

Nurturing Generativity and Deep Caring

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It is important to explore and seek the origins of generativity inside an individual's psyche and inside the spirited and soulful processes engaged by generative people. And it is also critical to look at the environment or context in which generativity is identified and nurtured. Just as we found in exploring the nature of Sage leadership in our study of the two Western Nevada County communities in California, the generative person is encouraged (if not created) by the community in which he or she lives and works (Quehl and Bergquist, 2012). Much as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a community to bring out the multiple roles of generativity in oneself. Our society helps to give birth to deep caring.

This exploration of generativity both inside and outside a person is essential when coaching someone regarding the way(s) in which and reasons why they are caring deeply in their life. More generally, any exploration of motivation in the people we are coaching should be viewed both as a very close, personal matter that pushes us forward into action and as a more distant set of factors out in the world that are pulling us to action. Egon Brunswick framed this as a complementary relationship between proximal (close) and distal (far) perspectives on human behavior (Postman and Tolman, 1959). There is an internally initiated (proximal) push alongside an externally-initiated (distal) pull. This two-fold model of motivation was identified many years ago by Henry Murray (2007), a Harvard-based mentor to many highly influential psychologists—including Erik Erikson, Gordon Allport—and Timothy Leary. Murray wrote of the internal, proximal pushes as Needs. The external, distal pulls were labeled Presses.

It is worth noting that Murray's Needs have received considerable attention (primary the need for achievement), while his Presses have been ignored. This is important for professional coaches to note because it is tempting to focus on the internal pushes when helping a client explore their motives. The external pulls are often ignored even though they might be the primary reason why we are determining what to do in our life and work. The behaviorists are right in pointing to the impact of stimuli out in the world when determining why people act in a particular way.

Given the push and pull of generativity among many other motives in our lives, we turn first to the often-ignored external pulls that exist in a Generative Society. A professional coach can provide valuable guidance if they help their client identify settings in their life that are generative in nature and if they find purpose in helping in their own way to make the society in which they live and work more generative.

The Generative Society

Fortunately, the two of us are not alone in emphasizing both the proximal and distal sources of generativity. Others who have written about generativity have considered societal settings to often be a distal birthplace of generativity and deep caring. Dan McAdams and his fellow connoisseurs of generativity edited an entire book several years ago on *The Generative Society* (de St. Alban, McAdams and Kim, 2004). We will highlight several findings and proposals offered in this book, especially as related to the four roles of generativity we have introduced and to the processes of professional coaching that address these four roles.

We then turn briefly to the broader consideration of the social-economic structure of a society and the important interplay between social-class and generativity. While professional coaches are not primarily in the business of reforming society, they are in the business of helping their clients face the realities of social

class and privilege. We conclude with our own thoughts about the nature of a generative society and generativity-focused coaching—gaining insights from the generative women and men we interviewed during the Sage project.

Shaping Generativity

In their introductory chapter, de St. Aubin, McAdams and Kim (2004, p. 5) propose that: "Generativity is shaped by political, economic, religious and cultural forces. Furthermore, it makes good sense to consider how social institutions themselves, and even societies writ large, may or may not function in generative ways." Like fellow observers of social structure and personal character in their description of the "good society" (Robert Bellah and others, 1991), de St. Aubin, McAdams and Kim describe the conditions needed to encourage and maintain generativity and to overcome what another insightful social observer (Christopher Lasch) identifies as a "culture of narcissism." (Lasch, 1991).

In their search for the ingredients to be found in a generative society, McAdams and Logan (2004, p. 18) turn to a distinction first offered by Bakan (1966) between *agency* and *communion*. On the one hand, generativity is all about extending the influence and appearance of one's self beyond one's death. This resides at the heart of generativity. It is about the search for immortality first identified by Plato and much more recently by John Kotre (1984) (as we note in our previous essays). This embrace of generativity is internally-generated - what we have identified as proximal Push.

Conceived as a search for immortality, generativity is aligned with *agency*: "the organismic tendency toward self-expression, self-expansion, self-protection, self-development, and all other goals promoting the individual self." (McAdams and Logan, 2004, p. 18) and, in its extreme, We find this generative agency to often hover on the edge of narcissism—a condition of which professional coaches should be aware (Weitz, 2013) More generally, this intimate Push toward immortality is a source of individualism and the kind of self-absorption which Lasch critiqued more than two decades ago—and which still seems relevant.

While many of the generativity examples we have offered in this set of essays are founded on this self-oriented agency, we propose along with McAdams and Logan that generativity (as displayed through all four roles) can only be sustained if agency is counter-balanced with *communion*: "the organismic tendency toward the self with others, merging the self in community, giving up the self for the good of something beyond the self." (McAdams and Logan, 2004, p. 18) It is this further extension of self in time and space which enables us to be fully capable of caring deeply.

This extension should be a major agenda item for a professional coach who is helping their client appreciate their own generative actions. We need agency to move beyond mere empathy. We need communion to see how caring must be viewed from what we previously identified as seeing the "big picture" when engaging in caring activities. Furthermore, we propose, along with McAdams and Logan, that the successful interplay between agency and communion requires that one is participating in a generative society. Our clients can either seek out such a society or can help build it in their own organization or community.

To focus more specifically, we note throughout McAdams and Logan's *The Generative Society* book, attention turns to all four generative roles—even if not specifically identified as such.

Generativity One

First, a generative society is one in which parenting (Generativity One) is fully supported in terms of public policy, economic incentives, and honoring of the role: "What makes a culture generative? The first and most obvious answer to the question is this: The culture creates an atmosphere in which children survive in

the most basic physical sense.” (Kotre, 2004, p. 37) Generativity One, however, is much more than just meeting survival needs. It is about the creation of a child or a project that is filled with energy and purpose. The child or project is Robust—a wonderful criterion for coaches to keep in mind when helping their client assess the quality of their Generativity One commitments.

A robust child, as McAdams and Logan note, is reared by a particular kind of generative parent: "generativity is associated with an *authoritative* parenting style." (McAdams and Logan, 2004, p. 21). They contrast this style of parenting with authoritarian, permissive, and disengaged styles. The authoritative parent cares deeply about her children—to the extent that she provides boundaries while also offering freedom. She provides knowledge and guidance while also encouraging her child to explore, stumble, learn and grow as an independent, courageous human being. Similarly, a robust project is one in which the generative founder and leader provides boundaries and freedom and offer knowledge and guidance, while also encouraging those working with her on the project to explore, stumble, learn and help the project grow with courage.

The irony, as Kai Erikson (Erik's daughter) has noted, is that this authoritative parenting and leadership requires a focused concentration on the child's and project's welfare and continuing development: “[T]o provide one's children with whatever leverage in life one can afford to bestow on them is a different kind of activity—and may be drawn from a different chamber of the human mind, so to speak—than looking out for the welfare of a whole generation.” (K. Erikson, 2004, p. 55)

While Generativity Two, Three and Four require a broadening of scope in terms of both time and space, Generativity One especially requires a caring focus. In Japan, this form of focused parental generativity is called *amae*: “To achieve *amae*, or the child's ‘basking in another's indulgence . . . Japanese mothers cater to each need of their child . . .’ The behaviors associated with Japanese parenting captured by the term *amae* are highly aligned with the values of cultural collectivism that exist in Japan.” (de St. Aubin, 2004, p. 68) We can point to the same focused attention when describing the successful start-up of a project. We are all aware of the singular attention that is needed when we try to begin something new. A reflective coach can help their client identify what must be set aside or ignored when a project is being launched.

