

# ACLE 3: Geoffrey Butler

Protocols for engaging the soul in a Circle of Trust – A community of solitudes.

The purpose is to be present to one another – neither invasive nor evasive.

## Touchstones for Creating a Safe and Trustworthy Space

- **Use a “third thing” to explore the issue intentionally but obliquely.**  
We mediate by metaphor using poems, psalms, art works, music, short readings. The task is not to find some objective truth in the third thing but to use it to evoke in us what our soul wants to attend to.
- **Choose for yourself when and how to participate.**  
There is always invitation, never invasion; always opportunity, never demand. It is OK to just converse with your inner self and listen.
- **Be present for yourself and others.**  
Presume welcome and extend welcome.
- **Speak for yourself** – Use “I” statements. Spend time internally reflecting before speaking (speak from your soul – not the ego or intellect) and make sure others have the time and space to speak and that they too are heard.
- **Make space for silence**  
Slow down and pay attention to the voice of the inner teacher.  
Let there be a silent space between each reflection.
- **No fixing or advising**  
Seek instead, through deep listening and open questions, to help each explore and find his or her **own** clarity. Trust the spirit. Don’t push the river.
- **When the going gets rough, turn to wonder**  
Be open to learning and seeing with “soft eyes.” Turn from reaction and judgment to wonder and compassionate inquiry.
- **Observe confidentiality** this is a double confidentiality. Don’t discuss the content of the meeting with anyone. Don’t pursue the participants with ideas about what was discussed after the meeting.

*Washington Courage & Renewal [www.wactt.org](http://www.wactt.org) 2006 Third things and other slight amendments Geoffrey Butler 2008*

# Humans have Souls

## Strategies for Heart Development. POH

Pedagogy of the Heart II - Readings. Nov 19 2006

Reading 1

Goleman Daniel 1996. Emotional Intelligence. Cox and Wyman Reading UK

### 1. There are two fundamentally different ways of knowing in the human mind – Emotional and Rational

The emotional /rational dichotomy approximates to the folk distinction of heart and head.

I know it in my heart is a deeper sort of conviction than a cognitive realisation.

NGB These two ways of knowing inform one another to a lesser or greater extent.

Sometimes the rational overrides the emotional and sometimes the emotional vetoes the rational

The perceptions recognise and classify someone or a situation and the emotions give value to it and commitments to action. EG Cognitive voice: **This is Smith**. Emotional voice: *I distrust Smith. I will take no notice of what he says.*

The neo cortex manages the information processing and the Limbic system including the amygdala **attributes value**

Limbic system.

The **limbic system** ([Latin](#) *limbus*: "border" or "edge") includes the structures in the [human brain](#) involved in [emotion](#), motivation, and emotional association with [memory](#). The limbic system influences the formation of memory by integrating emotional states with stored memories of physical sensations (see [emotional memory](#))

The generally agreed elements and their functions include:

- [Amygdala](#): Involved in aggression, jealousy, and fear;
- [Cingulate gyrus](#): Autonomic functions regulating [heart rate](#) and [blood pressure](#) as well as cognitive and [attentional](#) processing;
- [Fornicate gyrus](#): Region encompassing the cingulate , hippocampus , and parahippocampal gyrus;
- [Hippocampus](#): Required for the formation of [long-term memories](#);
- [Hypothalamus](#): Regulates the autonomic nervous system via [hormone](#) production and release. Affects and regulates blood pressure, heart rate, [hunger](#), [thirst](#), [sexual arousal](#), and the [sleep/wake cycle](#);
- [Mammillary body](#): Important for the formation of memory;
- [Nucleus accumbens](#): Involved in reward, [pleasure](#), and [addiction](#);
- [Orbitofrontal cortex](#): Required for [decision making](#);
- [Parahippocampal gyrus](#): Plays a role in the formation of spatial memory.

(Wikipedia)

2. NGB Implications for pedagogy of the heart. **Nothing worthwhile is remembered unless there is appropriate emotional attachment. Education needs to work at developing this appropriate emotional setting** – EG consider also the Critical theorists concept of Ideal Speech conditions. (Folder). In particular, religious education has to steer a course between getting students emotionally engaged in

examination and reflection of a spiritual or religious nature without the fear of indoctrination. It must be a safe space, but it must also be an emotionally rewarding place.

“Lacking emotional weight, encounters lose their hold.” p15.

3. The amygdala is a storehouse of emotional memory and thus of significance itself.

If the amygdala is removed or if the neural connections to the neo cortex are cut, the person loses fear, rage, competition, cooperation, affection, social connection etc

The person cannot value one event above another – “should I tie my shoelaces or kiss my wife goodbye.” The valuing by the amygdala is lost and therefore the capacity to prioritize so that there is no proper means of decision making.

NGB Implications for Pedagogy of the Heart./RE

**The material of the RE course needs to be material that the student can attach value to – i.e. it has some personal value for her.**

This does not mean the material cannot be intellectual or even highly intellectual but it must derive significantly from student concerns and be informing their values.

**The question being answered must be their question.**

4. High emotional charge enhances the memory of an event. E.g. Where were you on 9/11?

NGB implications for POH. The high ropes experience is a good example – high experiences need to be built into education with opportunity to reflect upon their meaning and for students to create the metaphors and formulations of meaning.

