

# CRUCIAL TIMES

Community Resource Unit Inc.  
Suite 5B, 19 Lang Parade  
Auchenflower Brisbane Q 4066

March 2002 Issue No. 23  
Ph: (07) 3870 1022 Fax: (07) 3371 3842  
Email: [cru@cru.org.au](mailto:cru@cru.org.au)

## Editorial

Jane Sherwin

Over the past two decades there has been a rise in a style of management known as technocratic managerialism. This style of management is easily recognised in large bureaucracies and corporations, but its influence and dogma are not simply the domain of large organisations; there is evidence that smaller organisations are under pressure to operate in this way. This edition of **CRUCIAL TIMES** is devoted to encouraging people to find ways of coping with the onslaught of technocratic managerialism.

In a regime of technocratic managerialism, 'professional managers' can be found – that is, people who do not have knowledge or experience of the field in which they work. For example, the manager of a national freight company might become the manager of a human service organisation, without having any knowledge of that field of work. The person relies on processes rather than on a depth of knowledge about what that person is managing. In the absence of practice wisdom, there is a reliance on processes that will deliver outcomes, which are measured in a disembodied way. Processes are put in place to deal with intakes, outputs, assessments, decision-points, guidelines, checking mechanisms and performance indicators. The processes are enshrined as policies, as if having data and documentation will ensure that the right thing will be done. But what do we mean by the 'right thing'?

While we might wonder whether managerialism is capable of delivering good things to ordinary citizens, our specific concern is whether technocratic managerialism can deliver good things to people with disabilities and their families. Can this form of management deliver enduring commitments to people with disabilities, when this type of management erodes responsiveness, individualisation, personalisation, support that is based on relationships, the personal qualities of all the people

involved, and decision-making that is kept close to the person who is served by an organisation. Person-to-person commitment, personal networks, informality and intuition cannot co-exist with technocratic managerialism, nor are they valued by that style of operation.

In a regime of technocratic managerialism, authority rests with the organisation rather than with the people who are served by that organisation. Decision-making resides in the relationship between the funding body and the service organisation, instead of being located in the relationship between the people in the service organisation and the person who is served by that organisation. Technocratic managerialism typically intrudes into private domains. Its processes invade people's lives through an insistence on formal processes, rules, impersonal lines of communication, assessments, data collection, and adherence to regulations. Applied to human services, technocratic managerialism tramples on the sensitivities of people by ignoring the importance of relationships between the person that the service supports and the relationships that might be present in that person's life, both paid and unpaid.

An alternative approach to technocratic managerialism is one where the nature of the human relationship between the served and the server is central to transactions between the service and the person with a disability, or that person's family. The relationships are based on personal interactions that share a sense of purpose, have constant dialogue, and an enduring commitment to a shared vision.

In the absence of sound personal relationships, organisations can resort to processes. Critical thinking and strong leadership in organisations are necessary if services are to withstand the onslaught of technocratic managerialism. ✕

---

### CRU's MISSION STATEMENT

- To challenge ideas and practices which limit the lives of people with disabilities.
- To inspire and encourage individuals and organisations to pursue better lives for people with disabilities.

# from the president

Mike Duggan

I believe that one of the greatest challenges for services to people with disabilities, and their families, is to resist the onslaught of technocratic managerialism. Services, no matter how well intentioned, often find themselves colluding with the demands of this style of management. Because managerialism blurs lines of accountability, human services can find themselves being more accountable to funding bodies than to those for whom they are providing a service. Under the pressures of managerialism, the relationship between the service provider and the service recipient is unlikely to be the 'right' relationship.

I was first introduced to the concept of 'right' relationship by Michael Kendrick. As a philosophy, 'right' relationship has foundations in Buddhism. Kendrick stresses the importance of creating 'right' relationship with those we serve, although it applies to other relationships.

There are two distinctive components to 'right' relationship. One component is *interactional*, which might be witnessed by our superficial interactions with another person or what might be displayed on the surface of one's interactions. The other component that might be witnessed is the *structure* of a relationship or the foundation to the existence of that relationship. It would be remiss to believe that 'right' relationship is superficially based in the interactional qualities of human beings; it goes beyond our everyday interactions with people in which we might be seen as treating people with respect – for example, in the language we use to address people. Right relationship goes to the heart of the structure or foundation of the relationship we have with our fellow humans.

