

## Brief Encounters with The Taos Institute

**January 2017**

This month we welcome Ken Gergen, President of the Taos Institute, as he reflects on the Taos Institute accomplishments in 2016 and looks forward to 2017.

### The Taos Institute: Bounding into the New Year

It's the time of year to contemplate our footsteps: where have we tread, and what is the path ahead? Our formal mission as a non-profit is educational, with a specific investment in the synergies between social constructionist ideas and professional practices. In pursuing these aims, the past year has made one thing very clear: we are enriched primarily through our relations. This was most clearly apparent in Taos' first entry into [collaborative healthcare](#): A November conference in Cleveland bringing together practitioners from across the healthcare spectrum to share their innovations. The enthusiasm was awesome. The power of sharing was also clear in our [collaborative conference on education](#) in Norway in April. After a rousing introduction by our sponsor, The Crown Prince of Norway, educators from around the world traded their ideas and practices - not only with each other but with a cadre of students from a nearby school. Then, at our [Summer Institute](#) - with the Attractor consulting firm in Copenhagen - dozens of organizational practitioners and scholars shared their ideas and innovations with each other.



This spirit of mutual sharing has pervaded so many of our activities. [The PhD program](#) for seasoned practitioners continued to prosper. The program is now offered in six European universities, and we are so very proud of the six participants who earned their PhDs this year. Our International Certificate Program in Collaborative Practices (<http://collaborativepractices.ning.com>) continued to expand, and is now offered in 11 countries. WorldShare Books - which makes books available free for downloading - added 13 new titles to their offerings ([www.worldsharebooks.net](http://www.worldsharebooks.net)). The topics ranged widely, from therapy, education...to social construction and spirituality. WorldShare Books are now published in 8 languages.

We try very hard to make sharing easy and without cost. This was accomplished virtually this year with a two-day conference on [relational research](#) followed by three virtual global meetings and dialogues to build an international network of relational research practitioners. We hosted four "[A Week in Dialogue with the Authors](#)" events which included webinars where participants could "meet the authors" of significant books. In addition to these open conversations, we also added to our online courses in social construction, two additional courses, one on relational leading and another on scholarly writing. And, of course, the Positive Aging Newsletter ([www.positiveaging.net](http://www.positiveaging.net)) continues to go out to thousands, now in 7 languages.

These footprints do seem to set the path for the coming year. Already the plans have been made for the Third International Conference on Collaborative and Dialogic Practices ([www.taosinstitute.net/iccp-conference-2017](http://www.taosinstitute.net/iccp-conference-2017)), coming up March 30-April 2, in Tenerife, Canary Islands. Further plans are in motion for conferences this summer both in Copenhagen and South Africa. And then in November, we will again collaborate for a conference on education in Copenhagen. We will put out information about forthcoming on-line seminars, webinars and the like in this Newsletter. But we also recommend an occasional visit to our brand new website ([www.taosinstitute.net](http://www.taosinstitute.net)); new resources are constantly added.

With the shifting political tides, we here in the United States are feeling a renewed commitment to the kinds of relational, dialogic, and collaborative initiatives we represent and support. There is also good reason for us to join hands globally. The challenges are enormous.

Ken Gergen, Taos Institute President