

From Kingdom to Community: Lessons from The Crucible

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ABSTRACT *The Crucible was set up as a workshop for men to practise leadership. An initial motivation was to assist a men's organization to move from reliance on the founder into being a co-created community. The Crucible was structured so that participants had many opportunities to take initiative and practise sustaining presence with self and others. Men benefitted from a background field of friendliness and movement between playfulness and challenge. An orientation was kept to experimentation and learning in comparison to "getting it right". It is hoped that this paper will be of use to those involved in men's work, training leaders, or wanting to assist an(y) authority-bound organization to move into being more of a cooperative learning community. Copyright © 2013 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.*

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A CRUCIBLE IS CONCEIVED

Essentially Men was established in Auckland, New Zealand, in 1991 by Rex McCann, a visionary who wanted to create conditions where men could break away from role typecasting and external ideas of identity and come into their own experience and authority (see <http://www.essentiallymen.net/>). Rex designed workshops, events and programmes for men. When I met Essentially Men and Rex in 2004 there was a transition underway. Rex had sustained a robust guardianship for many years but he was burdened by relentless organizational demands and authority dynamics. I offered myself as a peer. I was independent of his organization and its informal pathways of influence and privilege. We met for over a year and got familiar with the different ways we worked. I ran an initial workshop in which I broke several of the informal group norms. This was refreshing and provocative to many men. There was a hunger for robust and focused group work, of expanding the work on the self out into a relational field. From this, Rex and I fashioned The Crucible workshop.

The sociotherapeutic work done in The Crucible work is political in that it is explicitly working to move the old, archetypal political structure of "Kingdom", which here stands for the domain of the rule of an individual King/man, into being a cooperative learning

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community. Specifically we ask and facilitate how habitual patterns of authority, dependency and passivity can be moved into reciprocity, mutual respect and co-creation.

Certain aspects of The Crucible were not linear, clearly defined or structured. Gaps existed so that there were multiple opportunities for participants to create meaning, take initiative and follow that through in a living, authentic situation – and, to some extent, the structure and content of this paper mirror this approach: there is no clear, overriding principle or set of formulae. Each section focuses on a theme and has some combination of the following: vignette examples of action from within The Crucible; reflections from the trainers on their interventions and the group processes; discussions of learning principles and the dynamics of group work; and reflections from participants after the workshop. Hopefully the different perspectives will add substance and be of interest. The following vignette illustrates several aspects of our work. It occurs after group members have settled in and made some connections.

THE CRUCIBLE ENTERED

A vignette

There has been an encounter between Bob and Doug.

Al [to Bob]:

Are you feeling that as a rejection?

[Bob looks at Al. His eyes move downwards and to the side, indicating that he is now thinking.]

Phil (the trainer) [to Al]:

Do you notice what he's doing in response to your question?

Al: Yes.

Phil: Is that what you're wanting?

Al: No. I want him to feel more.

Phil: So you asked him a question.

Al: Yeah, I know, pretty dumb.

Phil: I reckon you've got an idea about Bob.

Al: I don't want to impose it on him. It's my idea.

Phil: Think about how you might make an offering of it to him. Something he can take or leave.

Al: I want him to stand up for himself.

Phil: Okay. See if you can make a direct expression of that then.

Al: Hey Bob, be strong, brother. Stand up for yourself.

Bob: Butt out. I can do this myself.

Al: [pulls back] Oh, okay. [looks surprised]

Bob: [softens] I'm still working it out.

[Al is looking down. He looks deflated]

At this point the trainer might tune in with the affective experience of Al, accompanying him in a time of difficulty, introducing curiosity and inquiry into the field of his distress. Such an empathic approach from the trainer would also change the tone of the interaction, which has perhaps got caught up with being aggressive. In addition, one could get curious about Bob's functioning. Is he taking his time, gathering his wits, going about putting a boundary to Al in the only way he knows? Perhaps he only softens after he has asserted dominance and isolated

himself. However, the trainer keeps to the principle Al himself has presented: stand up for yourself. He wants to see how that is working out for Al in his life.

Phil: Are you giving up?

Al: I took your advice and look what I got.

Phil: You better not listen to me again then. You better take your own advice.

