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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the process of acknowledging, I recall that my Buddhist teachers always remembered and gave grateful acknowledgment to their teachers at the end of a meditation retreat. Each teacher was always linked to the ones that went before, down through the lineage. I give thanks to my own crazy quilt lineage (quilting being a woman's tradition and therefore spoken of quite fondly; crazy quilts using many seemingly unmatched fabrics that fit together in the end) and all the teachers who have fostered my being into its present place in the universe.

I thank all my Process Work teachers and sister and fellow students. We continue to follow the unknown. A special thanks goes to Arny Mindell, a true Taoist, who has pioneered the theory and practice of Process Work. Process Work is called a psychology, but is also a spiritual practice that supports working in the world.

I thank Ruth Denison, my teacher of Vipassana, Buddhist meditation and the first person in my life who truly lived in the unknown. I sat with Ruth for twelve years as she taught me about awareness to all aspects of life.

I also thank social activists throughout the world, especially those who live and work in places that violently repress the freedom of life that many of us take for granted. They have taught me about the power of ordinary people to change the society in which we all live.

This paper was difficult to write and I could not do it alone. Leslie Heizer provided the loving focus and assistance needed to complete the project which had lingered in a semi-state of catatonia for over a year. I also thank the many other people who have contributed to this project and as in the Buddhist tradition, I take responsibility for any errors, which are my own.

A final thank-you goes to Emetchi, my partner and lover. I am continually amazed and grateful to her for teaching me that living in relationship always unites the spirit and daily life.

INTRODUCTION

This paper represents a journey, my own long-term struggle to reconcile seemingly disparate parts of my experience: spirituality and social action. The title comes from the hope that a bridge can be built between the spiritual, i.e. meditation, and sustainable social action by using the Process Work paradigm. I will use my own experience as a spiritual seeker and social activist as the base material for the discussion.

Process Work provides the stepping stones of a potential bridge as it seeks to embrace a broad continuum of experience, both inner and outer. I will examine shamanism, Taoism and Buddhism which all contribute to different forms of process oriented attitudes, skills and inner work. Then, I will show how these can influence the practice of social action.

There is a daemon or creative spirit which drives this project--my big feeling for and dedication to the importance of the spirit of social activism in our society. It has not let me drop this project even though writing does not come easily to me and I have suffered through various drafts of this paper. This spirit is present in a big dream I had in 1988, just before I attended my first Process Work seminar.

The dream is as follows. I am standing in darkness far above the street on a wide stone plaza. It is open and spacious. I feel something at my knee. It is a huge black bird in the process of eating a smaller bird. As I stare in amazement the bird takes flight and up in the air, finishes devouring the smaller bird.

In the next part of the dream a baby bear is frolicing above me on the triangular frieze of the Greek Parthenon. The mother bear appears and they play together having a great old time. The last scene is the baby bear dangling contentedly, (as cats do) over the edge of the frieze.

Some thoughts I had about the dream include: The context is the non-ordinary reality of the ancient dreamtime. In the first part of the dream the big bird eats the small bird, is nourished by the small. The small is eaten by the big, i.e. is the experience for the big. The larger than life bird, perhaps a raven, is mythologically associated with the spirit realm. The small bird, more like an ordinary pigeon, is associated with everyday activity and the more personal (Whitmont, 1969). In my interpretation the dream is showing how the ordinary is the food for the spirit; the non-ordinary.

The next part of the dream depicts bears playing. It is specifically a mother and her baby. The Greek goddess Artemis is a bear in one of her aspects and rules over wild animals and childbirth. These animal spirits have come to deliver a seriously playful message. A wild mothering and playful attitude are what is needed on the path. The animal spirits are pointing in this direction as the way to proceed.

I see this dream also as the theme of this project: that all is

food for the big bird and the Parthenon bears. Our personal lives; thoughts, feelings and actions are the nourishment for the global dreamingbody, the dreamlike aspect of the world that manifests empirically in our everyday experiences.

I have a feeling for and dedication to trying to live the spirit in everyday life. That is the direction in which my dream, the big bird and those bears, are sending me. This is precisely what Process Work supports and is why this paradigm can provide a bridge between the spirit and the world.

A NOTE ON THE FORM

This paper consists of a series of essays. Each essay can stand on its own; the collection creates the larger document. The first part of the paper is an overview of Process Work and the root philosophies that support the theory and practice of Process Work, including shamanism, Taoism, and Buddhism. The second part of the paper connects this theory and practice with social activism.

Also, I have indented certain sections of the paper that are more feeling responses than the general tone of the rest of the paper.

PROCESS WORK, A PARTIAL OVERVIEW

Because Process Work is a multi dimensional, broad spectrum approach to human behavior, it has many aspects. Here I will discuss only those aspects which are directly pertinent to the topics of this paper.

Philosophically, Process Work is based in the field theory of modern physics, which postulates fields of energy patterning the behavior of matter. It is also based in the ancient philosophy and practice of Taoism which trusts in and follows nature as the highest authority.

Arny Mindell developed the concept of the "dreamingbody", a dreamlike field pattern in the background of an individual, couple or group, which organizes its behavior. He noticed this pattern in his work with individuals when he realized that body problems were mirrored in dreams and vice versa (Mindell, 1985). An individual's childhood dream shows the pattern behind the processes for one's whole life and also relates to chronic symptoms (67). These patterns can also be perceived in relationship problems and in the environment.

Over time Process Work expanded into the areas of psychiatry and altered states; meditation, inner work and shamanism. It also focused on relationship work with couples and families, and worldwork with both small and large groups.

COMMUNICATION THEORY: SIGNALS, CHANNELS, AND PROCESS

The practice of Process Work is based in communication theory, which means that it explains human behavior as a process of communication trying to unfold itself. It describes behavior that is present rather than prescribing certain behaviors as better or more desirable than others.

A signal is any bit of behavior. Signals and the senders and receivers of these signals are studied and followed. Signals occur in channels which are perceptual modes of communication. Process Work identifies the following channels: visual, auditory, movement, proprioception or body feeling, relationship, and the world. For example, if the first answer to the question, "How are you doing?", is a sudden stomach cramp, that cramp, which is in the proprioceptive channel, is perceived as valid as a verbal answer.

The "process" is defined as the momentary flow of information which is the expressing and perceiving of signals. These signals are carried by the different channels or modes of communication. The process is like a river that is continuously moving and

changing. In the background of that changing river is the dreamingbody, a mysterious totality which is communicating all the time through different channels.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY PROCESS, EDGES AND DOUBLE SIGNALS

The distance from awareness is important in how we observe information. Signals and processes that are closer to awareness and with which one more or less identifies are called "primary" or the "me". Other signals and processes which are farther away from awareness, i.e., are more disavowed, are called "secondary" or the "not me". An area lying between the primary and secondary processes is called the "edge". It marks the limit of one's known identity. "Double signals" are unintended information, that is, they are not sent by one's identity, but by the secondary process. Therefore, they occur at the edge of one's identity.

An example of a double signal occurs if the person who means to nod "yes" as an answer to a question also moves backwards from the intended receiver of the signal. Moving backwards is incongruent because it doesn't go along with the signal of the affirmative nod. It is a signal from a different, more disavowed part. A hypothesis about this process might assume that agreeing is primary, i.e., belonging to the identity, and that disagreeing is more secondary or disavowed.

THE METACOMMUNICATOR

The metacommunicator is the fair witness, the part that is detached from the momentary situation and can observe all the other parts in any given moment. It can talk about what is going on in a neutral manner. In Process Work a metacommunicator possesses true consciousness, that is, is aware of one's own awareness. It knows what is really present and not present (Mindell 1990: 121). An example of metacommunication is picking up one's own double signals. For instance, if the person in the above example notices she is moving backwards and is able to talk about it and bring that awareness forward into her interaction she is metacommunicating about her process.

TELEOLOGY AND TAOISM; UNFOLDING AND AMPLIFICATION

Process Work believes that all behavior is teleological in that it is potentially meaningful. Trusting and following the unknown nature of behavior is a teleological approach. It is also Taoist since the Taoist observes the natural patterns and movements of nature and tries to adjust herself to that flow (see Taoism below). It is our job as process workers to join the flow and help the meaning of a process unfold itself and become known. Process Work goes further than Taoist observation and following of nature, in that it seeks to unfold it. A process worker takes nature as the beginning or seed of a process and interacts with it as a dream that has a mysterious message to be unraveled. "Amplification" is the method whereby that "seed" is given a lot

of attention so it can reveal its message. For example, a mysterious movement can be made bigger or smaller, can be inhibited or done with the whole body to begin to unfold the information in that movement.

Behind each signal is a part of a person. When awareness is brought to a part it can then know itself and establish communication with other parts. One of the concerns of Process Work is creating relationships between the different parts.

METASKILLS

Metaskills are the feeling attitudes with which we practice the skills of Process Work. They reflect our underlying beliefs about life, nature, and human development and bring a rich liveliness and power to the work (Amy Mindell, 1995: 16-24). Many of us naturally develop these attitudes as we work with people. One of the goals of the development of the concept of metaskills is to make the use of these background feelings and attitudes more conscious and therefore more useful in the practice of Process Work.

For instance, many people who work with others, both individually and in groups, grow to feel compassion and love for their clients. In Process Work, the metaskill of compassion specifically means compassion for all parts of a process. This includes support for the primary identity and at the same time, a

belief in the seemingly absurd which goes against the primary identity. Compassion means developing the awareness to pick up the double signals that are the messages from the secondary process, learning to amplify these signals and staying at the edge between the primary and secondary process. In this way, a process is compassionately supported to unfold itself.

Other metaskills which are referred to in this paper are a beginner's mind, which is an attitude that is open to the unknown parts of a process, and fluidity, which is the ability to "move, adapt and flow with the unique curves and windings of any given process" (Amy Mindell, 1995: 152) I will discuss these metaskills further in the sections on Buddhism and Taoism respectively. A third metakill is eldership which pertains to the practice of deep democracy and is further discussed in the section on process oriented worldwork.

PROCESS ORIENTED WORLDWORK

The theory and practice of worldwork has been developed within the Process Work paradigm to work with large groups of people. It explores issues of democracy, minority and majority positions, power and rank, privilege, abuse, revenge and conflict. It is an adventurous new area to be addressed by psychology, which has generally been concerned with individuals in contained therapeutic situations.

The goal of worldwork is the creation of community, which happens when a group's conflicts and tensions are processed. Simply winning a conflict is not ultimately sustainable, since a winner implies a loser and the conflict will recycle. It is the processing of a group's conflicts and tensions that creates dialogue and builds sustainable solutions. Ultimately, this is what builds relationships and community. A worldworker makes use of the following concepts.

DEEP DEMOCRACY

Deep democracy is based on the realization that everyone, including all parts and all states, is needed to represent reality. This includes the mainstream and the disturbers of the mainstream. Not only representation of all the parts, but also the relationships between the parts, is important.

FIELD THEORY

A classic example of a field is the force field created by a

magnet organizing metal filings in its vicinity into specific patterns. Just as the magnet creates a force field around it, so do organizations and groups create patterns around themselves that organize what happens in the field of that group. The identity and beliefs of a group make up part of its field. Another less visible part is the atmosphere or tensions between parts or polarities within a group field.

ROLES

Just as Process Work believes all behavior has potential meaning, so do group fields have potential intelligence. Acting out the roles in a group enables them to interact, which brings consciousness to the atmosphere of the group's field. Expressing all the parts allows the potential wisdom of the field to unfold itself. Roles effecting a group can occur anywhere within a group's field, including outside the group, between individuals and inside each of us.

Having access to a bigger picture enables us to perceive and work with all the parts impacting a group. For example, today there is a rollback of affirmative action by a more conservative political atmosphere than when the idea was originally conceived. Groups working for affirmative action identified with the minority role they were created to support, but the part that they did not identify with was the white male already in power. The rollback is a response by white men who have felt left out. Process Work field theory states that any part with which we

don't identify, but which is present in the field that we are working with, will have an effect on us. Therefore all the roles need to be occupied and related to in order to create sustainable relationships. It is the dialogue between the roles that creates sustainability and reveals the potential intelligence that is inherent in the behaviors and tensions between the different positions.

TIMESPIRITS

Timespirits are the different roles in the overall global field. They can be seen as energies in the field with which we momentarily identify. They are found throughout the world. Examples are poor and rich, woman and man, worker and manager, minority and majority. Timespirits create polarities and tensions in a group. For example, the recent OJ Simpson trial brought up the timespirits of race, sex and class differences for everyone in the United States.

If worked with, the polarities of the timespirits can transform. For instance, the male-female conflict was at the forefront of this trial, which centered on the accusation of domestic violence ending in the murder of Nicole Simpson by her ex-husband, OJ Simpson. Simpson is an African American man and his wife a white woman, so the black-white conflict is present. He is a wealthy man and therefore could afford a very extensive defense team so the polarities of rich and poor are also represented. A process oriented approach supports the polarities of each timespirit to

express themselves; to argue and conflict publicly with the other side of the polarity. A public theater depicting the facilitated conflicts and dialogues of the timespirits is a way to bring more attention and awareness to these needed interactions (Mindell, 1992: 121). Unfortunately, during this trial the sides never conflicted directly, but only in the gossip columns of the mass media.

WORKING WITH ISSUES OF RANK

Rank consists of the power and privileges, unearned or earned that accompany certain positions or states of being. Process Work defines four kinds of rank. The first two are external and more related to how society is structured. The second two are more internally oriented, that is, how we feel about ourselves. They are:

Global rank: the rank one is born into, i.e., gender, race, religion, health, class, also including sexual orientation.

Social rank: the rank given by a community to certain positions of power. Teachers, parents, bosses and leaders of organizations all have social rank.

Psychological rank: is related to how we feel about ourselves. It includes how we weather our childhood traumas and families. If one feels OK about herself she has higher psychological rank than if she is depressed, lonely and feels much personal suffering.

Spiritual rank: is also a feeling attitude and is related to how close we feel to some energy source bigger than ourselves. The

bottom line is that there is an affirming experience somewhere in the background that sustains us in difficult moments.