The structural component might be characterised by how we place ourselves in terms of the equality of a relationship and how control or power might be

dispersed between two people in a relationship. It is entirely possible that, on an interactional level, people might treat each other respectfully or nicely but at the structural level of the relationship one would witness inequality in such things as one person having more power over the other. For example, professionals having power and control over people's lives yet interacting in a manner that might be seen to be respectful, or nice. If we were to look back in history, an illustration might be drawn from slavery, where the structural level of the relationship between master and slave was unequal and abhorrent, but at an interactional level many slave owners may have treated their slaves 'nicely'. The structural level forms the deeper level at which a 'right' relationship might be lived and witnessed.

The questions then that need to be proposed are whether 'right' relationship is possible in human services today; or is it a question of whether today's human service systems, which are characterised by technocratic managerialism, are the right vehicles for 'right' relationships to grow and develop; or do we need to imagine a different version of *service*?

'Right' relationship would require human services to treat a person as an equal authority in that person's own life. In the most practical terms possible the ethic that is embodied in 'right' relationship would mean developing supports or assistance *with* a person, not doing things *to* or *for* a person. 'Right' relationship ought to begin with a commitment to preserve maximum and normative personal autonomy, unless there is some compelling reason to limit it. ■

[This article is based on notes taken at a Michael Kendrick Workshop on "Right Relationship". I sincerely thank Michael for his generosity, whilst also acknowledging his wisdom.]

## CONTENTS

Editorial	1
From the President	2
Debunking Technocratic Managerialism	3
Resisting the Red Tape	5
Flexible Support – not rigid rules	7
Local Responses to Global Rationalism	8
How To Resist Technocratic Managerialism	9
Don't just do something...stand there! An invitation to conversation	10

### CRU Committee members 2001-2002

Mike Duggan	.....President
Alf Lizzio	.....Vice President
Elaine Stephenson	.....Secretary
Janet Millward	.....Treasurer
Cathy Bartolo	

### CRU Staff

Jane Sherwin	.....Director
Pam Collins	..... Publishing Editor & Resource Consultant
TBA	.....Co-ordinator Education & Development
Lynda Shevellar	..... Consultant
Sandy Grant	.....Senior Admin Officer
Jillian Roche	.....Admin Officer

### CRU Associates

Anne Cross • Michael Kendrick • John Armstrong • Peter Millier

*We invited **Stuart Rees** to expose some of the dogma of technocratic managerialism and to spell out some ways of overcoming its effects. Stuart Rees is the Director of the Centre for Peace & Conflict Studies at the University of Sydney.*

# Debunking Technocratic Managerialism

**T**he words in this title need to be explained and I'll begin with 'managerialism'.

Managerialism refers to a dogma that more should be done with less, that management can solve almost any problem, and that financial consideration should always take precedence over social ones. This last observation is apparent when managers talk about a healthy bottom-line to imply that the quality of people's lives is of less importance than the responsibility of managers to balance their books. It is a view that reflects government policies which give far more attention to running an economy than to producing a fair society. One of the world's arch managerialists – Margaret Thatcher – said there was no such thing as 'society', only individuals.

The term 'technocratic' refers to a straight-line way of thinking, sometimes called 'linear', or 'logical' or, most persuasively, 'rational'. The use of computers to record and bolster such ways of

thinking is both a means and an end. Computers can be used to record any amount of information and the very recording is sometimes counted as a form of efficiency. It doesn't seem to matter whether the information recorded is of no use to anyone or has no real effect on the quality of services. When sitting at a computer becomes an end in itself, little else seems to matter if an image of order and tidyness is achieved. It may not matter if the lives of vulnerable people continue to be extremely difficult as long as a feeling of efficiency has been achieved in the manager's office – records are in order, regulations can be downloaded, and an atmosphere of rational management prevails. Even if there is a mismatch between the management's perceptions and the lives of people for whom they are making decisions, the culture of the technocratic managerialist age somehow manages to camouflage this state of affairs. It is a bit like a politician caught out by evidence which shows that asylum seekers did not throw their children overboard but the politician insists it did happen and his words can still be trusted.

'Debunking' is a means of exposing this mismatch. It means being skeptical, persistent with questions and never taking official views for granted. Official views such as 'there are not enough resources', 'care in the community is efficient', and 'we'll have to cut back' are promoted by management. To debunk those views is to ask why they are being promoted and how they can be justified. To be skeptical is to show the qualities of a good researcher and the best 'researchers' into the lives of people living with disabilities are often the people themselves, their families and those who work with them. The views of citizens or clients often sit in complete contrast to the technocratic managerialist line. To enable professionals and their managers to respond energetically and imaginatively to citizens' needs and demands, carefully assembled and well-publicised accounts of people's experiences are needed.