Here, the trainer is being playful and attempting a light touch: Al is not offered solutions; he is not treated as though he is weak and unable to stand on his own; he is treated as a resourceful person. There is no emotional rescue. The trainer is acting as though there is nothing worthy of being ashamed about. This situation is not a moral dilemma or a final judgment of personality.

Al: Oh yeah.

[takes up the playful challenge with a steely look]

Phil: You appear to have given up on it.

Al: No. I'm standing up to you.

Phil: Yes, but how about Bob? How did he go in that area ... with you?

Al: He did great, the bastard. He was supposed to be standing up to Doug not me.

[Al laughs and the group joins in. There is a light-hearted quality indicating the group is enjoying the self-deprecation.]

Phil: Okay. So, what's next?

Al: Leave them to it. He told me to butt out.

Phil: Well, you could but then you would miss out on the last thing. Do you recall the last thing Bob did, what he said?

Al: Butt out?

Phil: No ...

Al: I don't know then.

Phil [to the group]:

Does anyone remember? The last thing.

Charles: I'm still working it out.

Phil: Thanks, yes. What do you make of that?

Al: He's still working it out.

Phil: Yeah, but what do you make of it in terms of him and you, what he's willing to do with you?

Al: I don't know. He wants to work it out?

Phil: It's an opening. You wanted to engage with him. Initially he spat you out and then he shifted. He softened. When something is said or done, then there is new territory. When a man says he's angry, then he's in a new place, he's responding to his expression of anger. He may or may not be angry. He might feel shame or sadness. You want to keep with the crest of emerging experience of a person. Don't just respond to the content of what they said. If you want to get with them, then you don't want to be four seconds behind the action. You will keep dragging them back, responding to your questions. "Are you angry?", you might say. He's just told you he's angry and you ask a question pretending it's you being a reflective listener. This business we're in is not a field for simplistic techniques. You'll have to be on your toes. You'll have to be in touch with your experience and you'll have to be in touch with his. Now, I imagine this is of some use to you and Bob ...

Here, the trainer is giving a meta-commentary to the group, outlining the area of work in which the group is involved. By looking around and addressing the group, it gives Al time to come into

himself and integrate the experience. Men need time to process the relational things that girls practised in the school playground with each other while the boys were kicking balls around. It is useful to vary the pace and take the heat off a man who is learning. It can be very useful to make an assessment of the “warm-up” level of the person. Are their energy and attention falling away? Are they up for more? The trainer is also attempting to evoke the spirit of adventure that delights the soul. Such an adventurer is not warmed up to self-consciousness, risk avoidance or playing it safe. There is learning to be gained, new territory to be explored. Risks are expected.

Al has been in unknown territory, slightly off balance, needing to regain himself. This is where he gets to know the territory of the unknown and build resilience through surviving the experience. Even in the midst of this, he has some warm-up to sustaining his initiative, to keep in contact with the responses of the person he made the intervention with, to have an ongoing relationship with the trainer and himself as a learner with heart and a sense of adventure. He does not indulge in resignation, riding roughshod over anyone or being bloody minded.

Sometimes a man gets going with another man and he finds he meets with resistance or some new information of a kind he hadn't expected. The plot thickened in a way he wasn't prepared for. He feels the left and right flanks exposed seemingly without his own consultation and he finds he is retreating. He just wanted to highlight one thing. Couldn't someone else take it up now? Isn't *The Crucible* about co-creation? No, apparently not. He is in the place of unknowing, without rescue. He is alone. It is useful area to build up experience in, to try different things. It is a situation a leader finds himself in from time to time.

Such an approach echoes the existential sentiment of Yalom (1980). There is the calling forward of the actions of the existential hero to take the opportunity Frankl, (2004) so clearly demonstrated: there is dignity the human being may claim under adverse and dire conditions. He may stand tall and say: “Here I am, a man brought up on breadcrumbs of affection and great lashings of shame and look at what I can do.”