Paradoxically, an oppressed group can have spiritual rank exactly because of the inner experience of surviving that oppression (Mindell 1995: Chapters 3&4).

Ranking occurs everywhere. When it is not acknowledged there can be continual struggles for power, organizational splits and public backbiting. For instance, people often work collectively in a social activist organization. Though the identity of the group is one of equality, there are always some who have more power than others. It may have to do with gender, the ability to be more articulate or more directive. The group acts as if all are equal, but in the background this may not be so. This unacknowledged leadership often creates bad feelings, cliques, and eventually can split a group.

Process Work suggests ideas and strategies focusing on sustainable outcomes, that work with situations in which rank and power are present. For example, the Process Work concept of deep democracy welcomes all parts and can therefore acknowledge background leadership and work with it so it is not implicitly influencing the atmosphere and the relationships between the activists. Leadership as a role is in the group, and developing sustainability demands that we pay attention to it. Deep democracy welcomes that role and works with it to create greater awareness. Working with leadership as a role in the group means

that the leadership position can be explicitly occupied by different people at different times. Bringing awareness to the different roles in a group field allows people more choice in which roles they want to occupy, react to or conflict with. It is the ongoing awareness and the resulting relationship or dialogue between the roles that creates sustainability.

Another rank situation that is not always recognized occurs when those with less global or social rank have more spiritual and/or psychological rank. In a human interaction the spiritual and psychological ranks can be as or more powerful than the global and social ones. I am reminded of an open forum group process described later in this paper in which a large group was struggling with the timespirit of sexism and the relationships between women and men. Finally, after a long, unresolved interaction, a subgroup of African American men and women were able to transcend the polarities of the timespirit and join together as they worked with each other.

They had less global rank, but greater spiritual and psychological rank than did the predominantly white group and were therefore able to work with each other in a way that had been impossible for the larger group. One of the women in particular was especially impressive. She had the spiritual and psychological rank to challenge the men on their sexism and while holding them to the issue, simultaneously embrace them as parts of herself. By standing for her own side and also

supporting the other, she nurtured the atmosphere of the entire group. It was an awesome moment of eldership that deepened and broadened the entire group field of relationship.

ELDERSHIP

Elders model deep democracy. They care for all the roles in a field and have the tolerance to stay with a difficult moment.

Elders are politically wise, psychologically oriented people interested in personal development as well as everything else. They are compassionate people who have feelings that go beyond right and wrong and the borders of their own person and nation and are capable of understanding and helping others. (Mindell 1992: 157)

Eldership is an open state of mind that is extremely useful when working in the world. It is able to maintain an awareness and a loving neutrality when a group breaks into conflicting polarities and the fire gets hot. It is also open to all states of reality and types of communication. Eldership is a part-time occupation and one state among many to which a fluid worldworker develops access.

THE MAINSTREAM, COMMUNICATION AND CONSENSUS REALITY

The mainstream of a group is generally the majority position. In a democracy the majority traditionally rules. Worldwork tries to establish dialogue between majority and minority viewpoints. In mainstream western culture the traditionally favored communication style is verbal linearity. Minority viewpoints may have a non-linear communication style, including chaotic, angry, quiet or dreamlike. Process Work tries to honor each style as it

arises.

Consensus reality is the reality of the mainstream. It is a relative concept because it is often not the reality of those outside the mainstream viewpoints and it can be a trancelike state or a hypnosis because we often don't know we are in it. Examples of consensus reality assumptions are: all women like children, men are brave, everyone needs a spouse, white people know best, etc.

AWARENESS

One of the goals of a group process facilitator is to become an "awareness facilitator", which means having an awareness of the process happening in the moment. As process workers we try to follow signals and spirits as they appear and change.

Cultivating awareness of the different states, emotions and communication styles in which we find ourselves is the goal. This includes anger, fear, hopelessness, ecstasy, revenge, abuse, escalation and de-escalation of conflict among others. To be able to bring awareness to a momentary state can change the course of an entire group process. Arny Mindell notes that a group needs five out of a hundred people who are awareness facilitators to influence an outcome. (Lecture, 1991)

For instance, in a hot conflict two people are yelling at each other, but then one pauses and looks down. This is a momentary de-escalation signal and needs to be picked up by an awareness facilitator. Otherwise it will be skipped over and the fight

will go on. This momentary change is important and if followed can change the course of the conflict, which otherwise can recycle and escalate to a standoff and possible violence.

In this way the facilitator becomes another role in the field of the group and can be occupied by anyone bringing in a momentary awareness of the process.

PROCESS ORIENTED INNER WORK

Like traditional meditational sitting practices, Process oriented inner work also brings awareness to the moment. It differs from traditional practices in that everything is worked with, including what Buddhist theory calls "distractions", because Process Work believes that all experience has potential meaning. Sexual feelings, greed, restlessness and tiredness are examples of experiences that are generally avoided by the traditional meditator, but are all the beginnings of processes that can lead to wisdom and greater wholeness when unfolded. In, Working On Yourself Alone, Arny Mindell suggests,

Whatever you are able to experience contains its own evolution, solution and growth. The stuff of your visions, voices and body pains is....not an illusion, but an express train to yourself (1990: 40).

Disturbances change and evolve when we use our awareness to follow them. This includes an awareness of channels, double signals and amplification, the skills needed to unfold and reveal the meaning behind the unknown aspects of these processes.

RESTLESSNESS AS AN EXAMPLE

Restlessness often plagues many meditators. Concentrating and sitting still for long periods of time is difficult. In order to progress in a Buddhist practice restlessness, a hindrance, needs to be overcome. What would happen if we believed in and unfolded the experience of restlessness?

Here are some possibilities. One might notice slight shivers that occur in the legs. In this case the activity is happening in the movement channel. These internal body movements can be followed. One can make them bigger by slightly moving the legs. One can make them bigger yet by allowing the whole body to shiver. This could turn into a meditation dance reminiscent of the yogic kundalini snake which rises up through the chakras towards enlightenment.

Another cause of restlessness is thinking. One can think the strangest thoughts during meditation. Following these thoughts in the auditory channel means really listening and unfolding them. One might notice who is actually talking. Is it a critic? Is it the Buddhist "conditioned mind" refusing to quiet down and focus? Perhaps it is a part of the process to which one needs to listen. Dialoguing with thought processes as they arise provides new insights into the process in the background that is trying to come forward.

INNER WORK AND WORLDWORK

Inner work is an integral part of worldwork. Because a group field is holographic what one person feels or thinks is connected to the atmosphere and process of the whole group. People often think that what we feel in a group doesn't matter. We criticize ourselves internally when we feel afraid, irritated or different from the majority. The ability to do inner work in a group and bring that awareness out is an important skill that can change

the path of a group. The field needs each individual reaction to really work with itself and develop.

"Burning your wood" is an important concept that connects worldwork and innerwork. Group processes can bring up strong emotions in us. These include fear, anger, shock and numbness. These can be related to our abuse issues from the past and can influence how we react in the present. It is useful to burn your wood around the issues that tend to catch on fire and heat up with a lot of emotion in the areas where there has been hurt. Inner work in these areas leads to greater awareness and the ability to be neutral when the group process gets hot (Mindell, 1995). One might tell the story, yell, cry, growl, hit, dance, meditate, paint and drum to express the feelings and thoughts that are inside.

An awareness facilitator needs to be able to drop out of consensus or "normal" reality and go inside. It is important to be able to work on oneself in public when issues of rank come up. For example, when gender conflicts arise it can often complete a process if a man, who usually has more rank in this instance, can speak about his male privilege or admit that he has been sexist in some situations. Being able to apologize for himself and other men can also heal past hurts for many women, but it takes inner work to recognize and articulate these thoughts and feelings.

A rankful person may develop the ability to recognize projections on a minority group, and thus be able to own them. In the above example, a man might realize he has been thinking women are too emotional when he hasn't been in touch with his own feelings. The same may be true for white people linking people of color with stereotypes that whites disavow, such as parts of ourselves that are more spontaneous and again, emotional. Emotionality is an often disavowed aspect of white male culture. Inner work on one's own feelings withdraws projections. This benefits the larger field as each one of us who changes inside affects the outer world as well as ourselves.

Working on oneself under attack is difficult since defensiveness is usually the first option, but having the ability to work with an attack instead of immediately against it can make it more useful to both oneself and a group. Options include: picking up the accusation and working on it, working on oneself internally and bringing that out, noticing whose side you're really on, yours or the other side and standing for it in the moment and taking the attacker as a teacher with valuable information (Mindell 1992: 59-60).

The ability to do inner work means one must recognize one's own double signals and edges. This makes inner work one of the most difficult parts of Process Work. It calls for a dedication to following the unknown into areas of life that may seem dangerous and scary; trusting that the path is leading in the direction

that the process needs to follow.

This is a moment when my original dream seems relevant.

It is the inner work with oneself which transforms the everyday food on which the huge raven feeds. Inner work is its nourishment and mothers the unknown and the miraculous to come into being. Using one's awareness to work with oneself on conflicting time spirits is monumental in today's mass media world of sound bites and consumer stereotypes. We break through our conditioning by giving attention to feelings and insights that can be recognized only by the dedication of one's awareness to the details of one's own body and mind.

PHYSICS

Process Work is based in the discoveries of twentieth century physics which overturned the Newtonian model of the universe that had ruled science for hundreds of years. The Newtonian cosmos was a giant machine governed by exact mathematical laws explaining all physical phenomena. The system was causal, deterministic and static. The Newtonian paradigm is still valid, but only for limited times and distances (Capra, 1976). The new physics is acausal, non-deterministic and postulates a connected and continually changing universe.

QUANTUM PHYSICS: THE VERY SMALL

Quantum theorists studying the subatomic level of matter found that it was not solid as they had thought, but full of "vast regions of space" filled with abstract entities with dual aspects. These appeared as both particles and waves depending on how they were viewed. At this level matter existed only as patterns of mathematical quantities with tendencies to exist, called "probability waves". These patterns were not of things but of their interconnections (Capra, 1976: 55-57).

This is the basis for Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, which postulates the connection between an experimenter's questions or method and the answers or results obtained from the experiment. The experimenter can never be detached from the results of the experiment. In fact, s/he determines the results.

Bell's Theorem further states that there are no local connections in quantum theory because electrons at great distances will behave identically at the same moment with no way of locally connecting (Capra, 1976: 303). This means that our actions may have larger implications than our linear minds are able to imagine.

THE HOLOGRAPHIC UNIVERSE

Holographic theory expands the interconnectedness of quantum theory by postulating that any part contains the same information as the whole. David Bohm coined the term "holomovement" for the dynamic phenomenon out of which all forms of the material universe flow including space and time (Capra, 1976: 310). He describes an implicate order from which all explicate phenomena arise. This is a description of the concept of the "dreamingbody", the background field pattern that manifests itself in dreams, symptoms and relationship and world problems. In Process Work experiences in different channels can each manifest the same dreaming process. For example, someone with the background process of roughness may develop strong skin

rashes, dream of grizzly bears and find herself confronting rough work situations that demand she be tougher with others than is normally comfortable. Each experience may seem separate, but they are alocally connected by her dreamingbody, which can also be called the Tao, the Buddhist big mind or the spirit world of shamanism.

RELATIVITY: THE VERY BIG

Einstein's theories of relativity describe the immense spaces between stars and the speed of light. He found that in these situations space and time are connected forming a "space-time continuum", and therefore measurements of space and time become relative to each other, each losing its absolute reality. In Process Work this applies when working with an altered state or symptom. The "consensus reality", that which is considered normal, often sees altered states and illness as wrong or not normal. But normalcy is relative to the observer. When the momentary state is joined and unfolded there is no longer a problem. There is excitement and new life discoveries (Mindell, 1995: lecture).

For instance, when confronted with a symptom we generally want to be rid of it. The pounding of a headache sends us for aspirin to dull the pain. But if the headache pain is amplified and one becomes the "symptom maker", the figure in the background causing the pounding, new worlds can open up. One is no longer the

receiver of pain, but the creator of a pounding motion.

Imagining into that pounding one becomes a goddess or god shaping new life into being, a warrior confronting her enemies or an enraged lawyer making a big point. Our realities become relative to our own points of view. Once we unfold the headache, the view shifts. Originally the reality was pain. The new relative reality is a creator of a new life experience.

SHAMANISM, DON JUAN AND SPIRITUAL WARRIORSHP

Shamanism, practiced by indigenous people all over the world, is an ancient form of healing, personal growth and community work. It is also one of the background philosophies of Process Work. Traditionally, medicine people or witch doctors work with spirits, dreams and other aspects of non-ordinary reality to benefit both individuals and communities.

Although shamanism is not generally acknowledged as scientifically provable by western science, aspects of modern physics theoretically support shamanic experiences. Bell's Theorem postulates alocal connections between phenomena, as does Bohm's concept of a holomovement, out of which all forms of the material universe flow. Relativity theory states that at the speed of light space bends and has no absolute reality separate from time. The possibility of unknown connections between phenomena that influence known reality becomes more than conjecture when the theories of modern physics are considered.

One of the great modern teachers of shamanism is don Juan Matus, a Yaqui Indian seer from Mexico. We are introduced to don Juan through the writings of his student, Carlos Castaneda. Don Juan lives in a dreaming world made up of mysterious spirits and unfathomable events. His view of life sees the world as a hunting ground for power. Through his conversations with

Castaneda, he teaches us how to hunt power and become a "spiritual warrior" who can meet fate and develop one's unique life path. This path and the hunting of power are necessary to make everyday life magical and mysterious (Castaneda, 1972).

In order to live as a spiritual warrior, one must give up the attachment to "personal history", that is, one's long term primary process. Actually, this occurs every time an edge is crossed and a disavowed part is brought into awareness. Then one is present to the dreaming process that is happening in the moment. For instance, I am generally caring, warm and kind to others. It is how I have always identified myself. But once in a while I can become cool and distant. It is more disavowed, not a part of myself I identify with. It is a little scary to admit that this is also part of me. I think others won't like me. This cool and distant part is in my dreams as women who are angry at me, disapprove or are mysterious and half hidden. These dream figures are my allies pushing me towards this disavowed part of my wholeness.

