

Dear Iris, Robyn, Jason, Arianna, Giulia, Marie, Paula, (Jack), Liz, Sonia and Joy (i - Living Theory research support SKYPE community, Sunday evenings);

Jacqueline, Robyn, Swaroop, Marie, Pete, (Jack), Mairin and Moira (ii - EJOLTS Editorial community);

Jacqueline, Robyn, Swaroop, Marie, Judy and Moira (iii - Living Theory post-doctoral enquiry community);

Margaret, Rosemarie, Robyn, Carmen, (Jack), and Marie (iv - Adlerian, Living Theory community);

William, Rachael, Deborah, Marie, Robyn, Sonia, (Jack), Donna, Andy (v - Conversation Café, Living Theory community);

Carmen, Margaret, Robyn, Marie, Joy and Jack(vi Transformative Community Development with good conversations in Living Theory research).

Here are some ideas and suggestions that I'd like to bring into our conversations on enhancing our contributions to Living Theory research as a global social movement. I find that planning to participate in an event might be more influential than the event itself, but that the planning and event together, help to formulate plans and intentions that can help to motivate a sustained and generative commitment to enhancing such contributions.

I'm writing this on the 16th November 2018 to suggest that one event we could focus on is the Action Research Network of the Americas Conference in Montreal Quebec, Canada, from June 26 - June 28 | 2019 on *Repoliticizing P/AR: From Action Research to Activism*.

For the event in June, I'm suggesting that we could all (if we wish), contribute our living-educational-theories from our own lives and contexts in a way that includes our ongoing conversations within our different communities below. Not everyone who is named is on the particular video. Whilst the participants can vary week by week, our conversations are being sustained, sometimes over years.

I have provided a couple of illustrations from the contributions of Swaroop Rawal and Moira Laidlaw, in the post-doctoral community, and William House in the Breakfast Café Conversation, to show how we could all make continuously evolving contributions to Living Theory research as a global movement and **learn how to share each others' contributions** in a range of digital and non-digital forums. It would be great to hear each others' suggestions on how we might do this.

- i) **Iris, Robyn, Jason, Arianna, Giulia, Marie, Paula, Liz, Sonia and Joy** (Living Theory research support SKYPE community, Sunday evenings);



35:18 minute video of conversation on the 11/11/18

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q36IGelQ2xM>

- ii) **Jacqueline, Robyn, Swaroop, Marie, Pete, Jack, Mairin and Moira (EJOLTS Editorial community) – Catriona McDonagh – 3rd from left below – has been replaced by Mairin Glenn.**



9:25 minute video of conversation on 30-07-17

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZRCrAt8-Pk> Jack is raising the question of how might we know what influence EJOLTs is having.

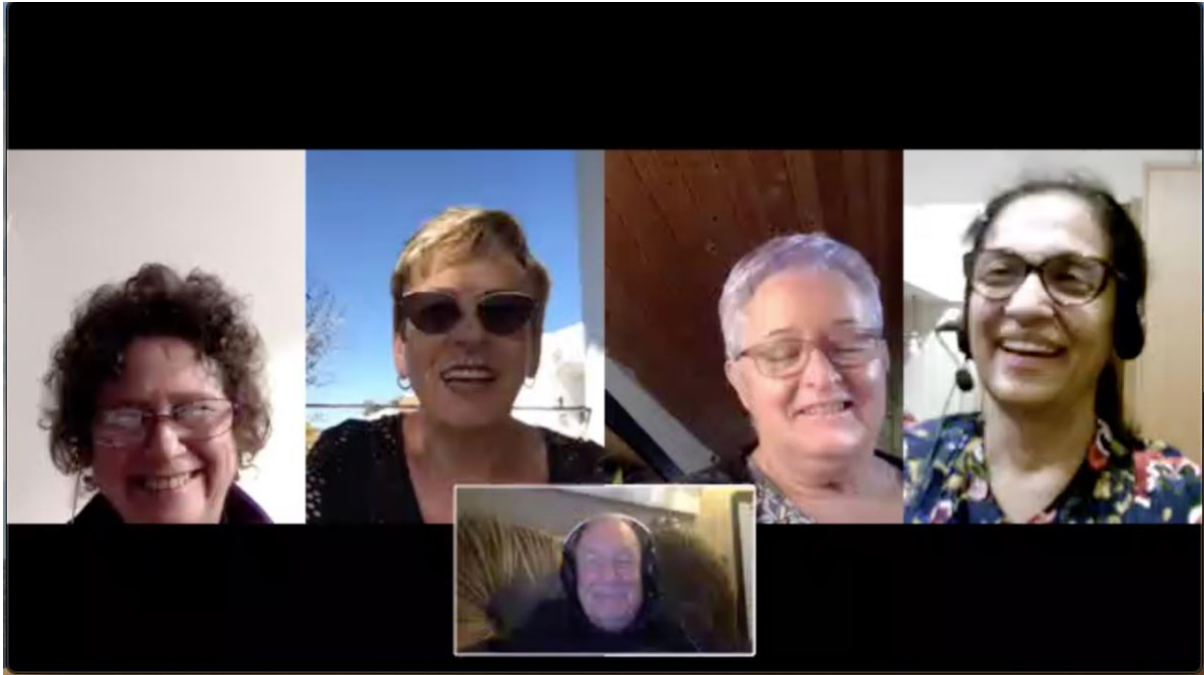
- iii) **Jacqueline, Robyn, Swaroop, Moira, Marie, Judy, Mairin and Jack** (Living Theory post-doctoral enquiry community);



