

Regard

The word ‘regard’ has its root in the idea of ‘taking a second look’ (re-gard). This is much more immediate than ‘respect’, the etymology of which indicates taking a more long-term (historical) inspection of the person or thing re-respected. When you regard a person, you are making more of an ‘estimation’ than an examination; you are, it might be said, holding them in ‘esteem’ (as you are seeing them worthy of your estimation). A lot of concern in our work is about the alleged ‘low self-esteem’ of some of those we work with (although it seems for many youth workers, nurses, police officers the super high-esteem [arrogance] of many young people seems to be more than a social problem). But you just can’t go out and get some esteem. It takes at least two people to generate this (one person being held in esteem and another holding the other in esteem). The first indication that one is ‘worthy’ of esteem is the understanding that you are being regarded. If I am regarded it provides me with the basic building block of care; it is a confirmation of existence (I get more than one look, I become a person estimable of needing more than a cursory glance). At the same time, as I regard another and they respond to that regard, my own effect on another person is confirmed and that literally confirms me – it denotes my existence has been registered. Regard is therefore a mutually confirming activity that literally boosts esteem.

Accompaniment

Accompaniment is a means through which one might become more deeply attuned to one’s interaction with those we work with, for and among. It is a process encounter that arises out of mutual regard.

Accompaniment, being actively with a companion (companionship) is a ‘friendly’ setting that exists to generate an atmosphere of ‘associative activity’. It is a place wherein regard is given but also expected on a mutual basis. With this foundation in place a situation can be fostered in which trust that field effect that exists between two people, can evolve and be exchanged as it is earned/justified.

In accompaniment we work to build our awareness of the presence of our companion (we build companionship). As our companion shares their dreams, struggles, triumphs, disappointments, joys and fears, they express their deepest and wisest source of their potential.

When examining the character of accompaniment, for analysis sake, I call the professional the ‘accompanist’ and the client the ‘companion’. In practice both (all) those involved in accompaniment are companions in that they ‘travel’ together. They are also both accompanists, but they constantly change places in time as each directs the journey in turn, but in the main the companion (client) finds the path, so by and large the professional is the accompanist – but this is not a rule as all journeys are unique and as such start and conclude differently.

As a professional accompanist, you work with your companion to notice, savour and respond to the world, but more than this you are open to them introducing aspects of their perception to you. This, of course, can only happen if you do the same in return. People are much more likely to tell you what they think (on a consistent basis) if you tell them what you think. So it is more about how ‘we’ see things, than how ‘you’ see things. This exchange of ideas and perceptions is what Marx called the ‘Dialectic’ – a fusion of perceptions.

Consideration

In the ‘people professions’, including nursing, youth work, social work and policing, practitioners are encouraged to ‘reflect’ on their practice and the term, ‘reflective practitioner’ has become a widely used kite mark across these professions. This reflective practice is often undertaken with what is effectively the tutelage of more experienced peers, mentors or supervisors and involves looking back on what has been done in a critical manner, essentially to imagine how whatever was done might have been done better or more effectively. On the rare occasions when things, ‘on reflection’, have gone as well as possible, say we hired a bouncy castle for a fund raising event and made loads of money, the idea is that we apply a similar strategy at our next fund raising event. However, for the most part, we are encouraged to reflect on how to make our practice stronger by seeking out/identifying our errors, flaws, mistakes, miscalculations etc. As such reflective practice involves developing imaginary responses to past activity, the results of which might be called upon in the future if anything occurs like what has occurred before.

Unlike reflection, consideration is set in the ‘now’. It is centrally focused on ‘concerns’ that might arise from recorded practice, but also by ‘conjecture’ about possibilities. In that sense it takes a global ‘considerate’ view of events.

Consideration raises concerns. It includes careful deliberation about matters, uses advisement and calculation and the extension of 'secure kindness'. It involves thoughtfulness and sometimes study. It requires concentration and attention. It makes use of accompaniment, heedfulness and regard. It is solicitous in that it is bound by disciplined care and attention to detail. It is deferential to the client, seeks collaborative approval and acknowledges professional accountability.

Consideration includes admiration and appreciation of the client in that it holds them in esteem and seeks to honour their individuality and unique behaviour over time. It is not based one person asking questions and another answering (according to Will Hunting (1998) no equality exists a interaction like this) – it is dialectical

Consideration, being bound up with regard, authenticity and accompaniment, calls on the client for advice and guidance, but will also pass on judgements made about them as and when relevant and/or appropriate and will include the giving of advice and information about expectations - this is required at points to move thesis on to antithesis so away from ghetto thinking and create synthesis (a dialectic).