THE ALLY

A warrior must have an ally. An ally is a kind of teacher, "a symbol of an altered state of consciousness. The ally is impossible and dangerous, but without it, life is empty" (Mindell, 1993: 96). Process Work uses these teachings as a challenge to live our wholeness in everyday life. We develop

skills and courage to meet whatever ally our fate may bring, whether it be illness, success, falling in love, failing an exam or relationship problems.

AN ALLY STORY

Another of my allies is my father with whom I have fought and struggled for the past twenty years. He is an autocrat, a patriarch and a militarist. Sometimes I have hated him outright. Other times I have tolerated his patronizing attitude. We have spent years with little or no contact. I discovered him as an ally at a Process Work seminar led by Amy and Arny Mindell. I was fighting with what I call his "killer energy" and felt hopeless that it would ever transform into anything useful. Working with Arny, I began loudly yelling invective as my father is wont to do, while pushing Arny backwards. Instead of fighting me, Arny supported everything I was screaming about: "Yes, you are the boss. I need to listen to you. Yes, I am stupid, tell me what to do. I need you to tell me." As I became more abusive, Arny kept on supporting my ally to take control of the situation and him. Finally, he kneeled before me and worshipped the ally as Kali, the great Hindu goddess of destruction: "Oh great destroyer, yes, we need you. Please, tell us what to do."

I was astounded by his behavior. He was totally supporting the energy of the ally. Through his awareness that energy was transformed and became available as power that I, Rhea, could use in the world. I realized that with that amount of energy or power I could do anything that I had heretofore thought impossible. I needed the very energy I had fought against all these years.

Arny had the awareness and detachment needed to work neutrally with the ally and thereby could make its energy useful to me. His second attention was very strong.

SECOND ATTENTION

Second attention is the ability to focus on and stay with irrational experiences that are normally ignored. With this attention a spiritual warrior hunting power can perceive the dreaming process behind whatever else is happening. Arny used his second attention to focus on and support the energy of my ally. My own second attention was not strong enough to stay with the energy. Because my personal history with my father is negative and in the foreground, I judged that energy as negative and that judgement interfered with my awareness.

My ally is a disavowed part of myself that comes out in my double signals. Here, the intense energy which I associate with my father also belongs to me. Mostly, it remains in my day dreams

where I have fantasies of violence, blood revenge and killing or being killed. But that same energy is also in the symptom maker behind chronic asthma which can squeeze my lungs until I must struggle to breathe. The second attention is needed to follow these unknown body sensations, inner feelings and outer signals in order to stay close to dreaming. The warrior in me follows these signals and tries to live them more fully.

DEATH AS AN ALLY

Death is a special advisor and ally for the spiritual warrior in don Juan's teachings. Its finality interrupts one's primary identity. To follow death means to detach from this normal identity and follow the unknown. It means to take responsibility for one's deepest and highest dreams right now, in the moment.

ALTERED STATES AND AWARENESS

The teachings of don Juan are an indigenous description of states and experiences that support the focus of Process Work on altered states. An altered state is any state, mood, or trance which often lacks a strong metacommunicator. Altered states occur when we experience ourselves in perceptual channels that are usually not occupied as in movement and proprioception. Trance dancing, chanting, Tai Chi and meditation are examples.

Awareness is often difficult to keep around in an altered state because it is so unfamiliar. Big emotions, such as anger and fear can also put people in altered states, as does landing in a secondary process which is far from awareness, as in the "Kali" process described above. Here again, the second attention needs to be developed so that these states can be worked with and unfolded. This is important because these moments contain the new experiences that, with awareness, broaden the view we have of ourselves and the world.

TAOISM

Taoism is another of the root philosophies of Process Work. It is the ancient Chinese study of the movement of nature. The Tao is the path or way along which all things in nature move. A Taoist tries to stay in harmony with this movement, rather than go against it. But the Tao is mysterious and often formless so staying with it can be like trying to surf a powerful though unpredictable wave.

In Taoism, yin and yang are opposites that represent fundamental dualities existing universally. These opposites are not mutually exclusive. For darkness to exist there must be light. For goodness and right to exist there must be evil and wrong. Everything is created by the tension and interplay between polar opposites. This movement is within us and outside us. It creates the whole universe and all our sensory experience of reality. The universe is dualistically ordered because it is in the interaction and tension between the opposites that movement and growth can arise. The opposites need each other, define each other and are therefore actually inseparable.

Thus, a true Taoist accepts the relativity of nature and the inseparability of the opposites. Positive and negative, good and evil, right and wrong are all parts of the fundamental process of

creation. One does not reject evil impulses, but accepts and works with them. Wisdom is the acceptance of the contradictory nature of the universe and of ourselves (Deng, 1993: 168-204).

Process Work goes one step further. Not only does it accept the nature of a so-called evil impulse, but it unfolds and interacts with the process behind that impulse to make it meaningful. In this sense Process Work puts feet on Taoist theory by actually teaching skills, such as amplification, with which one can interact with the Tao.

Later in this paper there is an essay about a large town meeting organized by the Process Work community at which the Oregon Citizen's Alliance, a group working against the rights of gays and lesbians, is invited to speak out and dialogue about its position. That position is then amplified and unfolded. Each inflammatory statement is treated respectfully, listened to, asked about and in this way, amplified. The other side is then given a chance to respond and the same process happens. Taoism respects all the parts and its teleological aspect looks for the meaning behind all events. Here, the meaning seems to be about really allowing the seeming dualities of life to truly interact with each other instead of being pushed underground where they can become isolated and more dangerous.

This is an example for me of a Taoist attitude towards a position that is on the evil side of duality. It truly takes a belief in the unknown nature of a process and a trust in the inherent wisdom of the Tao to amplify and unfold it.

THE UNSPOKEN TAO

Tao that can be spoken of,
Is not the Everlasting Tao.
Name that can be named,
Is not the Everlasting name (Chen, 1989: 51).

These are the opening lines of the Tao Te Ching, an ancient Taoist text. They express the mysterious aspect of the Tao which is formless and nameless. In Zen Buddhism it is the limitless, boundless ground of the universe. In Process Work it is the alocal and acausal field concept called the dreamingbody. This Tao cannot be spoken because, like nature, it is forever changing. It is a cyclical movement or becoming. Therefore it is a verb not a noun. We are forced by language to name it and so call it the Tao or Way, but it is the everlasting rhythm of life, the unity of the polarity of non-being and being (52).

"Therefore the sage manages affairs without action...Ten thousand things arise and he does not initiate them" (55). When the Tao is present in the world there is no need for power or pushing. The wise person, imitating Tao, practices non-action, trusts the unknown and goes with the flow. All things arise by themselves without his planning. Tao is the non-being which gives rise to and nurtures all beings. The Taoists however, did not focus on how a student of Taoism can actually learn to be a Taoist. We study the Taoist concept of "wu wei", non-action or not going against the flow, but how do we get there?

In The Shaman's Body, Arny Mindell speaks of the two Taos,

...one that can be seen and spoken about and one that can only be experienced. The crucial energy of life that you are after can be experienced in terms of the feeling you have surrounding events; it is the dynamic of a moment, not its description (1993: 70).

In Process Work we develop our second attention to open our perception to the dreaming process that is always happening in the background of our daily experiences. We learn to perceive this momentary information in the form of double signals described in the overview of Process Work. We learn that double signals, dreams, symptoms, relationship problems, sometimes barely ascertainable feelings and strange chance occurrences all contain the seeds of the dreamingbody. To follow and unfold these seeds of information takes us on a mysterious journey into the unknown.

We study and practice and grow, but then something inexplicable happens. We call it the Tao and trust it as the unknown, the irrational, a "dreamlike fate" (142).

It can be turbulent, frightening and overwhelming. I recall an experience with this Tao that made me propose partnership and moving to the United States to a woman who lived across the world, was with another, had a complete life and didn't like Americans, which I am. My whole dreaming process, which included my chronic symptoms, death as an ally, my high dream and chronic background depression said, "pursue her", but the outer situation was not promising. It was the most difficult thing I had ever

done. I couldn't eat or sleep, and cried every day, but I knew I had to do it. Finally, after six months, I stopped the outward pursuit, but could not stop feeling an inner spirit connection that did not die. Six months later she called to ask if I was still interested in the relationship.

The Tao moves in mysterious ways and hanging on for the ride challenged every part of my being. It felt like life and death, that the Tao was choosing me and the only real choice I had was to choose it. It was that essential to my being in relationship and in the world. This is the Tao that cannot be spoken, but can only be experienced. Certain political people are also examples of the unspoken Tao. One is Che Guevara, a famous South American revolutionary who was a middle class doctor and dedicated his life to fighting for the peasants of his country. He believed that, surprisingly enough, the revolutionary is driven by great feelings of love. The strength of his conviction influenced a whole generation of social activists. This unique man used the privileges of his class background to fight for an ideal of equality that moved him in a very different direction from his peers. His ideals and dedication became a timespirit for social change movements all over the world.

THE TAO THAT CAN BE SPOKEN

Process workers, as Taoists, are always searching for and trying to follow the hidden Tao, the one that can't be spoken. But it is the spoken Tao, the material world of form and perception that makes up the bulk of our everyday experience. We live and die in a body that wants to eat and sleep, feels pain, wants pleasure and ease. Our bodily sense perceptions create the base from which we experience living in health, work and relationships. It all makes up the named world of the 10,000 things; the world created by the cyclical movement of the forces of yin and yang.

In Everyday Zen, Joko Beck tells us that the competition for Sixth Zen Patriarch was a verse writing contest about a mirror. The winning verse, which is the true understanding, is a koan which states that from the very beginning "there is no mirror-stand, no mirror to polish, and no place where dust can cling" (1989: 19). She goes on to explain that the paradox for us is that we have to practice Zen meditation with the verse that was not accepted as the winner. "We have to see the dust and polish the mirror; to be aware of our thoughts and actions. Only by doing so can we see what is real...we can't and won't know that unless we relentlessly polish the mirror" (19-20).

Students continually practice in order to prepare the ground for the spirit of Buddha Mind to enter. Somewhere, in that worked and fertilized soil of practice something unknown happens. "We see that we are the limitless, boundless ground of the universe, and can open into that immensity and express it. Then our whole life becomes practice, twenty-four hours a day" (5-6).

What Joko Beck says about Zen can also be said of Process Work and following the Tao. Part of the practice of Process Work is to become hunters of awareness. We study process structure, double signals and edges, channels and amplification techniques. We study other systems and philosophies such as Taoism and physics. We continually develop the second attention, learning to perceive and follow the irrational, whether it is a body feeling, a dream or fantasy, a strange movement or someone in the community that irritates us. We work on our own personal histories, burn our wood and develop metaskills as we continually study and develop the spoken Tao. This practice is our awareness training, and it is also the preparation for being able to jump in and flow with the river of change in the moments when it calls us.

Gregory Bateson, an eminent psychologist and modern thinker, defines information as, "the difference that makes a difference" (Diamond, 1989: 14). The ability to perceive this difference happens only when it matters, when the perceptual difference

corresponds to a difference in meaning (14). If the difference is not perceived there is no information. We may not be able to perceive these differences in information because our awareness skills are undeveloped or we are stuck in our personal histories and primary processes which can be frightened of difference. Perhaps we have not developed the courage and spiritual warriorship to jump in and participate with the unspoken Tao as it flows by. If we have not worked with the spoken Tao we may miss the opportunity to be enriched and rejuvenated by a connection with the unknown.

A NOTE ON FLUIDITY AND FOLLOWING THE TAO

The metaskill of fluidity is basic to following the Tao as the everchanging flow of the river twists and turns. Staying with the flow of a process can have many aspects. They can include getting wet, wading, floating, swimming, surfing the wave, going under, drowning, trusting the flow, going against the flow, getting out and drying off.

Recognizing that change has occurred and a different response is needed depends on awareness. This includes outer and inner signal awareness. For instance, inner proprioception can give strong clues about change if one can focus awareness inside. Recognizing that I feel a momentary stomach cramp that accompanies the appearance of certain people I dislike is a

MOVING BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE TAO

Another aspect of the Tao is the relationship between the unspoken Tao and the spoken Tao. In the first chapter of the Tao Te Ching, the Nameless and the Named are continually spoken of together.

Nameless the origin of heaven and earth;
Named, the mother of ten thousand things.

Therefore, always without desire,
In order to observe the hidden mystery;
Always with desire,
In order to observe the manifestations.

These two issue from the same origin,
Though named differently.
Both are called the dark.
Dark and even darker,
The door to all hidden mysteries (Chen, 1989: 51).

The nameless aspect of the Tao gives rise to all things whose manifestations are named. Both are called the dark. It is the cyclical movement between these two states, between form and formlessness throughout time which creates a continual becoming or Tao. To live in the Tao is to live in this momentary flux of experience.

It appears as though the nameless and named are two separate entities, but they are really different sides of the same coin. Chapter 2 goes on: "When all under heaven know beauty as beauty, there is then ugliness" (55). Because being and non-being give rise to each other, the opposites issue from the same ground and actually need each other to define themselves. Therefore, according to the Tao Te Ching, all beings are interdependent.

Just as beauty and ugliness are connected, so are the two Taos: the spoken and unspoken. As the seasons turning into each other, each aspect of the Tao has the seed of the other in it.

Consciousness of one brings with it consciousness of the other.

An example of this in Process Work is when someone says, "I'm trying to be good." We wonder what the "not good" is like.

There is an intimate relationship between the known identity of a person and the unknown or disavowed parts of their experience.

Amplification of the process behind a double signal brings one to the new thing, in this case, whatever is "not good" about this person. Dreaming into the not good, I imagine: doing for oneself, going more slowly or quickly than expected, being creative, taking initiative, or perhaps having a strong inner critic whose judgement is tougher than anyone on the outside. What begins as a disturbance and irritation when followed, turns out to be just what we need to become more of.

