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### Personal Memories and Reflections of Wolf Wolfensberger

I first met Wolf in 1975. I was working for Judith Sandys at the time, and she said I “had” to attend this PASS workshop in Ottawa being conducted by Wolf through NIMR. And as is true for so many, my life was profoundly altered and remains so almost 50 years later. Wolf’s analytical mind and clarity provided opened my eyes and explained what I had been experienced working in the field for 5 years. I can still remember the experience intimately.

Within a few months I was invited to lead my first PASS team and can distinctly remember the ‘eagle eye” of Wolf ever present, always teaching, always seeking to deepen one’s understanding and sharpen one’s critical lens. If I remember correctly looking as an eagle was one of the exercises Wolf had to do in time and thus so did we all.

As some point in the journey, I had the benefit of mentorship from Darcy Elks and Michael Kendrick. Became an ‘accredited’ trainer, co-conducted many workshops, and participated in many evaluations as Wolf and Susan Thomas’ thinking evolved from normalization and PASS to PASSING and SRV. On some of those occasions I remember having to ‘support’ Wolf and Susan to procure an array of local beers for tasting comparisons. And was immensely fortunate in terms of my growth and development to be engaged in the delivery of Sanctity of Life and Moral Coherency workshops. Each time providing a deepening understanding of self and the world. Wolf’s scholarly discipline was, for me unmatched.

In the early 80’s I arranged for Wolf to provide, I think perhaps the second, deathmaking workshop in Canada. While his work on deathmaking was just one example of his prophetic talents (some would say gifts) he warned me to be wary of any personal repercussions, given the nature of the event. His warnings were prophetic, not in terms of personal repercussions, but as today myself and colleagues are deeply engaged in a literal life and death battle as Canada has legalized the killing of persons with disabilities. Wolf’s continuous attention to the unconscious is reflected in Canada’s process for people to be murdered by the state on the basis disability, which is formerly known as Track 2, without the any conscious connection to the holocaust train tracks.

On a lighter note, I always appreciated Wolf’s sardonic humour and biting wit which I don’t think participants in his workshops got or certainly not often enough. There were other personally funny moments such as the time I had to go to Canada customs so they would let Wolf into the Country. To digress for a moment, I’m not sure, as well, how many in the SRV world have also had the opportunity to scuba dive with Susan in Hawaii. I remember one advanced PASSING Workshop in Winnipeg in 1979, which may have been the first time I met John O’Brien, another lifelong mentor and teacher. My coughing asthma was not yet correctly diagnosed, and I was chugging codeine laced cough syrup while having nightmares of a

turtleneck with waving arms chastising me for being “low level” knowing this nightmare could become reality when I presented as Wolf stood there in his turtleneck uniform.

In the very early 80's I began to question normalization and SRV's overall effectiveness at combatting or offsetting societal devaluation and the endemic life wounding that continued, even as human services attempted to implement the theories and practices. I wanted something more powerful, and I raised this in a private conversation with Wolf. And while I was at risk of becoming a 'rabid inclusionist'; an advocate for inclusion yes, but rabid I think not, Wolf listened and agreed. Not at all with what I was beginning to formulate but with the inherent limitations of normalization and SRV both in the context of altering or transforming human services and in relation to their sufficiency in addressing societal devaluation and wounding. It turned out my calling lay much more in relationship to families, in their recognition of the inherent humanness and equal worth of their children with intellectual disabilities, in their desire for inclusion, and in their capacity for leadership on multiple levels and fronts, particularly collectively.

The different theoretical path and resulting practices I've pursued, beginning about 40 years ago, is a result of, although certainly Wolf might not have approved, and has its roots in normalization principles and SRV. I believe the results of this endeavour are part of Wolf's legacy. By way of example, the Inclusion Alberta Family Leadership Development Series myself and Anne Hughson created, to which John, Michael and Darcy have all contributed as well as others, is directly derived from Wolf's 1973 monograph where he articulated the critical value of voluntary leadership which could not be fostered in the ways in which professionals are trained. Today there are close to 500 families that have participated in the Series, inclusive of individuals with intellectual disabilities, and now the Series has begun to be rolled out nationally. In every Series Wolf is acknowledged and his quotes, which inspired the Series, are shared.

I think there are many ways in which a legacy can both endure and manifest, including through having contributed, even unintentionally, to divergent thinking and practices from the teacher. Wolf solidified my values and sparked and honed my critical thinking skills. This in turn has led directly to many thousands of children and adults with intellectual disabilities and their families being the beneficiary of Wolf's challenging questions, brilliant insights, demanding lessons, and unique wisdom as they get to live more ordinary and inclusive lives. This too is part of Wolf's immeasurable and enduring legacy for which I am personally deeply and forever thankful.

