INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction..

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI®

University of Alberta

When Principals Engage in Public Acts of Resistance:
Stories of Relationships

by

Barbara Jeanne Spilchuk ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

Educational Administration and Leadership

Department of Educational Policy Studies

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall, 2000

National Library
of Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-59673-7

Canada

University of Alberta

Library Release Form

Name of Author: Barbara Jeanne Spilchuk

Title of Thesis: When Principals Engage in Public Acts of Resistance:
Stories of Relationships

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

Year this Degree Granted: 2000

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Library to reproduce single
copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific
research purposes only.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright
in the thesis, and except as herein before provided, neither the thesis nor any substantial
portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatever
without the author's prior written permission.
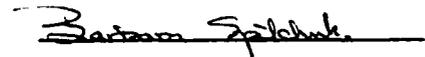
2017 1st Avenue
Cold Lake, Alberta
T9M 1E7

June 5 / 2000

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommended to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled When Principals Engage in Public Acts of Resistance: Stories of Relationships submitted by Barbara Jeanne Spilchuk in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration and Leadership.

Dr. Bill Maynes (supervisor)
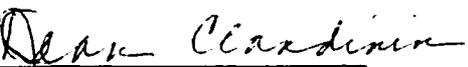
Dr. Jean Clandinin

Dr. José da Costa
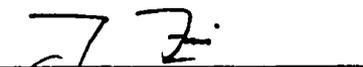
Dr. Joe Fris

Dr. David MacKinnon
(external examiner)

May 26, 2000

Abstract

Central to this inquiry are teachers' stories of relationships during times of conflict in schools where the principal has resisted an order from a superior. Because, in each case, the principals chose to resist openly so that others would be aware that they were doing so, I refer to their actions as "public acts of resistance" in this study.

Five stories of principals' public acts of resistance form the context for the teachers' stories of relationships told in this inquiry. My story is one of these five principals' stories. The five stories told by teachers, one for each of the five schools where the principals were located, provide insights into relationships before, during and after our public acts of resistance. The stories told by the teachers are the focus of this inquiry.

It has been my intention in conducting this inquiry to add to our understanding of the landscape of schools, as it pertains to teachers' relationships. In particular, these relationships are found within the context of conflict following a principal's public act of resistance.

Much of our understanding about teachers' relationships in schools may be found in specific stories told by narrative researchers (Bateson, 1989; Chase, 1995; Clandinin, 1995; Greene, 1994; Qoyawayma, 1992). Information about relationships can also be found in research that describes the characteristics of what encompasses a good relationship (Morgan, 1997; Sergiovanni, 1992; Strike, Haller & Soltis, 1988; Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1996; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). I found no research, however, that focuses upon teachers' relationships during times of conflict. This inquiry may offer possibilities for enhanced understanding within this area.

How teachers feel during conflict that affects them is another area that has not been widely researched. The stories in this inquiry explore the feelings of five teachers caught in conflictual situations. Their stories are about how they made sense of and chose to respond to those situations.

By understanding more about the people in educational organizations, it may be possible to come to some greater understanding of "the nature of human life as lived to bear on educational experience as lived" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, p. 3).

Dedication

I want to acknowledge those who walked with me on this journey. Their footprints are recorded on the pages of this text.

Dr. Bill Maynes, my supervisor, a person of high integrity and emotional intelligence without whom this journey would not have been possible. Bill, you helped me find my way through many rocky trails. I am indebted to you, both as a person and a scholar.

Dr. Jean Clandinin who asked me to look at my colleagues in a different way, and then to listen and hear what they had to say. Jean, although that burning question is recorded here, I do not think I have found the answers, only possibilities to be considered.

Dr. Margaret Haughey, that intrepid Irish woman, who inspired me to step out of the shadows. Margaret, while the rules don't allow me to place your name on my signature page, they cannot discount your imprints on this narrative nor deny the history we share.

My colleagues over the years who have shared their courage with me. You know who you are. In a perfect world I would name you but the story of Kathmandu continues. Some of our stories and our relationships are recorded here, in this account of one segment of our journey together. Semper Fi, eagles.

My co-researchers who opened up their selves to me so that we might talk together of how things are, and how things might be in a perfect educational world.

My teachers, the two Joes. I leave one an eagle feather and the other a prayer that he might also sail fast one day. And David, who "travelled" to my "world" to better understand the person behind the words.

My sister, Pat, who taught me that life is a journey bursting with challenges and successes, relationships and stories. "O mani padme om," Pat. You are indeed the "Traveller," as will your Heather be some day. She has had a teacher of excellence. My mother and father who nurtured and supported me along the way. "Road Runner" can now slow down to share the small pleasures of life with you. My husband, Brian, my friends, Vanessa, Heather, Shelley, Ihor and Little Ed, and my step-children, Donovan and Heidi, who often had to travel this journey with me whether they wanted to or not. My brother, Tom and his family, Terry, Christie and Jodi, who remained steadfast from a distance. My mentor, LaVerne, who gave me her strength as a crutch when I thought I could walk no further. And my son, Graig, the most precious legacy I can leave to a future I hope fervently will always include the concepts of care and consideration in the relationships between and among all people.

"Many will walk through your life but few will leave their footprints on your heart" (unknown). You have all left your gentle footprints on my heart, and I find that they are not a heavy load to carry as I continue on my journey.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Schools are About People

The Beginning

"A good educational system ought to nurture creativity,
independent thought, and a moral instinct.
These aspects of human life should be allowed to flourish."
(Chomsky, 1999)

Annapurna Sanctuary
and Circuit Trek
Ghorapani, Nepal
Sunday, Oct. 19 / 97
Hiking Day 12
Photo by: Pat Kvill   1

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Schools are about people. Stories of conflict in schools can capture our imagination because they are stories of people. This dissertation is about such stories and their effects upon those who were part of the conflict in those stories.

Central to this inquiry are teachers' stories of relationships during times of conflict in schools where the principal has resisted an order from a superior. Because, in each case, the principals chose to resist openly so that others would be aware that they were doing so, I refer to their actions as "public acts of resistance" in this study.

Five stories of principals' public acts of resistance form the context for the teachers' stories of relationships told in this inquiry. My story is one of these five principals' stories. The five stories told by teachers, one for each of the five schools where the principals were located, provide insights into relationships before, during and after our public acts of resistance. The stories told by the teachers are the focus of this inquiry.

The major question the teacher co-researchers and I explored together is: "When the principal engaged in a public act of resistance, how did that affect your life in the school and your relationships with other people located there and elsewhere?" This question caught my imagination and drove me to explore this area because of my personal experiences, and those of my teachers. When I had engaged in a public act of resistance, the teachers became caught in the conflict. While many supported me, it must have been a

2

difficult decision for them to make because they did not have all of the information I had.

I can only imagine what a frightening experience the conflict that followed was from that

perspective. I have wondered how that conflict reshaped their relationships with me, with

each other, and with others in our district.

Some of the related questions the teacher co-researchers and I explored together

are: (a) "How did you feel?", (b) "How did others feel about the principal's actions?", and

(c) "How did you feel about the response from central office?" Another key question is:

"How did your relationships with others, the principal, the teachers on staff, and central

office personnel change because of the act and the response?" These questions have

required me to reenter my own story of conflict and shifting relationships as a

participant-researcher. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) indicate of narrative researchers:

> Working in this space means that we become visible with our own lived and told
> stories. Sometimes this means that our own unnamed, perhaps secret stories come
> to light as much as do those of our participants. This confronting of ourselves in
> our narrative past makes us vulnerable as inquirers because it makes secret stories
> public. In narrative inquiry, it is impossible (or if not impossible, then
> deliberatively self-deceptive) as researchers to stay silent or to present a kind of
> perfect, idealized, inquiring, moralizing self. (p. 62)

My story is told within this inquiry. I have not been explicit about the details in order to

protect individuals within my story. Nevertheless, parts of my story are here in the poetry

I write, in the story segments I offer, in the research I explore and in the wonders I share.

As well, one of the teacher co-researcher's stories serves to offer a different perspective

from which my story may be understood. While this teacher's story has not been

connected to mine within this inquiry for safety purposes, my story lives through it. It also

lives through the stories of the other teacher co-researchers since my interpretations have

3

merged with their interpretations of what occurred. This reliving of my old story in community has provided me with new imaginings from which to reconstruct my life in a different direction.

Purpose

It has been my intention in conducting this inquiry to add to our understanding of the landscape of schools, as it pertains to teachers' relationships. In particular, these relationships are found within the context of conflict following a principal's public act of resistance.

Much of our understanding about teachers' relationships in schools may be found in specific stories told by narrative researchers (Bateson, 1989; Chase, 1995; Clandinin, 1995; Greene, 1994; Qoyawayma, 1992). Information about relationships can also be found in research that describes the characteristics of what encompasses a good relationship (Morgan, 1997; Sergiovanni, 1992; Strike, Haller & Soltis, 1988; Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1996; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). I found no research, however, that focuses upon teachers' relationships during times of conflict. This inquiry may offer possibilities for enhanced understanding within this area.

How teachers feel during conflict that affects them is another area that has not been widely researched. The stories in this inquiry explore the feelings of five teachers caught in conflictual situations. Their stories are about how they made sense of and chose to respond to those situations.

By understanding more about the people in educational organizations, it may be

4

possible to come to some greater understanding of "the nature of human life as lived to bear on educational experience as lived" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, p. 3). Only through understanding the experiences of individuals can we begin to understand the social environments that have helped to shape these individuals. The stories in this inquiry offer some understandings about teacher relationships during times of conflict.

Perspectives on Conflict and Relationships Brought to this Inquiry

It is commonly agreed upon in school reform literature that teachers are key to successful learning for students (Barth, 1990; Lambert et al., 1996; Lieberman & Miller, 1999; Sergiovanni, 1992). Teachers continue to grow as they make sense of situations in the classroom, revising their practice to solve problems (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Certain academic tensions and conflicts help teachers examine their values and beliefs about teaching. Pedagogic conflict encourages teachers to seek out better ways to engage students in their learning (Schon, 1983). Conflict, in this context, has the potential to be highly productive in schools.

Researchers have also found that teachers work to build classrooms that are safe and caring environments where children can learn and grow (Grimmett & Erickson, 1988; Paley, 1996; Schubert & Ayers, 1992). The teachers, in turn, also need safe and caring environments as they work to improve their practice with the children (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997; Clandinin, 1986, 1995; Connelly & Clandinin, 1986, 1986a, 1987, 1988, 1994, 1994a; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). A safe and caring environment appears to be a critical prerequisite for teacher innovation and risk-taking in a

5

school (Sergiovanni, 1991, 1992; Morgan, 1997).

In my experience, I have found that some conflict in schools has the power to threaten this safe and caring environment. I believe that many teachers place people before the goals of their organization during conflict that threatens relationships. I believe they do this to ensure their safety as well as the safety of others they care about. When safety is threatened for the teachers, it seems likely that the children will also be affected.

When a principal engages in a public act of resistance, one of the results can be conflict. When conflict occurs, sometimes the teachers will seek to understand the root cause. They may have discussions about it, reflect upon it and make judgements about it. At some point, the teachers may choose to support, avoid or take an active stance against issues within the conflict. From differing points of view, teachers will see the act or the conflict in different ways. As a result, some of each teacher's relationships may be affected. These shifting relationships may, in turn, result in further conflict. I have wondered how it is that teachers negotiate this as they also endeavour to teach effectively.

As I look back at my experiences and those of my teachers, this wonder stands out. Perhaps the stories found within this inquiry may give others pause to also consider this puzzle. As Wheatley indicated about story telling at the *8th International Conference on Thinking* in Edmonton, Alberta (July 4-9, 1999):

> There's a great resurgence or a great remembering of the value of story telling. People say, 'Just tell me your story.' Or we ask executives now in corporations, 'Let's just each tell our story of what's going on here, what happened. Let's each tell our story of why this work is meaningful to us.' But we're using the word story in a very important way which is to go back to what is a basic human capacity to sit together and share our unique and individual perceptions of what the world means to us, to share our unique meaning, to share our unique

6

perceptions. And I just want to emphasize the word 'unique.' When we ask people to tell us their story, we start with the assumption that no two stories will be the same. We agree with the understanding that no two people see the world the same. And when we ask people to tell their stories, we're returning in our primal minds to a time when we know we sat around in circles and shared our understanding of life. Now what's really interesting about story telling is that it's also coming out in the work of complexity science -- that the only way to understand a complex phenomenon, a complex system, is to tell stories about it. There's no one interpretation; there's no single cause and effect. There's your story from where you sit in the complex system. There's my story from where I sit in the complex system and then there are all those millions of others. Now if we were to sit together to tell stories we might, I believe, begin to grasp the complexity of our organization, the complexity of our life, the complexity of our community. This is very far removed from analysis, data gathering, interviewing and what I just want to stress is that telling stories is a more holistic way of understanding a complex system than any other methodology.

An Outline of this Inquiry

This inquiry focuses upon relationships among teachers when the principal has engaged in a public act of resistance. The key question which guided the inquiry is: "When the principal engaged in a public act of resistance, how did that affect your life in the school and your relationships with other people located there and elsewhere?" The sub-questions focus upon the feelings of the teachers during the conflict. My own story may help to put these questions into perspective as they pertain to my passionate desire to learn more about this puzzle.

My personal story of resistance is found in Chapter 2. This chapter situates me as a narrative inquirer within my own story. It includes some of my wonders about the principalship. It also includes my interpretations of some of the problems I have encountered and the dilemmas I have dealt with from that perspective.

7

I named an individual in this inquiry who has intimate knowledge of my story. My sister, Pat, is this person; she has consented to being named. Pat is a lawyer who has recently received an appointment as an Alberta Provincial Court judge. As a 'critical friend,' Pat assisted me, through her insights about natural justice, in understanding how my experiences may have influenced my relationships. Pat's legal experiences moulded her beliefs about people and relationships. Many of Pat's entries in her personal travel journal from Nepal refer, specifically, to caring in relationships. I included some of Pat's entries that appear to be representational of her beliefs as they apply to this research.

Chapter 3 offers an overview of narrative inquiry methodology. The processes used to story the experiences of the co-researchers in this inquiry are included in this chapter. As well, I included the thoughts of some researchers on "world travelling" (Clark, 1998; Lugones, 1987), the way I created collaborative partnerships with my co-researchers. In this chapter, I also explain why the pictures of my sister in Nepal are used as a pictorial metaphor to represent my "world travelling" with my co-researchers. Finally, I present an explanation for my inclusion of poetry and my use of a response journal in this inquiry.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the literature that appears to intertwine within the stories of the co-researchers.. These bodies of knowledge are: Relationships, Caring in Schools, Culture, Organizations, Ethics and Morals, Resistance, Marginalization, Mandated Teaching Philosophies and Practices, Teacher Leadership and The Professional Knowledge Landscape

Chapter 5, *The Principals*, is designed to describe the contexts within which the

8

teachers' stories of relationships are told in Chapter 6. The contexts of the principals' stories are presented without detail even though I spent a great deal of time storying the principals' experiences with them. Exclusion of their stories serves to: (a) protect the teacher from their school who is also a co-researcher, (b) protect others within their story, and (c) ensure that the teachers' stories are kept at the forefront of this inquiry. The principals' stories are powerful and may detract from my inquiry focus. It is important to note that my experiences as a principal make me sympathetic to the stories of these principals. By eliminating the details of their stories, and by keeping this chapter purposely short, I attempted to minimize this limitation.

Chapter 6 includes the teachers' stories and my interpretations of how and why the teachers' relationships were affected during the conflict. This chapter is the focus of my inquiry. These stories are collaboratively written so that our, the teachers and my, emerging understandings about the conflicts that occurred and the relationships on the landscape blend together. There are five teachers' stories in this chapter. The first research text in each story is written in the first person as we, the teachers and I, attempt to have the teachers tell their own stories. In the second entry, the teachers and I explore their relationships within the context of the events that occurred. Each story ends as the teachers imagine new possibilities for restorying themselves on the school landscape and a continuation of their teacher story from that perspective

Chapter 7 offers some of my thoughts about the teachers' stories with respect to relationship building. I connect my thoughts in this chapter to Lugones' (1987) thoughts about "world travelling."

9

Chapter 8 is a brief overview of my reflections about my experiences as a narrative researcher. This chapter presents some of the problems I encountered during my inquiry as well as possibilities for future research. These possibilities emerged from the wonders I am now left with as a result of the questions I asked and the stories I heard.

10

The Traveller's Treasures

"No organization, however large, is big enough
to hold even one human soul."
(White in Wheatley & Kellner - Rogers, 1996)

Annapurna Sanctuary
and Circuit Trek
Kalopani, Nepal
Saturday, Oct. 25 / 97
Hiking Day 17
Photo by: Larry Calloway   11

CHAPTER 2

MY STORY

The Past

My understanding of school from my childhood experiences had a great deal to do

with my decision to become a teacher. As I look back, this story from my Grade 12 year

stands out as one that finally encouraged me to answer the call to teaching:

It had been a family tradition, starting with my sister, to become highly involved in school athletics. Since we were only a year apart in high school, my sister and I always played on the same teams. She was usually the captain of the team, and I was her younger, less talented sister. When she was in Grade 12, she won the Female Athlete of the Year Award. The next year, when I was in Grade 12 and she was in Grade 13, I worked hard to follow in her footsteps.

On a field trip which involved the cheerleaders and my brother's junior team, the boys won the European Air Division Championship. Tommy was in Grade 10, and 15 years old at the time. I was the coach of the junior cheerleaders and Assistant Captain of the Senior squad. I was in Grade 12 and 17 years old. After the game, the younger boys decided to buy a bottle of champagne. This was a team tradition upon winning a championship which all of the Senior Teams I had played on in Grades 11 and 12 had participated in. Because we were in Europe, access to liquor was a daily option; German law was quite different from Canadian law. Whatever life in Canada was like, and whatever rules there were in Canada had never been the rules we were governed by as displaced Canadians stationed with our parents in Europe. We were assimilated into the local culture. I recall that the Canadian kids did not abuse this access, however. Probably this was because it was not a taboo. It was a fact of daily living within the context of the culture we found ourselves in.

Tommy asked me to go with his team to buy the champagne. I went with his team but did not share in the buying. When we got on the bus, the boys found that there was no cork screw available. I asked the male teacher if he had one for the champagne. He said, "No," so the boys pushed the cork into the bottle, then filled up the wonderful, shiny, silver cup. There were approximately 35 kids on the bus; most had a sip, and the ritual was completed.

Needless to say, I was in shock on Monday morning when I was called to the principal's office and suspended from school for the event. I was the only person called and the only person suspended. There were no questions asked; I received a letter and was told to go home. I had never been suspended from school before. I was puzzled by

12

the response of the school to a traditional ritual that had become a part of Air Division sport history for the previous five years in the two bases in Europe where I had participated. I was even more puzzled because the teacher-supervisor knew we had the champagne and had neither confiscated it, nor told us not to have our ritual.

That incident occurred in November and I thought it was over. I took my punishment from school and again from home, then continued the year, participating in all of the remaining sports. It was not until my sister came home from a Sports Awards meeting in June that I understood the far reaching ramifications of this incident. As President of our Students' Union, she was the student representative on the coaches' team that decided upon school awards. She indicated to me that only she and the senior girls' coach and teacher, Kelly Gordon, had voted for me as the Female Athlete of theYear. The boys' senior coach, the male coach who was on the bus and the junior girls' coach, also on the bus, had voted against me because of the November incident. Patty then gave me the worst of the news. It appeared that in order to make a statement that would reset sport history, the coaches were going to present the trophy at our graduation ceremony to a junior whom I had coached all year in cheerleading. The Grade 12 and 13 students would be on the stage when Air Division history was rewritten. It was to be a public humiliation, and that is what happened.

For some reason, I blamed Kelly Gordon, the senior female teacher, for what I

considered unjust and unfair treatment. Years later, I can see that Ms. Gordon, a teacher I

worshipped, was exactly the type of teacher I wanted to be like when I chose to enter the

profession. I suppose that it was just the thought of her presence at that meeting that

caused me, in my adolescent mind, to rewrite the story of who she was for so many years.

This is the story that finally brought me to teaching. It is also one of my stories of school

that brought me to the principalship in later years.

I met Kelly Gordon again in 1998 at a "Canadian Military Brats Reunion" in Calgary, Alberta. Many of the kids who lived in Europe from 1960 to 1980 had begun to attend these festivities with regularity. This year my sister Pat and I made the pilgrimage to see the "Brats." We were now middle-aged, with careers and children of our own. When I saw Kelly there, she was unchanged. She had those same piercing blue eyes, that same grey hair, the same laughing, freckled face and the same lithe body that was unmistakably that of a physical education teacher. I spent some time with her that evening asking her why she had let this happen. Kelly's response made me sit back and think before I responded. She said, "So you missed out on that award and it drove you to teaching and then to a principalship. Was that so bad, Barb? In the larger framework of

13

life, why is it still so important?"(storied in July 1998)

As I relive that moment, I think about what it is that calls a teacher to teaching and a principal to the principalship. For me the beacon has always been fair and just treatment. These principles have always caused me to stop and reflect: "Is this good for kids?" or "Is this fair and just? Can I live with this?" Fair and just treatment has also been at the root of many of my decisions to engage in public acts of resistance as a principal.

The Present

I have been a principal for eight years. My understanding of 'principal' is one who negotiates change as an agent of the board while managing a school. As such, I understand that as a loyal servant, it is my job to implement change mandates. Sometimes I have found this to be an impossible task to perform, however, because of the human costs involved.

In particular, five of my eight years as a principal were filled with turmoil as the teachers and I negotiated a series of radical changes that came "down the pipe." Some of those changes did not take into account the delicate balance of one teacher story being lived out beside the stories of other teachers in our school. Indeed, I believed that some of those changes appeared to give others "the moral right to control and dominate people" (Chomsky, 1999, p. 7), particularly with respect to individual creativity and pedagogy. In those instances, I had great difficulty reconciling what others said education should be with my experiences and those of my teachers. On occasion, I resisted directives that I believed might invalidate the practice of some teachers in my school; some of those acts of

14

resistance caused conflict. I have always viewed these as ethical decisions.

What is ethically 'right'? Is resisting a directive that may cause conflict between teachers right? Is the resulting conflict which occurs because of my resistance, also 'right', then, or is it 'wrong'? What is 'right' and what is 'wrong'? How do we decide and who decides? This problem continues to plague me in the principalship today.

Strike, Haller & Soltis (1988) define ethical decisions as those that "are not just matters of personal preference":

> Ethical situations often require that hard choices be made under complex and ambiguous circumstances. It is difficult to be sure that we have made a good decision. At the same time, one choice is often better than another. Moral reasoning has a moral point, and it can help us make better and more justified moral decisions if we see the moral point. Words such as right, ought, just and fair are common. Moral issues concern our duties and obligations to one another, what constitutes just or fair treatment of one another, and what rights we have. (pp. 3-4)

They indicate that dilemmas are internal contradictions that develop when we have multiple obligations and we must decide which take priority (p. 4).

I believe that as a principal, I have multiple obligations. I am not solely obligated to ensure that directives are implemented. My obligations include protecting the concepts of care and consideration, of thoughtfulness and reflection and of discussion and choice. Another key obligation I believe I have is to ensure that the individuality of others is protected. I believe that education should be a lived experience of enlightenment about the value of people in organizations. My beliefs have created dilemmas for me when I am forced to decide which obligation should take priority in a given situation.

In my experience, some policies and procedures or curriculum mandates have not

always fit in with my beliefs about education, particularly as they apply to the teachers in my school. If I follow a directive without questioning, am I staying true to my beliefs about caring, relationships, individuality and the human aspects of schooling? If I do not follow a directive, will I be placing myself in danger? Whom do I have primary responsibility for first, myself or others? What is a loyal servant? Whom should I be loyal to first -- myself, the students, their parents, the teachers, or others who have no knowledge of the individuality of the people who live on our school landscape? These are some of the questions I have asked myself when faced with a dilemma.

I wrote the following piece of poetry in November 1998. It illustrates my concerns regarding the rapid transitions that took place in my district as prescribed by experts who had no knowledge of the individual teachers cohabiting in our school. While the changes may have been good in theory, some of those changes invalidated the classroom practice of some teachers. Morgan (1997) and Wheatley (1992) suggest that restructuring without careful consideration for the people involved can produce chaos.

Flux and Transformation in Chaos Theory

Opposites are intertwined in a state of tension that also defines
harmony and wholeness.
Established and new attractors compete with transcending paradoxes
challenging paradigms.
Tensions between the status quo and a desired future create
instability and crisis.
Flux and transformation can flip the trajectory or drive the organization
into sheer anarchy...
Out of control. A fragile balance between catalysts and ambiguities
creates uncertainties.
An absence of fixed states and clear points creates internal tension
between opposites.
Empowerment mobilizes awareness of control undermining the drive

16

to empowerment.
A struggle of opposites: development generates counter development -
a paradox.
Both dimensions of the contradiction that accompany change
have merit.
Enhanced forces drive change; change self-organizes into an emergent
phenomenon but
Change cannot be predetermined or controlled in chaos theory -
a two-edged sword.
(inspired by Morgan, G., 1997, pp. 251-297)

My decisions to resist some directives followed a process of weighing the benefits

and the consequences of my resistance and then acting in order to preserve some balance

in our fragile school ecosystem. Each decision made included a knowing that there would

be an action/reaction based upon the type of resistance in which I engaged. The severity

of the reaction from others depended upon how intrusive my resistance was to the

organization.

While I was at the height of the conflict that resulted from my public acts of

resistance, my sister and I spoke often. I would vent, and she would respond with: "Life

is a struggle. Get out of your vortex! Struggle or quit! " When I was at my lowest

moment, she sat me down and we coauthored a story called *Kathmandu*. This story

centred upon my troubled history as a principal. Stepping away from the real story and

placing the circumstances into a travel allegory helped me to understand the situation

more clearly. This experience of restorying my story in community with my sister helped

me to unpack my feelings and emotions, perceptions and intuitions, thus allowing me to

commence my reconciliation with traumatic past events. This process also helped me to

begin to reconstruct my life in a different direction from the possibilities that emerged.

17

Shortly after Pat and I wrote *Kathmandu* together, and following this period of conflict, my sister travelled to Kathmandu, Nepal, to hike for two months. She kept in constant communication with me. The post cards that came from her became important contacts. In one, the following excerpt caught my attention:

> In Nepali society, the older people are very respected - just like in Indian culture in Alberta. When everyone passes these older women, they always put hands together and say, "Namaste." (Pat Kvill, postcard, November 7, 1997)

I began to wonder why it is that some cultures value life experience as relevant, while others do not. I also began to think more carefully about the wisdom in Pat's words. Her ways of knowing seemed to extend past her formal education to connect with her life experiences.

Travelling to Kathmandu became the theme the teachers and I chose to live out in our school the year after the conflict. This theme seemed so appropriate because of our experiences together. Because it coincided with my sister's trip, some of the teachers were also interested in "travelling" to Kathmandu with Pat. Our school was covered with pictures and activities about travel, mountain-climbing and goal-setting. Guest speakers worked with the students and the teachers in these and other related areas. Kathmandu became our destination. As Pat travelled to other worlds, we also "travelled" to each other's "worlds" to renew or renegotiate our relationships. Some of those relationships had been affected by the conflict that resulted from my public acts of resistance. While we took few pictures to remind ourselves of this period of "world travelling" in our school, I know that each of us carried specific memories of that time together into the future. Every so often, we would restory them together in community.

Pat's journey symbolized our goal of working together, while learning that we could "climb any mountain, one step at a time." For this reason, the images of my sister in Nepal now hold special significance for me. My sister's pictures are reminiscent of the "world travelling" we did as children within the context of a Canadian Air Force family. Pat's pictures from Nepal show the same touching, laughing, and connecting to the people of our childhood years, across language, place, space and time. Her pictures are of caring relationships being built on high places with the people she met as she lived in Nepal as a "world traveller." Pat left Nepal as she had come, her pack on her back, travelling lightly, with memories in her heart and in her mind. Her E-mail signature speaks loudly of her belief that the experience of life's journey is more important than the bits and pieces accumulated along the way:

> 'Man's real home is not a house, but the road and life itself is a journey to be walked on foot.' (Bruce Chatwin, 1990, cover page, E-mail signature, Pat Kvill)

Apart from the conflict which occurred, what stands out for me when I think about this story is the response that came from many teachers on my staff, and elsewhere, to my resistance and the ensuing conflict. When the conflict reached its peak, these people chose to step forward and support me. While they had some knowledge of the issues, they had virtually no control over the context of the situation. Some of my decisions to resist occurred with little or no discussion with the teachers. The decisions I made to act without teacher support came from a need I felt to protect them as much as possible from any fall out. From the perspective of the teachers, however, it must have been a very frightening and difficult decision to make to support me because they did not have all of

19

the information I had.

Following the conflict, it appeared to me that some of the consequences I learned to live with also began to affect the teachers. These consequences ranged from some avoidance of our school, to teachers not being recognized in our district for their accomplishments. Over time, it became necessary for their validation to come from within, from each other, from me, from the awards they received in the province, and from the sharing they did as presenters at conferences. Nevertheless, the teachers stood steadfast; publicly they showed no weaknesses. In spite of their strength, however, I was left with a profound sense of concern for them. I was frustrated by my own lack of effectiveness in protecting them. I began to wonder if the situation, inadvertently, had reshaped the sense of well-being of some of them. I also wondered how the conflict had reshaped their relationships with me, with each other and with others in our district. These are the wonders that drove me to this inquiry. They are also the wonders that have prompted me to look back at my own stories as a narrative researcher.

Finding Voice: Looking outwards

When I first entered the principalship, I began to keep a chronological record of my growth as a principal in my portfolios and journals. These records, kept for more than five years at the time of the controversy, included many letters, pictures, cards, formal documents and journaled reflections. Having written *Kathmandu* with my sister, my issues of concern became clearer to me. I began to research my story by creating a time line of dated events from these artifacts. I then rewrote my travel allegory, using historical

20

evidence. This story focused upon my personal struggle to deal with the dilemmas I had experienced as a principal. I shared my story with others at a lengthy meeting.

Belenky et al. (1986) speak of constructivist women by stating that "they want to develop a voice of their own to communicate to others their understanding of life's complexity"(p. 137). I suppose that this is what I was doing although, truly, I did not know it at the time. I just felt a need to tell my story after so many years of silence, regardless of the consequences.

Still, while others listened and appeared to hear my concerns, the teachers who supported me from my school, and elsewhere, were not heard. Their voices were not validated by others who needed to hear their "understanding of life's complexity." Within the safety of our association, I created an opportunity for my teachers to tell their stories to someone outside of our community who would listen to them. Aside from that safe and listening place, however, their stories were not heard by anyone, other than by their closest peers.

Since that time, I have kept the following quotation by Elliot uppermost in my mind:

> If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence. (in Belenky et al., 1986, p. 3)

Over the years between then and now, I have struggled to find a way to publicly validate those teachers. Labosky (1994) calls this personal search a "passionate creed." It is my intention to do so in this inquiry by providing a place for "a gradual mingling of voices, theirs (mine) and the participants, as a kind of border crossing where there is an

intermingling of narratives of experience" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 76). By so doing, I hope to offer some understanding of how teacher relationships can be affected when a principal makes a public act of resistance. I believe that others might begin to understand the experiences some teachers have within this context, by hearing the stories told by the five teachers in this inquiry. This, then, is my tribute to those who stood behind, beside and in front of me, voiceless, yet powerful in their silence.

My experiences highlighted for me the need to construct safe places so that teacher voices could be heard. The following poem, written in April 1999, describes my own frustration in knowing that what I have to say is not valued by others: "I hear you but I'm not listening" (journal entry, May 4, 1999). I can only imagine, by comparison, how frustrated and invalidated my teachers must have felt during their experiences with silencing. This is the last piece of poetry I wrote for this inquiry:

On Finding Voice

Hear me. Do you hear me?
Can you hear me? Do you hear me?
Do you listen when you hear me
or is passion blown asunder?
Do my words become a jumble,
tuned out rumble you can switch off?
Do inflections cause rejection,
flat connections to your cortex,
bland expression, no reception,
no perception of my meaning,
no compassion, just denial
and dismissal of my trial?
Voicelessness
we come together
and cross worlds
our whispers strengthen.
Thunder echoes in expression

22

while resistance drives a lesson.
Silence ends now with a stridence
causing eyebrows to waver slightly.
Can you hear us? Do you hear us?
Is the ringing shrilly bringing
meaning closer to understanding?
Is indifference slowly fading
and is dawning lifting jading?
Collaboration ends suppression
opening old shuttered meaning.
Gone the deafness
of the moment
and the muteness
of lonely reason.

Connelly and Clandinin (1994) tell us that "almost all reformers had in place mechanisms to prevent teachers' biographies from making a difference, that is, ways to prevent teachers' stories of themselves from influencing and modifying the developers' grand schemes for reform" (p. 151). Perhaps the collective voices found within this inquiry will give these developers reason to pause as they listen to "that roar which lies on the other side of silence." It is my hope that the stories in this inquiry will shatter the illusion that teachers' stories of relationships during times of conflict following a principal's public act of resistance are not significant enough to be heard.

Recognizing Other Voices: Looking inwards

"In the broadest sense, voice may be thought of as belonging to participants, researchers, and other participants and other researchers for whom a text speaks" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 146). Through this inquiry I am empowering myself with 'voice' and by so doing, giving 'voice' to my co-researchers through collaboration. The

23

multiple 'I's' within myself and of myself both past and present hold conversation as I reflect upon my new ways of knowing from differing perspectives. I have given 'signature' to my work through my stories, images and poetry. They speak loudly of the teaching and learning rhythms I have begun to understand as essentially my own.

Belenky et al. (1986) speak of women's voices by describing "the metaphor of voice to depict their intellectual and ethical development; and that a sense of voice, mind and self are intricately intertwined" (p. 18). As both a researcher and a participant I have given myself voice, while hearing the voices of others who have influenced my understanding of life's complexities.

Reinharz (1992, p. 263) clarifies the purpose in developing connectedness between research and subject by presenting a perspective which authenticates each participant's experiences as part of the communal story of inquiry. While there is tension in finding commonalities between 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity' (p. 262), it is this tension which allows the researcher to find 'voice' by adhering to her personal values and beliefs while presenting collaborative understandings of experience. "This struggle for research voice is captured by the analogy of living on a knife edge as one struggles to express one's own voice in the midst of an inquiry designed to capture the participants' experience and represent their voices, all the while attempting to create research text that will speak to, and upon the audience's voices" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p. 423).

"For many, especially for women being educated as researchers, voice is an acknowledgement that they have something to say" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p. 423). The courage of those who trusted and supported me gave me the strength to find my

24

voice then, and the determination to use it again now. My voice speaks through and with my co-researchers as we explore, in community, how teachers' relationships can be affected during times of conflict following a principal's public act of resistance.

Grumet (1988, pp. 88-89) indicates that we "must construct a special place for ourselves, if our work as teachers is to achieve clarity, communication, and insight of aesthetic practice -- if it is, in short, to be research not merely representation." This is our special place -- a place where my co-researchers and I have been able to open Pandora's box about relationships, resistance and conflict. It is a storying place where clarity and insight may reside. The following chapter offers an understanding of narrative inquiry and the processes I used as a narrative researcher within this inquiry.

