

Three Postures of Relationships

Our message to our children needs to be seek out learning partners – those who will be in-learning with you, who value walking beside you.



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Three Postures of Relationships

How do you present yourself to your family, your friends, your work relationships, new acquaintances or strangers? We continually shape the experience of our relationships and the world around us. As you approach your different relationships, are you primarily in-knowing, in-wanting or in-learning? These three postures shape the energy we share, the invitations we make to others, the choices we see, and what actions we take.

The difference between in-knowing, in-wanting or in-learning is recognized by the qualities or energy that are present when we hold a particular posture. In our relationships we are constantly sensing what qualities are present as people approach. This important information we use to interpret intentions, motivations, and attitudes from one person to another. Qualities are universally recognized across cultures and societies.

Consider these five qualities each on a continuum.

- attached – not attached
- filled-up – space or openness
- disconnected – connected
- asleep - awake
- control - flowing

These primary qualities help distinguish the postures of in-knowing and in-wanting from in-learning.

Attached – Not Attached

When someone is holding the postures of in-knowing or in-wanting they are deeply attached to their beliefs or desires. Letting go is very difficult and often means changing their view of themselves, another person or the world at large. They will often attack or defend to assert the value and significance of their beliefs or desires. When you are in-learning you are not attached to your beliefs. This does not mean that you do not have beliefs or opinions rather it means that you are open to influence and willing to consider other opinions and ideas.

Filled-up – Space, Openness

When you are in-learning the quality of openness is present. There is room for new information. New ideas are given attention and pondered. When you are in-knowing you are literally filled up. There is no room for learning. New ideas are evaluated and then rejected, accepted or distorted to fit with your existing beliefs. If you hold the posture of in-wanting, everything is filtered against your desires. Will this help me or hinder me in reaching my goals?

Disconnected – Connected

The postures of in-knowing and in-wanting create an experience of separation between people. People becoming things, objects of desire, means to a goal, – characterize the nature of relationships. People become less-than, while others assume a position of more-than. You can sense when someone sees you as an object and recognize it in his or her behavior. Little or no connection is possible when they are seen in this way. When you are in-learning there is a natural connection with others. People are experienced as people and held with respect as an equal. When in-learning people listen to one another and people open up to each other.

Asleep – Awake

Are you ever asleep or on auto-pilot as you move through your day? Do you have automatic reactions to certain people or groups of people? You may find yourself thinking “there she goes again” or “that’s the problem with ‘those people’ or “that organization.” This is the posture of someone who is in-knowing. Are you so deeply focused on your goals and objectives that either you are unaware or you do not care about how you effect the people around you? This is the posture of in-wanting. If you are deeply asleep you do not even reflect on your day and your interactions with people. Being in-learning means you are awake. In real time you pay attention to your own behavior and how it affects other people. When you do get defensive you catch

yourself and own your part in a conflict.

Control – Flowing The central movement or rhythm of both the posture of in-knowing and in-wanting is expressed in some form of control. This often involves creating a self-sealing, self sustaining bubble of beliefs which is impervious to influence. Another form seeks control of how other people think or behave to align with your beliefs. Still a third form of control tries to get people or communities to follow direction, in order to meet someone’s objectives, passions, visions or desires.

These five continua of qualities are the key to understanding what posture you are in and to discerning the postures of the people around you. It is always best to start with being intentional about your posture. Learning to sense your attachment, degree of connectedness, desire for control and noticing signs of being filled up are necessary to discern your posture.

II. Being in-Knowing

Being in knowing is an energetic stance which is so common that it is often taken for granted. When held or adopted by individuals or communities it can be expressed in both small, subtle ways and more dramatic and harmful ways.

This energetic stance distracts and limits a person’s or community’s ability to grow or heal wounds. In it’s simplest form the doors are closed. Access to creativity, discovery and learning is limited. The ability to sense new possibilities emerging is lost.

In a community in-knowing defines the acceptable actions on how to behave and think. In the darkest form, holding the posture of in-knowing drives people or communities to seek out and eradicate differences – differences in ideas, beliefs, culture, appearance, or race. Genocide, ethnic cleansing, hate crimes are all examples of the darkest form of in-knowing. Countries go to war because their leaders are rooted in the energy of “in knowing” (beliefs about their opposition) and/or “in wanting” (believing they should have what the other possesses). In a more moderate form both adults and children who are in-knowing can exclude or demean others who do not conform in thought, action or appearance to themselves or to the community.

You can learn to recognize the more subtle ways if you understand what to look for. There are four frequent movements of in-knowing:

1. inferring, judging and evaluating
2. knowing what is “best”
3. being filled-up
4. waiting to be told what to do

QUALITIES

in-Knowing & *in*-Wanting

in-Learning

Attached

- ❖ Sense of self determined by knowledge, power, wealth, rightness
- ❖ Focus and limit people's choices
- ❖ Holding on tightly, sometimes for dear life
- ❖ Difference is viewed as a challenge or threat

Not Attached

- ❖ Sense of self worth defined by values and each person's gift
- ❖ Expand the experience of what is possible
- ❖ Stable, centered, able to move with change
- ❖ Difference is viewed as natural and an opportunity to learn

Filled Up

- ❖ New ideas are dismissed or swallowed whole and repeated as truth. Not invented here drives what is accepted.
- ❖ When pressed tempers flare, feel criticized, act authoritarian or go one down and act subservient
- ❖ Wearing blinders, maintain singular focus
- ❖ Closed to feedback, defensive

