

Taos Institute News

Creating Promising Futures through Social Construction

January 2011

An Exciting Year of Taos Institute Activities

A message from Kenneth Gergen, President of the Taos Institute

Inside this issue:

Message from the Taos President	1
Social Constructionism	2-3
Collaborative and Dialogic Practices in Therapy and Social Change—April 2010, Taos Conference	4
Moments with the Taos Board Members	5-6
Remembering Suresh Srivastva	6
Taos-Tilburg PhD Program	7
Taos Associates	8-9
Resources + Grants	10
Taos Workshops and Friends of Taos Workshops	11
Taos Institute Publications—Six New Books	12-13
Journal of Collaborative Practices, E-Journal in Danish and Summer Institute	14
Kudos for the Positive Aging Newsletter	15
Upcoming Conference March	15

In spite of economics and politics, it is easy to look appreciatively at the past year of Taos Institute activities. Collaboration with Taos Associates in Mexico yielded our first ever bi-lingual conference, Collaborative and Dialogic Practices in Therapy and Social Change, in Cancun, Mexico. This multi-workshop event was capped by dinner on the beach, complete with Mariachi band. Latin American developments were extended in a collaborative effort with Associate Dora Schnitman, yielding a Spanish speaking Network for Productive Dialogue (www.dialogosproductivos.net). These developments blended nicely with our English/Spanish journal, The International Journal of Collaborative Practices (<http://collaborative-practices.com>). Also abroad, we joined McMann Berg and Mindspace Press in launching *Relationel Praxis*, a Danish on-line journal (www.relationelpraxis.dk). Three new books were published, Maurits Kwee's *New Horizons in Buddhist Psychology*, Madelyn Blair's *Riding the Current: How to Deal with the Daily Deluge of Data*, and John Shotter's *Social Construction on the Edge*. The PhD program continues to thrive, with a greater number of applicants than ever before, and a spate of new graduates.

And with all this wind in our sails, we look forward to the coming year. The five-day cruise conference, Play with Purpose, is in the offing, and we will join the Danish consulting firm, Ramboll/Attractor, in putting on a summer institute in Copenhagen (<http://www.attractor.dk/english/summer%20institute>). In collaboration with the Houston/Galveston Institute, and with the participation of Institutes in Europe and Latin America, we will also launch an international certificate program on collaborative practices. We continue to work with Danish and Dutch groups in forming an MA program in Relational Leadership, with further programs on the drawing board in Mexico and Colombia. At times, we are also breathless...

In concluding, it is most important to acknowledge that virtually all these endeavors have been born through voluntary efforts. Amazing what can be accomplished by dedicated people working together!

Ken Gergen

"To eliminate all those whose values are not identical to one's own would leave but a single voice and an empty silence."

— Kenneth Gergen
Relation Being, 2009

Attractor/Taos Summer Institute

July 4th-6th, 2011

in Attractor's Copenhagen office

A conference on systemic, constructionist and appreciative theory and practice.

For details:

www.attractor.dk/english/summer%20institute

Social Constructionism

Sally St. George and Dan Wulff

In preparation for writing this feature article, we re-read previous features by Ken Gergen and Harlene Anderson and created “word clouds” (www.wordle.net) of their narratives. (The first is Ken’s and the second is Harlene’s):



Word clouds are visual displays of narrative text, creating larger and more striking presentations of words that are used more often. In Ken’s word cloud, *meaning* is much more prominent than other words; in Harlene’s word cloud, *knowledge* is showcased. Both of these words are key elements in social constructionist thought and language.

As we considered our understandings of social constructionism, in addition to meaning and knowledge, we believe that the contribution of the word *social* cannot be underestimated; in our Western ways of knowing, it is easy to be swept up in all the individualistic discourses in which *I*, *me*, and *my* are embedded. We are reminded daily of all the ways decisions in our lives are influenced by others, social understandings, and preferences.

Our students often ask about social constructionist talk. We ask them what they notice. When they tune their ears, they tell us that they hear talk that is offered tentatively and open for reshaping, as well as talk that offers inclusive invitations for interpreting and talk that uses the plural rather than the singular case. And when they hear this kind of talk, (continued on next page)

Social constructionism and *social* justice--both of these terms privilege the social in their very titles. We believe that thinking about the *social* can sometimes seem so huge and overwhelming to the individual or small group, that we often wither and abandon the effort, especially when it comes to speaking out or acting for justice. We cannot afford that position. We can make daily and small changes toward greater social justice by attending to our language, inviting others to talk about the issues as they are relevant to our daily living (e.g., how and where to shop, how budgets in our local communities are created and executed, services available to people in our communities, and the physical environment so strikingly present in all our lives). We stress the *daily* connections and possibilities between socially constructing our worlds and being socially just. We think that reminding ourselves of the social-ness in all we do is a ready pathway for us to construct fairness and just relations with our neighbours and fellow citizens of the world.

