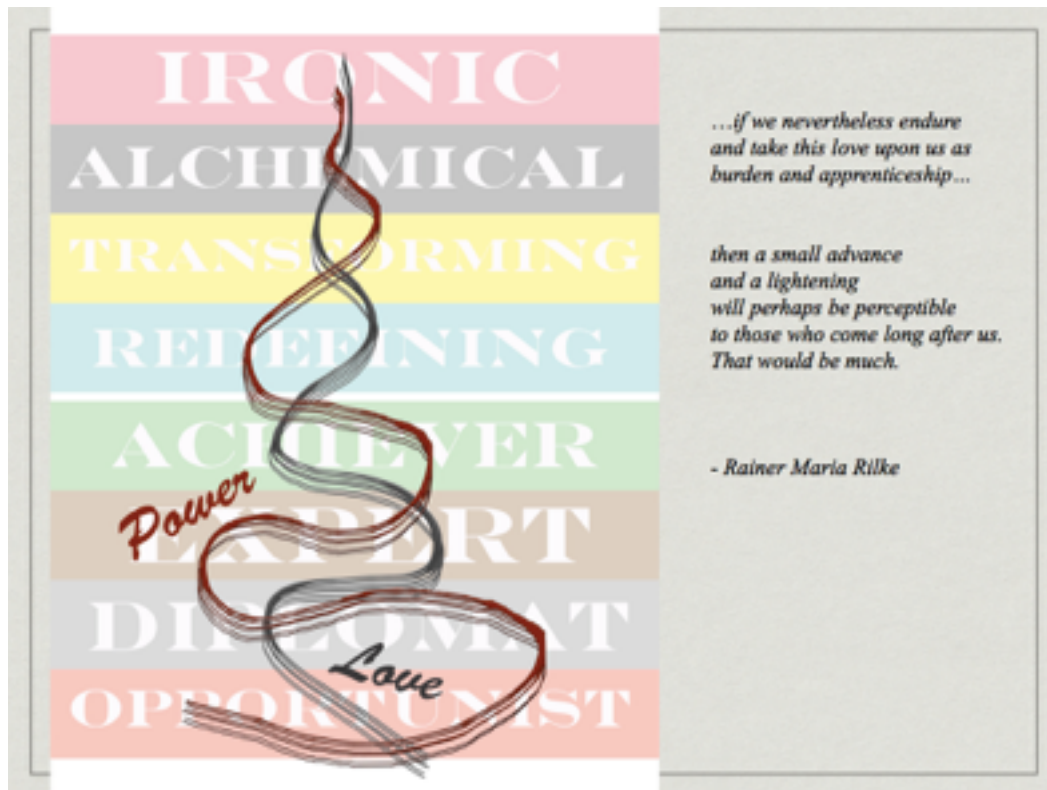


Relational Action Inquiry Research Co-lab

An on-line community of inquiry/practice

A Project of the non-profit network AR+

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We are desperately in need of a movement that shakes us at the very core of how we think about ourselves as individuals, What does it mean to love with courage? To make love an integral feature of moral [developmental] reasoning, the kind of love that risks in profound ways of being mutually vulnerable, [reimagining] who we call our neighbors...” - George Yancy, Ph.D., (Philosopher, Emory U.)

The Relational Action Inquiry Research Co-lab, a project of the non-profit AR+/actionresearchplus network, provides a scholarly-practice space for the transformation of human relational darkness into light. We learn about relationship together in the practice of relationship and erotic friendship. We liberate through welcoming, along with our joys and appreciations, those shadow parts of us so easily triggered. In a circle of likeminded/

kindminded friends, we remind ourselves that without truth there can be no sustainable creativity and that without humor there may be no point.

Objective: Co-inquiry to the heart of relational inquiry

Building on decades of practice with action inquiry and action research, Hilary Bradbury and Bill Torbert articulated the importance, along with illustrating the art and practice, of relational action inquiry in their critically acclaimed book *Eros/ Power: Love in the Spirit of Inquiry. Transforming how women and men relate* (integral Publisher, 2016).