For all of this to occur, for there to be a chamber of the human mind that has a Generative One focus. The parent, child and project must find support in the society where the child is being reared or the project is being initiated. The proximal Push to start a new project must be matched by a distal Pull by society (or at least one's organization or community) for this project. More specifically, the generative parent or founder must have a vision of the future that is inspiring and filled with hope; a generative society helps the parent and founder find this inspiring vision.

As we have seen in apocalyptic movies, such as *The Road Warrior*, a society without a future is one in which there is no generativity at the most basic level: caring for and about children. Why raise a child or start a new project if the world is unlikely to survive in a manner that is conducive to the flourishing of this child or project? Put simply, Generativity One requires a generative society that supports the care and feeding of children and new generative ventures. Professional coaches must remind their clients of this critical equation. Otherwise, their client is likely to find failure and after several repeated failures they may also find themselves discouraged and burned out. The Push is gone and generativity is replaced by stagnation.

Generativity Two

Generativity Two is inherently enacted within an institutional setting. A distal Pull is critical. It is about extending the space of care beyond that of a specific child or project. The Pull is about ensuring that our

actions are sustained by other people. Mentoring, motivating, and monitoring (along with the other M's) are engaged within an organizational setting. This setting, in turn, is deeply influenced by the societal structure in which it exists. Two prominent organizational theorists, Maturana and Varela (1992), have even suggested that the boundaries drawn between an organization and its environment are artificial. Adopting an organizational perspective called *autopoiesis*, Maturana and Varela propose that all viable organizations are open systems and that an organization is primarily designed to meet the unique challenges of the environment in which it exists. Thus, from their perspective, a generative organization requires a generative society. The distal Pull must be expanded and a professional coach can help their client recognize the need for this expansion.

At one level, the generative society is one in which men and women are encouraged to mentor, motivate, and engage the other activities we have associated with Generativity Two. It is a society in which the individual dreams of those being mentored and motivated are tied to the dreams and vision of the organization, and these dreams and visions, are, in turn, tied to the vision of the society:

The mentor is a host who welcomes an initiate into a new world; an exemplar who provides a model for emulation; a teacher who passes on skills; a counsellor who provides guidance and moral support; a sponsor who facilitates a protégé's advancement; and, above all, someone who believes in a young person's Dream. (Levinson, et al., 1978). To this description we must add what is in the interest of culture: that in their role as teachers, the very best mentors see that crafts are passed on with integrity, that the art in question is not compromised. They also seek out students in whom special talent, special virtue, or special ideas are struggling to emerge; for cultures need the fresh eyes and the blood that these students possess. (Kotre, 2004, pp. 43-44)

In this quotation by Kotre, we find not only the role of mentor as acknowledger and sustainer of another person's dream and vision, but also as acknowledger and sustainer of new ideas and appreciator of fresh talent and perspective. A professional coach might help their client acknowledge their own engagement in these generativity roles. The coach might even "turn the tables" by helping their client acknowledge how they have benefited themselves from these generative services. Given this broader role for the Generative Two mentor, a society is required in which new projects (Generativity One) can expand and in which innovation and risk-taking is given its due (as in a recent TV ad that describes how scary new ideas are and how we must not condemn or isolate them).

Building on the vision-based support for Generativity One, the generative society articulates a future that encourages a deep caring for the next generation of leaders and the continuing empowerment of new and old members of an organization. With this generativity in place, an organization or community can adopt to the changing condition of this environment and can remain agile in the midst of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, turbulence and contradiction (Bergquist, 2020; Bergquist, 2022).

Generativity Three

The role to be played by a generative society in the encouragement of the third generativity role is also salient. In his identification of the forms that a generative society must take to encourage generativity, Kotre points to mentoring and "the keeper of meaning"; he references, in this regard, the work of George Vaillant. As noted by Vaillant (2012) and by us in an earlier essay, the guardians of tradition and heritage must be valued in this role by the society in which they dwell. The parade, monument and museum do not exist in a vacuum. The consumers of Generativity Three products and services do not live in isolation. They are

members of a specific society, and they help build the museums, collect the valuable artifacts, and march in the parades.

Kotre notes that Generativity Three can be engaged, often inadvertently, by those people in a specific society who become "living legends" in their own time. Being honored by other members of their society as saints (Mother Teresa) or geniuses (Einstein), these men and women exemplify the values that are to be safe-guarded and perpetuated. Generativity Three, then, is intricately interwoven with the propensity of generative societies to identify, appreciate and sustain these values. At a less dramatic level, a coach client might be encouraged to identify and appreciate their own moments of being a saint or genius—especially when they have been honored as such by their organization or community. To be honored we are not only given the opportunity to feel good about ourselves, but also given the opportunity learn something about ourselves that holds major implications for how we continue to engage in beneficial work in our life.

There is yet another level at which Generativity Three and the generative society interact. This level is concerned not just with the keeper of meaning, but also with the fundamental construction of the reality in which the society operates. Values, traditions and even fundamental perspectives are guarded and passed on by Generative Three leaders and by the society in which they live. The fundamental memories of a society are shaped by the Generative Three guardians. The work of Karl Mannheim (father of the sociology of knowledge) is relevant here:

To explain the continuity and change between generations, Mannheim proposes structures of memory at the individual and social levels . . . According to Mannheim, there are two ways by which people incorporate a cultural experience in social memories: (a) as consciously recognized models to determine the direction of their behaviors or (b) as unconsciously condensed patterns. (Imada, 2004, p. 86)

McAdams and Logan have noted in their own analysis of the generative society, that collective memories (whether they be consciously recognized or unconsciously condensed) tend to be forged in mythic or real narratives that are repeatedly shared in a generative society. These narratives form the basis of our individual and collective identity:

A growing number of philosophers, psychologists, social scientists, and social critics have argued in recent years that adults living in modern societies strive to provide their lives with some sense of unity and purpose by constructing self-defining life stories . . . Indeed Erikson's conception of identity can be reconceived from a narrative point of view. (McAdams and Logan, 2004, p. 24)

Kotre offers a similar perspective on the nature of a generative society or culture: "What does a culture need to keep the young connected to its traditions, even as it welcomes youthful reform? What will lead the young to create a generative *identity*. . . and arouse in them what is now called *generative desire*?" (Kotre, 2004, p. 39) He identifies five type of generative stories that create generative desire and sustain a culture and tradition: (1) the epic, (2) the origin myth, (3) story of real life, (4) the parable and (5) the cautionary tale. (Kotre, 2004, pp. 40-42). Each of these stories is told by a Generative Three narrator and supported by a generative society. Together with their coach, a client can extract some of the meanings and implications inherent in their stories.

In Kotre's identification of the generative story and narrator, we find an interesting and important blending of the second and third roles of generativity. As noted by McAdams and Logan (2004, pp.19-20), in most traditional societies "generativity may take the form of passing on the eternal truths and wisdom of the ages that are embedded in religious and civic traditions." Even in a secular society that often shows little respect

for civic traditions, there is storytelling and the honoring of "living legends" and mythic images through film, novels and other art forms. There is, in other words, the opportunity of a generative society to emerge and support Generativity Three actions awaits an organizational or community leader—especially if supported and guided by a Generativity-Focused coach .

Generativity Four

In describing the conditions that create and sustain Generativity Four in a society, the various authors of *The Generative Society* understandably focused primarily on the volunteer services being offered by men and women. We have similarly focused on the volunteer services offered by civically engaged Sage leaders—especially our Emerging Sage leaders who engage the role of Generativity Three through their work as paid employees in human service agencies.