We have begun to post videos on our website that may be of interest to many of you. We invite you to take a look, spend some time and let us know what you think of this offering.

Kenneth Gergen Videos

A group of seven people, four men and three women, posing for a photo indoors. They are all smiling and holding glasses of wine. The setting appears to be a home with a large red circular artwork on the wall behind them.

January 2011

Collaborative and Dialogic Practices in Therapy and Social Change: Honoring the Past and Creating the Future

April 2010, Cancun, Mexico



In Cancun we joined together to explore innovative practices for therapy and social change, both past and present. We honored those whose legacy has inspired us (Tom Andersen, Gianfranco Cecchin, Harry Goolishian, Insoo Kim Berg, Steve de Shazer, Michael White, and Paul Watzlawick) and explored the polyphony of new practices that have emerged from the creative seeds of these legacies. Dan Wulff created a beautiful video that brought many of us to tears remembering those who have inspired us. We remembered our systemic, narrative and relational roots, showcased the growth and innovations that have evolved from those roots, and created the opportunity to join together in creating a social constructionist future in therapy and social change.

This conference brought together over 150 participants representing 16 countries including Japan and Taiwan. The entire conference was bi-lingual thanks to the six translators from our co-collaborators. In looking back on the event, four important things stood out:

- The successful attempt to bring English and Latin speaking cultures together in common dialogue. All sessions were in both Spanish and English. The six translators were active in every plenary and workshop. The effort was very important for a conference "first" in giving equal entry to the dialogues.
- The strong reliance on a large group of Taos Associates. Virtually all of the 35 plenaries and workshops featured the work of Taos Associates.
- The rich flow of "relational synergies" taking place throughout the conference.
- The injection of joy into the proceedings, largely from the inspirational efforts of our collaborating institutes in Mexico, Grupo Campos Eliseos and Kanankil Institute. There was music, food tasting samples, Mexican group dancing, a Mariachi band, a final banquet under the stars on the beach, and so much more.

We invite you to take a few minutes and view the picture show from the conference, the video by Dan Wulff, and the plethora of topics explored at the conference by going to this link: <http://www.taosinstitute.net/collaborative-dialogic-practices>

We want to thank our collaborating partners, Grupo Campos Eliseos, Kanankil Institute & Houston Galveston Institute, for their wonderful energy, creative spirit, and dynamic dedication to making this conference a huge success. We hope that future Taos conferences can be so nourishing at every level, and look forward to these collaborations.



Moments with the Taos Institute Board

Reporting by Mary Gergen

Taos Institute Board members find it amazing that we can find a couple of hours every month to engage in conference calls, and even more amazing that we can all find a time to come together for our yearly retreat. Autumn of 2010 we met at the home of board members **Kenneth and Mary Gergen**, where we reflected on the accomplishments and challenges of the year and constructed our "mischief" for the next several months. The weather cooperated, and we ate our lunches under the fall colored trees.

We also had some festive events to celebrate our successes this year. Here Dawn Dole, our Executive Director, is joined by Board members, Jane Magruder Watkins and Dan Wulff.



Besides our involvements with the Taos Institute, Board members lead very active lives. Here are a few highlights.

Sheila McNamee spent the year making academic appearances in various European venues, including the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, where she was joined by **Ken and Mary Gergen** for an international conference on ethics, along with associate **James Day**. A very important aspect of Sheila's year was the departure of son, Taylor Lannaman, who started college in Oregon, a long way from New Hampshire. (He loves it, so Sheila reports.) Sheila and Jack took East Coast Swing lessons once Taylor left home.....but when Jack had knee surgery after (another) ski-racing accident, the dance lessons stopped. (There are easier ways, Jack, to get out of dancing.)

For **Mary Gergen** a highlight of the year was meeting the authors of *Ordinary Life Therapy*, a Taos Institute publication, and their colleagues, at a family therapy conference in Gothenburg, Sweden. Despite the snowy weather, the welcoming hospitality of **Carina Hakansson** (a Taos Assoc.) and her colleagues made us warm indeed. Other thrills were being invited to participate in the biannual narrative conference held at St. Thomas University, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada in May, and returning to Marburg, Germany to present and do a workshop for *Lebenswandel als Dialog*, organized by Taos Associate **Klaus Diesler**. **Kenneth Gergen** and **Harlene Anderson** gave plenary talks at this conference as well.