25

The Traveller

"Man's real home is not a house, but the road
and life itself is a journey to be walked on foot."
(Chatwin, B.)

Annapurna Sanctuary
and Circuit Trek
Tatopani, Nepal
Crossing the Kali Gandaki
Monday, Oct. 20 / 97
Hiking Day 13
Photo by: Larry Calloway   26

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Coming to Narrative

"Narrative inquiries are always composed around a particular wonder, a research puzzle" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 124). Deciding upon my research puzzle took me two years. It shifted back and forth as I searched to define my problem. Having finally come to a point where I could picture the question, I was surprised to find that the puzzle, itself, also seemed to shift and change. As I explored my questions with my co-researchers and my critical friends, their thoughts opened up even more wonders for me to consider. It appeared that as a result of the stories I heard and the conversations I had in community with others, more questions were the end result.

I wondered about this shifting and changing focus. Today, I understand that our lives continue to be in flux and change as we continue to make meaning of our stories. Lives do not stand still, nor do the contexts within which we live our lives stand still. Clandinin and Connelly discuss this process:

> As researchers, we come to each new inquiry living our stories. Our participants also enter the inquiry field in the midst of living their stories. Their lives do not begin the day we arrive nor do they end as we leave. Their lives continue. Furthermore, the places in which they live and work, their classrooms, their schools, and their communities, are also in the midst when we researchers arrive. Their institutions and the communities, their landscapes in the broadest sense, are also in the midst of stories (pp. 63-64).

My co-researchers and I came to some understandings about what our stories mean to us today. These understandings allowed each of us to consider possibilities for

27

restorying ourselves as teachers in the future, as we live "in the midst" of our present lives. Consideration for the past, however, is never far away. By telling our stories today, it is possible that others may think about future imaginings for themselves that may be lived out as stories in their classrooms, their schools, their communities and their organizations.

Choosing to walk the path of a narrative researcher presented me with a problem of theoretical transition as well. I began my inquiry in a more positivist paradigm, looking for definitive answers to a defined question. My shifting and changing focus is recounted in a section of this chapter called *Research Process*. In the segment about Chapter 7, my struggle is brought out through my use of language such as "factors," "categories" and themes." In this section, I describe how I was compelled to step away from my research twice to reflect upon my purpose. During the rewriting of my research text, I would step away twice more to revisit narrative methodology and reflect upon its purpose.

I now understand that causal language is incongruent with narrative. The stories, themselves, provide possibilities for understanding the experiences of individuals. "There's no one interpretation; there's no single cause and effect" (Wheatley, July 4-9, 1999, taped version). Thinking about research as offering possibilities to consider rather than definitive causes or answers was, perhaps, the most difficult transition I had to make while working as a narrative researcher.

The segment about Chapter 7 in *Research Process* records my thinking as well as my process as I move from positivism through interpretive methodology toward narrative while exploring theories that might better suit my purpose. I want to be clear that the language in this segment is non-narrative. I have included it only to show my progression

28

as a narrative inquirer.

In the end, it was my own experience coming to bear upon the experiences of my co-researchers that helped me to make sense of both their stories and mine. I began to understand that because my story was the catalyst that drove me, it would also help me position myself within this inquiry. "The stories we bring as researchers are also set within the institutions within which we work, the social narratives of which we are a part, the landscape on which we live" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 64). As Clandinin and Connelly indicate, "Narrative inquiry characteristically begins with the researcher's autobiographically oriented narrative associated with the research puzzle" (p. 41). My story, then, is the beginning of this research puzzle. It is not the end, however. I believe that there is no end to the stories of people and the social contexts within which their lives are shaped.

Telling our own Stories

Hoffman (in Florio-Ruane, 1997) indicates that storying and restorying our stories offers an opportunity for "reconciliation of experience, and the hope of rediscovering a sense of self in a decentred world" (p. 159). Stories provide an opportunity for us to make meaning of our lives as we work through tensions, conflicts and solutions within the context of the situation. Hoffman continues by saying that through storied reconstruction, "she surveys her new world by triangulating past, present, and that 'unassimilable' part of herself that negotiates meaning within difference" (p. 159). Thus it is that, as humans, we are able to reconstruct our lives by restorying our stories with others, and then living new

29

possibilities that emerge. "The power of narrative to nurture and heal, to repair a spirit in disarray, rests on two things: the skilful invocation of impeachable sources and a listener's knowledge that no hypocrisy or subterfuge is possible" (Lopez, 1989, p. 69). This is the hope which the practice of storying brings to people.

O'Laughlin (1992) discusses why narratives are so critical in helping teachers find voice and rhythm in their practice: "In a world in which teachers are often silenced by the institutional structure of schooling, the most powerful antidote is to affirm their personhood and their experiences and provide a space in which they are enabled to voice their thoughts and examine their experiences" (p. 338). Cooper (in Witherell and Noddings, 1991) suggests:

> Telling our own stories is a way to impose form upon our often chaotic experiences and, in the process, to develop our own voice. Listening to our own stories is a way for us to nourish, encourage, and sustain ourselves, to enter a caring relationship with all the parts of our self. (p. 97)

Stories are told to others with whom we have relationships. Having a relationship with our audience is important, because the responses we are given can help us rethink about our stories and imagine new possibilities. These new imaginings offer us opportunities from which to reconstruct our lives in a different direction as we begin to live a story that includes a reflection upon and with the voices of our audience.

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry focuses upon the experiences of individuals in the world of education (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 4). Only by exploring the experiences of

30

teachers can we begin to understand the social contexts within which they have been shaped. As Connelly and Clandinin (1990) suggest, "what is at stake is less a matter of working theories and ideologies and more a question of the place of research in the improvement of practice and of how researchers and practitioners may productively relate to one another" (p. 12). Inquiry into narrative, then, is research into future possibilities for teaching as lived.

Clandinin and Connelly (1990) indicate that there are many stories that can be told about schools. These stories include teacher stories, stories of teachers, school stories and stories of schools. These names "refer to first- and second-hand accounts of individual teachers, students, classrooms, and school written by teachers and others" (1990, p. 3). Who is doing the telling will determine the type of story being told. They go on to say that "the educational importance of this line of work is that it brings theoretical ideas about the nature of human life as lived to bear on educational experience as lived" (p. 3).

This inquiry focuses upon teacher stories. Teacher stories inform us about teachers, from their own perspectives, as their lives are lived out within the context of situations within their schools. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) discuss how teacher stories inform teachers about themselves:

> Teachers often tell stories about their own experiences as learners. They learn a great deal from reflecting, through their stories, on their experiences as children in their home, family, and community situations. (p. 199)

Narrative inquiry acknowledges the importance of lived experiences for teachers as well as the importance of teachers' voices in educational research. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) indicate that teacher thought processes are validated through the stories they tell and the

31

experiences they have. This experience "is the starting point and key term for all social science inquiry" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p. 414).

Critical to narrative inquiry is the development of a relationship between the researcher and the research participants. "Narrative inquiry is a process of collaboration involving mutual story telling and restorying as the research proceeds" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 4). Narrative inquiry is a process that requires the researcher to become actively involved in the lives of others. Through the stories shared, new possibilities emerge that help both researcher and participants to simultaneously begin reconstruction of their lives: "A person is, at once, engaged in living, telling, retelling, and reliving stories" (p. 4). This living of new stories can become an endless process, as differing perspectives continue to influence understanding.

The voices of the participant and the researcher must both be validated: "In the process of beginning to live a shared story of narrative inquiry, the researcher needs to be aware of constructing a relationship in which both voices are heard" (p. 4). In narrative inquiry, "both the practitioners and the researchers feel cared for and have a voice with which to tell their stories" (p. 4).

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) say of stories and people: "People by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience" (p. 2). It is through the transaction of learning from each other that the researcher and participants can begin to understand specific experiences within the context of stories which are told and retold in community. New understandings about the content and context of a

32

situation can begin to open up possible new imaginings for future stories to be lived. As Connelly and Clandinin (1990) suggest, "One learns about education from thinking about life, and one learns about life from thinking about education" (p. 415).

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) indicate that narrative inquiry is a form of empirical narrative where the stories, themselves, become the data for research interpretations: "The inevitable interpretations that occur, something which is embedded even in the data collection process, does not make narrative into fiction even though the language of narrative inquiry is heavily laced with terms derived from literary criticisms of fiction" (p. 5). Data for narrative inquiry can be gathered from field notes, interviews, story telling, letter writing, autobiographical and biographical writing, and historical artifacts such as lesson plans, letters, philosophy statements, pictures, newsletters, evaluations and metaphors (p. 5).

Narrative inquiry relies upon "apparency, verisimilitude and transferability as possible criteria" to consider when assessing the quality of the research (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 7). The audience should be able to relate to the inquiry and to believe it. "A plausible account is one that tends to ring true. It is an account of which one might say, 'I can see that happening'" (p. 8). Within the narrative, explanations or meanings derived must convey significance for the past, value for the present and intention for the future (p. 9). Narratives leave the audience with a sense that they are not finite. They are simply segments of a person's life waiting to be restoried in the future. There is an anticipation at the end of each written piece that there will be a continuation of the story. There is a wondering about the characters in the plot. How will they fare in the future?

What new issues and complexities will they need to negotiate? Which path will their storied lives take next? "Narrative inquiry is driven from a sense of the whole" (p. 7). There must be, then, purpose, rhythm, pattern and believability to a narrative.

Narrative inquiry is complex. The lives of people are complex, so research into those lives must somehow show complexities (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Multiple 'I's' in narrative offer an understanding of this complexity for a person: "The 'I' can speak as a researcher, teacher, man or woman, commentator, research participant, narrative critic and as theory builder. Yet in living the narrative inquiry process, we are one person" (p. 9). Complicated? Yes, it is but no more so than the lives we live as mother or father, sister or brother, daughter or son, teacher or friend, principal or teacher, listener or teller, researcher or participant, reader or writer, philosopher or doer. The living of lives is complex. The studying of lives must, therefore, use a complex process like narrative inquiry, for what is 'truth' if not lived experience? 'Truth' is defined in a living world for the person doing the living.

Narrative Unity

Stories are a fundamental part of our lives. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) suggest that through telling and retelling our stories we can construct new meaning. "Contrary to common sense, which assumes that our lives determine our stories, narrative scholars argue that our stories shape our lives and that narration makes self-understanding possible" (Chase, 1995, p. 7).

Clandinin and Connelly (1994, p. 425) say that "it is in the research relationships

between participants and researchers and audiences, through research texts that we see the possibility for individual and social change." Stories told take "on meaning in terms of the reconstruction of life experiences according to the demands of the expression of a narrative unity with their personal practical knowledge" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1986, p. 308).

Dewey indicates that "the student cannot be taught what he needs to know, but he can be coached: He has to see on his own behalf and in his own way the relations between means and methods employed and results achieved. Nobody else can see for him, and he can't see just by being 'told' although the right kind of telling may guide his seeing and thus help him see what he needs to see" (in Schon, 1987, p. 9). Telling our stories may help "guide our seeing" as we reflect upon the responses we receive from the differing perspectives of our audience.

Within the stories we tell are threads that run through our lives. These threads tell us how we got to where we are today from past experiences. These threads also open new possibilities for future imaginings of where we might go tomorrow. Connelly and Clandinin (1987, p. 130) describe narrative unity "as a continuum within a person's experience which renders life experiences meaningful through the unity they achieve for the person." The threads that tie our stories together help us find narrative unity. Narrative inquiry is the seeking of understanding not through individual events but by trying to "understand and reconstruct the narrative unities within the narratives of the participants" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1987, p. 131). As the stories of a teacher are storied and restoried in community with others, patterns or threads begin to emerge. By

35

attempting to understand what these threads mean, we can begin to see an element of unity (Connelly & Clandinin, 1987) within an individual's life story. Within this inquiry, I have sought to understand my own narrative unities while listening to the stories of others.

Tensions sometimes occur to clash with the unities we have come to understand as central to our being. Connelly and Clandinin (1987) indicate that "narratives involve the confrontation of events or circumstances which refuse to cohere with the personal knowledge derived by the person in question from past events or circumstances. There are, then, conflicts and tensions which punctuate and colour the rest of one's life" (p. 135). Within the stories of my co-researchers, these conflicts and tensions become obvious.

Developing Co-researcher Relationships: Traveller as metaphor

I began thinking about matters related to my research having finally settled upon my puzzle and my method. I was concerned about how to approach my co-researchers in our work together. In the summer of 1998, I went back to the university to take another course on narrative methodology. I was asked to create a time line that depicted important events in my life. What emerged was a reconstruction of my life as an Air Force dependent immersed in the cultures of people from other countries where I had lived. I began to think about my relationships with those people. These relationships provided me with a model to emulate in my developing relationships with my co-researchers. As Lugones (1987) writes: "Those of us who are 'world' travellers have the distinct experience of being different in different 'worlds' and of having the capacity to remember

36

other 'worlds' and ourselves in them" (p. 11). I intuitively felt that a critical piece of my research puzzle had fallen into place. This was the experience I was seeking in my research relationships with my co-researchers.

The following entry from my sister's journal in Nepal offers some reminiscence of the "world travelling" Pat and I did together as children in an Air Force family. It brings forth that feeling of crossing "world" boundaries, so critical in understanding the experiences of others:

> When we returned to Lukla, Kusang showed me a huge bag of the incense plant stored in the upper room of our lodge. He invited me to take a handful. I carefully placed some into a plastic bag and carried the precious incense back to Canada. (Pat Kvill, journal entry, Thursday, November 20, 1997 - Hiking Day 9)

Pat's memories bring clear images to her mind as she travels across space, place and time back to Kusang's "world":

> Even now, the dried twigs are stored in a drawer in my computer desk. As I type this journal, almost a year later, I open the bag and the smell fills my kitchen. I am mystically returned to the dry, high valley surrounded by famous peaks and graced with the chortens dedicated to fallen climbers. (Pat Kvill, journal entry, Sunday, August 16, 1998)

Like Pat, I can still close my eyes and drift back to the kitchen of my friend, Brigitte, in Stambach, Germany, where her mother made huge fruit 'kuchen' for my brother, Tommy, and her brother, Hans. The smells from the kitchen drift up from my imagination as I sit here remembering. The talking with no words across the barrier of language and the loving which is held in my heart and mind -- these are the connections I took back with me to Canada as a "world traveller" in Brigitte's world.

"In describing my sense of 'world', I mean to be offering a description of

experience, something that is true to experience even if it is ontological/problematic" (Lugones, 1987, p. 11). I committed myself to involving my heart and my mind in the interchange experience with my co-researchers much as I had done with Brigitte as a child, and Pat had done with Kusang in Nepal. Having done so, I have come away with a deeper understanding of my co-researchers as people within their "worlds." Through the storying we did together, I became a part of their "worlds," just as they became a part of mine. Clark (1998) speaks about this interchange process: "People can interact in discourse as travellers if they write and read in ways that render participation in discursive exchange a transformative act crossing an alien *space* rather than the more defensive act of occupying familiar *place*" (p. 16).

While living in Stambach as a child, my family often visited other places. In those places, I ate the food and saw the sights but did not become immersed in the rhythm of the lives of the people who lived there. There was no touching, loving, caring and communication other than surface questioning. I was a tourist in those places, and as a tourist I would bring back bits and pieces, souvenirs to remind me that I was there.

It was never my intention to come away with 'bits and pieces' in this inquiry, as a tourist might, to prove that I was 'there'. There has been no intent to gather data to support a stated and objective position. The relationships I developed with each co-researcher are not tangible objects. They are subjective in nature and not apparent to the eye of others who have not "travelled" to these "worlds."

It was with care and caution that I entered the lives of my co-researchers. Having left, it is possible that I have not entirely removed myself from their life stories. Van de

38

Walter in Clark (1998) speaks of this need to travel with care and caution: "He travels 'humbly' —so that 'joy may be found in the ...astonishing human contacts on the road without rousing that fear of patronage" (p. 14). Their ways of knowing may have been affected by the new possibilities we considered together while restorying our stories in community. As a "world traveller," I left the "worlds" of my co-researchers lightly, with new relationships as my continued connections to their "worlds."

The following poem describes my interpretation of the interchange process that occurs during "world travelling." It evokes the feeling I get when I consider my relationship with my sister. I wrote this poem in July 1998, as I readied myself to begin this journey into other "worlds":

To Travelling in Worlds

My foray in her world
is but a sketch
in my life
but still I etch
a place in mine
for her and then
the life lines redefine
and shift again
and hers reshift
in time with mine.
With each new world
I travel to and
leave a piece and change
her/me - our hands
reach out through time
and worlds and range
within the mind
and change
the sketch...me/her
Again.

39

Research Process

Five principals and five teachers are co-researchers in this inquiry. My story is included with those of the principals. Each principal provided me with the names of teachers they felt would have stories to tell of their experiences during the public acts of resistance.

In attempting to understand the context within which the teachers' stories of relationships occurred, I focused first upon the principals' stories of resistance and conflict. A conversation with each principal was taped and then transcribed. Each of the four principals was interviewed for approximately two hours. I also gathered artifacts from the principals that included letters, memos, lists, newspaper articles, policies and procedures and anecdotal notes made by the principal co-researchers at the time of their stories. Transcripts of our conversations, drafts of the principals' stories as well as the artifacts I collected became field notes for our research together into the contexts of the situations that occurred. The principals and I worked collaboratively to develop their stories. The principals' stories are not included in this report, however, even though they have been well-developed using narrative methodology. I came to understand that telling their stories might overshadow the relationship stories of the teachers which are the focus of this study. Outlines of the causes and methods of resistance the principals engaged in have been included, however. They help to set the context within which the stories of relationships are told by the teachers. My own experiences are included in this section.

Narrative inquiry methodology as defined by Connelly and Clandinin (1990) has been key to unpacking the teachers' stories of relationships in this inquiry. I interviewed

40

each teacher twice over a period of eight months. Each teacher conversation took approximately two hours. These conversations were taped and then transcribed.

Between these interviews, the teachers and I continued to correspond through letter and story drafts, over the telephone and by E-mail. As well, I gathered artifacts from the teachers that helped define the context of their situations and the relationships before, during and following the conflict. These artifacts include letters, memos, lists, evaluations, policies and procedures and anecdotal notes made by the teacher co-researchers at the time of their story. All written communication including the artifacts, transcripts, story drafts and responses became field notes for my research texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, pp. 104-118). All of my co-researchers were encouraged to use their artifacts to assist them with the reconstruction of their stories. These artifacts assisted me with recording our changing perceptions, over time.

Using the transcript of the first interview, I wrote a letter to each co-researcher, restorying their stories from my understanding of what had occurred. In an attached note, the teachers were asked to respond to my restorying of their stories in letter format. The teachers added new insights and revised any misunderstandings I may have had. The teachers also edited the letter as they saw fit. My purpose was to come to a collaborative understanding, through written communication, of the events that occurred and the effects of the conflict upon the relationships of those in the stories. The letters documented our communication and changing perceptions across space, place and time. Some anecdotal comments the teachers attached or wrote on the drafts, recorded their feelings with respect to the conflict. These communications became field notes for my research texts.

I had two "critical friends" who acted as an audience for the developing drafts of the teachers' stories. One of these critical friends was my research supervisor; the other was a person who knew my own story intimately. I sent these drafts to my critical friends so that they could note their questions, wonders and concerns for me to ponder. Their responses also became field notes in this inquiry. I responded to their wonders, all the while responding to the responses and insights provided to me by the teacher co-researchers.

Letters were exchanged three times between the teacher co-researchers, my critical friends and myself until a final letter was developed collaboratively. These letters appeared to respond to all of our wonders, issues and concerns about the contexts of the situations that occurred. I described this process in a response journal entry that I had written to one of my "critical friends":

> At this point I am focusing upon their (co-researchers') changes. Before I retell their stories in another draft with them, I will look at your concerns and rethink those sections. Each story will be redrafted twice - once for them and once for you as my critical friend. My other critical friend should also have her thinks to me by then, so I will look at her thoughts in a third draft of this telling before I feel comfortable that the next telling is more accurate and I send it back to the teachers for response again. (January 13, 1999)

Journal entries between myself and my critical friends, two of whom were also working with me on the field texts, also became field notes for my research.

Additionally, there were several notes that went back and forth between the teachers and myself. These notes accompanied the developing story letters redrafted several times. I also communicated by E-mail with two of the teachers. All of these communications became field notes in the process. Some telephone conversations with the

teachers also occurred; these telephone conversations were not taped.

The collaborative letter was the first piece that we, the teachers and I, worked on together. Through a process of mailing this letter back and forth between each teacher and myself, we were able to story the context of each situation. The collaborative letters took approximately three months to write with each of the five teachers. The dates on each of these field texts indicate the last time each letter was restoried following our final written communication. Each of the five teacher co-researchers worked with me concurrently throughout this process. The letters we wrote together became part of the field texts for this inquiry as we continued to work toward exploring the puzzle of the relationships within their stories.

During the writing of this first letter, I found that the teachers were focused more upon the conflict than upon the relationships within their stories. I began to understand that a further process would be required to get to the heart of the relationships that existed on the school landscape. Having lived through this process myself with my sister, I believed there to be an important connection between personal voice and reconciliation. Some of the teachers' stories continued to be highly emotionally charged as we began the next phase, that of establishing personal voice for the teachers.

The second phase of our research focused upon the collaborative telling of the teachers' stories of context. These stories became the first research texts I chose to include in each of the teachers' stories in Chapter 6. The teachers and I had established a research relationship for four months by the time we began this narrative piece together. We, the teachers and I, attempted to place their stories in the first person in order to give

the teachers a stronger representational voice. As we worked through a process similar to that developed in the first collaborative letter, it became apparent to me that the 'I' stories might offer an important step in reconciliation for some of the teachers. The process to write the 'I' story took two months to complete. These stories were mailed to each teacher and then back to me only once before all of the teachers felt comfortable with our interpretations. The letters we had written together during the four months preceding the 'I' stories appeared to have cleared up any wonders we had. We were now ready for phase three of our work together.

In our second taped conversation we were able to move quickly toward exploring pieces of the relationship puzzle. I found it interesting to note that in the second interview, some of the teachers explained their relationships by storying them in short stories contained within their larger stories of conflict. We continued to communicate about these relationships in letter format, in a process similar to the process we had established in writing the first collaborative letter and the 'I' story. Some of the teachers also continued to communicate through E-mail and telephone conversations with me as additional recollections occurred. Each consecutive conversation and communication added new insights about the relationships.

The second letter became a field text used to create the second piece of research text included in each of the teachers' stories in Chapter 6. *Thinking About the Relationships* centres upon our reflections about the relationships that existed on the landscape before, during and after the conflict.

The first two collaborative pieces in each of the teacher's stories are included to

44

illustrate our emerging understandings, over time, of the conflict and the relationships in their story. Some characters and places as well as some of the specifics of the incidents within the plot lines have been changed in order to blur any connection to specific people in specific school districts. It has not been my intention to change details or facts which are important to the context of these stories. It has been my intention to come to some understanding about the issues in this inquiry while protecting the people within these stories.

Section one in each of the teachers' stories focuses upon the first three questions in this inquiry: (a) "How did you feel?", (b) "How did others feel about the principal's actions?", and (c) "How did you feel about the response from central office?" Descriptions of the teachers' feelings, perception, emotions and intuitions add to the context of each situation.

Section two, *Thinking About the Relationships*, focuses upon the final question: "How did your relationships with others, the principal, the teachers on staff, and central office personnel change because of the act and the response?"

Section three, *Imagining a New Story*, is a short introduction to the continuation of each of the teacher co-researchers' stories. This short piece offers a glimpse at the possibilities the teachers imagined for how they might restory themselves as a result of the first events that occurred. Section four, *The Story Continued*, shows each teacher restorying his/her life from one of the possibilities he/she imagined following his/her experiences. This entry is also written with 'I' representing the teacher's voice in each story.

45

Chapter 7, *Thinking About the Teachers' Stories*, explores some of my thoughts as I bring my own experiences to bear upon the experiences of the teachers and their relationships following the conflict that occurred. Initially this chapter was more interpretive as I sought to weave the teachers' stories together across space, place and time. I, originally, explored the five stories for commonalities that appeared to exist in the relationships of the five teachers. Then I explored the stories for themes that might offer greater understanding of the contexts within these relationships had been developed. Following both of these phases, upon reflection, I determined that neither process fit in with my understanding of narrative inquiry. I discarded the initial interpretive chapter that I had written. I chose, instead, to explore the concept of "worlds" as I brought to bear my own experiences upon the experiences of the teachers in their individual "worlds" in Chapter 7. Following this decision, I wove the relationship commonalities back into each teacher's specific story in the section called *Thinking About the Relationships* in Chapter 6. The general themes that emerged are woven into Chapter 7. The following five paragraphs offer a description of the initial processes I used to interpret the data as well as my logic for replacing the interpretive chapter.

I began by looking for descriptions of the relationships in each of the ten transcripts, two for each teacher, that formed part of my field texts. I analysed each transcript line by line to come up with categories for these descriptions. As a result of this process, twenty-one different categories appeared to emerge. Common language describing the relationships desegregated the categories. For example, "shame" was a word used by two teachers and "pipelining" or a description that appeared to be

46

synonymous was used by three teachers. I then collated these descriptions into a cumulative list of common categories of relationships that appeared to cross over at least two of the five stories. These descriptions also included my interpretations about why each of these relationships may have been formed.

At this point, I thought I was done my analysis. It was only following three months of reflection, further discussion with my thesis supervisor and a reading of Clandinin and Connelly (2000), that I realized that this cumulative list was not what narrative research was all about. While I knew this in my mind, it took this further period of reflection before I fully began to understand this concept. I suppose that when we look at the world around us, we feel that our presence in that world is not significant. I began to understand more clearly that narrative was not about the world. It was about "worlds." Narrative inquiry informs us about individual people. We can only begin to understand the contexts within which the lives of teachers have been shaped by understanding the experiences they, as individuals, have had. Each of the five teacher co-researchers was important as an individual living in their "world." I needed to place the descriptions back in each teacher's story where they belonged. While there may have appeared to be similarities in their stories, narrative inquiry focuses upon the individual. The context within which each of the stories of the teacher co-researchers was framed was unique. I began to understand more clearly that narrative is not about collective truths; it is about individual possibilities. But putting this understanding into practice was not a direct route for me. As I document below, the next step in my journey toward narrative took me into an interpretive analysis of the data.

I went back to my cumulative list, cross-referencing it with the research texts in parts one and two of the teachers' stories. This brought the descriptive classifications back to each teacher's story (reflective journal, Dec. 3 1999). This process elicited four more categories that I had not previously seen. I placed the now twenty five descriptions in point form beneath each teacher's story in my field texts. To those that appeared to influence relationships in each story, I included the teachers' descriptions. Those that did not appear to influence relationships in a specific story were left in point form for that story. As I looked at the common classifications of relationships that appeared to influence relationships in each of the stories, I began to wonder about why the combinations were different. Did the contexts that shaped the lives of the teachers also shape their relationships? This wonder brought about a third level of exploration for each of the teacher's stories.

As I began to think further about each story, I wondered how age and experience may have affected the teachers' experiences and their relationships? Six other themes also emerged as wonders. These were: (a) Observations of Factors Influencing the Teachers' Relationships, (b) Relationships Affected by the Conflict, (c) Relationships Affected by the Principal's Public Act of Resistance, (d) Trust on the School Landscape, (e) Safety on the School Landscape, and (f) The We-They Thinking in the School Intensifies. None of the relationship categories appeared to be independent of each other. They all appeared to cross over from one theme to another, depending upon the issue under consideration. As well, all of the themes appear to be interrelated. At this point, I wrote Chapter 7 as an interpretive chapter, crossing over the "worlds" of the teachers, as I used the data that

48

emerged to show commonalities in the five stories.

Upon consultation with my thesis supervisor, however, I realized that once again I had made generalizations that separated the teachers from their "worlds." The interpretive work I had done did not fully describe my wonders about how each individual teacher's relationships had been affected by their experiences. I began to believe that only by reentering the teachers' "worlds" through Lugones' (1987) eyes, would I be able have any meaningful understanding of their experiences. It was at this point that I rewrote Chapter 7, keeping Lugones (1987) at the forefront of my thinking. This chapter explores some of my thoughts about "world travelling" and "loving perception," as I bring my own experiences to bear upon the teachers' experiences and their relationships as told to me in their stories.

In Chapter 8, *Reflections*, I explore how the narrative research experience has impacted my ways of seeing. As well, I offer some suggestions for future research as a result of the wonders I am now left with because of the questions I asked.

Response Journal as Field Text

My response journal with my thesis advisor, and other critical friends who responded to my developing thoughts, has tracked my journey. I used my journal as a field text to monitor my changing perceptions, wonders, thoughts and beliefs as well as those of my co-researchers (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 102). My journal also assisted me with recording concerns from my critical friends and my thoughts about how I might address those issues.

Holly (1989, p. 1) indicates that writing about personal experiences in journals can help the author see new possibilities: "'Learning stamps you with moments.' It is in the act of expressing moments on paper that journal writers discover themselves. Reflective writing projects the journal writer into a greater awareness of the present. To John Dewey it meant becoming 'aware,' to Maxine Greene, 'becoming awake.'" I wrote the following poem in July 1998, to illustrate the value of journaling to me:

To Think in Journal

Too much talking
need some walking
in the dawning
of the morning
Now to thinking
in the writing
and the piecing
of the lighting.
In the thinking
and the writing
comes a waking
to a liking
and a loving
of the solace
of the morning
and the dawning
of my thinking...

My response journal took an unusual form overtime. It became a collection of E-mail communications between my critical friends and myself. In one of those communications (April 9, 1999), I explained to a critical friend why I believed my journal had taken this turn:

> I believe that voice has much to do with my choice of this type of journal. Letter writing has been a way for me to find voice as a principal. Sometimes I believed that it was the only way that my voice might be validated, even when responses to

50

my letters did not come. Voice requires audience. Just because the audience refuses to respond does not mean that you do not have voice. It simply means that others are attempting to deny your voice. Silence from an audience cannot deny voice unless you allow it to.

I used my journal for reflection and feedback as well as reflection upon feedback.

I believe that my preference for this letter format was also at the root of my decision to write some field texts with both the principals and the teachers in this way. These letters were, in and of themselves, a kind of response journal. They validated the voices of my co-researchers, all the while validating my voice, as we clarified our understandings of the situations and the relationships together.

Images and Poetry

Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996) say of images and poetry:

In a creative and playful world, all of us are, all the time, poets. We are always engaged in trying to convey our experience of life in images that can connect it with other experiences. Even the most analytic science, the most careful construction of models is always poetry, the creation of images that evoke experience, linking things together for new ways of comprehending. We cannot know the world in an objective way. We can never get outside our senses to determine if reality exists in some sphere beyond us. We can never gain a true picture of how it really is. We can never observe what's right. We peer out through our senses describing our experience of what we think reality to be. We choose images to convey our experience. We create metaphors to connect what we see. We are all poets exploring possibilities of meaning in a world which is, all the time, exploring possibilities. (taped version, side one)

My poetry weaves the "travelling" metaphor together with my thoughts, the thoughts of others and the pictures of Pat in another world. This weaving has been done to create an image of "world travelling." The pictures, images and poetry in this research contribute a rhythm to my research that is uniquely my own.

51

As a "world traveller," I moved between the "worlds" of the teachers and principals in this inquiry much as my sister did with the people of Nepal. I listened to the stories of my co-researchers and came away with some greater understanding of them in their "worlds." This excerpt from Pat's journal describes the small things that are remembered by "world travellers" when they open their hearts and minds to the interchange experience:

> We saw many babies in cradles. People live in huts made of mud and dung and straw with straw roofs. Children had no toys, only clumps of dirt or stones or sticks to play with. But they all smiled at us and put their hands together in prayer and said, "Namaste." (Pat Kvill, postcard, November 7, 1997)

My own "travelling to worlds," like Pat's, was designed to listen, hear and experience those small details of another person's "world." My "travelling," like hers, was done with loving and caring as we, the co-researchers and I, storied and restoried our experiences together while building relationships across our "worlds."

The following selection from Pat's journal offers an insight into the compassion and caring required during "world travelling":

> As we crested the ridge, we came across a memorial ground with cairns built to many Sherpas, and some Europeans and Japanese. Kusang crouched on the ground. I wandered through the chortens reading plaques which were roughly carved on stone slabs. "Narayan Sherpa - Climber and Friend - Sagartha September 1988", "In memory of late Nima Dorjfe friend and brother Krigi 1960-1988", In memory of Yoshikuni Mori (age 25 years) who was a student of Toku Shima - University, Alpine club member of Japan who died on 28th March 1990 as the team leader during Pumori Expedition. We pray to the Almighty for Mr. Mori's eternal peace and for the consolation of those who loved him. He will always be in our hearts. Now you rest in peace." But by far the majority of these 20 memorials are to Sherpas. Just simple names scratched into stone. It was so quiet here. The air was filled with lost souls. I began to cry, overcome by the loss to these beautiful people. I couldn't think of what to say to Kusang -- so many of his people, friends or relations, remembered here because western people wanted

52

to climb his sacred mountain. (Pat Kvill, journal entry, Thursday, November 20, 1997 - Hiking Day 9)

The stories of my co-researchers have become a part of my story, just as mine has become a part of theirs, as a result of our time together. Their experiences touched me; their feelings moved me. Caring for them has become a natural reaction for me.

This inquiry includes a reflection upon, and with, the images of my sister hiking in Nepal as I apply the metaphor of "traveller to worlds." Through the images of Pat, as "The Traveller," connecting to the people she built relationships with while in Nepal, I hope to form a mind image of my "travelling" to the "worlds" of my co-researchers: "Her/me - our hands reach out through time and worlds and range within the mind and change the sketch... me/her again."

My relationship with my sister has been pivotal to my new ways of seeing and knowing about relationships. There is a bond of understanding and caring between us, wherever we may be, that transcends time, space and place:

> I really liked little Dawafuti. She was just the age when children lose their front two baby teeth and she had a charming gummy smile. I gave her the little angel pin that my sister, Barby, had placed on my daypack as a good luck charm for my trip. (Pat Kvill, journal entry, Sunday, November 23, 1997 - Hiking Day 12)

Pat's pictures provide a parallel metaphor of her physical "world travelling" abroad to the mind image of my storied "world travelling" done in this inquiry.

The metaphor of "traveller to worlds" comes together through the poetry I write, "poems that give us the strength and courage to see, to feel, to speak, and to dare" (Lorde, 1984, p. 39), as well as the stories I tell. Images, poetry and print form a collage in the tradition of T. Minh-Ha Trinh (1989) giving meaning and thoughtfulness to my

53

inquiry. The stories of my co-researchers, intertwined with my own stories, weave the various milieu together to bring others into our "worlds."

