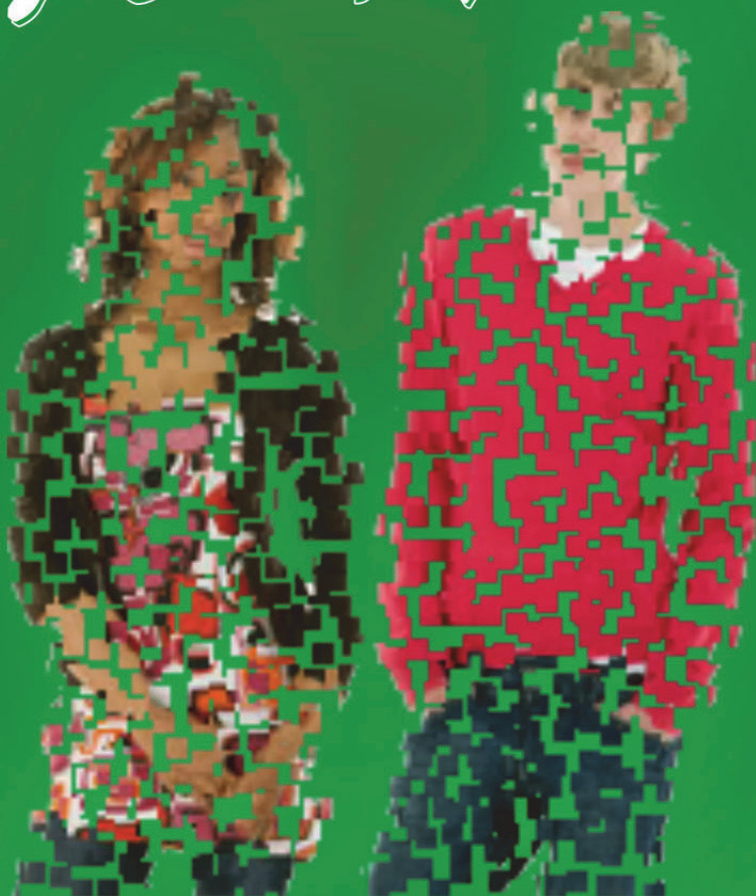


Moments with Youth



Mark Krueger

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Mark Krueger

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Published January 2015

ISBN 978-1-928212-13-3

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The CYC-Net Press

An imprint of Pretext Publishing

P.O. Box 23199, Claremont 7735 SOUTH AFRICA

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contents

Foreword	viii
February 2002	
Time and Motion	17
April 2002	
Place	19
October 2002	
Basket Hold	20
April 2003	
We can't place ourselves in someone else's shoes, but we can try. . . .	23
July 2003	
On Juxtaposition	25
August 2003	
On Vac.	28
November 2003	
The Alley.	32
January 2004	
On the Spot	37
February 2004	
Positioning	38
March 2004	
"Let's walk to your room together"	40
April 2004	
Community youth work	42
September 2004	
Leaving things unresolved.	45
October 2004	
Edward Hopper and the Existential Hum	47
November 2004	
Anatomy of a Scene	49
December 2004	
Love: the who or what and Thanksgiving	51

January 2005	
The Morality of Writing	58
February 2005	
Beach Scene	61
March 2005	
The Seventh Moment	63
April 2005	
The Team Meeting: A Short Three-Act Play.	66
May 2005	
Inside the actor's studio	73
June 2005	
The Team Meeting: Act II	75
July 2005	
The Team Meeting: Act III.	81
August 2005	
Pueblo	87
September 2005	
Corey the Bike Fixer	91
October 2005	
Reflecting and talking of New Orleans.	96
November 2005	
Reflecting on Conferences, Playgrounds, Camps and Churches	101
December 2005	
Weave and Bop; Dip and Slide	105
February 2006	
Talking structure, control, and consistency	107
March 2006	
Waiting, Anticipating, Space and Place	109
April 2006	
Motion and Stillness	114
May 2006	
Passing through, lining up, and basketball	119
June 2006	
“No Farting in My Van”.	122

