achieving your results.
- Sell only carefully thought out ideas that you have checked with trusted resources, to ensure that you have provided for contingencies and have not overlooked anything.
- Learn to approach people tactfully, sensitively, and in a way that avoids unnecessary conflict.
- When Whites are illogically resistant, lay out relevant data and let them think they came up with the idea. If your idea is accepted, chances are you will eventually get credit for it, since you will be the one who knows how to develop and implement it.
- When appropriate, confront Whites directly or imply that their behavior may be a part of the problem. This will force them to examine their dysfunctional behavior.
- Present your ideas in terms of Whites' self-interest.
- When using Whites as resources, show your appreciation by giving them a stroke or sharing useful information.
-

Manage Racist Behavior by Controlling the Behavior of Others

- Manage through others. This may enable you to accomplish a task more effectively, especially when dealing with Whites who listen better to other Whites or to a select few Blacks with whom they are comfortable.
- To prevent dysfunctional behavior that results from insensitivity or ignorance, tell Whites how you expect them to behave in a given situation.
-

Manage racists with personal style and charisma, which will tend to calm them down and stop display of racist behavior.

- Be careful in using organizational resources, so they do not negatively evaluate you. When using Whites as resources couch your need in organizational rather than personal term. Never approach a White resource by openly discussing your personal deficiencies.

Manage Racist Behavior by Using Organizational Norms and Values

- Ask for more work, which will cast you in a favorable light while shattering negative stereotypes about Blacks.
- Put information in writing. This standard organizational practice allows you to share your experience and expertise with others and can thereby help defuse any negative input about you.

- When appropriate, ask key questions indirectly, to avoid giving racists a reason to react negatively to questions perceived as threatening or irrelevant.

Manage Racist Behavior by Using the Communication Network

- To ensure that you and your expertise are known by the right people, develop productive relationships with powerful people in your hierarchy.
- Eat lunch with Whites to get information from their formal and informal communications networks and make personal contact.
- Eat lunch with Blacks to share information, keep in touch with the grapevine, relax, and replenish your psychic energy.

Manage Racist Behavior by Using the Power of Your Boss

- In dealing with a potentially racist White, simply say that your boss instructed you to use him or her as a resource. The individual, knowing you will report any dysfunctional behavior to the boss, will tend to meet your needs.

Manage Racist Behavior by Using the Power of Your Organizational Position

- If your job carries some organizational power, use that power to get information from racist individuals. Even if you do not hold a higher position than the Whites, they still have to acknowledge the power associated with your position and will respond according to your needs.
Quoted in

Appendix 10 Section Five: The Holmsow meeting

I am at a special event in Holmeslow. It is the end of a year-long programme for women, Black people and ethnic minorities. I hate most of these categories. It has been a very powerful programme in parts and one in which I felt that I was bale to work with the Training department as congruently with the values I am seeking to live my practice by as I ever have. The two women who head up the team are excellent professionals who seem to value my approach and ideas. They have expressed this to me openly and this has assisted me in being able to be the person I want to be more.

This is the presentation event that celebrates and closes the programme. It is being held in the town hall. The Chief Executive is there as are most members of the Senior Management Team. There are over a hundred people in the audience, many of them the managers of the participants on the programme.

I had been asked to give a talk - but to keep it to 5 minutes in length. "What can I do in five minutes?" I was frustrated by that, but determined to make sure that I did something good. This programme had been important to me. I have tried to test out ideas and extend what would normally do with a group that contained both Black and White staff. I sat down this morning not feeling happy with the brief I had received. It felt contrived. I wanted to say something that could give the day energy and set it off down a positive path. I also wanted to be true to myself and articulate ideas and visions that may be 'outside of the box' of what people would expect from a management consultant speaking at a smooth event such as this.

When I got up to speak I felt an intensity of focus that almost overwhelmed me. I looked around the audience and knew that I wanted to spread a message of hope, and to make suggestions about how they could take their organisation forward that had come out of the inquiry and practice that I have been engaged with. I also wanted to praise the participants and all of those who had contributed to their learning.

As I spoke I was passionate and committed to what I was saying. I looked at the audience whilst I spoke and they seemed to be with me. When I said that they should focus more on getting it right and not being afraid to make mistakes, I saw heads nodding. I thought it was a nod of relief and gratitude for permission to do and do something that they knew made more sense to then than the slavish following of the latest policies.