Verisimilitude

The storying and restorying in community of the stories found in this inquiry may offer some possibilities for "plot, meaning, interpretation and explanation" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 9). These stories tell of some relationships found in a school before, during and after the conflict following a principal's public act of resistance. I believe that the processes I used with my co-researchers developed 'verisimilitude' (p. 7) or believability in the authenticity and credibility of the data. I also believe that the stories presented allow for transference of the experience if the transfer fits. This transference may enable others to become participants through the "act of affirming by entering into someone's thinking or perceiving" (Elbow in Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 4).

These stories represent the quality of life my co-researchers lived in their schools during the times of conflict following their principals' public acts of resistance. I believe that each story demonstrates life's complexities as we explore the relationships entangled within the context of these five conflicts. These complexities required me to explore several bodies of knowledge within the literature. The following chapter offers some areas that appear to be at the heart of the principals' stories of public acts of resistance and the teachers' stories of relationships.

Life is Experience & Experience is Education.

"I was often greeted, especially by young
Nepali men,who would smile and say,
'Namaste Didi.' I was puzzled by
'Didi.' Kusang explained that it meant
' older sister.' " (Kvill, Oct 30, 1997)

"In Nepal society, the older people are very respected -
just like the Indian culture in Alberta." (Kvill, Nov. 7, 1997)

Annapurna Sanctuary
and Circuit Trek
Manang, Nepal
Thursday, Oct. 30/ 97
Hiking Day 23
Photo by: Larry Calloway   55

CHAPTER 4

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This inquiry is complex because people are complex. Their relationships can be messy and the factors affecting their relationships can be equally messy. As Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996) indicate, "Life is not neat, parsimonious, logical nor elegant. Life seeks order in a disorderly way. Life uses processes we find hard to tolerate and to believe in, mess upon mess until something workable emerges" (side one, taped version). This chapter provides an overview of literature that I see as "informing" and serving as context for the stories which are the substance of this inquiry. Since this study is about relationships, I focus first upon this area in the literature.

Most of the research I explored for the section of literature called *Relationships* centres upon what a 'good' relationship should look like and what defines a 'good' relationship. Some research also explores the importance of relationships within organizations. As well, some narrative researchers explore, peripherally, the specific relationships of people within the context of the stories they tell. These relationships are embedded within these stories and appear to be an essential ingredient in the telling of stories of people. I could find no research, however, that describes the relationships of teachers, particularly as they are affected by conflict following a principal's public act of resistance. This void suggests that this study may add to the body of knowledge in that area.

56

The second area of research I explore is *Caring in Schools*. Several theorists have explored caring with respect to teacher-student relationships in schools. Research in this area also explores a caring ethic in relationships, as it applies to members of an organization.

A short piece on *Culture* speaks to the connection between caring and organizations. Morgan's (1997) metaphor offers possibilities to consider when thinking about the teachers' stories within this inquiry. The link between culture and value systems is discussed later in this chapter.

A fourth area of research, *Organizations*, opens up possibilities to consider about change, caring and relationships in schools. In this section, I make a comparison between the current technical-rational model used by many organizations and visionary collaborative models suggested by some researchers. The literature discussed in this section tends to suggest that strong moral and ethical leadership in an organization can provide a catalyst for a caring ethic to develop.

Within the stories of my co-researchers, questions were raised about the *Ethics and Morals* of decisions made by some of the leaders. A question of what is 'good' and 'right' was raised many times by the co-researchers in this study. A perception of "poor" decision-making appears to be a key factor in the shifting relationships of people in some of these stories. This area relates, specifically, to relationships and caring in organizations. It also leads directly into *Resistance*, the next section of the chapter.

Resistance issues have been explored by several researchers. Morgan (1997) and others describe pathologies that exist in some organizations. These pathologies may lead

57

to the formation of resistance cultures. Listening to stories of principals' public acts of resistance may offer some possibilities for understanding the context of the resistance as well as the response from the organization to the resistance.

Marginalization is an area of research I was compelled to explore because it was discussed by several co-researchers in this study. Several also discussed workplace bullying as a possible consequence of resistance. This section continues the conversation about an ethic of caring in an organizational culture. It also explores how some relationships can be affected when teachers have the perception that others are using unjust methods to control members or force system mandates.

Mandated Teaching Philosophies and Practices presents research that describes the feelings of some teachers when they believe that what they think is not valued by others. This area of research also explores how organizational mandates can inhibit creativity and risk-taking in principals and teachers. *Mandated Teaching Philosophies and Practices* connects directly to the types of teacher stories found on *The Professional Knowledge Landscape* as described by Clandinin and Connelly (1995).

In the area called *The Professional Knowledge Landscape*, I explore the research of Clandinin and Connelly that describes how teachers story themselves on the landscape. This section supports the suggestion made by Clandinin and Connelly that *The Professional Knowledge Landscape*, itself, must be restoried if meaningful possibilities are to be lived out as teaching practice in the future.

One of these meaningful possibilities is explored in the area entitled *Teacher Leadership*. Perhaps if we can restory *The Professional Knowledge Landscape* from this

58

perspective, organizational directives that result in resistance may no longer affect the

relationships of teachers.

Together, all of these areas of research provide a context within which to think

about the stories of conflict and relationships contained within this thesis.

Relationships

Shabatay (in Witherell & Noddings, 1991) offers a description of a 'relationship'

with the following:

> We are able to think, imagine, and feel how the other is thinking, imagining and feeling. We do this neither by projecting our own feeling onto the other nor by remaining detached but by being open to that which is taking place in the person before us. This we can do to some extent before we know a person well. But a full 'making present' occurs in closer relationships where we are able to experience what the other is experiencing. Buber refers to this as 'imagining the real', or experiencing the other side' or 'inclusion'. All we can do is respond to what the stranger shares with us. But that response can be a caring response. (p. 149)

Building relationships takes time and care.

Wheatley and Kellner-Rodgers (1996) say of relationships in organizations:

> The system emerges as individuals freely work out conditions of life with their neighbours. No one worries about designing the system. Everyone concentrates on making sense of the relationships and needs that are vital to their existence. They are co-evolving. (side three, taped version)

Traditional organizational practice today often relies less upon strong relationship-building

and more upon productivity, however. The goals of many organizations have become

more important than the people they serve (Morgan, 1997). Wheatley and

Kellner-Rogers (1996) suggest that organizations must look at their purpose in a different

way:

59

What skills and capacities come forth now that there is a relationship? What are we capable of now that we're together? An emergent world asks us to stand in a different place. We can no longer stand at the end of something that we visualize in detail and plan backwards from that future. Instead, we must stand at the beginning, clear in our intent, with a willingness to be involved in discovery. The world asks that we focus less on how we can coerce something to conform to our designs and focus more on how we can engage with one another, how we can enter into the experience and then notice what comes forth. The world asks that we participate more than plan. (Side three, taped version)

Greenfield (1993) suggests that "The error most theorists make in thinking about organizations is to conceive of them as somehow separate from life, love, sex, growth, self, conflict, accomplishment, decay, death, and chance" (p. 53). The technical rational view of organization has somehow transformed an historic social phenomenon built upon human needs into an antiseptic view of our world where people are treated like machines (Morgan, 1997). This position produces a dichotomy when considering change, however, for organizations are built upon the needs of people and people need to feel safe to explore new possibilities (Morgan, 1997). In times of change, relationships give us the balance to be flexible and the connectedness to trust enough to risk-take (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1996). People need relationships with others to become productive citizens.

Wheatley (1992) indicates that "we cannot hope to influence any situation without respect for the complex network of people who contribute to our organization" (p. 145). People are not pawns to be moved about in a chess game. They are integral to the function of any organization. She speaks of the need to build relationships that can withstand change mandates:

To live in a quantum world, to weave here and there with ease and grace, we will

60

need to change what we do. We will need to become savvy about how to build relationships, how to nurture growing, evolving things. All of us will need better skills in listening, communicating, and facilitating groups, because these are the talents that build strong relationships. (p. 38)

Lambert et al. (1996) indicate that "relationships seem to be the basis of resiliency in humans, other living systems, and in social systems as well" (p. 44). Strong relationships are critical for successful organizational reforms because organizations are living systems. They are socially constructed around the needs of people (Morgan, 1997).

Tappan and Brown (in Witherell & Noddings, 1991) present the following position:

> I've suggested that schools should become places in which teachers and students live together, talk to each others, reason together, take delight in each other's company. My guess is that when schools focus upon what really matters in life, the cognitive ends we are now striving toward in such painful and artificial ways will be met as natural culminations of the means we have wisely chosen. (p. 168)

Sergiovanni (1992) indicates that relationships in school organizations must be built upon collegiality not congeniality. They must have the basic principles of fairness and equality at their base. Mutual respect depends upon a moral mentorship which is lived out by the leaders (p. 143). A caring ethic becomes a critical 'covenant' to protect (p. 115). This caring covenant is protected by a new type of leadership: "Leadership by outrage, and the practice of kindling outrage in others, challenges the conventional wisdom that leaders should be poker-faced, play their cards close to the chest, avoid emotion, and otherwise hide what they believe and feel" (p. 130). "Leadership by outrage" requires leaders to protect the ethical and moral principles of their community with "hand, heart and mind" (Sergiovanni, 1992).

Emotions play a large part in how people behave in certain situations. Caring is an

61

area which has been explored by some researchers with respect to relationships.

Recognizing the importance of a caring ethic in school organizations of the future may be key to accomplishing educational reform.

Caring in Schools

Strike, Haller and Soltis (1988) speak of caring for others as a moral principle.

With respect to teachers and administrators, they say:

> Growth as a moral agent, as someone who cares about others and is willing and able to accept responsibility for one's self, is the compelling matter. Promoting this kind of development is what teachers and administrators ought to be fundamentally about, whatever else it is that they are about. As educators, we are first and foremost in the business of creating persons. (p. 84)

Sergiovanni (1992) speaks about the caring side of schools in the following way:

> The heart of professionalism in teaching may be a commitment to the caring ethic. The caring ethic requires far more than bringing state-of-the-art technical knowledge to bear on one's practice; this results too often in students being treated antiseptically, as clients or cases. The caring ethic means doing everything possible to serve the learning, developmental, and social needs of students as persons. (p. 53)

Caring about students in this way is an expectation we have of teachers. Aoki (1986) also discusses this caring side of schools:

> I find that teaching so understood is attuned to the place where care dwells, a place of engathering where the indwelling of teachers and students is made possible by the presence of care that each has for the other. (p. 3)

An ethic of caring is also an expectation employees have the right to expect from their organization. Witherell (in Witherell & Noddings, 1991) points this out by arguing "for an ethical theory for both women and men that pays as much attention to

62

considerations of care and responsibility as to considerations of justice" (p. 91). Greenleaf

(in Sergiovanni, 1992) supports her position by suggesting that "people's caring for one

another is the foundation on which a good society is built" (p.115). Tappan and Brown

(in Witherell & Noddings, 1991, p. 160) take this position further by stating that "The

attitude of care liberates us from the fear that parties in the conversation will use gross

power to seize what they want. It requires all people to care -- to respond to expressed

needs."

Witherell and Noddings (1991) indicate that caring can be observed by the quality

of conversation between people in a school organization:

> True dialogue is open; that is, conclusions are not held to be absolute by any party
> at the outset. The search for enlightenment, responsible choice, perspective, or
> means to solve a problem is mutual and marked by appropriate signs of reciprocity.
> (p. 7)

This caring, demonstrated through conversation, should embrace all levels of discussion

including pedagogy and change. Greene (in Witherell & Noddings, 1991, p. xi) offers the

following for consideration: "It may be that education can only take place when we can be

the friends of one another's minds."

Morgan (1997) suggests that we can become "friends of one another's minds" by

beginning to understand the values and beliefs of people living in a specific culture: "There

is considerable value in adopting the standpoint of the cultural stranger because, in

becoming aware of the stranger's point of view, we can see our own in a refreshingly new

perspective" (p. 129). Stepping inside another person's "world," a world which includes a

combination of 'cultures as lived' such as family, school, province, country or religion,

63

requires some care and consideration.

Culture

Morgan (1997) suggests that culture should be "based on inclusive relationships characterized by trust, support, encouragement, and mutual respect" (p. 136). An organizational culture begins with people working together to build good relationships. It is built by people who spend time together talking about philosophical issues that may cause disagreements, "where organizational members could explore and resolve their differences in an open manner" (p. 131).

The culture of a school is built upon shared personal and professional values and beliefs as well as preferred models of teaching and school organization: "Culture is not something that can be imposed on a social setting. This sharing means developing a consensus of collective beliefs and an acceptance of common values in the specific culture. These values within a culture "develop during the course of social interaction" (p. 137). There should be "an ethos of sharing problems and ideas in an atmosphere of free and open exchange" (p. 131).

Culture "is a form of lived experience" (p. 151). It cannot be mandated through the philosophies of others. It is an "evolved form of social practice that has been influenced by many complex interactions between people, events, situations, actions, and general circumstance. Culture is self-organizing and is always evolving" (p. 151).

While researchers such as Morgan (1997) and Wheatley (1992, 1996, 1999) accept that culture is created through inclusion, the tendency of technical rational bureaucratic

64

organizations is to try to control culture from the top down. Exclusion is one form of

control used by organizations to control those who resist this method of management

(Chomsky, 1999; Greenfield, 1993; Field, 1998; Field, 1996; Morgan, 1997; Sergiovanni,

1992).

Organizations

Organizations need to find ways to include all members in problem-solving for the

future. Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996) suggest the following for consideration:

> Parallel systems are dedicated to finding what works, not by careful stepwise
> analysis in the hands of a few experts, but by large numbers in a population
> messing about in the task of solution creation. They come up with better solutions
> but they are based on a different kind of logic trying thousands of things
> simultaneously to find what works. Parallel systems are not afraid of error. Errors
> are expected, explored, welcomed. More errors create more information that
> results in a greater capacity to solve problems. (side one, taped version)

Involving all members of an organization through simultaneous problem solving processes

duplicates the system of life itself. Excluding members limits the possibilities (Wheatley &

Kellner-Rogers, 1996).

Morgan (1997) writes about future organizations as self-organizing organisms. In

self-organizing organizations, conflict and tension are used productively by members to

raise awareness of issues in order to confront problems. Tension is created within the

dense leadership of an organization's learning teams through conversation and action

research about issues. This tension opens opportunities for risk-taking to occur as team

members expand the horizon of their learning past the traditional model. Lambert et al.

(1996) describe the value of conflict in a self-organizing organization in the following way:

65

> Conflict is a necessary outcome of a collaborative structure in which teachers come together to discuss issues of importance to them. Rather than inhibiting learning, conflict can enhance it by causing people to stretch in their understandings and create alliances across differences that ultimately benefit everyone. (p. 163)

Conflict and tension are necessary precursors of change in organizations where risk-taking, individuality and creativity are valued.

Morgan (1997) speaks of the need for organizations to support risk-taking at all levels:

> For...learning to occur, organizations must develop cultures that support change and risk taking. They have to embrace the idea that in rapidly changing circumstances with high degrees of uncertainty, problems and errors are inevitable. They have to promote an openness that encourages dialogue and the expression of conflicting points of view. They have to recognize that legitimate error, which arises from the uncertainty and lack of control in a situation, can be used as a resource for new learning. They have to recognize that genuine learning is usually caution based and thus must find ways of helping to create experiments and probes so that they learn through doing in a productive way. (p. 94)

Unfortunately, many organizations simply pay lip-service to the support of the risk-taking by their employees. The reality is that successes are rewarded and failures are punished.

Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996) discuss this problem:

> This fear of error seems the darkest of Darwinian shadows. When errors hold so much peril, play disappears. Creativity ceases. Only fear and struggle persist. Paradoxically we make greater errors. We say to one another, 'Get it right the first time.' How can we live with so much fear? (side one, taped version)

If care is required for trust to develop, and trust is required for risk-taking, then organizational cultures of the future must focus upon building an ethic of caring into their covenants (Sergiovanni, 1992). Chomsky (1999) supports this notion of a caring and moral heart in organizations of the future. He presents a problem for us to consider when

66

comparing the norms found in today's educational systems with the ideal we are searching for:

> A good educational system ought to nurture creativity, independent thought, and a moral instinct. These aspects of human life should be allowed to flourish. But of course that approach has problems. For one thing, it means that it will encourage the challenging of authority and domination. The fact is that honesty, integrity, creativity -- these things we're supposed to value -- all run up dramatically against the hierarchic, authoritarian structure of the institutions in which we live and work. (p. 7)

Bennis (in Sergiovanni, 1992) explains how it is that we have come to this point in organizations of today. He describes the difference between leaders and social subordinates and suggests that the failure in school reform lies in the type of leadership sought:

> Once we believed that success was achieved through hard work, frugality, industry, diligence, prudence, and honesty. Now we believe that success is based on our personality alone. If we can please other people, we will succeed. Instead of working hard at work, we work on our personalities. Instead of being good at what we do, we opt for charm. And we do not dream, we fantasize. (p. 34)

Sergiovanni (1992, p. 323) asks the following question with respect to this type of environment: "How can one believe that one is part of a community of shared interests when differences in status and privilege are obvious and rife?"

He goes on to present the position that "for subordinates, life can be uncomplicated and even easy. After all, it does not take much talent or effort to be a good subordinate" (p. 70). He also indicates that "emphasizing personality over ideas leads to the "messiah syndrome," where emotional attachment to the leader is so blind and so strong that reason falters" (p. 71):

Success depends upon personality and style, or on carefully chosen ways of inducing others to contribute to the organization. It is not what one wants to do and why that is important; it is who one is and how one does that counts. We find such a view offensive. It is incompatible with the values of autonomy, reason and democracy, which we see among the central commitments of our society and our educational system. (p. 34)

Sergiovanni (1992, p. 4) adds that when there is subordinate leadership in schools:

The result is an emphasis on doing things right, at the expense of doing the right things. Leadership styles become substitutes for purpose and substance. Congeniality becomes a substitute for collegiality. Cooperation becomes a substitute for commitment. Compliance becomes a substitute for results. Where the managerial mystique rules, schools are forced to do rather than decide, to implement rather than lead. Too often, the results are 'trained incapacity' (Veblen, 1973) and 'goal displacement' (Merton, 1968).

Morgan (1997) suggests that when "leaders rise to power they tend to become preoccupied with their own way of looking at things, and it seems that the most that can be hoped for is that they will attempt to keep the interests of their members in mind" (p. 306). He offers the position that "we can get seduced by the idea that management must engineer, reengineer and operate an efficient organizational machine, only to find our designs undermined by a changing environment or by human beings that ultimately have to bring the machine to life" (p. 348). Strike, Haller and Soltis (1988) remind us that "the principle of equal respect requires us to treat people as *ends rather than means*. People cannot be treated as though they were nothing more than instruments to serve our purposes" (p. 17).

Morgan (1997) suggests that "Managers have to get beneath the surface and understand what is happening at a deeper level. Instead of being buffeted by the latest theories and trends, they need to be able to develop and take their own position" (p. 376).

68

They must also listen to others in their organization and hear what they have to say.

Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996) explain the change processes in the following way:

> Everything is in a constant process of discovery and creating. Everything is
> changing all the time: individuals, systems, environments, the rules, the processes
> of evolution. Even change changes. Every organism reinterprets the rules, creates
> exceptions for itself, creates new rules. Life uses messes to get to well-ordered
> solutions. Life doesn't seem to share our desires for efficiency or neatness. Life
> uses redundancy, fuzziness, dense webs of relationships and unending trials and
> errors to find what works. Life is intent on finding what works, not what's right.

Morgan (1997) suggests that organizations must develop relationships built upon
collegiality not congeniality because change cannot be mandated. Change is a continuous
process that cannot be controlled by any single individual or group. The exclusion of
some members from participation in decision-making processes may result in resistance
cultures forming within the organization (Chomsky, 1999). The harder that leaders try to
subjugate members of their organization, the deeper the resistance will go. The long term
consequence may be an underground network of resistance that is powerful enough to
undermine any attempts to mandate change (Chomsky, 1999).

How is it that we should approach leadership in an organization then? Wheatley
and Kellner-Rodgers (1996) suggest that "there is no such thing as a hero, not even a
visionary leader. Everything is the result of interdependencies, systems of organization
where we support, challenge and create new combinations with others" (side two, taped
version).

What characteristics should organizations seek in leaders for the future?
Hodgkinson (1991) says, "I would take issue with any underestimation of the
administrator as an agent incapable of altering the moral climate and moral destiny of the

69

organization" (p. 124). Hodgkinson also describes a leader who does not fulfill our need

for ethical and moral leadership:

> All means justify his ends and he is strong, bold, amoral - beyond good and evil in
> the conventional sense. In general, normal ethics and morals are simply jettisoned
> or abandoned, although careful pains may be taken by the leader to disguise the
> fact from his followers, who themselves presumably subscribe, at least overtly, to
> such morality. (p. 92)

I introduce the next section on ethics and morals with a quotation from Strike,

Haller and Soltis (1988):

> A belief in the possibility of moral reasoning permits a view of education that is
> itself moral in nature. It provides the grounds for administrators to pursue, with
> their staff and students, those moral commitments that define us as a free people in
> a free and democratic society. Ethical relativism, in contrast, leaves the
> administrator to pursue values that cannot be objectively chosen and thus, if
> operative at all, must be arbitrarily imposed. Moreover, relativism defines the
> administrative role as technical and manipulative. (p. 106)

Ethics and Morals

Hodgkinson (1991, pp. 95-105) explores the dimensions of human behaviours by

classifying them into affective, cognitive and conative value concepts (p. 96). He indicates

that feelings and emotions guide the affective system while rationality counsels the

cognitive system. The affective and cognitive domains tend to rely upon individual and

collective needs and wants that are accepted within a culture as norms. A third system,

the conative value system, is made up of existential and ideological values that influence

an individual person's will. Will is that ungovernable and private part of self which is the

moral self, "where an act of faith or commitment is necessary" (p. 99). Conative

'metavalues' are unquestionably basic and desirable as 'right.'

70

Hodgkinson (1991) speaks about the struggle individuals have to discover their

own morality while engaged in conflict with others:

> Morality in its highest sense is a progressive discovery of one's will; of the truth
> that one has a will and can manifest it in the world through other people and other
> wills. Morality is the reconciling of this will with the ethics to which one chooses
> to subscribe. And this journal of self-discovery is, in the end, everyone's true life's
> work. (p. 153)

This struggle for self-discovery amidst conflictual situations sometimes results in the

"progressive discovery" of individual will.

"As feeling human beings we also need to be sensitive to the moral domain and

draw upon our shared ability to empathize with and care for other persons. Our moral

intuitions are rooted in our ability to feel and empathize as well as in our ability to think"

(Strike, Haller & Soltis, 1988, p. 102). Our moral intuitions or "our intuitive sense of

what is right and wrong are important data for moral reasoning and the construction of

moral theory" (p.101). People make decisions to support one position or another in a

conflict because of their value systems. Strike, Haller and Soltis (1988) discuss the

obligations people have for moral principles that make up their value systems:

> People have a right to freely choose their own conception of "good." However,
> moral principles as expressions of the good are obligatory, and we can interfere
> with those who breach them. (p. 41)

They go on to clarify this position:

> No one has the right to impose their values upon us. Moral principles are,
> however, a matter of public concern. Moral principles express obligations to other
> people. It is often reasonable to enforce them. (p. 38)

The absence or presence of moral principles lived out by a leader will become obvious in

the quality of care that exists for people in an organization (Hodgkinson, 1991).

Ruggierio (in Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 110) presents one basic principle and four

working principles for consideration by organizations when building a covenant. The

basic principle is that all people have the right to expect "to be treated with respect and be

left alone as long as one does not infringe on others' rights." The four working principles

to be considered are:

(1) Relationships with other people create obligations of various kinds, and these should be honoured.
(2) Certain ideals enhance human life and assist people in fulfilling their obligations to one another. These should be served whenever possible. Among these are: tolerance, compassion, loyalty, forgiveness, peace, brotherhood, justice (giving people their due), and fairness (being impartial, as opposed to favouring select people).
(3) The consequence of some actions benefit people, while those of other actions harm people. The former actions should be preferred over the latter. Consequences, of course, can be emotional as well as physical, momentary as well as lasting, and subtle as well as obvious.
(4) Circumstances alter cases. Good thinking about issues means getting beyond generalizations and examining the particulars of the case. (p. 110)

In their work on schools and leadership, Strike, Haller and Soltis (1988) suggest

that "growth as a moral agent, as someone who cares about others" is a compelling matter

because "as educators we are first and foremost in the business of creating persons"

(p. 84). They go on to suggest that "our ability to empathize, to experience the wrong

done to others as our hurt and the good done to others as our joy, is a large part of our

desire to do right" (p. 103). Hodgkinson (1991) talks about the depth of emotion one

faces when deciding the 'best value' in decision-making:

In art, unlike life, resolution is within the creative gift of the author. In life, or reality the disappointing analytic answer is that there is no mode of resolution, no maxim, no strategy for determining the 'best value.' There is only anguish, dilemma, and powerful negative emotion. (p. 150)

72

They go on to say that ethical and moral leadership includes empathy for and caring about people: "People cannot be treated as though they were nothing more than instruments to serve our purposes" (p. 17). Wheatley and Kellner-Rodgers (1996) say of organizations and people:

> Instead of denouncing us as irresponsible, disloyal or lazy, our organizations need to notice how they have disengaged from us. Poet, David White, states that 'No organization, however large, is big enough to hold even one human soul' (side three, taped version)

First and foremost, organizations must be of, and about people, or resistance will be a natural consequence.

Resistance

Greenfield (1993) speaks about the choices people make to commit, comply or resist a mandate when their beliefs run contrary to the expressed purpose:

> People do what they have to do, what they can do, and what they want to do. They have opportunities to act, to remain silent, to maximize their pleasure or to foreswear it, to prevail upon others or to submit to them. Concrete specific action is the stuff organizations are made of. (p. 53)

Their value systems will come into play when making these decisions.

Field (1998, pp. 377-380) suggests several "legitimate" ways to resist unfair and unjust practices in an organization. His methods include: (a) direct voice - trying to achieve personal outcomes by asking directly, (b) complaining to the manager or supervisor, (c) going over the head of the immediate boss by bypassing the chain of command, and (d) practising obstructionism - not doing the work, ignoring requests, missing deadlines on purpose and the like.

He goes on to indicate that "illegitimate" responses from bosses to these resistance strategies include: (a) the formation of coalitions, (b) the exchanging of favours, (c) the promotion of individuals more for whom they are than for what they can do, and (d) reprisals to punish the undesired actions of others (p. 379). All of these responses tend to cause more resistance because "coalition, legitimizing, and pressure were the least effective" strategies "for influencing subordinates and peers" (p. 379).

Morgan (1997) indicates that resistance is a logical consequence of reengineering processes that do not take into account the human aspect within the organization:

> By placing primary emphasis on the design of technical 'business systems' as the key to change, the majority of reengineering programs mobilized all kinds of social, cultural and political resistance that undermined their effectiveness. (p. 39)

He explains that the "human factor often subverts the reengineering process, leading to massive failure rates" (p. 22).

Morgan also suggests that many organizations "operate as opportunity structures that open the doors to success for some employees while closing them to others" (1997, p. 342). In this type of political environment, "radical leaders hell-bent on changing the circumstances of their followers" will engage in confrontation and resistance "even if this means a long and arduous battle" (p. 342).

Morris, Crowson, Porter-Gehrie & Hurwitz (1984) indicate that 'managers' should consider resistance as an alternative when members of the organization are placed in jeopardy:

> The need for the manager to be bound by the command chain is conventional wisdom. What is not so commonly understood in organization theory is the companion contradictory idea that the need to *ignore* the chain of command also

74

increases as the bureaucracy grows. Precisely because decision making in large organizations relies upon impersonal expectations, the need to *disobey* orders to counter their dehumanizing effects becomes more compatible with principles of good management. (p. 150)

As Morris, Crowson, Porter-Gehrie and Hurwitz indicate, resistance is important in order

for organizations to be "sensitive to the human needs of their surroundings" (1984,

p. 150).

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) suggest that women, in particular,

are prepared to abandon the search for mediation when it becomes obvious that their

concerns are not heard:

> Women constructivists show a high tolerance for internal contradiction and ambiguity. They abandon completely the either or thinking so common to the previous positions described. They recognize the inevitability of conflict and stress and, although they may hope to achieve some respite, they also, as one woman explained, 'learn to live with conflict rather than talking or acting it away.' They no longer want to suppress or deny aspects of the self in order to avoid conflict or simplify lives. (p. 137)

Women, traditionally, have not had a significant voice in developing policies and

mandates in highly bureaucratic organizations. Validation of voice may be a significant

contributor to the commitment one has for the goals of an organization. Conversely,

invalidation of a person's voice may serve to sever relationships with those who are the

source of the invalidation. Resistance and conflict may be the inevitable result.

Field (1988) indicates that when principals or teachers are punished for trying new

ideas, successful or otherwise, or for presenting their opinions about mandated practices,

the obvious result is decreased creativity, personal innovation and risk-taking. Wheatley

& Kellner-Rogers (1996) leave us with the following questions to consider with respect to

75

the punishment of risk-taking:

> When did opportunities begin to feel so limited? How did we come to believe in 'windows of opportunity', rare openings that suddenly snap shut. When did we become so unforgiving and so punishing of one another's explorations? (side one, taped version)

Field (1988) indicates that while punishment is an "illegitimate response," the marginalization of an individual by supervisors or members of a coalition group is one form of punishment sometimes employed.

Marginalization: A result of resistance

Resistance to organizational directives can be a dangerous enterprise. People who resist publicly and openly can become the focus of negative attention from the organization. Chomsky (1999) says of people who resist in organizations:

> There are people who don't accept, who aren't obedient. They are weeded out, they're behavioural problems. The long-term effect of this process is to foster and reward subordination. It begins in kindergarten and goes all the way up through your occupational or professional career. If you challenge authority, you get in some kind of trouble. (p. 7)

Field (1998) suggests that scapegoating may be a consequence for those who resist.

> Scapegoating is used in three distinct sets of circumstances, namely: (1) When power holders perceive an external challenge to the prestige and respectability of their institution; (2) to intimidate others and to increase their own power; or (3) as a way to redefine their own social image by blaming someone in the organization who exhibits conduct that the power holders have deemed to be unacceptable. (p. 384)

He goes on to suggest that "It is not hard to imagine that being selected as a scapegoating target would lead to resistance and conflict, one of the many possible outcomes of the

76

influence attempt" (p. 384).

Morgan (1997) discusses the problem of marginalization in the following way:

> All kinds of organizational scapegoats serve similar functions --people in roles
> everyone 'loves to hate', convenient 'trouble makers' and 'misfits', and people
> who are 'just not playing the game.' They provide a wider focus for unconscious
> anger and sadistic tendencies, relieving tension in the wider organization and
> binding it together. (p. 234)

He suggests that if there is a subculture of resistance within an organization, targeting high

profile individuals may become a predictable response. Coalition employees of the

organization's hierarchy become involved in the task of discrediting and marginalizing the

individual. This marginalization can include "all kinds of subtle degradation through the

stories and myths that circulate on the organizational grapevine" (p. 192).

Adams, (1992), Field (1996), Wyatt and Hare (1997), Randall (1997) and others

label these behaviours "adult bullying" or "mobbing." Field (1996, p. 113) indicates that

the arch bully, usually a person in a high position of authority, "employs highly selective

memories, stacks all the odds in their favour, and regularly moves the goalposts; in short,

they cheat" when dealing with subordinate victims. He goes on to indicate that victims in

the workplace tend to have a high degree of social conscience "which is closely allied to

the sense of injustice" (p. 113). They are often "strongly empathetic, and the need to feel

valued and worthwhile is deeply ingrained. Consistency and high standards of behaviour

are also exhibited and expected. A lack of awareness of the role of naivety also

contributes, as does instinctive deference and an overactive sense of guilt" (p. 119).

The purpose of bullying is to destroy a person's will. While that is the logical

result, on occasion, bullying may serve to enhance the strength of a victim. Belenky et al.

77

(1986, p. 47) suggest "that they can strengthen themselves through the empowerment of others is essential wisdom often gathered by women." Greene (1997) indicates that marginalization can become a process of acceptance of exclusion, and then a redirection of focus: "Were it not for my being excluded from the inner circles...I would not have had to reach out on my own" (p. 33). Choosing to restory a story of marginalization toward one of independence, and from there to collaboration, offers hope to individuals caught in these social circumstances.

Field (1988) suggests that directives and mandates do not encourage learning and exploration by administrators. They marginalize what is possible. Marginalization used in this context suggests that organizations sell themselves short when they require administrators to follow directives that do not allow for individual creativity:

> Stability is found in freedom not in conformity and compliance. We may have thought that our organization survival was guaranteed by finding the right form and insisting that everyone fit into it, but sameness is not stability. It is individual freedom that creates stable systems. It is differentness that enables us to thrive. (Wheatley & Kellner-Rodgers, 1996, side two, taped version)

If this is so for administrators, then it seems highly likely that it is also so for teachers.

Wheatley and Kellner-Rodgers (1996) talk about the passion individuals have for the purpose of their organization and how that passion can be destroyed:

> We take this vital passion and institutionalize it. We create an organization. The people who love the purpose grow to disdain the institution that was created to fulfill it. Passion mutates into procedures, into rules and roles. Instead of purpose, we focus on policies. Instead of being free to create, we impose constraints, constraints that squeeze the life out of us. The organization no longer lives. We see it's bloated form and resent it for what it stops us from doing. Too often organizations destroy our desires. They insist on their own imperatives. (Side three, taped version)

78

When the personal practical knowledge of individual teachers is not recognized, education

may, itself, become marginalized. The following section brings us into the classroom,

where mandates and directives have the ability to negatively affect what is possible in

teaching practice.

Mandated Teaching Philosophies and Practices

Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996) talk about the re-creation of 'expert'

methods within our organizations:

> Experimentation doesn't use up opportunities; it creates more -- more information, more experiences, more insights. We have limited the world but it remains wide open to us. Many of us have created lives in organizations that give very little support for experimentation. We believe that answers already exist out there independent of us. We don't need to experiment to find what works; we just need to find the answer. So we look to other organizations or to 'experts' or to reports. We are dedicated detectives tracking down solutions, attempting to pin them on ourselves and our organizations. Could we stop these searches? What if we gave up so much striving to discover what others were doing? What if we invested more time and attention in our own experimentation? We could focus our efforts on discovering solutions that work uniquely for us. We could realize that solutions that are not perfect, only pretty good, can work for us. We could focus on what's viable rather than what's right. Observing others' successes can show us new possibilities, expand our thinking, trigger our creativity but their experience can never provide models that will work the same for us. It is good to be inquisitive. It is hopeless to believe that they have discovered our answers. (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1996, taped version, side one)

Fenstermacher (1994) indicates that some researchers are simply interested in

telling us what they know, not what teachers know about teaching:

> Researchers in this category do not see themselves as studying teacher knowledge so much as they perceive themselves producing knowledge about teaching. Using methods and designs found in the social sciences, they seek the determinants of good teaching. Their work rests on a belief that if their methods and designs are in accord with accepted scientific theory and practice, their results may be safely

79

accepted as knowledge about teachers and teaching. (p. 7)

Clandinin and Connelly (1995, p. 8) support this position with:

North American education is so deeply embedded with a notion of theory-driven practice that it is difficult to get a hearing for an alternative view. The school administrator's metaphor of the funnel aptly expresses the relationship.