Some the most expansive experiences of the year for **Ken Gergen** were conversations triggered by the publication of his award winning book, *Relational Being: Beyond the Individual and Community*. He was also captivated by the people and the creative projects encountered in his visit to Brazil, and he enjoyed playing the roll of the Spirit of Creative Past at the closing ceremony of the Cancun conference on therapy, with **Mary Gergen**, as his medium. Especially intriguing for him is a new project on games and cultural transformation, his first offering on this topic presented at a conference in Utrecht. His worst experiences included getting lost on Dutch trains two days running.

Dan Wulff and **Sally St. George** have been working diligently on the Viennese Waltz. The principles of dancing map onto their lives in many ways. Their favorite one at the moment, which their teacher keeps repeating, is "get out of his/her way --he/she will do his/her job. You will both get much further down the floor." For Sally and Dan, dancing is the ideal antidote to overwork. They have also been instrumental in promoting and editing *Qualitative Report* with **Ron Chenail**, a Taos Associate, and professor at Nova Southeastern University in Florida.



Left to right: Taos Board of Directors Bob Cottor, Jane Watkins, Sheila McNamee, Sally St. George, Dan Wulff, Harlene Anderson, Ken Gergen, and Mary Gergen (not pictured: David Cooperrider)

Bob Cottor's major event for the past year was the opening of Ryan House last March in Phoenix. Ryan House is a freestanding pediatric palliative care facility that provides respite and end-of-life care for children with life-threatening and life-limiting conditions and their families. It is named after Bob's now nine-year-old grandson, Ryan, who was diagnosed as an infant with spinal muscular atrophy, a progressive genetic neuromuscular disorder for which there is no treatment or cure. Ryan House is a unique facility in the United States. **Bob and Sharon Cottor**, a Taos associate, were able to facilitate the creation of a collaborative, appreciative and relationship-based healthcare program for Ryan House over the six years it took to make Ryan House a reality, from the initial dream to the final marvelous result.

Jane Magruder Watkins and husband/partner/Taos Associate **Ralph Kelly** have been spreading post-modern OD (Organization Development). 2010 has been a year on the road with the usual rewards of wonderful people and exciting places; and, the usual trials of endless airplanes, etc. While working in South Africa at the Wilgespruit Fellowship Center, they offered an Appreciative Inquiry Foundations course, where many of the people were delighted to learn about the Institute and its founders. **Jane** also was the prime mover behind the joint conference between NTL and the Taos Institute in March.

David Cooperrider spent the

Taos Board continued

majority of 2010 on a much needed sabbatical catching up on his writing along with fun -- kayaking, boating, golfing, doing yoga and going 'green' in his eating. He still managed to get in some traveling as he continues to consult with organizations around the world. He designed and facilitated a large AI Summit in Cleveland to create a *Green City on a Blue Lake* – a vision and plan for a sustainable Cleveland by 2019. In 2010 he was awarded the Peter Drucker Distinguished Fellow, from the Drucker School of Management at Claremont University, California.

Like other Board members, **Harlene Anderson** has been globe-trotting: presenting at conferences, providing workshops and consultations. She continues to be surprised and pleased at the growing interest and creative translation of collaborative-social construction-postmodern ideas and practices. Highlights of the year include launching of the International

Certificate Program in Collaborative Practices and nudging along the production of the second issue of the *International Journal of Collaborative Practices*. When she is back home in Houston, she enjoys spending time with her husband, David, at their river cabin.

Diana Whitney has had an exciting year, yet again. In 2010 people around the world welcomed the publication of *Appreciative Leadership* (**Diana Whitney, Amanda Trosten-Bloom**, (Taos Assoc.) & Kae Rader). She was invited to give speeches and workshops in the US, Europe and Asia. Along the way she learned that she really likes Bibimbap and almost all Korean food, shopping in Insa-dong, soaking in the Roman Baths in Budapest, watching fireworks over the Danube and swaying to Stand by Me by Playing for Change with hundreds of people. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Us-TVg40ExM>

Dawn Dole, our Executive

Director, not only manages our Board and organization, she works as an OD consultant with other Taos folks, including **Jim Willis** and **Miriam Ricketts** with whom she does a training for a 1,000 person experiential teambuilding program every year in Florida. Dawn also manages the AI Commons, and was a participant in the AI Storython, a special gathering in Washington DC, which celebrated the 10 year anniversary of the AI Consulting group. She also fulfilled her mother's great dream this year, accompanying her to the Oberammergau festival in Germany.

