

Brief Encounter with the Taos Institute

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Are Relational Practices, Dialogue, and Collaboration Enough: Part II

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Last month I offered a Brief Encounter entitled, *Are Relational Practices, Dialogue, and Collaboration Enough?* In that piece, I raised these questions: *How do we call others to dialogue when their interest is only directed toward wealth and power? How do we adopt a curiosity for ideas that are so different from our own? Is it possible to refrain from judgment of one who believes that the color of one's skin is surely linked to the degree of one's humanity? How do we cultivate curiosity about another nation's apparent disregard for human life?*

Pedro Martins responded to my invitation to join in this conversation. He said, *I usually like to look at my surroundings and ask myself: who can I connect with to make my professional efforts more impactful? Can I take these ideas to someone who had the means to broaden and strengthen them? I am thinking here about a big range of social actors, such as politicians, business people, news staff, digital influencers, etc., who might be impactful in ways that my single actions are very often not. I am also trying to be aware of how I can use my own privileges to amplify these connections and make them worth the while of others.*

Greg Spiro also shared some provocative words. Greg shared a poem he wrote called, *Non-Judgment Day: A Proposal* (2018). (You can read Greg's poem at this [LINK.](#)) In keeping with his poem, Greg wrote, *So the specific suggestion I propose, somewhat presumptuously, is that the Taos Institute might be the perfect forum to establish 'Non-judgment day.'* What does 'non-judgmental' mean for ourselves and our clients? How does it play out in practice? How do we reconcile this core value with our own opinions and indeed our judgments? *The . . . poem starts off with some warm and cuddly possibilities but culminates in a darker challenge: we have to find ways of engaging in dialogue with our adversaries. I wonder if there is any appetite to establish 'Non-judgment day' as a forum in which we could explore and roll out its possibilities?*

As I read Greg's comment and poem, I recalled the Milan Systemic practice of engaging in what they called a "linear orgy" as a way of cathartically releasing their judgement. Working as a team, they would take a break from their conversation with a family and, once separated from

the family, give voice to their prejudices, judgements, and opinions. Rather than ignore these judgmental positions, the Milan Team believed that voicing their prejudices prepared them to engage in more generative, respectful, and appreciative ways with their clients. Rather than act as if our judgement is non-existent, can we *first* acknowledge so that we might then move toward curiosity for our differences?

In some ways, the ability to entertain curiosity over judgement while also moving a bit beyond our comfort zone in our practice is the focus of the Taos Institute's upcoming virtual Gathering, November 12-18, 2022 ([LINK](#)), ***Unfolding Dialogues: Relational Resources for Global Good***. Given the global challenges facing us in this increasingly complex and potentially volatile world, there is a vital need for innovative ideas and practices of promise for our ways of relating. This virtual gathering, a kind of un-conference, will offer all of us the opportunity to share ideas and practices that bring insights and inspiration for addressing these challenges. From the local to the global, how can social constructionist ideas and practices help us create and bring forward new ways of going on together? I hope you will join us to continue this important conversation and work together to expand constructionist practices for the global good.



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2022
GATHERING

A SERIES OF GLOBAL, VIRTUAL EVENTS

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Relational Resources
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