Space Openness

- ❖ New ideas are considered, some are pondered and mined for new possibilities. Best practices welcomed.
- ❖ When pressed there is inquiry and room to speed up or slow down as necessary
- ❖ open to new ideas, new people always searching to expand possibilities
- ❖ Open to feedback, may feel defensive yet committed to listening and learning

Disconnected

- ❖ Do not care about impact on people or communities
- ❖ Willing to do harm to achieve goals or desires or defend position

Connected

- ❖ Inquiry and reflection on the impact of my behavior
- ❖ Concerned with unintended consequences, committed to doing no harm

Asleep

- ❖ On autopilot, get as much done as possible, multi-tasking
- ❖ Unaware of my impact on others
- ❖ React automatically to people and situations with pre-programmed responses

Awake

- ❖ Aware of self and others around me. Pay attention to intention and invitation
- ❖ Catch myself in real time
- ❖ Authentic responses to people and situations

Control

- ❖ Use a variety of means to get people or communities to do what you want them to or think they should do
- ❖ Shaping situations, people, environment to meet your needs or your sense of the ideal

Flowing

- ❖ Deep respect for free will
- ❖ Interested in what is emerging and natural

1. Inferring, judging and evaluating

The most frequent form of in-knowing is characterized by making judgments and evaluations of individuals or entire communities of people. For example, someone runs into a building and the inference is that he is late. Further, it is not uncommon for people to make up stories about what they infer thinking he is not responsible or respectful by showing up late. The complexity of this movement increases because all of this starts with a simple action which “we add to” and then “forget” that we added to it! We judge and evaluate others and then assume that our judgment and evaluations are facts. When judgments and evaluations turn into beliefs and absolute certainties everyone loses. This is certainly true with racism, in which communities of people hold negative beliefs about another community of people and act out of these beliefs creating harm and wounds.

This same process happens in all aspects of our life. It occurs in business, where communities of people organized around work functions holding negative beliefs about another work community. For example, engineering believes that manufacturing is staffed by incompetent, low level employees who cannot follow directions and build products to specification. Manufacturing in turns believes that engineering is not worth a damn, producing plans which are always late, subject to change and this creates incredible pressure on them. Or sales persons on the line with customers believe the corporate headquarters is out of touch with the “real world.” (aka their world) with certain new products releases – “if only once “they” (corporate) would come out and talk to them and to the customers they wouldn’t be asking for them to move certain products with features that customers don’t want.”

The movement repeats itself at very young ages in our schools. Children form into different social groups based on popularity, sports, race, economic class – each having little or nothing to do with the other, holding judgments and evaluations about the other groups.

David Levine, author of Teaching Empathy in our schools believes that for learning to occur in the classroom children need to be connected to one another and empathetic. In addition this needs to be modeled by the teacher’s behavior. Empathy is a key form of energetic connection between people. Regardless of the setting the posture of being in-knowing always limits possibilities.

2. Knowing what is best

The second most common form of in-knowing has to do with beliefs about what is right, wrong or best.

When someone is in-knowing they can behave as the expert with strong opinions about what is “right for us and what is right for others”. They are not open to influence and most importantly they are tuned out to the needs of others and to the impact of their behavior. We typically learn about “in-knowing” from our parents and teachers.

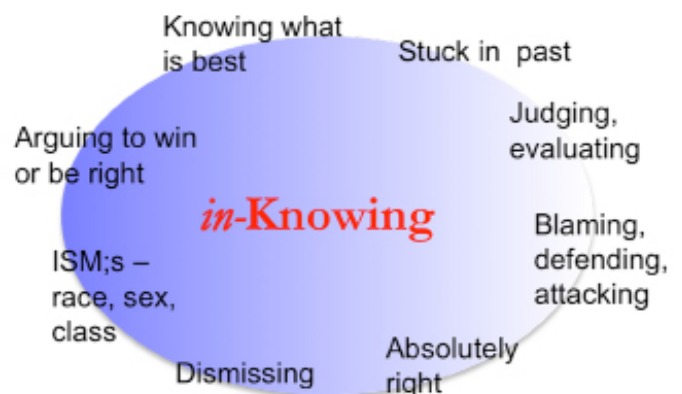
Here are a variety of ways the posture of being “in knowing” is expressed by a parent.

The parent who frequently:

- knows what is best for his children and does not listen to his child’s interests or passions, pressing them to do what is “best”
- uses guilt, fear, threat of loss, to motivate a child in order to gain compliance to rules
- defines what success is and rewards or withholds affection depending on his child’s behavior
- shields a child from any risks
- imparts negative beliefs about communities of people – teaches racism or sexism

When parents direct this energy to children on a regular basis they soon realize that they are not learning partners. They come to see a new and different posture. Parents are always teaching by their behavior and the energy they send to us. So gradually following parents behavior, they learn about a new posture, one that takes them away from being in-learning. While it is not as satisfying they follow behind them down the path they are traveling.

Experiencing being “in knowing” also frequently comes from our teachers. Much of a child’s time is entrusted during the most formative years to relative strangers called their teachers. Helen Buckley in her poem about The Little Boy (sometimes titled the Red Flower) illustrates how a young boy is actively taught to abandon the posture of being “in learning” and adopt the new posture of “being “in-knowing.”