On a sad note, we said goodbye to one of our founders, **Suresh Srivastva**, who died May 8th. We honor him in the article below.

The founders and board members work everyday to bring the ideas of social construction to the forefront of practices that encourage positive change in society. It is the relationship at the center of everything.

Remembering Suresh Srivastva

Taos Institute Founder and Board Member

We will miss our friend and colleague Suresh Srivastva who died May 8, 2010 while at home with his family in Florida.

Suresh Srivastva was a founding member of the Taos Institute and an instrumental figure in the creation and development of Appreciative Inquiry. Suresh was professor emeritus of Organizational Behavior at Weatherhead School of Management and was David Cooperrider's mentor.

In a 2008 letter announcing a celebratory event in Srivastva's honor, Professors David Cooperrider (Taos founder) and Ronald Fry (Taos Associate) wrote that he brought to the department and to the field "a towering sense of purpose for the creation of a humanly significant science devoted to changing the human condition of the world." They added that he "left an unmistakable signature-legacy" on his students and colleagues, the department and the discipline.

"Suresh was one of the very early founders of the Department of Organizational Behavior at CWRU. He served as the chairman from 1970-1983 and was the primary driver in attaining academic credibility for our doctorate degree in organizational behavior. His leadership, scholarship and mentoring significantly shaped the identity we enjoy today as a place for novel and provocative ideas, research of consequence, and a developmental approach to educating and preparing future scholars and institution builders. For myself, the learning, self discovery, and appreciation I experienced in relationship with Suresh was life changing and I am forever grateful to have known him and to have called him mentor and friend," Ron Fry said.

Srivastva was the author or co-author of dozens of books, reports and articles related to the topic of organizational behavior. His first major article, "Toward a Social Psychology in Management: Some Neglected Variables in Management Thinking," was published in 1967. He concluded organizations are centers of human relatedness—where people come together to learn, to care and to grow, to love and develop, to cooperate and to co-create.



Taos Institute -Tilburg University Ph.D. Program in Social Sciences

13 students graduate in 2009 and 2010

Read about our students' dissertation research and writing.

Very exciting work — go to this link or click here to read the updates for 2010:

<http://www.taosinstitute.net/current-dissertations>



Julie Tilsen — Resisting Homonormativity: Therapeutic Conversations with Queer Youth

Kara Kaufman — Crossroad Moments with My Self: Conversation, Perspective, and Choice through Social Constructionism



Yossi Tal and Itzi Lichtenfeld -

Transferring the Aviation Risk Management Model (ARMM) into an Ambulatory Healthcare Organization

Lorraine Hedtke - Folding Memories in Conversation: Remembering Practices in Bereavement Groups



Christine Dennstedt — The Interplay of Substance Misuse and Disordered Eating Practices in The Lives of Young Women: Implications for Narrative Therapeutic Practice

For more pictures and dissertation topics visit the program's web page at: <http://www.taosinstitute.net/phd-program>

Completed Dissertations

The Taos Institute-Tilburg University students who have completed the program share their dissertations on the Taos Institute website. Please visit this page: <http://www.taosinstitute.net/completed-dissertations> to view these dissertations.

Noteworthy Dissertations

The Taos Institute is collecting dissertations from around the world which are related to social construction research, theory and practice. Visit <http://www.taosinstitute.net/noteworthy-dissertations>. Many new scholars are finding intriguing and innovative ways to employ social constructionism as the substantive focus of their work, as a guide to methodological designs, or as an organizing framework for the entire dissertation/thesis enterprise. We hope these "noteworthy dissertations" will stimulate networking conversations among all who read them. Authors of these dissertations have granted the Taos Institute non-exclusive rights to post their dissertations on its website in a PDF format. Please use correct citation when quoting from any of these documents.

New Associates in 2009 and 2010

We are pleased to introduce the following colleagues as Associates of the Taos Institute. They were invited to participate in this capacity for their outstanding work in their field related to social construction and its applications to academics, professional practice, organizational and community development. The Honorary Associates are colleagues whose contributions have been unusually stimulating and inspiring and exceptional contributions to the dialogues, practices and ideals of the Taos Institute. We invite you to get to know them.