For this reason, they suggest that "it is necessary to use metaphors such as the funnel to

talk about the relationship" (p. 8).

The conduit is a metaphor that allows us to name the sacred story and to give a sense of how it functions in relating theory and practice in education. Specifically, the conduit allows us to imagine how the sacred story shapes teachers' professional knowledge landscapes. (p. 9)

Although not using the language of sacred stories and the conduit, Aoki (1988)

understood well the limitations of the kind of positivist perspective on the relationship

between theory and practice which are embedded in the conduit metaphor. His notion of

the "black box" view of teaching seems to fit nicely with this metaphor:

In this black box view of teaching, what I resent is the way in which it is ignoring the lives of teachers and students, they are cast into nothingness. That which I consider to be the most vital is devitalized into nonexistent darkness. For me, the black box reflects a frightening ignorance of so called educational researchers, who, as researchers, are forgetful that they are not merely researchers but *educational* researchers. They forget the adjective. And by being forgetful, they commit violence by denying the humanness that lies at the core of what education is. (p. 1)

Casey (in Goodson, 1994, p. 188) made a similar point:

By systematically failing to record the voices of ordinary teachers, the literature on educators' careers actually silences them. Theoretically, what emerges is an instrumental view of teachers, one in which they are reduced to objects which can be manipulated for particular ends.

The moral tiredness that Clandinin (1995) wrote about may well, at least in part,

owe its existence to the invasive influence of the "black box" view of teaching:

> Moral tiredness is tiredness that seeps into our very being. It takes us past the physical tiredness that comes from the long hours of moving and talking and bending and cutting and pasting and hanging and talking. It takes us past the emotional tiredness of the intensity of interacting with many children, parents, other teachers and administrators. Most of all, moral tiredness speaks to knowing that what we think is important is not valued by those around us. Moral tiredness is a tiredness that sleep and walks and good food and even time away from the intensity cannot dispel. (p. 4)

She goes on to indicate, however, that

> There are other people with whom to seek community. I think about principals and assistant principals and vice principals. Some of them are feeling increasingly uncomfortable about how they are positioned on the out-of-classroom place on the landscape and about the kind of knowledge funnelled into it. (p. 7)

She says: "I hear their stories of trying to create safe places on the out-of-classroom place on the professional knowledge landscape to share secret stories of teaching" (1995, p. 7).

Clandinin (1993) suggests that as an *educational* researcher and teacher educator, her efforts focus upon hearing "my voice and then to still it so I can hear others' voices" so that together "new stories of possibilities" can emerge from which they might all learn (p. 160). Elbaz (1991) offers the position that we must "make room" for teachers' concerns, expressed by their own voices if we are to "present the teacher's knowledge in it's own terms, as it is embedded in the teacher's and the school's culture" (p. 11). She goes on to suggest that "in a sense, the research on teacher thinking constitutes a developing conception of voice and an ongoing attempt to give voice to teachers" (p. 11).

Perhaps by listening to all of the voices of teaching, we might truly begin to understand what "good" teaching is by learning from the "lived" possibilities that emerge. Wheatley and Kellner-Rodgers (1996) say of these individual capacities:

81

Emergence is so common to our experience that it's a wonder we don't recognize it, that we still believe we must plan everything into existence. How much of any human endeavour comes to fruition from precise plans unfolding step by step just as their designers describe. If we look at any successful human activity, we see that what led to success was the newly discovered capacity of people. They came together and they invented new ways of doing something. They explored new realms of ingenuity. They made it happen by responding in the moment and by changing as they went along. Our plans, our blueprints and our diagrams have made it difficult to see this wonderful, creative capacity growing around us all the time. We fear surprise and we retreat to caution. We'd rather know what's in store than be caught off guard by new possibilities. (side three, taped version)

The Professional Knowledge Landscape

The professional knowledge landscape is a metaphor which is used to describe space, place and time as well as the positioning of people and their relationships to one another in the world of teaching (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000; Clandinin, 1986; Connelly & Clandinin, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1990, 1994). The professional knowledge landscape is described as having three main locations: the in-classroom place where teachers live out their lives of teaching with the children, the out-of-classroom place which includes all other places in the school, and the conduit, the authorities-based pipeline through which 'experts' mandate theory-driven practice to teachers. While some of these 'experts' may once have lived in classrooms, they no longer do.

Connelly and Clandinin (1986) define personal practical knowledge as "understanding teaching acts in terms of personalized concrete accounts of people knowing" (p. 297). To them it is

A term designed to capture the idea of experience in a way that allows us to talk about teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons. Personal practical knowledge is the teacher's past experience, in the teacher's present mind and body, and in the future plans and actions. Personal practical knowledge is found in the teacher's practice. It is, for any one teacher, a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions of the future to deal with the exigencies of a present situation. (1988, p. 25)

Grimmett and Erickson (1988) explain that teachers often work through problems in the classroom by using a process of 'reframing' situations from their past experience:

One's ability to recognize patterns in situations of uncertainty and uniqueness, and to act officiously in those situations, depends upon one's capacity to 'frame' problems. In doing so, one is drawing upon a repertoire of past experience and ways of apprehending that experience, both of which lead to an ability to 'reframe' problems in the light of the information obtained from the practice setting. (p. 117)

Schubert and Ayers (1992) refer to a teacher's perspective about teaching and education in the following way:

Teacher lore refers to knowledge, ideas, insights, feelings and understandings of teachers as they reveal their guiding beliefs, share approaches, relate consequences of their teaching, offer aspects of their philosophy of teaching, and provide recommendations for educational policy makers. (p. 9)

Teacher lore offers us an understanding of the personal practical knowledge of teachers in oral format.

VanManen (1984) indicates that "a true thinking on lived experience is a thoughtful, reflective gathering of what it is that renders this or that particular experience its special significance" (p. 41). Stories represent this thoughtful gathering by portraying the lived experience of teaching for the teacher. The teacher creates the story by looking inwards and outwards, backwards and forwards, connecting personal history to relevant context and reflective thinking to experiential situationedness (Connelly & Clandinin,

83

1994, p. 417). This process provides a three-dimensional view of the teacher as a knowledgable being in the world of school. Because personal practical knowledge provides the base for teacher stories, storying and restorying our stories of practice in community may offer infinite possibilities for the development of new teaching practice.

Clandinin and Connelly (1995) suggest that a view that practice is only applied theory can invalidate the personal practical knowledge of many teachers. Teacher voices that tell about teaching in the classroom are silenced as voices of "educational researchers" and other "experts" speak out loudly. These loud voices offer stories about what "good teaching" is that cannot be discredited or discounted because over time, and through word of mouth, they are accepted and referenced as being "preferable."

> The universality and taken-for-grantedness of the supremacy of theory over practice gives it the quality of a sacred story (Crites, 1971). Crites makes the point that sacred stories are so pervasive they remain mostly unnoticed and when named are hard to define: "These stories seem to be elusive expressions of stories that cannot be fully and directly told, because they live, so to speak, in the arms and legs and bellies of celebrants. These stories lie too deep in the consciousness of people to be told directly" (p. 294). The relationship of theory to practice has this quality and for that reason we say that the professional knowledge landscape for teachers is embedded in a sacred story. (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 8)

Some teachers choose to live out their teaching lives behind closed doors with the children. Their secret stories of what education is to them are told in 'safe places' because they may conflict with the stories mandated by 'experts' who live on the out-of-classroom places on the professional knowledge landscape . Teachers may hide their secret stories of teaching because they fear retribution or loss of prestige from those positioned above them.

Often, teachers tell cover stories on the out-of-classroom places on the landscape

84

in order to show themselves as knowledgeable persons in the world of school (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). These cover stories have been developed in portfolios (Burron, 1992; Campbell, Cignetti, Melenzer, Nettles & Wyman, 1997; Setteducati, 1995; Siemens, 1994; Wolf, 1991, 1996; Wolf, Whinery & Haggerty, 1995; Zubizaretta, 1994) and elsewhere so that teachers' evaluations will be positive. "Their task is to create a coherent story by cutting and pasting together fragments of their personal lives, their beliefs and their practices, cradling the story within the explicit standards and expectations of the teaching profession" (Bossetti, 1996, p. 4). Here then, we see "cover stories, stories in which they portray themselves as characters who are certain, expert people fulfilling the moral requirements of the prescriptions on the out-of-classroom place" (Clandinin, 1995, p. 6).

Historically, educational researchers have focused their attention, in one form or another, upon evaluation in teacher portfolios. Stewart (1994) suggests, however, that we may be limiting the possibilities by looking at portfolios in this traditional way. He offers the following for our consideration: "I have found the narratives to be an integral part of the portfolio and of the reflection process, not just a means of getting there" (p. 54). Perhaps if we listen to the teachers as they story their artifacts to us, possibilities for teaching practice, as yet unconsidered, may emerge. These possibilities could be lived out as new stories of teaching in the classroom.

Unfortunately, these possibilities are now limited as teachers hide their authentic stories of teaching, while appearing to conform to practices mandated by others. Clandinin (1995) tells us, however, that "the collective, the community, will help us to speak in clear, strong voices that call for restorying the out-of-classroom place on the

85

professional knowledge landscape" (p. 8). Connelly and Clandinin (1994) suggest that "we need to create space so teachers and students can begin to tell their stories and have responses from many different voices in order to help them imagine new possible retellings" (p. 158). Only through telling their stories can teachers begin to see new possibilities emerge that can be lived out as new stories of practice. These new stories that have been restoried from different perspectives and with the input of different voices shift our perspectives as teachers: "The horizons of our knowing shift and change as we awaken to new ways of 'seeing' our world, to different ways of seeing ourselves in relation to each other to the world" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994, p. 155).

As Wheatley and Kellner-Rodgers (1996) indicate: "We can influence each other only by connecting with whom we already are. We encourage others to change only if we honour who they are now" (side two, taped version).

Teacher Leadership

Bender (1997) says of leadership: "Leadership is not just about managing systems. It's about people" (p. 7). Wheatley and Kellner-Rodgers (1996) indicate of systems and people:

> Systems cannot be deconstructed. We can't figure out cause and effect or even who contributed what. There are no heroes or permanent leaders in an emergent systems creating world. There are too many simultaneous connections. Individual contributions evolve too rapidly into group effects. A system is an inseparable whole. It is not the sum of its parts. It is not greater than the sum of its parts. There is nothing to sum. There are no parts. (side three, taped version)

In community, under the leadership of one of their own, teachers can move quickly

86

toward finding answers to problematic teaching situations if they are engaged in discovering solutions through their own experience (Lambert et al., 1996; Lieberman & Miller, 1999). Lambert et al. (1996) indicate:

> Constructivist leadership is reciprocal and happens in community. The role of the leader in this context is to create and sustain the occasion for other people to learn. Given its reciprocal nature, constructivist leadership is non-hierarchical. Depending on the problem at hand, the teacher leader assumes leadership responsibility based upon his or her knowledge or expertise rather than by assigned role in the school organization. Leadership, therefore, is contextual. (p. 148)

Lieberman and Miller (1999) talk about schools of the future as principal-less. These schools are organized around teams of teacher leaders who lead, learn, and teach together with the professional members of other teams within their community. Lieberman and Miller (1999), Lambert, Dietz, Collay & Kent (1996), Wolf (1995) and others say that the roles of professionals in our schools are changing. Principals and teachers "are blurring boundaries and forging new connections between learning, leading and teaching" (Lieberman & Miller, 1999, p. 46). Lieberman and Miller also indicate that when this happens, "teacher leadership becomes embedded in the school" (p. 46), creating an atmosphere which is open to change because change is owned at all levels of the organization.

Thinking about the Literature

Each section of this literature review should be considered when thinking about the stories of the principals and the teachers presented in this inquiry. While these areas may seem to be simply pieces in a jigsaw puzzle, I prefer to see them as Wheatley and

87

Kellner-Rodgers might: "It is not the sum of its parts. It is not greater than the sum of its parts. There is nothing to sum. There are no parts." These areas of literature are so interconnected within the stories of the co-researchers that they are, in reality, "an inseparable whole."

Only through sharing our stories might we "newly discover the capacity of people" (Wheatley & Kellner-Rodgers, 1996, side three, taped version). Chapter 5 offers some insights into the stories of five principals who have engaged in public acts of resistance. Five stories of the relationships within the context of conflict following these acts are told by the teachers in Chapter 6. It is time for our secret stories of conflict and relationships to come forth.

88

Building Relationships

The Principals

"In our exploration of what's possible, we are led to search
for new and different partners. Who we become together
will always be different than who we were alone."
(Wheatley & Kellner - Rogers 1996)

Annapurna Sanctuary
and Circuit Trek
Chomrong, Nepal
Thursday, Oct. 16/ 97
Hiking Day 09
Photo by: Larry Calloway   89

CHAPTER 5

THE PRINCIPALS

What Am I Doing Here?

Sometimes I find it overwhelming because much of what I am supposed to do as a

principal is not directly related to children learning. When I read Aoki's *Principals as*

Managers: An Incomplete View (1987), a great 'ah ha' hit me and I knew that I was not

alone.

> The word *principal* was at one time understood as *principal teacher* -- first or
> leading teacher. *Principal* was at one time an adjective. How did it become a
> noun? What happened when the adjective *principal* was separated from *teacher*?
> The separation made it easy for principals to be labelled administrators, usually
> understood within the business framework as managers. Such an understanding,
> which might be satisfactory for business, is inappropriate for educational ventures.
> Business deals with materials and people as resources -- as *beings that are*
> *THINGS* (note, dehumanization). Education deals with people -- with *beings that*
> *are HUMAN*, making education a venture different from business. (p. 11)

I once took a leave of absence from my principalship to explore another school

culture. I was excited by the prospect. I had hoped that this school might be the

"emergent system" of Wheatley and Kellner-Rodger's (1996) prophesies. I found,

however, that regardless of where a school is located, ways can always be found to

manage the business. Communication became ponderous as it moved through the cogs

and wheels of the organization at a distance before reaching us. Many of the directives

sent appeared to limit life chances for, and inhibit the creativity of, the people living on

that school landscape. In the aftermath of each incident, I noticed that damaged

relationships were often the end result of the turmoil created. I began asking myself the

90

question, "What am I doing here?"

I smiled wryly to myself as I sat on the paint-chipped bench sipping a Coke, trying

to decide whether to stay or to leave. I chuckled softly, as I considered how others might

react if I decided to go. Some might say, "There she goes again!" Others would say, "It's

her high ideals!" Then I thought again about the dangling communication...dadadadadada.

Words chattered in my head.

As I sat there deciding, I saw a bird hover high in the jewelled blue sky overhead.

I watched it float and then swoop upwards to still loftier heights. In the stillness of that

moment, I heard a gentle voice whisper in my ear:

> There are eagles and there are sparrows, Bubby. Eagles fly high. They are bold
> and adventurous; they do not fear failure. Eagles have a panoramic view of the
> world. Sparrows sit on telephone wires close to the earth where it is always safe.
> They sit on their perches, twittering and twerping about the eagles. They do not
> risk take; they fear failure. They have a narrower view of the world.

> The world needs both eagles and sparrows, Bubby, but you are an eagle. Accept
> that your life will always be filled with painful decisions and turmoil because you
> are prepared to risk-take. Accept that the sparrows will spend their time
> chattering about you because much of their life is spent watching to see if the
> eagles succeed or fail.

> Don't beat yourself up or cower like a whipped puppy. Make your decisions
> and move on. I will always be here for you if your journeys don't turn out quite as
> you planned.

I relaxed and lay back, soaking up the sun; the answer had come to me. I felt at peace for

the first time in months. I could hardly wait to E-mail my sister with my change in plans.

I left that day. I packed my bags, said a few goodbyes and walked away with no

regrets. As I look back, I remember the newness of it all, the excitement and the

adventure. I remember the experiences that made this quest special, and I remember the

91

people who touched my heart in places that touched my soul. There is nothing left past these small treasures: "First organizations are about people -- nothing beyond them, nothing less. Organizations are in people; they are not out there" (Greenfield in Hodgkinson, 1991, p. 140).

Why did I leave? I left because it was time to go. Sometimes, intuitively, I just know when a decision is the right one for me to make. Had I stayed, I would have accepted becoming a "thing" in a world where only "humans" should have mattered. My leaving was a form of resistance. Did I fail in my quest? I don't think so, nor do I think that the other principal co-researchers in this inquiry failed when they chose to leave their organizations. After all,

> What is it to lead? To lead is to follow the authority of the true. A leader in education must lead as he or she follows the essence, the true, of what education is. At the heart of education is pedagogy. Leading in education means, essentially, the leading of people from where they are now to new possibilities. The principal as leading teacher must be one who leads others to new possibilities by following the essentially true of what education is. (Aoki, 1987, p. 11)

Life is experience. Experience is education. I had lived an experience and I had learned from it. That is all that can be expected of any of us.

I wrote the following piece of poetry in July 1998, when I first began to explore resistance through the literature. My poem offers a metaphor to describe the feelings I have when I am struggling to decide whether to resist, comply or commit to a directive, program, philosophy change or restructuring that may affect my school. In the poem, I name the border I straddle between my teachers and their classroom practice and others who give directives as the 'interface.' This poem shows me stepping away from

92

resistance:

On the decontextualized, deconceptualized changing interface of the conduit

Checking the boundaries
toes on the forge
hanging ten over
crossing the gorge
Pulling the rope
passing the slack
choosing the knife edge
rock face to back
Out on the edge
of canyon's deep cut
teetering, tottering
eyes tightly shut
Then full awakening
danger behind
she had to try it
boundaries defined
Now into safety
and stepping back
taking the right side
of the right track...

on the conduit's changing interface.

If I were to restory this poem showing my resistance, I would be stepping forward, relying

only upon a thin line of rope to stop me from hurtling toward the floor of the canyon

below. Choosing to resist can place a principal in a very dangerous place on the landscape

of schools as indicated by the stories of the principals shared within this inquiry.

The Principals

There are five principal co-researchers in this inquiry. I am one of these five. Four

of the principals recorded their stories in incident portfolios. These four principals used

93

their dated and chronologically filed artifacts to assist them in telling their stories. Two also prepared time lines to assist in the telling. The fifth principal did not share any artifacts of the story. This story was told completely from memory.

The four principals who had portfolios referred to letters which recorded their resistance to assist them with their story-telling. All five of the principals used memory to describe their perceptions about others during the conflict. As well, all used memory to recall the various relationships within their stories.

None of the principals believed that the teachers were responsible for the situations that occurred. All of the principals saw the teachers as having been victimized in some form or another. All understood the relative vulnerability and powerlessness of teachers. One of the principals spoke with passion in a letter written on December 1, 1978, about this vulnerability:

> She is now suffering, justifiably or not, from the tyranny of intimidation. Fortunately she is not completely cowed...If you have talked to her in the manner she describes, I find that behaviour outrageous and particularly infuriating from someone who holds such an important internal public relations/personnel office.

Another spoke of the devastation the teachers felt in this story when they believed that they had been victimized by others:

> There were a lot of people that couldn't walk away from it. That's for sure. There certainly was. And probably still hurts...They were never given any information. They were never assured...Their worst dreams came true...What happened to those people?

None of the principals felt that the organizations' goals should be more important than the members of the organization. One of the principals said of people and organizations:

94

You can't help external problems, sometimes...But this was an internal situation with our own people who were not trying very hard to say things like, 'Well, maybe we could discuss this and what do you think of that?' And kind of compromise and reach an agreement that made sense, instead of putting the stress on the teacher.

All of the principals spoke of the guiding principles they used when choosing the path of public resistance. As one indicated,

I felt very strong in my convictions in what I was doing. I knew it was right to do that. I had taken a stand and I was prepared to live with the consequences, be they what they may. I would hope that people would do that. What else is there to base decisions on?

All of the principals spent a great deal of time reflecting upon their decisions to resist. One said the following:

I had the feeling, at that time, and it got stronger as time went on, that I had spent three years building a hell of a good school and that all I was doing anymore was fighting ditch fires and trying to, you know, hold what we had built. We weren't growing or developing or employing any new programs or ideas.

Resistance was never the first thought any of the principals had in trying to resolve the social situations they found themselves in. In the end, however, each decided that public resistance was the only thing left to try when their other efforts had failed.

The Principals' Acts of Public Resistance

What is fair and just? Principal one believed that there was an ethical and moral obligation at stake that required that resistance be employed. This resistance served to underline the unfair treatment of staff members at the school. Some teachers had expressed their opinions about a proposed restructuring. This restructuring appeared to highlight unfair hiring practices in the district. As well, at least one of the teachers also

95

disagreed, in whole, with a teaching philosophy the district wanted to mandate in the restructuring. After expressing their opinions, these teachers were punished. Writing letters and attending meetings were the methods used by principal one to resist. This principal left the principalship permanently within two years of this act of resistance. This principal sought assistance from the Teacher's Association.

Principal two felt strongly that an attack upon a female teacher by a male superior resulted from a situation that was uniquely feminine. Further, this principal believed that the female teacher was bullied by this superior. Letters, meetings and phone calls were methods principal two used to resist. This principal sought assistance from the Teacher's Association.

Principal three indicated that restructuring that did not take into account the teachers' security and dignity was a basis for serious concern. This principal resisted this issue as well as unfair practices in contractual issues for himself and a colleague. Meetings and phone calls were methods used by principal three to resist. This principal sought assistance from the Teacher's Association.

Principal four resisted attempts to mandate school culture and teacher practice within the school. This principal also resisted what appeared to be unfair practices in hiring and dealing with employees within the district. What appeared to be an attack upon the personal integrity of this principal served only to intensify this principal's resistance. Letters, meetings and phone calls were methods principal four used to resist. This principal sought assistance from the Teacher's Association.

Principal five resisted a restructuring that caused the school to receive less money

96

for more students. Teachers had to be cut. The final act of resistance made by this principal was to leave the profession when the relative competency of teachers was not taken into account by board members in their hiring practices. Letters, meetings and phone calls were methods used by principal five to resist.

My Interpretations

The following threads that weave our stories together offer some understanding of why resistance is engaged in by some principals. These threads of voice, mandated practice and poor treatment of teachers provide us with a glimpse into some of the complexities of resistance.

<u>Stories of Restructuring Resulting in Loss of Voice</u>   Four of the principals had organizational restructuring as a common thread in their stories of resistance. One spoke of his organization's decision to restructure the administration within the schools in the district and the concern expressed by some of the teachers because of that decision. The second talked about the amalgamation of the district with another. This principal explained how that restructuring caught some teachers in the cogs of the reengineering process. The third spoke of how a restructuring of the district negatively affected the philosophy of the school. This philosophy had been successful in bringing together people of strongly opposing cultural factions in the community. The fourth had also experienced a shifting of philosophies that drove a physical restructuring of the district. This restructuring affected the practice of many teachers and their relationships with other

teachers who appeared to be favoured in the movement.

For four principals, their greatest concern in the processes used became the invalidation of the voices of the teachers and administrators in the schools affected. In one story the teachers were punished for their attempts to have their voices heard at a meeting prior to the proposed restructuring. These teachers appeared to be silenced by an act that undermined their professional credibility in the district. Another principal spoke of a subculture of teacher victims that developed in the school as a result of reengineering in the district. These teachers appeared to be silenced by undermining their reputations of competency within the district.

In both of these stories and two others, the principals also felt voiceless in the restructuring processes that occurred. One of these principals refused to accept a loss of voice. This principal openly resisted the district's realignment through various letters to the board and confrontations with the superintendent and the board. When all else failed, this principal chose to walk away from both the district and the teaching profession: "When I saw them start that little game, that's when I resigned and walked away from the school for a new career." This principal's voice was finally validated by the media following his resignation. This principal's teachers appeared to stay silent, for the most part, throughout this story.

Another principal was also concerned about loss of voice in a restructuring process that resulted from a philosophy change in the district. A letter from this principal to central office on March 27, 1995 indicates this concern:

98

> While I cannot speak for my colleagues, I can say that I did not come to where I am to speak with someone else's voice.

Like the first principal, this principal refused to be denied voice. The significant difference between the two stories is that many of the second principal's teachers did not stay silent. They refused to be denied voice. They responded in various ways to convey their concerns: through a community letter to board members, individually in letters to board members, and through open conversation with others.

The fifth principal's story had to do with a general restructuring of beliefs about people:

> If there were gender equity, we'd still have issues of grievance, but I think the male/female thing would not be so predominant. Equity also means access to equality.

This principal's resistance had much to do with efforts to ensure that voice for a teacher who appeared to be bullied was not lost in the process.

One of the five principal co-researchers talked about the need for principals to ensure that teachers' voices were protected from intimidation and coercion within school organizations:

> The paramount insult to teachers occurs when you say, 'You're going to do this', and so when they question you, then you hit them with something else. You're just getting a bigger stick to get them in line. And that's not right. You can't do that.

It appears that whatever form the restructuring in these stories took, when an invalidation of teachers' voices occurred, public resistance was an alternative these principals resorted to.

The following poem written in September 1998, demonstrates the concern

99

expressed by one of these principals when the goals of the organization took precedence

over the people. In this story, some of the teachers appeared to be caught in the cogs of

the reengineering process that merged two school districts together:

Reengineering - Mechanical Means

The plant needs reengineering.
Move the cogs and the wheels around.
Turn the fulcrum. Electrically ground
the wires and secure the new mechanism
in formatted place. A new schism
and plan to remove the excess
and garbage the refuse.
Unnecessary fixtures to be ever greened
making the plant more concise and lean.
Enter the new classification;
recode it with deliberation
into the computer.
Dehumanized mechanical process -
No time to communicate;
this will only perpetuate
the cogs and wheels of minds
moving with individuality.
Social processes are wasteful
in a mechanical world.
Humans as things - why not?
Less distraction from satisfaction
to the organization
in the reengineering process.
People should be moved around
like machines and wound
like cogs and wheels bound
to the organization by productivity -
syncronicity in objectivity.
Why not?
(Inspired by Morgan, 1997)

<u>Mandated Theory Driven Practice or Philosophies</u>   Another common thread that

appears to weave two of these stories together is mandated teaching practices. The first

100

principal resisted a suggested restructuring designed to facilitate the implementation of a 'new' teaching philosophy in the school. This philosophy was one which could not readily be defined as one specific thing because it had grown out of the minds of so many 'experts.' At least one teacher in this story was also resistant to the interpretation the district had taken of this philosophy. The district's interpretation was incongruent with her understanding of how children learned. When she spoke up, she was punished. Her punishment, and that of other teachers who also spoke up, became the motivating force behind this principal's public act of resistance.

The second principal's resistance escalated because of how a 'new' philosophy of teaching was introduced in the district during a restructuring process. The teaching of some teachers appeared to be invalidated, as 'old' ways of doing things were frowned upon and specific characteristics of 'effective' teachers were encouraged in the 'new' philosophy. This principal became very resistant when it appeared that central office was trying to define 'good teaching' from a philosophy which grew out of the minds of 'experts' who were 'parachuted' into the district. These 'experts' did not live in classrooms with children, nor did they live in the cultural and geographic area where this school was located.

The ideologies of the teachers in a school help to create the culture of that learning community. School culture is always evolving and changing. Those who are living the culture are in the best position to understand it and to determine how and what changes should be implemented within it. The following poem, written in October 1998, suggests that attempts to mandate ideologies within a school culture may be met with resistance:

101

Organization as Culture

Social interactions develop cultural
beliefs. Culture is a struggle for the right
to shape organizational norms. It is an active,
living phenomenon through which people jointly
create and recreate their worlds in which they live.
Mind-sets, visions, paradigms, images, metaphors, beliefs
and shared meanings sustain realities in organizations.
Core meanings are those that people can
own and share. Rituals serve hidden
functions.

Culture cannot be mandated, designed
or made. It is a living, evolving, self-organizing
reality...an evolved form of social practice influenced
by the complex interactions of people, events, situations,
actions and circumstance. Culture is a distinctive ethos, exuding
characteristics that define the mission of the whole. It is a form of
lived experience, a symbolic consequence of actions. Culture
cannot be controlled. It pervades activity and is elusive
to direct domination by any single group of
individuals.

Enactment is a voluntary process -
empowerment creates direct influence by
the actors upon the culture. Disenfranchising
members of an organization creates a sub-culture of
dissonance. Repression, suppression - a superficial appearance
of harmony drives conflict underground. A struggle
for the right to shape organizational culture and
questions of ideology results. Manipulation
of culture is met with resentment and
resistance.
(Inspired by Morgan, 1997)

Stories of Poor Treatment of Employees   Poor treatment of teachers also appears to be

a common thread that strengthened the resolve of four principals to resist. Each believed

that some of the teachers in their schools were treated poorly by others in the

102

organization. One of these principals spoke about this issue, encapsulating the problem with:

> It always seemed to me that issues of complaint or grievance all had to do with the concept of social justice.

The first principal's resistance was immediate and public when teachers in the school appeared to be wrongfully punished for seeking to establish their opinions about a proposed restructuring in their district. This principal said, "You can't walk in and just power over people. Because you have more power, it doesn't give you the right to do that." The second refused to perform tasks that would make the principal the carrier of bad news decisions made by others to the teachers: "I'm not going to do that. I'm not going to do that." The third principal became openly defiant in a written communication to central office on December 1, 1978:

> She is now suffering, justifiably or not, from the tyranny of intimidation... If you have talked to her in the manner she describes, I find that behaviour outrageous and particularly infuriating from someone who holds such an important internal public relations/personnel office.

The fourth also used the letter approach to central office and board members, as well as meeting and talking on the telephone with others to convey concerns. As indicated in the following letter written on April 3, 1999, this principal believed that some teachers felt marginalized because of their principal's resistance history:

> They were caught between a rock and a hard place before; they chose the rock and I believe that they are now living in a very hard place. They feel that hardness whether it truly exists or not; they have indicated this to me and I have indicated this to you. Seeking first to understand, then be understood, may be a beginning to placing them on softer ground. I am asking for your assistance to change old perceptions.

103

Thinking About the Stories of Resistance

Argyris in Hodgkinson (1991) suggests that "a healthy personality cannot achieve

a perfect fit with the requirements of formal organization. This inevitable incongruence

increases as the employees are of increasing maturity, the formal structure is made more

clear-cut and logically tight, one goes down the chain of command, and the job becomes

more mechanized" (p. 81). Two of the stories told by the principal co-researchers

describe their incongruence with hiring practices they characterized as 'nepotism' within

their organizations. In the following poem (November 1998), I offer a possibility to

consider for understanding their concerns by expanding upon Hodgkinson's metaphor:

"There are indeed educational emperors aplenty who are wearing no clothes"(p. 59).

Political Marriages

"The emperor has clothes!" they say.
Allegiance for favour
they savour the flavour
of knowing whatever
needs knowing.
The inner circle of a powerful leader
weaves a hypnotic illusion
and powerful delusion
of grandeur.

Alliances formed for personal profit
stroking the leader...
stoking and feeding
while cloaking their needing
of sanction.
Stories circulate about the excluded.
Surreptitious whispering,
confidential muttering -
a subtle degradation.

Encouraging transactions of some

104

while blocking others.
Manipulation covers
the 'status quo' brothers
providing a buffering function.
Eliminate or suppress conflict -
an unfortunate state
no more debate.
Function with division.

Political patronage doled out carefully
parsimonious nepotism.
false jovial collegialism
an anachronism within
the marriage of convenience.
Manner solicitous; feigning sincerity
They may get burned
or turned upon
semi-autonomous pawns.

Loyalties are undone
when power is gone
no illusion left...of the inner circle.

Nothing is black and white. Life is not simple. People are complex. This has been a weaving together of some of the common threads found within our stories.

What I Am Doing Here is Experiencing Life

I wrote the following poem in September 1998. At that time, I was doing some research on Nepal so that I might have a greater understanding of my sister's thoughts in her travel journal. Pat had provided me with several books that told stories about mountain climbers. These stories were filled with decision-making, relationships, conflict and resistance. I resonated with the climbers' feelings of apprehension and imminent danger as depicted in their journal entries. I began to draw an analogy between their

105

feelings and mine as I imagined my resistance to be like a dangerous climb that had no real

or lasting effect. Still, like those climbers, I understood that I would rather try and

possibly fail, than stay silent and deny my principles. In this poem, the risk of resistance

pays off as I summit the mountain. The possibility that I may have to resist again looms

on the horizon, however. Any success I might feel in that brief moment on top is swept

away by the wind:

Breaking Trail

There are no easy mountains to climb.
Each one has its own peculiar challenges -
Cliffs, ridges, chasms, glaciers, crevasses.
Stepping onto a narrow crest -
testing the limits, knowing oneself...
Daily you head toward another peak
traversing a pitch, jumarring up a rib,
avoiding avalanches, rappelling down
to a narrow, windswept serac
crampons biting deeply into the snow.
The summit is near and then it is here...
"You never conquer a mountain.
You stand on the summit a few moments,
Then the wind blows your footprints away."
In the distance you can see
that there is always another mountain to climb...

"The view was surreal -- surrounded by Pumori, a symmetrically solitary peak, Everest,
looking bleak and chunky and Lhotse, floating in the sky like a beautiful ice sculpture."
(Pat Kvill, journal entry, Sunday, November 20, 1997 - Hiking Day 9)

Life is a struggle.
You can reach for the summit or shiver in the shadows.
"Om mani padme hum, om mani padme hum...
The jewel is in the lotus, the spirit of humanity is in the universe."
(Inspired by: Blum, 1980, *Annapurna: A Woman's Place*, p. 211 and 240)

For the moment, this is what I am doing here. I am living my story while imagining future

possibilities as I listen to the stories of others. I am learning about the experiences of my co-researchers as I reflect upon my own experiences. I am also exploring the contexts within which our lives, our stories and our relationships have been shaped.

Conclusion

Across place, space and time, I have been touched by the stories of four other principals who have had experiences similar to mine. By stepping into their "worlds," I have begun to understand my own story more fully.

Since the teacher stories are the focus of this inquiry, I have not included specific details about these principals' stories of conflict. This elimination of detail serves to place the stories of the teachers at the forefront. I believe that the voices of these principals will be heard through the words of their teachers, however.

The following chapter focuses upon the teachers' stories of relationships within the stories of conflict told by these five principals. The teachers also offer their own interpretations of the conflict that occurred. There is one teacher for each principal co-researcher in this inquiry.

Loving Playfulness

The Teachers

"One of the bolder young women came up to me beckoning to
join them. She then began to pull me by my arm, encouraging
me to sing with her. The children loved it, clapped their hands
and danced around me. I joined the singing and dancing."
(Kvill, Nov. 2, 1997)

Kathmandu, Nepal
Nov. 08 / 97
Photo by: Larry Calloway

108

CHAPTER 6

THE TEACHERS

Jennifer, Jeannie, Heather, Melissa and David are the five teacher co-researchers in this inquiry. Their stories span twenty-five years of teaching in five school districts in Alberta. Each of these teachers has been in a school where the principal has engaged in a public act of resistance. Each has lived through the conflict that followed. These teachers have much to say about relationships on the landscape of schools when principals choose to engage in public acts of resistance.