To work with one's fate in life is a practice that can be spoken about, but the hidden mystery of the dreamingbody makes its own unfathomable decisions. Arny Mindell tells a story of being a young therapist trying to get clients and not succeeding.

Finally he gave up and went skiing. He met his first client on the ski lift! As in the study of Zen, one learns and suffers through preparing oneself in a discipline with what can be spoken, and then one opens to receive what can't be spoken.

But it is not one or the other. It is each and their interconnection. As Joko Beck says above, "our whole life becomes practice" (1989: 6). There comes a time when what can and can't be said is all practice. Information comes in different channels, but it all becomes part of the mysterious and unknown dreaming process, the pattern in the background that is continually influencing our lives. It is difficult because our language forces us to speak about one and then the other, but as we progress in the river the different Taos swirl around us like whirlpools that seem separate and then connected as they move us down the river.

The one influences and is intimately connected with the other. The more skills, metaskills and experiences I work with, the more the unspoken Tao can come into my life. Working with the spoken Tao gives me the ground to pick up and flow with the unexpected. And the more I have contact with the unknown, the more able I am to stay with my awareness in any moment.

An example of the connection between the two Taos is the story of my proposal of partnership to a woman in another country and the resulting roller coaster ride in the relationship channel. My heart was caught up in the flow of the unknown spirits of the unspoken Tao and my identity had to follow. I practiced with the spoken Tao using awareness to stay with the twists and turns of the process and second attention to pick up double signals. I went over my own edges and held her to her edges. I practiced

spiritual warriorship to stay with a very challenging and often painful situation and fluidity when the process changed and I had to change with it. I also had to have a teleological perspective. Something had meaning here even though I did not know what the outcome would be.

As time passed, the different aspects of the Tao began to merge: to stay with the unknown I had to practice skills and metaskills and then, to stay with my practice depended on being pushed to it by the unknown.

As an anti-Vietnam war activist I also remember the Vietnamese people I met who had been kept in very small "Tiger Cages" by the United States military as a form of torture. It amazed me that these people could still love and forgive Americans. There was no rational reason why they should be so generous with us. It seemed to come out of nowhere and was a profound moment of a "Forgiveness That Couldn't Be Spoken!" That ability to practice forgiveness has profoundly influenced my own ability to forgive. That unspoken Tao had a big impact on my practice that could be spoken.

Like the tendencies of electrons to connect with one another in quantum physics, so the Vietnamese forgiveness connected with and influenced my own forgiveness of others. The two Taos connect with each other over and over, flowing on, into a river of tendencies of spoken and unspoken moments.

This reminds me of my big dream and the theme of this project. Our personal lives--thoughts, feelings and actions--are the nourishment for the giant raven and the global dreamingbody, the dreamlike aspect of the world that manifests empirically in our everyday experiences. The ordinary sustains the spirit of the non-ordinary.

Something special happens when we go back and forth between the two Taos. We begin to understand that our everyday experiences are sacred. Usually we don't notice this. Noticing double signals and edges and working with ourselves and others in difficult spots bring the wild, bearlike mothering of my dream to our experience. This mothering nurtures a new level of awareness and belief in our ability to follow and unfold the unknown.

BUDDHISM

As a longtime meditation practitioner I have a complex relationship to Buddhist practice. Certain aspects of the Buddhist teachings are awesome in their clarity and description of reality, such as those on non-duality and the emphasis on compassion for all beings. The Buddhist emphasis on the development of momentary awareness as the basis of meditation is fundamental to the practice of Process Work. There are other aspects I find less helpful, such as ideas about anger and other so-called "unskillful" actions or states of mind. The feminine is also put down in favor of the masculine.

Buddhism is a religious philosophy originating in India around 500 B.C. It describes the material world as illusory because it is impermanent, continually arising and passing away. This illusion is called the world of "Maya and the 10,000 things". Because we perceive reality through the senses, our minds are conditioned to notice only this sensate level of reality. We learn to believe that what is impermanent and therefore illusory is actually permanent and real which leads to great suffering. The awakening to life as it really is made possible through meditation which allows the mind to perceive beyond the senses. The goal of Buddhist practice is this awakened mind that can detach from the illusory world of the goddess Maya.

AWARENESS

The Buddhist concept of awareness teaches us to pay attention to

what is happening now, not in the past or future. It means living in the present moment and experiencing fully just what it is that is happening (Goldstein, 1976: 20). Attention to breathing, sitting, walking, eating, etc., is the training and becomes the path to the awakened mind. This mind is awake to itself all the time which provides a clarity and presence that is unusual in the everyday world.

The above description of the awakened mind could also describe the Process Work metacommunicator, a momentary state which has the detachment to see all the parts of a process. Another aspect of the use of awareness in Process Work is the ability to become aware of the double signals which are always in the background of a process.

In Working On Yourself Alone, Arny Mindell postulates a Process Work awareness principle in which the secondary process organizes itself to make us aware that it is present (1990: 123). Process Work trains us to bring that awareness forward. The development of the second attention is especially important as it brings attention to exactly what the primary process ignores, such as strange body movements, altered states and the background processes in illness and relationship or world problems. Our normal identities tend to ignore exactly those background processes in which the dreamingbody shows itself to us.

A specific aspect of this awareness training is awareness to

dreaming, that is, noticing how a dream is happening in the moment. For example, although I am a fairly peaceful person, I have violent fantasies and, as I discussed in the shamanism essay, a killer for an ally. The violence is secondary, but will be present in my double signals. Developing my awareness means bringing attention to these disavowed moments which are often subjective and irrational. This dreaming is happening all the time, but noticing it takes a special awareness, one in which my everyday self is not so interested. This is why we train the second attention.

For instance, when I am irritated in relationship, my voice rises an octave all by itself and I can become very terse. My hands slide imperceptibly to my hips and I point my finger. I can become cold and distant when I don't like what is happening. I may even throw things. These are all feeling reactions with which I don't identify. They are not me. Even as I write, I feel that I am describing someone else. Continuing to bring awareness to what the primary process sees as irrational supports the disavowed part to develop over time. My identity can begin to relate to and identify with this powerful, "not nice" part of myself as I grow and change.

A BEGINNER'S MIND

Another aspect of awareness is the development of a beginner's mind. In Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind, we learn that the beginner's mind is something special. It is innocent, free of the habits of

the expert and open to all possibilities. In Zen, the beginner's mind sees things just as they are and wonders about the unknown possibilities of life (Suzuki, 1973: 13-14). In Process Work the beginner's mind is an attitude or metaskill that is open to the unknown even if the identity and habits of a person are against the new process. This is part of a teleological perspective that brings a compassionate awareness to all experience through believing that it may lead to something meaningful.

COMPASSION

Compassion is a metaskill for awareness work. Without compassion the work can become cold, unfeeling or critical. In Buddhism the development of compassion is basic to the path of awakening. The "Bodhisatva", or the awakened one in Zen Buddhism is someone who reaches enlightenment and then, because s/he has developed so much compassion for others along the way, renounces this state of bliss in order to stay incarnated and help others become enlightened.

In the Bodhisatva compassion and awakesness are inextricably bound together. In Process Work this is a state of mind which uses its awareness to support and unfold all parts of a process, both the known and the unknown. In group work it is the concept of deep democracy which has compassion for all the parts of a group. A group facilitator practicing deep democracy brings awareness to both the identity of a group and the more disavowed parts, understanding that sustainable outcomes need all parts to be

represented.

EMPTINESS AND FORM

Non-duality is central to both Taoism and Zen Buddhism. The "Prajna Paramita" (Great Wisdom Sutra), basic to Zen practice states:

Form is not different from emptiness; emptiness is not different from form. Form is precisely emptiness; emptiness is precisely form (Watts 1957: 72).

As in the Tao Te Ching, this contradictory statement teaches that the worlds of form and emptiness are actually not separate. They are non-dual. One must understand this to perceive the world as it really is. That is why Zen theory teaches that we already have Buddha Nature. We just need to wake up and realize it. We practice meditation because duality is a fact of life for human beings and meditation supports our awareness to connect with the non-dual aspect of nature so we can wake up to becoming the non-dual creatures we really are.

Duality arises when our human consciousness names, classifies and separates experiences using logic and the rational mind. Results of this naming tendency are the dualistic concepts of good and bad and right and wrong. Since separating and categorizing are inevitable occurrences, Zen is also taught through the use of "koans", contradictory riddles that confuse the analytical mind. These riddling questions cannot be solved by consciousness, but demand instead the momentary, intuitive knowing of direct

experience (prajna) to reach the awakened, non-dual connectedness or wholeness of the Enlightened Mind.

In The Way of Zen, Alan Watts examines the dualistic and Newtonian world of illusion where all phenomena are separate. To separate we must define, make boundaries and classify experience as this or that, creating opposites. The Buddhist does not believe in the separate reality of "things". S/he sees reality as nondual. "The doctrine of maya...is saying that things, facts, and events are delineated, not by nature, but by human description and that the way we describe or divide them depends on varying points of view" (1957: 50).

In The Tao of Physics, Fritjof Capra makes the connection between the Zen teachings on non-duality and quantum physics. Scientific research has found that at the subatomic level of reality there are no basic building blocks from which consciousness seems to construct its world of dualistic perceptions and ideas. There is instead a continuous movement of patterns of energies we call matter (1983: 130-145).

EXAMPLE

My own process may be helpful as an example. In November 1994, I took the Process Work Phase II exams. I had to take three out of eight of them again. I didn't pass them. This means that, in part, I failed my exams. This is somewhat of a big deal; to fail anything in this culture is a drag. It's not something that people tend to congratulate you on. Rather, you get condolences

and "that's too bad" or "how awful!". Plus, everyone has his or her own relationship to failure and success, including complexes, bad memories, punishment and shaming.

This is my koan. In the dualistic world, how can failure be success and success be failure? As stated above, it is difficult to speak of these things because in describing them one must use language which by nature classifies and divides. There are moments when the fog of "failure" lifts and I see that passing and failing are descriptions that have no meaning in my moment to moment experience of life. They describe states about my learning only relative to others in consensus reality. If I can shift my awareness I perceive an invitation to dive into a deeper level. What was difficult and painful becomes interesting and even humorous. My mistakes, reasons for the "failure", become momentarily relativized by my own nondual attitude to the experience. These "errors" become invitations to further learning; humorous moments of "Whoops! You missed that one, hee, hee." It is "Big Mind" laughing at the messes our dual natures get us in.

The big mind of Buddhist practice has the neutrality of the Process Work metacommunicator and the compassion of the Bodhisatva in its acceptance of all experience. It is a larger spirit in the background of every individual and is therefore also comparable to aspects of the Process Work dreamingbody and the Tao.

THE WORLD OF EXPERIENCE: RECLAIMING MAYA

The goddess Maya and her veils of illusion are the world of the 10,000 things in the Buddhist and Hindu traditions. Buddhist students are taught to see through and give up Maya as we learn detachment from that world. The goal is to use the clarity of the enlightened mind to see through the veils of the conditioned mind. Maya is definitely not someone with whom a good practicing Buddhist wants to hang out. She is a second class citizen, a woman of the night who obfuscates, provides hindrances to right mindedness and basically trips up devoted students of the "dharma", the Buddhist teachings.

I see Maya differently. The Women's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets, states that Maya is the Virgin aspect of the Hindu goddess Kali, the "Great Destroyer". In her virgin aspect she is, "creatress of all things made of matter and perceptible to the senses" (Walker, 1983: 626). Ironically, she also gave birth to the Buddha. Heinrich Zimmer says, "Maya-Shakti is personified as the world protecting, feminine, maternal side of the Ultimate Being, and as such, stands for the spontaneous, loving acceptance of life's tangible reality" (1983: 626).

Maya, more earth related, is the world manifesting itself in all its diversity and possibility. The temple dancers in India were acknowledged as kinesthetic manifestations of the Goddess. I once saw a photograph of a woman dancing before the British outlawed the practice. The look of pure ecstasy and joy in her

face and in her body movement is something I have never seen before or since. There is a keen intelligence in her eyes and I imagine that she is perceiving moment to moment, her every pulsating gesture, both internal and external. This is a picture of a woman experiencing herself fully.

What is so negative about this ecstatic feminine energy from a Buddhist perspective? It calls her greed, anger and delusion; desire, hatred, restlessness and torpor. Maya and the conditioned mind is the "not me" in Buddhist teachings. It is what is done away with, gotten rid of. Although the Buddhist dharma is deep and insightful, there is an aspect that devalues the feminine and the meaning of a whole area of life experience is never unfolded. All those sensuous feminine veils are considered cheap thrills compared to the true Buddhist teachings of detachment and the "middle path".

What would Maya look like if we could live her today? With the help of channel theory my imagination fills in the blanks.

Hymn to Maya.....Oh baby, oh baby, cast your look in my direction. Let me feel your soft skin next to mine. Bring your world of the senses undiluted into the fields of my perception that I might know a fullbodied way of being. My life seems too cool and too controlled. Let me revel in the world as it manifests through you.....and, (and this makes all the difference) give me the tools, the awareness to fully appreciate your myriad ways and manifestations, for I have lived too long in a house that is not Yours and have only those old ways that no longer work for me. Give me eyes and ears with which to sense you; body sensations, movement and relationships to know your deep beauty. Then, take me out into the world that you have created so that I

might share you with others and we might go out together delighting in your creation as we perceive it anew moment to moment.

Awareness of experience is what Buddhist practice is based on, but some experiences are considered positive, i.e., loving kindness, humility and selflessness, and other experiences, such as the ones listed above in connection with Maya, are negative. Awareness is used to amplify positive experiences and to change the others. Meditation is practised to reach a state in which we are no longer affected by the so called "conditioned mind".

As an example, Steven Levine, a Buddhist teacher, has taught that anger can be a pathway to enlightenment. The awareness of the awakened mind penetrates deeply into the feeling and since nothing is solid the anger changes to something else in the loving field of our awareness. This sounds good, and it can be. But there is also a subtle non-acceptance of the emotion in the background. The path is one of change, not finding meaning in anger itself.