If we are being critical it must not appear as though we are being as fundamentalist or inflexible as the managers who are the target of

our questions. I am not the bathwater. I support management which is judged 'good' throwing the baby out with because it does not take an official point of view and is able to be self-critical, or even laugh at itself. Being a creative and imaginative human being is of far more value than hiding behind computers and other office paraphernalia. Fundamental managerials are usually long winded, unapproachable and very boring. But if I am not to sound like a hypocrite by being long winded myself, let me finish with a few points as to how to combat the impersonal attitudes conveyed by the latest breed of managerials. I don't usually like check-lists but I'll risk it this time.

- Insist that managers and their technology only exist to serve the public.
- Keep a dated record – with comments about the specific context – of the day-to-day experiences of living, and of the impact of services on those experiences. Check your record against official management claims.
- Never be intimidated by officials' insistence as to what the Rules say. Rules and officials are usually here today and gone tomorrow.
- Always be skeptical of the management claim that more can be done with less because there are insufficient resources to go around – that story is as old as the hills. The main issue is usually about the fair distribution of resources, not the absolute total of money available.
- Remember your humanness, your humour, your love, compassion, energy and imagination and insist that professionals of all kinds, and managers in particular, should be evaluated according to these criteria of humanity.
- Insist that any kind of technology for keeping records and for aiding decision-making is only a means to an end. We should never be slaves to this technology. It should be made to work for us.
- Remember that the use of impersonal and inflexible management techniques are in effect promoting a form of violence which is unacceptable. The very personal celebration of humanity and the creativity which is inherent in that celebration is the goal to aim at. It is the way to train professionals, administrators, and volunteers. It is the way to ensure that we will never be suffocated by the fumes of an invisible but controlling managerialism.



□ *In corporate life, information technology has become so sophisticated that data transfer is often confused with communication, and personal relationships within organisations have suffered directly as a result. Sending and receiving disembodied information is increasingly allowed to occupy time which used to be spent in keeping closely in touch with each other.*

Hugh Mackay, *Reinventing Australia*

# Resisting the Red Tape

**W**e call it bureaucracy, red tape, paperwork, official procedures and sometimes words which cannot be put into print. It is in effect part of the relationship between government departments and recipients of government funds.

It is this part of a relationship which has undergone a slow and furtive change – nothing too obvious which could be confronted or challenged, but nonetheless just as daunting. Whatever happened to that government department whose role it was to fund services that could then provide support as required by the individual? Whatever happened to Community Resource Officers whose role was to provide support and to *resource* information for funded services?

Over the past couple of years our service has struggled with increasing ‘administrivia’. It has taken us away from our prime objective, which is to support people with a disability to connect with their community in whatever ways they choose. We were getting so caught up in the red tape that we were slowly losing our way,

*Lisa Cooper of Tableland Community Link in North Queensland describes why it is important for a service to be flexible in its response to the needs of people that it supports. She also believes it is important for a service to provide a buffer between the bureaucracy and the people supported by the service.*

allowing the funding body to come up with answers. We were losing our creativity, our flexibility, our purpose, and most importantly we were no longer assisting people in the manner they should expect and receive.

We all knew something was wrong, but no one was able to put a finger on what it was. Each bureaucratic request was simple enough and taken on its own, did not amount to anything substantial, but looking at all those simple requests over the past few years it is clear that there are major changes at hand.

In July last year three people from our organisation attended a Michael Kendrick workshop in Cairns. Michael discussed the idea of support agencies creating a bureaucratic ‘buffer’ for consumers, the concept being that people may not want to know all the rules and regulations of departments and may only be interested in their needs being met. It was like a lightning bolt, and such a simple idea – just focus on delivering the most appropriate service to people, and deal with bureaucracy internally. We had been getting caught up in the notion that



collaboratively in an atmosphere of trust toward the accomplishment of mutual social benefit.