The most extended description of Generativity Four in *The Generative Society* comes from the chapter written by Snyder and Clary (2004, in which they report on their study of volunteerism as related to generativity. Snyder and Clary (2004, p. 237) identify six psychological functions that are served by involvement in volunteer work: (1) expressing altruistic and humanitarian values, (2) promoting understanding about oneself and other people, (3) fostering social functions, (4) promoting career development for the volunteer and other people, (5) reducing feelings of guilt on the part of the volunteer about being more fortunate than other people and (6) increasing a sense of self-esteem and growth on the part of the volunteer.

The first, second, fifth and sixth of these functions seem to be closely related to our previous discussion regarding the motivations associated with Generativity Four as well as the benefits derived from Generativity Four-based civic engagement. A society can be generative if it provides its citizens the opportunity to offer meaningful service to other people that is soulfully gratifying. This is where the distal Pull of generativity exists. The distal source of generativity for some people might join with their proximal Push. McAdams refers to a "redemption" motivation. Snyder and Clary refer to this as a guilt-reducing function. We pay forward our good fortune by being of service to those who are less fortunate. Snyder and Clary suggest that civic engagement (volunteerism) can also be of more practical benefit by providing an opportunity for the volunteer to learn new skills and gain greater knowledge through engaging in novel activities and providing different forms of leadership. Professional coaches might take note of these practical benefits.

The function that might be most easily overlooked is "social function." As many of our Sage leaders noted, their civic engagement provides an opportunity to work with men and women who share their interests and hold similar values and priorities: "[I]n both activities [volunteerism and generativity] we find human beings attempting to connect with others, both others who exist and others who will one day exist, and in doing so, contribute to their communities and to their society." (Snyder and Clary, 2004, p. 235) This is another theme that professional coaches might reinforce with their clients. One can leap over a silo by signing up for volunteer work. This theme is particularly noteworthy for clients who are retired and have retreated into their home and engaged only in isolating activities.

We also want to add another Generativity Four role that would probably not formally qualify as "volunteerism," since it is very informal and often not given much thought by those who are generative. Generative men and women are conveners of informal small groups of "fellow travelers" that meet every day or once a week to simply talk about what is happening in their lives or in their communities. One of us occasionally has breakfast at the nearby McDonalds and observes that four to six men and women in their 70s and 80s are always there sitting together at the same cluster of tables. The elderly mother of one of our

colleagues similarly meets every day with other old timers near her home in New Jersey, where she has lived for more than 80 years. One of our brothers meets once a week with other guys in their New England town, and a colleague meets every Thursday morning with six other men at a restaurant in Nevada County.

These gatherings would not occur if there were not settings in which to meet with women and men who share similar values. Several years ago, Ron Kitchens, executive at a community bank in Kalamazoo Michigan, wrote about "community capital" (Kitchens, Gross, and Smith,2008). He offered the metaphor of filling a bowl with rocks, pebbles and sand. When speaking to other people about community capital, Kitchens brings out a large bowl and asks one of the meeting attendees to fill the bowl with rocks contained in a bag. When this task has been completed, Ron asks another attendee to gather pebbles from another bag and continue to fill the bowl; apparently, the bowl is not really filled until the pebbles are added. Kitchens now asks yet another member of the audience to open a third bag that is filled with sand. Remarkably, there is still room in the bowl for the sand in addition to the rocks and pebbles. Kitchens suggests that the "rocks" in a community are the major institutions that provide jobs and financial stability (for example, industrial and financial institutions). The pebbles are those institutions that provide nutrition, human services and education. These "pebble" institutions stitch the community together and make it a place where people want to live. Governmental agencies provide some of the pebbles, but also some of the rocks.

It is the "sand," however, that makes the community truly come alive. The sand is to be found in the daily interactions among members of the community: the gatherings in local restaurants, the art and craft fairs, the weekly farmers market, the local concerts. We suggest that civic engagement and volunteer services of all kinds can be found operating at all three levels in a community. The "sandy" forms of generativity service are just as important as the rock and pebble roles of Generativity Four that are engaged through formally organized volunteer services and leadership in nonprofit organizations. Perhaps a professional coach can help their client build a sand castle – a series of encounters with other members of a community that are meaningful for all involved and offer pathways to expanded civic engagement.

It is through the interplay of community rocks, pebbles, and sand that generativity is likely to flourish. The institutional rocks must provide the resources and stability to ensure that there is legitimate generative hope for the future in this community. In the case of Kalamazoo Michigan, this building of hope was critical, for like many American cities in the "rust belt" the economy was rapidly deteriorating. Few jobs were available. As a community banker, Kitchens had to provide smart and timely financial support that would aid the recovery. The pebble institutions are also critical. People must be fed and cared for, and the citizenry must be educated about the complex challenges that the community faces—otherwise, civic engagement and Generativity Four will be short-lived, misplaced and misunderstood. The sandy generativity fills in the community's gaps, providing the glue that holds it together even during times of hardship and insecurity about the future. The generative society, then, would seem to be a bowl filled with Kitchen's rocks, pebbles and sand.

As we conclude our brief exploration of Generativity Four as it is enhanced in a generative society, we note that the distinction between Generativity Three and Four is often not clearly drawn; both involve civic engagement and both require a Distal Pull . Both are motivated by a desire to extend values and benefits to the next generation: “Clearly, many of the activities that are labeled as volunteer work fit these definitions of generativity. Many of the activities of volunteers cross generational lines. . . .As such, the activities of volunteers may contribute to continuity and linkages across generations.” (Snyder and Clary, 2004, p. 223)

The distinction we draw between Generativity Three and Generativity Four concerns the primary focus of each: Generativity Three centers on expanding the time dimension, while Generativity Four centers on expanding the space dimension. We provide caring linkages across generations by bringing the past into the present so that it can be available to the next (Generativity Three). We expand our care to other people and to the next generation by engaging in activities that improve community services (Generativity Four). The extension of care in time and space best operates in a generative society – otherwise the extension is hard to achieve and often short lived. Monuments will crumble, stories are no longer told, the poor are no longer served, children are ignored, and humans live in isolating silos. Stagnation reigns supreme. As dedicated (generative) coaches we can play a major role with our clients to ensure that a Stagnant Society isn't produced or sustained while they serve as leaders of their organization or community.

Social Class and Generativity

In their assessment of generativity as related to social structure, Keyes and Ryff (1998, p. 253) observe that:

[S]ociety contours generativity. Midlife and often older adults, adults with more education, and women tend to exhibit greater levels of diverse aspects of generativity than young adults with fewer years of education, and men. . . . Perhaps relieved of primary obligations, midlife and older adults give emotional support and unpaid assistance to more people and feel less primary but more civic obligations.

In other words, civic engagement and other acts of generativity might be the privilege of social class, rather than being a sign of altruism or personal commitment. Perhaps, as some of our Sage leaders observed, stagnation and the absence of civic engagement might be at least partially attributed to the inability of many people to find time or energy to move beyond their own economic struggles (and to move beyond their own Generativity One role as a challenged provider to their family).

Keyes and Ryff (1998, p. 254) also noted that "generativity contours our quality of life." We find our work in all four generative roles to be not just gratifying, but also a source of meaning and purpose in life. We are not just given the opportunity to outlive our self (as Kotre suggests), but also to find enrichment in the life we are still living. The generative society provides the abundant opportunity for this enrichment of life--provided a society enables those who are poor, oppressed and challenged in every aspect of their life to move beyond this state in order to afford themselves the privilege of generativity.