In Relational Action Inquiry Research Co-lab we envision systematically furthering this learning in the context of relationship that cultivates self and other, and leaves us all better off. Beyond reading about it, knowledge for action requires relationships for practice. Therefore the Relational Action Inquiry Research Co-lab convenes a co-inquiry group for those interested in learning/practicing relational action inquiry. Our learning/practice together will help develop insight into the developmental nature of relationship, its capacity at different stages of development for different forms of love, power and inquiry.

Beyond understanding that nature of good relational inquiry, the co-inquiry structure will convene a small community of like-minded practitioners with whom to share personal projects that link power and love to individual lives in relationship. We will also harvest our learning to be shared as action research (in possible workshops, articles, a follow up book...) as we learn more about bringing our fuller selves in creative relationships to the boardroom, bedroom and wherever the fullness of creative work arises. In this way our efforts link subjective, inter-subjective and objective, i.e., first, second and third person research/practice in the domain of relationship. For more about action research visit actionresearchplus.com.

If you feel called to co-convene a community of creative inquiry/practice and are willing to consider how you'd so so as a hologram for a new practice for such communities throughout the world. Please let Hilary know: hilary@hilarybradbury.net.

Our purpose is to learn what is possible as & for a community of women and men learning together, to cultivate eros and creativity that blesses the world through the seasons of our lives. We pay attention to integrating first person, second person and third person inquiries/practice. We will work emergently, dropping or adding to the structure provided as meets our aspirations.

Process Guidelines:

Relational space requires mindfulness so that we foster friendship and development in a space both humorous/playful and earnest/structured, as appropriate. Let's presume that wisdom is contained within and among all and thereby aim for enhancing shared intelligence and encouraging the generous contribution of input and constructive feedback. We do all this with an eye to making the world a better place. In striving to co-create good community and dialogue, we are all invited, minimally, to do no harm and, ideally, to create learning and happiness that can spread. The following help:

Regarding the spirit of our speaking and listening:

- We will speak from our own experience (no lectures!).
- We will listen with resilience, "hanging in" when we hear something that is hard to hear and monitoring our own reactivity.

Regarding the form of our speaking and listening:

- We will participate within the frameworks suggested by the (rotating) facilitator.
- We are careful to share “airtime” and respect occasional generative silence.

Regarding confidentiality:

- Names/identifiers are never linked to information shared outside the group.

Logistics:

We meet regularly by videoconference for 75 mins per month over the course of several months.

Homework/practice is expected/encouraged between meetings.

Details of Structure (based on Cohort 1): 9 months on Full Moons.

1. Meeting for 75 mins, 11 AM pacific - this is 20.00 Eurozone. We use Zoom video, and an online team private SLACK forum for sharing writings. It's important to share the intention to make all/most calls.
2. Topics and short readings are suggested for the first few meetings, post-meeting writing is encouraged as reflection. We'll then make it up as we go along.
3. The first call is unlike others - we'll use it to "check each other out." Those who want to learn (again) about personality and development to share at that call, consider the following free or almost so online resources:
 1. Enneagram: <http://www.9types.com/rheti/index.php>
 2. MBTI/Keirsey temperament sorter.
4. Expect that each regular call will start with roll call (name/place) and listening into the dark together followed by confirming the agenda (15 mins), Then we separate into inter-gendered trio conversations to start with relational action inquiry practice (25 mins), plenary dialogue with everyone (20 mins), housekeeping/clarity for next call (5) Completion check out (10).
5. Hilary will facilitate the first couple sessions only, thereafter please volunteer. We do ask that facilitators consider how to move the conversation through the basic phases of action research so that all participants speak from experience, invite different perspectives, (re)learn a useful conceptual frame(s) and inquire about implications for action/practice in the upcoming month. Of course our individual creativity is very much invited in how we do that.