Jeremy McArdle, *Community Development in the Market Economy*

# FLEXIBLE SUPPORT – NOT RIGID RULES

*Wendy McDonnell offers an example of how important it is for families to keep decision-making close to them when they seek support for their sons and daughter. Wendy lives in a remote North Queensland community where a local service provider showed great flexibility in responding to the family's needs – a flexibility that would never be demonstrated in a technocratic style of service management.*

I have a nineteen year old son named Ricky, who has Down syndrome. Ricky attended special schools and this was a secure network for us, knowing that his educational needs were being met by his teachers as well as his special needs. Ricky enjoyed school and felt at ease with his many friends and his surroundings, so when the time came for him to leave school it was an anxious and worrying time for us. Things were no longer so easily set out and we needed to plan for Ricky's future. We felt we should organise some funding so that we could get Ricky involved in cutting a path to his future.

At about this time I met up with Karen, the Local Area Coordinator in our region. She was extremely friendly and gave us hope. We spoke about Ricky's circumstances and she gave me lots to read. She helped me get organised. I'm a working mother and didn't have a lot of time but Karen helped me get started. We developed a vision and plan for Ricky's next stage of life, including setting some immediate goals, future goals, and we applied for funding through the Moving Ahead Program for young people with disabilities.

Months later we received news that Ricky had been allocated funding to support the plans for the next stage of his life. We live in a remote community and at that time I wasn't particularly happy with the local organisations that provided services to people with disabilities, so Karen and I began to look around to see what other options there were. We identified a local mainstream employment and training organisation that supports young people. We approached them about managing Ricky's funding and providing some of the supports that he needed to reach his goals. They had never done that sort of work

before but after a period of negotiation they agreed to join in supporting Ricky. This was a major step – we now had a service provider and the choice was made in the knowledge that I could change the arrangements at any time. I could change the arrangements for the funding, whether the organisation managed part of Ricky's funding or none at all – the decision was entirely up to me.

With Karen's help and Ricky's Moving Ahead Program worker, we knuckled down, working out goals, wants, and needs for Ricky over the coming two years. From this we developed a plan for Ricky that included personal development, life skills, literacy skills, work skills, and job placement training. At the same time we were able to get the support of a male support worker (from another organisation) who helped Ricky to reconnect with some of his mates from school. Ricky is very much a 'people person' who enjoys socialising, loves being part of a group, and it's important to him to spend time with his mates.

Once Ricky's Moving Ahead plans were up and running I realised that there were issues of concern that related to Ricky's daily activities and his goals. I discussed these concerns with Karen and we met with Ricky's support worker to sort them out. I was comfortable in voicing my concerns and we were able to develop some revised plans for Ricky's goals.

I know we still have a long way to go, however I feel confident that in working closely with Karen and Ricky's support worker we will sort out issues, large and small, and that Ricky will live a happy, worthwhile and productive life. ■



# Local Responses to Global Rationalism

**Richard de Simone** describes alternate strategies to technocratic managerialism that have roots in earlier periods of history. Today, through a range of small mutual-aid processes, small communities create pools of funds that meet common needs. Richard is strongly involved in a Brisbane community that assists those who are marginalised by society.

**M**anagerialism and Economic Rationalisation form a set of beliefs that dominate the Western World. They express an ideology that values wealth over people, and views economic efficiency as more important than human need. Those who hold these views assume there is no alternative, so that the poor, the less able, racial minority groups, and those most negatively affected by these views are stuck with them. But there is a blind spot in the ideology – it ignores the capacity of ordinary people to join together for mutual support.

Prior to the development of the Welfare State, the provision of social security was largely in the hands of mutual-aid groups. An example would be the Friendly Society movement, the origins of which are now somewhat obscure but probably arose from groups of labourers meeting in inns and pubs, paying a subscription to a society for the purposes of relieving financial misery caused by death, illness or disability. Cooperative in nature, the movement emerged as a direct response to the upheavals of the agricultural and industrial revolutions and the appalling conditions faced by rural and industrial workers during those historical periods. In England, the earliest general Act dealing with Friendly Societies was passed in 1793. Some researchers note that in the early part of the nineteenth century the societies were regarded as useful organisations for lowering the poor rate, but were potentially dangerous in a political sense. Ultimately, the ‘danger’ that Friendly Societies posed to the inequities of Victorian England was that the societies pioneered a means to a more equitable society. For example, they established unemployment benefit funds, sickness benefit funds and medical benefit funds. The first Australian Friendly Society was established in 1830 and by 1900, half of all Australians were members of Friendly Societies.