This is where Kitchens' rocks and pebbles are found to be critical. The generative society provides a government and set of social service agencies that support and encourage civic engagement. It provides a variety of other generative institutions as well that are operating in an effective and efficient manner. These rocks and peddles are needed if quality of life is to be enhanced through generative acts within a community context. The metaphor of rocks, pebbles and sand can be a wonderful for professional coaches to use when helping their community leaders consider the best ways in which to confront the challenges of social class and privilege. A society is unlikely to be generative if many of its members find little time to be caring deeply about anything other than their own welfare and even survival.

Fostering the Generative Society

Many years ago, Sigmund Freud indicated that our capacity to both love deeply and engage in productive work defines our quality of life (and perhaps our level of sanity). The first architect of generativity, Erik Erikson, similarly emphasized the integral connections between love and work. Both are needed to foster generativity. Love resides in the internal Push, while work resides in the external Pull of generativity. Erik

Erikson spoke of this requirement on many occasions, perhaps most eloquently and succinctly in *Insight and Responsibility*: "As adult man needs to be needed [loved], so . . . he requires the challenge emanating from what he has generated [work] and from what now must be 'brought up,' guarded, preserved--and eventually transcended." (E. Erikson, 1964, p. 131) Like Erikson, we wish to emphasize the integral connections between love (Push) and work (Pull), as both are needed to foster generativity.

Agency and Communion

This integration is played out in the vital connection between *agency* and *communion* that McAdams (2001, p. 405) and then Snyder and Clary (2004, p. 232) emphasize in their portraits of generative society:

[A]t the heart of generativity is communion and altruism, on the one hand, and agency and narcissism, on the other. Accordingly, along with other-oriented concerns for future generations, generativity may have as the self-oriented aim "creating something in one's own image, a powerful act of self-expansion."

In our interviews with Sage leaders, the role played by agency and hard, persistent work is clearly evident. Furthermore, we see in our study of civic engagement that generative work is sustained in a community that appreciates and honors this agency (as we noted above regarding the creation of an appreciative society). We also discovered that generative agency shows up in many forms.

This, in turn, means that there must be multiple ways in which agency is supported in any society that wishes to be generative. An insightful and more detailed account of this need for multiple support mechanisms was offered by Dollahite, Slife and Hawkins (1998, p. 475):

Generative agency is holistic (choice is embedded in a web of other choices, contexts, and constraints), temporal (choices and constraints change over time), spiritual (choice is enhanced and challenged by spiritual connections and convictions), capability-oriented (the exercise of choice brings greater capabilities), and moral (people are accountable for their choices).

As a sociologist, Kai Erikson focuses on distal Pulls to generativity. She is aligned with the second half of the equation: communion. Kai points out that communion is a fundamental building block in all societies and in the formation of our own personal sense of identity and security:

Human beings, like all social animals, have an innate tendency to gather into collectivities containing individuals who regard themselves as being of like kind. That is, it is in our nature to seek communion with other human beings. But the ways in which we do so, the people to whom we find ourselves drawn, and the groupings that emerge from all this must be understood as products of social life. . . . Most people belong to a number of [social groupings.] . . . The most important question one can ask of these nested [social] identities is: which of them are crucial enough at any given time to provide a sense of communion, a sense of security, a sense of being at home among one's own kind. (K. Erikson, 2004, p. 56-57)

Building on our own four role model of generativity, we can readily rephrase Erik Erikson's statement about love and work to incorporate this generative interplay between Agency and Communion. As an adult we need love and communion. Love fulfills the need (Push), while communion provides the Press (Pull). We also require the challenge emanating from what we have generated through our work and agency. Work offers an external opportunity (Pull) to find generativity, while agency offers us the internal guidance (Push) for finding generativity in many lifetime activities. That which we have generated through love and work must be reared (Generativity One), guided (Generativity Two), guarded and preserved (Generativity Three)

and eventually expanded and transcended (Generativity Four). While agency (and work) is needed to carry out the act of generativity and deep caring, communion (and love) is needed to formulate the desire to be caringly generativity. We have found this formulation to be helpful in guiding our own coaching and consulting enterprises.

Appreciation and Gratitude

There is another source of our guidance as coaches and consultants. This is an Appreciative Perspective (Bergquist, 2003; Bergquist and Mura, 2011; Bergquist and Mura, 2014) We believe that appreciation represents the vital link between agency and communication and that a generative society must be founded on a culture of appreciation. The term appreciation itself has several different meanings that tend to build on one another; however, as a foundation for creating the generative society, we can begin by noting that appreciation refers first to a clearer understanding of another person's perspective. We cannot be generative in working with another person – be they a child, mentee, colleague, member of our community or coaching client—unless we understand something about their interests, fears, and hopes.

Empathy is critical. One cares deeply about the matter being studied and about those people one is assisting. Neutrality is inappropriate in such a setting, though compassion implies neither a loss of discipline nor a loss of boundaries between one's own problems and perspectives and those of the other person. Appreciation, in other words, is about fuller understanding, not merging, with another person's problems or identity. At the level of society, we find priorities, policies and procedures that encourage us to take the time to understand and empathize with one another. Our generativity is successfully directed toward other people—especially a coaching client—only as we understand who they are and actively engage them in the context of this direct, appreciative engagement.

Appreciation refers not just to understanding but also to valuing another person, event or project. Appreciation is about an increase in worth or value. A painting or stock portfolio appreciates in value. Van Gogh looked at a vase of sunflowers and in appreciating (painting) these flowers, he increased their value for everyone. Van Gogh similarly appreciated and brought new value to his friends through his friendship: “Van Gogh did not merely articulate admiration for his friend: He created new values and new ways of seeing the world through the very act of valuing.” (Cooperrider, 1990, p. 123)

One of those seeking to define the nature of a generative society frames this second form of appreciation by turning to the Japanese culture:

Who decides whether our lives are "successful?" We could select . . . words such as *meaningful* or *tasteful* to represent our lives. Kanji characters of the Japanese word meaning involve *Ajji*, which translates as "taste, flavor, sense, impression, appreciation, enjoyment, and experience." (Yamada, 2004, p. 99)

Our appreciation becomes a matter of "taste." We are appreciative and create a generative society when we emphasize the acquisition of tasteful awareness of the extraordinary world around – both the natural world and the exquisite production of people who are now alive or have lived in the past and provide us with objects and events of lasting beauty.

The person who engages in the third role of generativity by honoring and preserving the heritage associated with a particular person, society or event has raised the value of this person, society, or event by seeing in a new way – thus opening new vistas for the growth of generativity in a society. Similarly, as a Generative One

parent, Generative Two mentor or Generative Four civic leader, we are pointing to and enhancing value. As a generativity-focused professional coach we are often in the business of helping our client find the best pathway to enhance value in their organization or community. We are helping our client (and those with whom they are working) to see the "big picture." We are helping our client be appreciate about their appreciation. We are catching our clients "doing it right" when they help raise the level of aspiration and hope among those with whom they relate and work. In the upward appreciation of value comes the motivation to care deeply and fight hard for our child, mentee, monument, or civic project.

From yet another perspective, the process of appreciation concerns our recognition of the contributions that have been made by another person: "I appreciate the efforts you have made in getting this project off the ground." Sometimes this sense of appreciation is reflected in the special recognition we give people for a particularly successful project or in the bouquet of flowers or thank you note we leave with an assistant. This form of appreciation, however, when it is the only kind provided, typically leads just to praise inflation, praise addiction and the tendency to keep people who report to us permanently in a needy and, therefore (ironically), one-down position (Kanter, 1977).

