



SYMPOSIUM

A dialogue on core qualities and practices needed in education
Driebergen, 8th & 9th February 2017

*Ways and a will to reach out – to withstand the eroding of
connectedness.*

Reflection by Corina van Doodewaard

All kinds of reflections can be brought together, when looking back at the conference: Unfolding Human Potential. This very well organized conference, gathered people around the need to reconsider the role of education in the development in our societies. I captured my thoughts in short and different notes.

One poem of Bart Moeyaert kept capturing my mind during both two days: “

***Anyone can exist,
but it takes courage to “be there”.***

It feels stronger in Dutch:

***Bestaan kan iedereen
Er zijn vraagt moed***

Looking back ...

This conference about the unfolding of human potential, brought me back to my meetings with one of my teachers. He was a wise, non-conforming, authentic and anarchistic rhythm and music educator. He taught me to take responsibility for good education – and how to love the beauty of the doubts. He inspired me to talk about education as a practice, and encouraged me to study this practice for social justice. He taught me the beautiful risk of education, although we didn't use those words or grammar back then. He is one of my educational flame keepers.

Inspiring network for good education

For me, the conference actually started at the trainstation of Driebergen-Zeist. When I was searching for the bus to take me to Landgoed De Horst, the exact conference-location, I already met fellow congressmembers. We directly 'unfolded' and got in an open-hearted conversation about our expectations for the next two days. We talked about jobs, hometowns, education, universities, childreporters, the week of the forgotten children... All that in a short trip.... We felt connected in our joy and expectations of being part of this shared upcoming event. During the conference, we kept each other in the eye. It felt as if our start was the conference in a nutshell. Sharing values and lives – in connection before we even got started. A promising beginning of being part of an inspiring network....

Urgency...

"Connectedness between people on several dimensions is eroding..."

During the conference, I met a lot of people from very different backgrounds and with a variety of jobs and involvements. Nothing pointed in the direction of eroding connectedness in Driebergen. It made me wonder: Was it really this urgency that brought all these people together? Or was it the spirit of collective autonomy? The eager to create a different perspective, another language or grammar, away from *"learnification and performativity"*? It was a pleasant bubble, these two days – with a lot of synergy and shared educational values and engagement. But also with a strong appeal for dissonance, awareness of unsafe learning and the values of crises.

It was an inspiring bubble, those two days, but it also made me realize that this bubble can't make the difference.

Our jobs are 'out there'; where dilemma's and conflicts of values challenge me on a daily base. I feel empowered and challenged by the conference to create such little 'bubbles' in my own spaces, with my own colleagues and students. Connect and create free spaces to share doubts, cherish dilemma's and ...dare to fail, bravely, together!

Value connectedness as a source of life...

Treasure curiosity

Just before I went to bed during the conference my daughter (18) sent me a *WhatsApp*.

She: Hi mam, how is your conference going?

I: The congress is very inspiring.

She: What is it about?

I: It's about how to really be present in education, to engage, to be there for each other.

She: Sounds cool! Makes me curious!

I: It makes me curious about your thoughts on this as well

She: Maybe we can take a long walk with the dog this weekend and discuss it?

I: Discuss what counts in education

She: Yeah ;-)

(here we switched the subject...as we often do on WhatsApp....)

She: Well, see you on Friday then! Have fun over there and sleep well!

I: Sweet dreams for you too sweetie!

In a few sentences we could share what was between us. Curiosity and care.

The beautiful risk of communication through short messages...

Sometimes WhatsApp worries me – is it a part of our eroding connectedness as humans? At other times, it makes me very happy – these beautiful new forms of connecting and interaction. Ways and a will to reach out – to withstand the eroding of connectedness.

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