

Taos Institute News

January 2006

Taos Institute Conference — a Wonderful Blend of Collaborative Practices — October 6-9, 2005



"This was the best conference I have ever attended."

"The atmosphere of the conference was one of hope and collaboration. Everyone was willing to share ideas and listen to others' journeys in social construction awareness. The energy and enthusiasm of the participants was contagious."

"I appreciated the diversity of people from different disciplines and parts of our world who both attended and presented. The workshops and plenaries were filled with "fresh air" of new and old ideas."

"This conference had many exciting qualities. First, it gathered together many people attempting to practice social constructionism in their daily lives. It was wonderful and fulfilling to talk to different people about their ideas. The food was terrific and so was the location. Thanks for hosting this experience!"

These are just a few of the many comments conference participants offered in describing the October 2005 conference in Taos, New Mexico.

****The joining together in Taos*** - There were 175 voices, coming from 18 Countries, 34 states, and from many fields of endeavor – social work, therapy, organization consulting, teaching, artistic pursuits, preaching, entrepreneurial activity, philanthropy, law, medicine and other healing arts, all with an open heart and eager minds, curious and enthusiastic



about joining into the collaborative development of the conference.

****The intellectual and social stimulation*** - Collaborative practices proclaimed and developed in each field of endeavor: Plenaries with Diana Whitney on spirituality; Theresa Bertram on Appreciative Inquiry in organizational development; David Cooper-rider on Business for World Benefit; Ken Gergen and Sheila McNamee on education; Stan Witkin and Dennis Saleebey on humor and social construction; Harlene Anderson, Bob Cottor and John Shotter on this thing called therapy. There was an abundance of symposia on positive aging, narrative practices, art, writing, relationships, conflict resolution, forgiveness, movement, storytelling, education, healing, and so much more. For the first time there was a meeting which brought together the Ph.D. students in the Taos/Tilburg program. What

an electric feeling as 20 scholars and mentors shared their visions of dissertations together. The pre-conference workshop on social constructionism with Harlene Anderson and Sheila McNamee was a highlight as well.

****The friendship and collegiality*** - The conference was all about meeting new people, and reuniting with old friends and acquaintances. It was filled with lively conversations around the bookstands at break time; walks together in the fields; sharing food and drink; laughing heartily; being blessed. There were no strangers in Taos. What a wonderful feeling to be among friends, with a steady rapport of goodness, but with the freedom to grow in whatever ways felt right in the moment, with no dogmatic program to fulfill.

Be looking for the announcement of the next Taos Institute conference. Perhaps in 2007.

Inside this issue:

Cover Story— The Oct 2005 Conference	1
Message from Ken Gergen	2
Board of Directors Changes	2
Contribution Award	2
Taos/Tilburg PHD	3
Taos Institute on the Web	3
New Associates in 2005	3
Workshops You Won't Want to Miss	4-5
Books from Taos Institute Publications	5
New Listserv for educa- tors of Therapists	5
Resources Available	6
New Books	6
Contact Us	6

The Year Ahead: Wonderment and Consequence

Kenneth Gergen, President, Board of Directors

The October conference was surely a highpoint in one of the most productive years of the Taos Institute yet. It was a year with new books streaming from Taos Institute Publications, new enrollees and graduates from the PhD program, an array of workshops, burgeoning Associates, and more. And yet, I can scarcely detect anyone who views the coming year as "more of the same." Rather, what truly excites me about the TI network is the continuous sense of wonderment. What could we create; what might now be possible; how could we make a further contribution to the world in which we live? I like to think this sense of wonderment is fostered by social constructionist thought itself. For the constructionist, new worlds are as close as the next conversation.

But if we shift from these giddy moments of creation to matters of consequence, what images now appear on the horizon? One matter of immanent concern is whether we should become a membership organization. Many have asked about ways to join the Institute more fully, and membership may be the best route. Closely connected is the possibility of joining like-minded organizations to publish a journal featuring constructionist ideas, research and practice. This possibility is related, in turn, to an initiative in the making: a website archive of theses and dissertations that treat issues and practices in social construction. Personally, I would also like to see an enrichment in thinking about the process of dialogue and the efficacy of narrative. Coupled with such theoretical development, I would welcome an expansion in featured practices. I hope we can explore together new, collaborative practices in mediation, education, and health care. This can be a very exciting year indeed.

