

How do I care for my self? – response to Sonia

I'm writing this is response to your note to the SKYPE research support group:

*On 2 May 2015, at 23:56, Sonia Hutchison
<soniahutchison@hotmail.com> wrote:
Hi*

I have made good progress on my paper for the Cumbria Research and Enterprise Conference in July. I have attached where I am on my first draft and would appreciate any constructive criticism to help me improve validity of the claims I make in my paper:

- How could I improve the comprehensibility of my explanations of influence?*
 - How could I strengthen the evidence I use to justify the claims I make?*
 - How could I deepen and extend my sociohistorical and sociocultural understandings of their influence in my practice and understandings?*
- How could I enhance the authenticity of my explanation to show that I am living my espoused values as fully as possible?*

Also for anything people would like me include about their learning about self-care and preventing burnout.

Thanks,

Sonia

I like your question:

'Care For The Self? - How Can We Live Caring for Ourselves in Practice?'

I also enjoyed your critical evaluation of Foucault's writings in Care of the Self, because of its clarity and the way you justified your arguments about a limitation in Foucault's writings from his male perspective with little regard for female perspectives.

I focused on the second part entitled 'Living Theory of Care for the Self'. I think you could make a helpful distinction from your first part between the two questions. 'Care For The Self?' seems to focus on conceptual meanings – abstract generalisations, in the two concepts of 'Care' and 'The Self'. 'How Can We Live Caring for Ourselves in Practice?' is focused on a practical question through which meanings can be clarified in the course of their emergence in practice, rather than already existing within the conceptual abstractions of our language.

You could make a similar distinction between Living Theory research and a living-theory. Living Theory research refers to the concepts – abstract generalisations, that can be used to create boundaries that help to distinguish a particular research approach. A living-theory is an individual's explanation of

their educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which the practice is located. This might fit where you have said 'Add Living Theory explanation'.

You could focus on showing that your research approach differs between the two questions: 'Care For The Self? - How Can We Live Caring for Ourselves in Practice?'

For example, you could focus on exploring the implications of asking, researching and answering the question, 'How can we live caring for ourselves in practice?' This would mean identifying a genuine 'We'. Marie is presenting a paper at the Higher Education Special Interest Group meeting in London, next Friday – when I'm in Toronto. It deals with four innovative research methods from Living Theory research. You might enjoy this and find it useful. I'm now going to briefly respond to your request:

... for anything people would like me include about their learning about self-care and preventing burnout.

If anything seems useful, do include it.

I'm aware of a mystery at the core of my well-being that is a flow of life-affirming energy. It is a mystery because I do not 'know' the source of this energy. Some images evoke, such as the sunset below, in Bali, evoke my cosmological awareness of this flow of energy. It feels vital for my care for myself, to be daily aware, or mindful of this energy and open to its flow.



I also identify care for myself with expressions of this energy that accompany many of my human relationships. I experience this flow of energy as I look at the photograph of my grandson Luke who has been asked to show his 'grandad's face' – ie - Jack relaxing in the sun ! I also feel this flow of energy as I look at the photograph of my Mother and Father in their favourite place in the Trough of Bowland in the North West of England, near to their home in Morecambe.



Answering the question of ‘How do I care for myself?’ also involves my response to a point made by Erich Fromm – If a person can face the truth without panic they will realize that there is no purpose to life other than that which they give to their own lives through their loving relationships and productive work.

In relation to caring for myself through my productive work, I think the drawing you produced in your teenage diaries and included in your EJOLTS paper on your living-theory of caring, is most relevant.



Image 2. Conscious Conversations

For most of my productive life I have been motivated by the desire to contribute to the legitimization of a valid understanding of educational theory in the Academy (understood as the global collection of Universities). My focus between 1973-2009, the time of my tenured contract with the University of Bath, was to demonstrate that it was possible for practitioner-researchers to gain their doctorates for bringing the embodied knowledge as practitioners, into the Academy for accreditation. By 2009 I felt that I had accomplished this aim to my satisfaction whilst recognizing that new living standards of judgment in the original contributions of Living Theory researchers will continue to extend and deepen understandings of educational theory. I look at the publically accredited living-theory masters and doctorates at:

<http://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml>

and

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/mastermod.shtml>

with a sense of well-being about my productive life. I also look at the *Jack Whitehead Validations* book edited by Robyn Pound, Moira Laidlaw and Marie Huxtable at:

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jackvalidationsb.htm>

with the pleasure provided to me by others and that contributes to my caring for myself in the sense of recognizing my own value to myself and others.

(Just read your response to Pete and your eloquent and clear review of Swepson, P. (1998) Separating the ideals of research from the methodology of research, either action research or science, can lead to better research. **Action Research International**, Paper 1. Available on-line: http://dafa-research.blogspot.co.uk/2011/11/v-behaviorurldefaultvmlo_8716.html)

I believe my productive life is related, in two related processes, to the way I care for myself. In the first process I focus on a continuing exploration of my question, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' This includes my continuing contribution in a supervision team of doctoral enquiries such as your own and Arianna's. This is linked to the central aim in my productive life between 1973-2009 of transforming what counts as educational theory, through the accredited explanations of individuals for their educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which the practice is located. I have a strong intuition the both yourself and Arianna will be bringing original standards of judgment into the Academy in terms of understanding the nature of the ontological and relational values that you use as explanatory principles and living standards of judgment. I am thinking of the ontological and relational values and understandings that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity.

The focus of my productive life began to change from around 2009 from a concern with the legitimization of living-theories, to spreading the influence of Living Theory research, together with its evolution. Using your image above as a metaphor for the well-being I experience in contributing to an extension and deepening of the educational influences of Living Theory research, and the image below of the Living Theory posters to be presented at the Town Hall Meeting of the Action Research Network of the Americas in Toronto on the 8th May, I continue to feel the flow of life-affirming energy that accompanies my sense of living a productive life with a global dimension.



I'm looking forward to reading the next draft of your paper for Cumbria and to seeing and responding to your presentations at the Action Learning and Action Research Association World Congress in Pretoria in November 2015 – if your proposal is accepted.

Jack 3rd May 2015