July 2006	
Lunch 101	125
August 2006	
More thoughts on Power	128
November 2006	
Careless to caring for troubled youth: A caregiver's inside view of the youth care system	134
December 2006	
Exploring Class and Critical Race Theory: Rethinking how we/I might have gone wrong in developing the profession	140
January 2007	
Bulls and White Nights.	150
February 2007	
Monks in Training for War	153
March 2007	
Beyond Beats and Rhymes: Looking For Leadership.	158
April 2007	
Triage.	163
May 2007	
The New Salons	167
July 2007	
The Wall	169
September 2007	
Death, beauty and other paradoxes.	172
November 2007	
Peace.	175
December 2007	
Where the landfills used to be.	182
February 2008	
What's in our library for doing child and youth care? "Well, dah!" . . .	184
April 2008	
Of, with, in, act. Do, move and be: Defining relational work	187
June 2008	
Initial reflections on the 'talk smart institute' and relating.	189
August 2008	
More thoughts about place	194

September 2008	
"Home".	199
October 2008	
Poems and rhizomes	204
November 2008	
Noise	209
January 2009	
Images of Thought	212
February 2009	
Breaking the tiles	214
March 2009	
The closing: Alinsky revisited	217
April 2009	
Something is amiss.	223
May 2009	
Careless to caring: Still a long way to go.	226
June 2009	
The "divine" child and youth care "milieu".	230
July 2009	
Detachment/Attachment.	235
August 2009	
Fragmentation.	241
September 2009	
What happened to Carlos?.	247
December 2009	
Lessons of youth and activism from Camus' The First Man	252
November 2009	
Czeslaw Milosz and W.S. Merwin on being here with youth	260
February 2010	
Lost places.	265
March 2010	
Thelonious Monk and the jazz of youth work	270
April 2010	
Seen through the eyes of a child: the El Salto discussions	273

May 2010	
Pictures of praxis	277
June 2010	
El Salto reflections	280
July 2010	
Remembering first days at Ranch Ehrlo	282
August 2010	
Modern parenting	285
September 2010	
Where are the borders?.	289
October 2010	
In the spaces between	293
December 2010	
Post Program Identity	295
February 2011	
Poetics and the Language of Youth Work	298
March 2011	
In the Words of Young Poets.	301
April 2011	
Drop In	305
August 2011	
Growing Our Cultural Center	309
October 2011	
The Place for Classics	311

Foreword

Gerry Fewster

Mark Krueger was the most prolific writer in Child and Youth Care. For me, and many others, he was also the most profound. His stories – he called them “sketches” – are multi-layered narratives that beckon us into the underworld of practice and leave us to find our own way back. His insights – he called them “musings” – pose endless questions and leave us to create our own answers. It wasn’t his style to tell others, whether adults or kids, what to think, what to feel, or what to do. Rather, he challenged us to match his own insatiable curiosity, and, if we had something to say, he would listen, not as a judge, but as a learner. What a writer, what a teacher, what a youth worker!

Mark was never at ease with certainty. He mistrusted the experts and gurus who claimed to have the truth. His heroes were those who took the risk to break free from the bondage of worn out prescriptions to delve into the underlying chaos of their own experience – whether they happened to be James Joyce, Albert Camus, or the kid who just told him to “fuck off and die.” This wasn’t an intellectual stance concocted for academic or professional purposes; it was an authentic reflection of how he chose to lead his own life: “... *the major challenge in child and youth care is to understand, not change or prove, as we are so often led to believe today ... When (this profession) can understand, it will understand itself.*”

Mark was equally ill at ease with purpose. His curiosity was driven by a need to make sense of his world rather than by personal ambition or ‘measurable’ outcomes. Impressive as they were, his academic, professional, and literary achievements were never taken as fodder for the ego, but as opportunities for defining his place in a world he needed to understand. He was a man constantly in motion, moving with the flow to sense the underlying pulse or rhythm that connected him to the whole. He was a runner:

"I run everyday because I enjoy moving. Frequently, after the initial pain subsides and the endorphins kick in, I get runners high. Time is lost and everything is in synch. I can go for several blocks and not remember the distance in between. You might also say it is my flow or optimal experience, and as such is a metaphor for how hard work leads to fulfillment in life."

Mark preferred metaphor to concept, not only in his writing but as a way of illuminating his own experience. He preferred images to abstractions because they were alive. And he preferred themes to details because they were expansive, always in motion. These were the flexible parameters that allowed him to remain open, free from the shackles of consensual knowledge and beliefs. This doesn't mean he spent his time wandering aimlessly in a solipsistic haze. He was a researcher and his methods were as disciplined and rigorous as any to be found in the traditional scientific realm. He was a pioneer and, like all diligent explorers, he created anchor points that defined his location on the planet, such as the old Pavilion in his beloved Milwaukee, and his lakeside cabin in the woods. He kept a log book, rich and detailed pageants of the past, to monitor his course through the flow of time. And he used his work as an affirmation of his identity, a secure place in an irrational and precarious world.