Maybe take students to a black gospel choir and or Messiah and then get them to read the scriptures associated with the music and the historic context. EG. What is the meaning of “Let my people Go” to Negro slaves on the cotton plantations in the southern states of America in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This explores the meaning of Gospel freedom in different social settings. Then “what is the meaning to you?”

**5. The emotional memory attached to past events may trigger emotional alarms** in a person which are poor guides to contemporary events generating a crisis response to what may be an ordinary situation.

This is characteristic of people who have lived with stress to the point of distress and breakdown. (E.G. Ambulance drivers) Contemporary events which seem like the past events can generate fear and anxiety or panic attacks.

NGB Implications. Students may have past histories of RE or anything else – other life experiences - which may generate inappropriate responses to a contemporary situation. This needs to be treated with insight and discernment and some strategies devised to defuse the emotional climate and restore more appropriate emotional weather.

6. The amygdala is formed at birth – the neo cortex has to grow and mature for 20 years or more.

**Early experiences are therefore more highly coloured** because they are viewed through the emotional mind. P24.

**Thus, there is a significant necessity for emotional safety in early years of schooling.**

Consider the story of the little boy camping with Mum and Dad and charged with sleeping near the flap of the tent to keep out the bears. Tell story from “Real Boys” Lockwood.

7. The left pre frontal lobe appears to act as a damper to control disturbing emotions triggered by the amygdala till the neo cortex properly assesses the threat.

By controlling the input experiences and teaching the rational processing of the emotions.

We need to develop this control in boys especially.

“Feelings are indispensable for rational decisions” Dr Damasio p28.

8. 80% of our capacities to adapt to life are derived from emotional intelligence or what used to be called character. This has been largely ignored in schools for the last .....years? We concentrate on academic intelligence which seems to account for 20% of achievement.??? NGB Verification required.

9. Gardner, as part of his multiple intelligence schema, identified intra personal and inter personal intelligence.

### **Different Forms of emotional intelligence**

He subdivided inter personal intelligence into leadership, relationship nurturing, resolving conflict and social analysis – knowing who was who and where everyone fitted.

**Interpersonal intelligence** is the ability to understand others, what motivates them, how they work and how to work cooperatively with them. This aspect will be taken up in **Pedagogy of Community**.

**Intrapersonal intelligence** is the similar ability to reflect upon oneself, to provide an accurate model of oneself and to operate effectively in life.

This depends on the ability to access ones own feelings and values, to correctly identify and name them and to draw on these emotions with cognition to guide appropriate behaviour.

NGB Implications for POH.

Teachers and students need training in recognizing and managing these feelings and values and selecting them appropriately. This need for specific emotional training in self efficacy has been recognised in studies on the education of boys.

10. Salovey p43 expands subsumes and expands Gardner's personal intelligences as ***Emotional Intelligence***

1. Knowing one's emotions – **Self Awareness** – recognizing the feeling as it happens.
2. **Managing emotions.** Having the capacity to soothe oneself, manage anger, shake off rampant anxiety, gloom, irritability and incipient depression. Those who are poor at this are constantly distressed. Those who are good bounce back rapidly.
3. **Motivating oneself.** Marshalling emotions to serve a goal, pay attention, gain mastery, generate creativity, delay gratification, stifle impulses. This is the basis of self discipline.
4. **Recognizing emotion in others.** Empathy, altruism, attuning to subtle social signals of what others need or want.
5. **Handling relationships.** Getting a team together to focus on a goal and produce a product. .Recognizing incipient differences and potential conflicts. Handling conflict between members. Generating harmony.

NGB Implications.

Each domain indicates a body of response and habit which can be trained and educated. The means of training is through the languages of the heart. Goleman, along with many others, suggests that there are certain symbolic modes through which the heart or emotional mind best expresses itself.

### 11. Symbolic Modes

The emotional mind has special symbolic modes ( These are all the *third things* of which Palmer speaks by which we can obliquely approach the soul and encourage it to express itself.)

- Metaphor
- Simile
- Poetry
- Song
- Fable
- Story
- Dreams
- Myth and legend
- Art
- Music

“these are all cast in the language of the heart.” P54

NGB Implications. This means that the **pedagogy of the heart will use these as the instruments of teaching and learning**. Note how well Leunig’s cartoons on heart matters and his prayers are received by the public in Australia.

I was discussing the pedagogy of the heart with Martin Scroope SJ at the Lutheran Principals Retreat at clear mountain in 2006 and asked what he thought of Leunig’s work. He said... “Best theologian in Australia.” Such artists are gifted in giving voice to the “wisdom of the unconcious.”

He also said that the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart would be a good source of learning and wisdom in this area.

## 10.1 Self Awareness

### 10.1.1 Chapter 4 **Know thyself**

NGB This indicates that the essential starting point for the teacher is specific training and education in his own self awareness and emotional intelligence.

10.1.2 p54 **Awareness of feelings determines our judgment** and therefore the quality of our choices – e.g. What career, who to marry, what house to buy and where to live?

These decisions are not made on sheer rationality, nor should they be, but on aesthetic, spiritual and emotional connection.