As a Buddhist practitioner this never worked for me. Anger is already a disavowed part of my experience so trying to give it up is like trying to give up an undeveloped ego. It is not really there to give up. Many of us, especially women, need to experience our anger and get support for it, so it is available for us to work with. I find my anger an ecstatic experience. Like the temple dancer, I use my awareness and perceive the experience of my anger as a celebration, not as a hindrance that

I must avoid to get to a more neutral middle path.

Unlike Buddhist theory, Process Work has tools to work with anger and other states of awareness to find meaning in the states themselves. I recall fighting with a friend in an open car. I got so mad that I was screaming. In those moments I was completely and congruently taking my side. I momentarily forgot that we were stopped in summer traffic and the windows were rolled down. We were suspended in time. My screaming ended the fight. Fully taking my side changed it and we had the fluidity to pick up the change and move with the next thing coming up: friendship and peace. That is true ecstasy!--dancing moment to moment with Maya!

My anger is a secondary process and needs to be unfolded. It is a different story for those whose anger is primary and have edges to peace. Perhaps Buddhism was developed to assist men, many of whom make wars that kill people and therefore need to learn to work differently with their anger. As a Process Worker I see that the Buddhist teachings have no real interest in unfolding the so-called negative experiences for themselves. Awareness is really meant to change them. But it doesn't work to disavow anger, fear, greediness, etc. Half of human experience is being cast out when the world of Maya is negated.

The Process Work attitude towards our perceptual world is that it is an exciting and mysterious place to hunt awareness, wholeness,

fluidity and power. Many kinds of experiences are celebrated. Otherwise the wholeness and liveliness inherent in truly valuing all aspects of life are never reached. Process Work takes Maya seriously in that we are taught to take experience seriously. This means meeting experience on its own terms, which can be a subtle business and not so easy as interpreting, judging and making ideas about experience before the experience itself has a chance to really unfold.

Worshipping Maya demands a paradigm that supports a teleological perspective finding meaning in all experience. Process Work provides skills and attitudes needed to work with the complex world that is the human birthright so that one can truly be devoted to following and unfolding the dreaming process. One has the chance to dance with Maya, however she appears. That dance is a form of meditation that bridges the gap between sacred and everyday experience and is another form of meditation in the world.

DANCING WITH MAYA: SPIRITUAL WARRIORS AT THE EDGE

Fully dancing with Maya requires an ability to stay at the edge of one's known world with a willingness to meet the unknown. The edge in a process encompasses both these worlds. It is where different parts of an individual, couple or group meet and process their differences. There can be some stormy weather around the edge with clouds and fog, lightening and thunder while the spirits conflict and dialogue, hammering out their relationships.

A spiritual warrior is someone who is not swamped by this strong weather, but is able, as Arny Mindell describes in In The Shaman's Body, to work with moods, illnesses and relationship problems as dreamlike events and deliberately decide to approach them in a disciplined manner (1993: 81). He goes on to say,

She senses something unknown to her and consciously decides to use her second attention to explore it. This is because she has a love for the unpredictable and the belief that whatever comes up will carry her into the adventure of becoming whole (83-87).

STAYING WITH THE UNKNOWN

I often get hypnotized at the edge by what is known, the primary process. It is so familiar and I am afraid of what is in the background, unknown and therefore, seemingly undesirable. I completely lose my second attention, the ability to stay with these background experiences. I am reminded of how Buddhism relates to Maya, disavowing what is not understood or known how

to work with, afraid of what is not controllable because there is no teleological view of the experience itself. The known is faithful and familiar, even if it is not always helpful. I also become afraid that I won't know what to do with a new pattern once I bring it out into the open. I get performance anxiety.

This can happen when working with a client at the edge. I recall working with a client's back pain. This pain felt like a giant claw was grabbing his spine and scraping it. He made the claw and even growled slightly with it. The process was right there in the movement and auditory channels to amplify and unfold. But my own fear of the unknown along with his primary identity of being a nice person kept us from going into that clawlike behavior. We went in a different direction. Ultimately, this is not beneficial for him because that pain, which was connected to a life-threatening illness, is his ally, a part of himself that if not lived will keep attacking him.

Since the unknown can be anything from uncomfortable to terrifying, going against all we know, how do we deliberately and consciously choose to follow it? This is a spiritual question because dedication to the unknown is predicated by a trust in the universe and a love for the mysterious that can only be described as spirituality. The sense of a spiritual connection is the only answer I can find to why we continually choose to pursue what is sometimes practically invisible and often so difficult. In shamanism it is an aspect of spiritual warriorship and in Process

Work it is the basis of spiritual rank.

Life gives us whacks and the patterns of our personal histories are stubborn and take time and dedication to change. As the Taoists say, "Perseverance furthers" (Wilhelm, 1967: 4). But perseverance takes the development or the good luck of spiritual rank--that belief and trust in something greater than ourselves to carry us through the storms of life. It is the spiritual warrior in each of us who has the courage to persevere in the face of personal history, hopelessness, one-sidedness and bad moods.

COOKING

In order to really dance and transform with Maya and the unknown we all go through periods of "cooking". Like the medieval alchemists, who tried to cook raw matter or base experience and turn it into gold, we heat up with the problems of life--relationship, money, health-- and cook them. Seeming obstacles to happiness and contentment rise up in our paths. Fate seems to be against us. We struggle, go against nature, feel hopeless and even plead with god or a higher authority to, "Please, get me out of here; out of this situation from which I'm trying to grow." But we persevere, sometimes trying and then not, to follow wherever the Tao is flowing.

I have created the following recipe for cooking myself:

To follow the unknown you have to stay in the pot, turn up the heat and cook. There is some bad weather. It boils up and gets really hot. You lose it, can't stand another moment of it and still stay in it; suffering at the edge, hanging on as though your life depends on it, which it does. Or maybe you jump out, cool off a bit and dive back in. It's practice. Practice with the spoken Tao, learning and building skills. But then, it's about failing, being stuck and being a wreck. Maybe something happens and maybe it doesn't. But chronic symptoms change. Breathing happens a little easier, as do bowel movements. It is a strange and awesome moment when one is a wreck and a chronic symptom gets better. This is an unspoken Tao. What it takes to live over the edge is something that can never be completely spoken!

Why do we do it when the tasks often seem so difficult? A voice, not my primary identity, answers, "What better thing to do in this lifetime?! It's short and you know you like a little excitement and something new, something more in life." My primary process answers, only a little incongruently, "All right, keep going".

The spiritual warrior is in the world to hunt power. This is a momentary state of mind that follows and dives into the unknown searching for that which is trying to be birthed. S/he has a beginner's mind that doesn't worry about outcomes and participates with seemingly difficult life experiences for the joy of discovery.

I am reminded of a single woman with advanced cancer trying to make a decision to pursue the unknown. Her primary process was self containment and conventional responsibility to a boring

job. In the background was a passionate spirit longing for deep connection with others. The unknown presented itself as a month-long personal growth workshop that would support her relationship life. Should she do it? She began worrying about her job and finances. Should she take the time off? Would it cure her cancer? But death was her ally and the attitude of a spiritual warrior was needed to drop her primary identity and pick up the ally's call to the unknown. She deliberated at the edge, going back and forth between her habitual concerns and the new possibilities her life and death were offering her. Finally, she decided to take a leave of absence from work and support her deep inner self and relationship life by attending the workshop. This gave her the support she needed to become the passionate spirit with a deep connection to others in her life.

This woman stayed incarnated to participate with the unpredictable and continue the adventures towards wholeness for which all beings seem to long.

SOCIAL ACTIVISM

The next part of this paper addresses the world channel. It will attempt to connect the Process Work concepts, skills and metaskills developed from Taoism, Buddhism and shamanism with the practice of social activism.

Traditionally, social activism means working for the rights and welfare of people who are unrepresented by their government. Movements arise to redress this inequality. They are often not supported by the mainstream. In fact, the mainstream may actively oppose them.

Examples of social change movements are: the 1960s Civil Rights movement which worked for the inclusion of African American people into American life, including the right to vote and the right to an education among others; the Anti-Vietnam War movement in which many Americans became outraged at what they saw as an unjust war waged by their government against a technically unadvanced agrarian society; the Women's Movement, created by a generation of women who could no longer live under the restrictions dictated by a mainstream male dominated society. These movements were timespirits within the global field with which we all identify. They involved activists worldwide and influenced every facet of life. As I and others became involved in these struggles for equality, new worlds of experience opened to us and expanded our awareness. A diversity of people who had different ideas changed the ways we thought and felt about life,

relationships and power. As a young white woman growing up in the 1950s and 60s I had a narrow view of the world. This rapidly changed as I became involved in movements for social change.

People of color, women, gays and lesbians, disabled people, the elderly, poor people and those who disagree with U.S. foreign policy have all become social activists to receive the recognition and/or rights that other, more mainstream groups take for granted in this society.

THE BEGINNING

My first experience as a social activist involved quiltmaking. It was my first women's support group meeting and the women were creating a large square that was to be part of a larger quilt. The squares were made by women all over the United States and were sent to Toronto, Canada to be pieced together as a presentation to a delegation of North Vietnamese women meeting with North American women. It was 1970 and we were working together to stop the American intervention in Vietnam. Even now, remembering, I begin to shiver. I feel my heart, my throat tightens and tears come to my eyes. What an amazing privilege to work with these people fighting for their freedom and with all of us who worked with and supported them. We were part of an international community; a worldwide solidarity movement.

This is a moment when the dream spirits are around. Somehow these feelings indicate that the big spirit bird is here and feeding. These feelings and actions are food, nourishment for the spirit. Does it also mean that the wild mothering

is here too? I think so. It was the height of the Vietnam War and the beginning of the Women's Movement. A whole generation of young people erupted with energies that stopped "business as usual" and changed the entire world. We were standing for an equality that until then had been reserved for wealthy, white, Protestant, heterosexual men. We were parenting the whole world.

My early political involvement included working with the Catholic Left and the American Friends Service Committee which meant an inherent feeling of spiritual commitment. The Women's Movement was gathering steam. I joined the quilt making support group, began working at a women's center, became an abortion and birth control counselor, went to many business and educational meetings and became progressively more involved. We started a women's press, a film co-op, a women's group against the war, supported union drives and women on welfare. We studied Marx and Mao, learned about sexism and racism. We became Internationalists supporting people, and especially women fighting for their freedom, all over the world. Our slogans bespoke our beliefs: "Our Bodies, Our Selves", "The Personal Is Political", "Free Our Sisters, Free Ourselves", "Women Hold Up Half The Sky". I was moved by a feeling deep down inside me about right and wrong. Plus, there was so much energy and life had been so boring before.

As time went on I worked in the women's movement and the international solidarity movement supporting under and above ground social change. We became revolutionary, Marxist and anti-spiritual, supporting the Central American peoples in their

wars with the United States, the South African anti-apartheid movement and the anti-nuclear movement among others. I became involved in larger organizations, did more teaching and networking and created more demonstrations and outreach. But, as time passes, everything changes. Problems and conflicts arose in the social activist scene that have never been adequately addressed. There were some amazing and fortuitous moments that got many of us turned on as social activists, but in the long term we need much more to create sustainability and survive as spiritual activists.

DIFFICULTIES AND PROCESS WORK APPROACHES

THE ENEMY OUTSIDE

As young social activists we thought we knew who the enemy was. It was the military industrial complex, the government and the multinationals, white supremacists, the ruling class. It was capitalism and patriarchy. It is true that power is often used irresponsibly by those possessing global and social rank, but knowing that and fighting against it hasn't brought us any closer to the vision of longlasting change towards which we saw ourselves working.

In fact, because activists have traditionally seen ourselves as representing only one side, that of the minority against the majority, we have oriented our vision and strategies towards fighting the enemy on the other side. This has worked to a point, but has not proved sustainable over time. We have become

defined by our reaction to that enemy, both by ourselves and by others outside of social activism. This limits our goals and visions and locks us into a smaller framework in which creative self definition becomes more difficult.

Process Work suggests ideas and strategies that can broaden the vision of social activism as well as empower its capacity to creatively redefine its own identity. Deep democracy's compassionate concern for representing all the roles in a field is one of those ideas.

Social activism is an important part of the world channel. It is the part that is willing and able to stand up for a disavowed minority position. Activists will put themselves on the line for their beliefs and commit to a struggle with the mainstream. There is also the danger of becoming attached to this role and ignoring the others. In Process Work the social activist is only one position in the global field. When applying the concept of deep democracy the entire field of a movement is considered. Continual one-sidedness is not sustainable because all roles in a conflict must be represented so dialogue can happen. This is true even if some parties refuse to come to the table. The missing role must still be represented and worked with, so fluidity, the ability to represent different roles in a field, is needed. As holographic theory states, every part of a field contains the whole of that field within itself and whatever happens outside the group will also happen inside. In other

words, the enemy outside is also present inside the group, in the relationships within the group and inside the individual members of the group.

I imagine what it would look like if we could expand our field awareness in this manner. For instance, an anti-imperialist group could represent that "enemy" in its meetings. The imperialist or tyrant would not just be outside the group, but would be a role that was worked with among ourselves, recognizing its presence in each of us and between us in our relationships. Perhaps someone would use her awareness and consciously pick up the role, congruently becoming tyrannical about her beliefs with other members. The whole group could momentarily admit that they were not always just working for social justice, but sometimes felt revengeful and would like to be imperialist towards the "enemy" if it were possible. These different choices add to the creativity in a group and build sustainability as a complete awareness of the roles in a field allows that field to more completely work with itself and come to new relationship and community.

Therefore working with a role anywhere in a field affects the entire field. It can even have an effect on the role of the enemy outside the group. Arny Mindell reports that working with racial conflict in an Oakland, California seminar may have influenced the field of the entire city. Riots that were occurring in Los Angeles at the time were expected to spread to

Oakland. They did not (Mindell, 1995: 64).