These forms of assistance would later be taken up as the foundations of the modern Welfare State, and as a result, Friendly Societies declined in importance. However, the current frenzy to dismantle the Welfare State has given rise to the re-emergence of mutual-aid amongst ordinary people seeking to cope with the harsh realities of life under the dominance of economic rationalism. The following is an example of the re-emergence of long-established activities.

The Foresters ANA Friendly Society was established a century and a half ago, and over the past ten years has

been developing a response to economic rationalism. The response hinges upon the values of mutual aid, social justice, ecological sustainability, and citizenship that engenders social change. Through a range of mutual-aid processes, Foresters ANA seeks to empower local and affiliated communities to create pools of capital that can be used to address their common needs. Under the broad heading of ‘community capital formation’ Foresters ANA has developed three strands of activity: Micro Finance, Mutual Services, and Social Investing.

**Micro Finance** involves small-scale savings, small loans, and enterprise development and has a ‘mutual’ quality that can be understood in terms of ‘every person for every person, themselves included’. Micro Finance can be understood as a form of social action, providing an alternative to mainstream financial options. People can use micro finance to become self-sufficient and by doing so, challenge the political, economic and social structures that would otherwise limit their quality of life. Micro finance has existed throughout history and across cultures.

**Mutual Services** is the oldest Foresters ANA activity. The present scope of Mutual Services includes an Eco Fund, Funeral Fund, and Community Organisations Investment Service. The Eco Fund provides benefits to a contributing member to purchase or otherwise bring about ecologically sustainable improvements to that member's home or locality, through a no-interest loan. It is particularly useful for people on low incomes who cannot accumulate capital. The Community Organisations Investment Service has been developed to assist community groups to secure the best possible returns on their funds. It involves combining the funds of many organisations so that a higher rate of return can be achieved with fewer fees and charges.

**Social Investing.** The Society has three major social investment mechanisms: Foresters ANA Ethical Investment Bond; Ethical Superannuation Fund, and a Charitable Trust. Investments from these funds are governed by guidelines that seek to ensure investments do not harm the earth, people or communities.

These mutual initiatives are a small part of what is believed to be a resurgence of people power, a means by which ordinary people can join together for mutual support and have control in important aspects of their lives, rather than having them controlled by ideologies

that dominate corporations and governments. ☒

## HOW TO RESIST TECHNOCRATIC MANAGERIALISM

**Glen Hyland-Reid** suggests that there are many ways to resist the forces of technocratic managerialism, and lists thirty-three of them. Glen works with people in the Redcliffe community who have created environmental arts that enhance the cultural life of the area.

Be clear about your real work.

Be brave. If you aren't naturally brave or courageous – fake it. You will become brave.

Know the enemy and use their weapons against them

Make strategic alliances.

Choose your battles wisely.

Be prepared to compromise on the small things.

Be strategic in your thinking. Who else will benefit from your plans & how can you involve them?

Honour the ideas and work of others. Don't accept all the praise for yourself.

Be prepared to let go. Provide the space for other's ideas and creative projects.

Be a creative enthusiastic compassionate leader.

Think outside the square.

Never resent others for leaving. They may be future allies.

Don't be afraid to ask friends to be involved in the work.

Be creative with your grant money – support can mean many different things.

Apply for many different grants for existing and innovative projects.

Go into partnership with local government.

Build strategic networks.

Encourage everyone to be conscious of their networks or lack of them

Bring people in your networks together.

Resist promotion.

Work in spite of the system – not because of it.

Remember enthusiasm is contagious and better for you than the flu.

Train yourself to separate emotion from action.

Remember that not everyone is going to like you all the time – but be hopeful that they will.

Be a person who can be alone and reflective.

Don't crave to please everyone.

Always challenge poor practice without taking the moral high ground.

Be inclusive in your practice framework.

Invite the community in.

Think about community – talk about community – work with, and in the community.

Expect the unexpected.

Surround yourself with energetic, creative people.

Laugh a lot!

## **Don't just do something...stand there!** **An invitation to conversation**

*Alf Lizzio is a lecturer in psychology and a member of the CRU committee. In this article he reminds us how important it is to take time to reflect, and to have conversations with each other. He even suggests some topics of conversation.*

**T**here is no shortage of useful work to be done. As a society we have needs coming out of our ears and many good people are in action, working long hours, contributing above and beyond...and thank goodness for such commitment. However the righteous feeling that we sometimes get when we are over-committed should not be mistaken for the glow of success. While we all know that being busy is not the same as being effective, we can sometimes lose sight of this in the haze of everyday activity. We may do well to be a little cautious when we hear ourselves and others say things like: *I've too much to do. Thinking about the 'big picture' is a luxury I can't afford, or At least we're doing something – we'll work out whether it's useful later*, and some will be familiar with the words: *I'm too busy chopping wood to stop and sharpen my axe*. These are the siren songs of the short game.