Honorary Associates

- Toshio Sugiman** - Graduate School of Human and Environmental Studies, Kyoto University, Japan, sgiman@toshio.mbox.media.kyoto-u.ac.jp
- Karl Scheibe** - Susan B and William K. Wasch Center for Retired Faculty, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, kscheibe@wesleyan.edu
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- Jaber F. Gubrium** - Department of Sociology, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO, gubrium@missouri.edu
- Jill Freedman** - Faculty member, Chicago Center for Family Health, Evanston Family Therapy Center, Evanston, IL, narrativetherapy@sbcglobal.net
- Gene Combs** - Departments of Family Medicine and Psychiatry, Glenbrook Hospital, Professor in the Departments of Family Medicine and Psychiatry at NorthShore University HealthSystem, Director of Behavioral Science, University of Chicago, Family Medicine Residency Program, Glenview, IL, narrativetherapy@sbcglobal.net
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Taos Institute Web-page Featuring the Associates

Taos Institute Associates are colleagues who have supported the work of the Taos Institute and continue to promote and work with social constructionist thought, practice and theory in their own work. We hope you will take some time to visit the Taos Institute website page which features our colleagues who are Taos Associates.

<http://www.taosinstitute.net/institute-associates>

Web of Connections

The **AI Practitioner**, edited by Anne Radford is an excellent source for up-to-date and relevant examples of Appreciative Inquiry. Visit Anne's website at:

<http://www.aipractitioner.com/>

You may find other innovative and interesting links on our web page called **Web of Connections**

<http://www.taosinstitute.net/web-of-connections>

This page includes a list of institutions with which our work at the Taos Institute is deeply resonant.

Free Articles and Papers

We invite you to take a look at the articles on this web page of the Taos Institute website. Perhaps there is a paper or article which you have not read yet.....

<http://www.taosinstitute.net/manuscripts-for-downloading>

We also list **"Books of Interest"**. If you know of a book that has been of interest to you, related to social construction, let us know. We can post the book cover, title and ISBN.

<http://www.taosinstitute.net/books-of-interest>



Cultures of Participation Book Project

The Christopher Reynolds Foundation in New York awarded the Taos Institute with a \$70,000 grant to fund the "Cultures of Participation" book and research project. Diana Whitney (Taos Institute founder and board member emerita) is the project liaison for the Taos Institute. Diana is one of the collaborating authors on the Cultures of Participation at Work book project. Jeff Jackson and Maurice Monette of the Vallarta Institute (www.vallartainstitute.com) in Oakland, CA are volunteer Project Managers for the project on behalf of the Taos Institute. Patricia Arenas of Cuba is the project coordinator in Cuba. She is a new Taos Institute Associate. This

project is designed to create publications which were originally published in English in the U.S. and make them available in Spanish for Cuba where the books will be primarily disseminated. The project is in collaboration with the Center for Psychological and Sociological Research in Havana, Cuba and the Martin Luther King Foundation.



Conferences through the Years: Take a look at all the conferences we've held over the past 18 years.

The first Taos Institute conference was in April 1993 with over 130 participants from around the world.

<http://www.taosinstitute.net/previous-conferences1>

It is exciting to see the growth and YOU have been an important part of making this happen.

Workshops for 2011

The Taos Institute Workshop Series

These workshops are all fully sponsored by The Taos Institute. Questions regarding content, registration, and fees for a particular workshop may be directed to the presenter of the workshop. For general questions email the Taos Institute — info@taosinstitute.net.

For information and details visit:

<http://www.taosinstitute.net/upcoming-workshops>

* **Foundations of Appreciative Inquiry** with Diana Whitney and Ralph Weickel, March 14-18 in Chapel Hill, NC

* **Pathways to Publishing: A Writing Workshop** with Jackie Stavros and Jane Seiling, March 31-April 1 in Southfield, Michigan

* **Social Construction, Relational Theory, and Transformative Practices** with Dian Marie Hosking and Sheila McNamee, April 11-13 in Utrecht, The Netherlands

* **Social Constructionist Inquiry and Research Practices** with Sheila McNamee, Dan Wulff and Sally St. George, May 11-14 in Calgary, Canada

* **Social Construction, Relational Theory and Change Practices** with Ken and Mary Gergen, June 5-7 in Wallingford, Pennsylvania

* **Postmodern-Social Construction Philosophy and Practices** with Harlene Anderson, June 19-24 in Playa del Carmen, Mexico

* **Social Constructionist Inquiry** with Sheila McNamee and Saliha Bava, October 27-29, 2011 in Durham, NH

Positive Aging Newsletter: The Taos Institute is pleased to offer an electronic newsletter, *Positive Aging*. The newsletter brings to light resources—from scientific research on aging, gerontology practices, and daily life—that contribute to an **appreciation of the aging process**. This newsletter provides resources for understanding aging as an **unprecedented period of human development**.