Expectations

Rex and I saw that strong statements of intent and outlining specific areas of work would set up an expectation for work. We wanted men to come with purpose. Here is a typical example of what goes in the flyer:

Expect to develop:

- Ability to lead from a place of presence with yourself and others.
- Skills that enhance facilitation, leadership, co-enquiry and co-creation.
- Clear thinking about group functioning and evolving group norms.
- Capacity to work with intuition, story and body wisdom.
- The art of living in the unknown and being in transition.
- Stronger alignment with your purpose.
- Ability to stand in the world as a man with heart and courage and authority.
- Your ability to be playful and spontaneous. (Essentially Men, 2012)

We wanted the men to turn up. This can be a fundamental shift for many men. They have opted out of life. They have been worn down by typecasting or the depressive power of others. Some came into their energy once and found that other people got offended and hurt. So, they withdrew. Perhaps they decided others weren't really up for their power or that there was something very wrong with themselves. We wanted to set up a different norm, immediately.

Turning up, keeping going, and vulnerability

One participant reflected after a Crucible: "I also really valued the culture of getting on with the work – it felt like everyone turned up wanting to get into it so there was less opportunity for avoidance." Often this type of thing is equated with courage. Yet, in all the feedback over the years, there has not been one comment mentioning courage. The girding of the loins, flashing of swords and thickening of the skin have been overdone in the culture of men. Men are drawn to a new approach to being with difficulty and the unknown. Participants emphasized vulnerability. This includes the qualities of receptivity and presence, agility, and fluidity of emotion and intelligence. Some reflections from men given after the workshop are:

Trusting myself to be present in a very vulnerable state and knowing that I have really healthy options in choosing how I want to be supported and by whom.

To continue practising the art of being honestly vulnerable in my life – I need lots of practice.

I learnt how powerful it can be to be honestly vulnerable in the moment.

It was not as bad as I imagined standing up and speaking from my self and exposing some of my Shadow.

Vulnerability includes an authentic presence of self with others. This appears to infuse the group with more life. This is counter to the dominant story we have been telling ourselves that the freedom of the individual comes at the cost of the wellbeing of the group. As a student of Max Clayton (1935–2013) (see Clayton, 1991, 1992, 1993, himself a student of J. L. Moreno (1889–1974) (see Moreno, 1953, 1983, 1985), I have been taught experientially of a new cultural norm: that the life force of the individual evokes and infuses the spontaneity of the group and vice versa.

There are other attitudes of mind that we have found effective for provoking presence, especially when things were not going well. Here are a couple of examples:

John: It's impossible. I'm not going to be able to do it.

Phil: It sure looks that way. You've had no modelling from your family or teachers. You've had lots of shame. You try to please others by being a good boy. You orientate to other's views for your own self-worth. No wonder you've been all out at sea. And now you want to do this new thing. So, it's impossible and since it's impossible, you may as well give it a go.

John: Yeah why not. I may as well destroy what little ego I have left.

The trainer comes with the perspective that the worth of this man's personality does not stand on whether he achieves this or not. We shift out from the universe of getting it right and into the universe of learning and experimentation. Defeatism is defeated. He could be a spectacular failure: the very best at failure. Perhaps this can be expressed to the man. It is the type of light-hearted mockery that is perhaps New Zealand in flavour, with a Polynesian

twist, and a taste of self-deprecation that we have developed. It may not hit the right note in other cultures.

We have men who come from a vacuum of not knowing their feelings, not knowing what love looks like, feels like, sounds like.

Kevin: I just don't know what you mean. I don't have that feeling. I really don't have any idea where to start. I just don't know what love is.

Phil: What are we going to do then? You want this thing.

Kevin: I don't know.

Phil: You'll have to pretend. You'll have to act as though you know what it is.

Kevin: I don't want to be fake.

Phil: No. But it looks like you'll have to. You have to start somewhere and right now that's with Michael. Give it your best shot and we'll see what happens. Of course, he may find it unpalatable and spit you out.

There are many other entertainments of mind that men have shared with each other in order to keep going through difficulties, such as: no one has the answer; no one ever gets away with anything scot free if only in the hardening and contraction of their own heart; there are no shortcuts.

PSYCHODRAMA AND SOCIOMETRY

The action can have the visceral flavour of Moreno's (1914) vision of encounter:

A meeting of two: eye to eye, face to face. And when you are near I will tear your eyes out and place them instead of mine and you will tear my eyes out and place them instead of yours then I will look at you with your eyes and you will look at me with mine. (p. 1)

This is a principle of the psychodramatic method on which I draw as a trainer. It is not that I want to teach participants to do psychodramatic enactment. I did not need them to understand psychodrama or even hear the word. We were working with the actual experience of the group. There was no need to call it psychodrama. That people did say it was psychodrama was not to my liking. I did not want them to think they had done psychodrama. I did not want them to go away and do things and call them psychodrama. To those who experienced a strong motivation to train that way, I pointed them to the psychodrama training institute.