### 10.1.3 **Correctly identifying what is going on internally. Somatic Markers**

Feelings are attended by somatic markers, face flushing, sweating, increased heart rate, butterflies, gut reaction. These reactions need to be learned, identified and interpreted as anger, anxiety, fear, excitement, interest etc.

## 10.2 **Managing emotions “Self mastery is the key to life performance” P15**

This master aptitude of knowing, managing and riding the emotional storms is the ancient wisdom or virtue of Temperance which means balance and wisdom.

Aristotle suggests that the virtuous man demonstrates appropriate emotions proportionate to the circumstances.

It is our duty to help students towards this temperance.

If students' emotions are **too muted** they may be dull or alienated from the work of education and the society of their peers.

If **too extreme** they are subject to pathological immobilizing depression, overwhelming anxiety, raging anger or manic agitation.

**None of these states are helpful in the educational process.**

The teacher's task is often to manage these moods in a mass setting without being able to attend to the training in management of mood which would help students and classes overcome the problem.

Intentional skill development and teaching and learning in this area in this area will enhance teaching in the humanities and especially in RE.

EG in the RLC yr 10 unit "Body, Soul and Spirit"

### 10.2 .1. **Anger Control. P60**

Brooding fuels the flames of anger

Seeing things differently douses the flames.

Di Tice found that reframing a situation in more positive terms puts anger to rest

10.2.2. **Optimal Arousal.** There is an optimal level of arousal for top performance. A level of anticipatory anxiety enhances performance but too much fear sabotages the attempt to do well.

10.2.3 **Mood and performance.** Good moods enhance flexible thinking and complex problem solving because they support risk taking and positivity. Foul moods create negative memory and lead to fearful over cautious decisions

Laughing enhances mood and intellectual performance because memory is state specific.

### **Implications for classes.**

Train in mood management, work for a positive class mood, intentionally create humour and look for humour in context of possible.

"Don't take yourself too seriously." Geoffrey Butler

"Discipline with a light touch." Bill Rogers

### 10.3 Self Motivation.

**10.3.1 Hopefulness** or optimism is a better predictor of first semester grades at Uni than SAT scores. P86 CR Snyder University of Kansas

**Hope** is believing you have both the will and the way to accomplish your goals.

**Optimism** is the belief that you have mastery over the events of your life and will be able to meet challenges as they arise.

Developing a competence – any competence - helps self efficacy. Therefore develop skills in students.

Parents. Get your kids to learn an instrument.

Such people approach a situation with a view to handling whatever comes up rather than worrying what will go wrong. This is self efficacy. Resilience! This is what we seek to develop in students.

Create an emotional environment of hope. “You can do it”

**10.3.2. Flow.** As people grow in confidence and competence they approach quite difficult tasks with a state of self forgetful high performance – so absorbed in the task at hand they lose all self consciousness. This is called **Flow** unconscious competence

EG champion surfer working a wave, great surgeon doing an operation, singers with the gift of the elves, musicians jamming. Ruth timetabling

**Implication** – What would be the kind of processes whereby we are able to get teachers into a state of flow getting students into a state of flow??

#### **Do challenging things but with a repertoire of well practiced skills**

We should allow students to practice and gradually build their repertoire of skills or give many practice tests before testing them for grades.

Clear directions and plenty of draft correction.

### 10. Summary of master task - Self control

#### **learn /teach to**

- Control impulse
- Put off gratification
- Regulate moods to enhance and not impede thinking
- Motivate ourselves to persist and try again in the face of difficulty or failure
- Find ways to enter flow through peak arousal and engagement in the task



## 10.4 Recognition of Emotions in others

### 10.4.1 Non Verbal messages

90% of emotional messages are non verbal messages.

Teacher's need to get these EMs and NVs right and to resist the manipulation of our moods by student EMs and NVs. Read the verbal and non verbal messages

**10.4.2 Attunement.** This is the close identification of the mother or partner with the emotional mood of the other – baby or lover etc so that they give back an emotional signal to indicate that the baby's mood has been recognized and not mimicked but appropriately acknowledged by the mood or NV of the mother. The child is engaged.

**10.4.3 Misattunement.** When parents consistently fail to show empathy, the child avoids expressing those emotions. The child undergoes shut down

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read it out to the group.

NGB Implications of Attunement and Mis-attunement for teaching and learning.

It is essential that teachers engage in this attunement process in order to get students engaged with the learning process.

It is no coincidence that 60% of learning difference in students and classes is teacher difference. (Frank Crowther quoting the Wisconsin Project. Concordia College Toowoomba - Visioning process 1999) It would seem to me that much of this would be due to the level of psychological, emotional and spiritual attunement of the teacher towards his class and the persons of his students. This is Carl Rogers' notion of **Unconditional Positive Regard**. (Rachel Naomi Remen. *Kitchen Table Wisdom*. Read the article.

**Can we really teach well without loving our students????**

Scott Peck defines love as **the will to make the effort to act in the best interests of the spiritual, social and emotional growth of the beloved other.** *The Road Less Traveled*

When I told my year 10s that I loved them as a teacher having previously given them this concept of love and explored it with them, they were very open and receptive to the idea and remembered it as an example of love and quoted the definition in their assignment work.