I felt as if I was playing a Miles Davis solo. Spitting out messages with ferocious warmth and connection. I spoke in bursts as I moved from key message to key concept I wanted to get over. I had come to praise the participants on the programme and all the positives that they had achieved. I had also come to inspire other managers to aspire to greatness in their work. I wanted people to connect with their 'values of humanity' and understand how they could bring that to the work that they do.

I told them the story of my father describing a zebra crossing to me and then warning me not to try to use it unless a White person was doing so at the same time

“because they might not stop”. As people laughed and looked shocked at the same time I made the appreciative point that I wanted to. It went something like this:

“You laugh at this because it so far away from what we know today. But things would not have been the way they are now if people had not taken action. The qualities of our society are the results of the quality of action that individuals in this society have taken as we have fought and loved each other. As we have developed relationships and argued and made deep friendships, as individuals have taken risks and transgressed boundaries of restriction. Central to the moves that have succeeded are the actions of people like you. Local government workers are often the people who have translated political intention into policies and practices that have changed the lives of individuals and communities. When you come to work everyday you do not just come to do a job of work. You come to help recreate our society. You come to work to give life and hope to those who have been battered by life and society. You could think of yourselves as heroes. You are the people who put the flesh, the structure and the heart to what we call civilisation. You have the power to make a fundamental difference to the experiences of people beaten by life and excluded from power. You can do it because you have done. Just as you have successfully helped transform our society and move it beyond the blatant prejudices of thirty years ago you can help take this organisation, this borough, these beautiful people around you to the next step. The problem is ours. The solution is within us as we learn to connect honestly to each other, as human beings, and step out of the citadels of fear reflected in a terror of “getting it wrong” that is so powerful that we prevent ourselves from “getting it right”.

Equality and diversity will be advanced through the quality of relationships that we manage to engage in with each other as we seek to focus more on possibility than on problems. We have the power to help a more positive future emerge through the intention that we embody in our work. Step beyond policy and work with the spirit that has made this borough the place that it is.

How do we do it? Its not rocket science. When a child is learning to walk and you see him or her fall what do you do? Do you say “well we have performance targets in this family and children are expected to walk by the age of 11 months? Do you say that they have failed to perform a task and therefore should be disciplined? Oh no you don’t. You hug that child. You tell them that they are beautiful. You tell them not to worry because they will learn to walk soon. You tell them that they are great. We love that child into walking. We do not teach them. We let them know that we have a powerful belief that they will be successful and they are as a consequence. I mean that you know. I remember that reading somewhere that children who have been raised by wolves and learned to travel on all fours, even when taken into human society, fail to learn to walk because the initial expectation was not there.

Just as we teach our children to walk so we can inspire our staff to succeed by creating an environment of high expectation and relationships that transmit that expectation and the necessary affirmation of the individual. Do you understand what I am saying?”

So I was praising them for what they had contributed to evolving a more inclusive society and seeking to inspire them to use their strengths and beauty to do more. I said more than this in my brief time-slot but I think the extract above captures the spirit of my intervention.

I stopped talking. I looked around me. There was a second of silence and then the sound level went from one to ten in less than another second as the hall broke into applause. I was emotionally spent and open to the world, not vulnerable but connected in a way that I rarely am. It was almost a spiritual experience. I had gone into the talk determined that I would say that stuff that I thought was actually meaningful and it had felt like a risk. I had extended myself emotionally and felt as if I had crossed a threshold. I did not know what it was a threshold of though. People smiled at me as I made my way back to my seat in the audience and I felt that I had succeeded in making real connection with their humanity and the aspirations they held.

I had explicitly entered into the day with the intention that I would be inquiring in action so, as soon as I sat down, I wrote these words with applause echoing in my ears – or was it my head?

“What I really liked about my presentation is that I addressed issues to do with our common humanity.

Gave positive messages that went beyond the policies to giving positive messages to each other as human beings

I started off by praising people and commenting on how great people looked. In doing so I extended the boundaries of what a talk like this is supposed to fit into. I made an aesthetic comment.”

I remember other clips from what I was saying:

“We’re all bloody human beings and the connections that we make with each other transform each other.”

“Leadership is what takes place in the space between people. The quality of the messages that take place in that space determines the outcomes of that relationship. The quality of the message is determined by the quality of the relationship that occupies that space”.