I hope it is sufficient for the reader for me to signpost the tradition from which I draw. I think the principles and approaches I work with in *The Crucible* are universal and do not need an understanding of the psychodramatic method. There is, however, is a considerable body of theory and practice wisdom built up in the 100 years the method has been around. I also want to acknowledge the modelling of group leadership and training that I was privileged to have had with Max Clayton, the founder of psychodrama in Australia and New Zealand, for more about whose work see Clayton and Carter (2004).

As a group leader, my single most valuable tool is tele, which is part of the sociometric part of the psychodramatic method, for descriptions and examples of which see Carlson-Sabelli, Sabelli, and Hale (1994). Tele is the feeling valency between two people. It is experienced as a movement towards or a movement away. When a group member does something, I notice whether other people in the group move away or towards that person. Then, I notice how the

person is responding to what they hear from themselves and also to what they are aware of in the group's movement. What is their response to their experience of the group's response? Do they move towards the group or away, towards themselves or away?

A man's idea of the group's response to him may be more negative than is the reality. A man may see another look uninterested or turn away, but this may have nothing to do with him. He may experience rejection when no one has rejected him. The Crucible is a rare opportunity to check these things out explicitly. The following enquiries can be very useful: "As a result of what you did, is the man more in the group or further away?" "As a result of what you did, is the man more in himself or less?"

THE ZEITGEIST?

Our current manifestation of bureaucratic aggression is not a minor irritation that will be solved by a change of government, moving neighbourhood or country. Such bullying occurs in a futile attempt to fill the vacuum of adequate professional and community relationships. Scaremongering will do little other than bleed more helplessness and feed us into the hands of tyrants and totalitarian answers. So, we focus on the work to build cooperative working relationships. The Crucible is part of that, a small ripple across the larger evolutionary movements of human consciousness.

Lewis Mumford (1895–1990), the American historian, sociologist, and philosopher of technology (see Mumford, 1966, 1970), gave the Egyptian construction of the pyramids as the beginning of the megamachine, where human work units were bits in a vast production. We were drawn to the power of the Sun God and progress:

Change itself became not merely a fact of nature – as it is – but an urgent human value; and to resist change or to retard it in any way was to "go against nature" – and ultimately to endanger man by defying the Sun God and denying his commands. On these assumptions, since progress was ordained by Heaven, regression was no longer possible. (Mumford, 1970, p. 208)

We have built institutions which can live longer than any human being. Our ideals have great seductive power and can override our conscience. The slice of the brain that holds ideology must become better integrated with the other organs of humanity. Plainly it is not easy. We are not about to give up the emotional independence of our thinking. Nor are we likely to go the ancient Eastern mystical way and enter with the inflow and emerge with the outflow, surrendering ego. We are wilful and purposeful. In coming up with the computer we have done the god act by creating in our own image as language manipulators (Carter, 2010). Maybe we will get to live forever through our creations. Joseph Campbell (1972), the American mythologist, described the shift in consciousness occurring in the Western world about 5000 years ago:

Man is therefore not to put himself in accord with nature – as in the ancient and oriental worlds – but to make a decision for the good, put himself in accord with the good, fight for justice and the light, and correct nature ... Where formerly there had been, as the ideal, harmony with the whole, there was now discrimination, a decision to be made ... effort, struggle, and zeal, in the name of a universal reform. (Campbell, 1972, p. 16)

The work of *The Crucible* is to tap into the zeitgeist and give expression to the emerging consciousness. This is shaping up to be a new integration of heart, mind and will; the individual both free existing and in meaningful relationship with others. The dynamics in *The Crucible*, like any group, mirrored the larger cultural movements between freedom and structure, individual and group. They were expressed in the interpersonal dynamics in *The Crucible* and its formal and informal norms. How we structured that is outlined and discussed in the next section.

