

VI. Generativity in Four Acts: Introducing the Cast of Characters

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Having outlined the roles to be engaged in this play about generativity, it is time to further set the stage by introducing the men and women to whom we turn for insights and narratives about generativity and deep caring.

Consulting with and Coaching Mid-Life Clients

Our first source of narratives and insights come from the men and women with whom we have interacted over the past 30 years in our work as consultants and coaches to individuals and organizations. Our clients have told us a great deal about their own lives and the challenges they face. While we hope to have been of use to these men and woman (who are usually in their 40s, 50s, and 60s), we have also learned much from them as gifted and insightful leaders, innovators, and creators. We have drawn extensively in this book from them. Some of these narratives are reported in three books and articles we have written: *In Our Fifties* (Bergquist, Klaum and Greenberg,), *Men of Autumn* (Bergquist,2012) and *The Social and Cultural Characteristics of Generational Age Groups* (Quehl, 2012)

The Enduring Couples Project

Our second source of insights and narratives is a project conducted over a twenty-year period with men and women who have been together in an intimate relationship for many years (usually at least fifteen). While most studies about the keys to successful marriages (and more broadly, successful intimate relationships) have been conducted by marriage and family therapists who extract lessons from couples who are not successfully engaged in an enduring relationship, the project on which we base work in the present book focused on lessons learned from couples who have found ways to forge and sustain a long-term commitment. Sponsored by the Professional School of Psychology (in California), this project yielded interviews conducted with 80 couples and a series of essays on enduring intimate relationships that have been published in the Library of Professional Psychology. We make use of these interview data primarily with regard to the first generativity role: raising children and initiating projects.

The Sage Leadership Project

We turn third to a group of 100 men and women who were interviewed in conjunction with a two-year project about the civic lives of 50 emerging sage leaders (age 25-55) and 50 senior sage leaders (age 56-90) living in Grass Valley and Nevada City, California. It was the concept of intergenerational Sage-ing that inspired the governing board of the Center for Nonprofit Leadership (the California Western Nevada County umbrella service organization for nonprofits) to conduct in-depth interviews with each of the 100 sage leaders. Results from this project were reported in a book published by the Center for Nonprofit Leadership in January of 2012 and co-authored by the two of us (*Sages Among Us: Harnessing the Power of Civic Engagement*). We make use of this interview data primarily with regard to the second, third and fourth roles of generativity.

The Featured Players

Two women and two men were especially selected from among those participating in the Sage leadership project to play featured roles in the current book. They are each amazing senior adult leaders who have had long and full lives and have engaged extensively in each of the four roles of generativity. These *Featured Players* are Daniel Weinberg, Dale Richards, Sally Johnson, and Lisa Underwood. We wish to introduce you to all four of our *Featured Players*. We have taken care to disguise them by name and personal history—except for the actual lessons they report having learned during each of the four generative stages.

Daniel Weinberg: A native of Burlington, Vermont, Dan was raised by a single mother after his father was killed in the South Pacific during WWII. He graduated with a BS degree in physics from a prestigious Ivy League university in New York State and also was in the naval reserve there. Dan was called-up during the Vietnam War, where he served as an Ensign on two aircraft carriers. His marriage failed during this period, and his ex-wife moved with their young son and daughter to her childhood home in Santa Barbara, California. Estranged from his ex-wife and children, Dan decided to pursue graduate studies at a private university in Southern California, where he earned his Ph. D. in physics in 1971. He so impressed his major professors that Dan was invited to join the graduate faculty of the university as an assistant professor of physics. He

then remarried and had a son with his new wife, who was a young assistant professor of English at the university. Over a period of 13 years, Dan quickly moved through the professorial ranks and established a stellar reputation in physics research. This led him to being appointed Provost of the university and, ultimately, its president. After serving as university president for 18 years, Dan and his wife decided to retire in Northern California.

Avid fly fishermen and outdoor enthusiasts, Dan and his wife moved to Grass Valley, California, in 1993. There Dan discovered the nonprofit world and served with distinction as board president of an environmental organization and then a healthcare nonprofit. Due to his background in higher education and nonprofit leadership, he was invited to become part of the Center for Nonprofit Leadership Sage Leadership Project. He became a member of the ten-person team who interviewed the 100 sage community leaders. Dan recently celebrated his 78th birthday and 35th wedding anniversary. He and his wife make frequent visits to Utah and Wyoming to be with their three grandchildren.