“The challenge of diversity is to go beyond the policies and structures to address the issues that really matter and really make a difference. The spirit of equality is of more importance than filling in the right forms – though that too is necessary”.

I remember thinking as I walked back to my chair with the applause seeming to surround me, “was that too wishy-washy liberal? Did I really challenge their thinking? Could they hear that challenge among the praise and affirmation I gave them?” That was really a powerful presentation. It hit hard”

In the break people came to speak with me to offer me their comments. I wrote them down:

“You’re a great speaker. You had no notes. You just spoke.”

“It was so inspiring. You seemed to feel so strongly about it”.

“I wrote down a lot of what you said ‘leadership takes place in the space between people’ that’s great. I’ll remember that”.

“I love the example of the child learning to walk. I’ll remember that”.

Participants got up to give their presentations. After each one the Chief Executive gave them some comments. I was amazed by the quality of the feedback he gave them. It was inspiring, caring and informed. This was not the message that somebody had given me about him previously. He was supposed to be cold and hard and not good at expressing emotion and here he was bringing me close to tears with inputs that I believe to be genuine.

He asked a senior participant on the programme what he had learned. She sounded nervous as she said, “I always thought I was good, but it was not until I did the programme that I realised how effective I could be across the borough”.

Somebody else responded to the question: “the importance of networking – there are so many internal networks that you have to tap into”.

As I reflect on what I can remember of what I have said I’m amazed at how much of the detail seems to be leaving me. I feel triumphant and humble at the same time. I reflect that if I had the talk to do again I would be more explicit about the message I wanted to give and say as clearly as I could that the challenge is to live the values as well as to comply and conform.

One of the presentations is about domestic violence. They recount frightening statistics before they tell of the work that they have done in their project of working with victims of domestic violence and their children. Then. Then they bring the children on to the stage and they perform a short drama before they start to speak of their experiences. I feel so proud of the people who chose to do this project and had made such a fantastic impact on the lives of the young people who stood there. I feel emotion flooding through me. As I sit looking at them I am trying to communicate my pride and hope for them silently as they recount their stories.

I write while I watch:

“I am looking on wanting them to do well and proud of their achievements before they’ve even spoken. My eyes are brimming with tears. I stare at them before they start to speak. Manjeet catches my eye. I clasp my fist and press it against my chest as affirmation. Did she notice? I am trying to ‘beam’ to her love and belief and support and connection and things I cannot find words for”

As the children recount their stories of abuse my eyes water freely with tears.

I saw the Chief Executive moving through the crowd as the audience have a break and move to get refreshments. I walk over to him. I know it’s not the professional thing to do but I have already modelled the importance of working more with the heart than with protocol and I am going to do it again. I said something like:

“You’re great you know. I loved the way you spoke to people. You were positive, affirming, thoughtful and respectful to the participants. It was fantastic.

I know I probably shouldn’t say this but some of your image is of being authoritarian. I think you have a PR problem. People need to see more of that wonderful caring you. I think it would make a difference”.

I cannot remember his exact response, but he thanked me and suggested that I come to see him some time when I was in the Town Hall.

I was left wondering if I had been too forward. I was also really glad that I had had the courage to follow my instincts and to do what I felt was right. I wanted to go beyond the boundaries of propriety and ‘form’ and to connect as humanly as possible. Even if it was with a Chief Executive who some viewed with great fear. I was concerned though that I had not expressed what I had wanted to as clearly and appreciatively as I had intended. I drafted the following email and discussed it with my colleague. She thought it was maybe too big a risk to send it. I disagreed and sent it.

From: Eden Charles Sent: 10 December 2004 14:52
To: Mike Gorks
Subject: Confidential: to be read by addressee only. The Positive Action Presentation

Hello Mike

I hope that you are well.

I am writing to expand a bit upon the comments that I made to you last week.

I really enjoyed the way that you managed the whole session. Right from the start you expressed valuing of participants on the programme and told people who had come along that they would have a good time and be amazed at the quality of what was to come. People did not disappoint you, but in a sense you helped people to feel able to excel by your comments.