THE CRUCIBLE

Structure: Not too loose, not too tight

In our work in *The Crucible* “How much structure?” has been a question of ongoing focus of attention, planning and experimentation for Rex and myself. In what things would we take leadership? In what things would there be space left for others? In the flyer for *The Crucible*, we put it this way:

You will be involved in experiential group work involving learning with cycles of practice and reflection. At times, Rex and Phil will lead the group in the work, informed by the emerging motivations and group dynamics. At other times group members will be taking initiative to progress their own and each other's developmental work. (Essentially Men, 2013)

Some men were satisfied with the mixture. Some were not comfortable but saw the learning opportunities:

The opportunities I took to speak up, and the crazy randomness of the event which gave me recurrent shocks to process and take courage with.

I do like order and an effective process; and was challenged to effect by not having that. Thus, I learned more of myself and what calls me as I stood into the process.

Some men found there was not enough structure:

Make the container stronger from outset, to deepen quickly requires safety.

Some warm-hearted opening and closure before we enter into the fray might support folk to trust the process more.

In the earlier offerings, we tended not to initiate any group exercises in the opening session. Instead we made an invitation for a man to take leadership:

Here we are in the beginning of our work. Some of you are very aware of what is required for you to become present. This will probably also be true of some others. Perhaps there is a thing you might initiate for us. In this you can practise leadership and later we can get with you and reflect on different aspects of your functioning.

Over time we moved towards a tighter direction of the first couple of sessions, followed by an overt transition to peer co-direction. We found this worked better. There were still plenty of opportunities for men to take up leadership and initiate actions in later sessions.

Sometimes, the realization of a disturbance for a participant was on the edge of consciousness, and not clear until the end. Sometimes the impulse was expressed and the man wanted to follow through and have the group come to some consensus, rule or norm. This man was then in the deep end, working with the group on the edge of the unknown. A man with the following summary would be invited to consider how he might act on this:

I think there is enough feeling within the men and resources to move their feelings and do not consider story telling as the most efficient way of healing. I consider more body work, massage, dance, music, drumming, singing to loosen up the body as more effective.

Co-creation – and “It’s an addition”

There has been satisfaction expressed at the culture of co-creation established:

The notion of co-creation and this being about developing our own leadership skills created a platform for me to push myself.

Co-creation – feeling the edge between my instincts, others’ instincts, and managing the tension.

Some group members led the group using techniques from their own backgrounds such as paired bodywork sessions, Tai Chi exercises, a psychotherapeutic technique or exercise, a spiritual evocation, a play. In the flyer, this area of work was outlined as follows:

Rex and Phil will bring experience in ways of working such as: use of story, collaborative group work, inner journey, bodywork, ritual, action methods, expressive therapies, shadow work and deep listening. You will bring to this mix your own experience and ways of working. (Essentially Men, 2012)

This helped create a cohesion in the work. Rex and I were both aware not to go for too long in the modalities with which we were familiar.

From time to time, a lot can be going on and the group can become like a runaway train, with too many things arising without adequate closure on previous material or issues. In such situations, Rex and I tried different strategies. We might, for instance, pause the action and lead some reflection about the area of work. Typically there were parallel processes and a group theme could be identified. A man or relationship which best exemplified this could then become the focus of the work. Sometimes, we would go for a sociometric choice where group members would choose who they were most warmed up to working with.

Rex and I have had to work with a real difficulty between us. Rex has a sensitivity for when the group is bordering on achieving a unified state of stillness, and he is practised in guiding a group into this reverence. I am strongly committed to championing the rejected and outliers, so, in those times of stillness and reverence, I might see a man looking disaffected and would become curious. I don’t want him to conform or comply, and so might make an intervention, as a result of which the movement of the group towards unity is experienced as being interrupted. I work with that resistance and sometimes we end up with greater unity, but the rare moment for group reverence is be lost. Perhaps, the man just needed to give up his last excuse and get intimate. Equally, I have had to get humble and ask myself “Was I stirring? Was I avoiding intimacy?” In every group, the leaders will have a test of authenticity: will the leaders go by the values and actions that they are putting forward and wanting of others? At times Rex was graceful,

at other times I was graceful; sometimes we were both graceful. In this difficulty, we didn't lose credibility, and the group didn't disintegrate. Rex and I became curious and spacious with each other and we have worked through various issues outside the sessions.