I think they were in fact quite moved. They recognized it as not some mushy gushy feeling or affection towards them but as a genuine commitment to their growth as persons.

Part of this teacher love is making the effort to understand and develop our awareness and skills in this activity of emotional attunement.

This does not in any way of course take away our obligation to maintain professional distance – it rather requires it because a teacher love which sought emotional reward from students other than the reward of seeing them learn and grow would be unseemly and NOT LOVE

- Good teachers provide a reparative experience of attunement
- A therapist reflects back to the client (person) an understanding of his inner state just as an attuned mother does with her infant. This allows the person to have a sense of being deeply acknowledged and understood.
- The school and the teacher seeks to create the community, the place and space in herself and others where this deep need is met for the student.  
UCPR
- Peck says that love demands **the effort to attend fully to what a child is saying.**

### **Criminality and mis-attunement.**

The evidence that criminals have infant life histories of emotional neglect with little opportunity for attunement is well substantiated – about p 101 Lack of attention leads to socio-pathic responses

### **NGB implications**

In educating the sentiments, **emotions are both the medium and the message. What you do is what you are.** How you do it is what is done.

### **We respond to the emotional emphasis of the other.**

**This mirroring of emotions illustrates a basic principle of social life** and the teacher needs to be master of her own emotional repertoire and therefore of the emotional tone of her classroom and personal interactions even difficult ones.

Teachers can therefore deliver to students an appropriately controlled emotional repertoire and therefore control the emotional climate of the class even in the face of difficulties because of their calming or enhancing responses.

They can also intentionally teach these emotional management strategies to students. See the work management training manuals and tapes for pertinent practices eg. “Managing Difficult People” and “Crucial Conversations”

Tell the story p114 of six monks who calmly walked between the opposing forces in an incident in the Vietnam War.

The courageous calm of the monks pacified the warring parties. “All the fight was out of me- we just quit fighting.”

Actors are artists of the emotional display We can use their insight and strategies.

We need to study the Stanislavski method. Our drama teachers could take a seminar (series) for all interested staff on this method.

We need also to use more emotional material in our lessons and develop lessons with emotional training exercises embedded.

## **10.5 Managing relationships with others.** Case studies. Marriage, Work place, Medical practice. The nature of the problems Strategies for solution

### **10.5.1 Marriage – The problems.**

**Starting position...** Emotionally the societal standard or generalization has been...

“Girls becoming adept at verbal and non-verbal emotional signals and communicating their feelings”

Boys become adept at “minimizing emotions having to do with vulnerability, guilt, fear and hurt.”

NGB implications. Males who for one reason or another learn to master their emotional spiritual selves early become able to relate well to girls and in any work situation which requires intelligent talk or emotional negotiation. As this is the stuff of relationship and marriage it would be well for us **all** to learn it well.

**Problems...p 133.** Sex, frequency, romance, discipline of children, how much debt savings, who is spending on what... These are the sore points of conflict in marriage, But they are not the key issue. Rather it is how these issues are handled and discussed which determines the viability of the marriage. **“Reaching an agreement on how to disagree is the key to marriage survival.”**

#### **Danger signals ....**

Habitual body language and verbal sniping that indicates disgust or contempt about the other. Sneering, eye rolling when challenged, verbal attack and insult. 4 – 5 times in 15 minutes is a predictor of divorce in 4 years.

Instead of negotiating in the communication process people get into a fight or flight response and the emotional flooding and counter productive actions that result from emotional flooding.

#### **Two Arms of the fight /flight response.....**

**1. Fight back....** – Usually her - the verbally competent one. lashing out in anger which leads to a fruitless shouting match of accusation and counter accusation, insult and counter insult. (NGB..hardly conducive to intimate trusting relationship.)

**2. Stonewalling....** Blank silent withdrawal. Usually Him – not so verbally and emotionally trained. This gives a powerful, unnerving message of icy distance, superiority and distaste (NGB..hardly conducive to intimate trusting relationship.) This is a devastating strategy because it cuts off all possibility of working out disagreements.

#### **Overt and Covert messages and the hidden myths in conversations.**

In conversations there are two or more conversations going on. The exterior one and the interior one filled with toxic thoughts which also often has a deeper myth about the relationship attached to it. Eg. “Poor Me, I am a victim” or Self righteousness indignation “How dare she speak to me like that.” Read out examples p 136/7

So they get into habits of toxic thinking about their partner. People are overwhelmed by their partner’s negativity and their own over reaction. They are swamped by dreadful out of control feelings – cannot hear without distortion or respond with an unbiassed clear head. They fall back on primitive responses, anger or violence or escape.

The bad or good habits we have are derived from childhood so that we are primed to respond in certain emotional ways – overreacting to perceived slights (Geoffrey????) or shutting down at the first sign of a confrontation. (Ruth???) the reason for these over reactions and defensive mechanisms is that in a love relationship, conflict touches on some of our deepest needs - to be loved, to be respected, fears of abandonment, or fears of emotional deprivation.

We need to learn to maintain openness hold the tension and work on appropriate strategies for resolution.