I have worked as an organisational development consultant for over 20 years now. I work all around the world with some truly fantastic human beings and my life is hugely expanded by the relationships I have forged with such differing people. My clients include some of the leading multinational banks for example and I am used to working on tough business issues. I tell you this to set the stage for my next comments. I want you to understand that I am used to thinking calmly, rationally and analytically and am not somebody entirely driven by emotion. I am used to working on tough business and human issues and having to make judgements that have significant consequences for individuals and organisations. What I want to say is this: In all of my time, working with some of the richest and some of the poorest people in the world I do not think that I have been as moved as I was by the wonderful synergy of aspiration and achievement that you facilitated last week. It has been a privilege to work on this project and with some truly (though often quietly) outstanding officers of the council.

I want to say something about the other comments I made. Particularly about the way that some in your organisation describe your personal style and the wide gap

between that and the powerful, compassionate leader I saw last week. I am used to seeing 'professional' displays of caring and support. You certainly convinced me that you were genuine and most do not succeed at this. I made my comments to you because I was so impressed and because I thought that there is so much more that you could achieve as a leader generally and specifically in relation to diversity and equality. I chose not to allow professional caution to prevent me from making my comments to you. I apologise if you find them inappropriate but I do wonder how many people you have around you that might give you those types of comments. I want you to succeed because people's lives would benefit from it and because it sets a standard (and establishes qualities) of public value for others to learn from and aspire to. The sort of standard that unfortunately schemes like IIP are not yet able to value and evaluate sufficiently, but which impact hugely on peoples lives.

We both enjoyed working on the positive action programme immensely. I thank you for the experience.

Best wishes

Eden Charles

Within a day or two came the response:

Many, many thanks for your thoughts. I, like you and NAME REMOVED, was thrilled by the presentations. I am also really appreciative of your comments about myself, which have given me considerable food for thought. There were so many aspects of the presentations that spoke to me, both managerial and personal. I have six children, aged between 8 and 27, three of whom are mixed heritage. Two of my twin girls are to undertake work experience in Jan, while their brother will be graduating next year. Perhaps it's my age, but I feel so proud of the achievement of my staff. If you are in and around the Civic Centre in the New Year do let NAME REMOVED know so we can fit in a quick chat,
Many (thanks) for all your talented work with us. Have a great Christmas and New Year,
Regards,

Mike

I felt that the response totally validated my sending the email and, perhaps more importantly, my seeking to work from beyond the boundaries of professional etiquette (and safety) and engage with people at all levels of organisations as human beings in ways that supported the realisation of values of humanity that move towards a reconfiguration and reidentification of our interpersonal relationships, organisations and social identity. The fact and nature of his positive response confirmed my belief that I could engage with people without the masks and without playing the colonised subject and connect. Through that connection all sorts of possibilities open up for me to increase my decolonising influence.

Appendix 11 Section Five: Why I grew my dreadlocks

My decision to grow my hair was influenced by a meeting in the city with clients who worked in the Lloyds building in London. I cannot remember what they did in detail. I remember that they made deals worth millions that were sealed with a handshake. I remember that they were all under or, in one instance, just over thirty. I remember that thinking that these youngsters managed more money than the finance ministries of some 'developing' countries. I remember that they spent a lot of time entertaining their clients in the evenings. They came to work, often hung over, and worked like crazy till an early lunch time when they basically got pissed and then returned to sleep at their desks until about four in the afternoon, at which time they got back to work until it was time to go out with more clients.

I remember standing around having, a very liquid, lunch with them. I had gone to spend a day with them as they were my clients and I wanted to experience what they did so I could respond to their needs more appropriately. I had spent the morning in this hugely inhuman and impressive building. People drank more and more and the one man who decided to have something to eat was derided for being a "wimp". I took part in the conversation and did not feel too out of place. However as the alcohol flowed some people's inhibitions came down and they started to get to the subject of race. I began to feel uncomfortable. Then somebody asked me outright; "Hey Eden' have you ever done it with a White girl?" I went cold and could not respond. I knew that they did not know that where I came from that was fighting talk. How was I supposed to react? I wanted to be there to find out more about what made them tick, but I was not going to pander to their sexualised fantasies.

"I've always wanted to do it with a Black girl you know it's kinda natural, like, you know".

I smiled at him briefly with one of those very quick smiles that we used to call "White smiles", because they do not engage more than the mouth, and made conversation with somebody else. Once that conversation was established I said that I had to get going now and made my apologies, thanking them for letting me see how they worked and I was sure that when I worked with them in the future that it would have been a really valuable learning experience.