30:32 Video of conversation on 02/09/18 – See Mairin and Judy introducing themselves between 1:00-4:00 minutes into the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DhenTow0-9c>

The group includes Swaroop Rawal – on the far right below:



Here are some details of Swaroop's ongoing post-doctoral enquiries that include the following award of an honorary D.Litt. Degree from the University of Worcester on the 7th November 2018:

I examined Swaroop's doctorate in 2006. As a VIP guest of Swaroop I was sitting on the front row and able to take the following video of Swaroop's 6:54 minute response to the award in Worcester Cathedral:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLLygbX8DCY>

Here are the details of Swaroop, published in the University of Worcester details of Award Ceremonies for 2018:

Dr Swaroop Sampat-Rawal,

Former Miss India and Bollywood superstar, Dr. Swaroop Sampat-Rawal, is an alumna of the University of Worcester, who travels across India training teachers, while also campaigning to get ore children, such as those in tribal communities or street children, into the classroom.

Dr. Sampat-Rawal studied for a Ph.D. in Education at Worcester, graduating in 2006, and since dedicated herself to community development and advocacy within the field of education. She aims to help children overcome adversity and become resilient.

She is a member of the Governing Council for Save the Children, whose mission is to create lasting change in the lives of disadvantaged children in India.

She developed a training curriculum for Jeevan Kaushalya, an adolescent girls project in Gujarat, which was a drama-based life skills intervention implemented across 3,450 villages in six districts reaching out to 38,000 young members of the village-level adolescent girls' network.

Here is the 13 minute video that includes both the introduction to Swaroop and the above response from Swaroop.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7GpmNK5OhU>

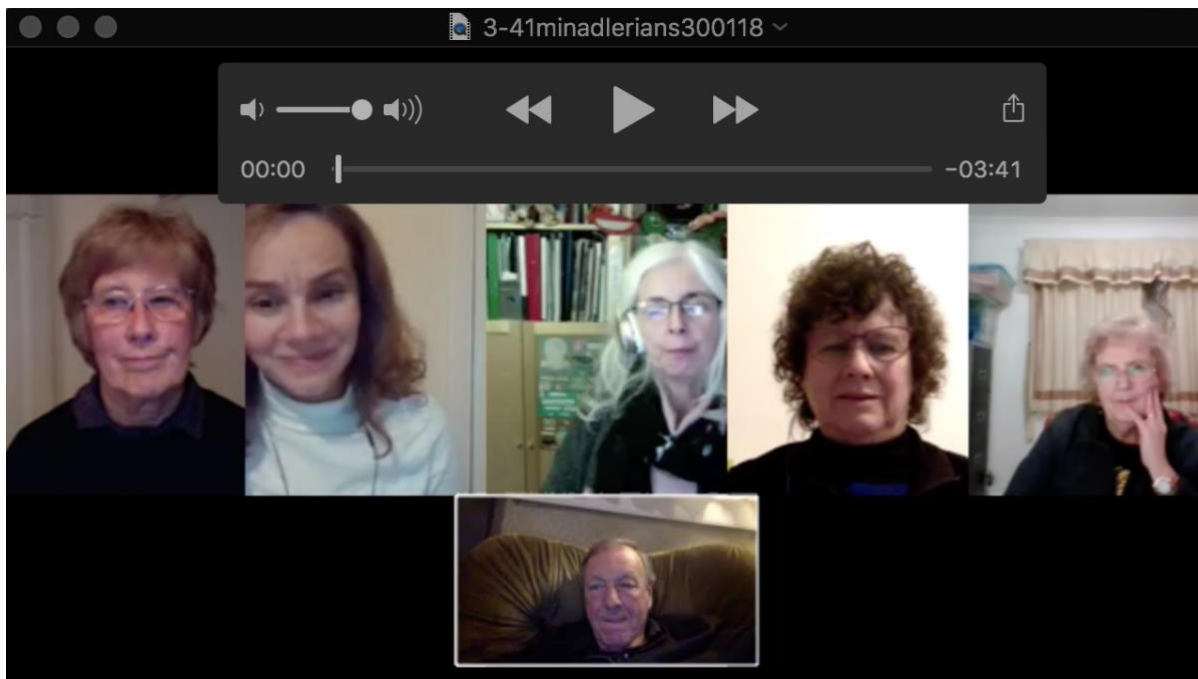
The post-doctoral Living Theory research community also includes Moira Laidlaw, whose original contributions to educational knowledge include the understanding that the explanatory principles and standards of judgement used by Living Theory researchers are themselves, living. Moira's (Laidlaw, 2018) latest original contribution to Living Theory research is on 'Living Hope and Creativity as Educational Standards of Judgement' in the 10th Anniversary issue of the Educational Journal of Living Theories. Moira explains in her Abstract:

This paper explains a transition between the writing of educational stories and harnessing their innate values within the work I am currently engaged in as a tutor at the Open University on a module for the Development Management M.Sc.. I offer two stories about my classroom-practice in the 1980s to illustrate the educational significance of creativity and hope as I perceive them now. I then show the development of my understanding of the educational processes involved in making links between hope and creativity and clarifying them as living educational standards of judgment and explanatory principles. I show how I use my understanding of hope and creativity in my present educational practices with two students and clarify further my understanding of the relational dynamic between hope and creativity as I continue to clarify and communicate their meanings as explanatory principles and living educational standards of judgment. Most significantly for this paper, I am claiming an epistemological significance in clarifying and communicating the relationally-dynamic meanings of hope and creativity that emerge from my practice.

This paper is also being presented as an expression of the hope I gain in working with colleagues through EJOLTS and to celebrate its 10th Anniversary in 2018.

Keywords: Creativity; Hope; Living educational standards of judgement; Forms of power; Relationally-dynamic epistemology; EJOLTS' 10th Anniversary edition.

- iv) **Margaret, Rosemarie, Robyn, Jack, Carmen and Marie** (Adlerian, Living Theory community);



3:41 minute video of Adlerian, Living Theory conversation on 30/01/18 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWRq6eIMXu0>

- v) **William, Rachael, Shelagh, Deborah, Marie, Robyn, Sonia, Donna, Andy and Jack** (Conversation Café, Living Theory community).



58 minute video 09/11/18 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFsYIjASnGY>

On the 16th November's conversation we are going to respond to the following pilot project, supported by William and others, on transformative community development through the promotion of good conversations, to see if it might be possible to Include Living Theory research in way that might support the project. I know that clarification will be need about meanings of 'good' in 'good conversations'

The Conversation Solution project charter

KAN Keynsham Action Network

Aim: To pilot an approach to transformative community development through the promotion of “Good Conversations” in Keynsham

Goal

Support a change in community culture which enables individuals to flourish through connection and purpose and the community to become health-creating.

Funder

St Monica Trust

Background

- Training provided in ‘Good Conversations’ to 25 health and social care workers by Thistle Foundation in March 2018
- Appointment of project manager / development worker or ‘Producer’ (EB)
- Relationship with SHINE Project, Fife International Futures Forum, Fife
- Evaluation support from Richard Kimberlee, UWE

Objectives

- Support trainees to take an asset-based approach in helping people who live or work in Keynsham to articulate their needs, identify and achieve their personal outcomes.
- Develop a local training programme in the Good Conversations technique (Fife) and facilitate local training of health, social care and others in using the approach.
- Identify and co-ordinate a responsive network of community resources to support recipients in achieving their personal outcomes.
- Develop a framework for evaluation of the project, focusing primarily on the collection of stories and experiences amongst all involved.