LEADERSHIP STRUGGLES

The leadership struggles in social activist groups are partly related to seeing the enemy we are fighting outside ourselves as possessing all the power. Power is then considered bad and the social activist ethic of equality and consensus is considered good. Unfortunately, leadership in such groups is therefore often implicit and unacknowledged, and building explicit leadership is ignored. Though social activists see themselves as radically different from the mainstream, most groups become implicitly hierarchical. People who work hard are often the decision makers, but charisma can also put someone in the forefront of a group or a movement. Activist groups can become hotbeds of competition, egotism and revenge tactics with people blaming each other, but not taking responsibility for their own actions. Competition over theoretical dogma and the demand for political correctness also splinters groups and communities. Though the actual splits are often in the leadership, everyone suffers from the chaos as the energy that goes into leadership intrigue becomes less available for the actual work.

For instance, in a Central America solidarity group in which I worked one charismatic man always ended up in the middle of every visible project the group worked on, but would not take responsibility or identify with his leadership. Other members became frustrated as he implicitly began to control everything

around him. As a result the group got smaller and smaller until he and a few friends were the only ones left working in it.

Process Work Ghosts and Roles

Like the enemy, the leader is a role in the group field. If it is not explicit it becomes a ghost role which is an unconscious spirit in the background influencing everyone in the group. Everyone identifies as equal, but behind this is the actual leadership disturbing the group. Representing the ghost role enables the group to work with this behavior explicitly rather than as a background phenomenon which influences everyone, but with which no one can fully grapple.

Role theory also states that a role is bigger than any one person and needs many people to fill it out. A person is also more than one role and can occupy different positions in a group. With the understanding that leadership is fluid, different people can occupy the role at different times. This also creates the awareness to work with processes, such as competition, that may accompany leadership issues.

COMPETITION

Process Work recognizes competition as a process to be explored and unfolded. Individually, a feeling of competition for leadership may be a signal that there is an edge to bringing out one's leadership and a person needs to believe in herself and do it more. If there is always competition in a group it can mean that one or more members are too identified with the leadership

role and need to share it. Continued competition may also signal a lack of eldership in a group; not enough caring for all the different parts of the group's field. Groups need leaders, as well as elders whose concern is the total well-being of a group's atmosphere.

HOPELESSNESS AND BURN-OUT

Holding a social activist position is a challenge to maintain over time because social activism is not supported by the mainstream. The commitment to the vision or high dream of freedom must be strongly held. This necessary strength of conviction can put social activists in a trance, with many thinking that nothing more is needed when it comes to problems with others or with oneself. Somehow the dreams are assumed to carry us through the hard times, disagreements, power struggles and disappointments. The other polarity becomes depression and thinking that change isn't happening. Many people drop out of social activism for this reason. Also, people entranced by a high dream tend to overcommit and then burn out. There is little pay and always more work to be done. Hopelessness or a low dream can result and many social activists leave behind what has been an important part of their dreams for a better world.

Process Work as a Bridge

The Process Work concept of "high and low dreaming" brings a non-dual awareness to the momentary states which continually swing between these two polarities. Realizing each is relative

to the other and therefore inseparable, Process Work provides a bridge between the two states by conceptualizing the ebb and flow of dreaming, putting both idealism and hopelessness into a context of change (conversation with Emetchi, 1995).

The high dream is one's highest vision or hopes for a group. When these hopes are not realized the low dream, connected to one's past disappointments and hurts, comes into play. Often, we are not aware of this dreaming and get stuck in either the high or low dream unable to complete either one. An awareness of where one is in the moment is important and can help completion of these states.

For example, I imagine my own high dream of freedom. I see people working and playing together in a city with parks, childcare and clean air. People of all colors, sexes and ages mix. Jobs have learning apprenticeships and work decisions are not only based on profit, but also on employing people who need work. Profits are shared more equally. People have flex time to do community work. The media uses its power to support community life. This city is part of a worldwide network of communities sharing technology and learning together.

The dream could go on, but I notice that I begin to think about how irresponsible the media is; how it titillates with sound bites and violence that sells. I begin feeling angry and cynical about capitalism's greed, including the raises the U.S.

congress recently gave itself, while the cities slide into more disrepair. I remember that the gap between rich and poor is widening and the environment is being destroyed. I notice that I begin to get hopeless about change. I remember that the U.S. government will reduce health care funding, but not its military budget. I am now in my low dream.

Just as the seasons change into one another, so does our dreaming. In fact, like the seasons, each aspect of high and low dreaming has the seed of the other in itself. A momentary awareness allows us to pick up the double signal that is the harbinger of change. In the above example noticing my contradictory thoughts about the media was that momentary change. I was identified with my highest hopes for the future, but at the same time was moving on to the low dream. Process Work supports the awareness to stay with the continuing river of change that is the Tao.

Stuck at the Edge

When we go over edges processes complete themselves and change happens. But when we get stuck at an edge a trance develops; we space out, lose awareness and can't pick up any signals, inside or outside. For instance, we all have edges to believing in our high dreams. Western culture generally supports the material world over the ideal and creates a consensus reality that puts down dreaming. As a result, we have edges to completing our high dreams and then sink into a mild background depression that

creates hopelessness and bad feelings. Without an awareness of this process we can get stuck in the low dream which is fed by the past hurts and disappointments of our personal histories. We naturally swing between the different momentary states, but need the ability to identify edges and navigate around and through them. Process Work maps the territory of dreaming and provides the needed awareness skills to find our way.

If I am in an activist group, but not in touch with my high dream of freedom I will eventually get hopeless. If I realize that I am hopeless, instead of just getting depressed or blaming others, I have the choice of working with my edges and standing for the high dream or really completing the low dream. Having the skills to follow my high and low dreaming as it naturally ebbs and flows into one polarity and then the other enables me to stay connected with the vision that sustains my activism and weather the low dreams which also naturally occur. This awareness acknowledges the everchanging process of the momentary Tao and enriches my own activist experiences.

WORKING WITH CONFLICT AND RANK ISSUES

As described above in the example of working with the role of the enemy, social activists generally have not been able to see that the obvious abuse of rank a movement is fighting outside itself also happens inside the movement. It is false thinking to assume that social activists are not susceptible to struggles around race, sex, class, homophobia and leadership. Ranking occurs everywhere, and because we haven't acknowledged it within our movements there are continual struggles for power, organizational splits and public backbiting.

Social activists are continually accused of excluding people of color, gay people and poor people. Women, though very present in these movements, accuse men of sexism. Theoretically any social activist could speak for all these issues, but being able to work with one's own attitudes, actions and feelings is difficult. As a result the movements suffer.

There are numerous examples of the inability to struggle around different rank issues. In 1994, "Act Up: San Francisco", an AIDS activist group, had 300 members and split over the inability to struggle around racism within the group. In Yearning: race, gender, and cultural politics, Bell Hooks calls attention to the fact that white feminist writers criticize black male writers more often than they criticize white male writers (1992: 66). Recently, the male head of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), one of the oldest civil

rights organizations in the U.S., was accused and fired for sexual harassment.

RANK, CONFLICT AND THE GLOBAL DREAMINGBODY

At the center of social life lie a multitude of turbulent, conflicting fields that are structured by tensions between minority and majority groups...Since fields are always changing and evolving we must process these tensions as if the field itself were trying to express itself. Conflict in a group is an attempt by the timespirits or momentary roles to confront, conflict with, and know one another (Mindell,1993: 23-24).

The global dreamingbody is a mysterious architect that patterns all of group life and expresses itself through us. Process Work connects this spiritual background process with the real conflicts of the timespirits. It is empowering to locate oneself in this larger drama. Without this perspective the conflicts around difference are just difficult and painful. To see oneself as part of a spiritual dimension of awesome proportions in which timespirits are battling it out in search of relationship and global community can give one the ability to persevere. Process Work suggests ways to work with situations in which rank and power are present with a focus on sustainable outcomes. The belief is that when awareness is brought to these awesome conflicts a deepening of experience will result.

SPIRITUAL WARRIORSHP AND RANK

When a rank issue comes up it can be a difficult moment and a call to everyone's spiritual warriorship. There are often intense feelings, accusations, counter accusations and rigidity

which all belong in a confusing and painful soup. For instance, when heterosexuals are challenged by lesbians or gay men to acknowledge their privileges vis a vis their global and social rank they are also spiritually challenged to work with their own anger, guilt or victimization which often comes up when one is confronted around privilege.

It requires a courageous attitude and self love to take responsibility for oneself in a difficult moment. The spiritual warrior has rank because she trusts in the inherent value of processing the interaction and takes it upon herself to support others in this direction even though she knows there may be a boiling over of tensions, difficulties and pain. She realizes that staying with the tensions will create more understanding and community in the long run. Spiritual warriors with less global rank are willing to be vulnerable and put themselves on the line; to face the ignorance and arrogance of the majority position; to risk being misunderstood or taken advantage of again. An example of this kind of spiritual warriorship is related in the essay, "Process Oriented Worldwork", in which a sub-group of African American people is able to lovingly challenge and work with itself in the midst of a predominantly white group.

A spiritual warrior is challenged to draw on her spiritual rank and use that rank for the growth of the entire field. She realizes that impossible people and situations are allies that make life exciting and full. She also knows that these energies

contain a piece of her own wholeness and are therefore needed by the field. The spiritual warrior develops second attention and skills to meet and unfold these energies.

CELEBRATING PRIVILEGE

The awareness of privilege connected to rank is important in conflicts pertaining to difference. We are usually taught to feel guilty about our privileges and therefore disavow them, especially when faced with others of less privilege. For instance, relative to people of color, a white person may have a higher academic education or in daily life, be able to shop without being followed. It is tempting to believe that these have nothing to do with privilege and so, separate oneself from one's global rank. The awareness that privilege is a gift to be celebrated changes one's relationship to rank. Privilege is no longer something to hide or hoard, but to enjoy and share. Just as guilt causes a closing down, celebration creates an openness. This changes the feeling atmosphere around privilege and makes one more open to standing for and sharing privileges (Mindell, 1995: 72).

DOUBLE SIGNALS

In the section on Process Work, I mentioned how human beings send a multitude of signals, some we identify with and some we don't. People send a lot of double signals around rank because many of us are not used to identifying with rank and privilege. But it is clear to others who don't have global, social, psychological

or spiritual rank and are at the receiving end of these double signals, what the privileges are. For instance, feeling good about oneself and putting down another's depression by lack of interest is the unconscious use of psychological rank. It sends a subtle message that the other is not together psychologically. Thinking that education has nothing to do with rank puts down those who don't have the rank to obtain higher schooling. Assuming everyone can get married is a background assumption of heterosexual privilege that puts down those who can't get married.

The unconscious double signals of rank separate people and create conflict. When we work with our double signals, the hidden content of our interactions, we are working on all the world's issues (Mindell, 1995: 69). In other words, working with a feeling reaction or a subtle moment of an interaction can change the world. As in the beginning dream of this paper, our everyday experiences feed the absolutely awesome, transpersonal aspect of nature. Building our awareness of rank signals mothers the whole field and creates the facilitation needed to process the hidden spirits in conflict.

THE METASKILL OF ELDEERSHIP

The elder in each of us understands that the field speaks through all of us. This means an elder will join another who is alone in a difficult or painful position because s/he realizes that a role

is bigger than one person and it is up to everyone to support the dreamingbody of a group. The elder has the patience to sit with a hot conflict and support the slow and often painful unfolding of each side's position as a dialogue develops between the seemingly separate polarities of a timespirit. Eldership is the metaskill that creates a strong pot in which the conflicts and tensions surrounding rank issues can simmer and cook to create the rich stew of community.

WORKING WITH RACISM

Racial prejudice is so painful. People are used, put down and excluded by institutions and in everyday interactions, because of skin color. Even though many people are liberal, open thinkers and believe in equality and freedom for all, we don't really know how to process our relationships when they heat up around racism.

This essay further explores working with difference, specifically in a Process Work seminar situation. I describe my own experience and learning as I and others struggle to process the tensions and conflicts that are part of the timespirit of racism. This was a seminar in which the group's participants split up by gender to work as women and men with each other. Out of sixty women, four are women of color, who challenge the rest of the group to work with ourselves and our ignorance about rank and white skin privilege.

As the seminar progressed, we tried to work with the conflicts that arose. The work was exciting and also chaotic, painful and frustrating. The predominantly mainstream group had come prepared for a personal growth seminar, not to work on racism. As a result most women were silent and the process centered on those of us who tried to stay in the soup with the women of color.

Most women present are white and middle-class. They have little

experience working with racial difference which is indicative of mainstream privilege. This privilege includes the ability to ignore racism. As middle-class whites we can avoid working with racism because we can live, work, shop and send our kids to schools where most people are also white and middle-class and difference doesn't immediately impact our lives.

MISSING THE EDGE

As I watched a video tape of the seminar, I saw us miss the edge in confronting racism again and again. A woman spoke of her fear of black women. We didn't support her to go into what she was afraid of. A European woman said racism was not her issue. We weren't able to challenge her disinterest. Our inability to process the information behind the fear or lack of interest caused chaos. The women of color understandably became irate. The group polarized with accusations and counter-accusations. We were in the conflict.

A process escalates when information isn't picked up and the edge is missed. Even though many of the white women are experienced process workers and have expert awareness skills we do not get the message. Racism isn't information. We are in a consensus reality hypnosis that takes these statements for granted and lets them go by. White skin privilege allows us this oversight. There is no "difference that makes a difference". As explained above, the mainstream can insulate ourselves from the minority experience. We don't need to notice what is different since it

has no effect on us. We are even surprised and confused when confronted with difference.

This is a rank issue. I see that the majority of mainstream women at this seminar do not seem interested in processing the conflict. But I cannot exclude myself from awareness around rank. As an African American woman reported:

If a white person and a black person are walking down the street together and as a white you think that you're having the same experience as the black person that is racism!