Dale Richards: Dale is a native of Springfield, Missouri. He attended a major private university in St. Louis and graduated with a BS degree in electrical engineering. Dale initially worked in the aircraft industry in St. Louis and received a deferment from military service during the Vietnam War. He married his childhood sweetheart, and they settled in New Jersey, where he began a swift rise in the telecommunications industry. Dale and his wife parented two children, but they divorced in 1972. Dale's advancement through senior positions in New Jersey resulted in frequent moves across the country (Chicago, San Francisco), during which he met his present wife. Before retiring in 1990, Dale earned national recognition for the many patents he had developed during his telecommunications career.

Their love of Northern California, where Dale and his second wife vacationed for many years, led the couple to decide on Grass Valley as their retirement home. Because he was always involved in civic organizations during his professional career (e.g., twice chairing the national United Way Campaign for his company), Dale naturally took to volunteering for various nonprofit organizations in Grass Valley and Nevada City. He also routinely offered *pro bono* services to many of the region's nonprofit organizations and, in 2011, was invited by the Center for Nonprofit Leadership to join the ten person team who were to interview 100 community Sage

leaders. Dale recently celebrated his 78th birthday and 25th wedding anniversary. He and his wife continue to enjoy many visits with their five grandchildren in the Midwest.

Sally Johnson: Sally is a native of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and she attended a reputable Southern liberal arts college where she graduated with a BA in sociology; it's also where she met her husband. After graduation Sally and her husband sought careers in Washington, DC; in time, Sally became a major fund raiser for the National Republican Party. She then served as a senior White House adviser in Richard Nixon's White House. During this period Sally and her husband parented a son and daughter, and both became involved in anti-Vietnam War protests. Fatigued by the hubris of Washington, DC, politics, Sally and her husband moved to Los Angeles, and she established a nonprofit organization that served under-privileged children. Over time her innovation and leadership attracted the attention of the Mayor of Los Angeles, and she was awarded "Citizen of the Year" recognition in 1992.

When it came time for both Sally and her husband to retire in 1998, they visited a number of small rural communities and decided that Nevada City, California, was a perfect fit. Given her background in serving under-privileged children, Sally was invited to join several nonprofit boards, where her reputation for wise leadership prospered. Indeed, she was awarded for her community service in 2010 by being recognized as Western Nevada County Nonprofit Citizen of the Year. This led to the Center for Nonprofit Leadership inviting Sally to become one of the ten-person team who interviewed the 100 community Sage leaders. Sally is now 74, and she and her husband recently celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary. They make frequent visits with their three grandchildren, all of whom live in Dallas, Texas.

Lisa Underwood: While she grew-up in Cedar Rapids, Michigan, Lisa decided to attend a major public university in Texas, where she graduated with a BA degree in psychology. Her marriage at an early age resulted in a male child but ended in divorce. She had the additional burden of having to care for a very ill mother for almost 45 years and serve as a guardian for her disabled nephew. After her divorce, Lisa moved with her mother and son to a Midwest city; she earned both her MFT master's degree license and Ph. D. in clinical psychology at a major public university. After completing her 3,000 hours of supervision, Lisa and her mother and son moved

to Boston, Massachusetts. Over the years Lisa established a very successful therapy practice and wrote many books on the psychology of women. This attracted the attention of her national professional organization, which she served as a board member for 12 years.

When her mother died in 2005, Lisa decided to move to the warmer climate of Northern California. She lived in Redding for three years but decided to retire to Nevada City and the ski slopes of Lake Tahoe. Lisa very quickly became sought after as a speaker and seminar leader for the Center of Nonprofit Leadership. She was invited to become part of the ten-person interview team of the community Sage Leadership Project. Now fully retired at age 70, Lisa occasionally provides *pro bono* services in helping Western Nevada County nonprofit governing boards to strengthen their missions and their capacity for public accountability.