If this is what I was expected to become in order to be successful as a consultant then bollocks! I was not going to work in a way that left me feeling humiliated. I have always loved dreadlocks and what they represent to me. I had always assumed that "it was bad enough being Black in this job. Dreadlocks would be the final kiss of death to a professional career". I made the decision that I could do without that success if it meant being humiliated. They would take me as I wish to be or they could leave me. They would have me as a man or as nothing. They would not have me as a boy colluding in their racist behaviour.

The fascinating thing for me has been that my dreadlocks do not seem to have hindered my career at all, to my knowledge. I was probably more responsible for any holding back that took place when I refused to put myself in certain types of situations because I believed that I would not be accepted. The impact of how I look would be an interesting area to explore because I am sure it has had some effect but I get the feeling that it has not all been negative.

Appendix 12 Section Five: Bi-Cultural Competence Model

Each cell in the chart describes an area of competence. Competence is about your ability to achieve outcomes in a situation. It is less about what you know and more about what you can do in a situation. Competence can only be known experientially. That is you can only know if you can hit that cricket ball if you actually manage to hit it. You might have all the theory in the world, but the proof is in the doing. In order to become competent you have to know experientially. You have to get involved relationally as in through and with relationships. In order to be able to establish effective relationships you need a range of skills and beliefs that you can embody congruently.

Many Black managers are very well qualified but still find that they cannot progress. One of the reasons for this appears to be that they think that the qualifications should provide them with a means for progression. I argue that in an ideal world that might be the case, but when you are working with people, how they experience you is critical to your success and so you need to take action to develop productive relationships. I say that you cannot do this everybody. Some people are just outright racist or negative or selfish or a combination of all three. You can't win them all. But the number of people with whom they can creatively establish relationships is far higher than often appears possible. Another reason they do not progress, and this is interconnected with the first, is that they are not competent, i.e. effective participants, in the 'hidden' culture of the organisation or formation. Again that competence can only be achieved through the establishment of relationships and this requires, for some people, a mind-set shift that some are unable to make. I argue that even though it might not be fair, or right, or in keeping with equal opportunities policies, it is largely a feature of organisations that one needs to be aware of and engage with – in your own terms – if one is to understand the hidden meanings, urges, interests and agendas that are never published in handbooks.

I also point to the importance of the left hand side of the model which is about having competence, lived experience of supporting cultural and social networks that feed and nourish your sense of worth and personness. I argue for balance and say that if you put all of your energy and time and identity into the work place then you reduce your ability to bring in other perspectives and, perhaps just as important, to renew yourself. I say that each person can choose, to some extent, what that network is that they choose to nurture themselves with. It does not have to be blood family or members of your ethnic, religious or anything else. All it has to be is something that is nurturing of your sense of who you are.

I then refer to the bottom left quadrant and say that this refers to deep culture which is about the ontological need that we have as human beings for a sense that we are rooted in something that we can draw strength and identity from. I compare this to the lily pond metaphor that Edgar Schein uses and say that this is the mud at the bottom of the pond that you draw strength from. If you have a sense of your history of it being inferior or non-existent, then this affects how you operate in the world today. Decolonising your history from racist lies and occlusions can give you a stronger ontological foundation for your ways of being in the world. Just as in the right hand side you have to engage relationally with others to develop this knowledge and competence. I have found, through my own practice that it works most effectively when it is embodied and embedded in living practice.

Most critically, each cell ‘transgresses’ upon the ones it connects to and is dialectically interconnected. The boundaries are only there for illustration; they are not actual dividing lines between forms of culture in the real world. You actually cannot be competent in any area without reference to others.

This model has proved extremely powerful in my work and draws upon the stories that I have been told by hundreds of Black (and White) managers over the years as its research base.

<p>Own Cultures Lived, networks of family, friends, community and other manifestations of culture</p>	<p>Explicit Culture of the institution, organisation & wider society. The rules as contained in policies, induction, constitution, etc</p>
<p>Historical Culture That which you draw upon from the past to create your sense of who you are today</p>	<p>Hidden or Shadow Culture, How things really happen here: the golf course, the societies, clubs, sports, associations, family gatherings, etc.</p>

I have infused the stories that I tell that help explain the model with the spirit and inclusionary urges of African cosmology. I work with the notion that racism is alive and a present force that they should not underestimate. I then say that if you work against it you help strengthen it and that we have to be more sophisticated in our approach. We need to develop sophisticated tactics that are built around working with the positives and transforming the negatives. From African cosmology I introduce the idea that things are both good and bad and not either or. Each contains within itself, the other. What appears to be an enemy can become a great ally, particularly if you discover how to connect with their humanity. I try to argue against cynicism whilst not denying the power of racism. I use notions from Appreciative Inquiry such as “What you focus on grows”.