For much of his life, Mark's primary laboratory was the ubiquitous discipline of Child and Youth Care. Here he was free to pursue his own course without being compromised by professional labels and repetitive practices. Much as he was devoted to the development of Child and Youth Care, he refused to be influenced by its changing fads and fashions. His need to understand his world depended more upon retaining his innocence than accumulating the packaged wisdom of the experts or complying with the demands of the controllers. So, did he have a problem with authority? Yes, he did.

As a fledgling youth worker, Mark came to believe he would never understand the kids unless he was equally committed to understanding himself: *"This desire to understand makes me human. I want to know other, the world around me and myself ... and therefore I am."* The essence of his work was to find the elusive balance between his desire to help kids take charge of their lives and his need to create a space in which his own life could be

experienced and expressed. To make this happen he would have to be fully present and available in the moment. There could be no pre-determined outcomes, only a process, a mutual encounter of learning and understanding.

It was a challenge that called him into action as much as reflection. On the topic of motion, he wrote:

"As a youth and youth worker I was constantly in motion. I was moving, doing something. Motion was always there at the edge of my consciousness. It was something I did, heard and/or flowed between us that I could not quite understand, yet vital to knowing my experience and the experiences of others. The titles of my novels were "In Motion" and "Floating" because these emphasize the meaning and importance of motion in work with youth. Put simply, we are more often in motion than not.

Sometimes I think of motion as the existential hum or rumble beneath the surface that we often feel and hear, a life force perhaps. Motion is also, as Aristotle said, the mode in which the future and the present are one, or perhaps a state in which we can be totally in the moment. And then motion is just plain movement, or getting from here to there, or nowhere, the moment without which it is impossible to be alive."

As a teacher, Mark was never one to spout theory. He resisted any external belief system that might deny, deflect, or distort the truth of his own experience. The knowledge he valued could only be accumulated through direct engagement with others and the world waiting to be known. For this he had no road map and would politely detach himself from anybody who offered one. Freedom comes to those who have the courage to step into the unknown, and understanding comes to those who can remain grounded within themselves to make sense of whatever they discover. He urged his students to go out into the chaos, examine their own thoughts and feelings, create their own meanings ... and report back. He didn't lecture; he discussed. He always acknowledged honesty and challenged conclusions, whether he agreed with them or not. It wasn't about education – it was about learning. In other words, he worked

with his students the same way he worked with himself and the kids in the residential centre.

As a writer, Mark's most trusted source of material was his personal journal. Unlike most academics, he wrote for himself, not as a strategy to influence, impress, or educate others. This was the medium he used to create meaning from what he was seeing, thinking, and feeling. Readers looking for clarity and resolution may find this disturbing. Images and metaphors may illuminate but they don't explain or resolve anything. And that's exactly how he wanted it to be. His intention was to 'see, show, and tell' rather than define, analyze, and conclude. He wanted to understand rather than explain and, for him, the expressive arts of literature, music, and painting, offered a deeper and more revealing representation of human life than the data collected in the name of science. He didn't write textbooks. To fully grasp the essence of his work, readers must begin by suspending disbelief as if watching a play or reading a novel. In his narratives, he is always the central character, the main protagonist, moving through time and place and coming to reflective stillness. The challenge is not to objectify, classify, or follow him, but to join him as a companion who is also seeking to understand. Readers who come to see him as a separate person are left to reflect on their own stories and create their own meanings. He would have asked no more from a fellow traveller.

Mark was passionate about Child and Youth Care. For him, it was a means to enhance the lives of young people, particularly those who struggled to find expression and meaning in the backwaters and war zones of North American cities. His desire to see and understand what "is" was in constant dialogue with his growing sense of injustice. On this topic he didn't hesitate to let his values and beliefs be known:

"Every city, town, and country has its oppressive places run by the control, and sometimes religious, 'freaks' who think of space and place mostly as a chance to restrict and shape personalities for a future as cold, closed, and limited as the place in which they find themselves. These controlling places try to make consumers, religious crusaders, and employees out of children instead of fulfilled and happy youth who have a chance to become their dreams. The workers and leaders live above, not 'among' the children and families. The signs on

their doors and walls have messages that 'come down' from some mysterious higher authority. Presidents, preachers, gods and captains from a place unfamiliar to anything democratic, spiritual, or humane."

