

July 2013

Dreams Inspire Possibilities



By Sheila McNamee

Last week, on behalf of the Taos Board, Ken announced the birth of Taos Institute Europe (TIE) to be launched under the capable leadership of Taos Associate, Jakob Noerlem. Then, only days later, associates learned of an important conference Taos will be co-sponsoring next June in Norway, [Beyond the Therapeutic State: Collaborative Practices for Individual and Social Change](#). There is also a Master's program in *Relational Leading* in the works among a plethora of other projects. I list these developments not to advertise or attempt to impress but to invite you to marvel with me at what I see as a continuing impulse to create, to connect, and to make a difference in the world. I think it is important to ask ourselves how we ensure that we continually push ourselves into the realm of new possibilities and resist becoming too comfortable with our past achievements.

We all know how easy it is to get into a “groove” that defines who and what we are and to continue to move within this groove. It is harder to continually search for divergent but connected grooves – new ways to make a difference and to make new connections. I often reflect on how social construction, as a way of living, actually justifies that child-like feeling that anything is possible! How can we continually remind ourselves of the pleasure of imagination spawned by intense curiosity? Of course there are constraints, challenges, and barriers, but by focusing on what is possible and what might create a difference, those constraints, challenges, and barriers often recede, or at least diminish. One quick illustration is our new WorldShare publications. We could focus on how to pay for the publication of inspiring books or we could simply provide them, free of charge, to anyone who is interested. Why let the traditional idea that books are written to make money serve as the guiding principle? WorldShare is what happens when you shift from the assumption of income generation to the assumption of idea generation and proliferation.

Similarly, the birth of TIE acknowledges that Europeans (and others around the globe) might be able to creatively expand the work of the Taos Institute in ways that may differ from our USA-centered base. While we are all one multifaceted community, we are also a gathering of local, situated communities. Taos Institute Europe can create opportunities for new forms of governing, for movement toward collaborative health care, for organizational/communal cooperations and more as associates and others bring their interests, talents, and resources together. And, to be sure, the byproducts of TIE will have ripple effects for all of us. We will be invited to consider how we can tailor innovative and successful initiatives in Europe to the Asian, South American, African, Australian, Middle Eastern, and North American contexts. For it is in promiscuous (Latin: to mix up) processes that novelty and transformation are born. Perhaps we should take time to share with each other the various ways in which we act promiscuously; how do we “mix it up,” hold on to our child-like curiosity, and position ourselves on the edge of comfort and possibility.