<http://www.taosinstitute.net/positive-aging-newsletter>

Friends of the Taos Institute Workshops

The Taos Institute offers this workshop listing opportunity as a service to our associates and friends to share their great work. The Taos Institute is not responsible for the content or management of these workshops. Questions regarding registration and content should be directed to the workshop presenters. **For details visit:**

<http://www.taosinstitute.net/friends-of-taos-institute-workshops>

Igniting Innovation & Sustaining Positive Change: Foundations & Breakthroughs of Appreciative Inquiry, Jan. 24-26, - Cambridge, MA with Bernard J. Mohr, Roz Kay & Lisa Hirsh

Appreciative Inquiry for Strategic Planning (AISP), Jan. 24-28 - London, UK with Tony Silbert and David Shaked

Rapid Strategy Development Getting to Engagement and Results Quicker, Jan. 31 - London, UK with Tony Silbert & David Shaked

The Fourth Annual Innovation Expedition In Healthcare, Feb 6-7 - Boston, MA with Bernard Mohr , Dr. Martin Merry, Danny Nashman

LEAD from Your Strengths: A Simple Way to Address Daily Challenges and Opportunities, Mar 7 - Washington, DC , with Ada Jo Mann

CMM as Spiritual Practice, Mar12-13 - Vallombrosa Retreat Center, Menlo Park, California with Barnett and Kim Pearce

Foundations of Appreciative Inquiry, Mar 14-18, Chapel Hill, NC with Diana Whitney, Ralph Weickel, Claire Fialkov and David Haddad

Appreciative Leadership Development Program®, April 26-29, Chapel Hill, NC with Diana Whitney and Carlos Aguilera

The Appreciative Inquiry Summit, May 3-6, 2011 – Golden, CO, with Amanda Trosten-Bloom and Barbara Lewis

Foundations & Breakthroughs of Appreciative Inquiry, May 16-18 - Providence, RI with Tony Silbert & Jen Hetzel Silbert

Being Appreciative Inquiry Spiritual Retreat, May 23-26, Chapel Hill, NC with Diana Whitney

Rapid Strategy Development Getting to Engagement and Results Quicker, June 16 - Providence, RI with Tony Silbert & Jen Hetzel Silbert

Cultivating Character Strengths, June 24-25 – Boston, MA with Claire Fialkov and David Haddad

Foundations of Appreciative Inquiry, July 25-29 - Costa Mesa, CA with Tenny Poole and Ralph Weickel

The Appreciative Inquiry Summit, Sept. 26-29 – Chapel Hill, NC with Ralph Weickel & Diana Whitney

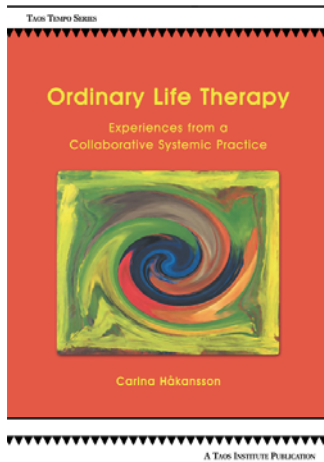
Appreciative Leadership Development Program®, Nov. 2-5 – Golden, CO with Amanda Trosten-Bloom and Kae Rader

Appreciative Leadership Development Program® Trainer Certification, Nov. 7-8 – Golden, CO with Diana Whitney and Amanda Trosten-Bloom

Appreciative Inquiry Foundations Workshop: Igniting and Sustaining Positive Change, Nov.29-Dec.2 - Ottawa, ON Canada with Joanne Daykin and Catherine McKenna

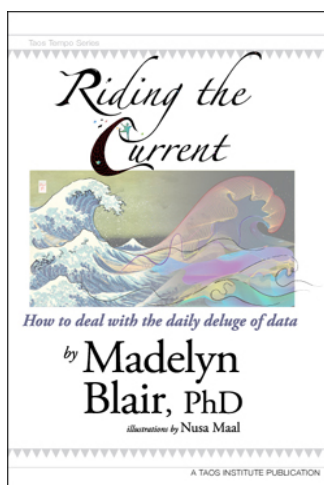
Foundations of Appreciative Inquiry, Dec. 5-9 – Golden, CO with Amanda Trosten-Bloom and Barbara Lewis