There have, however, been times when I have not been authentic or congruent, when I have not lived by my principles, and this becomes apparent to the group. I have learnt to become humble and live with my shame. I must sit outside, alone, but for how long? No one knows. Even in this time, however, I can encourage myself to remain in the identity of a trainer and continue to be curious. Perhaps I will look around and find I am not the only one. Perhaps a disaffected person will come over and want to form up an association with me and plot a revolution!

There is no end to the work of living in communities if we have the imagination for it – and the heart. Sometimes I need to sit under a tree to fill myself up. Finding sources of life outside of the group must be necessary for every person. Each man has his own way of coming into himself and getting fuelled up.

The phrase “it's an addition” became popular in some Crucibles. Things come and cut across what we are seeking to do. A man will cut across the “warm-up” of another man. We can try to educate that man or put up a boundary. We can also engage the imagination and reframe it as an addition. We can consider that every action made, every word said, is related to what has come before, even if it isn't. We can provoke the imagination to find a link. In this way, things get built, but the previous things are not automatically rejected. If I can't come up with something, I might invite the group to make a connection. For example: “David here has said this ridiculous thing that seems to have no relevance or connection with what we have been focusing on at all. Can any of you come up with one?”

Backing perceptions, offering a gift, and touch

Many participants do not want to impose anything on anyone, nor do they wish to field projections and judgments. Men will often sit on their perceptions and experiences. They don't do much with them. They might slip into some dull habit such as asking obvious questions:

[David's chest is curved in, his eyes are wet, the muscles around his mouth let go.]

Brian: Are you sad?

[David looks up at Brian. His eyes move. He looks like he's coming into thinking.]

Phil [to Brian]:

Is Brian more in his experience or less?

Brian: Less.

Phil: You knew he was sad and you asked him a question.

Fred: He might have wanted David to be more aware and bring thinking in.

Phil: He might. That could be useful.

Brian: I didn't.

Phil [to Brian]:

Tune in with David again. See if you can do that. When you've got that, notice what's in you.

Brian: Yes.

Phil: It looks like your body wants to do something.

[Brian stands up and goes over to David, comes alongside him and sits with him. He puts a hand on David's shoulder. David accepts that. He gets more warmed-up.]

Phil: You and David keep going. That's great. [looking around the group] We're in the area of backing our perceptions and the experiences in us. We notice the question “Are you sad?”, like all questions, as a

demand in the sense that David has to shift gears to answer it. Notice that a question can shift an affective warm-up into a cognitive warm-up. Alternatively, you can make a gift, offer something. For example, the comment “You’re sad” invites the person to continue their experience. Even better, Brian is acting on his perception and what is in his heart and body. There’s a lot of things here. Let’s reflect on this area as a group later.

[turns to Brian and David and tunes in with them]

Backing and following through on one’s perceptions requires becoming clear about the dimensions and criteria on which the perceptions are based and working out how dependable and accurate those dimensions and criteria are. The trainers explicitly lead men to develop this by doing “check outs” in the group.

Touch is crucial in men’s work. Many men have withered away and become terribly isolated. Words without the feeling element or touch may mean little. Sometimes, only in human touch does the man really know companionship. At the start of a group, movement in the body can be a crisp way for men to transition and become present with themselves and each other. Getting alongside someone in open heart connection, in unconditional positive regard is a key activity of Essentially Men and a key practice in The Crucible. Different therapeutic modalities, motivational groups and spiritual practices have different approaches and techniques in this area. The Crucible offers numerous opportunities to practise most techniques, as well as the rare opportunity to investigate the interpersonal territory around the use and effects of an intervention.

Intimacy

To every Crucible, the golden room came when the group was spacious and still, people were not interrupting each other or were orientated to taking turns. There was no compiling of lists of all the things that needed to be said. We were not warmed-up to authority, dependency, or any kind of deprivation. There was a spaciousness and a stillness, a sensitivity to self and others. We had achieved intimacy:

Almost a week out from our crucible work and there is a spaciousness; a quality of stillness and generosity that we generated in the group that remains with me and blesses my everyday, mundane activities.

I am left with an acute sense of privilege and humility at witnessing such deep, tender and profound parts of a group of men who will live with me for many years.