THE LITTLE BOY

BY HELEN BUCKLEY

Once a little boy went to school.
He was quite a little boy
And it was quite a big school.

One morning
When the little boy had been in school awhile,
The teacher said:
“Today we are going to make a picture.”
“Good!” thought the little boy.
He liked to make all kinds;
Lions and tigers,
Chickens and cows,
Trains and boats;
And he took out his box of crayons
And began to draw.

But the teacher said, “Wait!”
“It is not time to begin!”
And she waited until everyone looked ready.
“Now,” said the teacher,
“We are going to make flowers.”
“Good!” thought the little boy,
He liked to make beautiful ones
With his pink and orange and blue crayons.
But the teacher said “Wait!”
“And I will show you how.”
And it was red, with a green stem.
“There,” said the teacher,
“Now you may begin.”

The little boy looked at his teacher’s flower
Then he looked at his own flower.
He liked his flower better than the teacher’s
But he did not say this.
He just turned his paper over,
And made a flower like the teacher’s.

At the end of the poem both the child and the teacher are in a symmetrical self-reinforcing relationship filled with the energy of “in-knowing.” The teacher believes it is her job to instruct her students on the “right way to draw.” The young boy, after repeated being corrected, now believes that his job is to wait to be told what to do by the teacher. Correctness is valued over creativity and experimentation. The student views the teacher as the source of information on “correctness” and this position cannot be challenged. So the little boy sits and waits until someone tells him what to do. These are the same patterns that Dr. Weisch sees in his college students. (See insert on page 8)

3. Being filled up

Being in-knowing does not always mean taking a dominant position or pressing others adopt your point of view. Many people are simply filled up with existing knowledge and beliefs. They could also be filled up by the number of tasks they take on and there is literally no space for learning. Here are a few examples:

- Carl is a physical therapist with 20 yrs experience. He is uncomfortable with the younger therapists on staff and finds the conversation at lunch on new techniques and use of technology uncomfortable.
- Sara is a working mother with two children in school. Her days are full before and after work, between the kids schedules and household tasks. For her birthday Kevin signed them up for a class for modern dance lessons. Sara thought he was crazy, even though she had said she always wanted to do that.
- Maryanne has cancer. Her sister Tanya wants her to see a homeopath and to try alternative treatments. Maryanne feels very resistant to her suggestions.
- On the news tonight a reporter was raising issues about his favorite candidate for Senator. Jack couldn’t believe a word of it or take it in at all. It made him very angry. He believes deeply that if it were a man these same issues would not be raised at all.

To understand if you are filled up ask the question am I open to influence and if so under what conditions and by whom? It is important to pose this same question to people around you. No one wants to say – “oh I am closed off, not open to influence, I am done learning.” Feedback from your friends, family, coworkers can help you understand the degree of openness and the degree to which you are filled up.

4. Waiting to be told what to do

The poem, Little Boy, captures all the movement and outcomes when relationships are in-knowing, You can feel the sadness when a child first shifts from in-learning to in-knowing and adopts the position of waiting to be told what to do. You can see how the children grow up to become tellers, waiters or opposers.

Tellers	Waiters	Opposers
believe they should tell others what to do	believe they should be told what to do	stay separate, neither telling, waiting or learning.

When someone waits to be told what to do they are holding the posture of in-knowing. They have been taught to believe that someone knows better than what they do and surrender, just as the young boy surrendered to his teacher who was in-knowing. Sometimes people do not even perceive they are waiting, they just accept that their role is to follow directions. Other times, like the boy they have a sense of loss, of not sharing their ideas or feelings.

Summary

When we shift from being in learning to “in knowing” we block our ability to grow and develop as we see and experience the world. Why do some people learn from their mistakes and not others? One is “in learning” and the other is “in knowing.” As infants, babies and children we were masters of the posture of being “in learning.” Being “in learning” - this is the posture that becomes illusive as we transition from childhood to adolescence and can completely escape us as adults. When we grow older, we can lose this mastery as we adopt new postures. So how much have you forgotten about being in learning? Who are you partners in learning right now?

IV. Being In Wanting

Early in childhood we are taught about another posture – being in-wanting. As adults this energy is characterized by being so focused on our own needs that we drown out others and block opportunities for connection. Fully embracing this posture leads to treating people as an ends to a mean. Relationships become transactional in nature. I stay and am happy as long as I am getting what I want. Regardless of the specific movement the energy of this posture is focused on the “self.”

The movements of in-wanting are:

1. Defining Self through Ownership
2. Seeking Transformation
3. Love and Wanting

1. Defining Self through Ownership

The first movement of in-waiting is defining yourself through ownership. The acquisition of wealth, property or precious objects has been a long standing measure of social importance. The more wealth, the more importance. The lose of wealth is to lose both your image and stature within in the community. In today’s world where it is not possible for everyone to live the American dream of rags to riches, the dream is replaced with the ownership of specific object of value. Often this object is the key to inclusion and acceptance in a community, which in turn defines you social position.