Appreciation can instead be exhibited in a more constructive and generative manner through the daily interaction between a Generativity Two mentor and her mentees. It involves mutual respect and active engagement, accompanied by a natural flow of feedback, and an exchange of ideas. More specifically, appreciation is evident in attitudes about the nature and purpose of work. If the person engaged in the second role of generativity "sees work as the means whereby a person creates oneself (that is, one's identity and personality) and creates community (that is, social relations), then the accountability structure becomes one of nurturing and mentoring." (Cummings and Anton, 1990, p. 259) A generative society is one in which the acknowledgement of contribution is widely demonstrated and supported – not a society in which bouquets of flowers are to be found everywhere, but rather a society in which knowledgeable and supportive feedback abounds.

Stated in somewhat different terms, a generative society engenders *gratitude*. Not only are monuments erected to honor fallen heroes and pioneers (Generativity Three), but also simple words of gratitude are abundant as those who provide generative actions (in all four roles) are acknowledged. One of our Sage leaders clearly articulates the need for this appreciative acknowledgement in a society of generativity:

When working within volunteer organizations, where people are not paid to perform and meet goals, we all need to be grateful for any time or effort that is given freely. We need to gracefully enable people, use collaboration and an open mind. Everyone has unique gifts, and it is important to hear everyone's ideas—holding in mind the organization's objectives and mission. Most folks are doing the best they can. Projects take longer sometimes. Some people volunteer just because they want to be involved, but they may have few skills. However, they are there with their heart open, and we need to find a place for them to contribute. I am learning to have more flexibility and grace when working with volunteers.

Appreciation is engaged in two additional ways that often are not acknowledged. Appreciation in a generative society also refers to recognition of the distinctive strengths and potentials of people working within the society. An appreciative culture is forged, and a generative society emerges, when an emphasis is placed on the realization of inherent potential and the uncovering of latent strengths rather than on the identification of weaknesses or deficits. People and societies "do not need to be fixed. They need constant

reaffirmation.” (Cooperrider, 1990, p. 120) Even in a context of competition, appreciation transforms envy into learning, and personal achievement into a sense of overall purpose and value.

The remarkable essayist Roger Rosenblatt (1997, p. 23) reveals just such a shifting and generative perspective in candidly describing the role that competition with other writers plays in his own life:

Part of the satisfaction in becoming an admirer of the competition is that it allows you to wonder how someone else did something well, so that you might imitate it—steal it, to be blunt. But the best part is that it shows you that there are things you will never learn to do, skills and tricks that are out of your range, an entire imagination that is out of your range. The news may be disappointing on a personal level, but in terms of the cosmos, it is strangely gratifying. One sits among the works of one’s contemporaries as in a planetarium, head all the way back, eyes gazing up at heavenly matter that is all the more beautiful for being unreachable. Am I growing up?

Paradoxically, at the point when someone or an entire society is fully appreciated and reaffirmed, they will tend to live up to their newly acclaimed talents and drive, just as they will live down to their depreciated sense of self if constantly criticized and undervalued.

Finally, and most importantly, appreciation is engaged, and an appreciative culture is forged, by establishing a positive image of the future within a society. We grow to appreciate and invest in our society and its inhabitants by imbuing it with optimism. We invest it with a sense of hope about its own future and the valuable role potentially it plays in our society. “[A]ffirmation of the positive future is the single most important act that a system can engage in if its real aim is to bring to fruition a new and better future.” (Cooperrider, 1990, p. 119)

Faith and Hope

Effective, generative leaders must be “not only concerned with what is but also with what might be.” (Frost and Egri, 1990, p. 305) As McAdams and his associates (McAdams, Hart and Maruna, 1998, p. 26) have noted: “To believe in the (human) species is to place hope and trust in the future of the human enterprise. Generativity requires a fundamental faith in humankind and hope for the future.” We come to appreciate our own role and that of other people in the organization regarding the contributions we make jointly in helping the organization to realize these images, purposes and values. An appreciative perspective is always *leaning into the future*. While we appreciate that which has been successful in the past (Generativity Three), we don’t dwell with nostalgia on the past, but instead continually trace the implications of acquired wisdom and past successes regarding our vision of the future (the bridge between Generativity Three and Four). We can serve as *Futurist Coaches* when we assist our clients in their own leaning into the future—aligned with their own learning in the future (Scharmer, 2009)

As we noted previously, a society without hope is a society in which children are ignored and personal survival replaces any concern for other people or community enrichment. We honor nothing because there is no future to honor us. We do not seek to extend ourselves beyond our own lives, because there is nothing worth extending ourselves into when envisioning the future. It is only when we have a clear vision of the future that we care deeply about other people and our community. This is the central message of this set of essays— appreciation as well as the spirited and soulful nature of deep caring and professional coaching. We now turn to this more spiritual aspect of generativity—and coaching.

The Origins of Generativity in Spirit and Soul

Alongside the distal pull toward a generative society, resides the proximal processes of spirit and soul. These sources of generativity reside at deep and personal level. We propose that Generativity is ultimately about more than child-rearing, organizational leadership, mentoring, preservation of traditions, and civic engagement. It is about something transformational. At the heart of the matter are two proximal forms of Generativity that women and men often experience during the middle years of their life: Generativity of Spirit and Generativity of Soul. To better understand the direction in which we are taking this final analysis of generativity and in which a professional coach might take their generative work with a client, we wish to distinguish between these two forms of generativity.

Spirit is about achievement and about lifting upward. It is the form of generativity that was identified earlier as Agency. It is about the joy that comes with accomplishment and recognition. It concerns our discovery of higher order truths and our commitment to higher order values that motivate our collaborative work with other people in our family, in our organizations, and in our community. This generativity ensures that our presence is felt in the world. It often serves as a bridge between Generativity One and Generativity Two.

Generativity of Soul is about coming home and discovering what is already there and what should be valued. It is the form of generativity that was identified earlier as Communion. Generativity of the soul is about tending not just to matters of the organization we lead; it is about tending to sick or dying parents. It is about protecting those people that we love and the projects we have begun under Generativity One. It is about guardianship and heritage. Generativity of the soul often serves as a bridge between Generativity Three and Generativity Four.

Generativity of the Spirit

One of our Senior Sage leaders identified the essence of Spirited Generativity: “Two-thirds of my life is gone, and I don’t want to do anything now that doesn’t feed my spirit. I haven’t for a long time. Anytime I’ve tried to, it has never worked out.” Energized by the Generativity of Spirit we soar upward, like Icarus. We reach the highest point in our career, the highest point of status and influence in our communities. We know that our generative initiatives have made a difference. We are in danger of the seduction of power and narcissistic concern for personal recognition.

We may find ourselves framing our world in a dualistic frame. Everything is either right or wrong, good or bad. Coming out of a position of power and influence, we may foolishly think that we have “discovered” truth, when in fact we simply have the status and power to define what truth is and how it will be judged in our family, organization, or community. In the movie, *Network*, Paddy Chayefsky offers a penetrating analysis of contemporary corporate life and communications. He portrays a world in which those in power primarily define the truth. These powerful figures are predominantly white males.