My work has evolved into a greater focus on what you do, in terms of developing living theory that can increase your competence in both sides of the table. I am interested in what happens as you seek to become competent in the right *and* left hand side, i.e. in the culture of the organisations or the wider society and or in the lived present culture and the historical culture/s that an individual seeks to draw upon in discovering, constructing and expanding an identity that provides foundational anchors for their self-defined success in life. I am interested in how to bring ways of being that are mutually appreciative and positively transformational into the relationships that I engage in as we work with others in

organisations and society. The concept of competence, of actually being good at a achieving an objective, interests me because it is only achievable in practice.

Appendix 13 Section Five: Feedback from colleagues

An African American colleague described the way I speak thus:

“Its what those Black preachers do in Black churches when they talk for hours. They take you on a journey; they are real show people. They have a message but they take 2 hours to get there. A lot of it is how they use themselves in telling the story. They’re usually preceded by singing. They then move from the formal “turn to page”. After a while they shut the book & start talking personally. They bring you with them. Their passion and the passion of others in the audience embraces you. Its almost like sex, they take you to the point of orgasm with them. Then they slow down; the organ comes in and leads you away, down. I think you do that Eden. I’ve seen you do it on your courses. You always start with some sort of paper or theory or something and then you just go. You take people with you on a journey. When you start you’re not warmed up, so you need to start safely. Then you throw away the textbook, the theory and you go on a journey that is deeply personal. Each one in the audience, like sex, feels like its deeply personal to them. You walk around, you get in place to people, like the preacher walking off from the pulpit – it’s so powerful”.

Ian Phillips said of me:

“In the forum I was reminded how people pay attention when you speak... I was also reminded how you speak engagingly...Furthermore, I was reminded how you actively search to engage others... how you interact not oppositionally, but inclusionally...”

He wrote a poem as a way of giving me feedback.

For Eden (*Presenting Lightly*)

Within and beyond the perimeter
Watchful and adroit
Concerned with what exists
And that which still has to be
His gaze is fixed most assuredly
On what works
Is in the interest of
Those who are becoming
And on whom the future beckons
To do different
To be different
To truly appreciate *inclusivity*

He champions their values,
Heralds the quality of their relationships
Creating environments
Enabling their stories to be told
Yet, he is mindful, so mindful
Of not lingering too long in the past

Important as that may be
For his is an urgent mission
A decided activity
To heal and protect, yes
But holding most passionately, a sense of community
And working *collaboratively*

He is a man of reflection
And of action too... insightful
These qualities are apparent
In what he does and in preparing what he has to do
So alongside that non-engaged engagement
That so often characterises his demeanour
His mind is at work in multiple ways
Making sense of lived experience
Taking emotive account
Finding ways out of no way
Inquiring into meaning of things
Determining what has to be done *purposefully*

Appendix 14 Section Five: Evidence of my influence

- The success rate of the programmes I am running
 - I am currently leading on two national positive action programmes for Black and ethnic minority staff. I have brought the experiences insights, models and my embodied knowledge to both of these programmes. They both seek to improve the rate at which BME managers achieve senior positions in their organisations. The results have been fairly spectacular. In each case promotion rates of participants have been over 70% in less than 9 months. On some individual courses the success rate has been closer to 85%. In a conversation with a Permanent Secretary I was told that the success rate for a prestigious central government programme with similar intent was less than 4%. He wanted me to tell him what it was that I, and the team I led, were doing that was making this difference.