In western society commercials on television are usually a child’s first experience with the energy of in-wanting. The commercialization of Christmas is also a huge energetic movement exposing many young children to the energy of in-wanting. The focus becomes what I want, am I getting what I want. As children move into school they are caught in huge energetic dilemmas – as the roar of being in-wanting calls to everyone and is linked to inclusion or exclusion. For many children the ownership of certain objects allows them to be part of a social group. The need to belong and feel included is a very powerful drive for children. Having the right cell phone, the newest ipod, a particular type of shoes, a certain bag makes the difference between feeling good about oneself or feeling like an outsider. A principal from a school with children from families of various incomes commented that most parents do not understand the pressure children feel to conform and fit in and most importantly to avoid exclusion. When a new fad of shoes or clothes sweeps through a school it can separate those who can afford the item and those who cannot into different social groups. This can cre-



ate emotional pain and hurt feelings for the children who cannot afford the items so desperately desired by everyone. This is why many schools have policies on clothes or move to uniform. This pattern of defining self through ownership continues as adults. Now it is the right job or getting promoted on the fast track. For others it is the right car or the right size house, or living in a specific neighborhood. The social pressure for inclusion is now keeping up with the "Joneses."

We receive a lot of help to be in-wanting. In the US it is estimated that companies spend over 1\$50 billion dollars to attract our discretionary spending. Industries such as Pharmaceuticals spend 25% of their income on advertising and marketing. This is twice the amount they spend on research. (The industry claims that research costs are what drive the extremely high prices of new drugs.) Recently a group was asked the question what would you have to do to not be exposed to any advertising for 24 hours. After much debate people agreed this would either require camping in the woods overnight with no access to media or to spend the day in bed. We are inundated with messages which say buy me, pick me, choose me. These messages come with claims that you will feel better, look better, and be more popular.

2. Seeking Transformation

The second movement of in-wanting is trying to create transformation through buying. Those that sell to us want us to believe that if we buy their product we will feel better, be better and be seen as better, or be more popular. Paco Underhill author of *Why We Buy* recently commented on the financial crisis: "One of the fundamental issues I think we're trying to discover as consumers is that there are no acquisitions that are transformational. Acquiring that iPod or that tube of lipstick or that Maserati doesn't change us into anyone other than what we were to start out with and that, therefore, our relationship to consumption here has to be more real." (http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/business/jan-june09/shopping_04-24.html)

3. Love and Wanting

When you think about the being in a relationship with someone what images come to mind? The most common association would be falling in love. Falling in love can mean many things. In every case it is a powerful energy exchanged between people that builds some type of connection. The nature of the energy and connection changes based on the posture which someone holds. Looking for a partner (with whom to learn and grow) is very different than looking for a someone to fulfill your sexual needs, or looking for a partner that will take care of you financially. The first person is in-

The Typical Responses of in-Knowing

How does someone who is in-knowing listen and respond in a conversation?

1. He is silent and assumes that the person talking is also in-knowing and is not open to input or feedback.
2. She is silent but actively critiquing and disagreeing in her mind.
3. He accepts the information without question, treats it as truth or follows blindly.
4. She takes the information without question and uses it to reinforce her beliefs, becoming more and more adamant about how "right" she is.
5. He responds by instantly dismissing, not waiting for the person to finish because the ideas or opinions do not reinforce his views
6. She senses the implications of the information, reacts with confusion and becomes anxious and afraid
7. He sees the other persons views as a direct challenge or attack and responds aggressively
8. She treats the conversation as a win-lose interaction, interrupts or reacts competitively and proceeds to do everything she can to prove the other person wrong and herself right
9. He is multi-taking partially listening
10. She is on overload and refuses to even engage in the conversation.

learning. The later person is in-wanting.

Relationships end when people are no longer "in love"—often this is code for "you no longer meet my needs or wants." Being in love often flows from in-wanting. The energy of wanting is expressed in a desire for "something we believe we want or need – for example, an ideal image of a husband, boyfriend, wife or girlfriend, who behaves in particular ways. For some the emphasis is on feeling good through sexual energy. For others the emphasis is on filling an emptiness or creating comfort.

Being in love can also be an expression of being in learning. In either case, at the heart of these relationships (no pun intended) is the exchange of energy whether it is romantic, loving, wanting, or sexual energy. The desire for this exchange of energy (regardless of the form) is strong in each of us. This is partly

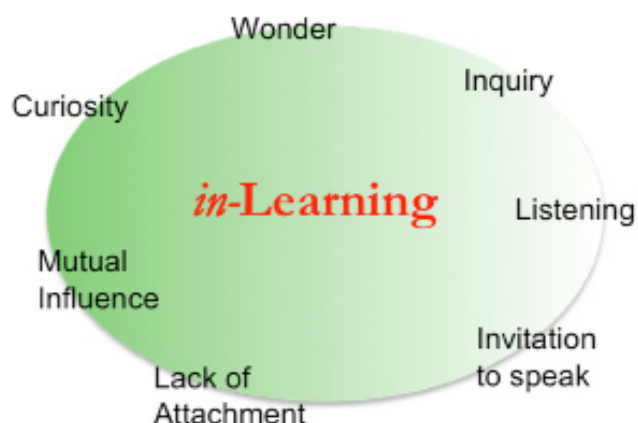
driven by society, biology, our parents and friends, are own sense of what we want, for completeness, or to fill a void. There is nothing wrong with this drive to exchange energy and feel connected. The posture we use to experience this exchange of energy is important. The exchange of energy and the outcomes are very different when the posture is in learning or in wanting or in knowing.