This is new information to me. I have a privilege induced perceptual hole. I want to believe that it is possible for us to ignore the difference. This is possible for me, the white woman with privilege, but it is not possible for this black woman. She lives with the difference imposed on her by white culture every day. I need to celebrate my white skin privilege and then take responsibility for it. This means educating myself around difference, entering into diverse situations where white skin is not necessarily in ascendancy and daring to work with conflict.

At this seminar it becomes clear that most of the women are not familiar with conflict. For many the silence seems almost trancelike. In general, white culture does not support sitting in chaos and confusion and we have no pattern for working with these situations. Part of the time the women of color have center stage and are confronting us with racist images with which they must deal daily. They are having fun doing it. It is painful and funny at the same time. I am in awe of these women

and at the same time feel powerless, frustrated and finally hopeless, a state which people of color experience all the time. The tables are turned. As whites we feel powerless, have lost our awareness and are swimming in the soup.

REVENGE

The women of color are responding to the white mainstream culture of the seminar with humor and sarcasm. Although funny in the foreground, sarcasm is a form of humor with a stinging double signal in the background. The women of color are sitting in a mostly white group that is overtly racist and not able to work with itself. Revenge in the form of stinging sarcasm is a reasonable option in this situation because the mainstream position is using its rank and privilege unconsciously.

Minority groups resort to revenge as the only means available to call attention to injustice. In this instance, making fun of racist white stereotypes embarrasses liberal whites. Revenge is a momentary "wake-up call" to become aware of the abuse of rank (Mindell, 1995: 76). It is also important to remember that those with rank often use their power as revenge towards others of lesser rank. Examples of revenge include: not reacting, storming out, depression, creating coalitions, hatred, rage or violence.

THE GHOST

The racist is a ghost in the field. It is so difficult for white liberals to pick up this role. We are terrified to admit that we

are racist. It is painful and politically incorrect. But if we don't identify with that privilege, the burden of proof is again left on the minority. "Without this awareness the whole field is full of victims and there is no mainstream to work on"

(conversation with Jytte Vikkelsoe: July, 1993). Therefore, it is the responsibility of those with rank to pick up the role so that the field can get to know itself. Making oneself vulnerable and identifying with one's rank takes the courage of a spiritual warrior. Deep democracy honors all the parts. If the racist is a ghost, it influences the whole atmosphere of the field from the background. It would have relieved everyone if someone could have momentarily filled out that role. Ultimately, since no one did, the process could never complete.

THE DOUBLE EDGE

When groups are in conflict each side will get to an edge, that is, will be blocked in the communication of something that is trying to come up. The facilitators must help both sides get through these blocks or the process won't be complete. In this situation, the minority group came forth and went over its edge to speak out, but the majority was not able to go over its edge to respond, so the whole group felt incomplete. The majority couldn't pick up the ghost role of the racist, nor could it fully stand for its own position of privilege.

When working with minority/majority differences the double edge is especially important. After the minority side comes out, if

the majority side is not also supported, it can use its privilege to leave the scene and not return. Picking up the racist ghost role is one part of this process; paying attention to the possible majority backlash is another. This backlash is the mainstream's politically incorrect response to the disturbances it must endure from marginalized groups. To create sustainable outcomes the double edge must be addressed (Mindell, 1995: 209).

RACISM AND HOMOPHOBIA

When the group of men and women came back together, one of the young black women suggested that the whole group focus on the gay issue which had not yet been addressed, but as she spoke she simultaneously made a homophobic remark. There was a lot of tension in the atmosphere and she was challenged to work on the issue of homophobia.

SOCIAL ACTIVISM VS THE TAO

This posed a problem for me as a social activist. This mainly white group had tried unsuccessfully to pick up the role of the racist. As a result, the women of color were left holding the whole process around racism. It was the same old story: white folks falling back on our mainstream privileges and not showing up to take responsibility for racism. Whites hadn't picked up our own edge to working on racism and now we wanted a black woman to take responsibility for homophobia. It seemed to be more white racism. Plus, as often happens, minorities would conflict with each other while the mainstream, who has bigger edges to

conflict, safely watches from the outside.

But seen from a Taoist perspective, the African American woman has the right to work on her homophobia. After all, The Tao chose her to make the homophobic remark. The Tao is a neutral force and doesn't necessarily choose the politically correct person for its work. From this standpoint, supporting the woman not to work on homophobia interferes with the flow of what's happening in the field.

A social activist position may feel it is protecting a minority by giving it support against the mainstream, but the whole is not being supported. This woman should have the chance to grow and develop as much as a white person. It becomes patronizing and therefore racist to prevent a minority group from working on its homophobia. To a social activist the minority person may seem to need protection. In looking at all parts in the field, minority positions are simply parts that need to work on themselves as much as the white majority. (From Arny Mindell's lecture, 1992)

This is an awesome and confusing moment for me as a social activist. As with a meditation koan, paradigms are clashing and I can barely see through the fog that surrounds me. I feel thrown into a reality that goes against my basic ideas about the power and responsibility of rank. No landmarks exist at the edge of my known world. Following the Tao demands a fluid leap into the unknown. This is a moment of non-duality and the unspoken Tao. If I take the leap, I think, "How amazing to perceive

working on one of the -isms as a right and not something about which to feel bad or guilty. It is as though the chance to work on one's homophobia, racism or sexism could be celebrated instead of lamented as politically incorrect." I realize that the Tao has a much deeper vision than that of a social activist perspective and is deeply democratic in its embrace of all experience.

A momentary awareness follows the Tao. Working with double signals and edges, doing inner work, becoming spiritual warriors, picking up the ghost roles, are all aspects of the spoken Tao. Then comes the moment to catch the unspoken Tao and follow the unknown.

AWARENESS AND ENTROPY

Developing the awareness to work with rank issues seems a matter of life and death. It feels that important to bring consciousness to this aspect of our relationships in the world, because the unconscious use of rank is so damaging to its victims. It is also because this unconsciousness is a kind of death in terms of the life it doesn't allow to live.

In physics, the second law of thermodynamics states that in every physical situation some energy will become lost or unavailable for the future if a system is closed to outside interaction. This results in "entropy", the complete loss of useful energy which would eventually lead to the self-destruction of the planet

through a form of heat death (Mindell, 1992: 144). This is a metaphor that speaks to the serious need for open, interactive systems.

Awareness is the key. It opens the door of a system and keeps it open for all the roles to come in and out and interact. This means the polarities of the timespirits are in contact with one another. Awareness of all the parts in a field allows the conflicts between these polarities to emerge and be processed. A system is healthy when awareness is present to support this conflict, a natural interaction style between polarities. This is the goal of the awareness that Process Work brings to the field of social action and working with difference.

FOLLOWING NATURE, THE UNKNOWN AND ALTERED STATES IN GROUP PROCESS

Shamans traditionally live in a world of spirits, using their second attention to follow mysterious, non-linear forces that may not be part of ordinary reality. Whether hunting their own power or healing others, they follow these seemingly unknown energies for the benefit of the larger community to which they belong.

In Process Work we also train ourselves to follow the mysterious and the unknown. We learn to use the second attention to catch double signals and follow the Tao; learn to open the beginner's mind to the unknown; practice spiritual warriorship which puts us at the edge of our known world, knowing that death is ultimately watching us. As an important aspect of deep democracy, we also learn to value and support the unknown in altered states of consciousness.

A DIFFERENT LEVEL OF INTERACTION

The western intellectual tradition, based in a causal and therefore linear framework, has traditionally under-valued altered states. It generally lacks the teleological perspective needed to follow and unfold what it does not already understand or control. Another view is:

Wherever we come together, what indigenous people call the "dreaming process" is present. In this altered state of consciousness, fantasies, intuitions and insights can be noticed right along side today's problems. When these are expressed...the atmosphere changes and amazing solutions appear (Mindell, 1995: 186).

What an indigenous shaman perceives in the dreaming spirits is

the unspoken Tao; it is a moment when the frolicing bears of my original dream are present. Play is one of many disavowed or non-ordinary state of awareness in western culture. It has been relegated to children and week-long summer vacations; because it is so disavowed it has become, for many, an altered state. This means that it can have potentially important information for our primary identities. In group process non-ordinary states can be particularly helpful, especially at stuck moments when other, more linear, ordinary means of communication fail.

As in my dream, "play" or non-ordinary reality has a serious role to fulfill. It provides needed altered states in impossible situations; new and helpful possibilities in seemingly unsolvable conflicts.

Arny Mindell has remarked that in an open forum, group process becomes a place for history's unsolved problems (July 1993 lecture). Global timespirits such as race and gender create strong conflicts and groups can get stuck in the polarizations of these timespirits. Edges to awareness or attitudes that could bring a momentary resolution may be too great. There may be so much hurt, abuse and anger that one or both sides cannot change in the moment. Ghost roles may be too far in the background of everyone's consciousness to access. Perhaps, as in the case of war, the field of the outer world situation is so polarized it does not allow the roles in the microcosm of a group process to interact and change. When this happens in a group the field may

provide a different level of interaction involving altered states of consciousness that allow the timespirits to express themselves in non-ordinary ways.

ELDERSHIP AND SECOND ATTENTION FOLLOW THE UNKNOWN IN NATURE

Deep democracy is the metaskill that supports all parts and states in a group. The elder is living deep democracy when she uses her awareness to support states which consensus reality may ignore, ridicule or even punish. Altered states are non-linear, often non-verbal expressions of the field. The elder realizes that nature sends these strange, mysterious packages that need attention and unfolding to be made useful.

Second attention is the special awareness an elder uses to follow the river of the unknown dreaming process. This awareness receives the non-ordinary signals and information that are sent to us by the dreaming field surrounding a group. "An elder is a channel for information pouring from the vast potential of nature into the moment in everyday life" (Mindell, 1995: 190).

The birds and bears of my original dream are present in the moment. They are dreaming symbols of the potential of Nature. They are Nature. When we think we are stuck Nature is around us all the time if we can only be present with Her. It is our job to become channels for Her great wisdom which manifests in the unknown and strange moments of group process. Surely, this is the unfolding dance of Maya.

A PERSONAL NOTE ON SHIFTING PARADIGMS TO FOLLOW THE UNKNOWN

Process Work is predicated on a belief in the unknown, the mysterious, that which disturbs or may seem ridiculous. It

believes in and follows the momentary flow of events which is continuously changing, (see, "A Note On Fluidity" in the essay, The Tao That Can Be Spoken). This belief in the unknown moment is not something that comes easily to me. It demands that I make a paradigm shift.

I began studying Process Work when I was in my mid forties, already steeped in the state oriented, causal framework of the western intellectual tradition mentioned above. I want to convey to the reader the difficulty of making the required paradigm shift into a process, rather than a state oriented approach; a non-causal, field oriented approach rather than a causal one. It goes against all our traditional training, both personal and social; though I have been studying Process Work and working with myself and others for the past seven years in a very concentrated way, it is still not easy for me to naturally think in a process-oriented manner. Rather, I am like a person learning to think and feel in a second language. I am continuously translating inside myself; reminding myself to be open to double signals; not get hooked by trying to solve the primary presenting problems. I try to remember that even though the person or group seems more interested in problem solving the gold lies elsewhere: in the unknown. This means trusting what I cannot see, but can feel. It also means continuous openness to and belief in the mysteries in the background of every process.

The following are two examples of altered states influencing the

outcomes of difficult, chaotic large group processes.

THE GHOST OF SUFFERING

I recall a Process Work seminar in Oakland, CA whose focus was the timespirit of racism. During one of the group processes a strong conflict erupted between an African American man and a white man. The white man made racist comments, but could not admit that he could possibly say such things. He was confronted again and would not back down. The group became impatient when he did not cross this edge and the process repeated itself with no change in the outcome. Other people, both African American and white, began to yell into the center, the process escalated and then chaos broke out. Many people were screaming all at once. The whole group was stuck at a difficult and painful edge.

Suddenly, from someplace outside the main interaction, came a very different sound. It was a loud howling moan that continued on and on. Everyone stopped yelling at each other and this mournful howling became the only sound in the room. It soon turned to deep sobbing. People quietly began to move towards the mourning African American man whose outpouring of feeling had now shifted the entire mood of the group. Everyone became silent as we let the sadness of this man's response to our desperate situation penetrate into each of us. People began to form a cluster around him and eventually a large part of the group came together held by the focus of his deep feeling state.

He was crying out that his pain was the pain of everyone present. His heartfelt tears were meant to represent everyone's suffering from having been repressed and having repressed others for so long, from being unconscious of privileges and racism, from being unheard and unseen (Mindell, 1995: 162).

Arny Mindell explains that the real expression of suffering and pain had been missing in that conflict (163). This man was a momentary channel for the ghost of suffering to enter him and express itself in the group, which was needed in order for the group to express its wholeness.

Altered states are deeply felt messages from the spirits of the group field trying to come through to us. They are magnets that pick up the charge in the field. In this case we see that the field expressed its pain in a state that was different from the more primary state of anger. Often, we don't understand altered states. They may seem embarrassing and illogical; don't go with our consensus reality, but can hold a new direction. They are our fate; the Tao moving through us.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF AN ALTERED STATE COMPLETING A PROCESS

The scene was a large group open forum. We had been processing the difficult relationship and rank scene between women and men for two days. This included women's anger at men and men trying to communicate between themselves about their own thoughts and feelings. Accusations were traded back and forth. Again, there was much anger and pain in the room. The group was now focusing on rape and the abuse of women. Women took center stage and

spoke eloquently and painfully of their suffering; men were mostly silent and listening. The room had already cycled through many feelings and states including rage, sobbing, apologies, the chaos of many things happening at once, speaking out and listening and analyses of the problem. The atmosphere was heavy and it seemed, at times, that the problems were too overwhelming for the group to come to any kind of momentary resolution.

As a woman was speaking, a small rhythmical sound, a staccato whimpering could barely be heard from a back corner of the room. As she was given more space, we could see a small, young woman standing and making these involuntary sounds. As Arny Mindell worked with her, supporting and unfolding the sounds, she lay down and the sounds became louder and more forceful. The attention of the entire group, about three hundred people, was with her as the symbolic laboring birth of a baby came through her! Her altered state birthed something for the whole group. She said very little, but her entire state changed to one of joy as she smiled shyly out to the group from her birthing position.