The teacher co-researchers were suggested to me by their principals. I chose three of the teachers from the groups of names given to me by their principals and made contact with these people myself. I have not told their principals who they are. One of the teachers was suggested to me directly because the principal's public act of resistance revolved around her. The teacher in my story is also known to me.

Two of the teachers were quite young at the time of their story. One was in the first year of teaching; the other was in the sixth year. The other three teachers were teachers with several years of experience.

Four of these stories were told with a great deal of emotion. Two of the teachers cried during our first interview and their first telling. Four of the teachers became quite angry during their first tellings of the incidents leading up to and following their principal's public act of resistance. I noticed that their faces turned red and mottled and that their voices shook with emotion while they spoke. The fifth teacher appeared to be confused

109

by some of the events that occurred in this story.

Three of the teachers wholeheartedly supported their principal's acts. Two of those acts had, specifically, to do with two of these three teachers. The other act of resistance had to do with all of the teachers in the third teacher's school. The fourth teacher did not know about the principal's acts as they related to the teachers. The fifth teacher did not support the principal at the time of the act. Years later, this teacher regrets not having done so.

Three of the teachers knew a great deal about the context of the situation leading up to their principal's public act of resistance. These were the three teachers who supported the acts. The fourth teacher also knew details about the context of the situation, having been directly involved, but knew nothing of the acts as they related to the teachers. The fifth teacher knew some of the context leading up to the principal's act.

Three of the teachers had portfolios. Two of these three teachers used their artifacts to assist them with their memories of their story. The other two teachers had no artifacts and no portfolios. One of these teachers had destroyed the artifacts shortly before our first interview because they were "old baggage" and held painful memories.

The Teachers: Multiple 'I's'

These are the stories of the teachers. There are four parts to each story. The first part tells of the incident from the teacher's perspective. We wrote this story together following our first interview. 'I' has been assigned to represent the teacher voices in each story because I believe that 'I' signifies the strongest representation of voice for a teacher.

110

I believe that it is a validation of self. Indentations or quotations have been used to identify actual statements made by the teachers during our conversations in these stories.

The second piece is a summary of how the relationships shifted on the landscape as the story unfolded. The third explains how the teachers reimagine themselves as a result of their experiences. The fourth is a continuation of the 'I' story as each teacher restories their lives on the landscape from the possibilities each imagined. All four pieces, together, illustrate our emerging understanding over time of how their lives were shaped by the contexts within which they lived.

These are the words of the teacher co-researchers storied in collaboration with me. This is "that roar which lies on the other side of silence" (in Belenky et al., 1986, p. 3).

David: Telling his story

This story happened a long time ago, when I was in my sixth year of teaching. I had been hired fresh out of college to teach at a newly built high school. Several of the other teachers on the staff were also new teachers like me. We found that we had a lot in common, so we "sort of socialized with the same group" from our school whenever we had parties and things. We were all "out to have a good time."

Our town was pretty unique. "First of all, you've got Catholics, Protestants, you have French Catholics, you also have the native people...in some cases even the Ukrainian faction in the community." The principal "respected everyone's situation. He would get together with a lot of people, one on one, and talk to them. In many cases, he would gain respect for their situation or position and he'd sort through it and make his decisions in

111

that respect. You know, we were a public school." All of the high school kids in the community went to our school.

Our principal "was interested in having the teachers represented in community activities." We knew this when we were hired as teachers. Our principal wanted to make sure that "the school was part of the community and he believed in that." He also believed that unless the teachers "extended the school to become part of the community," the French Catholic faction in our town would eventually demand that the Catholic students should be in their own high school. This would split up the kids, and we didn't want that to happen.

That was our philosophy. I accepted it when I was hired because I believed in public education and public schools. I got involved in extra-curricular activities in the town, like coaching minor hockey, right away. I put in lots of hours during my first six years of teaching and built some pretty good relationships with the kids and the parents out of school. The rest of the teachers at my school did the same during those years. Some of the older teachers who were transferred from the two existing districts in town to our school when it opened weren't very happy with this arrangement, however.

Since we were the only school in our district that made life very interesting. "We had a different board - completely different." In our fourth year as a high school, Alberta Education decided to restructure the Education Committee who ran our school. They appointed a regional superintendent and designated three board members from the public board and three from the separate board to the new regional board. A regional superintendent ran things for a year and then the superintendents of the public and the

112

separate districts began taking turns as superintendent of our district. "I think this made it difficult in that you're running one school board against another."

The public superintendent was the first one to take a turn. That worked out okay for the first year, but then it was the separate superintendent's turn. The separate superintendent made it pretty clear as soon as he took over the revolving superintendency that he didn't support our school's philosophy of teachers doing community extracurricular. This caused a bit of a problem among staff members because some of the older teachers started slacking off and the younger ones had to pick up the load.

Our principal had pretty much gotten along with the old Education Committee. He also got along with the public superintendent and board members. I don't think he got along with the separate superintendent or some of the separate board members though. Some of those board members were French Catholics and I think he believed that they wanted to split the kids up into two high schools. I know he didn't think that this would be good for our kids or the community. That's why we'd put the community involvement philosophy in place, to stop that from happening.

Anyway, in about April of that sixth year, we were told that some of our teachers would be cut because there wasn't enough money. Our principal was pretty upset about that. He thought that having a superintendent, a board, a secretary treasurer and a central office secretary for a one school district was wasting classroom money and he'd told the board that before. At any rate, the money wasn't there and, "someone had to go and it wasn't necessarily the ones our principal wanted to go. I think there was a different point of view and at that time, usually it was last one in was first one out, pretty well."

113

The principal wanted to keep the teachers who were still actively participating in our school philosophy and who could continue to present all of the school programs to the kids. He told the board that he would make those cuts but that he wouldn't let those cuts affect programming for the kids. Then he sent letters of termination to two of the older teachers in our school telling them that they wouldn't have a job in September. One of the teachers he terminated was a French-Catholic and this caused a big stir because "I think most of the Catholics went to church together. They belonged to various groups like the Knights of Columbus and so on."

The board called the principal in and insisted that two of our younger teachers should be cut using a 'last in, first out' practice. The principal disagreed. "The people the principal wanted to keep better exemplified what he would like from the school than what the board view was." Right after this, the board sent letters of termination to two of our younger teachers. So now there were four termination letters out there, two from the principal and two from the board!

While all of this was going on, I just kept my head down. I kept thinking to myself, "Well, if this person can get cut and they've only been here a couple of years or a year, and I'm just new on the staff, maybe they can chop my position and I enjoyed what I was doing."

During that period, whenever I went into the staff room, "everyone was sort of quiet and didn't want to discuss the situation." I guess that, "We were all hesitant to discuss certain things because of what the repercussions may be."

114

And in many cases, we didn't know where the other person stood...With some of the people, we knew where they stood and we weren't going to upset them. I knew it was no use trying to convince them of anything different because, maybe I respected their situation.

This went on for about a month, and "we watched our p's and q's with each other. There was, more than anything, a cautious type atmosphere. Not to maybe say or do anything against someone to hurt them or go against their support of the people they were supporting."

During this time, I think "there were some teachers that were a little more involved because they were closer to the people that were going to be released. I think, in some cases, it could have been public against separate since some had come in from those two different districts" when we started out six years ago. "There was sort of a dividing line as to whom you could discuss the situation with and some of the staff sort of split two ways." Most of us "respected each other well enough that we didn't want to get involved in this," however.

The public teachers and the new teachers didn't get involved politically because,

A lot of teachers weren't open to phoning board members and so on, at least from the public point of view. We had our so-called place and I didn't know how they would react to a teacher's involvement in that situation. I think there were many cases where a lot of us were afraid of what role we could play.

Eventually the board made it clear that the younger teachers were the ones who would be terminated, so we "knew who was going to go. They were some of the people I associated with and I felt a little uncomfortable talking to them because they were good, excellent teachers." It was pretty hard on all of us who socialized with them. "The one lady that was going to be released, I was a friend of hers. We grew up in the same

community." But, you know, "even then, there was no idea of us teachers getting together and saying, 'Look, what can we do here?' I was never approached from that point of view." We just accepted the situation and I noticed that as time went along, the "involvement or excitement on staff" from these teachers "was reduced, even from the staff meeting point of view. They just sat back a little bit."

The next thing we knew, our principal had resigned his principalship. Boy, that sure caught us by surprise! "He wasn't the type of guy that would say, 'Well, I want it to go this way and if it doesn't go this way, I'm giving up.'" I know that "he had to make a lot of decisions working between two different school boards, rotating superintendents and everything. This time it sort of came to a head and he felt strongly about it. I think the ultimatum was given that the board go his way or else he was withdrawing his services." The board refused to give in, so he resigned as of the end of that year. "It was sort of publicized but I didn't know how to help him at that time. I didn't know what was happening, a lot of the nitty gritties, and I was just starting out."

I know that "a lot of students were upset as soon as they found out he was leaving. As far as to what extent they went to, I'm not familiar with that." They really liked him though. "He was fair in his dealings with the students. I think the students respected him in that regard. When he left and went into public service, a lot of the students supported him."

At the end of the year, "we had a staff party at our place and all of a sudden, you get one person that's involved in this, they're crying in one room." That was a really tough situation.

116

What can you say except, 'Well, I think you're the best person for the job' but that's as far as it went. It was just a reassurance that the person wasn't being let go because of the job they were doing. That they were doing a good job and that they were fulfilling the job, involved with the students, involved in most of our activities in school. It was just a reassurance that they were doing a good job.

Well, my principal left and went on to other things. As I look back though,

I think we lost a hell of an administrator. I liked the way he managed a school. When we worked for him, there was a follow-up. He knew what direction he was going and he was on top of everything, all the time.

He involved us in a lot of things and listened to what we had to say:

If something needed to be tightened up, he wouldn't hesitate in discussing it with the staff. He was very open with the staff if it concerned the school. He wanted to let us know where we were at as a teacher, as a school or a situation.

I thought that he was really good to our staff. He helped each of us improve our

teaching because "he was able to recognize that if there was a weak portion in the person,

he would always try and work something else that would try to bring out the stronger

parts of the individual instead of sticking to the part that they couldn't do at all."

I also think "he was pretty well fair to all the people he worked with, although this

could be viewed differently by people that, maybe, he was trying to push out." I know

that when he left, "we just felt he had done a good job and he hadn't been treated properly

in that respect." And guess what? "About four years after he left," our high school split

into two schools, public and separate, just as he feared it might.

The principal who came in after him thought that those of us who were younger

"were picked by the other principal." I guess we were and because of that, the board and

the new principal were pretty rough on us because "they wanted to start with a clean

slate." I sure didn't like the way that the new guy treated those of us who had been brought in by our first principal. I found it very "hard to accept this treatment because our old principal didn't treat people that way." I remember becoming quite upset when I saw "one of my fellow members being totally stressed out because of the way he was treated" by this guy.

I still stay in contact with my old principal. I consider him to be a friend twenty years later:

> Now, whenever we talk about him staying, he says, 'Well, you could probably have helped the situation.' I don't know how much I could have helped him. I really don't. It was just unfortunate that he had more insight into what was happening there and was more involved than we were.

I think about what he said sometimes though and I guess I have to agree with him because "he helped me in teaching and he helped me later on in life. So, like he says, maybe I could have helped him out earlier, but I just didn't."

<u>Thinking about Relationships: The Context for the Event</u>   Having worked through the story of conflict, we, David and I, were able to reflect back upon his story. Together, we thought about how and to what extent, the relationships had shifted as the story unfolded.

David indicated that his closest colleagues prior to the conflict included the principal, the vice principal and four other teachers who were new to the school: "We were all picked to come to the school. All of us were new. We all started teaching in the school together." Two of the teachers were chosen from the two existing school districts; two were new to teaching. Of these four teachers, David was the newest teacher to the

118

profession in the group, but not the youngest. Four of the six members of this group were married; David and one other teacher was not.

David said that some members of the group played adult volleyball together after school. Others bonspieled together. "It seemed like the same group of people always attended these functions." The whole group socialized together in staff activities: "We were involved quite a bit with each other." During all of these social activities, David indicated that the teachers did not discuss school. David said that he might have had short conversations about school with these people during social activities but, generally, the talk was about other things.

David also said that he had two other teacher friends who were not in this first social group. These were teachers he coached with at school:

> I got involved in cross country running and then at the end of the year it was track. Those were the two major ones and then later I was involved in canoeing. This is where I developed a fairly close relationship with Brian, one of these teachers.

The other teacher, Bill, lived with him for a while when they were both single.

Only one teacher in these two groups of teacher friends had come from outside the two local school districts as David had. This was Bill, the teacher he lived with. The principal had also come from outside the area. David indicated that he made no distinction in his friendships with the other teachers regardless of whether they had come from the Catholic or the Public School District, however. He said of these teachers who were his closest colleagues:

> I think we got along fairly well, and we were about the same age. Even the people from the separate system, we got along. I developed an appreciation for socializing with them also.

119

David noticed that there was only one other close cluster of teachers in the school. These teachers were largely French Catholic:

> The Catholics had a support group which they'd had for years and a number of these people were involved in that. It took up a good portion of their spare time.

He indicated that this group was somewhat isolated from the others. They socialized together; much of that socialization was focused upon church activities. Some of these teachers had very good relationships with the separate superintendent and the separate school board members because they all belonged to the same religious organization. David believed that some of these teachers may actively have been working with the separate district to separate the students into two high schools:

> I would say because of the association, three or four that I know worked so carefully together, I could see that happening. When the separation came, I think they were very much in favour of it.

In general, however, David indicated that the whole staff got along very well. He said that there were many after school social activities that most people attended: "Our school socialized just about on a monthly basis at a social activity." He also indicated that only a few of the older teachers did not join in because of other commitments: "They were involved in their community activities and I think it didn't permit them to have the flexibility to get involved with us."

Most of the staff also spent time socializing together in the staff room. Even when conflict came to the school landscape, David said that he still spent time in the staff room, as did many of the other teachers: "We still went in the staffroom and we all pretty well ate together." Their conversations avoided the situation, however: "More than anything

120

there was a cautious atmosphere, not to maybe say or do anything against someone to hurt them or go against their supporters." David also noticed that one of the two young teachers being cut from the staff stopped coming to the staff room. She began to spend all of her time in her classroom. "I think the person toward the end didn't attend the staffroom as much but I went and a lot of my friends went." This teacher was one of only four females on a staff of twenty-three teachers:

> You know, I think if it was one of us who had been cut, there would have been a lot of talking because we're closer together. The female was pretty well left a little bit on her own.

David believed that this teacher received some support out of school from wives of teachers in his group. This support group included his wife since he was now married.

David spoke about the conversations he had with people he trusted during this period. With the three young teachers within his social group he said: "I would think if it was one of us, there would have been a lot more going on. We talked about it but that's as far as it went. You know, it was just a time when we felt we were vulnerable." He also talked to his father, who "was in teaching at the time." His father said to him, "You know, you're not the one to make the last decision." David indicated that he believed that this position described the tone of participation in conflictual issues of teachers of twenty years ago: "I think the response to authority was a lot different then. I don't think there was confrontation with authority."

Following his principal's resignation, David indicated that some of the changes in the school began to affect the relationships of the teachers. The new principal appeared to be at the root of these changes:

121

He was a brilliant man but he just had difficulty implementing things because he was so harsh with people. It was cut and dry and that was it. It was going to go this way, that's it. And he's not going to try a different route. I think the principal, at the time, knew that people were talking about him and he didn't care.

David believed that the new principal also began to target the teachers in his group who had socialized with the principal and vice principal:

Well, I think he worked on each of us individually. There were a lot of little things. If you left your classroom and he noticed it. He didn't like it, you know. And if you came down to get water or coffee and go back up to their classrooms while the kids were working, I don't think he liked stuff like that.

He believed that the new principal thought he had to put these teachers in their place. In particular, David believed that Tom was picked on the most:

One of us, Tom, was probably hardest hit. I know, like in Tom's case, it was really getting to him. I think there were a lot of nit picking things. You know, Tom never talked about it. All he would say was, 'He's wearing on me.'

David also believed that Tom's size had much to do with him being chosen as the primary target in his group. He said that Tom was slightly built and another slightly built male teacher also appeared to be bullied during this period by the principal.

David also indicated that the vice principal, one of the original six in David's group, had a major argument with the new principal about the school's sports philosophy during that first year. The vice principal, Brian, was involved in physical education. He and the old principal would make special arrangements for teams with a neighbouring high school if one of their coaches could not attend an out-of-town sporting event. They would then return the favour. This arrangement appeared to work very well. David indicated that the new principal changed that agreement, however:

If the teacher couldn't make it, forget it! We'd just cancel the team. And he didn't

122

make any bones about it. He didn't give a care. He said, 'If you say you can't go, we're not sending a team and that's it!' And the vice principal and the old principal weren't like that. And they're very stubborn. I remember looking after the kids from the high school in the other town. And I said, ' Well, maybe the coach from the other town...' And he'd say, 'Nope, has to be a teacher from this school.

The result was that the vice principal quit at the end of the year: "He could see that there wasn't going to be any cooperation."

David spoke about his own relationship with the new principal. Because those closest to him were now being affected, he began to speak out about issues he believed to be unfair like the one with Tom. He said that the principal was not happy with this change in his behaviour: "I think he got tired and he just called me in and said, 'You know, I know you don't like what I'm doing. You're probably talking all over the place.' And I said, 'No. My wife and I will discuss it but that's as far as it will go.'"

As a result of these changes, David indicated that many of the teachers were dissatisfied and unhappy. They spent less time together in public areas of the school and at staff social activities: "Social activities dropped off to just about nil. We never even had a year end party." The teachers left in David's group isolated themselves socially: "One year, a group of us that were still there got together and went out and had a party at one of our houses and that was it. We just got together as our social group." During these social occasions, the conversation also changed. It now focused upon issues of concern that the teachers had noticed. He said that they "brutalized" the new principal in their discussions. David said that shortly after this, the high school split into two schools, an outcome the first principal had predicted.

<u>Imagining a New Story</u>   As we worked through our, David's and my, understanding of the situation, we began to understand that David had already imagined new possibilities for how he might restory himself in the future: "I would think if it was one of us, there would have been a lot more going on." We also began to understand that David lived out this imagining shortly after the new principal arrived.

We ended the first story with David saying, "It was just unfortunate that he (the principal) had more insight into what was happening there and was more involved than we were." David continues his story as he lives out his statement that "there would have been a lot more going on." He then considers further imaginings that may be lived out as future possibilities in his story:

<u>David's Story Continues</u>   I've thought about this story often and I've wondered why I didn't become more involved at the time. I wish I had, because my principal was a wonderful administrator. "I regret that I didn't do much for him." I guess it was just not the right time in my life: "A lot of us were afraid of what role we could play. A lot of us were just getting started." I was concerned about involving myself because I was a relatively new teacher in the profession: "It was, basically at the start of my career, a time when I was still young." I was also very busy: " I was involved in quite a few activities." As well, I was not directly affected by the conflict. My work situation was fairly isolated because I had a unique specialization in the school: "I didn't pay attention. I didn't know what was happening." Finally, the situation involved the relative competency of my colleagues: "I think we watched our p's and q's with each other." I think many of us

124

avoided the situation because we "respected each other well enough that we didn't want to get involved in this." Perhaps the most important reason I stayed out of the situation was that teachers just didn't get involved in school politics twenty years ago. "I don't think there was confrontation with authority" back then like there is today.

If this situation were to happen today, things would be quite different. It's not that I'd be upset that someone was transferred. "I've become more accustomed to people leaving and if I have to teach another ten years like this, I don't think it would even bother me that someone was leaving." The thing is, I know a lot more about how a good administrator can make a difference in a school. In this situation, "compared to what we had, he (the new principal) wasn't a very good people person." I know that my "old principal didn't treat people that way." I started speaking out when the new principal began picking on Tom: "Actually, we had a confrontation over it."

I guess "I didn't know how to go about" supporting my principal back then. We didn't have "someone who could maybe give us a little more direction in which way we could have gone without violating ethics, or whatever." Many of us on the staff were new teachers. We also never communicated about issues of concern. We never "got together to say, 'Well, look. What can we do?'" Today things would be different. I've had a few experiences along the way that have taught me to speak up about issues with which I disagree. As well, there are many of us who are senior teachers at my school now. We spend time talking about problems and we share how we feel about those issues with each other. We do this at school and in our social group. I also talk to my wife at home and I'm quite sure my friends also talk to their wives. We've become involved. We pay

125

attention. We understand the issues. I guess I was pretty naive then but I'm not now. Today I would know what to do.

Jeannie: Telling her story

My story is a pretty long one. It happened over several years and crossed the borders of two schools. It had a lot to do with the two principals I had in my first school and how the relationships of everybody in that school and the next one I went to were affected by the conflict between these two people. I've thought a lot about why this story happened. I don't know if it was because of any specific act my second principal made, although I do know that she resisted things she thought would hurt the teachers. I really believe it started as an issue which was made personal by my first principal: "I believe that all the trouble my second principal had stemmed from a personal dislike which my first principal, who went to central office, had for my second principal, the person who had replaced him." This personal dislike carried over from the first school I was at to the second one where my second principal and I both went. It affected all of us in the second school because "the attack on her just wasn't an attack on her by that time. Every time she got attacked, the school felt it. They felt it because there was allegiance."

My story really begins with my first principal, a person I supported and worked hard for. "I had very high respect for him as one of the greatest principals I'd ever had" even though he often got into conflicts with central office. He always used to say,

> When he's principal, central office, butt out of the decisions that are made within a school. He would not allow district to get involved. It was his school. He was going to do it his way and no superintendent was going to tell him what to do.

126

At one point, it looked like his contract as a principal would be cancelled because of his resistance. I stood by him and supported him though, because I thought it was the right thing to do. I thought that he had been doing a good job in our school.

When my first principal was promoted to central office, he was replaced by another principal whom the board had chosen. I don't think he was very happy with this. I don't know if he would have been very happy with anyone who replaced him because he had a lot of ownership for the people in our school. It was hard for him to let go. Well, "she took over his job at the school," and right from the start there were problems because "he didn't think anybody could step into his shoes." He made life pretty difficult for her:

> I think he did everything to make her life miserable so that she wouldn't succeed. And the more she succeeded, the more he threw at her. And every time she succeeded, he threw another bullet at her as if he hated the idea that she was successful.

My new principal tried hard to involve the staff in decision-making. She would ask us for our input, "saying she would not go forward with an initiative unless she had the backing of her staff."

> As soon as she got the backing and she went forward with this idea, however, a few disgruntled teachers who disagreed with it, but never voiced it publicly during the meeting, would go to our old principal at central office and complain to him about the decision, this way or that.

I remember that "this got me really angry. And I remember calling the staff together after school and blasting the teachers who had gone to central office when both of them had been present in the room when consensus had been reached." It bothered me even more because often, after they'd done this, central office would come over as one big team to reprimand the new principal in front of the staff. Many of the other "teachers were too

127

scared to defend our new principal when this happened because they were scared that they would end up getting transferred."

The pipeline from our school to central office caused a lot of problems between some of the teachers at the first school: "It caused some of us to be paranoid." I know, for myself, as time went by, "my relationships with a couple of teachers on staff whom I regarded as dear friends and dear colleagues, I found myself less participating in discussions with them because I felt that they were going directly to complain to central office, any comments that I might have said in the staff room."

This went on for two years until my new principal was transferred to another school. Several of the teachers at our school were also transferred to other schools in the district that year:

> The teachers that got transferred, me included, were some of the more verbal members that had supported our new principal...And we felt it was in retaliation for us switching our allegiance from the old principal to the new principal which he didn't expect to happen so quickly.

I was pretty upset by how the whole thing occurred, and especially how I was treated in that process:

> The transfer...the way it was done that day, bothers me today. Certain teachers were given two weeks notice and asked if they wanted to be transferred. I got called in and had a white envelope thrown in my face by my old principal. To me, that was uncalled for.

Moving into the new school was very difficult for those of us who went over with our principal because there was still an "old allegiance, especially in the first year or two of us being at the new school, from some of the old staff there for the old principal from that school." Others of us supported our new principal. It took about two years before most

128

of us began to work together, although "there were still some people sitting on the fence and sucking up to central to see what they could get out of it."

At the new school, I thought that the conflict would be over, but it continued. It began to affect the teachers at the new school even more because the criticisms also seemed to be directed at us. Central always seemed to know what we were doing, and so we began to think "that there were people on the staff that were active, that were planted as spies for central office." It was pretty uncomfortable for everyone during that period and, as time went along, things got progressively worse:

> She couldn't make a move without central scrutinizing her. And when she was scrutinized by a magnifying glass, the staff felt as though they were being scrutinized. When she had negative remarks on her, it seemed like we all were brushed with the same brush.

It didn't seem reasonable or fair to me that we always seemed to be criticized because "over and over again, our school proved that we were good. That we were near the top. That it didn't matter what they threw at us, we were able to overcome it." It hurt the teachers a lot to know that "no matter what we did, it was never good enough. No matter how many initiatives they threw at us and we, as a staff, thought we had implemented them, we were always criticized." Our principal tried very hard "to alleviate this negativity for us by giving us letters of praise for our portfolios but we never got recognized from central office for the good things we were doing."

Eventually our principal began to resist this behaviour by central office quite openly. We knew about it because we would hear things from teachers at other schools. Also, sometimes she would write letters to central and have me or someone else edit the

129

letter to make sure that she was conveying our feelings correctly. We also knew when central office was angry because she would get these big visits or she would get nasty letters and the office staff would let us know about this.

She became particularly resistant when a new philosophy of teaching was thrown at us and central kept pushing us to do more and more. We'd hear her say things like, "Look, they're doing all they can. Leave them alone. Let them at least try to see what the results of all of these initiatives are." It never seemed to end, however, "and teachers were overloaded." Still, she continued to try to get central to see reason through more letters and more visits. "She would point out that everything they were asking us to do fell in line with this new philosophy they wanted us to have, but they didn't seem to like what we did even though the research showed that we were, in fact, doing what we were supposed to be doing."

It seemed as though my principal's resistance to this new philosophy made her prepared to resist other things that might also affect us in the classroom. A good example was when our district wanted to make sure that all of the teachers went through an evaluation cycle. She worked hard to make sure that the teachers at our school were allowed to use their portfolios to replace the evaluation cycle:

> That's why she fought to maintain our portfolios. And she did presentations on that, even at institutes, about portfolios and how portfolios could easily be matched to any of those blue binders we were asked to maintain.

She also resisted central office interference with our site-based management decisions. "While other schools make a decision and central office leaves them alone," she had a hard time getting a lot of our decisions passed.

130

By this time, almost all of the staff was with the principal. There were only a couple who weren't and we thought these were the ones who were running to central to see what they could get out of it. Most of the teachers tried to stay neutral in public places, though. I knew where they stood because of our private conversations. The principal had no idea who was where because she was too busy trying to defend herself and the school from attacks by central office.

After about three years of this, a time came when the teachers were pretty much forced into making a decision to support the principal publicly, or not. Our principal left to go on sick leave for about three weeks in the spring of our third year at that school. Those years of conflict, both at the new school and the old one, had taken their toll on her. All of the teachers knew why she had become sick and a bunch of us went to her house to try to convince her to come back and to give her moral support. She stayed out, however, having very little contact with any of us. She said she needed some thinking time and she needed to get well because she felt that a final confrontation was coming. My old principal was just never going to give up until she was gone, and she was a pretty tough little cookie and would not go just because he didn't like her. She was very worried about the safety of the staff if he was able to force her out. The staff was also really nervous during the time that she was gone:

> Some of the teachers were scared. They said, 'If they can do that to a principal, I'm going to get transferred.' Some of the younger teachers really felt that their jobs would be in jeopardy if they spoke with what was on their mind. So they were very scared.

We were all very careful about whom we talked with and where we talked: "You could

131

see people in hallways in groups and all of a sudden they would clam up, depending upon who was walking by." We'd stop conversations when one of the people we believed was a leak to central office was around.

Eventually, however, most of us overcame our fear:

> The teachers started to rally for her because they didn't like, whether they agreed or disagreed with her on many things, they didn't like the way she was being treated. They felt nobody should have to go through that particular type of harassment and they saw that she had been harassed at every stage of her being a principal.

You could see the teachers leaning on each other for support as they "started to band in little clusters to sort of reevaluate what was going on."

When our principal returned, we quietly went about our business waiting for the big confrontation which we all knew was coming. We knew that "one person definitely had plans to take over our principal's job when she got canned. People in the public knew that. Well, I didn't like that. I didn't like the rumours that were going around."

About three weeks after she returned, our principal was called to central office and given a letter recommending a termination of her contract. I knew about it the next day. She called me and one other close teacher advisor in to let us know about the letter and the meeting before the rumours hit the street. I had always been one of my principal's informal advisors. I guess it's because I was never afraid to tell her my thoughts on any issue and I often spoke up for other staff members:

> With the staff, the teachers see me as a rebel. The outspoken one. When they want something to be discussed with either the principal or central office, they come to me. They figure 'What the heck.' I've got the big mouth!

The principal told us to tell the other teachers not to approach her to talk about the

132

situation because she was concerned about the pipeline of information going to central. She also told us to tell them that she would be appealing and not to worry. We knew that she did not expect to win her appeal with the board, however. She explained that she would probably go to a Board of Reference. Regardless of that outcome, however, she would probably lose her principalship anyway. I remember that I was pretty shocked by this information. The two of us were also told that she had started a process with our teacher association called a Public Relations Review which would protect all of the staff, regardless of the outcome of her appeal. If she lost, the teachers who had been supportive would be protected; if she won, the few members of staff who had not been supportive would also need to feel comfortable with the situation. None of the rest of the staff were to know this, however. We were told not to share this information with anyone.

I began to circulate a letter "encouraging her to fight and telling her that the staff was behind her and we felt she had done a wonderful job and we were looking forward to having her as principal for many years to come." Several teachers came looking for that letter when they heard about it; I was surprised at one of those people. I had always thought this person was one of the "spies." Some teachers were scared to sign, but they did anyway. At the time, I thought that it "was pretty sad that teachers were scared for their jobs. I mean, signing a piece of paper, saying 'Way to go!'" Can you imagine? In the end, only two teachers didn't sign.

Many of our staff also sent personal letters to the board about the situation. Some of our parents on School Council and some teachers from the first school we were at also got involved. A couple of us also contacted someone who could take the whole matter to

133

the Minister of Education. Things got pretty wild over the next couple of weeks while she prepared to go to her appeal.

Well, the big day came and she left the school. We all knew when that happened. We had become pretty tuned into the situation and you could almost feel when stuff was happening, even if you didn't know it first hand. Many of us went over to central office after school to be with her. I know she was pretty surprised to see a lot of people there. She knew that I would be there. Some of the other staff who came over really surprised her though, and you could see that she was really emotional about it. I remember that she said that family was what counted and she would feel good at the end of the day, regardless of how things went for her inside that room. You know, we knew that we couldn't stay in that room with her for the whole hearing, but we wanted her to see us there. We wanted to give her our strength.

The appeal hearing started at 4:00 P.M. and when we were all asked to leave, each one of us gave her a big hug. Some of the staff went home shortly after that. I stayed and manned the telephones and other people just sat around and talked. That door to the board room kept opening, and people kept coming out and then going back in. We were confused by the process, but our principal would explain what was happening every time she came out. About an hour into the meeting, the board came out and bought us pizza for supper and then they all went back inside again.

We did lots of crazy things to keep ourselves occupied during that long night. The School Council chairperson entertained us with a little play she had made up about the whole process, and what she would like to do to our old principal. One of our staff kept

134

listening at the door and entertaining us by saying, "Round five or round six. It's the ATA guy talking...nope. She's still talking!" I stood on the table in a room adjacent to the board room and removed a tile from the ceiling so that I could hear what was going on inside. At one point I almost got caught by the central office guys when they were asked to leave the board room, and they came into that little room. I had to jump down quickly, sit in a chair and pretend to be asleep. I was praying they wouldn't see the tile missing from the ceiling. Several other staff members raided the offices for candy when we became hungry. The evening went on and on and on until finally there were only two teachers from our staff left. We were the ones who would be speaking to the board for everyone else. As I said, I was always the one who stood up for things, so my participation was pretty natural. I wondered if my old principal would remember when I walked into that room that I had been there for him many years before.

At 1:00 A.M., someone finally came out to tell us that we wouldn't be allowed to talk to the board. I was pretty ticked off. I couldn't understand why we weren't allowed to support her in there especially since I'd done this before. I remember thinking that things sure changed depending upon who was making the decisions. Shortly after that happened, I went home with the other teacher because I had to go to school the next day. I made my principal's husband promise to phone me as soon as they knew anything.

That night didn't end for my principal until 3:00 A.M. She sure gave the board an earful. All the staff said that she'd won because the board just didn't want to hear her talking any more... she sure could talk! She'd kept lots of documents and had journaled in her diary every day about what had happened in the two schools. In the end, after thirteen

135

hours in that room, the board overruled central office and she retained her contract. She told me that my old principal even apologized to her in there!

I found out early the next morning that she had won her appeal. Her husband phoned me at home before school. I got to tell everybody else. Our principal stayed home that day to sleep, but most of the staff walked around with big grins on their faces. There was sure a lot of hugging going on! That night most of us showed up at her house with signs and lights and we partied and sang and made a great big ruckus! There was no way that people didn't know what had happened! It was a great night for most of us; only a couple stayed away and cried in their beer.

The next day, our principal came back to school and found that her whole office had been filled with balloons. We'd made signs and everything. Lots of the kids and the teachers had spent all day, the day before, decorating...we didn't get much school work done, you know! But, hey! She wasn't there to get us back on track and central office sure stayed away, so what the heck!

This whole story caused some problems for me with at least one staff member:

> I know that my relationship with my principal and fighting for her caused a sour note with one person who didn't support her, but I was always honest with him. Always told him my views up front. After she did win her case, my relationship with him improved ten fold. In fact, that particular resistance saw an improvement in our school in lots of areas.

I know that my principal spent a lot of time working things out with him the day she came back. I think they left the school and talked and talked about a lot of things.

Soon after that, we had our Public Relations Review and "I think a lot of positive things came out as a result":

136

Openness, communication is definitely better now than I think it ever was. Teachers are now starting to get a little more open with each other. There isn't that distrust, now that she won her fight with the district. People are quite open now to express their opinion and not worry where it is going to go. We've agreed to disagree, basically.

The teachers have changed in other ways too:

I think the staff is becoming more and more open to resistance. A good example is getting the teachers to react to issues of concern from our local. They comment. They have something to say. They write it down, which before they were very hesitant to do because somebody might find out who said what.

As a result of this story, my own life as a teacher also changed.

I've decided to be a crusader on behalf of my fellow colleagues because we've got damn good colleagues in our system. And I guess I was impressed with my principal and I figured, if she can work on behalf of the staff, then maybe each one of us has to start defending...and so I am.

<u>Thinking about Relationships: The Context for the Event</u>   Jeannie and I were able to reflect back upon her story following our reconstruction of the conflict that occurred. We began to consider how and to what extent, the relationships had shifted as the story unfolded.