This doesn't mean he aligned himself with the simplistic conclusion that residential programs should be abolished or used only as a last resort. On the contrary, he believed we should create spaces and places in which child and youth care workers could become directly involved in the day-to-day lives of the kids in their care "... *'homes' –cabins, cottages, hang outs, playgrounds, and woodland and mountain temples of hope ... programs that invite, inspire, value, and respect the creative and intellectual capacity of each young person to find his or her way with the guidance of a fulfilled adult.*" He considered Child and Youth Care a movement as much as a profession:

"My dream is for a contemporary civilian conservation corps of young people who would build these places with adults – 'habitats of humanity' across the land, not just the wood frame habitats, but the parks, streams, lakes, playgrounds, schools and streets where everyone walked and played with their heads up. And we could easily pay for it with the money we have spent blowing up the other places."

When it came to methods of practice, Mark wasn't about to be influenced by those who argued that diagnosis and treatment were the key to becoming a real profession. He had no interest in tagging kids with concocted disorders, setting arbitrary goals, standardizing prescriptive interventions, and measuring meaningless outcomes. Such strategies belonged to the control freaks and had no place in the profession he had in mind. For him, the problems are not inherent in the kids themselves but in the poverty of their relational histories and the repressive nature of the social order. The primary task of the youth care worker is to understand the experience of each young person and support him or her in developing a sense of Self capable of throwing off the shackles. And the task of the profession as a whole is to share this understanding with anyone prepared to listen.

Mark's quest for understanding inevitably took him beyond the pragmatics of day-to-day child and youth care practice and into the realm of philosophy: "*There is something about philosophers that I can hear, but don't quite understand.*" Yet even in this daunting arena he didn't simply devote himself to whatever the masters had to say; he carefully selected those who seemed to understand *him*. Having come to see himself as an active, feeling, and thinking being, a product of his past, and the creator of his future, he was naturally drawn to the diverse philosophy of existentialism. He singled out the French novelist Albert Camus whose personal struggle to free himself from the repression of his past seemed very much like his own. It would be a mistake to assume that he identified with Camus, Becket, Satre, or Dostoyevsky. They were simply the carriers of the light that served to illuminate the darkness that constantly beckoned from the periphery of his awareness and understanding.

It would also be a mistake to conclude that Mark's fascination with philosophy was a conscious, or unconscious, attempt to abandon his laboratory in Child and Youth Care. Given the prevalence of rationalist thinking in this profession it's far more likely to have been the other way around. Whatever he wrote, and whatever he said, he always invited responses from anyone who cared to step forward. In his early work, when he was primarily concerned with the role of the front-line worker, he was constantly engaged in dialogue and discussion with the party faithful. But the more he explored the labyrinth of his own curiosity, the less responsive his audiences became. Many of his 'followers' (how he despised that word) fell by the wayside arguing that he was no longer concerned with the real issues of working with kids, and had wandered off into the esoteric and impersonal forest of literature and philosophy. Nothing could be further from the truth. Anyone with an open mind and artless curiosity will clearly see that his later work offers the most personal, insightful, and far-reaching picture of what working with kids is really about. Along the way, they will be treated to some of the finest writing to be found anywhere in the literature of Child and Youth Care, or in any other human service profession for that matter. The writer had found his 'voice' and the alarming simplicity of this complex man is there for anyone prepared to listen.

In the years before his death, Mark Krueger had to come to terms with a debilitating and disfiguring condition. To regard himself as a victim would have been an unthinkable violation of all he had come to know and believe. Caught up in the monolithic and impersonal world of the medical system, the precarious nature of the human condition was painfully apparent – power, authority, status, control, pretension, and arrogance, overriding the simple qualities of caring, compassion, and connection – the ‘skimmed milk’ of human kindness. True to form, he steered his own course through the fortress, demanding that his medical specialists communicate with each other and begin to work as a team. And he kept on running, not as an attempt to avoid the obvious, but as a way of staying present in the otherwise intolerable moment. Rather than seek out others for sympathy or support he preferred to nestle down in his favourite coffee shop with his laptop and a book, no longer engaging others, but always watching them, still seeking to understand.