#### **Marriage - The solutions.** (“You do better when you know better” – Linda Mc Comb in conversation 10/01/07)

The strategies required to fight the good fight are: 1. Mechanisms to de-escalate the emotional tension; 2. Ways of showing each other we are being listened to using acts of empathy; 3 Maintain civility; 4. Stick to one topic; 5. Give each partner the chance to fully state their case. – Basically the EI of calming, empathy, listening well and being both assertive (stating your case clearly) and cooperative (hearing what the partner is meaning).

### **Task 1. Calming Down**

1. Soothe your own distressed feelings.
2. If there is overheating, agree on a 20 minute break to allow full cool down. Call time out and go for a walk separately then return to the conversation.

### **Task 2. Detoxifying Self Talk**

1. **Recognition.** Tackle toxic self talk by recognising that such internal conversation pieces as *"I'm not going to take this anymore"* or *"I don't deserve this"* are innocent victim and righteous indignation slogans. i.e. posturing.
2. **Challenge toxic thoughts and deny them control.** Bring to mind evidence and perspectives that call these postures into question.e.g. *"He doesn't care about my needs. He is always selfish."*... is challenged by calling to mind the thoughtful things the husband has done in the past week, month, year.
3. **Reframe** – *"OK. He is mostly thoughtful – this incident was thoughtless."*
4. **Then discuss that point.** Don't generalize.

### **Task 3. Non – defensive listening and speaking.**

1. Look past the anger
2. Make reparative gestures
3. Don't get fixated on the specifics – what is the underlying concern?
4. Acknowledge and return any peace offerings in the partner's conversation.
5. Don't immediately ignore or rebut the issue raised – Wait to see what is behind the complaint or " attack".
6. **DO ignore the nasty tones, insults, contemptuous criticism to filter out and hear the main message.**
7. Try to hear the feelings behind the words.
8. Mirror the feelings of your partner – rephrase to show you have understood both the content and feelings.
9. Use X,Y,Z presentation of the issue. When you did X, I felt Y. I'd rather you did Z.

**No bullying, threats or insults – no defensiveness – excuses, denying responsibility, or counter attacking with criticism.**

**Respect, love, apology, accepting responsibility, acknowledging the emotions all disarm hostility.**

### **Task 4. Practise.**

This should be practised in non hostile situations with an unheated discussion. Then in situations when the emotional flooding comes on the responses are automatic enough to operate before the process is hijacked by emotion.

### **10.5.2. Work – The problems.**

Offering a critique by personal attack is the worst way to motivate someone – ad hominem charges with disgust sarcasm and contempt give rise to defensiveness, dodging responsibility, stonewalling, avoidance and embittered passive resistance derived from feeling unfairly treated.

Part of the problem for the employer/supervisor or indeed for employees is allowing issues and small problems to build up without dealing with them in a matter of fact way at the time. Then there is a bitter blow up with consequent unproductive results.

**Work - The solutions.**

Artful critique focuses on what the employee has done and can do rather than reading a mark of character into a job poorly done.

**Task 1. Be specific** - focus on a key event or task poorly done or a pattern of deficiency using the X, Y, Z procedure.

**Task 2. Offer a solution or way forward**

Suggestions should be offered about ways to fix the problem preferably with a time scale for the task with offers of assistance, resources etc for the corrective procedure.

**Task 3. Be present.**

Such a critique has little chance of success unless delivered face to face.

This allows for response and clarification from the other person and does not suggest carelessness or cowardice. (never by memo)

**Task 4. Be Sensitive.**

Empathise. Be attuned to the impact of what you say and how you say it. Make sure there is time and place and room for cool down, follow up and re-establishment of working relations.

**10.5.3 – Medical practice – The problems**

**Medical Practice – The solutions.**

Reading No. 2.

Parker J Palmer, 2004. *A Hidden Wholeness*. Jossey Bass, San Francisco USA

**1. Humans have souls.**

We need to remember and acknowledge that **humans have souls**. This is the core of their being.

The first step in pedagogy of the heart is for the teacher to recognise his own soul and that students are persons with soul.

(We need to believe) “that the soul – that life giving core of the human self with its hunger for truth and justice, love and forgiveness – (can be renewed) in its power to guide our lives.”

Palmer p2.

We need to learn to find and to be what we are and to help others especially our students in their quest for the same.

**NGB. Implications.** The means for creating spaces and places, strategies, activities, silence, stillness and times for such soul exploration needs to be a significant part of the RE curriculum and the life of the School both for teachers and students.

“Sauntering” Tom Christenson/ Thoreau: Life is sacramental.

**2. The soul is shy.**

It needs a safe space to reveal itself. It needs a trustworthy process to develop. It needs an intentional self directed and guided process of formation. P59 “If we want to see a wild animal ... the last thing ... is to go crashing around in the woods yelling for it to come out.”

It requires quiet space and **unconditional positive regard** (Carl Rogers’ term) and the support of community. The task of teachers, advisors and other participants is “simply to be present and attentive to the other.” African proverb – **I am because you see me**

**NGB.** This is difficult to achieve in a school setting which is largely a crashing around, yelling, fixing, advising, directing sort of place. Discuss the creation narrative. Humans are created responsive – able – aware of being seen and engaged in conversation with God. We realise we are in conversation – with god and each other and responsible and reasonable.