Unfortunately in many of our societies this search for being "in love; directs us in ways that are not helpful to our growth and development as human beings. Idealized images stress the importance of romance, desire, lust, fulfilling a dream, filling a void, creating the ideal TV family – all wants.

Everyone would benefit – for ourselves, our relationships, our communities, for our entire planet –our emphasis should be on being "in learning" with someone.

III. Being in-Learning

in-Learning is the fundamental posture which supports a person to grow and develop as a human being. Learning is akin to breathing, both natural and important to our health. We do not need to be taught to breath or to learn. The easiest way to learn about this posture is to notice infants and young children. They fully embody a single, natural posture – they are "in constant learning." Being "in learning" is 100% of who



they are. Unencumbered, by fears or social rules – they embrace every opportunity to learn.

The movements of being in-learning are:

4. listening
5. invitng people to speak
6. curiosity
7. Finding learning partners

We call these movements because they are active states involving perceiving, thinking, feeling, believing,

and acting.

1. Listening

Listening is the first movement of being in-learning.

If your options seem limited and you feel stuck or unsure what to do begin by listening. Listen to yourself (thoughts, feelings, intuitions) and listen to others. This is the most reliable place to start to shift into being in-learning.

Listening to yourself involves paying attention to thoughts, feelings, intuitions and your body. Most people do not listen to their thoughts. They do not stop negative thinking, reflect on their judgments and evaluations of other people, or break the pattern when the mind keeps playing re-runs of a situation. Thoughts shape our experience, reality and feelings.

Medical doctors now recognize the power of positive thoughts in the body's healing process. Sports psychologists work with their clients to manage negative thoughts and to create positive images for success. When the thoughts we have about ourselves and others are negative, we limit and narrow possibilities and shift us into being in-knowing. Negative thoughts also limit our ability to listen to others.

As you increase the quality of your listening the quality of your relationships will dramatically improve. Consider that in any conversation you have 100 units of attention to apply to your listening. The more units of attention, the higher the quality of listening. At 90 units or above curious or in wonder about what the other person is sharing with you, there are no judgments or evaluations, no internal conversations. Your mind is still and receptive, you are totally engaged.

In many conversations people only give a minimum of their attention to what the other person is saying - they may be doing more than one thing at once, or rehearsing what they want to say, or remembering an experience which is bigger or better to share.

Listening in all its forms is an on-going practice of limitless possibilities.

2. Inviting People to Speak



Each of us makes an invitation to another person to speak. Invitations can be open, closed or shaped. When we are in-learning our invitation is open. The stance a person adopt shapes the invitation they make to others. When someone is in-learning the invitation is open ended.

When was the last time someone said to you, "Please sit with me, tell me your story, take your time, as much as you need, tell the story anyway you like. I'll listen." Listening invites a deep connection, which is always there just below the surface, to emerge and if we actively invite someone to speak from the heart and they accept the invitation – we are in-learning together.

With the help of some questions and after reflection people were asked to describe the type of invitations they commonly create with people. As you read what they said consider the energy or qualities present in the conversations they create.

- My invitation is usually this. Keep it short and simple and I will listen to you. Tell me the facts. If I want more I will ask. The conversation is finished when I have heard what I need to know.
- My invitation is pretty open. The subject doesn't matter too much. I like to be entertained. I will listen to you if you are interesting. If it is an important social situation, after I lose interest I pretend to be listening. My sister, I love her dearly, can talk forever. So I just tune her out in the middle of the conversation. I say to her unh huh, oh yes, hmmm, very interesting, or wow – every once in awhile. Usually I do chores while we on the phone.
- My invitation to speak depends on balance. I will listen to someone if I sense they will listen to me. If not I tune it out – try to keep the conversation short, more transactional. I don't seek them out, to spend time with after I sense that they don't listen.
- Oh, I love listening to people. I really do. I know I am not too good at it. Some one says something and things just bubble up inside of me and I say them. Sometimes they are related to what the person is saying other times they reminded me of something I wanted to tell them and then I interrupt. Sometimes I can definitely take over a conversation. I don't mean to – it just sort of happens. I guess I just have a lot to say. Do you think that is rude of me? I don't mean to be rude. I can be very funny. There was one time when I was talking to my aunt.... My invitation, well, I guess it is to listen to me?

3. Curiosity

Curiosity is another movement that is particularly helpful when you are doing something other than learning. For example, you fell stuck in a situation, options seem limited, or you find yourself in opposition to other people. The word opposition is used energetically and has broad meaning, including disagreement, argument, attack/defend, conflict, and doing harm to yourself or others.

By asking simple questions – "I wonder why they disagree with me?" or "I wonder why I disagree with them?" It is possible to create rapid shifts from the stances of in-knowing and in-wanting to being in-learning. When your alarm system goes off, rather than fight, challenge, disagree, dispute, criticize, discount, distort, dismiss the new ideas and become curious. Say aloud – my alarm system protecting my beliefs is going off – I am curious why these ideas create an alarm. I am curious about why their ideas are so different than mine. I disagree, I want to fight – let me for a moment be curious about the natures of your ideas; what is underneath and around them.

If you have trouble doing this then "pretend." Pretend to be curious, even this offers more possibilities, than being in-knowing. Cultivate your curiosity, let this quality live inside you and become your constant companion. Establish curiosity, as a response to the alarm system going off inside your mind. Shut off the alarm and be curious. Say out loud, "I wonder what set off the alarm." This is especially important when the alarm is intense, requesting from you a strong powerful emotional, mental, and/or physical response. In the beginning this will be training, that is, a new way you learn to respond, leaving behind the old habits. Over time it will become a reliable and natural way to respond.