An orientation to action is absolutely necessary – after all we don't want to be all talk and no action. I would suggest however that there might be benefits, to both our effectiveness and our personal satisfaction, if we supported our actions by regular and friendly questioning of each other about what it is

---

We may believe that authentic relationships between people are critical, but settle for workable procedures that demand less of us in our interactions.

---

that we think we are doing. I know this sounds simple but I don't hear these constructive conversations very often. Unless people have been quarantined in some type of workshop, making the space and time for critical reflection seems a challenge for most of us. It may be that our greatest strengths can also be our greatest weaknesses.

The activity trap is a sweet temptation for those of us helping-types who want to contribute. Current managerialist imperatives 'to do more with less' can be red flags to a helper's pride. We can fall into the collusive trap of priding ourselves on how well we can play the can-do efficiency game: *We'll show them how well we can deliver under tough conditions!* In treating ourselves as expendable commodities we reinforce managerialist assumptions about how the game of helping and service should be played. One aspect of the politics of helping is that human service systems

will allow enthusiastic workers to exploit themselves under the rhetoric of 'doing a good job'. People burn out and are replaced, and so the un-reflective short game is maintained without end.

Good helpers are often characterised as those who are able to show unconditional acceptance and non-judgmental supportiveness. We readily identify with the idea of being supportive people, however we can take this too far, and in a kind of helper's trance over-generalise our sense of acceptance of inappropriate rules or unworkable limitations on our practice. Our identity as supportive people means that we can find critical questioning too challenging or uncomfortable to incorporate into our *modus operandi*.

Perhaps the most consequential effect of this is that we start to take self-protective shortcuts in how we engage with our work. We may believe that authentic relationships between people are critical but settle for workable procedures that demand less of us in our interactions. We may acknowledge that people are complex but feel saved from potentially messy and challenging situations by the promise of one right answer in problem-solving. We know that people are likely to feel justly treated when they have a voice in decision-making, but solutions may get imposed when we lack the confidence to enter into a dialogue that comes from having thought things through. We may tell others that learning and change are important, but are happy to just get through the day. We may have vague feelings of unease with the way things are, but don't really want to admit these to ourselves because we fear the complications that might follow from acting on our insights.

Although it isn't the whole answer by a long way, giving ourselves permission to take time to get clear about what is most important can be useful. This is the first step in the training program for the long game. In case any unreformed helpers are wondering, this is real work and it's not 'being selfish'. Find someone, agree to be respectfully challenging of each other and start a conversation. Here are some possible conversation starters – who knows where they might lead!

**I d e n t i t y**    What do I stand for?  
What is the one thing I take as 'core' to who I am?

**P u r p o s e**    What difference am I trying to make?  
Why this and not something else?  
Who agrees/disagrees with me on this? And how much do I care?

**C o n t e x t**    What are the 'rules of the game' under which I am operating?  
Who makes the rules? How do I feel about this?  
Who are the winners and losers? How do I feel about this?

**P r i n c i p l e s**    What simple but important principles inform my daily practice?  
How do I know whether or not I am acting in accord with these?

**I n c o n s i s t e n c i e s**    Is what I actually do the same as what I say should be done?  
What are the differences between my intentions and my impact?

**V o i c e s**    Whose voice is heard most loudly in my practice? Why?  
Whose voice is mediated or translated by others? Why?

Whose voice grates on me? What might I not want to hear?

**Energy mode?** In what ways do I feel like I am in 'coping way? Am I working in a sustaining and life giving way? In what ways am I protecting myself and my reserves?

**Relationships** Who do I find easy/threatening to relate to? Why? By whom do I not feel understood or appreciated? Who do I imagine does not feel understood or appreciated by me?

**Comfort Zones** How am I becoming too comfortable or predictable? What habits or automatic procedures have I got into? What might be a useful but uncomfortable idea to consider?

**Learning** Am I having the conversations with others that I need to have? What are the blocks to my being more regularly in learning mode?