A Handful of Useful Resources

- Amiel Handelsman's treasure trove of OD/coaching and developmental materials: <http://amielhandelsman.com/>
- Bill Torbert on adult development – Transforming the Action Logics of Leaders, Teams and Organizations through Action Inquiry: <http://www.teamcoachingzone.com/drbilltorbert/>
- Bob Kegan RSA Video – The Further Reaches of Adult Development: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoasM4cCHBc>
- Bradbury, H., Ed. (2015). *The Handbook of Action Research*. Third Edition. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi. Sage Publications.
- Bradbury, Hilary & Bill Torbert, (2016). *Eros/Power: Love in the Spirit of Inquiry. Transforming how Women and Men Relate*. Tucson, AZ.: Integral Publishers.
- Eros/Power blog posts: <http://www.erospowerjourney.com/blog.html>

Register and donate:

This work is offered by donation. Our effort is part of AR+ a non profit 501.c3 organization. Participation in RAIR entitles the participant to other program participation through AR+, including developmental co-inquiry circles. Donations are tax deductible in the USA.

A suggested donation is \$25 per meeting. In addition consider if you can attend a RAIR F2F workshop weekend (for a 75% discount on the workshop fee) during the time of the colloque - it's always fun to meet in person too!

Scholarships are available upon request and mutual agreement. No one will be turned away for want of funding.

DONATE HERE: <http://actionresearchplus.com/register-for-workshop/>

Next steps:

- Check out registration page: <http://actionresearchplus.com/register-for-workshop/>
- Learn the calendar dates for your chosen course.

MORE SCHOLARLY DETAILS

Research format and purpose

Our co-inquiry is envisaged as a form of Contemporary Action Research (Bradbury, 2015) in which collaborative change with others supports the participants' confidence in designing for and living out collaborative learning and erotic friendship. In addition to being helpful in our own lives, it is also intended to generate insights about friendship that can help develop others through the seasons of their lives.

Key to the success and innovation of this action research is integrating subjective/personal (first person), intersubjective/interpersonal (second person) and objective/impersonal scholarly (third person) research and practice. RAIR is therefore an experiment with transformational knowledge creation in and for action toward a more sustainable world. All participants are invited to bring an eros infused, full self to the learning.

Inquiry defined

RAIR is an inquiry into how power and love interweave productively. It embraces two often taboo topics together - the eros in our lives and the dynamics of power. Eros is understood as our life-force: **Eros**: The soul surging toward the other; the connecting force of the universe. Eros is neither primarily nor solely connected to sexuality. Buber reminds us that when two people relate authentically and humanly, God is the electricity that surges between them.

RAIR does not side step the fact that Eros is also keenly associated with sexuality, a phenomenon so often warped, misunderstood and/or debased that the manifestation of rape culture that flourishes on colleague campuses concerns us deeply for the next generation. On the flip-side, the negation of Eros that manifests in contemporary social isolation, with loss of simple community often pegged to suicide rates climbing, is just as real a concern as we consider the lack of cultivation of true friendship. We treat Eros as the life force of creativity that expresses itself in multiple ways, and perhaps most especially in friendship.

Between the aspiration for what true erotic friendship might allow, and the desperation of what its absence conjures, lies an inquiry and a practice of how to cultivate friendship throughout the seasons of our lives.

We take as our focus (unit of analysis) the relationship as dyad/couple and/or small group/team. Using an experiential model of learning we will bring our own reflection on rich experience outside meetings, experience when together, with useful theory (especially from relational psychoanalysis, developmental and organizational psychology) for discussion and application.

We may investigate some (all/and additional) action-propositions:

P1: A useful of definition of erotic friendship includes **:

P2. Erotic friendship moves through developmental stages (independent of life cycle phases).

P3. Erotic friendship devolves under the conditions of a negative relational space to the lowest action logic of those involved.

P3.1 Erotic friendship rises, under the conditions of a positive relational space, to the highest action logic of those involved.

P4. Transformational Inquiry into power dynamics releases love in erotic friendship.

P5. Later action logics, though more rare, are more supportive of the positive relational space required for erotic friendship.

** Erotic Friendship is defined by Bradbury and Torbert, (2016) as present when:

- 1) engaging in some kind of shared work;
- 2) feeling a surging toward one another (which does not have to include sexual);
- 3) wishing to become more intimate;
- 4) making a commitment to develop;
- 5) passionately yearning for the other, but not seeking to possess them;
- 6) experiencing ourselves as on a quest together, increasing our loving mutuality;
- 7) recognizing the significant role of the “third” in any love relationship – the mutual friend or community of inquiry.”