Be curious. Don't underestimate the power of curiosity to pull you out of the "thick" – thickness of thoughts, thickness of feelings – thickness of complexity, thickness of conflict. Of all the movements it is the most familiar, even if forgotten. It is the most familiar because it is part of human nature. It naturally occurs in children as a fundamental way to engage the world.

4. Finding Learning Partners

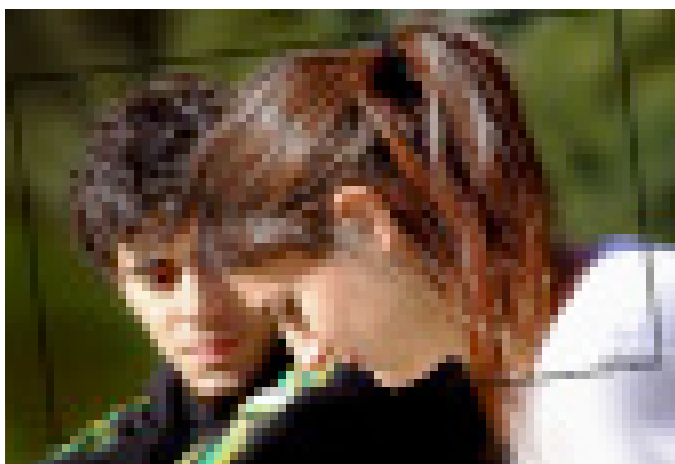
Young children see all those around them as learning partners. For the infants and babies, they are learning to control their bodies, language and most importantly the ability to communicate. Research shows that the more they have learning partners, the more rapid the learning process. A learning

in-learning differs from the postures of in-knowing and in-wanting in every dimension – from how people are viewed, problems are solved, intentions are shaped, the central purpose or motivations and the importance of respecting free will.

	in-knowing	in-wanting	in-learning
View of People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Less-than, not human, few people are important -or- better-than, expert, guru ❖ racism, sexism, classism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ objects of desire, tools , means to an end, fulfiller of dreams, a savior ❖ objectifying women, lusting for something or someone, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ everyone has a gift, opportunity to learn from, peers ❖ high value placed on creating partnerships for learning
Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ “I have the answer,” -or- wait for someone to decide who knows what is best to do ❖ People are followers – “this will be good for everyone;” or “follow me or else” ❖ Rely on past approaches, input from only few advisors ❖ win-lose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ “What is in it for me?” ❖ People are tools, resources for implementation, either helping or hindering goals ❖ Grasps at straws, wants to come to quick resolution ❖ win - goal focused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ keep everyones interest in mind, asks questions ❖ People are essential partners - “we can do this together” ❖ Emphasis on flexibility, adapting and quick cycles of learning ❖ Win-win, focus on unintended consequences
Common Relationship Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Telling, ordering, defending, attacking, lecturing, converting, dismissing ❖ Independent or dependent, one way ❖ Self-Worth dependent on knowledge, “rightness” ❖ Disdain or adoration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Selling, seducing, lying, converting ❖ Counterdependent or dependent, one way ❖ Self worth dependent on wealth, ownership ❖ Desire or lust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Asking questions, listening, inviting people to speak or participate ❖ Interdependent, sharing, two-way ❖ Self worth linked to linked to values and gifts ❖ respect for person or free will
Central Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Self-sealing, self-protecting, controlling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Fulfillment of desire or creating comfort for self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ learning, expanding possibilities for growth and healing

partner, stimulates them, provides opportunity to learn, gives both feedback and encouragement. It is impossible to stop an infant from being “in learning.”

Being “in learning” is the posture that our children naturally take, from the moment of birth until... we



teach them other postures. Early in our development as babies and young children we receive many signals from parents, siblings, teachers, media that tells us about other postures. In some cases they encourage or instruct us to develop postures other than being “in learning.”

Think for a moment are you in search of a relationship? Are you seeking to change the nature of a relationship? What posture are you in? What partnership are you looking for (learning, knowing, or wanting.)

There is tremendous healing and growth in being “in learning” with others. Here we can recapture the space we had as little children. There is no attempt to be dramatic in telling you this— seek those to be “in learning” with first – let everything flow from this. Love, marriage, partnership may follow or you might find love with someone different.

When you are “in learning” with someone growth and healing will occur for yourselves and those around you. In some cases you may have this relationship with your mate. Often these relationships are full. They are complicated because they begin with ways of being other than “in learning.” It is best to start with being “in learning” and build your foundations from here – chose your mate from this posture. Our message to our children needs to be – “seek those who will be in learning with you, who value walking beside you”

Of course, this is a major reversal of many of societies’ norms and compulsions – from those societies that chose mates for their children; to those that

encourage and support having multiple mates over time (not at the same time); to those that believe marriage is sacred. The pressures are abundant in many of our societies about the absolute importance of romantic love and passion. Movies, songs, books, our peers speak to the importance of loves, romance, passion and lust.

Where is the reinforcement about being “in learning” with your partner? How would it be if our stories were not about love, romance, and sex but about great partnerships that are “in learning?” Suppose our books, our TVs, radios, our music songs were told us about those who are “in learning” together and who walk side by side, helping one another grow?