This volume contains sketches and muses published by CYC Online between February, 2002 and October, 2011. They are part of a rich legacy left by a brilliant and unique contributor to the literature of this profession. If you’re not familiar with his work there is so much more to be had. When Child and Youth care comes to understand Mark Krueger, it will have taken a major step in understanding itself.

A Personal Note

In this introduction I’ve used many words (2943 to be precise) to create a rough ‘sketch’ of my buddy Mark Krueger. But they’re only words, carved from the many moments and events we shared over the years. For the sake of integrity, mine and his, I need to say from the outset that these words are not about Mark at all – they are about my experience of him as one of the most significant and beloved figures in my life.

To underscore the point, Mark would never have approved of the word ‘beloved.’ Perhaps I would say he was discarding the most essential ingredient of being human. Perhaps he would say it was a diversion, a catchall used to avoid facing the ‘truth’ of what ‘is.’ What I *can* say is that, in our constant exchange of emails, I began to sign off with “Love, Fewster” while he continued to use such terms as “Peace Brother” on his end. To provoke him I decided to

increase the size of the “L” word with each successive message. He made no comment as the format of my emails became increasingly ludicrous. When it was obvious that I’d reached the limit of my computer fonts he finally capitulated with a message ending with “L, Marko.” Phew!

In the months before his death, his responses to my messages became increasingly nebulous and sporadic. Checking in with members of his family I discovered he was distancing himself from relationships in general. Selfishly, I continued to hope that I would be the exception. A few days before he died, his caring brother-in-law reminded him of my persistent efforts to maintain contact. He simply smiled and said, “Ya, Fewster is probably going nuts.” I comforted myself with the belief that he set about dying as he set about living, making his own decisions and taking full responsibility for the outcomes. Perhaps he has finally uncovered the simple beyond the complex.

p.s. – I can only guess what Mark might say about this Introduction. In all likelihood, he would begin with, “Too many words Fewster ... too many words.” Well to him I would borrow a line from the movie *The Full Monty* and say, “I love you ... you bugger.” To which he would probably reply, “Peace Bro.”

Time and Motion

Like youth work (our term for child and youth care work), this column can be thought of as a continuous journey.

I will begin to share some of the thoughts that have emerged from our study and from reading other stories by youth workers. The premise for our study, as well as this column, is that stories inform us and challenge us to think differently about youth work.

Time in youth work, for instance, is usually thought of as being linear. Workers and youth move forward in time. The clock governs the length of what they do. They plan activities on the hour or by the minute. Sometimes it is as if time rules what they do. What can we do with this hour? Or this day, and how can what we do fit with the allotted time. A youth gets a time out. Another youth gets a special time, each time fixed according to the clock.

But in youth workers' stories about their moments with youth, time is not always linear. An event often occurs in the context of past, present, and future, and not always in that order. Sometimes moments, like moments in great novels, spiral forward and back through stories. A youth feels connected to a worker and recalls it later with fondness. Or a youth struggles with a worker then later understands what the worker was trying to say.

Workers and youth are often lost in time, immersed in their activity. Time stands still or moves with them rather than forces them forward. They are with each other, their togetherness and involvement in that task at hand governing their activity as opposed to the clock.

Motion and time are often interconnected. Workers and youth move together through time. In this context, motion is, as Aristotle said, the mode in which the future and present are one. Workers and youth act with purpose in time and subsequently what they are

doing and where they are headed is in harmony. Their goal is to be in the moment or to do something purposeful for themselves or others, and subsequently time is embodied in what they do.

Their movements together connect them. They are as Henry Maier said, “rhythmically in synch.” While running or playing or struggling their movements are in harmony. Sometimes an existential hum also moves just beneath the surface. An inaudible sound that drives the characters forward, creating something at the edge of their reach that calls to them. It is as if they are riding this underlying current of sound toward a nonexistent sense of resolution only to discover that it is the journey upstream that matters.

These notions of time and motion, like many other phenomena in stories, challenge us to think differently about youth work. They encourage us to pay attention to time and motion in ways that we might not have otherwise. In the next Moments *With Youth* column, stories by youth workers about silence, another key phenomenon in the stories of youth workers, will be presented.

For more information about time and motion see:

Maier, H. (1992). Rhythmicity: A powerful force for experiencing unity and personal connections. *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*, 8, 7-13.

Magnuson, D., Baizerman, M., and Stringer, A. (2001). A moral praxis of child and youth care work. *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*, 15-16, 302-306.