Yet, Chayefsky also notes that the new power elite is increasingly likely to come from non-western nations (in particular, oil-rich countries). Icarus doesn’t soar for long. Chayefsky observes how precarious one’s position is at the top, particularly concerning a grasp of the truth. His protagonist, Howard Beale, struggles throughout the movie with what truth really is and how easily it is manufactured. Beale encourages all people to stand up against the manufactured truth yet seems always to be swayed left and right to different versions of the reality that are presented to him by other powerful men and very masculine women—in particular the Faye Dunaway character.

In postmodern terms, the “grand narrative” has collapsed (Bergquist, 1993). Along with this collapse comes the challenge of lost or abandoned spirit. It is not incidental that the field of professional coaching arose at the time when the many challenges of postmodernism emerged (Bergquist, 2022a; Bergquist, 2022b). The widely accepted, abiding truths in our society are no longer viable and there is nothing to replace them. Like Howard Beale, we are all left in a vacuum and look in vain for a solid source of truth. As mature men and women we are particularly vulnerable to this collapse of the grand narrative. We have reached the highest point in our career only to discover, as did Howard Beale, that those truths which do seem to endure are ugly. They are based in ego and greed rather than in any sense of rationality or community welfare.

Later mid-life men and women often discover in addition that they have exchanged their freedom for the achievement of high social status and power. George Orwell (2009) writes of this tradeoff in his short story, *Shooting an Elephant*. The esteemed and powerful white leader of an Indian village, during the years of the British Empire, must kill a rogue elephant that is threatening the villagers. He hates the idea of killing this magnificent beast. Yet because he is at the top of the social order in this village, he finds himself walking down a path preparing to shoot the elephant. At this moment, the white male leader discovers that he has traded his freedom (to say “no” in this instance) for social status and power.

One of our Sage leaders offers insights about this shift in perspective that results not from serving as the leader in an Indian village, but from recognizing that he finds the greatest generative gratification in engaging activities of a much humbler and less "spirited" nature:

I have only been on one board here in Nevada County for which I eventually became president. That is Sierra Writers, and I have chaired the non-fiction critique group for about ten years. I also enjoy doing specific projects for a variety of non-profits here: ushering for Music in the Mountains, collecting tickets, writing newspaper articles, painting, or preparing food for workers at Habitat, working at the church fair-booth, and assisting at the Food Bank on occasion. I am also quite involved in the Sage Leadership Project. I like working alongside people now more than heading up any organization, paid or not. I got tired of committee meetings and bureaucracy.

This may be one of the most important truths that mid-life men and women must confront as they engage in Generativity—and that a professional coach can help their mid-life client address. We gain power in exchange for freedom. We find spirit but it is a constrained spirit. We seek out positions of formal influence, only to find that we aren't really making much of a difference in the world. Ironically, it seems that we must often defy (or at least step outside of) the system that got us to the top in the first place to confront and alter this truth. This is one of Chayefsky’s most haunting images in *Network*. We witness Howard Beale, a man in later mid-life, go mad and become “madder than hell,” as a way of discovering his own freedom.

At other times, men and women find in later midlife that they have lost all truths as a result of social revolution or massive technological change. They are left without any foundation. One of us worked in and wrote about women and men living in Estonia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. (Bergquist and Weiss, 1994) Many of the men, and some of the women, seemed to be wandering around in a haze. They lost their ideology or their base of opposition to the dominant ideology. Now what do they do? Where do their abstract thinking and their spirit find a new home?

Most of the Estonian women were able to adjust. They were accustomed to “making-do”, to adjusting, to living everyday life. The revolution did not really change their routines. The revolution only changed the

ideology. With the collapse of the “grand narrative” in Western culture, we may similarly find our colleagues, and perhaps ourselves, wandering about, unable to find a new source of spirit and guidance.

At the highest point in our career (maximum ego inflation and ego gratification) we are likely to fall from grace like Icarus, even if we don’t go “mad” like Howard Beale and seek out freedom. We fall from grace precisely because our success breeds envy and power plays. Our age suggests vulnerability to other people. They assume that we are now on our way “out”—or soon will be—or we have already departed and like the Jack Nicholson character in *About Schmidt* find that our carefully prepared recommendations and succession plans have been thrown in the garbage by our successors. Our long tenure in the organization may breed impatience among those who are younger and waiting their turn to take over. We may even come to realize, painfully, that our own egos and our own internal demons (unattended voices) breed mistakes, miscalculations, and a failure to grasp reality. Like Icarus, we fall back to Earth. We are forced to grovel and return to the mundane. Hopefully, a professional coach is there to ease the fall and to assist us in learning something important from this fall.

Generativity of the Soul

While Generativity of the Spirit is primarily concerned with accomplishment and agency, Generativity of the Soul concerns connection and communion. It concerns discovery of that about which we *truly and deeply care*. If Kotre is correct in suggesting that the primary motive behind the generative impulse is a desire to live beyond ourselves, then is the search for soul essentially a quest for some form of immortality? We live in a secular world—does this mean that generativity and deep caring are the ways in which we continue, in some way, to live beyond our death? Does this mean that when we are serving as generative coaches there is an inevitable movement into the domain of spirituality?

Generativity resides "on stage" throughout our adult life, but it becomes more powerful and more often at center stage as we grow older. The allure of generativity might increase as we grow older precisely because we come to realize that most of our life lies behind us rather than ahead. We are facing what Rudolph Otto (1923) calls the "numinous": a great chasm that is devoid of all meaning and that resides at the end of life. We have a strong desire to live somehow beyond our current self. We wish to fill this chasm with generative accomplishments and a lingering memory of good will among those who outlive us. As coaches are we ready to join our clients in exploring this chasm. Like Virgil in *Dante's Inferno*, are we willing to serve as a guide through the numinous-laden hinterland of our client's psyche? And does this require that we have done some exploring in our own hinterland?

In *It's a Wonderful World*, George Bailey needed to attend first to his crisis of the spirit. He needed to address his concern about not being a success in life and about facing the challenge of financial insolvency. Then by the end of the movie, with the assistance of his angelic “coach” (Clarence), George could attend to his soul—a soul which was so powerfully represented in the Capra myth of hearth, home and the fabled Christmases of bygone years. George didn't just want to be remembered after his death as a good and decent man; he wanted to live at the moment, while still very much alive, in a state of generative rebirth. O'Donohue (2004) states this truth in a similar manner:

The primal energy of our soul holds a wonderful warmth and welcome for us. One of the reasons we were sent onto the earth was to make this connection with ourselves, this inner friendship. The demons will haunt us if we remain afraid. All the classical mythical adventures externalize the demons. In battle with them, the hero always grows, ascending to new levels of creative and poise. Each inner demon holds a precious blessing that will heal and free you.

In his masterful analysis of generativity, McAdams might be inclined to identify George Bailey's story as a narrative of redemption. It seems that generativity is, at the very least, an effort to somehow redeem our own life as we come toward the end of it. In his own assessment of late life developmental challenges (as illustrated in the movie, *Wild Strawberries*), Erik Erikson (Erikson, Erikson and Kivnick, 1986) writes about the need for each of us to forgive ourselves for the mistakes we have inevitably made in our life. Does all of this mean that forgiveness of self is one of the major themes for us as professional coaches to address with our older clients?