Jeannie indicated that many of her relationships in the school during the conflict became clearer as a result of our explorations together. She indicated that she had two key colleagues who were very close to her during this period. One was located in the same wing of the school as she was, very close to her. The other was just down the hallway. "We were all three in the same grade level." She said that she had a long term relationship with both of these teachers: "Our personal histories go way back. Our conversations would always have come from a professional level." Jeannie said of her two

137

closest colleagues:

> They're trustworthy. They're very professional. They're never out for personal interests. They're always out for the good of everybody. They never had personal agendas. They weren't going anywhere. So the three of us, I guess, because none of us had ambition to get any further ahead, we weren't in the picture.

Jeannie indicated that most of their conversations during the conflict took place when "we were on supervision together and then also a lot of times when we had our team preps." She said that sometimes the conversations also took place in one of their rooms. Jeannie explained that their conversations were limited to school during the conflict because "we all lead such busy lives. After school, school life is not in the picture."

She said that there was one other colleague she was also very close to. This teacher, Vanessa, taught at a different grade level, but was one of the few social friends she had in the school. Jeannie said that most of the staff had collegial relationships with each other but not many had friendship relationships that went past the doors of their school. Vanessa happened to be part of the social circle that Jeannie and her husband belonged to, so sometimes they talked about school issues. Jeannie said of Vanessa:

> She sees a lot more than people give her credit for. She sees things on a global scale and she keeps things on a professional level.

Jeannie said that a secondary issue that occurred during the conflict served to polarize some of the staff relations. This incident involved the assignment of an acting administrator in the school while her principal was on leave. Jeannie indicated that the person who was expected to receive the job, didn't. She said that this decision by central office shed new light on issues of justice and fairness as they affected the principal. Many of the teachers had been too busy to notice what was happening and the principal had not

138

brought her concerns to their attention:

> It's very possible to be at a school all year and not really know what's going on. I mean, it's very possible to become self-centred in your classroom. Just worry about you and the school and not know what's going on.

Jeannie indicated that with this new incident, many of the teachers began to question incidents that had affected the principal more carefully. This situation also appeared to "mobilize the rest of the school on the principal's side." At the same time, "people began alienating themselves" from the teacher who received the appointment.

Jeannie indicated that the irony of that split became apparent to her when she circulated a letter of support for her principal:

> The ironical part was that when I asked the acting administrator to sign it, she was very happy that I asked her and didn't leave her out. She must have been feeling very alienated because she was so eager to sign it and was so happy that I actually asked her. And then the irony of it was that the teacher's I had supported did not sign.

She also said that her relationship with the teacher who would not sign changed as a result of this teacher's unwillingness to support a colleague: "I don't confide in her as much as I used to. I talk to her about school issues. Anything beyond that, I don't discuss with her at all."

Jeannie noted that several new relationships developed between herself and other teachers during the conflict. She said that one of the younger teachers came to her frequently: "This teacher used to come to me just to find out what's happening. She needed a security blanket." Jeannie said that a second teacher also talked with her and with one of her teacher friends in the hallway about the situation. Of this teacher, she said: "We have always had a mutual respect as colleagues." She also indicated that a third

139

teacher, who "always called a spade, a spade," also developed a closer relationship with her during this period. A fourth teacher also appeared to be "ticked off" about the situation and was prepared to speak up because "she had nothing to lose because she was retiring anyways."

On the other hand, Jeannie indicated that there were several teachers she did not form closer relationships with. One of these teachers appeared to avoid the issue as much as possible: "This teacher keeps to himself. You never see this teacher talking in the hallways. I've never seen him do that." Another teacher "was cut off" because many of the teachers did not appear to trust her. "It wasn't until near the end that she finally flipped over." Jeannie indicated that two other teachers were often seen "chit chatting" but she did not get into discussions with them. She indicated that she did not know where they stood on the matter. Yet another teacher appeared to be "cool to her."

Of the rest of the staff, Jeannie indicated that she was not sure who they were talking with and what they were talking about. She said that most of the teachers stayed in their classrooms during this period: "There were less teachers wandering the hallways or visiting." She said that she only learned where all of the teachers stood with respect to the situation when the letter was circulated and they signed it.

Jeannie said that even in the community there appeared to be a lot of talk about the situation. She was often approached and asked, "What's happening at your school? I hear they're trying to can your principal." She also said that other teachers in the community would come up to her on the street and talk to her: "I remember one person coming up to me and saying, 'What are they doing to her? She's such a fine lady. Such a

140

good principal. Your staff has such a good relationship with her. What are they doing to her?'" Jeannie indicated that she also talked to many parents from the school: "She had a lot of parental support from this school. A lot of parents were concerned about what was happening." As well, she said that some of her closest friends were teachers in the other district. The conflict at her school "would be the top of the conversation constantly" during this period.

During supper conversations at home, Jeannie indicated, that the conversation with her husband and children revolved around what was happening at her school. Of her children, she said, "They're better at keeping family secrets than their mother is!" Of her husband, she said:

> He was always very supportive because he's a very strong ATA person and he knows that I'll always believe in fighting for what is right so he was very supportive from that aspect.

When she went to the meeting, Jeannie found that "there were a lot of people there I didn't know from other staffs." She also said that many of the support staff members from her school were also in attendance. Of one of these people, Jeannie said, "She really liked her principal and she is a very good person, a very honest person. She is a very professional person." Of another she said, "She was loyal to the principal."

Following the confrontation, Jeannie indicated that there was a great deal of celebrating at the school: "Everybody was bubbly. Everybody was excited. I would say that the majority of the people were excited and those that weren't, didn't show it." She said that "everybody was excited that it was over, but at the same time that the principal's job was safe." She indicated that the students were not really aware of what the

141

excitement was about because "the staff always does stupid things a lot of the times. When do you know when its normal and not normal in our school?"

Of her relationship with her previous principal, Jeannie said:

We don't get together. I have nothing to do with him anymore. He's a bully. He's ambitious. He doesn't like anybody stepping in his way. He doesn't like being criticized. He's right and if you agree with him, you're 100%, you're on his side and if you question him, he marginalizes you. And if he's done you a favour, he collects. He collects.

Of the relationships among the teachers in her school today, she said:

People are always popping in. You very rarely see closed doors. We live with open doors.

Imagining a New Story   We continue Jeannie's story as she talks about how her relationships with others have changed as a result of this first story of conflict. We then go on to tell another story, one that Jeannie imagined as a possibility at the end of her first story, but which became the story she began to live out shortly thereafter:

I've decided to be a crusader on behalf of my fellow colleagues because we've got damn good colleagues in our system. And I guess I was impressed with my principal and I figured, if she can work on behalf of the staff, then maybe each one of us has to start defending...and so I am.

In this sequel, Jeannie explains what happened when she stepped out of her role as a school teacher leader into the role of a district teacher leader. As a result of this new story that Jeannie has lived, she imagines yet another story she may live out in her future:

Jeannie's Story Continues   You know, some things have changed as a result of this story.

142

I think I'm a lot closer to a lot of people on a collegial level. Like people come to me. One teacher comes for advice. She never did that before. Another was always very open with me. The teacher who did not sign the letter feels she needs me on her side because if she has me on her side, I think she feels she would get the majority of the staff on her side.

Central office has also changed. "Instead of being on the verbal attack, they're just passive. Maybe not criticism, but no praise. We get no acknowledgement for what we do." I don't see myself renewing my relationship with my old principal again. "How did one of the teachers I used to teach with, in the first school, put it the other day? 'When somebody hurts you as badly as they did, your respect for them is lost almost forever.'" I also don't see renewing my relationship with another person from central office: "He has threatened me too many times. I have no use for him. I have qualms with my old principal and him." As for the board and the others there, "I have no qualms" with them and "my old principal may not be there forever."

As a result of this story, I decided to take a position with my local association where I thought I could be of more help to my colleagues. My committee was "asked for an open forum" with central office to iron out issues of concern the teachers had. We were told to "feel free to ask any questions we wanted," so I collected questions from all of the schools.

When I typed these questions and had them faxed to schools to look at them and discuss them, somebody sent them over to central office. They were the unedited version. The board would only consider the unedited version instead of the edited version. And at that meeting, the chair, that was me, got lambasted for almost three hours straight and none of my colleagues backed me (who were there). And in the eyes of the board and district office, these questions seemed to be written by me, my agenda, my questions, my personal fight. And they weren't my questions but that caused me a lot of stress. In fact, for the first time in my life, I had an anxiety attack which I never had before in my life.

143

I made the decision to resign from that position for a while: "I needed a break from it and my own family life, my daughter needs me at home." I don't plan to stay inactive forever though:

> I have full intentions, as soon as my daughter graduates, to finish my last years left in the teacher profession more actively involved in the ATA. So I'm not out of it - I'm not out of the deal. And if I see things aren't done properly, whether I'm on local council or not, I have no bones of stepping in. I'll always believe in fighting for what's right.

Jennifer: Telling her story

> Well, I'd been working for the system for one full year. At the end of my first year, I discovered I was pregnant, quite accidentally. It was a surprise. At the time, we had just bought our first house and finances were a definite concern. Would I be able to make it through a maternity leave and still be able to keep the house?

This is how my story began and I had a lot of things on my mind. I went to my principal and talked to her about my situation. My baby would be due in early February of the following year so I could probably work up until Christmas and then take the rest of the year off. My principal explained to me that if I came back the following September, there would be no guarantee that I would be placed back in the same school:

> If I came back that same year, the school year the baby was born, then I would almost definitely be placed back in my own classroom. So we talked about that and I thought I could probably handle returning about six weeks before the end of the year, about the middle of May.

Then I realized that if I came back then, I would be short "three or four days, maybe two, just a few days to getting my increment." In those days that meant a lot of money to a young couple just starting out: "I mean, the increment was worth about a $1000.00." So

144

we talked about it again and decided I should come back for a few days after the

Christmas holidays that year. It made sense anyway because "it was probably a good

thing for little four and five year olds to come back after the Christmas holiday, see their

familiar teacher, be introduced to a new teacher and then make the transition." So that's

what I applied for. I would take maternity leave a week after Christmas the following year

to have my baby, and would return in the middle of May to complete the year with the

children in my class. My principal was very supportive of this idea.

I sent a letter to central office (Nov. 15, 1978) requesting this leave and shortly

after, got a response (November 21, 1978) to say that "two disruptions in the school year"

were not acceptable. "One was all they could handle." I was surprised by this response so

I responded with another letter (November 28, 1978) to discuss the situation and explain

my position. My principal told me not to tell them about my increment, so I focused upon

the logic with respect to the students. Following that I received a phone call from central

office and somehow, everything I said was misunderstood:

> 'Oh, so you're not interested in the well-being of the children. It's just convenient.
> You're in teaching for the money. Are you?' This person just went off the deep
> end and he was yelling and he was very angry. (November 30, 1978.)

I was pretty shattered by that conversation. Don't forget, I was just a first year teacher

and "I was very young, very naive, very vulnerable and when I got off that phone, I was

in tears. I was pretty broken up."

My assistant principal happened to come along just as I was hanging up the phone.

He saw me in the state that I was in, so he spoke to my principal right away. "She was

very, very upset, so she wrote this central office person a letter (December 1, 1978)

145

telling him exactly what I had said he had said and that she was appalled that he would

treat one of her staff that way." I saw that letter, by the way.

> Well, he wrote her back and it was very nasty. I think you may have a copy of that
> letter. He couldn't believe that she would take my word at face value and that
> really incensed me to think that he was saying I was lying. He didn't actually say I
> lied, but he just couldn't believe that my principal would believe me. That was
> upsetting. (December 7, 1978)

You know, whatever my principal put down in that letter was pretty accurate because the

conversation had just happened. It was probably "word for word because I had perfect

recall. Now, twenty years later, I can't tell you what the phone call was exactly about." I

was pretty upset by the whole thing though, "and being pregnant, you're more emotional

and a lot easier to tears, at least I was."

> My principal was pretty wonderful. She was a very strong person and always had

been:

> She was involved in the ATA and was always wanting to make a point. If there
> was an issue to be made for the benefit of her staff or teachers in general or
> women in general or whatever, she would stand up and push the point. She was
> never one to be told what had to be done. She would push the envelope whenever
> needed.

The person from central office told me that he wanted me to go there and talk to him but

she said:

> Nope, you're not going. You're not talking to him without me. You're not doing
> that. You can talk to him on the telephone. You tell him your husband won't let
> you drive in winter. These roads are slippery and your husband won't let you
> drive them.

When she said that, I had to laugh because my husband wasn't like that, nor was I. But,

"I felt she was in control and so I kind of did what she told me to do and felt very

146

supported. It was all for me. It wasn't to further her career in any way." It almost felt as though my fight had become her fight. In fact, in some ways, "this was more her fight than it was mine because she was so central to it. It felt like she was my lawyer."

That phone call changed something in me that day:

> I remember it's the one time I stood up to a parent and really told him, what I thought. I wasn't angry; I wasn't mean. I didn't say anything that I had to take back or apologize for. But especially when I was young, as a young teacher, I would really tip-toe around and be very careful of what I said to people and how I said things. Parent/teacher interviews would give me ulcers. And that was the one time I told him just what was on my mind about his child's behaviour and so on. I know that was because of the phone call. I'd had it! I wasn't going to talk to any other man and take anything more that day! That's the one time I did it but that was due to the previous phone call.

While all this was happening, the staff became aware of the situation because "my emotions were not tucked in too neatly." I know that "they were very, very supportive and I think that's due to the fact that I knew I had my principal's support. And I had my vice principal's support and anyone around was on my side. And so I didn't feel like I was making an unreasonable request. I didn't feel like the bad guy." You have to understand that there were fifteen women on that staff and only two men and the women sure understood about pregnancies, and, actually, so did the men. The staff had a pretty good laugh about the situation. It became the joke of the staffroom: "'Jennifer is going to have the baby for show and tell.' 'Jennifer's not allowed to have her baby.' It was all seen as ridiculous." There were two teachers in particular to whom I felt particularly close. They were very supportive.

Well, letters went back and forth (from my principal to central office on December 13, 1978 and response from central office on December 20, 1978) and there were many

147

phone calls, "and it went tooth and nail." Two months after I requested my maternity

leave and one week before it was to begin, I finally got confirmation of the leave as I

requested it in a letter from central office (January 4, 1979).

As I think back about that whole situation, I still can't understand that central

office person's position unless it all had to do with the fact that I would be getting an

increment out of that leave. This was the person who hired me just a year ago. "He was

the one that had interviewed me and called me the very same day and offered me the

position and couldn't wait to get me on staff and had a son starting ECS, himself, in the

system but in a different school, and saying, 'Gee, I wish he could be in your class' and so

positive about having me as part of the system." I guess I was so shocked by the whole

situation because,

> A year later, he turns and throws all kinds of nastiness in my face. It was just
> totally illogical. 'I'm the same person you hired a year ago. Why have you
> changed because I made a request? Why on earth do you think that I don't care
> about my class, I don't care about the students I teach, I don't care about the
> system or the school? I'm not a different person. I'm the same person you hired
> and wanted to have as your son's teacher.' And I couldn't understand what was
> happening.

It's been a long time since I've thought about that story and your call prompted me

to relook at the situation. It was a story that changed me as a teacher; I know this because

I kept all of these letters in a nice, neat portfolio. I talked to a few teachers in my district

since who have similar stories to tell about this central office person and their experiences

with him during their maternity leaves twenty years ago. We all had similar responses.

That can't be just a coincidence. I also believe that if my principal "had not stepped in, in

the end I would have done what that central office person suggested. I didn't know

148

enough in my position to challenge anyone."

I guess I'll close my story by talking a little bit about schools today and the job of

the principal from my perspective as a teacher having had an experience like this:

> You have to have a principal that is going to be behind your staff. I would hate to
> think what it would be like otherwise because it would be a very lonely road. It's
> a good feeling to think that someone has gone to bat for you and pushed for you.

<u>Thinking about Relationships: The Context for the Event</u>   As Jennifer and I reflected

back upon her story following our reconstruction of the conflict that occurred, we began

to consider how and to what extent her relationships shifted as the story unfolded.

Jennifer indicated that the staff room she was describing in her story was in an

auxiliary building. She said that most of the relationships among the teachers in her

building were quite separate from those of the teachers in the main building:

> We were a close little unit in that little building because there were so few of us - I
> think, five in total, and some aides or assistants. Two of my best friends, who are
> still very good friends, were in that building with me at the time. One was on one
> side of me and the other was down the hall past the staff room, but it was a small
> building so it might have taken fifteen steps, you know.

She said that of the five teachers located there, only the vice principal and one of

her closest friends, Selma, were senior teachers. Of Selma, she said, "She was an older

teacher. Her children were teenagers then, I recall. To me that was old." She also

indicated that Selma was her mentor. The other two teachers were also females; both

were in their second year of teaching. Jennifer said that she was the youngest and least

experienced of the teachers, however. She was in her first year of teaching. Jennifer

described how she felt and how she believed the two other young teachers felt with

respect to their relative inexperience: "I was a shy kind of person and probably was more intimidated than most, but I'm sure they all were to a certain degree." She said that her Friday night social activities revolved around this group of teachers. These were also the teachers who provided her with primary support during this incident.

Jennifer said that the other teachers in the main building "were quite separate. I mean we were friendly with everyone and they were very nice people but we never got close to them." Only one of the teachers from the main building was in her social group. This was because he car-pooled with the rest of them: "That's how we got to know him better." During the incident, she indicated that there "were jokes made with the whole staff. I can remember various teachers -- the twinkle in their eyes, laughing about it and things." She believed that the staff supported her because "I had my principal's support. And I had my vice principal's support." She indicated that new light was shed on this support during a recent conversation with Selma, however:

> The rest of the staff was all very supportive but the principal had it in control. It wasn't an issue that they felt they had to run and do something about because it was being looked after. It was taken care of.

Jennifer said that it was her vice principal who looked after the ECS parent meetings she attended; he also did her evaluations. She indicated that he was the first person she turned to when she became distressed: "I knew he was upset and I knew he didn't quite know how to deal with it or what to say or what to do." Apparently he turned the issue over to the principal: "'I told the principal about the phone call and she wants to talk to you after school.' And he may have said something supportive. If he thought of it, he probably would have. He was a very nice man and he wouldn't have

150

meant to upset me in any way. But I remember wondering, 'Oh, oh, more.'"

She said that her principal was located in the main building so she hadn't many

opportunities, outside of staff meetings and a few luncheons, to get to know her well.

This appeared to cause her some concern when this incident occurred:

> When she called me over, I was nervous because she's a strong, assertive person
> and I was not. I was very young and I didn't have a chance to deal with her on a
> daily basis because of this separation. When she did call me into her office, I
> didn't always know whether it was going to be a rap on my knuckles or a hug.
> You know, I didn't know which end it would be coming from. And I never got a
> rap on my knuckles for anything, but I always wondered! You know, there was
> always that little bit of intimidation there.

Jennifer said that the three issues about her principal that intensified her concern with this

situation. They were: "The hat she was wearing, the kind of personality she has and the

physical distance." She also said that she was afraid of the principal's "power." She

indicated that she "shook all afternoon thinking about it."

> I mean, 'What now?' You know, I just couldn't handle any more and now I have
> to go over and see her and what is she going to say to me? Did I step over the
> line? Did I say something that I shouldn't have to the man from central office?

Apparently Jennifer's principal eased the situation immediately for her:

> Anyway, I went in and right away, it was bang, bang, bang. 'What was said?
> What did you say? What did he say? What next? What next?' And so I just
> reiterated, verbatim, what the phone call was and within moments I knew that she
> was angry, very angry and she was not angry with me. So then I felt better very
> quickly.

Jennifer indicated that her principal's reputation continued to worry her, however: "Oh,

oh. Where is she going to take this?" She said that her principal had a reputation for

being an administrator who tended to push the envelope. This also caused her some

concern: "Where it would all end up?"

151

Over the years between then and now, Jennifer said that she became very close to her principal. Even after her principal retired, Jennifer said that the two of them stayed in touch. She also said that she never shared those initial feelings of intimidation and concern about her principal with her: "I think she would be shocked if I told her that now."

Imagining a New Story   At the end of her story, Jennifer said, "I also believe that if my principal had not stepped in, in the end I would have done what that central office person suggested. I didn't know enough in my position to challenge anyone." She said, however, that "I wasn't going to talk to any other man and take anything more that day!" This background appears to set the stage for another incident that happened some time after this first story.

In the sequel, Jennifer indicates that as a result of the first story, her life as a teacher changed. Her new life still included asking her principal for advice, but now she was able to deal with the situation herself. It also appears that Jennifer may have imagined herself participating in her principal's quest to change teaching conditions for teachers:

Jennifer's Story Continues   A few years after this event occurred, another incident happened with this same man:

> I had wanted a couple of days off to go to where my father-in-law lived because he was getting remarried. So I approached my principal and she said, "By all means, extend a weekend by two days. Not a problem. Write this same man and ask for personal leave and don't tell him what you want it for." And I said, "I don't mind telling him. It's not private." And she told me, "No, don't tell him because it's

152

not his business. You could be having a divorce; you could be having your tubes tied. You could, you know, be doing whatever you want to do, and if you're not getting paid for these days, it's none of his business what you are doing."

During that conversation, "I got the strong impression that my principal was trying to set a precedent." I knew that she was always contemplating ways to improve teaching conditions, and I could just imagine what she was thinking about my situation: "'If I could get this through, then we could make policy. They could change this precedent.' At that time you didn't get paid for personal leave, at all."

> I drafted the letter the way she suggested I do, and I got a letter back saying why? Why did I want that time? And so I showed my principal and asked, 'What should I do?' And she said, 'Well, by the looks of this letter, if you really want the leave, I guess you're going to have to tell him. If it really doesn't matter to you, then press it.' And I said, 'Well, no. I really want to go.' And so she said, 'Well, you better tell him then.' And in the end, I told him and he, 'reluctantly,' again he used the word reluctantly -- because I just read that letter a few days ago -- agreed to this two day absence with no pay so I could attend my father's wedding. And in the end my father-in-law postponed the wedding and I didn't go anyway and never did need to use it.

Years later, as I look back at this story and think about it, I understand what my principal was trying to do: "This was another case where she was trying to push the envelope to set a precedent to try to make things right." As I consider what happened in this second incident, I can understand my principal's position: "It really was none of their business if I was taking time without pay."

As I think about this story today, my thoughts take me back to that first story and a funny little episode that happened just before my principal retired:

> She was going through her personal drawers, or whatever, going through her files and she came across this envelope. It's the one I gave her. 'Such Fun!' was all she wrote on it and she passed me the envelope. She said, 'You might want to keep these.' And by then it was several years later and I read through them and I

153

thought, 'Ya, I'm going to hang onto these. These are very interesting letters.'
And they were in the original envelope where she had written 'Such Fun!'
Someday, I thought I might want to look back and remember.

I have changed since then, you know. I now have the knowledge and the
experience to deal with issues like these. I know what questions to ask, who to go to for
support and information, and how to deal with someone, I believe, is treating me with
disrespect. Perhaps, above all else, I know that, "I wouldn't want to be in a school, not
with what I've seen coming down the pipeline, so to speak. I wouldn't want to be there
without some kind of support!"

Melissa: Telling her story

Where is the start of my story? Okay, I guess it started a few years ago when
there was this hastily called meeting that was supposed to happen at lunch time one day.
These kinds of meetings always "caused chaos to people who were on supervision or
doing extramurals" and our central office did this to us quite often. "Every spring would
turn our school into turmoil for some reason or another and we would have something to
worry about." Our principal had resisted this type of behaviour from central office for a
long time:

> Central did such rash things that had you always jumping when they said jump.
> Our principal was often sandwiched between an unrealistic central office and
> teachers who were saying, 'Whoa! This is crazy!'

I know that the position he was placed in was hard on him.

> He aged twenty years in a couple of years there because he got stuck in the middle
> of a staff who was being pushed from above by central office and who would say,
> 'This is crazy'. And he got to the point where he wouldn't do the things he was

154

asked to do and he was stressed right out. His knee was hurting him and his back and these were probably symptoms of the pressures being put on him.

Sure enough, this year central office had decided "to restructure the administration in our school because we weren't doing some things they wanted to see done." The plan they presented "knocked out some assistant principals and brought in others." One of the new people who was proposed as a replacement was the girl friend of one of the guys in central office. "I strongly, strongly believe that she talked him into a lot of things and he went along with this one because of their relationship." At the time, she had an administrative position elsewhere in our district but it was being terminated. "I think she was fearful and he was trying to help her out. He wanted her right into administration." I suppose we weren't thrilled at the possibility of getting her:

> She had a history of hurting people in a variety of ways. She was well known for putting letters in co-workers' personnel files. She went through her boyfriend to do this so she had lots of power. She even put a letter into a teacher's file because she didn't like the way she had handled an interview.

The boyfriend of this woman just happened to be the person from central office we were meeting with that day. He was one of those people who'd just "barrel in and say, 'This is the way it's going to be.' And he prided himself on being first at everything, but many times people were rolling their eyes at what he was doing." I'm sure he wasn't very happy with our reaction to the restructuring of our school administration. We felt that our assistant principals had been doing a great job, "and so we had questions at the meeting and I was one of the ones who questioned on several things." I also disagreed with some of the things that were said about our school -- programs they said we weren't doing and so on.

155

A few days later, this same fellow from central office came into my room, unannounced, and started "pulling open filing cabinets, and going through desks and drawers and shutting them." It was really disconcerting.

> I'm carrying on and I have a teacher assistant in there that year cause I had a hearing impaired little girl and she's watching and looking at me like, 'What's this guy doing?' And I'm watching but carrying on, and I'm thinking, 'Something is up. Something is wrong.'

Finally this fellow left, and during my morning prep I phoned central office and told the secretary that I wanted to meet with him at noontime in my school.

You know, this man was someone my husband and I both had a personal relationship with. He was the person who offered my husband his first job; he actually went out of his way to recruit my husband. He also gave me my first part-time job without even an interview and "he was very good to do that -- to give me a job. And I've always appreciated that." We had always gotten along so I was more than a little disturbed that he would behave that way in my classroom. That day, at noon, he came back to the school and we had a conversation at a table in the staff room. "You could tell that the staff members were going like, 'What's going on here?' He was telling me how things should be taught and I agreed with some and some I didn't agree with." He was very much a total 'Whole Language' person because his girl friend, the one he wanted to move into our school, was very much a 'Whole Language' person. "She was really on that band wagon," and had told him that we were not doing 'Whole Language' properly. I was trying to explain to him that "you can't just do random words and things. There has to be some rules and a blended method of teaching. That was my philosophy." I thought

156

we had a good conversation and that we had agreed on some things and agreed to disagree on others.

The only thing I can think of that I might have said at that meeting about his girl friend to possibly upset him was that I was worried about discipline. I had some concerns about how she might handle discipline as an assistant principal because she'd never done that before. She had only worked with very little children. I explained that this was a concern for me "because we have a large school and discipline can become a factor come spring. In fact, discipline is always a factor in a large school." He responded with, "'Oh, she can handle that, no problem.' and that was about it." Then the bell went and I went back to class and never thought about that conversation again for quite some time. "That must have been in May."

Well, the evening before the last day of school, my husband came home and told me that a person he golfed with from the post office had told him I was getting a letter. This letter was from our teacher's association and it was charging me with unprofessional conduct. The person charging me was the central office guy's girlfriend. Apparently this post office friend had held the letter up to a light and knew exactly what was in it. He also knew who else was getting a similar letter. I was pretty upset with our friend's conduct, but I didn't pursue it because I didn't need any more problems than I already had.

"I went to school the next day very upset. I didn't sleep all night. I was very upset and trying to be upbeat for the children." That was a hard thing to do because the last day of school with small children is very hectic. My husband came by later that day with the letter and I read it while he was there. It was really tough but "I got through that

157

day and I really think I had a pretty good day considering the age of the children and the

demands that are put on you that last day. And what's in the back of your head. I don't

think they had a clue what was in the back of my head. They didn't, but I sure did!"

Getting that letter was the worst thing that has ever happened to me as a teacher because I

felt shame and I didn't know why. I mean, I hadn't done anything and yet the feeling I

had was "like a shame...and yet it shouldn't have been."

> I guess because we work with children we are sort of held up to be excellent role
> models or something. And so you see that as a disappointment or a devastation
> that you've been considered like that. It seems like such a shameful thing if you're
> ever accused of anything. I think a lot of teachers go through a lot of difficult
> experiences that they feel are shameful and that they hide from others. I don't
> think you're ever going to get those teachers to stand up and say - like, I'm not
> going to stand up in a staff room and say, 'You new, young teachers, I want to tell
> you something...'

I mean, "when teachers are accused of wrong doing, boy, are they ever guilty before they

are proven guilty." So that's how I felt at the time. Actually, that's why I agreed to work

with you in this research, because "you never hear much more after teachers have been

acquitted, but, you know, it's something if people can read it!"

At some point during that day, I went to talk to my principal. "He was upset but I

didn't want to put him in the position" of hearing me vent, so I didn't say much. This was

the first that he had heard about what was going on because "I was the first one to get my

letter. By the end of that day when word finally got out, however, I mean this hit

everybody like a ton of bricks." People stood in small groups in the hallways and there

were lots of tears. The people who were charged were not people who threatened to do

this or that when they didn't like something. There were six of us in all who got letters

158

charging us with unprofessional conduct. Most of us were women who "just tended to try to make things work." As I look back now, I think that all of us spoke up at that lunchtime meeting and that may have been the glue that connected us together in these charges. That day I left the school in turmoil.

The next day I had to attend graduation at the high school because we had an exchange student. One of the other teachers from my school who had also received a letter had a child graduating. I remember how badly I felt for her:

> She got the letter the day of the grad. She went to the mailbox the day her oldest son was graduating. Her oldest child. So, you know, she was devastated.

The day after that was the last day of school for the teachers. Usually on that day we had a big luncheon and did skits and things for each other about the funny things that had happened throughout the year. I remember saying that I wasn't going to go and "several people -- I'm probably going to get upset here -- came to me and said, 'We want you there.' And that was good for me to hear that." So I went to the luncheon.

Later that day, we heard that our principal had charged the woman who had charged all of us --you know, the one who was the girlfriend of the fellow from central office-- with unprofessional conduct. Apparently she had said some things about our principal at a meeting earlier in the year and I guess he decided that the best way to protect us was to show that she was not a perfect person. So now "he's jumping into the fire too and you have a triangle of things going on." I remember that at the time I was not saying "Yay, like that." In fact, "I thought, 'Oh God. Do you know what you're getting into?' But I also felt supported."

159

During that day, as with other times when there was conflict in our school, "You would often see in the hallways little people in groups and they're discussing it. They're mulling it over. These people are certainly your colleagues and in it with you at this point." I think some of the teachers talked there because they would have an unrestricted view of who might interrupt their meeting. Also, hallways are neutral areas. You had to be so careful in our school because " lots of things that went on got back to central office faster than a fax machine could have at that time." Things were pretty tense. Some teachers stayed out of the conversations though. These were "the outlying people, teachers who were oblivious because they wanted to be."

My principal requested that the investigation by our association of his six staff members occur within the first couple weeks of summer. "A person came in and interviewed all of us, one right after another and I got letters throughout the summer of how things were progressing. By the end of that summer, I was led to believe that they weren't going to pursue it."

> That summer was pretty much a downer, however. I kept to myself. When I would run into people, we might talk, but I didn't say much. Many of my good friends were teachers so I might have said things like, 'Yah, I'm upset. I don't know what's going on.' But I really watched myself.

The next September, our assistant principals were still at our school. That woman was placed in our school as a teacher because her other job had been terminated. During that year, "she pretty much stayed over in her end of the school. She was on one end and I was on the other end. "

I used to speak out at staff meetings before this happened but I sure didn't that

160

year:

> Boy, were you ever careful. I remember that I was pretty meek and mild. You can believe it! I was upset and scared. I was very, very careful. I stayed in my room a lot and I didn't go to the staffroom a lot. And you know, to this day I still don't go to the staffroom a lot. I go get my coffee but I don't sit down and chat. I don't have lunch there. I have lunch with my kids.

Everyone was very careful around her. "Teachers are such professionals though, so they included her in things." She often didn't go to our staff functions though, for a couple of years. Eventually she began to ease herself into these kinds of things:

> I think it was more difficult for her than for me because in this situation she had sent six letters to people all in the same school and she wasn't even part of the staff. You have to give her credit though.

She walked right into our school and held her head up and went about doing her job. She was and is a good teacher.

There was a joke circulating for a while that year about this central office guy "getting into my drawers." Some of the staff would ask, "Did he find your bottles or anything like that?" That was kind of funny, but it was still a very difficult year for all of us. The staffroom was a place that many of us avoided especially if there was conflict. "The teachers stayed in their rooms and they shut the doors." I know that, "I stayed in my room a lot because I guess I felt ashamed like I had done something wrong but I couldn't figure out what it was." I still would "rather stay in my room where I can shut the door and be myself with my kids, my students, and not have to play that game that some of them have to play."

During that year, "I never felt much supported by central office. I would go to meetings or whatever and they kind of avoided me. In retrospect this was a big

161

disappointment to me."

Also, at the end of that school year, I found out that I had this woman's niece in my class. I worried about this throughout the summer. That was a really stressful issue at the time:

> I wondered, 'Why in the world did they ever put this person in my class?' But I thought, 'No, I'm carrying on!' And I actually ran into them downtown. She was helping the little girl buy supplies. We didn't speak to each other at the moment, of course. And I thought, 'Oh. I'm really going to be watched' but I wasn't.

I know other people also felt stressed. Some even had trouble with her after she came to our school as a leave replacement. When the teacher who had taken leave returned to our school, this person would not give her back her room. Another example of something that happened had to do with the use of our kitchen. We have always had to book our kitchen. One day, this woman called her moms in even though she knew that someone else had booked the room. When she got there, and the other teacher reminded her of the schedule, she said, "Nope, I have my parents here and we're going to cook now." The other teacher is still angry with her.

> I mean, that's when you go back to your classroom and you shut the door, and go, 'Aaah!' And then the person next door comes over and says, 'What's wrong?' 'Aaaah!'

That's another thing. There are always people you are closer to in a school:

> The ones that teach right around you, they often turn out to be your strongest allies. There's a real special relationship with those people that are closest to you just because of proximity.

About halfway through that year, my husband and I decided to ask for a teaching exchange. I was really worried though. What "if you don't get an exchange because

162

you're deemed unprofessional and all that?" I also had to go to this same man at central

office for approval so that was a very nervous time for me.

When my exchange did get approved, "he came to my room to tell me, 'I have an

exchange for you. Let's go down to the library and look where it is.' He was like my best

friend. I was very cautious but I went with him." I was scared and I still felt shame, "but

I wouldn't let him see me cower or anything."

At the end of that year, my family and I moved away for a year "and it was

wonderful. And it was very healing. And we were able to miss a whole year of a very

difficult time at our school and come back to a new beginning with that void in between."

I came back to my school from my exchange during the last month that my

principal was there. "I did hear through letters that he had a rough year. That year was

sort of the culmination of it all. I was removed and it was wonderful but I'm sure it

wasn't wonderful for my principal because he lived through it."