**The soul resists manipulation.** I/thou both receive their character from the nature of the relationship. The relationship is primary. Any *it* behaviour breaks the soul/soul relationship.

### **3. We live divided lives**

Palmer suggests that too often **we live divided lives** and our life is not directed from our core meaning and centre.

Wholeness or integrity means developing the inner life and living out of it so that what we are within is what we live in the world. However our schools and society are stacked against this to everybody's detriment.

"Afraid that our inner light will be extinguished or our inner darkness exposed, we hide our true identities from each other...we become separated from our own souls... we end up living divided lives removed from our inner truth..." P4.

Jesus says – Can we add one cubit to our stature by worrying. This passage is about **Attending trusting and staying in the moment – Being present.**

### **4. Attributes of the Divided Life (Palmer p6)**

**We live divided lives when:**

- *We refuse to **invest ourselves** in our work, diminish its quality and distance ourselves from those we serve.*
- *We make our living at jobs which violate our basic values.*
- *We remain in settings or relationships which steadily kill our spirit.*
- *We harbour secrets to achieve personal gain at the expense of others.*
- *We hide our beliefs from those who disagree with us to avoid challenge, conflict or change.*
- *We conceal our true identities for fear of being criticised, shunned or attacked.*

### **NGB Implications**

All our training however has been for the secular paradigm that humans are bodies with intellects and that our task is to inform and train the intellect. – And we have been attempting to use this paradigm with Christian Studies or RE. Many teachers of RE are struggling with it and the lack of student engagement. Any contemporary strategy will not do. **Our strategies need to address the soul.**

We wouldn't teach music and exclude learning an instrument or singing from the curriculum, nor art and exclude the making of sculpture and the doing of paintings. Therefore the student of religion needs opportunity to express their religious self at whatever stage of the religious journey they happen to be.

There has been a false dichotomy established that RE is either indoctrination, (bad) or intellectual abstraction (good). This is the "Suckers' Choice." (See *Crucial Conversations*) There is a third way – to cultivate insight – the third eye – to develop the students own theology, formulations, explanations and spirituality and allow for reflective dialogue rather than strident debate which just shuts people down and causes them to hide their belief.

### **5. The Awakening to the divided life**

In exploring this topic with my wife Ruth, I did as I usually do. I read bits out for her critique and approval. She was reading from a Susan Howatch novel *The Wheel of Fortune* when I interrupted and she said, "there is a quote here which is exactly what you are talking about."

*“Why do you mortal men seek after happiness outside yourselves, when it lies within you? You are led astray by error and ignorance. I will briefly show you what complete happiness hinges upon. If I ask you whether there is anything more precious to you than your own self you will say no. So if you are in possession of yourself you will possess something you would never wish to lose and something fortune could never take away...”*  
 Boethius *The consolation of philosophy*  
 NGB Jesus says “What would it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul”

Palmer suggests p16 that we become aware of this divided self when:

- *We search the world for the something missing in our lives not understanding that what is missing is us.*
- *We feel fraudulent, even invisible because we are not in the world as who we really are*
- *The light within us cannot illuminate the world’s darkness and vice versa*
- *We project our inner darkness onto others making enemies of them and making the world a dangerous place.*
- *Our in-authenticity makes real relationship impossible and leads to loneliness.*
- *Our contributions to the world are tainted by duplicity and deprived of our life giving energy.*

These are not the marks of a well lived life but they are not uncommon among us and among students we teach.

#### **6. Ways of avoiding Wholeness.**

When our self perception is challenged we often choose against wholeness by a **familiar pattern of evasion:**

- Denial, What I have seen about myself cannot be true.
- Equivocation – how can I be sure of what my soul is saying?
- Fear. If I let my inner voice dictate, what price might I have to pay in a world that punishes authenticity.
- Cowardice. The divided life may be destructive but I know the territory – What lies beyond is unknown.
- Avarice. In some situations we are rewarded for stifling our soul. (Leunig Cartoon on getting by on one sixteenth of one’s soul)

#### **7. Circles of Trust .**

One strategy for wholeness is to create **Circles of Trust.**

We need to find space and courage and honesty for ourselves to break out of this divided life and embrace our own truth. (The example of the public service worker ex farmer who found the courage to speak for the land. Pp18,19.)

#### **Basic beliefs – Circles of trust**

**First.** We have an **inner teacher** whose guidance is more reliable than anything we can get from a doctrine, ideology, collective belief system, institution or leader.

NGB This is basic Quaker belief – The Orthodox Christian would want to suggest that it is the Holy Spirit speaking to our spirit which is the reliable guide. They would also suggest that the Spirit uses the teaching of Jesus in the Word of God is a reliable informant to the life of the soul.

Nevertheless Palmer like Christ does call us back to living out of the soul and not to simply adopt the rationalistic approach of our secular society.

**Second.** We all **need other people** to invite, amplify and help us discern the inner teacher’s voice .



## **Membership and structure of Circles of trust**

### **(i) Clear limits.**

It is an intentional short term community which may meet once a week or month or for a day three times a year with an agreed end point, say 12 months with the proviso that people may leave gracefully if the experience is not supportive or renew participation if they feel comfortable.