McAdams similarly writes about forgiveness (redemption) and aligns this forgiveness and redemption with the psychological and spiritual pull toward generativity (McAdams and Logan, 2004, p. 25):

What is the connection between redemption and generativity? First, some adults see their own generativity efforts as explicit attempts to redeem their own lives. . . . Second, generativity itself entails an implicit understanding of human redemption. The hard work that the highly generative adult displays in his or her efforts to promote the well-being of future generations may entail a good deal of pain, suffering, and sacrifice. But the hardships of today may pay off in the future. Sense of sacrifice and hard work, therefore, may lead to scenes of blessing and reward – a redemption sequence of sorts. (McAdams and Logan, 2004, p. 26)

A similar perspective is offered by Yamada:

I suggest that generativity concerns not only future generations for which we cannot care directly. It seems to me that generativity should be interpreted as an intergenerational life cycle or in an even broader sense as a spiritual life cycle implying continuity of life that stretches both forward and backward. I do not mean that we should accept the existence of the soul, the spirit, reincarnation, or an afterlife. Rather, I think that we should acknowledge the question of afterlife may be a universal dilemma for all of humankind. . . . A redefined generativity responds to humankind's deepest need for the succession of life by acknowledging the continuity of life, death and rebirth. (Yamada, 2004, p. 109)

Perhaps it is inevitable as a professional coach working with late-life clients that these soul-ful concerns are being addressed.

Ego Deflation and Wounding

At the very least, the soulful struggle with ego deflation must be addressed by those clients who have fallen at some point in their late midlife from a position of power or at least visibility. Several years ago, an article in a local paper appeared regarding a man who formerly was a major league baseball manager. He was now living in Maine. The ex-manager talked about going fishing each day and babysitting his granddaughter. He was not sure whether he would like another tour in leading a major league team. Like this ex-manager, many of us are forced to deal with the soulful loss of status and pride.

However, alongside this ego-deflation challenge might come a new sense of freedom. We no longer have to kill the elephant, nor do we have to struggle for success and recognition. We might learn to find gratification in the mundane and every-day. With the assistance of a coach, we can even find a new “more domestic” (Generativity One) pathway toward gratification. A colleague of ours went through his own traumatic ego-deflation, having been deposed as president of a major nonprofit organization. His wife speaks about how wonderful it is to see her husband tend his garden every morning before listening to his phone messages. He acknowledges the important lessons he is learning about himself through his gardening.

One of our Sage leaders had the following to say about his own transformation into soul-full Generativity:

After my own fall from grace [as the leader of an educational institution], I tended my ailing mother, cooked meals when I was alone as well as with my wife, did yard work and composting, and took time to write lyrics and poems. I let my hours of sleep be dictated by the sun rather than a watch. I spent considerable time at my cottage, which is a very feminine and soulful place. I also spent special time with women who have served as my guides. All of this relates directly to my own personal soul work.

A wounded adult in mid-life is often someone who has fallen from grace or has never attained the heights of which they dreamed. If our wounded mid-century remains wounded, they will go on to wound their sons daughters and fellow employees, as well as society> This is especially like to occur if the “wounded warrior” remains in a position of leadership. King Lear is a man gone mad as a result of confrontation with fearsome male forces and a turning to the soul. He soars to the height of his power. He flaunts his power, inflates his own ego, then falls and goes mad. Jane Smiley (2003) rewrites the Lear story from a female perspective in *A Thousand Acres*. The father in Smiley’s novel is playing games of power, while his children are dying. The father is stagnation and this stagnation is contagious.

How many stories concerning the fall from grace do we find among political figures in Washington, DC? How many sad stories of ego inflation and deflation come from inside the Washington Beltway? Other people around these powerful men and women helped elevate them and inflated their egos. These assistants and loyalists also protected these powerful figures from the real world. Ironically, these aides have often helped bring their bosses back down to earth. They have exposed them, shifted loyalties, and misinterpreted their aspirations and plans to their subordinates or the media. These powerful women and men inside the Washington Beltway must confront their own reality and madness in order to begin the journey inward toward the soul. Is the alarm bell being sounded to bring in professional coaches to work with the beltway wounded. Can a generative society ever be build to support these coaches and pull the wounded politicians toward renewal and new forms of generative leadership?

Nurturing Generativity: Building the Bridge Between Spirit and Soul

In essence, the work of generative men and women involves moving inward as well as outward. Like the wandering Ulysses, we must return home to Ithaca—to our family, our organization, our community and our own inner life. We must cross the border into new worlds and new experiences. We must ultimately bridge the chasm between soul and spirit. One of our Sage leaders reflects on this bridge in his own life:

Early in my own life I repeatedly dreamed at night of this bridging and integrating process. I now realize that this dream was preparing me for my future life, as do many repetitive dreams in our lives. I dreamed of climbing a flower-strewn mountain. This mountain rose up singularly and impressively from a plain. I now realize that it was a strong image of spirit and of masculine achievement for me. Near the top of the mountain there was always a cave. This was a hide-away. I looked forward to reaching this cave while climbing up the mountain. The hideaway was always damp.

He moves deeper by reflecting on a project engaged during his childhood:

This cave closely resembled a “clubhouse” that my brother and I built as small boys living in Illinois. We dug a big hole in the ground and covered it with plywood. The clubhouse wasn’t very pleasant. It was very dirty and offered little light. It soon was filled with water and spiders; yet, for a

brief period of time this clubhouse represented safety and a respite from our schoolwork and family responsibilities. It was an enduring image for me of a soulful presence in my life. Similarly, the cave in my dream represented safety and a respite from the climb. The dream has taught me that I need to blend the spirit of the mountain and my climb up the mountain, with the soul work of the cave and “clubhouse.”

Quiet Generativity: Finding Truth and Being Honest

As mature men and women, we must move beyond our dancing to tunes that other people are playing. If we are to be truly the guardians of values (Generativity Three), the mentors and motivators to other people (Generativity Two) and the advocates for and promoter of civic causes (Generativity Four), then we must discover that which does seem to be true and of value in a world that challenges both truth and veracity. We must move beyond getting by and fitting in. As one of our Sage leaders puts it regarding her own life:

When I reflect on how I have changed over the years, the first thing that comes to mind is that when I was younger, I needed a title to make me feel that it was o.k. to be a leader. As I have gotten older, it's just who I am. Take it or leave it. It's probably not waiting to be empowered, it's just being who I am – saying I can do that. People will either accept the help or they won't. If they don't, if the door doesn't open, then that's not the right place for me. It's just knowing that.

One of our Sage leaders describes her own transition away from personal ambition and power. She stated it this way:

In thinking back over my work life, I have found I became less able to put a good face on things when I didn't really want to. Earlier in my work I could do this because it helped me to nurture my career and advancement. If I had a bad boss, I could suck it up and live with it. And when I had a good boss, I'd enjoy being able to grow. So, I went through that phase of my career where I was able to be whatever I had to be, not just to get ahead but to get the job done. After I got into my 50s, however, I became less and less patient with bad leadership. It was a good thing I retired when I did at 55 because I don't think I could have continued to put on a good face when it wasn't warranted.

Another of our Sage leaders came to a similar conclusion regarding the work he had been doing and what he now does:

The same thing holds with my experiences in the nonprofit world. I often get to a point of frustration where I just say, “Screw it. The governance is so broken that I'm not going to bat my head against the wall anymore.” What this means is that I can be extremely effective in the right environment but no longer have any interest in putting on a good face in a lousy environment. I'd rather walk away from it and plant myself somewhere else.

