

Creative-relational inquiry is about movement

Jonathan Wyatt
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Creative-relational inquiry is about movement. It's inquiry that seeks not to 'capture', hold still, but finds a way to do justice to the fluidity of *process*. Creativity as process, relating as process. How, when I am inquiring into loss, I might find a way to write about how loss changes, shifts, is never still: a young adult son's sudden near-fatal road accident on the other side of the world and the jolt into life's precariousness; those hours of uncertainty as we wait to hear news; the surges of shock and disbelief; then after many days, relief. And how, a year on it's still there, that mark on the calendar, a continuing unfolding as he, we, we all continue to become something other than we were.

Inquiry such as this renders the researcher in motion too, affected, involved, implicated, never able to be distant and separate, always caught up, caught up in the flow, only ever able to seek a way to shape something, like themselves, that is partial, momentary, already transforming.

Creative-relational inquiry sees how the process of relating is itself creative. Like in therapy this week, when my client and I realised that without the two of us being in that room together, at that moment, and every week over the past year, we never would have realised how rare, how precious this encounter is in his realising how much he matters. To himself. Creative-relational inquiry hints at the possible in relating. How we, bodies, meaning, life, is created in relating.

Creative-relational inquiry is inquiry that, with Michelle Fine (1994), works its hyphen. The hyphen as connection and link. The hyphen as dynamic, as catalytic, as engaged. The hyphen as push and pull, as tension, as force. Always ensuring inquiry is mindful of its power, and mindful of the processes of power within and beyond it. The hyphen *drives* the creative-relational; that's where its energy is, never allowing inquiry to be complacent, always encouraging it to consider where it is, what work it's doing, what it's missing. The hyphen of creative-relational inquiry helps keep inquiry ready, alert, open.

Reference

Fine, M. (1994). Working the hyphens: Reinventing self and other in qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 70-82). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

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