New Books in 2009 and 2010 — www.taospub.net



Ordinary Life Therapy, by Carina Hakansson

Here is an unusual tale about a unique endeavour. Families, supported by professionals, have opened their homes for people in severe difficulties, both mentally and socially. In the book you hear voices of all parties, therapists, families, referring professionals and the individuals and families concerned. The book mirrors more than twenty years of experience from this creative combination of therapeutic skills and daily fellowship, enabling a new start in life in a seemingly hopeless situation



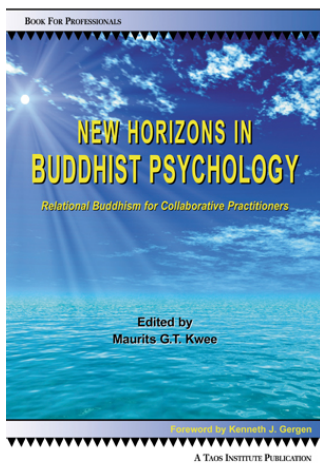
Riding the Current: How to Deal with the Daily Deluge of Data, by Madelyn Blair

In *Riding the Current*, Madelyn Blair shares ways ordinary and extraordinary people from around the world address the limits of time and budget, massive overdoses of information, and even lack of management skill to stay current in a fast-paced world. You'll learn new ways to keep your knowledge fresh through conscious self-guided learning that is grounded in the world around us! This book will help you discover ways in which your learning can occur outside the classroom and beyond books.



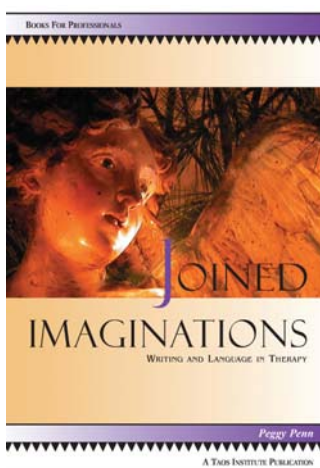
Positive Approaches to Peacebuilding: A Resource for Innovators, edited by Cynthia Sampson, Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Claudia Liebler, Diana Whitney

Positive Approaches to Peacebuilding presents an innovative perspective on peacebuilding that breaks new ground. The theoretical frameworks are rich enough to satisfy scholars, the case studies are practical enough to engage practitioners and the tips and guides to practice are sure to inspire new and innovative work among peacebuilders. This book beautifully describes the social construction of imagined futures, inviting us, as scholar-practitioners, to move beyond 'problem solving' and its ethic of 'neutrality,' towards Appreciative Inquiry, and its ethics of narrative, voice, and meaning-making, relying on the heart-wisdom that flourishes in the context of affirmation. This book powerfully delivers what it promises—a provocation to think more deeply about how we conduct our peacemaking and peacebuilding relationships. A must read for those who dare to make a difference.



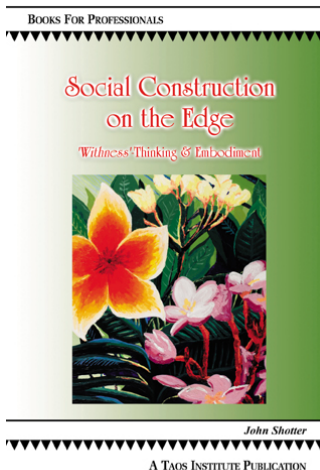
New Horizons in Buddhist Psychology: Relational Buddhism for Collaborative Practitioners, edited by Maurits Kwee

In this rich and wide-ranging anthology, Maurits G.T. Kwee has assembled ranking authorities on Buddhism as it originated, evolved, and stands in relationship to present day psychology, psychiatry, and education. The cast of authors includes eminent international scholars, teachers, practitioners, and monks. They explore Buddhist views as they originated over 2.5 millennia ago, as they have developed in many ways since this period, and as they now intersect with cutting edge scholarship in social construction. The book provides an in-depth understanding of Buddhist practices and their potentials, and the ideas that for centuries have had a profound contribution to cultural life.



Joined Imaginations: Writings and Language in Therapy, by Peggy Penn

Peggy Penn's book skillfully and gracefully traverses the edge between life and art. Her deep love of words and language, often in the form of poetry, also reflects an abiding philosophical stance about the power of language to shape relationships. Language and listening are the most powerful tools a therapist has, and Peggy Penn explores them with curiosity, interest, and reverence. Peggy found her true calling in this work, and her commitment to its beauty and power to shape our emotional landscape is inspirational.