We must move beyond "being good IN the world" to a place of seeking to be "good FOR the world." (Jones, 2020) The key is to somehow combine the spirit-ful caring that comes with engaging the world with agency, energy and vision, with the soul-ful caring that comes with persistent and often less-visible acts of communion and what we identified in an earlier essay as "quiet generativity". A professional coach can assist us in finding or creating this combination. It is a matter of discernment between that which pulls us toward continual self-aggrandizement (a spirit-ful search toward best IN the world) and that which pulls us toward a soul-ful being the best FOR the world. The Push (need for achievement) from our personally-ambitious side can be strong and compelling. A Discernment Coach can assist in drawing this often-elusive and

delicate distinction—and supporting their client in working toward a greater good (Freedman and Bergquist, 2021).

The Nature of Deep Caring

Living in a world and society many centuries removed from our own, Plato offers us an important insight when suggesting that our fear of death is partially assuaged through generativity. He observed that we seek out multiple ways to be generative to ensure that we live beyond ourselves in at least one domain of our life. (Wakefield, 1998, pp. 152-163) Do we engage in good deeds, as Plato suggests, in order to be honored by other people and to be spoken of after our death as a person of integrity – a person who led a "good life." In essence, are all (or most) of us pushed by an internal wish for immortality but also pulled by an external society-based incentive to be both ambitious (agency) and virtuous (communion)?

Are immortality and virtue intertwined. As Ernest Becker (1973, p. 11) suggests, do we seek to be heroic in our caring for other people and institutions as a means to deny or even defy death? In alignment with both Plato and Becker, Wakefield (1998, p. 163) offers the following straightforward observation about humankind:

[I]t makes people happy to know that they will be admired after they are gone for the same reason that it makes them happy to know that they are admired while they are alive by people they have never met; in fact people just like to be admired, irrespective of where when or by whom.

One of our Sage leaders offers an equally straightforward observation about the generative motive associated with aging:

I think it was Justice Black of the US Supreme Court who said, “All of the rules of relevancy are simply related to a realistic acceptance of the concession of the shortness of life.” If we were going to live 300 years, we’d have plenty of time to endlessly talk things through. But as we get older, we’d like to see progress made on some things before we are sent to the crematorium or planted in the back 40 under a little stone. This isn’t a dress rehearsal, so let’s get on with it and see if we can really get something achieved.

We respectfully suggest that Plato, Becker, Wakefield and our Sage leader are only partially right. We certainly seek a form of immortality through the good deeds that we perform in life and long for a linking remembrance as a good person who led a decent and caring life. There seems to be something more, however, to the search for soul through generativity. Living beyond ourselves seems to be something more than the desire for immortality. It seems, ultimately, to be about *actions of deep caring* that extend us in space and time beyond our current concerns and our current reality. We are pushed by our desire to care deeply and are pulled by society’s need for deep caring. We live beyond ourselves not only to outlive our self, but also to contribute in an extended and sustained manner to the welfare of our family, our community, and our world.

What then, in essence, is deep caring and how is it supported by professional coaching services?? We have proposed in this set of essays that deep caring, as manifest in an act of generativity, is about extending time and space. As coaches we can help guide this extension. Deep caring is more than a single act of generosity. As McAdams and his colleagues have proposed, deep caring and generativity are more than an orientation toward altruism: “Generativity, unlike simple altruism or general prosocial behavior, involves the creation of a product or legacy in one’s own image, a powerful extension of the self.” (McAdams, Hart and Maruna, 1998, p. 25)

More than altruism, which involves doing something good in the world for its own sake, generativity involves sustained "good works." As a professional coach we can be in the business of helping a client translate altruism into action—thereby coupling a push toward doing good with a set of actions that actually bring about the good. Generativity provides opportunities for mentoring and motivation. It involves organizing a parade that is intended to be a yearly event or building a monument that will endure for many centuries. It involves leading a community project that impacts many people, directly and indirectly. For the professional coach, a nurturing of generativity is based on the opening of a vista regarding generativity options.

The goal of a professional coach who is oriented toward their client's generativity has been clearly articulated by one of our Sage leaders. In offering two simple examples, this leader captures the fundamental nature of generativity and deep caring. Several generative pathways are identified that extend both time and space beyond the single act of good will:

Nurturing writers and then seeing them get published has given me much meaning and satisfaction. There is also nothing more rewarding than seeing a single-parent family getting a house for the first time after spending hundreds of hours working on a Habitat site to realize that dream.

Given the insights offered by McAdmas and our Sage Leader (along with Plato, Becker and Wakefield) we would propose that deep caring is more than just a narcissistic desire to extend and outlive ourselves. Immortality is a part of the generative incentive. It can push us. However, the need for immortality is not the entire soulful nature of generativity and deep caring. There is something more that resides at the heart of generativity and that is enhanced—and pulled—by one's residence in a generative society. We identify this something more as a virtue – the virtue of deep caring to which we turn in conclusion.

Conclusions

Carol Gilligan (1982) is one of the developmental theorists who have built upon the foundation established by Erik Erikson. However, she has expanded on and modified Eriksonian theory in several important ways. First, Gilligan has sought to capture a portrait of adult development that is less often aligned with men and more often aligned with women (and both men and women living in many nonwestern cultures). She writes about women finding their voice, rather than just expressing themselves through more masculine action. In many ways, Gilligan has placed greater emphasis on the communal side of generativity than on the agency side.

Gilligan also describes a contextual process of reasoning and decision making that moves beyond the emphasis placed by Erikson (and many other developmental theorists) on the capacity for abstraction and consistency irrespective of the context in decisions are being made and outcomes produced. In this re-envisioning of the reasoning process, Gilligan seems to align with a model of generativity that emphasizes diversity of generative roles and engaging generative roles within the context of a larger play and a more generative society. For Gilligan, generative push does not exist independent of generative pull. Proximal is intertwined with distal.

Perhaps of greatest importance with regard to generativity is Gilligan's portrait of mature adult development as an embrace of care as a fundamental virtue in life. It is necessary, according to Gilligan (1982, p.98), that we recognize "the importance throughout life of the connection between the universality of the need for compassion and care. The concept of the separate self and of moral principles uncompromised by the constraints of reality is an adolescent ideal . . ."

As we have done in this set of essays, Gilligan expands the notion of care in both space and time. As a result:

. . . the notion of care expands from the paralyzing injunction not to hurt others to an injunction to act responsively toward self and others and thus to sustain connection. A consciousness of the dynamics of human relationship then becomes central to moral understanding, joining the heart and the eye in an ethic that ties the activity of thought to the activity of care. (Gilligan, 1982, p. 149)

Thus, the ethic or (more broadly conceived) virtue of deep caring becomes a thoughtful, sustained initiative engaged through all four of the generative roles we have identified in this set of essays. It extends time and space, offering a bridge of creation and caring tying together multiple generations within the context of a generative society: “The virtue of care ties together different generations, promotes exchange between generations, and passes on values from generation to generation. Thus, generativity includes both *creating* and *caring*.” (Imada, 2004, p. 91)

We have journeyed through many ideas and narratives offered by many generative players in this series of essays. We have gained insights about deep caring through this journey and hope that you, the reader, have also learned something about why and how people engage in deep caring. We also hope that you have gained insights and ideas about how one might most effectively operate as a generativity-oriented coach. We have offered several titles for coaches that seek to enhance generativity - these titles ranging from Discernment coach to Family coach. Take your pick . . .

We conclude by turning back to where we started-- by offering the thoughts about caring offered by Erik Erikson, the wise visionary who first initiated this journey of discovery about generativity more than fifty years ago: “*Caring is the widening concern for what has been generated by love, necessity, or accident; it overcomes the ambivalence adhering to irreversible obligation.*” [Italics in the original] (E. Erikson, 1964, p. 131) These are words to live by and to guide our work as a professional coach.

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