Place

Youth work occurs in places. Physical places. Public and private places, places where youth can be alone or together *with* others, shared and separate spaces. Places that shape, violent, friendly, dull, exciting places – houses, parks and street corners. Places of boredom. Places where something might happen. Places where there is a sense of anticipation.

Workers and youth are in these places with one another, enmeshed in the space within, around, and between them, creating safe places, human places grounded in their presence. They try to understand places, their meanings changing as they change. They dance in and out of place, making it different with their presence. They long for place, the place of a youth's youth, their youth. They are in place with a sense of anticipation, vocation. They move in place and time, become lost in place, absorbed in what they are doing.

In James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* place gives the story meaning (linguistic self-consciousness) and is part of the lead character. Similarly in youth workers' stories, place shapes, houses, frees, liberates, controls, holds, contains them as they interact. A place is built, altered, shaped, left, entered, remembered, as an important part of the mood, tempo, tone and texture of who they are and what they do.

Thus, in *Moments With Youth*, place is an important theme just as are the themes of time, motion, and silence in our previous stories (see previous columns in *CYC-Online*).

For more about *place* read:

Baizerman, M. (1990–present). Musings with Mike. Regular column in *Child and Youth Care Forum*.

Childress, H. (2000). *Landscapes of Betrayal; Landscapes of Joy*. Albany New York: State University of New York Press.

Maier, H. (1987). The Space We Create Controls Us. In *Developmental Group Care of Children and Youth*. New York: Haworth Press.

October 2002

Basket Hold

In previous months, I shared stories from youth workers who are participating with me in a phenomenological inquiry we call 'Moments With Youth'. This is one of my own. I wrote it for our study as an example of one moment early in my career when I was trying to decide what to do with my life. In this context, it was one of many moments that helped me realize I was where I was supposed to be.

Daniel gets up from his chair in the lobby of the residential treatment center and approaches, his T- shirt tattered and his face wind-burned from several days on the streets. He's 14.

"I'm Mark, I'll be your child and youth care worker," I hold out my hand. I'm 23.

He continues walking. I walk alongside and motion for him to enter the office.

"Hi Daniel, I'm Nicole, your therapist," she holds out her hand.

No response.

"Before Mark takes you upstairs I wanted to tell you a little about our program," Nicole says.

"I don't give a fuck about the program!" He grabs a paperweight from Nicole's desk and throws it through her window.

I reach for him. He takes a swing at me. I duck and grab him around the waist. He pounds on my back. I quickstep behind him remembering my supervisor, Ernie's, instructions: "Grab both arms by the wrist and cross them in front of him, then put your knee behind his knee and dip like a basketball player taking the leap out of a re-bouncer in front of him, and collapse together to the floor. If he's small enough (Daniel just barely is) sit him in front of you with your legs hooked over his so he can't kick, his body cradled in your arms and your head tight to his so he can't butt you. Then prepare for a long wait. It helps to have something to support your back."

"Nicole, would you move that couch over here." My voice shakes. She gets on one end of the couch and pushes until it's between my back and the wall. The struggle is on. He twists like a dog trying to avoid a bath, shouts, "Your mother sucks cock! Your ol' lady sleeps with horses, cops, pigs!" The veins in his neck cord and his body strains like a stretched bow. My arms begin to ache. The sweat thickens. His hand breaks free. He turns and spits, then butts me in the nose. "Damn!" Fireflies flash in my eyes. Blood begins to run down on my chin.

"Are you, okay?" Nicole asks.

"Yes, I think so. Would you please grab his legs?"

She straddles his legs and holds them firm to the ground while I re-tighten my grip, wishing I could pull his arms up around his neck and choke him. He rests, then jerks like a fish out of water, rests and jerks again until gradually, like an engine slowing to idle, the tension subsides and we sit quietly, soaked in sweat, limbs intertwined, breaths as if coming from the same set of lungs. I look at the scars on his arms, several, almost perfectly round, circles. Sue told me his father put his cigarettes out on him.

"I'm going to let go of your left arm then your right one." We do this step by step until Daniel is standing across from me and Nicole is to our side.

I look out the window. It's raining. As large maple leaves slide down the glass, Nicole brings me a wet paper towel to wipe my nose and face. Daniel shows no remorse.

"I'll take him upstairs," I say to Nicole.