Through her altered state, this woman was processing the inexpressible; the agony of the global timespirit of sexism and the relationship field between men and women. The field chose her as a channel to express its mystery, transforming the pain and hopelessness of that group's field into a new birth and a momentary resolution to a very difficult field of interaction.

It is the elder's love of deep democracy that allows him to follow and unfold these dream-like, transpersonal states and put them at the service of the group (Mindell,1995: 186).

Sustainability is created in the honoring of all the parts, including not only the different polarities in the field, but also the non-ordinary states that are channeled by the field to the group. For example, when we were able to focus on the non-ordinary feeling state in the first case or unfold the symbolic birthing process in the second case, conflict resolved in a mysterious way.

The openness of Process oriented worldwork to the spirits in the field changes the range of possibilities open to worldworkers. We not only rely on ourselves and our knowledge, but also on the spirits that surround every group, which are ready and available to be part of any sustainable worldwork team.

A SOCIAL ACTIVIST CONSIDERS DEEP DEMOCRACY

The concept of deep democracy realizes everyone is needed to represent reality and supports all the roles in a group's field, even roles that social activists tend to fight. Deep democracy is needed to be truly open to following the Tao, but supporting everyone makes deep democracy a challenging view for a social activist.

In The Leader As Martial Artist, Arny Mindell writes,

One side never wins alone in human systems. There are no sustainable solutions in which one person or spirit represses another. There are no permanent conflict resolutions, therefore a viable worldwork must show the existence and value of all sides and also allow us to appreciate and live each side as it arises, one after the other. It is a deeper democracy that respects not only each part but also its capacity to make us whole (1992: 150).

In 1992, the Oregon Citizens Alliance (OCA), a right wing, fundamentalist Christian group, put a referendum on the state ballot that tried to stop all government funding for anything that mentioned the words, gay or lesbian, including library books, teachers and health forums. Had it passed, the referendum would have basically taken away First Amendment rights guaranteed by the Constitution for anyone with a gay or lesbian life-style. The OCA is considered "the enemy" by social activists.

The following is an imaginary inner dialogue between an elder and a social activist in which the concept of deep democracy is both supported and questioned. It is entitled:

CAN A SOCIAL ACTIVIST SUPPORT THE OCA TO SPEAK AND NOT BE CRAZY?

Elder: Deep Democracy says that we need to work with all the parts to be whole, both in ourselves and in a group.

Social Activist: "NO!", a voice inside yells. "Not the OCA. They already have too much power. We have to defeat them."

E: But they are part of the field. You know that ecologically we can't throw anything away any more. It just floats around in the atmosphere causing acid rain and putting holes in the ozone. We have to work with everything. Where do we start but here?

SA: But it goes against everything we've worked for. They would rather kill you than talk to you, much less let you be free to choose your partner. They stand for hate and they are fascists.

E: You're right. But it is better to have it out in the open than underground. People can see and hear and react to each other. Real people can dialogue about real thoughts and feelings. You are being too self-centered. The field needs this interaction. How will the world become more conscious if we repress everyone with whom we disagree?

SA: How do you know that this is going to work? Social activists have a plan. We create organizations and demonstrations. We have contingency plans if things change. You don't seem to be going anywhere.

E: This is partly true. Deep democracy is based in Taoism which

believes in and follows what is happening in the moment. It doesn't plan for an outcome, but follows the unknown. And then, it doesn't get stuck in an outcome that doesn't happen. I don't know exactly how it will work. It appears to be a completely different theory and paradigm. But it is moved by a spirit that supports freedom for all people and parts of people. And it takes "all" a step further to mean even the people who are acting as oppressors. That is radical! More radical than social activists ever imagined. The theory says we need the "other" for our own wholeness; we can't get along without it. That is almost too much even for me, the defender of this new approach. But I do know about the holographic aspect of fields and experience. If it's out there in the atmosphere then it's also going on in each of us and we need to pick it up, difficult as it may be. There may even be a little OCA spirit in you. It means working with all the parts, not just the ones that are acceptable to you as a social activist.

SA: Are you saying that deep democracy supports homophobia?

E: That is a good question. The field is neutral and as we saw in the essay on racism, can appear politically incorrect. "Deep democracy is our sense that the world is here to help us become our entire selves, and that we are here to help the world become whole" (Mindell, 1992: 5). I think that more than supporting one viewpoint over another, deep democracy encourages the meeting of the viewpoints, which is why conflict is supported. It is

through the conflict of the different viewpoints that the world becomes whole and we get to know ourselves better. We've got to support the OCA to speak even though we disagree with them.

SA: But they lie and quote the Bible and say horrible things about perfectly fine people.

E: Yes, again what you say is true. But we also follow their double signals and find out what is in the background for them. This will probably be difficult, but even the OCA has background states that need to be supported. I recall a formal meeting in Portland, OR between members of the gay and lesbian community and the OCA. One OCA member previously identified as a gay man and kept complaining quite judgementally about how oppressive gay men had been to him. He was trying to point out the hideousness and moral depravity of the gay life style. People argued back and forth with their various viewpoints. Finally, a gay person picked up that this man had been very hurt in his relationships. He spoke to the formerly gay man, now OCAer, telling him how sorry he was that this man had had such a terrible experience and had been so hurt. Even though he didn't agree with the OCA viewpoint, he felt very badly for him as a person. Everyone became quiet and then the OCA man brushed off the comment. But the feeling atmosphere in the group shifted because someone had picked up and spoken to the difficult feeling atmosphere in the room. There was a brief state change as people felt a moment of compassion across the drawn lines of warring viewpoints. This

subtly shifted the feeling as the meeting ended.

SA: That's a good story, but not much happened. That guy is probably still going around bashing gay people because he got a bad deal from someone.

E: You are right again. You know, I respect your tenacious questioning of every aspect of this concept. I'm grateful that you are in the field defending the minority position. We need you. But just as deep democracy values all the positions in a field, it also values all stages in a conflict. Resolutions are only momentary and never forever. Disorder and disturbance are also states a deeply democratic attitude embraces (Mindell, 1992: 73). Expecting a solution to a difficult process is as controlling to a group as one viewpoint trying to control another viewpoint. After all, everything is always changing and the Tao moves in mysterious ways.

SA: Yes, I see that deep democracy has a spiritual component. It trusts in a force much bigger than I have ever considered as part of social activism. It would have to trust in something to include a group like the OCA in its picture.

E: Yes, "Deep democracy is awareness that the world can only partially be understood. Its inexplicable nature leads us to interact with the mysterious powers of the field in which we live" (Mindell, 1992: 155). And this field needs our growing consciousness as we interact with different parts of ourselves,

each other and the world.

The conversation is over for the moment. The social activist has much to consider and the elder spoke eloquently about deep democracy's contribution to working in the world. That last mention of awareness reminds me of a poem by Rumi, a 13th century Sufi poet, who so beautifully expresses the mystery of the intimate relationship between a living awareness and change.

When grapes turn to wine they long for our ability to change
When the stars revolve around the North Pole
They are longing for our growing consciousness
Wine got drunk with us, not the other way
Our body is the honeycomb and we are the bees
We made this body cell by cell
We made it.

CONCLUSION: PROCESS WORK AS A BRIDGE

This paper has tried to show how different aspects of Process Work broaden and deepen the practice of social activism. These aspects form a bridge between the spiritual traditions at the root of Process Work and social activism. I will now reiterate the Process Work concepts that create sustainable social action.

THE FIELD AND ROLE THEORY

The field concept, developed by modern physics, is basic to Process Work theory. The field is the scientific concept which supports the views of the older perennial philosophies. Bohm calls it the holomovement. The field is the ever flowing Tao, the Buddhist big mind, and the spirit world of shamanism. It is the Process Work concept of the dreamingbody. Each paradigm postulates something bigger than our everyday reality that influences the momentary world in which we live. This larger field awareness of Process Work forms the basis from which all skills and metaskills develop. This is the background vision, the ground on which the meditation cushion of this paper's title sits.

Roles represent the different polarities of the timespirits in the field of a group. Acting out the roles and working with their relationships accesses the whole field of a group and changes the timespirits which, as Bell's Theorem points out, can

have alocal effects on the larger field, i.e., when women and men work on sexism in a seminar, that work can affect male/female relationships in the larger field.

DEEP DEMOCRACY

The Process Work concept of deep democracy, embodied in the metaskill of the elder, has compassion for and supports all the roles and states in a field to emerge and communicate with one another. When this larger awareness is present, the Tao or the dreamingbody can grow and change. The Taoists were great believers in deep democracy as they tried to live with the flow of nature however it manifested itself (Mindell, Amy, 1995: 74). They accepted the relativity of all polarities, such as good and bad; right and wrong, knowing that all movement and change came from the interaction of these polar opposites. This ancient Taoist concept of relativity is mirrored in Einstein's modern theory of relativity in which absolute measurements of time and space are relative to each other.

This philosophy of relativity provides a process-oriented attitude for working with the often conflictual scenes around rank and difference. Dancing with the Goddess Maya, deep democracy reclaims and recycles experiences such as conflict, anger and revenge, which are often disavowed by the larger

culture in which we live. Like Maya, deep democracy believes that all aspects of life are sacred and is therefore dedicated to the celebration of all experience.

BELIEF IN THE UNKNOWN: FOLLOWING THE TAO AND TELEOLOGY

The ancient Taoist dedication to following the mysteries of nature is a model for the Process Work paradigm, as are shamans following unknown spirits to hunt power and heal people. Process Work theory and interventions trust that mysterious signals and disavowed parts of a process hold the wisdom for that situation. The Zen beginner's mind is open to all possibilities. Each tradition has a teleological perspective--the belief that all experience has meaning. Process Work has dedicated itself to the unfolding of that meaning. This is the attitude or metaskill that supports all unknown states to unfold and it is the curiosity which hunts for ghost roles and other disavowed parts of a group.

The attitude that values all states, including the unknown, unfolds whatever experience is in that state. Thus, disturbing parts of a group such as conflict, the enemy, revenge, power and privilege are valued as information with important messages for everyone in a group.

Fluidity is needed to follow the twists and turns of the Tao between different states, from inner to outer, in different channels and from primary to secondary processes as a process unfolds. We go back and forth between the spoken and unspoken Tao as we unfold the meaning of a process.

AWARENESS AND THE SECOND ATTENTION

Awareness is the basic building block of Buddhist practice. The beginning meditator develops a momentary awareness to breathing. Awareness is then widened to include sitting, walking, eating and finally all aspects of daily life. Images of wandering monks sitting and meditating on tinkling brooks or grass waving in the breeze make up the teaching stories of Buddhist training. Process Work trains the same awareness. But instead of water and grass we train our second attention to perceive double signals and edges which contain the mystery of the unknown Tao.

The second attention is shamanistic. It perceives the spirits we usually ignore and allows us to participate in the dreaming process behind mysterious signals. Social activists need to develop the second attention to work with the processes in a group which are not apparent, but which influence the group from the background. This includes ghost roles such as the leader and the enemy, double signals and edges when working with rank issues and high and low dreaming around the social activist's vision and the hopelessness that occurs when that vision isn't fulfilled.

SHAMANS, SPIRITUAL WARRIORSHIP AND ALTERED STATES

The life of a shaman is an ecstatic adventure into altered states of awareness (Mindell, 1993: 139). Shamans are spiritual warriors who develop the courage and second attention to use all experiences to grow. They have spiritual rank because they see the unknown as an exciting doorway through which an ally may appear to push them into the mysterious world of rank and power differences. This challenging aspect of group life becomes a hunting ground for spiritual power. Spiritual warriors understand that unfolding the conflicts that occur when working with rank issues leads to greater relationship and community. Therefore, the spiritual warrior stays at a difficult edge, confronts the process and encourages others to do the same.

Process Work values non-ordinary or altered states of awareness as important processes that, when unfolded, often add the missing element or ghost in a process. These deeply felt, shamanic messages may go against consensus reality, but hold important information for individuals and groups.

COMPASSION

Compassion is a metaskill in Process Work. It is embodied in the Zen Buddhist image of the Bodhisatva, the awakened one whose compassion is so great s/he stays incarnated to support the growth of all other beings. This is the attitude that supports

all states, including the unknown. It is the loving awareness of the beginner's mind that appreciates all experience, no matter how absurd or strange it may seem. This deeply democratic awareness embraces the smallest signal and the largest group, right and wrong, good and bad. Compassion is an asset to a world worker who realizes that all parts of a field, even the ones s/he doesn't like or agree with, must be embraced to represent all of reality.

INNER WORK

In Process Work, inner and outer experience are connected. Because fields are holographic, each one of us is a piece of that field. Inner work accesses the atmosphere of the field in each of us. It may be a vision or dream or a feeling of fear, irritation or being left out. Process Work stresses the importance of bringing this inner awareness out into the larger group in order to access the field, Tao or dreamingbody of a group.

Heisenberg's uncertainty principle postulates a connection between the observer and the observed in the subatomic realm. This means that our attitudes may govern what we actually perceive and working with oneself can immediately affect the field of a group. The ability to work on oneself while under attack is an example. Picking up one's own edges and double

signals can change the outcome of an attack: instead of dividing a group, it may create more relationship within a group. This enables the process to be used for everyone's growth.

SUSTAINABILITY: THE MEDITATION CUSHION IN THE WORLD

Process Work theory creates skills and metaskills that support sustainable outcomes. The perennial philosophies which are the backbone of the theory and practice of Process Work emphasize the unknown spirit in every process, both inner and outer. Through following these background spirits, Process Work seeks to restore communication between different parts of individuals and groups so that fields can gain more awareness of themselves and their potential for real community. This does not necessarily mean peace and harmony. It does mean a renewed vitality and the creation of dialogue between the polarities in a field. This then, is the meditation pillow; the spirit, taken out into the world of form, as Process Work follows and unfolds the mysteries of our everyday lives to create sustainable social action.

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