A Good-bye and a Welcome on the Board of Directors in 2005



It is with abundant gratitude and sadness that we say farewell to co-founder and long-standing board member Diana Whitney. Diana has stepped down from her board position of

the past 12 years and is now taking a new role as *board member emeritus*. Diana was our link to Taos, NM and the host to many visitors in that area of the world who wanted to connect with the Taos Institute. She graciously opened her heart, home and community to all who came to Taos for learn-

ing, respite, and collegueship. We will miss Diana's gentle, spiritual and visionary voice on the board.

The Taos Institute board of directors will expand as we welcome Dan Wulff and Sally St. George who join the board of directors. Dan and Sally have been involved with the Taos Institute for over 10 years and bring a wealth of knowledge and experience working with social construction theory in practice and teaching.

They are the co-directors of the Family Therapy Program in the Kent School of Social Work at the University of Louisville.

They also co-edit The Qualitative Report, <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/index.html>, a free online journal dedicated to publishing creative and well-done qualitative research from all disciplines across the world.

We are thrilled that they will be helping to lead the Institute into the future.



The 2005 Taos Institute Outstanding Contribution Award



This year, the Taos Institute has much for which to be grateful. Many people have contributed hours of time to help advance the work of the institute. One person in particular has gone above and beyond her stated role. Dr. Jackie Stavros, Taos Associate, has volunteered hundreds of hours this year working with Jane Seiling, our chief editor, on the

Focus Book Series. Both Jackie and Jane work with authors to bring their visions of publishing to a reality.

Dr. Stavros is a professor of Management and Leadership at Lawrence Technical University in Michigan. Several years ago, she offered to volunteer her time, expertise and interest in working with the publishing efforts of the institute. We are grateful for Jackie's unending commitment to

working with authors, offering her time, talents, vision and voice to the publishing initiatives of the Taos Institute.

She also became one of our authors this year with the new publication: *Dynamic Relationships: Unleashing the Power of AI in Daily Living*, with co-author Cheri Torres.

Thank you Jackie for your generous contribution to the Taos Institute.

Taos/Tilburg PHD Program Growing

The Taos/Tilburg PHD program has grown over the past four years. The program began in 2001 with one student. Today, the program has five graduates and 17 active students. We are delighted to say that the program is currently at capacity.

Dissertation topics include a full range of research all of which is contributing to the development of social construction theory and practice. Topics include:

"An Appreciative Inquiry into the Role of Business as a force for Sustainable Peace";

"Career development and life meaning for adolescent girls and the value of cross generational dialogue/story telling as a means to developing life direction";

"The analysis of historical notions of leadership in the tradition of OD (Organizational Development) and the framing of leadership and leadership practices from a social constructionist perspective";

"Moving from Individual to Constructive Accountability".

There are several completed dissertations available to download from the Taos Institute website.

To read more about the PHD program visit:

<http://www.taosinstitute.net/tilburg/tilburg.html>

Be sure to visit: www.taosinstitute.net

Taos Institute on the World Wide Web

The Taos Institute's website is getting a great deal of visibility these days throughout the world. In doing a search on the web we found that there are 2423 sites which link to the Taos Institute's websites. This is an impressive number.



Additionally, the website averages about 3,000 hits per day. People are coming to the site to download free articles, order books, browse the resource sections, inquire about the PHD program, view the listing of workshops, and much more.

SHOP ONLINE and donate to the Taos Institute at the same time!!

<http://www.iGive.com/TaosInstitute>

The Taos Institute is now registered on [iGive.com](http://www.iGive.com) as one of the non-profit organizations which will receive anywhere from 2% up to 20% of your purchase if you shop at the above link. You will need to register yourself on the [iGive.com](http://www.iGive.com) website and then click on the following link: <http://www.iGive.com/TaosInstitute>

Do all your online shopping at this link and the Taos Institute will receive a percentage of your purchase.

NEW ASSOCIATES IN 2005

Taos Associates are colleagues who have supported the work of the Taos Institute, practice social construction in their work, and who have an interest in the future of the Institute. In 2005 the following people have accepted the invitation to join in these collaborative efforts:

Murray Anderson-Wallace	Sylvia London
Theresa Bertram	Michael Mahoney
Chris Blatern	Christine Meier
Sara Cobb	Bob Neimeyer
Klaus Deissler	David Pare
Ronald Fry	Johan Roux
Judith Levin	Tom Strong
	Peter Whitehouse

2006 WORKSHOPS

Offered by Taos Founders, Board Members, and Associates

Social Constructionist Theory and Practice around the World

The Taos Institute is a non-profit educational institution. The workshop offerings for 2006 are sponsored by our board members, the advisory board members and our associates and reflect their interests, practices and gifts. All workshop content is in alignment with social construction ideas and is grounded in its theory and practices.