Initial Success Criteria

- 25 individuals trained as Conversation Makers are active in Keynsham
- KAN Development worker trained and competent
- Tools and resources are available
- Connections made with local authority departments
- Stakeholders satisfied

Resources

- William House (vision holder), Elly Bernard (Project Manager/ Development worker/ ‘producer’)
- Julie Wevill (group training support)
- KAN-Do support group
- KAN community network
- £15,000 funding from St Monica Trust
- Good Conversations Skills
- Good Conversation Training
- Stakeholder resources

Dependencies & Constraints

- Volunteer - conflict of commitments
- No specific funding for training venues, back-fill time or advertising for recruitment
- Availability of team in Fife to provide training for local trainers in Good Conversation technique
- Stakeholder resources

Outcomes

- Cohort of conversation makers
- Capacity to train further people
- Increased understanding of approach
- Access to information on Good Conversations
- Lessons learned documented

Key Activities

- Discovery – Survey & Interviews
- Co –Production with stakeholders
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Reflection, Practice & Training
- Tool/ resource development
- Comms eg website, podcast
- Training
- Evaluation

Key Risks

- Ambitious in scope
- Lack of engagement
- Changing context of other services
- Community may not want to engage

Outputs after one year

- Minimum trained 25 “conversation makers”
- Minimum 1 qualified trainer
- Tools/resources
- Evaluation report
- Built relationships with members of team in Fife

Expected Benefits/ Impact

- More individuals able to make decisions about their health and wellbeing
- Reduction in GP consultations
- Improved staff morale
- Reduction in A & E attendances
- Improvement in referral systems
- More connections between statutory agencies and community

vi) Carmen, Margaret, Robyn, Marie, Joy and Jack (Transformative Community Development with good conversations in Living Theory research)

Joy accepted an invitation to join the Adlerian Living Theory research group. Joy’s doctoral research enquiry is presently focused on the question:

How can I contribute to the creation and enhancement of the educational influences of a community of learners, supporting each other and their own development?



54 minute video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUanTRffB-o&feature=youtu.be>

I'm wondering if the following quote might stimulate a conversation on our meanings of a 'good conversation':

To conduct a dialogue requires first of all that the partners do not talk at cross purposes. Hence it necessarily has the structure of question and answer. The first condition of the art of conversation is ensuring that the other person is with us. ... To conduct a conversation means to allow oneself to be conducted by the subject matter to which the partners in the dialogue are oriented. It requires that one does not try to argue the other person down but that one really considers the weight of the other's opinion. Hence it is an art of testing. But the art of testing is the art of questioning. For we have seen that to question means to lay open, to place in the open. As against the fixity of opinions, questioning makes the object and all the possibilities fluid. A person skilled in the 'art' of questioning is a person who can prevent questions being suppressed by the dominant opinion. A person who possesses this art will himself search for everything in favour of an opinion. Dialectic consists not in trying to discover the weakness of what is said, but in bringing out its real strength. It is not the art of arguing (which can make a strong case out of a weak one) but in the art of thinking (which can strengthen objections by referring to the subject matter).

The unique and continuing relevance of the Platonic dialogues is due to this art of strengthening, for in this process what is said is continually transformed into the uttermost possibilities of its rightness and truth, and overcomes all opposition that tries to limit its validity. Here again it is not simply a matter of leaving the subject

undecided. Someone who wants to know something cannot just leave it a matter of mere opinion, which is to say that he cannot hold himself aloof from the opinions that are in question. The speaker is put to the question until the truth of what is under discussion finally emerges. The maieutic productivity of the Socratic dialogue, the art of using words as a midwife, is certainly directed towards the people who are the partners in the dialogue, but it is concerned merely with the opinions they express, the immanent logic of the subject matter that is unfolded in the dialogue. What emerges in its truth is the logos, which is neither mine nor yours and so far transcends the interlocutors' subjective opinions that even the persons leading the conversation knows that he does not know.

As the art of conducting a conversation, dialectic is also the art of seeing things in the unity of an aspect – i.e. it is the art of forming concepts through working out the common meaning. What characterises a dialogue, in contrast with the rigid form of statements that demand to be set down in writing, is precisely this: that in dialogue, spoken language – in the process of question and answer, giving and taking, talking at cross purposes and seeing each other's point – performs the communication of meaning that, with respect to the written tradition, is the task of hermeneutics. Hence, it is more than a metaphor; it is a memory of what originally was the case, to describe the task of hermeneutics as entering into dialogue with the text. That this interpretation is performed by spoken language does not mean that it is transposed into a foreign medium; rather, being transformed into spoken language represents the restoration of the original communication of meaning. When it is interpreted, written tradition is brought back out of the alienation in which it finds itself and into the living presentation of conversation, which is always fundamentally realised in question and answer. (Gadamer, 1975, 1989 pp. 367-8)

Gadamer, H. G. (1975) *Truth and Method*, London; Sheed and Ward.

Love Jack 16th November 2018