A new, softer and deeper way of seeing my world. New energy, dynamism and care for others. A sense of self-worth and value as a leader and mentor.

Relationships

It appears that the “social self”, the neural template upon which each individual experiences their social worlds, is hardwired in response to our first social field (Schoore, 2003). This social self appears to pre-date language, reason, and even self-consciousness (Schermer, 2010). The templates of the social do not emerge so much from the process of language and reasoning but the other way around: our brain *is* social.

We are relational, and many of our cherished things can be seen afresh from a relational perspective, for example, choice. Choice has become a conglomerating principle of modern

life, yet it appears illusionary. According to Libet (2004), a person's awareness of the decision to act occurs after the act has already been initiated in the part of the brain that precedes action. Thus consciousness has a vetoing power which can stall or abort an act already initiated. So-called choice is like a moral compass. It appears that Albert Einstein had little need of free will:

If the moon, in the act of completing its eternal way around the earth, were gifted with self-consciousness, it would feel thoroughly convinced that it was travelling its way of its own accord ... So would a Being, endowed with higher insight and more perfect intelligence, watching man and his doings, smile about man's illusion that he was acting according to his own free will. (Einstein, 1930)

Perhaps such a view can generate a mildness or reverence. Whether choice exists or not, the actual movement occurs within a relationship. Darwin's primary perception, which evoked the theory of evolution, was that everything in nature grows from relationship. Martin Buber (1958) claimed that space and time emerge out of relationship, not the other way around, a point which is illustrated by the fact that the Earth goes around the Sun, a sequence we divide up into time. Tim Ingold (2000) assigned the beautiful word "dwelling" to describe the relationship within an environment. It is the first breeze that awakens the form of movement in a butterfly's new wings (Simon, 1996). It is the terrain that sets the simple legs of a crab into a complex path. It is the group that gives identity to the individual and the individuals that give rise to the group: a magnificent work of reciprocity and mutuality. That is the work of *The Crucible*.

CONCLUSIONS

Men learnt to speak directly with each other, not ride roughshod over someone or treat him with kid gloves. Warmth and friendliness were seen to be very fine masculine qualities. Companionship made a big difference to the adventurer. A field of friendliness greatly encouraged the imaginative capacity to generate new ideas in response to emerging situations. We were alert to pre-mature solutions. We found effective ways to practise the needed functioning of stepping up and taking initiative from places of heart, vulnerability and purpose. We found effective ways to practise keeping going with each other, challenging others, backing perceptions and getting alongside. Vulnerability didn't make us weak or deluded. We found ways to offer gifts of our perceptions and experiences that resulted in the other man moving forward in his experience. In as much as these things nurture and build the group, then leadership abilities were developed.

A trainer worth anything gets alongside, takes in the experience of the other, has it impact on him. The trainer lives the values and training objectives that he or she is promoting. The trainer has resilience. So, both life experience and reflective practice is needed. Working with men, a background field of friendliness and care is essential. This will involve touch and movement. Training effects are amplified and accelerated through movement between playfulness and challenge. Orientation can be taken towards experimentation and learning rather than getting it right and morality.

The work of *The Crucible* indicates that movement from Kingdom to Community can be given momentum and impetus by focusing on core attitudes and habits in interpersonal relating. By setting up a situation where men can examine their behaviours in a friendly

and challenging forum, with opportunities to practise new behaviour, then a very different way of personal, social and, in effect, political relating is set up which has an integration of heart, mind and will, which, in turn, sets up the foundation of quite different functioning in all our institutions.

Meaningful and satisfying relationship is the motivation for the work. The wider cultural environment is increasingly enforcing regulation and bureaucratic structure whenever there is a vacuum of effective working relationships. We can no longer leave it to elected representatives or bureaucrats. No ideology of any form or charter will do it for us. Scaremongering will do little other than bleed more helplessness and feed us into the hands of tyrants and totalitarian answers. If work is not done to build cooperative working relationships, then regulations and bureaucracy will overinflate in a futile attempt to fill the vacuum. We must commit to the impossible acts of developing intimacy in relationships, learning what reciprocity is, doing the hard work of building mutual respect. Men are going through a shift where they value other men for states of being and attitudes of respect and heart. There is a generative capacity and a nurturing quality inherent within masculinity. This is for the future wellbeing of all.

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