It can be free standing or embedded in institutional life.

It is completely voluntary but members must abide by the protocols of trust..

It has no agenda but to allow people to speak from the heart and in a supportive community to explore their soul issues.

### **(ii) Skilled Leadership**

The process requires a facilitator well grounded in the principles and practices necessary to create safe space for the soul.

A community is not a goal oriented organised entity which can almost run itself with clear functions and roles and tasks and times like a school.

“A community is a chaotic, emergent and creative force field that needs constant tending especially as in this case the aims are counter cultural...and the relational culture so rare and fragile.” So the leader has the authority of being one who is also a participant living an authentic and undivided life.

Such a role requires grounding, training, mentoring and experience.

### **(iii) Open invitations**

Everyone’s participation is a voluntary response to an open invitation without a hint of the manipulation or coercion which would scare off the shy soul.

For example employers cannot require employees to join such a group for the sake of community building or spirituality. They could offer it as a voluntary by invitation activity.

A circle of trust is not a “share or die” event. All invitations to speak are just that. If people don’t want to answer the question posed they may make up their own question and answer that. The soul knows best. This is the central principle in a circle of trust.

### **(iv) Common ground for people of diverse belief.**

The circle of trust welcomes openness and diversity. Genuine authentic reflection, honesty, engagement with challenging questions without the closure of orthodoxy or authoritarianism is the norm. Only this level of trust can get at what people really believe about themselves and the world and listen with respect to one another.

### **(v) Graceful Ambience**

The place and space must be beautiful. There is an aesthetic to

- Neither cramped nor cavernous - a circle of comfortable easily moved chairs.
- Eye level windows onto a pleasant outlook for visual relief.
- Décor warm and inviting – simple grace notes like fresh flowers
- Carpet and good acoustics so soft voices can be heard.
- Lighting incandescent and warm not fluorescent and cold.
- An uncramped schedule – we do not have to justify reflective time.

Instead of larding the schedule with multiple topics and lengthy texts spend the morning on a single topic framed by a brief poem. Then move from that large group exploration to solitude and silence, then to small group dialogue and then back to the large group again for closing reflections.

Slow down

Do more with less

“Walk into the woods quietly; sit at the base of a tree; wait for the shy soul to emerge and make its claim on our lives.”

## **8. Third things.**

**The basic approach of Circles of Trust. “Tell the truth slant” using a “third thing”**

This approach intentionally uses the power of metaphor to conjure up what people mean. The third thing by which a Circle of trust approaches a topic may be a poem or work of art or music. – “any metaphorical embodiment which allows us to approach the topic indirectly”

p90

This style is implied in the following quote.

*Tell all the truth but tell it slant-  
Success in circuit lies  
Too bright for our infirm delight  
The Truth's superb surprise.*

Emily Dickenson p89

This approach is best demonstrated in practise E.g. The Taoist Tale – p 95 – 111  
Leader to lead group through the process.

### **& A Taoist Tale &**

#### **The Woodcarver. Chuang Tzu**

*Khing the master carver made a bell stand  
Of precious wood. When it was finished  
All who saw it were astounded. They said it must be  
The work of spirits.  
The prince of Lu said to the master carver  
“What is your secret?”*

*Khing replied: “ I am only a workman:  
I have no secret. There is only this:  
When I began to think about the work you commanded  
I guarded my spirit, did not expend it  
On trifles, that were not to the point.  
I fasted in order to set  
My heart at rest.*

*After three days fasting  
I had forgotten gain and success.  
After five days  
I had forgotten praise or criticism  
After seven days  
I had forgotten my body  
With all its limbs.*

*By this time all thought of your Highness  
And of the court had faded away.  
Had vanished  
I was collected in the single thought  
Of the bell stand.*

*Then I went to the forest  
To see the trees in their own natural state  
When the right tree appeared before my eyes,  
The bell stand also appeared in it, clearly, beyond doubt.  
All I had to do was to put forth my hand  
And Begin.*

*“What happened?  
My own collected thought  
Encountered the hidden potential in the wood;  
From this live encounter came the work  
Which you ascribe to the spirits.*

## **9. Clearness Committees**

These are circles of trust of 4 – 6 members gathered for a period of two hours for the specific purpose of peer assisted self evaluation by one member of an issue in their life to help him or her gain direction and clarity from their own inner voice by the open questions and silent support of the rest of the group. The matter is briefly written about before hand for the members to read. The meeting opens in silence and then the focus person summarises the issue verbally. People may take notes to help remember what is said but all notes and reflection belong to the focus person and remain his or her property.

**Protocols for engaging the soul in a Circle of Trust – A community of solitudes.**

**The purpose is to be present to one another – neither invasive nor evasive.**

## **Touchstones for Creating a Safe and Trustworthy Space**

- **Choose for yourself when and how to participate.**  
There is always invitation, never invasion; always opportunity, never demand.
  
- **Be present for yourself and others.**  
Presume welcome and extend welcome.
  
- **Speak for yourself** – Use “I” statements.
  
- **Make space for silence**  
Slow down and pay attention to the voice of the inner teacher.
  
- **No fixing**  
Seek instead, through deep listening and open questions, to help each find his or her own clarity.
  