IV. Conclusion

Despite what is said we are not encouraged to take the posture of in-learning. We are actively encouraged to be in-knowing and in-wanting. In western society the majority of our institutions are not aligned with the energy of being in-learning. Most the institutions surrounding us reinforce in-knowing and in-wanting as the predominant postures to adopt.

Our **educational institutions** from kindergarten to graduate school emphasize knowledge acquisition, competition and testing. They confuse testing, counting and grading with learning and this, in turn, reinforces the energy of in-knowing.

Our **business institutions** typically value in-knowing and in-wanting over in-learning. Survival of the fittest, in the form of competition is valued over the learning that comes from collaboration. Leader effectiveness is judged by short term results (at any cost). Leaders are expected to be strong, directive, decisive – not change their minds. Inquiry, study, on- the-job-learning, creating collaborations for learning are viewed by some as slow or weak approaches. Leaders should be hungry for results at any cost (wanting) and be expert at what to do (knowing).

Our **retail institutions** encourage us to acquire things we do not need (wanting). In fact the major engine of our economy consumer spending relies on us to be in-wanting . Deep concerns are raised when the engine slows down. Retail institutions tell both children and adults what we must purchase to define ourselves as successful – success in relationships, success in competition with others, success in how we look. They tell us this is the way to transform ourselves, improve ourselves through buying. Each season they define and redefine the “must haves” in an effort to encourage

continuous buying. We are bombarded with an on-going barrage of media to be in-wanting and to use our wanting to define ourselves and our worth. Ask yourself these questions how much of what I buy is necessary for my growth or healing? How much of what I buy is necessary for my body's health and well-being?

Our **financial institutions** which were located at the epicenter of the recent world financial crisis demonstrates what happens when the posture of in-wanting drives our institutions and investors to greater and greater levels of risk in order to acquire wealth by seeking higher and higher returns on investments. Blinders are put on to the possible consequences of an unchecked drive.

Which of our institutions (financial or governmental) were in-learning, which were reflecting and reviewing their behavior? Who was exploring potential side effects and unintended consequences of the unprecedented levels of lending and debt creation? Everyone was wrapped in the energy of in-wanting at the institutional level. And everything was fine as long as these major institutions and large investors were making money. It was a massive conspiracy of in-wanting in which many people and institutions participated.

There is another way and that is more natural that we can easily return. As with most changes this starts with each of us individually. Each of us is born with a passion to learn, that can be naturally activated. It is always present.

In the previous example, how is Dr. Wesch not only able to teach anthropology in an inspiring way, and also in the short time of a course set people on a life long path of learning? How does he reverse years of messages that learning is about acquiring knowledge and being able to demonstrate acquisition via testing?

The answer lies in the natural stance of in-learning, in the joy and pleasure people get from learning. He simply removes barriers to this natural process and creates a powerful invitation. Most importantly rather than teaching answers he teaches his students questions. Dr. Wesch understands better than anyone the stance of in-learning does not need to be taught only invited and encouraged to show up. It is a natural stance or way of being.

An ancient master was asked by a student. "What is the source of your wisdom?" The ancient master replied:

"You cannot find wisdom it finds you. The search for knowledge is not a search for answers or information. It is a search for questions. There is nothing more precious than a good question. A good question can be your companion for a lifetime. You will never feel lonely. Good questions are very tricky. There is hidden

underneath the question another dozen questions that sneak up on you when you are least expecting it. Before you realize it you are deeply immersed in curiosity. This of course is the key - curiosity. Curiosity sets you on a path that wisdom frequents."

• • •

A Crisis of Significance: Breaking a System of in-Knowing and in-Wanting in the Classroom

Dr. Michael Wesch from Kansas State University says we have crisis in our classrooms – a crisis in significance. A majority of students he encounters, say they find little relevance to what is being taught to their lives. Over half of his students say they do not want to be in their classes. Each semester Dr. Wesch teaches Anthropology 101 for four hundred students. Early on in his teaching career he asked a class's about their experience as students and posed a genuine question inquiring about the messages they receive about the nature and qualities of being a student. They told him the central message they receive is that to learn means to acquire information. They also believe information is scarce. You should trust authority for good information. Authorized information is beyond discussion and you must obey authority. The final message is that they should be followers in the classroom. **These messages represent the deeply ingrained rhythms of being in-knowing.** These rhythms are expressed and reinforced by teachers, codified by the school system which counts and evaluates students as measures of progress and accepted and learned by the students themselves as the “way it is” as they move from grammar school to mid-school to high school. His students arrive at college deeply in-knowing.

Dr. Wesch also pays close attention to the questions his students ask. The three most common questions students hold are: How many points is this assignment worth? How long does this paper need to be? What is on the test? Most Students want a good grade and want to understand what it takes to get a good grade. Collectively they have also been taught to be in-wanting. self worth is determined by ranking and grades. They view what happens in the classroom in terms of what is in it for me? These questions deeply disturb him because they are not the questions of someone who is in-learning. They are also disturbing because he believes the most fundamental trait which makes us human is our passion for being in-

learning and what stirs learning the most are good questions. He says, “questions are a catalyst for great learning. If you have the right question you set you students on a path to learn, learn, learn. They can go on a great quest if they have the right question.” Dr. Wesch has a passion for learning and inspiring learning. Working with a simple premise that the keys to learning revolve around good questions, students making connections with – each other, with the class material and with him, he has deployed a series of powerful moves to engage learning. Using the technology which students embrace with a passion (facebook, twitter, wiki, wikipedia) he encourages them to develop their own materials, breaking the in-knowing paradigm that he is the source of all authorize information. It is common in his classes for students in real time to create composite class notes using Wiki that everyone has access to. Notes are complete with key ideas, may contain outside material (i.e. youtube videos) which support or disagree with key learning points and raise questions. He feels these class notes are stronger than anything he could create. Providing students with a bare bones outline for exam study – they can create within 24 hours a more robust study guide than anything he is capable of providing. Using social networking tools like facebook he creates mini-learning groups in his larger classes.