The presenters of the workshops are Founders, members of the Taos Institute Board, Associates or Friends of the Institute. Each workshop is individually sponsored and managed by the presenters. All questions regarding content and registration for a particular workshop should be directed to the contact person identified with each workshop.

For a full listing and workshop descriptions visit www.taosinstitute.net

Date to be determined: AI Dialogues

Anne Radford, convener

Email: AnneLondon@aol.com or editor@aipractitioner.com

Central London

February 6-8: Foundations of Appreciative Inquiry

Amanda Trosten-Bloom and Jim Ludema, Boulder, CO

Email: office@positivechange.org

March 2, 3, 7, 21, 31: Strength-based Approaches to Organizational and Personal Change: the theory and practice of Appreciative Inquiry

Anne Radford and Julian Rizzello, Central London

Email: AnneLondon@aol.com or editor@aipractitioner.com

March 27-30: Appreciative Inquiry Foundations Workshop: Igniting and Sustaining Positive Change in Organizations and Communities

Joanne Daykin and Catherine McKenna, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Email: jdaykin@innovationpartners.com

April 3-6: Appreciative Inquiry Summit

Jim Ludema and Mike Mantel, Chicago, IL

Email: office@positivechange.org

May 8-11: Appreciative Leadership Development Program

Diana Whitney and Jim Ludema, Location TBD

Email: office@positivechange.org

May 9: Becoming a Narrative Practitioner: Introduction: Living Stories (one day)

Madelyn Blair and Paul Costello, Washington DC

E-mail: pelerei@mac.com

May 10-11: Becoming a Narrative Practitioner: Exploring the Story: Narrative Techniques to Enhance Appreciative Inquiry (two days)

Madelyn Blair and Paul Costello, Washington DC

E-mail: pelerei@mac.com

May 12-16: Social Construction, Relational Theory and Change Practices

Kenneth and Mary Gergen, Wallingford, PA

Email: gv4@psu.edu

May 24-28: Focus on Relationship: Living the Appreciative Life - Creating Appreciative Environments for Your Relationship

Jane Watkins and Ralph Kelly, Beaufort County, N. Carolina

Email: ralph@appreciativeinquiryunlimited.com

June 6-9: Appreciative Inquiry: For Leaders and Consultants Engaged in Organization Transformation

Frank Barrett and David Cooperrider, Monterey, Calif.

Email: dancfield@cs.com

June 13-16: Being AI: A Spiritual Retreat for Change Agents

Diana Whitney, Taos, NM

Email: office@positivechange.org

June 18-23: Adventures in Collaborative Practices: Therapy, Training, Research & Organizational Consultation Across Cultures

Harlene Anderson, Mexico

Email: harleneanderson@earthlink.net

September 11-14: Appreciative Leadership Development Program

Jim Ludema and Diana Whitney, Chicago, IL

Email: office@positivechange.org

October 4-8: Focus on Relationship: Living the Appreciative Life - Creating Appreciative Environments for Your Relationship

Jane Watkins and Ralph Kelly, Beaufort County, N. Carolina

Email: ralph@appreciativeinquiryunlimited.com

October 16-20: Foundations of Appreciative Inquiry

Diana Whitney and Tony Awcock, Atlanta, GA

Email: office@positivechange.org

October 16-19: Galveston Symposium 2006: Making Music Together—Dialogic Processes in Relationships

HGI and Marsha McDonough and Pat Koch, Austin, Texas

Email: admin@talkhgi.com

October 27-29: Social Construction, Relational Theory and Transformative Practices