> I saw him in a different light. Like, I saw him physically beaten, you know. No,
> mentally being beaten. And the rest of our school did, too. He was physically and
> mentally just exhausted from what he was having to go through, from the demands
> that were placed upon him.

As I think back, "I can see where our administrators were getting the brunt of it

because they were getting shoved from below by the teachers and shoved from above by

central office, and it wore them out! It just plain wore them out. They were exhausted by

this way of ruling, so top heavy and authoritarian." None of our administrators today are

the same people from that story. They have all moved on.

> It's been a struggle but there is a long history of trying to sort of put this one
> school in its place because we were big enough that we could say, 'No, we don't

163

agree with what you are asking us to do here. We think this is a better way.' Or something. We didn't do that to everything, but some of these wacky plans we stood up to.

"The country schools are still doing things without questioning, but I hear about it later.

You hear it when they say, 'I've got to do this!' And they're overwhelmed at times too."

The situation with our school and central office is "much more amicable" now:

Things aren't done like that as much anymore. And board members changed and it became far more professional and policies were followed. The stress now seems to be dealing with lack of funds rather than the different beliefs in how to run a school.

The man from central office who was pivotal to my story retired. I see him every so often, "and I know for a fact that he is glad to be out of it too. He's much more relaxed." That doesn't mean that I have begun to trust him again. I haven't. " I'm still not sure around him. You can never feel comfortable because of the past so you sort of walk carefully. You walk on glass with both of them," he and his girl friend, who is now his wife. Sometimes, when I think about this story,

I often wonder if she'll ever apologize. But I know she won't. But I wonder in the back of my head, if she'll ever do that. I mean I don't expect it, is what I'm saying, but it crosses my mind; 'Wonder if she'll ever.'

Thinking about Relationships: The Context for the Event   Melissa and I reflected back upon her story following our reconstruction of the conflict that occurred. We began to consider how and to what extent the relationships shifted as the story unfolded. During this process, we uncovered some further stories that told of Melissa's relationships during the conflict that occurred.

164

Melissa said that the first story she remembered had to do with one of the teachers in her school whom " lots of people felt was sort of a mole." She said that this person came to her right after she had received her letter to say: "'I didn't have anything to do with this. I still want to be your friend.'" Melissa said that she found this behaviour very "strange" because this person was a friend of the woman who had charged you.

> Like why would this person, whom I don't even talk with other than to know her in the community, do this? Boy, this person was wanting to get to me very quickly to let me know that she didn't have anything to do with this. It was really strange, which, of course, makes you think that she does protest a bit too much, sort of thing.

She had a difficult time understanding why this other person would do this unless she wanted information. Melissa said that she had also considered that this person might not have wanted to get caught in the middle of the situation because the general feelings of the staff ran so strongly against her friend. Melissa spoke about her relationship with this person: "I certainly wouldn't have shared any of my innermost feelings with her anyway. We are friends on staff, but there is no way we would go shopping."

Melissa said that her "two closest friends" during this time weren't teachers: "I never really shared this with them, although they were aware of it. I didn't feel they would understand because they work in the private sector." She also said that she told other "friends who were visiting that were teachers elsewhere who were aware of this" that she "was disgusted with what had happened." She said of this conversation, however: "I knew I was not going to go any further other than to say that this was making me mad."

Within the school, Melissa said that there were three teachers who were much

165

closer to her than the others. She indicated that all three were at the same grade level and were located close to her in the school. Melissa said that one of these teachers, Christie, was the person she jogged with:

> We walk and talk together. She gave me a little rock she brought back from a trip to BC that summer. You know, one of those worry rocks. She said, 'I think this would be good for you.' And for a long time it was sitting right on the counter. And you know, this is a sign of how things are better, of course. I know exactly where it still is, but it's not right on the counter. It's in a little basket now.

I resonated with this relationship story within Melissa's story of conflict. One summer, while I was taking a class on narrative inquiry at the university, a person in my group who had heard some of my stories, also brought me a worry stone. I kept it with me and felt the need to touch it for a long time. Like Melissa, however, I finally put it away.

Melissa indicated that the second of this group of teachers, Jodi, was the person whose eldest son was graduating the day after she received her letter. The third teacher, LaVerne, was the one who told Melissa the story about the kitchen episode. All three of these teachers apparently played key roles for Melissa during this difficult period in her life but she hadn't really thought about their closeness to her before:

> Maybe what you're asking me, and I am not going deep enough, is because these people have been there for a long time. And this is a relationship we've had for a long, long time and, in fact, I would say my very closest people are the people I teach with, my other grade level teachers. One of them who was charged as well as me, one is the person in the story with the kitchen, and the other one is the one who gave me the rock. And we all teach the same grade; we work very hard together. But I don't think we have time to sit down and say, 'Ohhh, ohhhh. It's a subliminal thing we all do.'

Melissa went on to say:

I guess because it was so much a part of my life from the very beginning, I'm assuming that everyone knows. They are my closest teaching friends for sure. But, of course, why not? They know what you go through day to day because they also are with those little children.

She explained why other teachers in the school were not within this close circle of teacher friends:

I can't relate to the frustrations of an older grade level person as well as I can to someone who is with me at the same grade level. And they don't understand, you know, when they want to do an ice cream sale and they just want to set up a table and let it go. And you say, 'Not with these kids. They don't know how to count. They just want, want, want. You know, you have to be more organized than that.'

Melissa also described the "outlying people" in greater detail:

They don't have many relationships with the people who are in the school for various reasons. I think it's because, maybe, that's their personality. Also, a couple of them don't even live in the community. They drive from the city out to our community. So, you see, they don't spend a lot of time in the school or in the community. They come and go.

As well, Melissa elaborated upon her relationships with the other teachers who

were also charged with unprofessional conduct:

I have never really talked to them about the idea of the shame. But I know they felt the same sort of being kicked in the stomach feeling and that cautiousness. Like, 'Oh my goodness. I'm going to stay put here in my classroom.'

She went on to indicate that she believed that they also behaved in a similar manner to her

when there was conflict in the school:

We did it. When we were frustrated after something would happen, we would just go back to our classrooms and say, 'I'm shutting the door.' And they did it too.

She indicated that sometimes one of them would say: "I'm leaving early today. I can't

think of this anymore." She said she knew what that statement meant because she, herself,

had used it.

167

Melissa indicated that she "still had a bit of sympathy" for the person who charged

her "because she came into a large staff" where the other six teachers she charged were

living out their teaching lives. She said of this situation: "She had to work with these

people, and I can say, I don't think she had many allies at all."

Melissa spoke again about how her husband was pivotal in helping her to reconcile

herself with the events that occurred. She described their relationship with:

> He's not a person who's very outwardly emotional. But he's a very strong person
> who's just there, you know. I don't know if I can describe that. He listens and
> sometimes he'll make a comment and you'll say, 'No, no, no, no.' Like he'll take
> your side too much and you'll say, 'No. No. That's not how I feel.' He's a quiet
> person and he's not the kind who's going to rant and rave and do all that stuff.
> But when you're upset, he knows it. I think it's because he's a teacher. He just
> knows, you know, that there's days when I can't face things like cooking, and he
> just fills in. And I'm sure that there's days when he can't face something and I just
> fill in, you know.

She also talked about her relationships with her children. Melissa said that they

help her to keep her feelings about others open and honest. While she indicated that they

were too young to understand what had occurred in her story, she also believed that they

had special ways of knowing:

> They sense things. I never shared this story with them, but they know how
> cautious I am around this person because they will use her as an example when I'll
> say, 'Well, you need to include this person.' 'Well you don't like so and so. You
> would never include her.' And I have to respond, 'Well, you're right.' So they
> sort of know how to get to you and actually, that causes us to laugh too, you
> know.

Sometimes they remind her that we all have history that will affect our relationships for a

very long time: "They stop me from being too righteous."

168

<u>Imagining a New Story</u>   Of this incident in her teaching life, Melissa said "I can recall living this." She also said:

> You know, I also feel it is a part of the past. But I certainly know how I felt at that time. And, you know, I hope it doesn't ever happen to anybody else this way because I know the way I felt and it wasn't a very enjoyable year from the time I received the letter till I received the letter saying nothing was going to be pursued, more or less.

Following this incident, Melissa said that her life as a teacher changed as she began to think more about safety as she used her voice in different ways. This sequel describes how Melissa began to live out the caution she spoke about at the end of her first story: "I was very, very careful." In this sequel, Melissa reimagines her caution from one of fear to one of strength.

<u>Melissa's Story Continues</u>   Following this experience, I think I became "a lot more cautious. What you're really thinking doesn't get verbalized. Like I still feel the reason I got the letter was because I questioned him and I verbalized it in front of all those people."

Before this happened, I was one of a group of teachers in the school who was listened to by other teachers when I disagreed with the way things were being done:

> I think we were sort of known in our school and on our staff as sort of voices of reason, not saying that we have any power, but if you say to someone: 'I don't think that this is really a proper way of doing something,' or 'I don't like what's happening here. Let's talk about this.' They tend to listen. I think that comes with experience.

Now, "I think they also listen to us because they know the history of sorts of what we've been through." So if any of the five of us that are left in the school says: "'I don't think we should be doing this' or 'I don't think this is something that should be talked about,' I

169

think the teachers listen to that because they know" that we have a pretty good idea of what we're talking about.

> I would say that today I have "a more cautious strength" than I had before: I just try to make it more productive rather than anything that could be considered catty or gossipy or something like that. Not to say that you don't say, 'Well, what's going on with so and so?' but I don't fool around with that petty stuff.

I make sure now that I always have "safe things to say." I think a lot about how I will respond to something: "And when you talk among your colleagues and you're saying, 'This is a ridiculous plan,' you wonder, 'Could that be construed as being, you know?'"

They say that "sometimes experience is the best teacher." This experience was "a good slap upside the head." While those of us who were charged still think about it sometimes, I know "we're glad it's behind us. We've moved on although we're still very cautious" around everybody "but even more so around this person."

> I wouldn't want to go back to the way it was. I mean we still have our stress but really those good old days were not good old days. Now it's just a different kind of stress.

Heather: Telling her story

My story happened about ten years ago when Ottawa decided to get out of the business of education. The Department of National Defence had set up a lot of base schools all over Canada and Europe. Running education this way had become very complicated for them so I guess they decided to turn all of their schools over to the local boards where each school was located. I was working in one of those schools.

The teachers at my school were "very apprehensive" about this change process. In

170

our district we called it amalgamation, and it was going to occur between our school

board and three other local boards: the public, the separate, and the Francophone board.

There were no guarantees given to the DND teachers. We had no idea if we would even

be staying in our own schools. We had become like a family and this was a concern.

Most of us had been there since we had started teaching, and we related quite differently

to one another than the teachers in the schools downtown:

> Base teachers always worked hard and played hard. We had our own, I guess,
> identity. I felt as if my closest friends were my colleagues. It was a different
> culture. We had our own way of doing things, our own little club. Base teachers
> were base teachers.

I think we became aware of the fact that, somewhere along the process, some of us

might be transferred to another local school in one of the other boards when the

amalgamation was complete. This caused us to be "extremely apprehensive":

> People outside the base didn't like us too well. There was a certain jealousy in
> that we were extremely well looked after by Ottawa.

At that time, our schools were over-staffed. The population had declined on the base, but

Ottawa had not decreased the number of teachers in our schools. There even appeared to

be a surplus of teachers from the base schools after the open positions were filled in the

schools of the other local boards. That meant that some of our teachers would be

declared surplus, and none of us really knew what that meant. We did understand,

however, that surplus teachers would not have jobs in classrooms in one of our schools or

in any of the downtown schools unless there was a change in enrollment or a downtown

teacher retired.

Each board had to take a certain number of the surplus teachers from the base.

171

We had no idea if these teachers would have jobs when the process was over. We were missing a lot of information about the process. We didn't even want to think about what a "surplus teacher" was or how those teachers would be chosen. I remember thinking that this might be a way for central office to get rid of the teachers they thought were marginal.

I guess it never crossed my mind that I might become one of these surplus teachers. I had been teaching two core subjects in my school for many years, and my evaluations and the student results in my class had always been excellent. Here are some of the evaluations I kept in a portfolio. Look at what this comment from my first principal says:

> Ms. Jones is providing outstanding service to our school in both the junior high and elementary divisions. (March 16, 1982)

Here's another comment from a different evaluation. This one came from the principal in this story:

> Ms. Jones is providing our school with excellent service. The Math and L.A. programs would greatly suffer in her absence. (April 24, 1985)

This next evaluation was the most recent report completed prior to the amalgamation process. It was also done by this principal:

> Ms. Jones is providing our school board and our school with exceptional service. Not only do we recognize her sound and effective teaching ability but also her professionalism and leadership role as the Math Department Head. (April 25, 1989)

> Maybe these evaluation comments will give you some understanding of why I had

"no concept as to why I was called to the office" on a day we all still refer to as "Black Tuesday":

I just went down there, not thinking that I was on the list. I walked into the principal's office. The principal was there, the superintendent of schools was there, the vice superintendent of schools was there and myself. And I walked in. I was asked to shut the door. I did, and I looked at the individuals and I believe my heart sank right about then because I knew that this had to be bad news. The superintendent immediately informed me, without any preamble, 'We have called you here today to let you know that you are on the surplus list for the public schools and we just thought that we should inform you of this before you saw the list.'

I was shocked and dismayed. I asked "who had made this list up, how it was determined and what were the criteria."

I was told that "if you were deemed to be essential that if the school could not do without your programs, then that was the teacher or teachers that they had to have." I wondered how it was that math and language arts were not essential programs and so I asked that question. I was told by my principal and my new superintendent that "all teachers are trained to teach mathematics and language arts and didn't I know that? They all are."

I remember leaving the office at that point, feeling humiliated and shamed, and I had to walk past my colleagues who knew what had transpired. This was the hardest thing I have ever had to do in my life:

I was hurt. I was devastated. I was shocked. But for some reason, I felt ashamed about being on that list. I felt I was nothing. I felt as if I had been slapped, not on one side of the face but on both. And I didn't want to look at anybody. And I sure didn't want to talk to anybody. I wanted to be left alone.

I don't know how I did it. I still don't know how I was able to return to my grade nine math class and to teach for the rest of that day either.

The next day I stayed home sick because I had "terrible headaches. I couldn't

173

think, couldn't concentrate, couldn't do anything." The day after that, I went back to the school though, but from that point on, I began to avoid the staffroom and other places where the teachers gathered.

I stayed in my room and "poured my whole energy" into teaching my students. During the next three months, my relationships with my students changed dramatically. I think they 'intensified' and I became very possessive of my students:

> The kids became my personal possessions. It was strange. They became like my own children. I know that I pushed them hard. I pushed them really hard.

I wanted them to do the best that they had ever done. I guess that through them, I thought I would be able to prove that I was a good teacher and not "surplus to the essential needs of the school." Kids can be pretty perceptive and compassionate, you know:

> I never let onto my students, not even once, that I was perhaps not going to be there the next year. Not even once did I breathe anything about it. But I know they knew something was different. Something had changed. And I do know that word did get around a bit so probably some of them actually did know what was going on. But my relationship with my students - maybe you could say it intensified, if anything. I found I was spending a lot of time with them. I think I was afraid to let go. That I was going to wind up in a school where I didn't really want to be. I wouldn't know the kids there.

My kids became my whole life at school.

I spent the last three months of that year isolated from most of the staff. "I didn't want to talk to anybody. I certainly didn't want to talk to my principal so I stayed in my classroom." You know, even after all this time, "still, at times, I don't feel comfortable at all around my old principal." My vice principal would often come to my classroom to check to see how I was doing though:

174

He was very sympathetic toward all that was going on. He did not think any of it had been done right. He would come down to my room frequently just to see if I was all right because he knew I wasn't going to the staff room any more. He would catch me in the morning just to make sure I was all right and he would talk to me before I'd leave the school at night just to let me know as far as he was concerned I had a right to be cross, or to be hurt.

He confided in me that he had to sit in on the meetings, but that he would not participate in the decisions about who would be essential staff and who would be surplus. He told me that he had "declared himself unable to do it and would not participate in it." He often reassured me that I was an important member of the school's staff by saying that he felt that mathematics and language arts in the junior high end had suffered a dreadful loss. He also said that he felt the staff would suffer if I were somewhere else. He was one of the few people I would talk to and I really appreciated his words of comfort. This was especially so because he had other things on his mind. I knew that he and my principal had to fight to save their own contracts during amalgamation.

With most of the rest of the staff, I know that I became abrupt, bitter and angry. My whole personality changed during this period:

I'm almost ashamed to admit this but I really did take my hurt out on other people. And I will admit that. I was very angry for a long time. I was bitter for three solid months - the rest of April, May and June. I think I was probably kind of cutting and mean with my remarks to people. I don't suppose I was a very nice person to be around. I had gone from somebody with a pretty easygoing personality. I used to crack jokes all the time.

I remember that one of my colleagues noticed the change in my relationship with her and the others, and she came to see me. She told me that she felt bad about what had happened but that she wished that I wouldn't act the way that I was acting:

175

She let me know in a nice way that I was busy taking out my anger and pain and hurt on other people that didn't deserve it. And I'm ashamed to admit this, but she was right...I lost my trust in people. I was aware that there was a personality change going on there and I didn't like it. But I couldn't do anything about it.

I was so hurt by what had happened, however, that I had a hard time controlling my feelings. By the end of that year, I think I had softened my behaviour somewhat, but I was still not very open with my colleagues.

There was one change that was really unusual during this period with some of the teachers. It wasn't a change that only I felt either:

It was interesting that the people on the surplus list became - oh, what's the word I'm seeking - an entity, somehow. We seemed to understand one another's bitternesses and hurt and pain. They seemed to - the other people understood how I felt about not wanting to speak to people - let's say, and not wanting to meet somebody in the hallway and like that. The other people on the surplus list felt the same way. I believe they handled it different and perhaps handled it, maybe more maturely than I did, but you can't go back -- that's the way it was. It was almost as if we were an entity unto ourselves, and nobody else really understood because they weren't on that list.

Sometimes I think about how difficult that time was. I have tried to understand why I took out my frustrations on many of my colleagues who had been close to me and who were not also declared surplus. The only thing I can think of that makes any sense is that I needed to be angry somewhere and I didn't want it to be at home:

I tried as much as possible at home for home to still be home the way it always was. And not get them all upset about things and so on. So you see, I think that also partly explains my bitterness at school because I was not going to be bitter at home too. So maybe, I guess, you take it out on people that mean a lot to you. Some people take it out on their family. I didn't. I guess I took it out on my colleagues instead.

I found out somewhere during that time frame where I was going to be the following year and had resigned myself to the move. I also knew that the teachers at my

176

new school were not particularly happy about my coming because one of their own

teachers had been bumped to make a place for me. There were a few other teachers going

there with me from the surplus list:

> We already knew before we even became part of that staff that we weren't
> particularly wanted on staff because in their minds their own staff had already been
> established. And I could see that logic. I could understand their thinking, because
> I was sort of being kicked out of one staff.

On the last day of school, I was packing up to get ready to go to the new school

when a letter was delivered to me. It said that because of a change in "projected

numbers," my transfer had been rescinded and I would not be moving. I would be back in

my old school the following year. I couldn't believe it! All that pain, anguish and

humiliation for nothing. I recall leaving school for the summer that year, not having told a

single person:

> I'm not sure. I'm not sure why I did this. Maybe I felt it was a dream. That, you
> know, they are going to take this away too. I didn't trust anybody, Barb. I think I
> felt, 'Well, they can take this away just as easily as they took away my twenty
> years of experience by putting me on the surplus list.'

When I got home that day, I showed my husband the letter. He was furious:

"How dare they do that to you!" I was still in shock, but I do remember saying to him

that I wanted to go back there. He responded with, "But they don't want you." I think

that kind of stopped me for a minute because I thought that was an "interesting reaction"

from him, and it certainly gave me cause to think. At any rate, I stayed away from school

that summer for the first time in my career.

In the fall I returned to a room that was not prepared. I was expecting to be given

the "crap" in terms of teaching assignments. I don't know why, but my self-esteem had

177

surely taken a pretty good smack. I was certainly surprised, at the first staff meeting, to

find out that I had been given a full teaching load of math; this was the subject I loved to

teach more than anything and everyone knew it! I was also assigned to team teach with

my best friend, Terry. I couldn't believe it! This was the only person I had confided in

over those terrible three months the year before:

> She had been with me along the way through all of this. She had been my friend
> through all of this. Without her and the occasional drink of rum, I'm not sure I
> would have made it through all of this. I used to go over to her house and just - I
> could talk to her about this.

I remember showing my assignment to Terry, who was sitting beside me at the staff

meeting and laughing, because they had told me anyone could teach math. I will never

forget what she replied to me: "No that's false and they all know that's false. I cannot

teach math. If they gave me a math assignment to teach, I would have to quit teaching."

"So I came back, in other words, to a new school year and had been handed what I

loved to teach." I have always believed and will always believe that perfect teaching

assignment was "atonement" for what those people had been put me through. "That's

what I think, but I don't know. I could be dead wrong."

It took me quite a while to get over what had happened, you know. "I still didn't

communicate all that well with some staff members for a while. And that was my own

fault, I'm sure. But I guess that's just something I had to work through." By Christmas

of that year, things were pretty much back to normal with the other teachers at my school,

however.

> As for central office:

178

I'm very distrustful of things that come down the pipe from head office. They decide they're making policies. I almost hate to see them. I've almost gotten to the point where I'm thinking, 'Now, what kind of stupidity are we expected to put up with next.' Because sometimes their policies aren't totally well thought out.

That's just how I feel, you know. I was pretty shattered by this whole experience and I still feel the residue today. I don't have a lot of trust in the people who were in that room with me on "Black Tuesday":

I don't have a good relationship with our superintendent at all although the two vice superintendents seem very polite to me and seem to treat me with some manner of respect which I believe I deserve. But I wouldn't say so with our superintendent. He will cross the street to avoid me, I'm sure. So I think there's kind of a mutual hands off here between both of us.

Thinking about Relationships: The Context for the Event   As Heather and I reflected

back upon her story following our reconstruction of the conflict that occurred, we began

to consider how and to what extent her relationships had shifted as her story unfolded.

Heather indicated that her closest colleague, Terry, and her vice principal were in

the school when she arrived as a younger teacher. She said that her long-term

relationships with these two people, who were located across the hallway from her for

twenty years, were very close and special. Further, she said that she and Terry team

taught some classes in the same classroom for more than ten years. She indicated that

they had also accepted responsibility for all special school celebrations and publications as

part of their extra teaching duties for most of this time. "I think it just happened that,

well, here were two people who will see that it gets done."

Heather said that she was surprised to discover, as we reflected upon her story,

179

that all of the surplus teachers on her staff had several things in common. First, she

indicated that they were all located in her square of this large building. As well, she said

that four of the teachers taught or worked with junior high students. Another similarity

we discovered was that all of the surplus teachers had at least twenty years of teaching

experience. Finally, four of the surplus teachers were in the social group that also

included the principal and vice principal. Heather said of these teachers: "Many of us in

that school had not only had all those years together, but we actually taught the same way.

We had the same fun." Heather said that she was shocked when our conversations

brought this information to light. She said that she had not noticed these commonalities

before:

> I've just realized that the names that come to mind of those of us who were
> declared surplus were all junior high people and we were pretty well in that block
> I'm calling the square.

> She said of this junior high staff:

> Our junior high was a culture, for sure, and pretty well our whole junior high
> section would, for instance, go to the bar Friday after school. We would dance in
> bare feet, for heaven's sake. The vice principal and principal were part of that
> culture. I think the principal sometimes got into trouble when he got home for
> staying out too late.

The surplus commonalities appeared to include seniority, social friendships and twenty

year loyalties. She said that she now understood why she had felt so betrayed at the time.

Heather indicated that her feelings of betrayal had been at the root of many of her

relationships shifting at the time.

Heather said that all of the other teachers in that block, with the exception of those

made surplus, were very young teachers. The four exceptions were: a teacher who was on

180

an exchange, another who expected to be declared surplus but was not, a third who was best friends with the principal, and a fourth who taught both junior high and elementary classes. She indicated that these were the teachers, excluding the one on exchange, who were targets for her immediate anger and distrust shortly after "Black Tuesday." She also believed that one of these teachers may have been responsible for pipelining information to the principal.

Following a hallway conversation with one of the other surplus teachers two days after "Black Tuesday," Heather indicated that she believed that one of the non-surplus teachers had gone to the principal to share the contents of this private conversation. She indicated that she was shocked by, what appeared to her to be, a new behaviour in her school:

> We never had this feeling before this, before being introduced to our current people in head office. I never, in all those years, had the feeling that I couldn't say something that I really felt, as long as it did not, of course, malign someone or slander them or something. We always felt open enough to be able to at least express how we felt and thought and what kind of changes we would like to see and that sort of thing. We got along so well that I never ever had that feeling of betrayal.

She also said that this conversation was personal and heated, hurt and defiant:

> I was having, what I considered to be nobody else's business, a very personal conversation with one of these people that I've mentioned. I was very upset. It was probably a day or two after Black Tuesday. I was saying that I felt betrayed. Did he feel betrayed? Yes, he did. He said to me, 'You're not thinking of resigning are you?' And I said, 'Well, it definitely crossed my mind.' But I said, 'It won't be without making a big noise first. If that does happen, there would be a big noise first.' I said that I distrusted my administration at this point and various other things. Anyway, I was overhead by someone because in our school, the way the school was built, if you are talking in the hallway, your voice carries all the way down the hallway.

181

Shortly after this conversation, Heather said that she was called into the principal's office and there was a very heated conversation. She also said that she only "reined in her horns" when "the implication was that I had slandered him in some way. You know, that I had been unprofessional. And I said, 'What's unprofessional?'" On top of being declared surplus, Heather said that this incident came as an added shock: "I had visions of ATA people running all around. I could just see it coming down the pipe."

Following this experience, she said that hallway relationships disappeared from her square of the school. She indicated that the surplus teachers went 'underground' and began to meet in Terry's office. As well, she said, "I would often have long conversations on the phone at night instead." She indicated that the school landscape appeared to have become very dangerous for her and the other surplus teachers:

> From then on, I became very tight-lipped. I said to my principal, 'Well, you'll never hear another word from me.' I seldom, for the rest of the year, said things in any staff meetings. I seldom went to the staff room. I seldom went to the office unless I absolutely had to go for supplies or equipment. I used to arrive in the morning, go directly to the photo copy room, photocopy whatever I needed, go directly to my room, and if I hung out with anybody, it was likely with my friend or one of the surplus people. I, perhaps, would go to her room or one of their rooms and have a little chat.

Because they appeared to be isolated even further now, Heather indicated that the bond between the five surplus teachers continued to grow. Even today, she said that while she was the only one of the five left teaching, the others having moved away or retired, the bond was still there:

> We still have a special bond. I can't explain it, but here's an example: Let's say one of the teachers was to say to me, 'Oh, Heather, is it safe to say that shit flows downhill?' I'd reply, 'Oh, yeah, and I'm still at the bottom.' Or one of the others might say, 'So what new initiatives are you supposed to put up with now? What

182

band wagon are they on now, Heather? What's the new thing?' And I'll just laugh and say, 'Oh, well, it's such and such or whatever but I just do my own thing anyway.'

Heather indicated that her mistrust of most of the teachers who were not declared surplus in her square continues today. The only exception were the teacher who was on exchange and the teacher who expected to be made surplus but was not. Heather said that the second teacher had a similar transfer experience with the new district administration a year after "Black Tuesday." His experience served to strengthen their relationship.

Heather indicated that the other teachers in the school who were not in the junior high wing appeared not to be supportive of her. She indicated that some made little comments to her friend, Terry: "'Is she going to stay angry forever? Why isn't she just happy to have a job?' to which Terry would reply, 'Well, if she knew what job she would be going to, perhaps she wouldn't be so angry and bitter right now.'"

She also said "I was bitter and angry towards the people who were transferred into my school and yet I was made surplus. I also did not accept the people that were teaching options." I couldn't see "that those positions were any more important than what I was teaching for I had been teaching some options too, all those years." I understood that we needed specialty teachers for French Immersion, "so the people that were sort of slotted into those positions, I was able to accept that okay."

Heather said that this incident had a profound effect upon her relationships with the other teachers:

> I never got asked to go for coffee. I didn't get any phone calls from any of those people. I got phone calls from the other people who had been made surplus but I didn't get any of those people phoning. I said to my surplus buddies at different

183

occasions and to my friend, 'I felt as though someone had died.' I still get emotional as you can see, because I was the one who had died. The pleasure I felt in going to work every day died, absolutely died. So it's taken me quite a few years to get so I like to go to school again.

Heather also indicated that her relationship with her principal was damaged tremendously. She regretted this because she had always had such a special relationship with him prior to the restructuring. She said that he was the person who "pushed the gender envelope in the school" to get her into the math department:

> I was a fledgling math teacher at that time. Math had been the type of subject in this district that it seems that if you're a woman, they often didn't give you to teach for whatever reason. If you're a math person, you probably should be a man first. So I actually had to wait quite a few years to get into math. It was my principal who got me into math and then made me the math department head when he became the principal. I felt like one of the boys, to be honest with you. Don't forget that almost all the junior high were men. I was one of the very few junior high women in that junior high, but I was one of the boys, most definitely.

As we reflected upon her story, we came to the conclusion that perhaps this was why she had focused her anger upon him. It appears that her principal was the gatekeeper who opened a door of opportunity to her. He also included her in the "boys' club."

Heather said that she and her principal had always had a "fiery" relationship: "I felt I was standing up for the rights of all of us on staff. I still do, but I would imagine that there are several out there who would tell you that I'm a little bit rebellious, yeah." She said they often argued but still had a close relationship prior to this incident. She described the teachers in the junior high wing: "We were rebels in those days, my dear. The power was in the junior high end." She said that she felt that she belonged in those days.

Following this incident, she said she did not feel as though she belonged. Even

184

after her transfer was rescinded, she indicated that things did not go back to the way they were before. She said that many of her relationships with the other teachers were strained as was her relationship with her principal.

Imagining a New Story   Heather indicated that she began to live out a new story of teaching as a result of this incident:

> I didn't trust anybody, Barb. I think I felt, 'Well, they can take this away just as easily as they took away my twenty years of experience by putting me on the surplus list.'

This comment suggests that Heather had imagined herself having a powerless teaching life where trust and safety had become serious issues. In the sequel, Heather appears to work hard to ensure that her professional competence can never be questioned again as she protects herself from danger on the landscape in her new life as a teacher.

Heather's Story Continues

I have very few close relationships in the school today. While I think the other teachers respect me, I also think they're afraid of me. There's a new social crowd in the school. One of the teachers in this group was a young teacher in our square when all this happened. I was angry that these young teachers seemed to be taking our places, so my relationship with her and others became very strained. Now, when this group has social activities,

> I don't get included. She and her husband, periodically have people over and suffice it to say that if you don't get invited, you're not part of the group. All right? And I don't get invited, so I think that speaks for itself.

185

I've had a hard time getting past this because "I'm very distrustful still":

> There's still a certain bitterness I feel with some of the other people who had been on that original staff with me but who were not made surplus because it just seems they're never ever was the same closeness anymore. The same understanding of things. I felt, and still do, that there was a great amount of preferential treatment shown to those who were personal friends of our principal. And I still believe that.

Most of the older teachers are now gone and my friend retired a couple of years after this incident. My closest confidant is my teaching assistant who works with me in my room. "She is way more loyal and trustworthy and empathetic than people I taught with for twenty years. She is absolutely wonderful." Sometimes I do things with her and her children after school:

> We generally go for supper at least once a week. She has two little kids; we take them too. The tea pot -- that's from her kids. Various little things you see sitting around in my kitchen here, they're from her. She's forever giving me gifts.

Also, the new vice principal comes around to see how I'm doing every so often and "the little French teacher, she's a very nice person and she and I have become close." With the exception of these three people, however, I haven't any other close relationships. "I don't go out of my way to collect friends." You know, as I think about this story, my teacher aide and my new vice principal are "a little bit" like my old friend and my old vice principal, although I think "those were pretty big shoes to fill."

It's hard to look back at what I used to have in my school before this conflict happened. Then, "We worked together; we played together; we drank together. It wasn't the whole school. It was just the core cluster. I felt like one of the boys." Now, "I, essentially, go into school every day, work hard, and do my own thing. I don't sign up for a lot of committees anymore. I will, however, be persuaded to do things."

186

Central office tried to transfer me again a few years after that first story but the parents and my new principal went to bat for me, so that didn't happen. Maybe I'm paranoid or something, but since my transfer was stopped that time, there have been several embarrassing mistakes with my pay stubs not reaching my school, and forms that needed to be filled out going missing. These mistakes have become a school joke: "What else is going to happen to Heather?" Sometimes people from central office wander around our school, so I have to see them. They even came to my class last year because my provincial test results were pretty high.

> When I found out that the school board and superintendents were coming to our school and that they were coming to my classroom, specifically to watch me teach a grade nine math lesson, I wasn't so nervous as distrustful. I wondered, 'Now which way was this going to be used against me? What will there be that they won't like that will be used against me?'

Maybe others think it's funny, "but you see, it has created such a distrust that I could go either way with it. One day I could tell you that they're out to get me and another day I could say, "No." So, it's not as if the surplus story was the only thing that has happened to me with central office; it was just the worst thing.

Imagining New Possibilities

Wheatley and Kellner-Rodgers (1996) say of organizations and relationships: "A system is knowable only as itself. It is irreducible. We can't disentangle the effects of so many relationships. The connections never end. They are impossible to understand by analysis" (side three, taped version). From differing perspectives, relationships, are understood in different ways.

187

The following chapter offers some of my thoughts about the teachers' relationships as I bring my experience, my story, to bear on the stories of my co-researchers. In this chapter I return to Lugones (1987) to bring the concept of "worlds" together with my thoughts about relationships and "border crossings" following times of conflict in schools. My thoughts offer some possibilities to consider for restorying teachers' relationships in the future.

188

Loving Perception

"Gopal was definitely weakening and taking terrible spills. Without so much as an
exchange of a word, Kusang took Gopal's doko. I took back my pack, but Gopal
continued to have some nasty falls because my running shoes had little tread compared
with our hiking boots. Kusang carrying fifty lbs. was very strong and hiked on ahead.
The sky lightened further and suddenly there was much shouting behind me.
I turned around to see the sun hitting the top of Dhaulagiri. It was fantastic.
Gottfried was shouting, 'I'm so happy. It's so beautiful!' I felt like crying. I was
overwelmed by the beauty, the silence, the isolation and the incredible humanity of
Kusang's action in lifting the doko from Gopal and trudging on."
(Kvill Oct 29, 1997)

Annapurna Sanctuary
and Circuit Trek
Landrung, Nepal
Thursday, Oct. 09 / 97
Hiking Day 02
Photo by: Larry Calloway   189

CHAPTER 7

THINKING ABOUT THE TEACHERS' STORIES

Do any of us truly comprehend our organizations? If we look at our efforts to change them, we see mostly failure. For almost half a century, we have been trying to influence organizations. We still don't know how organizations change. We only know that they do. Many intelligent and good-hearted people have been involved in these quests. Our failures are not due to lack of ability or concern. When there is so much failure in the hands of such skilled people, it can only mean that we are seeking answers in the wrong places. Collecting more details or enforcing greater rigour still won't reveal wisdom. We have to journey to a different world and see our organizations with new eyes. We have to learn that we live in a world of emergence. When we join together, new capacities will always greet us. (Wheatley & Kellner-Rodgers, 1996, side three, taped edition)

Loving Perception and Border Crossings

Frye in Lugones (1987) "says that the loving eye is 'the eye of one who knows that to know the seen, one must consult something other than one's own will and interests and fears and imagination'" (p. 8). Lugones indicates that she agrees "as long as I do not understand Frye to mean that I should not consult my own interests nor that I should exclude the possibility that my self and the self of the one I love may be importantly tied to each other in many complicated ways" (p. 8).