Dr. Wesch, who has only been teaching for four years, recently received the 2008 U.S. Teacher of the Year award from Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. In a tribute to him one his students said of his former teacher – “Dr. Wesch taught me that teaching and learning is about asking really good questions not about finding answers. And from the day that course ended until today I have continued ask good questions and try to inspire others to ask good questions.”

Can I want something and still be in-learning?

Yes you can be *in-learning* and still have strong wants and desires. The key is how you hold the desires. For example you could have a very strong desire to succeed. What qualities are present when you are in pursuit of your desires? How attached are you? Are you aware and connected to others, willing to let go when necessary, or reshape your expectations ?

Am I in-knowing every time I follow direction or wait for someone to tell me what to do?

Not necessarily – there is nothing wrong with being a follower, waiting for someone to tell you what to do, or relying on someone's experience and expertise. However, if some of these conditions exist: you are constantly following a rule which says I must wait to be told what to do; hold a rule which says other people know what is best; if you doubt yourself and your abilities; or if you are not learning and becoming more self-sufficient – then you are probably in-knowing.

Can I have strong beliefs and be in-learning?

Yes, you can be *in-learning* and still have strong beliefs. Again the key is how you hold the beliefs and act out of them. For example, at a recent conference one noted scientist dismissed concerns to his theories questioning the credentials of anyone who raised the concerns. With questions he tended to be short and show disdain for peoples lack of understanding. Another scientist who presented on the second day listened carefully to concerns, acknowledging their validity. He would ask questions to understand the others viewpoints and then shared the data which he felt supported his theories. He treated questions, from novices the same as he did from his peers. He was only willing to consider new data and views

Is a leader *in-knowing* if he or she makes a unilateral decision?

How a decision is made could indicate that posture being held. Making a unilateral decision could be necessary at times, what happens after the decision is made is important. Does the leader stay connected with how the decision is implemented? If unintended consequences emerge will they be addressed?



Are you saying, that as a parent I don't know what is best for my child?

Parents are in a unique position to understand their children, and must be actively involved in guiding their development. Parents also need to listen to their children, understand their child's passions, and be aware how they are different or similar from

them. They need to be connected and influenced by their children. If you find yourself expecting your child to walk the same path you did and decide success if going further; or predetermine who they should grow up to be; or judge their worth based on grades, competing and winning, you should reflect if you are *in-knowing* or *in-wanting*. Again the qualities present are the indicators - connection, learning, being awake, listening.

Is being in love a form of wanting?

Only you can decide this based on the qualities present in the relationship. If the vibrancy of the relationship is based primarily on whether or not someone meets your needs and expectations and the moment this doesn't happen there on conflicts, then it is likely this is the posture of in-wanting.

As a leader does this mean I can't have a vision for the future?

Effective leaders do have a vision for the future. They also invite other to share this vision by participating in co-creating it, supporting them to link it to their passions. When a vision is shared the posture is in-learning. When a vision is singularly held and driven by a leader, who knows what is best, then the nature of the relationship is in-knowing or in-wanting.

Doesn't being in-learning slow things down, we need to make decisions fast?

There is often great pressure to decide and be in movement in order to achieve results. *in-Learning* is not a passive state and neither is it linear. Decisions are often made quickly based on the available information and experience. Once a decision is made is their a commitment to learning? If you are stuck in a pattern that seems to always require movement and there is no room for stillness, reflection, or sensing this may very well limit your ability to perceive possibilities.



Practices of being in-learning

- ❖ I am curious about why people think the way they do
 - ❖ When I get unexpected results or reactions, I first look at how I might have contributed to the situation
 - ❖ When I disagree with someone I ask for examples to better understand his / her position
 - ❖ I believe there is a collective wisdom in all communities which can be tapped for guidance in making choices.
 - ❖ I am curious about what we can learn from mistakes and failures
 - ❖ I put my ideas out and deliberately ask for feedback
 - ❖ I have a learning partner.
 - ❖ I am able to suspend judgments (I may have judgments, but don't act out of them) until I have all the facts
 - ❖ When being criticized I can postpone immediately defending myself and ask for illustrations to make feedback more concrete and constructive
- I believe no one is "best." Everyone has a gift to contribute. When people find their gifts and share them with their communities of work, family, religions etc., everyone benefits.
- ❖ I believe fear narrows, debilitates and blocks our ability to experience connection with others and to engage in true dialogue.
 - ❖ When people are nervous or having trouble expressing their ideas I try to help them out by asking questions or summarizing
 - ❖ In a conflict situation I can still ask questions about someone's point of view
 - ❖ I try to ask for the next layer of information about a person's position (needs, assumptions, judgments, concerns, aspirations).



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