Sheila McNamee and Harlene Anderson, Durham, NH

Email: sheila.mcnamee@unh.edu

November 15-17: Appreciative Inquiry in Action

Amanda Trosten-Bloom and Mike Mantel, Boulder, CO

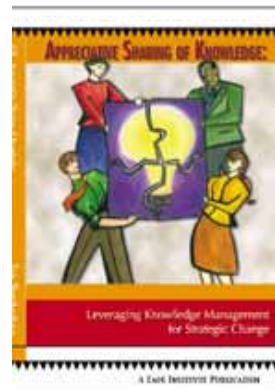
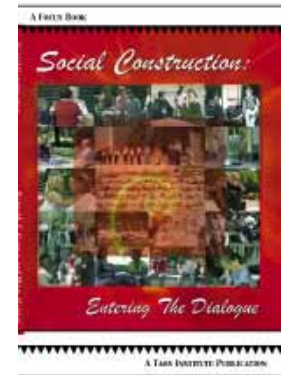
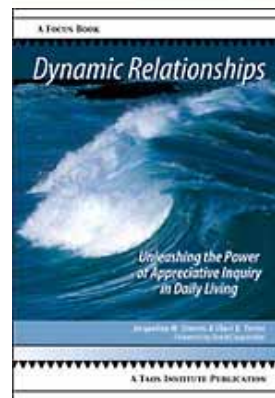
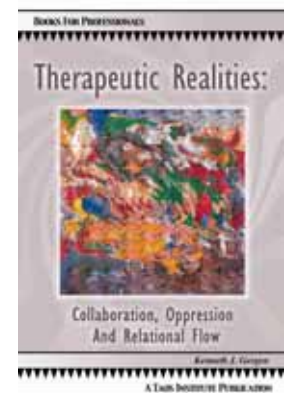
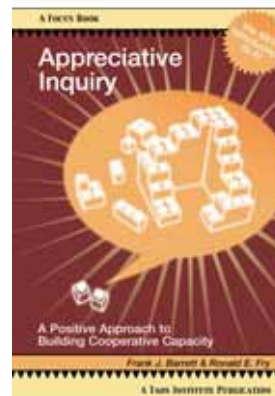
Email: office@positivechange.org

For workshop descriptions and more information visit:

WWW.TAOSINSTITUTE.NET



NEW BOOKS IN 2005-2006



The Taos Institute is proud to present the most recent among our publications. Please visit www.taosinstitutepublications.net to see descriptions and to order online using our secure shopping cart.



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Social Construction in Action around the World



Harlene Anderson's Summer Institute— **Adventures in Collaborative Practices:
Therapy, Training, Research & Organizational Consultation Across Cultures**

June 18-23, 2006, Playa del Carmen, Mexico with Pre- Institute Workshops: June 17-18, 2006

Information: harleneanderson@earthlink.net / 713-522-7112 / www.harleneanderson.org

Education & Action Resources

The Taos Institute offers you the following education and action resources:

- Free Manuscripts for Downloading
- Books of Interest
- Positive Aging Newsletter
- Video Productions
- AI Listserv
- AI Practitioner
- Noteworthy Dissertations
- Visit:



<http://www.taosinstitute.net/resources/resources.html>

New Books from Taos Institute Publications

We are excited to introduce three new books available now.

The first was published in October 2005, *Dynamic Relationships: Unleashing the Power of Appreciative Inquiry in Daily Living*, by Jackie Stavros and Cheri Torres. This book discusses how creating positive dynamics in all our relationships creates and sustains success. This requires a continuous awareness informed by appreciative action. Jackie and Cheri invite the reader to step into the appreciative paradigm to increase value and meaning in his/her life, communications, and relationships.

The second book was published in December 2005, *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Approach to Building Cooperative Capacity*, by Frank Barrett and Ron Fry. The purpose of this book is to provide a concise introduction to and overview of the growing discipline and practice of Appreciative Inquiry (AI). While the literature on AI is expanding rapidly with texts, handbooks, and case studies, the authors, Drs. Barrett and Fry feel

there is a strong call for a "quick read" that will assist curious change agents or leaders in determining if they are interested in learning more about this rapidly expanding field of theory and practice. If you are intrigued by the prospect of mobilizing rapid, positive change with multiple stakeholders in a human system that is important to you, this book is for you.

The third new book available now is written by Kenneth Gergen. *Therapeutic Realities: Collaboration, Oppression and Relational Flow*, contains Dr. Gergen's major contributions to therapeutic thought and practice. Earlier writings are updated and orchestrated, and original chapters added to reflect his most recent thinking on therapy as a process of collaborative construction. This work provides a brief introduction to social construction, and then illuminates the landscape of change. Special emphasis is given to topics of therapeutic communication, narrative, and therapeutic practices both traditional and contemporary. To order any of these books:

www.taosinstitutepublications.net

Counselor Education

Are you involved in training counselors using social constructionist ideas and want to discuss these ideas with other counselor educators? Consider joining the Social Constructionist Counselor Educators' Listserv, moderated by Tom Strong and David Pare. For more information email:

strongt@ucalgary.ca or

visit:

<http://mailman.ucalgary.ca/mailman/listinfo/soc-const-couns-ed-l>