Social Construction on the Edge: "Witness"-Thinking and Embodiment, by John Shotter

This is a book for practitioners, for people who, like crafts-persons or sports-people, must continually shape or fashion their conduct both within the immediate allowances or opportunities for action afforded them by their circumstances, *whilst at the same time*, aiming at an overall goal of 'bettering' those circumstances, and their performances within them, in some way. The overall approach taken in this collection of essays is 'on the edge' of social constructionism in that – rather than emphasizing a "linguistic" or an "interpretative" turn – it emphasizes the spontaneous, expressive-responsiveness of our living bodies as providing the 'background glue' that holds us together in all our relationships, both with all the other people around us and with all the events also occurring in our surroundings. It thus emphasizes how our living, bodily embedding in this previously unnoticed background, and the ways in which events in it both 'call out' expressive-responses from us, whilst leading us to 'resist' others, exerts much more of an influence on our actions than previous versions of social constructionism seem to allow.

To Order Online: <http://www.taospub.net/>

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES

relationships and conversations that make a difference

The *International Journal of Collaborative Practices* provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and stories from practitioners who utilize collaborative principles in their disciplines and daily work.

The Journal brings together authors and readers who are part of an ever-growing international community of practitioners including scholars, educators, researchers, and consultants interested in postmodern collaborative practices. This community is part of the broader dialogical movement in the social sciences composed of those who share an interest in: "How can our theories and practices have relevance for people's everyday lives in our fast changing world, what is this relevance, and who determines it?"

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CONTENT

- Articles
- Frequently Asked Questions
- From the Bookshelf
- Blog about the Journal
- Conference and Project Announcements

From the Bookshelf Editor

Margarita Tarragona
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Monica Sesma
Mexico

Spotlighting

The promotion of democracy, social justice and human rights

The necessity of collaboration

The importance of the people's voice, singular or plural

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The Attractor/Taos Summer Institute

July 4th-6th, 2011

in Attractor's Copenhagen office

A conference on systemic, constructionist and appreciative theory and practice.

Taos Institute presenters include:

Ken Gergen
Mary Gergen
John Shotter
Sheila McNamee
Gerald Monk
Frank Barrett

For details:

www.attractor.dk/english/summer%20institute

E- Journal in Danish

Relational Practices: Leadership & Organization Development

The Taos Institute has helped to sponsor a new free e-journal "Relational Practice" which is about leadership and organizational development, drawing on inspiration from the social constructionist, systemic, appreciative and narrative thinking, well known in many Danish organizations.

The journal's ambition is to provide a diversity of voices the opportunity to share their inspiration and experience of relational practice, so that together we can develop, disseminate and reinforce this practice. It is a journal from practitioners and to practitioners; managers, consultants, employees and others who are working to develop their own and others' everyday practice.

http://forlagetmindspace.dk/etidsskrift/1_2010/1_2010.html





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Kudos for the Positive Aging Newsletter

For the past ten years Ken and Mary Gergen have been editing the *Positive Aging Newsletter*, sponsored by the Taos Institute. The Wall Street Journal announced that the Positive Aging Newsletter is:

THE BEST IN...

INSIGHTS IN AGING

The electronic newsletter, which is free to subscribers, is dedicated to one goal, and that is to publish all the research results and news, as well as web, visual and literary resources, that suggest that the last third of life, the "third age" as some call it, is a time of life that is highly generative and rich in wisdom and personal satisfaction. The aim of the newsletter is to actively fight the stereotypes of old age that are so prevalent in our society.

The hope is to undermine the notion that the life-span is an archway, with those who are growing older becoming "over the hill." Instead, the attempt is to emphasize a way of



understanding the later years as an upward trajectory.

Thanks to volunteers, the newsletter is also available in French, German, Spanish and Chinese. Italian editions may be coming soon.

The Gergen's also give workshops and seminars on positive aging. If you would like to receive the newsletter in any of its languages, visit: <http://www.positiveaging.net> to sign up and to read the current and archived newsletters.

Peacebuilding, Mediation and Conflict Transformation: Exploring Relational, Collaborative and Appreciative Practices in beautiful San Diego!

**Mark your calendars—tentative dates:
March 28—April 1, 2012**

This will be a gathering of practitioners and scholars who are devoted to developing and sharing ways of moving from conflict-saturated relations to collaborating across divides of meaning. It will both educate and inspire new forms of practice and new projects large and small.

Look for more information soon on the Taos website.