- The increased willingness to consider alternative approaches to recruiting people from diverse backgrounds to courses and employment
 - One of the things that I am particularly proud of is influencing the design of an assessment centre for participants onto one of these positive action training courses. I advanced the argument that if you want to get different outcomes then you need to consider different processes. If the present system of selection was not working for BME staff then why not try another one? I had to carefully manage concerns for “maintaining quality” and “ensuring rigour” and compromise around many of the things that I wanted to try. I was successful though in influencing the design so that rather than having ‘assessors we had ‘learning partners’ who’s job was to help participants assess their own performance in between activities and help prepare them for the next ones. It was also agreed that people would (largely) self-assess their performance, work collaboratively with other participants, make peer assessments and make recommendations that would influence the final decisions that were made about selection onto the programme. The fact that the programme was so successful has undoubtedly help the approach to be maintained on two subsequent intakes of students. The design has been adopted by another government Department that it is using to select staff from the population generally.

- The feedback of my peers
 - My peers and clients have confirmed the view that I am making an original contribution to knowledge in practice through the quality and originality of the approaches I have advocated, facilitated and managed.
The value of my contribution may be measured in part by the fact that I have won several contracts both for my own business and for the consultancy that I work part-time for, managing and leading their diversity business. In fact, in less than two years clients have commissioned over 1.5 million pounds worth of consultancy work from the consultancy as a direct result of my influence. What fascinates me is that I am explicit about my beliefs in the interviews for selecting ‘providers’ to deliver this work and, maybe because of the values that I articulate – and the fact that these include valuing the ‘best of what is and what has been’ – they have selected me/us to do the work. For me this is also evidence that there is support for change if it is articulated in ways that affirm the individuals involved, inspire hope and vision for the future and engage people as partners in bring (their) dreams for themselves and their organisations to reality.

- The way that my approach has been received by boards as well as senior managers/leaders in organisations
 - I take pleasure and confirmation from the fact that I have been able to deliver seminars to boards of government quangos that they have found engaging and inspirational and which have supported huge efforts to change the culture. Many of these are not going to work in a sustainable way because the organisations do not invest enough in embedding the ideas into the lived day-to-day culture of the organisation, but they do prepare the way for future work. In addition, as I work with these senior people I get to understand better the issues that they face; I develop relationships with them and I increase my ability to influence their learning.

- The extent to which Black and ethnic minority managers have felt able to feel more successful and included in their work careers.
 - Earlier in this section on me as a management consultant I have shared some of the feedback that I have received from courses that I have run for Black managers. I have also included a film clip of me working with them. Both of these support a claim that the ways of being that I have shared with participants have had a positive impact upon their careers and lives. The career advancement success rates of participants on courses I have facilitated, spoken on or designed are another measure of my claim to have influenced a greater sense of success and inclusion in their organisations.

- The ways in which people say they feel their humanity has been expanded as a result of working in the spaces I have facilitated and enabled
 - I have spoken at meetings, conferences and seminars, courses and engaged with what must be thousands of people over the last few years. As I get clearer about the message that I want to convey and develop presentational forms and approaches that embody that message with greater clarity, connection and conviction I release my own power and engage in situations that I would have been nervous to previously. My engagement is marked and facilitated by the fact that I step beyond the professional boundaries of a ‘consultant’ (whatever they may be) and seek to ‘cut the crap’ and just engage with the best in people’s humanity and communicate unconditional positive regard for them and for their ability to embrace their humanity in ways that can inspire and influence decolonising personal and societal relationships and processes.
 - That the perspectives I articulate and the values I embody have enabled managers to engage with issues to do with justice, equality and diversity with greater parts of their aspirational humanity engaged than previously
 - The example of the Chief Executive of a local authority shared in this chapter is evidence of this. I have received many comments about the sense of relief that people feel as I support them in “just being myself. Cut the crap and forget about being afraid to make mistakes and remember the value of making relationships” (A participant comment after a seminar that I ran in 2005.)
 - I often work with managers that want to make a change and find that the sessions I do with them literally support them in their (subtly blasphemous) desire to navigate and circumnavigate the policies that restrict them from making real changes. Its as if I have given them permission to do what they already want to do. I am struck by the fact that often when I speak that people are not surprised by what I say as much

as by the fact that I say it all. I feel that I am often the person who gives form and voice to unspoken knowings and aspirations in ways that affirm and liberate.

- The extent to which I am valued and wanted to be of continuing assistance to groups and individuals all around the world.
 - I still correspond with people in Africa (The Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Nigeria, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya), Asia (Thailand, Philippines and Bangladesh) and South and Central America. (Ecuador, Colombia and the Dominican Republic). Here is the last part of an email from somebody I have worked with several times in South America