I wonder if we are "consulting our own interests" in situations where those we love "ignore us, ostracize us, render us invisible, stereotype us, leave us completely alone, interpret us as crazy. All of this *while we are in their midst*" *(p. 7)*. Lugones suggests that in these types of relationships, she feels that "their world and their integrity do not require me at all" (p. 7). She further indicates that "There is no sense of self-loss in them

190

for my own lack of solidity. But they rob me of my solidity through indifference, an indifference they can afford and which seems studied" (p. 7). It is in these situations and in these relationships that Lugones suggests we perceive others "arrogantly in their turn" (p. 5).

As I think about the teacher co-researchers, I wonder how "arrogant perception" may have affected their "understanding of life's complexities" in their stories. In Heather's story, for example, I believe that she "learned" a way of being that limits possibilities for her to create healthy, positive relationships with others in the future. In this respect, her experiences could be considered miseducative. I wonder if this is not also so, in some respects, for Jeannie and Melissa. All three of these teachers, understandably so, appear to have created enormous "borders" which they may feel protect themselves from such conflict. It appears that they were "taught to perceive arrogantly" (p. 4) by their experiences and have responded with "arrogant perception" as a result of their experiences. I wonder if, in this respect, their experiences were educative or miseducative.

I also wonder whether it is coincidental that the three teachers with experience appeared to have created the most enormous "borders." It appears that Jeannie, Heather and Melissa as teachers of experience could not find Argyris' "perfect fit" within their organizations (in Hodgkinson, 1991, p. 81). All three of these teachers had issues of concern which they shared openly with others at the beginning of their stories. They indicated that they spoke out at meetings about management issues they disagreed with prior to the events that occurred. Each of these three teachers also said that she had

191

approached management with her issues of concern. None apparently saw the "chain of command" as an obstruction to expressing their views. And yet, while these were the teachers with experience, they were also the teachers whose relationships appeared to shift the most, particularly with respect to others from central office. Their experiences made "border crossings" difficult.

As I think about my own story, I wonder if I have "learned" a way of being that makes "border crossings" with others difficult for me. As I think about the barriers I have constructed around myself and the responses I have made in the past, I can see that they may have discouraged "border crossings." I know that I have done these things to protect myself, and yet, I believe that I may have also stopped "world travelling" with some others because of my need. I also believe that the "loving perception" I once had has turned, in some cases, to "arrogant perception" as a result of the experiences I have had. I know that I did not always feel a need to protect "my self." When I was a young teacher, I recall being open and trusting. I recall looking at others who supervised me with "loving perception." I was in awe of the processes of education and felt that others with more experience knew so much more than I did.

David and Jennifer were both relatively new teachers when the conflict in their stories occurred. David was in his sixth year of teaching; Jennifer was just finishing her first. Neither appeared to have any clear understanding of the formal structures within their organization at the time. David said he was more focused upon his job and social activities with his friends. Jennifer was expecting a baby and wanted to ensure that her job would be intact when she returned. None of their relationships with other teachers

appeared to be affected by the conflict within their stories.

As I grew as a teacher, I began to rely more upon my own beliefs about what education was from my own experiences, past and present. I began to voice my beliefs more, believing that open and honest conversation was supported even though my beliefs were sometimes discounted and my experiential knowledge sometimes denied. I believe that I still loved "my self" and "consulted my own interests" all the while, consulting "something other than my own will and interests and fears and imagination." I still had not yet come to see others with "arrogant perception" because I believed that by using my voice, I could "cross borders" to them. They might see me with "loving perception" in my "world" just as I tried to see them this way in theirs.

It was only after I began to have experiences that ran contrary to my beliefs about people and about natural justice, fairness and equality, that I recall feeling a need to construct walls around me. I believe that my voice changed as I began to see others with "arrogant perception." I became guarded and defensive as "my own will and interests and fears and imagination'" took hold, replacing the "loving perception" I once had. I know that these experiences were miseducative for me. They did not serve to further my personal practical knowledge of what education is. They served only to strengthen my beliefs about what relationships were not. This is when I believe that "border crossings" became very difficult for me; they remain so today.

Of all of us, David appears most able to see the people in his story "with loving perception." In spite of his experiences, he seems able to retain the ability to step into another's "world" without making judgements that lock the other into a specific

193

characterization. Nor does it appear that David has been locked into any specific characterization by others. His experiences could be considered educative in this respect. Jennifer also appears able to reflect back, with the exception of one relationship, to see others in her story with "loving perception." I wonder what this says about some of the experiences teachers live and how they come to bear upon our ability to see others in their "worlds."

It appears that some of us have "learned" about "the hostility of 'these' worlds" (p. 3) instead of having experiences that open possibilities for "border crossings." As I think about David's story, however, I wonder if it must always be this way. Lugones indicates: "To the extent that we learn to perceive others arrogantly or come to see them only as products of arrogant perception and continue to perceive them that way, we fail to identify with them --fall in love with them--in this particularly deep way" (p. 4).

Playfulness in Our Work

"Playfulness is characterized by uncertainty, lack of self-importance, absence of rules or a not taking of rules as sacred, a not worrying about competence and a lack of abandonment to a particular construction of oneself, other's and one's relations to them" (p. 17). The stories in this inquiry indicate that some teachers have been taught not to be playful in their work. "Assimilation is the destruction of other people's worlds" (p. 16). Heather, for example, appears to be "someone who has had the fun constructed out of her" by her experiences (p. 15). I wonder how it is possible to create meaningful relationships with others when we have had the playfulness constructed out of us and out

194

of our "worlds?"

As I think about my own story, I believe that my trust in others is integral to my "loving perception" of them and my safety is integral to the "loving playfulness" I live in my work, although neither appears to be mutually exclusive of the other. I believe that we are all "creative beings" who learn "loving perception" through "loving playfulness" (p. 16). I believe that we must be playful to find meaning and expression in our work and in our "worlds." I also believe that we must be able to be playful in the "worlds" of others if we are to understand them and they to understand us. I wonder how it is possible to perceive others with "loving perception" if we cannot perceive them as playful both in their "world" and in ours.

Understanding each other with "loving perception" is the beginning of all good relationships. When our relationships are not built with "loving perception," we do great harm to one another. Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996) talk about this problem:

> Because we haven't understood organizations, we have hurt one another deeply. We joined together to accomplish a purpose; we spun intricate webs of relationships and a system emerged. But then, what happened if we disliked what emerged. How did we respond? Usually we turned on one another. We singled out one leader, one team, a few troubling individuals. We thought if we changed them or got rid of them, our problems would be solved. How many people have been terrorized by this endless search for scapegoats? For all the terror, how often have we succeeded in changing organizations by changing individuals? This approach to change is just another dark Darwinistic shadow. (Wheatley & Kellner-Rodgers, 1996, side three, taped edition)

Conclusion

It appears that as trust decreased for some of us, we began to see others with

195

"arrogant perception." Our "we-they thinking" appears to have increased incrementally when this occurred. We stopped seeing others with "loving perception." For personal safety, we put up barricades that blocked possible "border crossings." And yet, "without knowing the other's 'world,' one does not know the other, and without knowing the other one is really alone in the other's presence because the other is only dimly present to one" (Lugones, 1987, p. 18). As I look back at our experiences, I see the barriers and blocked "border crossings" limiting our future possibilities for relationship-building with others, and yet, I understand why they are there. Perhaps our stories will inspire others to consider new imaginings for relationships that include two-way "loving perception," relationships that support "border crossings" while strengthening connections across "worlds."

In the following chapter I reflect upon my experiences as a narrative researcher as I consider the problems I encountered. I also explore how my experiences have affected me today as well as possibilities for where I might go in the future.

Looking Forward
to Future Possibilities

"If we can be in our world in the fullness
of our humanity, what are we capable of?
If we are free to play, to experiment and discover,
if we are free to fail, what might we create?"
(Wheatley & Kellner - Rodgers, 1996)

Arafura Sea
Woijteich Jacobson
and Barbara Spilchuk
SV. Concordia
Oct 26/99   197

CHAPTER 8

REFLECTIONS

Problems

Wheatley (1999) paraphrases John Shay's thoughts about storying telling with:

When we are in despair, when our institutions are crumbling, when the contribution that we wanted to make can't be made, when we realize that our ideals will not be fulfilled, when we realize that the darkness is gathering around us, he said, at that time we do a distinctly human thing. We sit around together and we tell stories of God. We tell stories of suffering and of undeserved grace. We tell stories of terror and we tell stories of light and we do this because we don't seem to have any other choice. It is the only thing we can do, telling stories of God, to comfort ourselves and to hold out hope. (taped version, side two)

Living the narrative experience has had a profound influence upon my life. I initially found it to be a very trying experience. Separating my story from the stories of the principal co-researchers was often a very difficult task for me to accomplish as the lines between our "worlds" blurred. I began to accept that the space where I would live during my research with them would be on the interface between their stories and mine. During this period, I began to understand about "living on a knife edge" as a narrative researcher. There were periods during this part of my journey when I had to step away from my work; the knife edge became too sharp.

During one of these periods, I made the decision to remove the stories we, the principals and I, had written together of our experiences. They distracted me from my purpose, that being the teachers' stories of relationships. Having come to this decision, I was finally able to focus more clearly upon the teachers' stories. I remember thinking,

198

"It's no wonder that teacher stories have been overlooked for so long." Even with a clear and stated focus, my interest in the principals' stories had continually overridden my passionate desire to hear what the teachers had to say. I wondered how much easier it was for others, then, without a stated purpose, to stay deaf to their secret stories.

A three-month hiatus gave me space to live with the teachers' stories before I began further analysis of the stories we, the teachers and I, had written together. When I returned to my field texts following this break, I realized that my interpretations had not done justice to the possibilities that emerged. I also realized that my research texts would require a complete overhaul.

I began with my own story in Chapter 2. While I had begun to understand by this point that my own story was the driving force behind my coming to narrative and to this inquiry, much of what I had written was not important in the grand scheme of things. If my story was essential, then I must find a way to tell it in ways that storied me as a person with past and present, being shaped by the contexts within which I have lived, as well as one who is thinking about future possibilities. My past included my life before I became a principal. I reentered this part of my life, searching for my narrative unities. This reexploration began to open up possibilities I had not seen.

I soon found that I was jumping backwards and forwards through the chapters as insights I had about other connections emerged. From this point on, my computer screen scrolled up and down from one chapter to another. I began to see events as story episodes that crossed space, place and time rather than separated segments. These connections prompted me to move temporally from past to "living in the midst" of my

199

story. I moved my research texts and poetry around, dropping some pieces and adding others. I did the same with my journal entries and those of my sister.

As I reflected upon the teachers' stories, I began to see other possibilities. Much of what the teachers said had eluded me until I found a way to place my own story in perspective. Now, the literature became critical. It served to build connections across our "worlds" as my referenced authorities offered possibilities for understanding the events, issues and relationships within all of our stories.

What had appeared at first to be a giant jigsaw puzzle with many small pieces of similar shapes and sizes from several different lives, now appeared to be an intricate web spinning outwards into one puzzle that kept shifting and changing. My self talk must have sounded scattered and disorganized: "Chapters One and Three. Okay. Move to Chapter Four. Ya. Back to Chapter One; I forgot this. Okay, but now I have to move ahead to Chapter Five to make the connection. Hmmm. Does it fit with Chapter Two?" I began to understand that living the narrative research experience cannot be organized into any rigid format. My research "plan" became messy and complex just as the living of our lives and the connections between those lives is.

At some point, the puzzle began to take shape even though the picture appeared to continue to shift "in the midst" of my living. Finally, however, I had words that seemed to describe the puzzle picture. These words offer some possibilities to consider about the relationships of teachers on the landscape of schools during conflict that follows a principal's public act of resistance.

Wonders

"Only possibilities?" you ask. "There's no one answer that is right, but many answers that might work. Life explores all sorts of combinations content to find anything that works" (Wheatley &Kellner-Rogers, 1996, side one, taped version). Stories are only about possibilities and from differing perspectives these possibilities may change.

There are ten co-researchers' perspectives included in this inquiry including mine. My sister, Pat, offers another. My critical friends, including my advisor, offer several more. Each of us is an individual. There are many more points of view which I have not taken into account in this inquiry, but then, that's another story. There are no definitive answers in this inquiry, only possibilities to consider.

It appears that the more questions I asked within this inquiry, the more wonders I was left with:

> Does such tinkering make life appear indifferent, relativistic, crassly opportunistic or does it reveal life's delight in exploration, in discovering what's possible. Tinkering opens us to what's possible in the moment. Analytic plans drive us to what we think we already know." (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1996, side one taped version)

Some of those wonders may offer possibilities for future research. David's story, for example, made me wonder if there might be differences in the stories male teachers tell of conflict on their school landscapes as compared to the stories female teachers tell. I also wondered how a predominantly male staff might affect how those stories are lived out for both genders. As a result of hearing Jeannie's story, I wondered about the stories of the relationships of teacher leaders. I also wondered about the positioning of teacher leaders, both on the school landscape and the landscape of schools. Jennifer's story prompted me

201

to wonder about other young female teacher stories on the landscape. Heather and

Jeannie's stories presented two different views of the "inner circle." I began to wonder

about other stories of teachers who had lived in this place on the landscape. Melissa's

story left me wondering about other teachers' stories of "watching" and "caution." Might

they better inform us about safety on the school landscape? I wondered if this "watching"

was connected to the feeling of shame Melissa experienced or to the "watching" others

might have done of her. I wondered about the frequency of "watching" and what that

meant. In fact, I wondered about the whole phenomena of teacher "watching" and about

the stories that might better inform us about this behaviour. The stories told by Jeannie,

Heather and Melissa gave me cause to wonder about the motives of teachers who

appeared to "pipeline" to their central office. These stories of "moles" within the stories

of conflict had me questioning the issue of powerlessness for teachers. Did these teachers

who appeared to "pipeline," use this tactic to get power or because they felt powerless

without this connection to others with more power? Are some teachers more susceptible

to "pipelining?" What might we learn from the stories of teachers who do, in fact,

"pipeline?" This whole power issue threatened, as did the principals' stories, to divert me

from my purpose in this study.

Heather's story caused me to wonder about how it is that each of us interprets the

acts made of others within the context of the experiences we live. There appears to be a

substantial difference between Heather's understanding of her principal's acts and the

situation and her principal's understanding of his acts and the situation. In particular,

while the principal spoke of having "resisted" by supporting the teachers publicly, Heather

202

did not perceive him to have done this. Heather's story was the one that highlighted for me how it is that our understanding of our experiences can shape our individual stories in such unique ways. While Heather and her principal were living in the same school, at the same time, their experiences were different. Their understanding of the context and the content of the situation were different, and their knowledge and understanding of the principal's acts were different.

> When we ask people to tell us their story, we start with the assumption that no two stories will be the same. We agree with the understanding that no two people see the world the same...There's no one interpretation; there's no single cause and effect. There's your story from where you sit in the complex system. There's my story from where I sit in the complex system and then there are all those millions of others. (Wheatley, July 4-9, 1999, taped version)

Our individual lives and stories are shaped by our understanding of our lived experiences, concurrently as the lives and stories of others with whom we have relationships are being shaped by their understanding of their experiences. Our shaping is not the same because our understandings are affected by our past experience, our present situationedness and our imaginings for future possibilities. This is what makes our lives and our stories unique. Wheatley goes on to offer the following for consideration:

> Now if we were to sit together to tell stories we might, I believe, begin to grasp the complexity of our organization, the complexity of our life, the complexity of our community.

I wonder what might have occurred had Heather and her principal taken the opportunity to sit together and tell their stories to each other following this incident that so affected their lives.

> I have come to the conclusion that life is full of possibilities, particularly when it

comes to telling our stories and living new stories that emerge. Storying in community

has opened up new imaginings for me to consider in restorying myself as a

principal-teacher. My sister helps me to describe how I feel about my experience as a

narrative researcher:

> The walk from Namche to the river is beautiful and open with incredible views up toward Everest and back down the Dudh Kosi toward Lukla. And all around are fabulous peaks. The most beautiful one, to my mind, is Ama Dablam. Just around the corner from Namche, this beautiful two-coned peak, like a mother and daughter, can be seen far in the distance toward Everest. More spectacular than Everest, this peak was to become part of our world for the next five days. Even now, so far away from Nepal, the thought of this peak fills my heart with joy. To me it symbolizes everything good and beautiful about this country. (Pat Kvill, journal entry, Sunday, November 16, 1997 - Hiking Day 5).

Learning to Listen and Hear

As I progressed through my research, I felt myself changing. I found myself

listening more carefully and hearing the stories that other people tell. I would think to

myself, "I wonder how this story shaped who this person has become today." Every so

often, if I listened, I could hear the change in myself while talking to others: "I think your

story is continuing to change with the new experiences you are living." or "I think you

have learned from the stories you have lived." I have also begun to notice that the stories

we share lead into other stories, and that our stories change because we have rewritten

them with each new telling.

I have thought about this change. Often I recognize it when I am talking with my

mother, my father, my sister or my brother. The recognition also comes during

conversations with my husband, my friends, my teachers and other staff members. I

204

believe that it is the narrative experience that has brought about this change in me. I recognize that there are layers within the stories I hear. I have begun to understand that stories are not flat pages in a book. They are influenced by past and present and they are always changing "in the midst" as we look towards future possibilities.

Two weeks ago I received a call from my son, Graig. He gave me a running commentary of his life in college in Lethbridge. His stories were about searching for ways to ensure that "wrongs" were righted in situations he believed to be "unfair." He was passionate about his stories. I was taken aback for a moment. Those stories sounded so familiar and so unlike my gentle boy. I wondered if he felt me in his "world." We talked about his stories, what they meant within the context of his experiences, and possibilities for restorying his stories in the future. The next night he was passionate about the sequels; his stories had changed from his first tellings. They now included our thoughts, storied together during our first conversation. The next night they had changed even further. The contexts within which our lives are shaped also shape our stories.

This change has also included a recognition of my narrative unities and how they weave my stories together into my life story. I have begun to understand what I am doing here. Now it is time to think about possibilities of where I might go in the future.

My Narrative Unities

What called me to teaching? What called me to the principalship? What prompted me to walk away from a school on a bright sunny day? What is there about my poetry that is so uniquely me? As I look back to my childhood, I can see the events in my life

205

connecting me to my mother and my father and every other person I have met along the way. I believe that my narrative unities have been shaped not only by my experiences, but also by the relationships I have had within the context of those experiences. The patterns in my life have become clearer. I wonder if the experiences we, my son and I, have had, as well as the strong relationship we have built together, has had any influence on the strands connecting his life story together.

I recently took out my letters of resistance written to others and began to look at them through my narrative lenses. All of them told stories of teachers in the schools where I have lived. All of them storied relationships between those teachers and with others on the landscape of schools. They recorded the principles I lived by then. Frozen in time and captured in historic artifacts, my stories wove my narrative unities together across time, place and space.

A lot of water has run under the bridge in eight years. As I look back, I can see that while my principles have not changed much, my story has. Today, while I sit in the same chair, wearing the same hat, as I have for the past eight years as a principal, I now reflect upon the many voices I have heard as I write my storied letters to others. The voices of my co-researchers, of my referenced authorities, of my teachers and of those who teach me have blended together with my own voices as principal, teacher, learner, researcher, colleague, observer, participant and "world traveller" in my writing. Yes, I am different today. Now, I am always imagining new possibilities for where I might go in the future:

206

In our exploration of what's possible, we are led to search for new and different partners. Who we become together will always be different that who we were alone. Our range of creative expression increases as we join with others. New relationships create new capacities. (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1996, taped version, side one)

It is my hope that through and with these voices, others may begin to imagine new possibilities for teachers, their relationships and their stories, when conflict comes to the landscape following a principal's public act of resistance.

Conclusion

I find life to be full of inconsistencies when it comes to telling teacher stories and finding safe places to tell them. Miller (in Schubert and Ayers, 1992, p. 20) discusses her frustration at finding spaces to tell teacher stories of practice: "I longed for the kinds of spaces represented by that third-period planning room, where we could tell our stories amid the bustle of daily teaching activities but also where, over time, we could examine the themes and patterns that emerged from our constant storytelling." For her, these opportunities offer possibilities for teachers to tell stories that might influence "the standard hierarchical and technical-rational approaches and interpretations of our roles as teachers into reciprocal, equitable and collaborative forms" (p. 21). Miller indicates that teachers "want not only to be able to engage in decision-making activities in our school contexts, which seem to be the current reductionist interpretation of teacher empowerment, but also to be able to examine educational situations and relationships that overtly or covertly oppress certain individuals or groups of people" (p. 21).

Greene (1994) suggests that only through building inclusive relationships within

207

our communities will the validation of all voices become possible: "Surely we can affirm

and reaffirm the value of principles like justice and equality and freedom and commitment

to human rights, because without these we cannot even call for the decency of welcoming

and inclusion" (p. 25).

It is the 'looking forward' at the shifting puzzle, as I live "in the midst" of today,

that has given me the courage to look back at my yesterday stories. The today stories of

principal resistance and shifting relationships of teachers are still out there. We need only

find places to hear those stories and then validate the voices telling them with our listening

and our imagining.

> So I would invite you into this messy, complex, scary, hopeful world. I would
> invite you in to be together. I would invite you in to learn from the flowers. I
> would invite us all in to stay light and not take this too seriously. And more than
> anything I would invite us to turn to one another and to share our stories and to
> listen to those stories with an opening heart because that's my sense of how we
> can move through this time, by turning to one another and really listening to the
> wisdom and the creativity that is in every one of us. (Wheatley, 1999, taped
> version, side two)

This has been a journey. It has taken me to many "worlds." This journey leaves

me with hope for the future as I imagine the possibilities:

> If we can be in our world in the fullness of our humanity, what are we capable of?
> If we are free to play, to experiment and discover, if we are free to fail, what might
> we create? What could we accomplish if we stop trying to structure the world into
> existence? What could we accomplish if we worked with life's natural tendency to
> organize? Who could we be if we found a simpler way? (Wheatley &
> Kellner-Rogers, 1996, taped version, side one)

I believe that the possibilities become endless if only we can become the "friends of one

another's minds" (Greene in Witherell and Noddings, 1991, p. xi).

208

Life Itself is a Journey

" My foray in her world is but a sketch in my life but still I etch
a place in mine for her and then the life lines redefine..."

"For a time I pretended that I was a brave solo woman trekker and I
thoroughly enjoyed the knowledge that this hike could be done alone."
(Kvill, Oct. 30, 1997)

Annapurna Sanctuary
and Circuit Trek
Tatopani, Nepal
Crossing the Kali Gandaki
Monday, Oct. 20 / 97
Hiking Day 13
Photo by: Larry Calloway   209

References

Adams, A. (1992). *Bullying at work - How to confront and overcome it.* London,

UK: Virago.

Aoki, T. (April/May, 1986). Teaching as In-dwelling Between Two Curriculum Worlds.

The B.C. Teacher. In T. Aoki, *Inspiriting curriculum and pedagogy: Talks to*

teachers. (pp. 7-10). University of Alberta.

Aoki, T. (April 15, 1987). Principals as managers: An incomplete view. Unpublished

notes by Ted Aoki sent to Mrs. Elsie McMurphie, president of the BC Teachers'

Federation. In T. Aoki, *Inspiriting curriculum and pedagogy: Talks to teachers.*

(p. 11). University of Alberta.

Aoki, T. (June, 1988). Layered voices of teaching: The uncannily correct and the elusively

true. *Education New Brunswick.* In T. Aoki, *Inspiriting curriculum and*

pedagogy: Talks to teachers. (pp.1-6). University of Alberta.

Barth, R. (1991). *Improving schools from within.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Bateson, M. (1989). *Composing a life.* Toronto, ON: Plume/Penguin.

Belenky, M., Clinchy, B., Goldberger, N. &Tarule, J. (1986). *Women's ways of knowing:*

The development of self, voice and mind. New York, NY: Basic Books,

Harper/Collins.

Bender, P. (1997). *Improving leadership from within.* Toronto, ON: Stoddart Publishing

Co. Ltd.

Bloom, A. (1980). *Annapurna: A woman's place.* San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books.

Bosetti, L. (1996). Teacher evaluation as pedagogic opportunity: A case for portfolio

assessment. *Canadian Administrator*, 35(8), 1-11.

Burron, K. (1993). Professional portfolios: A new approach to teacher evaluation.

Reading Manitoba. XIII(1).

Campbell, D., Cignetti, P., Melenyzer, B., Nettles, D. & Wyman, R. (1997). *How to*

develop a professional portfolio - A manual for teachers. Toronto, ON: Allyn

and Bacon.

Casey, K. (1992). Why do progressive women activists leave teaching? Theory,

methodology and politics in life history. In I. Goodson (Ed.), *Studying*

teachers' lives. (pp. 187-208). London, ON: Routledge.

Chase, S. (1995). *Ambiguous empowerment: The work narratives of women school*

superintendents. Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press.

Chatwin, B. (1990). *What am I doing here*. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books.

Chomsky, N. (Spring 1999). From school to workplace, We're taught to obey,

conform. *Education Monitor*. 1(4), 7.

Clandinin, J. (1986). Rhythms in teaching: The narrative study of teacher's personal

practical knowledge of classrooms. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 2(4),

377-387.

Clandinin, J. (1993). *Searching for connections: Struggling for community: Collaborative*

research in teacher education. Edmonton: University of Alberta Publication

Services.

Clandinin, J. (1995). Stories of possibilities. *Early Childhood Education*. 28(2), 4-8.

211

Clandinin, J. & Connelly, M.(1994). Personal experience methods. In N.K. Denzin &

Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. (pp. 423-427). Thousand

Islands, CA: Sage.

Clandinin, J & Connelly, M. (1995). *Teachers' professional knowledge landscapes*. New

York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Clandinin, J. & Connelly, M. (1996). Teachers' professional knowledge landscapes:

Teacher stories-Stories of teachers-School stories-Stories of schools.

Educational Researcher. 25(3), 24-31.

Clandinin, J. & Connelly, M. (1997). Asking questions about telling stories. In C. Kridel

(Ed.), *Writing educational biography: Explorations in qualitative research*.

(pp. 202-209). New York, NY: Garland.

Clandinin, J. & Connelly, M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in

qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass Inc.

Clandinin, J., Davies, A., Hogan, P. and Kennard, B. (1993). *Learning to teach:

teaching to learn - Stories of collaboration in teacher education*. New York,

NY: Teachers College Press.

Clark, G. (1998). Writing as travel, or rhetoric on the road. *College Composition and

Communication*. 49(1), 9-23.

Connelly, M. & Clandinin, J. (1986). On narrative method, personal philosophy, and

narrative unities in the story of teaching. *Journal of Research in Science

Teaching*. 23(4), 293-310.

Connelly, M. & Clandinin. (1986a). Rhythms in teaching: The narrative study of teachers

personal practical knowledge of classrooms. *Teaching and Teacher Education.*

2(4), 377-387.

Connelly, M. & Clandinin, J. (1987). On narrative method, biography and

narrative unities in the study of teaching. *The Journal of Educational Thought.*

21(3), 130-137.

Connelly, M. & Clandinin, J. (1988). Studying teachers' knowledge of classrooms:

Collaborative research, ethics and the negotiation of narrative. *The Journal of*

Educational Thought. 22(2A), 269-282.

Connelly, M. & Clandinin, J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry.

Educational Researcher. 19(4), 2-13.

Connelly, M. & Clandinin, J. (1994) Telling teacher stories. *Teacher Education*

Quarterly. 21(1), 145-158.

Crites, S. (1971). The narrative quality of experience. *Journal of the American Academy*

of Religion. 39(3), 292-311.

Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y, (Eds.) (1994). *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* Thousands

Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Elbaz, F. (1991). Research on teachers' knowledge: The evolution of a discourse.

Journal of Curriculum Studies. 23(1), 1-19.

Fenstermacher, G. (1994). The knower and the known: The nature of knowledge in

research on teaching. *Review of Research in Education.* 20, 3-56.

Field, R. (1998). *Human behaviour in organization: A Canadian perspective.*

Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall Inc.

213

Field, T. (1996). *Bully in sight*. Oxfordshire, UK: Success Unlimited.

Florio-Ruane, S. (1997). To tell a new story: Reinventing narratives of culture, identity, and education. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*. 28(2), 152-162.

Greene, M. (1994). Epistemology and educational research: The influences of recent approaches of knowledge. *Review of Research in Education*. 20, 423-264.

Greene, M. (1994a). Multiculturalism, community, and the arts. In A. Dyson & C. Genishi (Eds.), *The need for story: Cultural diversity in classroom and community*. (pp. 11-27). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Greene, M. (1997). Exclusions and awakenings. In A. Neuman & P.L. Peterson (Eds.), *Learning from our lives: Women, research and autobiography in education*. (pp. 18-51). New York, NY: Teachers' College Press.

Greenfield, T. (1993). Organizations as talk, chance, action & experience (Ch. 3, pp. 53-73) and Reforming and reevaluating educational administration: When and whence cometh the phoenix? (Ch. 9, pp. 169-196). In Greenfield, T. & Ribbins, P. (Eds.), *Greenfield on educational administration: Towards a humane science*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Grimmett, P. & Erickson, G. (1988). *Reflection in teacher education*. Vancouver, BC: Pacific Educational Press.

Grumet, M. (1988). *Bitter milk: Women and teaching*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.

Hodgkinson, C. (1991). *Educational leadership: The moral art*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Holly, M. (1989). *Writing to grow: Keeping a personal-professional journal*. Portsmouth, NH: Reed Elsevier Inc.

Kvill, P. (1997). *Annapurna Sanctuary and Circuit Trek*. Unpublished journal. Internet site: http://www.compusmart.ab.ca/pkvill/annapurna/annapurna.htm.

Kvill, P. (1997a). *Everest - Parts I, II and III*. Unpublished journal. Internet site: http://www.compusmart.ab.ca/pkvill/everest/everest.htm.

LaBoskey, V. (1994). *Development of reflective practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Lambert, L., Collay, M., Dietz, M., Kent, K.& Richert, A. (1996). *Who will save our schools?* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press Inc.

Lieberman, A. & Miller, L. (1999). *Teachers - Transforming their world and their work*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers College Press.

Lopez, B. (1989). Landscape and narrative. *Crossing open ground*. (pp. 61-71). New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Lorde, A. (1984). Poetry is not a luxury. *Sister Outsider*. (pp. 36-39). Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press.

Lugones, Maria. (1987). Playfulness, "world"-travelling, and loving perception. *Hypatia*. 2(2), 3-19.

McCarthy, P., Sheehan, M. & Wilkie, W. (1996). *Bullying: From backyard to boardroom*. Alexandria, Australia: Millennium Books.

Morgan, G. (1993). *Imagination: The art of creative management*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Morgan, G. (1997). *Images of Organization*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Morris, V., Crowson, R., Porter-Gehrie, C. & Hurwitz, E. (1984). *Principals in action*. Columbus, OH: Bell & Howell.

Nettles, D. & Petrick, P. (1995). *Fastback - Portfolio development for preservice teachers*. Bloomingdale, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Ed. Foundation.

Noddings, N. (1986). Fidelity in teaching, teacher education, and research for teaching. *Harvard Educational Review*. 56(4), 496-510.

O'Laughlin, M. 1992). Engaging teachers in emancipatory knowledge construction. *Journal of Educational Thought*. 43(5), 336-346.

Paley, V.G. (1996). Talking to myself in a daily journal: Reflections of a kindergarten teacher. In C.P. Casavane & S. Schecter (Eds.), *On becoming a language educator*. (pp. 156-167). New York, NY: Erlbaum.

Qoyawayma, P. (1992). *No turning back: A Hopi Indian woman's struggle to live in two worlds*. Albaquerque, NM: The University of New Mexico Press.

Randall, P. (1996). *Adult bullying: Perpetrators and victims*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Reinharz, S. (1992). Conclusions (Ch. 13). In *Feminist methods in social research*. (pp. 240-269). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Schon, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Schon, D. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner: Toward a new design for teaching and learning in the professions*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Schon, D. (1991). *The reflective turn*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Schubert, W. & Ayers, W. (1992). *Teacher lore: Learning from our own experience*:

White Plains, NY: Longman Publishing Group.

Sergiovanni, T. (1991). *The principalship: A reflective practice perspective*. (2nd ed.).

Toronto, ON: Allyn & Bacon.

Sergiovanni, T. (1992). *Moral leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Setteducati, D. (1995). Portfolio self-assessment for teachers: A reflection on the

Farmingdale. *Journal of Staff Development*. 16(3), 2-5.

Siemens, H. (1994). Portfolios in context. *Journal of Home Economics*. XXXII(2).

Stewart, A. (1994). *What happens when seasoned teachers use portfolios*. Unpublished

master's thesis, University of Alberta.

Strike, K., Haller, E. & Soltis, J. (1988). *The ethics of school administration*. New York,

NY: Teacher's College Press.

Trinh, T. Mihn-Ha. (1989). *Woman, native, other: Writing postcoloniality and feminism*.

Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.

van Manen, M. (1984). Practising phenomenological writing. *Phenomenology and

Pedagogy*. 2(1), 36-69.

Wheatley, M. (1992). *Leadership and the new science*. San Francisco, CA:

Berrett-Koehler Pub. Inc.

Wheatley, M.(July 4-9, 1999). *Bringing life to change* (audio cassette). Unpublished

paper. Edmonton, AB: 8th International Conference on Thinking.

Wheatley, M. & Kellner-Rogers, M. (1996). *A simpler way* (audio cassette). Sausalito,

CA: Berrett-Koehler Press.

Witherell C. & Noddings, N. (1991). *Stories lives tell: Narrative and dialogue in education.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Wolf, K. (1991). The schoolteacher's portfolio: Issues in design, implementation and evaluation. *Phi Delta Kappan.* 73(7), 129-136.

Wolf, K. (March 1996). Developing an effective teaching portfolio. *Educational Leadership.* 34-37.

Wolf, K., Whinery, B. & Hagerty, P. (1995). Teaching portfolios and portfolio conversations for teacher educators and teachers. *Action in Teacher Education.* XVII(1), 30-39.

Wyatt, J. & Hare, C. (1997). *Work abuse: How to recognize and survive it.* Rochester, VA: Schenkman Books.

Zubizaretta, J. (Dec. 1994). Teaching portfolios and the beginning teacher. *Phi Delta Kappan.* 323-326.