Together we climb the stairs. "Sticky suckers," Suzanne the woman I live with calls the odd mixture of urine and disinfectant that marks the place.

At the top of the stairs, I part the fire doors. The other boys are in school.

"Your room is down the hall," I say. He walks to my side, runs his shoulder along the wall. The treatment center was remodelled last year: earth tones replaced with pastels, large hospital rooms turned into smaller, dormitory rooms, each one housing two boys.

A grocery bag with his things is on the bed. He digs through it. "Bastards," he says. Ernie searches all the new boys things for

drugs and weapons. He takes out a T-shirt and pair of jeans, starts to change, then looks at me. "What are you queer or something?"

I give him a moment to change and unpack, wait outside the door with my back to the wall, once again questioning why I'm here. When I enter again he's sitting at the desk with a photo.

"Who's that?"

"None of your fuckin' business."

I don't respond.

"My sister."

"She's nice looking." Nicole told me she had been abused also.

"Why do you work here?"

"I'm not sure."

"So you can get your jollies, probably."

I change the subject. "Want a coke?"

He nods and we walk to the day room.

I keep an eye on him as I buy cokes from the vending machine then sit across from one another at a small table. He sips his coke, looks down, then up.

"Your shoe's untied." He stares at me.

I stare back.

*We can't place ourselves in
someone else's shoes, but we
can try*

Recently members of our youth work research group have been discussing empathy, a theme in our stories. We have more or less come to the conclusion that we can't, as is often said in youth work, "put ourselves in someone else's shoes." If each worker and youth has a unique story, then it is impossible. We all see the world through a different lens, experience life differently based on our prior cultural and familial experiences, and subsequently make different meaning of what we experience.

For example, if a youth worker has been in a gang, used drugs, experienced a loss, or been abused, it doesn't mean that the worker has had the same experience as a youth who is in a gang, uses drugs, experiences loss or has been abused. Likewise a worker who has had success at something is not having the same success. And a worker who experiences sadness, joy, fear, or excitement is not experiencing the same sadness, joy, fear, or excitement as a youth.

Furthermore, we find that when a worker says to a youth that the worker knows what something is like because the worker has been there, it can more or less take away the youth's experience, or close the door for letting the youth describe how he or she is feeling. Most adolescents, for example, don't like to hear from their parents or youth worker, "I know what it's like. When I was your age I did the same thing," especially when it is said in a way that minimizes the youth's experience.

The goal instead is to try to understand. Workers with empathy are curious about the youth's experience. They want to know what an experience is like for the youth. These workers also try to understand their own feelings and stories and then use this understanding to open themselves to youths' stories, feelings, etc. This makes them available as Gerry Fewster says to mirror back

their experience of a youth. An empathetic worker, for example, shows the excitement, sadness, etc that a youth evokes in the worker as the youth describes his or her experience. And this conveys to the youth that the worker understands, or at least is trying to understand.

It is, of course, all a matter of degree and context—the matter of how close we can come to having another person's experience. Certainly some of our feelings experiences, etc, are similar to youths' experiences and feelings, but it is never exactly the same. We all have our own unique stories and feelings. Perhaps then a better definition of empathy is that we try to put ourselves in the youth's shoes. By knowing and valuing our own experiences, it makes us value and curious about youth's experiences. The empathetic worker shows by his or her actions and/or says, "Tell me what it's like for you, I really want to know. I'm curious about you and who you are. This is how I'm feeling, how are you feeling."

July 2003

On Juxtaposition

In this column for the past months, seven youth workers and I have been sharing short stories (sketches) about our experiences working with youth. These stories are part of a study (qualitative inquiry) that we are conducting. Our goal in the study is to deepen our understanding of our experiences with youth. As we write our stories, we have also been developing our method of inquiry, Self in Action. We improve our method of research, in other words, as we learn about our experiences.

The study has also reinforced our belief that our stories are interconnected with our stories about our work with youth. A couple months ago, Quinn Wilder, a member of our study group, provided an example of how some of us have been juxtaposing experiences from one moment in time with experiences from another point in time because together these experiences seem to shed light on one another. A moment from our own youth, for example, informs a moment from youth work.

In my own work, this is a process I have been using and trying to understand for several years. For our readers, who are interested in qualitative inquiry, I thought it might be helpful to share a brief description of this process that I am working on for the preface of a manuscript that is almost complete.