- **When the going gets rough, turn to wonder**  
Be open to learning and seeing with “soft eyes.” Turn from reaction and judgment to wonder and compassionate inquiry.
  
- **Observe confidentiality**

*Washington Courage & Renewal [www.wactf.org](http://www.wactf.org) 2006*

## **Bibliography POH**

### **Introduction to Pedagogy of the Heart Readings.**

In this pilgrimage I have used a framework of thinking derived from Habermas.

Habermas suggests three basic modes or domains of human cognition.

1. **Technical thinking for the purposes of control.** Empirical research is an example of this. (I call this **system efficacy**)

Pedagogy associated with this thinking is the usual **pedagogy of systems** of thinking: Science, Mathematics, Art, Music – these are all systems of thought to be transmitted and reproduced with fidelity with their knowledge, jargon, concepts, practices and skills. This is mostly what we do in schools.

2. **Communal thinking for the purposes of sustaining cultural norms and values.** (Habermas calls this Practical thinking) From this is derived the community understanding of what constitutes “commonsense”. An example would be the expectation that after WWII up until the late 1960’s in Australia it was expected that a woman would leave her job after she was married and attend to her husband, her home and her children when they came. It was so entrenched as “commonsense” that the Qld public service legally required a female teacher to resign her post upon marriage and women were paid less than men. Phenomenological research uses this kind of knowledge when it examines **the insider view**, the perceptions of the participants and what they understand their situation to mean. (I call this **social efficacy**) You cannot get along in a culture unless you understand and comply with the cultural norms. Schools are largely transmitters of cultural norms by the hidden curriculum.

3. **Critical thinking for the purposes of autonomy and emancipation from the oppression of the system and the norms of community.**

The individual and oppressed groups seek freedom and self direction and the opportunity to express themselves beyond the constricting norms of the policing of the system and the “commonsense” norms of the community. Indeed it is often the critical questioning of such people as Jesus, Martin Luther, Wilberforce, Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. which challenges the norms of society (**taking an outsider view**) and overcomes the entrenched “normal” oppression of religious legalism, hierarchical corruption, slavery, imperialism, and racism. All of these were empowered, embedded and entrenched norms before being deeply and persistently challenged by emancipatory movements. Research in this domain is Critical Research or action research. The theology is Liberation theology or “Bias from the Bottom” Richard Rohr

When this concept is applied to personal growth I call it **Self Efficacy**.

To grow in this domain you need to know your own heart, to develop identity, to find what is authentically you and to challenge the manipulation of social and system mores.

***This is Pedagogy of the Heart – the intentional cultivation of spiritual and emotional intelligence.*** Pedagogy of the heart is a pedagogy that operates between intra- personal intelligence and interpersonal intelligence. It is about learning to know who you are and acting in the best interests of your spiritual growth. What are the deepest needs of your own heart? Further because of this deep self awareness you are also committed to knowing and empathising with others feelings and concerns, seeking to understand and identify with their hurts and joys and participate in their personal, spiritual growth.

This is not to say that self efficacy is totally independent of social efficacy or system efficacy. In a “good” society the three exist in tension – We maintain order, we create community and we develop responsible autonomy. An RE curriculum will have all three types of thinking but pedagogy of the heart and also social efficacy (pedagogy of community) needs special attention and development in our system oriented education.

A person who has undergone this self development engages in community from a deep centred sense of self. This I believe is the key function of a Christian education and a core task of the Religious Education programme.

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**Post Script reflections on the main influences in the development of POH.** Habermas and my own reflections on his work and adaptations for classroom work have been the driving force in my thinking for ten years. This has provided

an intellectual framework and means of analysis. But it has also led to exploration of each of the three types of thinking which has led me to focus on the more personal as a means of deepening the work of RE.

Scott Peck and Daniel Goleman have written works both on personal growth and growth as a community member. These are becoming significant sources of my systematic theoretical reflections but **the key to changing direction** in my teaching comes from Henri Nouwen's little book *Reaching Out* especially the chapter on *From Hostility to Hospitality* in which he describes the relationship of teacher and student as one of gracious host and welcome guest with all that implies about listening to the student story and honouring it. The other significant contributors to my heart thinking have been the Australian cartoonist Michael Leunig especially in the cartoons from *The Prayer Tree* and *A Common Prayer* and Rachel Naomi Remen in *Kitchen Table Wisdom*.

Other works such as *Hidden Wholeness* by Parker J Palmer, *You – Prayer for Beginners* by Mark Link S.J., *Coping with Difficult People* by Robert Bramson and *Crucial Conversations* by Kerry Patterson et al provide both good theory and excellent strategies for pedagogy of the heart. Rachel Remen provides wonderful real life stories which just make you sit there and say aaah! Her stories provide a jumping off place for students in the right safe place and space to share or journal on their own stories and its sacred meaning.

I guess the trick to using all of these is for the teacher to believe in the reality of their own soul and to cultivate their own heart and to therefore be able to take the risks and to translate these ideas and strategies into authentic practical action for the heart growth of young people in their classes within the appropriate protocols needed to protect the shy soul.

Further sources from Michael Downey Brisbane consultant... Michael  
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