Pavilion: A Portrait of a Youth Worker

*"The same or almost the same points were always being approached afresh from different directions and new sketches made. Very many of these were badly drawn or uncharacteristic, marked by all the defects of a weak draftsman. And when they were rejected a number of tolerable ones were left, which now had to be rearranged and cut down, so that if you looked at them you could get a picture of a landscape. Thus the book is really only an album (Wittgenstein, 1951, in preface to *Philosophical Investigations*, pages unnumbered)."*

For several years I tried to draw a tolerable set of sketches about my life and work with troubled youth that I could put in an album. Like my reading of Wittgenstein and other philosophers and poets, there was something about these sketches that I could hear, but did not quite understand – an existential hum perhaps. My sense was that if I could get these sketches to ring true, I would as my friend, colleague, and mentor, Jerome Beker once said, “Hear it deep and look to the questions that do so much to determine the soul of our work.”

Using techniques I learned from literature and qualitative inquiry, I drew and redrew each sketch several times trying to make it look, feel and sound right. Sometimes I broke a sketch down to a line or two. Then I rested and started again, looking for what belonged and didn’t belong.

As I worked, I interpreted the sketches in relationship to what I had learned from literature, art, philosophy, music, psychology and my work with troubled youth. This helped me decide what to leave in and out. But I did not make the interpretations part of the sketches. Like a good story, I wanted a sketch and/or series of sketches to stand for themselves – images that alone or in combination rang true.

I borrowed a note card that short story writer Raymond Carver kept above his desk with the following quote from the poet Ezra Pound, “Fundamental accuracy of statement is the sole morality of writing.” I also read novelists, short story writers and playwrights, such as Marguerite Duras, Anton Chekhov, Albert Camus, Ernest Hemingway, and Samuel Beckett, who had the ability to create clear, precise images with a few simple words.

In search of my own voice, I read my work to my writing teacher. Hearing the words in anticipation of her response helped me listen. Then, when my lessons were over, I read alone, trying to escape the imaginary audience and please myself.

Once I had drawn several sketches as best as I could, I began to combine and juxtapose them, looking for ways they fit together. A sketch from my childhood, for example, would seem to work with a sketch from a later period of time, or vice versa. Gradually I found myself breaking the sketches into fragments and interspersing them with other fragments because this seemed more consistent

with my repeated reflections on the experiences. Rarely did I see a sketch as a whole. Parts of it in combination with parts of other sketches came at me as I was doing one thing or another.

At times it was as if I was looking through a kaleidoscope. As I twisted and turned the fragments in my mind, patterns or themes appeared and became the topics of new drawings. One of the new drawings became a play because that seemed to be the best way to frame the dialog. A few fragments were turned into poems. Many sketches and fragments were dropped. These were either still “badly drawn” after several tries, or simply didn’t fit.

Eventually a central narrative emerged from the few that were left. This was drawn in regular type while the fragments that wove around it were drawn in italics. Seven sketches, each comprised of two or more fragments, and an epilogue remained. All of the fragments were dated. And, finally, since many of my reflections occurred during my daily run, I framed the entire work in a run, which also seemed to provide the correct tempo. What resulted was a self-portrait, a work in progress named after a place I often return to, Pavilion.



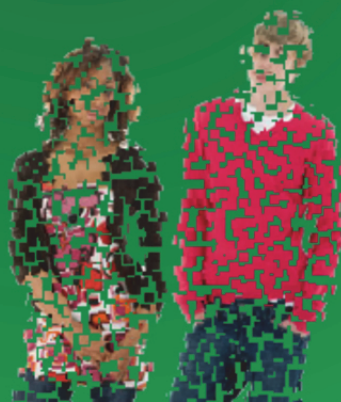
When I started child and youth care work with a fairly strict and formal classical education under my belt, I initially found the seeming waywardness of Mark Krueger's imagery hard to get my head around.

Paragraphs like *"Child and youth care work is like modern dance. Workers bring themselves to the moment, practice, plan (choreograph), listen to the tempos of daily living, improvise, and adjust to and/or change the contexts within which their interactions occur"* initially proved hard to parse and translate into relevant and usable ideas. However it soon became liberating to come across his sudden transpositions which always proved enriching and relevant to real-live youth work.

Mark was always most generous with his writing, and this book is a collection of his *Moments with Youth* columns which appeared in *CYC-Online* for almost a decade

Thank you, Mark.

— Brian Gannon



ISBN 978-1-928212-13-3



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