

ABSTRACT

The thesis describes a journey of inquiry, in which the researcher explores the implications of a commitment to respect in facilitating training workshops in nonviolent approaches to conflict, where this entails working across cultural boundaries. This exploration includes the concept of respect itself in different cultural contexts; the challenges of exercising the power and responsibility of the facilitator in the counter-cultural setting which workshops constitute; the development of theory which encompasses both attention to power and justice, and the need for accommodation and peace. In addition the researcher monitors and reflects on the inquiry process itself, and the development of her awareness in practice.

Through the eight workshops recorded in detail and nine others more briefly described or discussed, certain culturally influenced issues emerge. Hierarchical power relations and their effects, especially those related to gender and to historical, cultural and geographic power relations, are experienced in the workshops themselves, challenging the inquirer as an English woman working abroad. She explores the ways in which she has tried to deal with these and other conflictual aspects of her work, especially outside Europe, and the problems and doubts which remain, examining her own warrant to do the works she does.

Her theoretical positioning and contribution, and the overall content of her workshops, are presented and discussed. They reflect her concern to address power relations and injustice, as well as the need for peace, and her goal to combine the complementary strengths of Active Nonviolence and Conflict Resolution. The use and usefulness of the theoretical content of her work are tracked through the different workshops.

The inquiry confirms the researcher's view that respect constitutes a useable and useful reference point for her work, and at the same time demonstrates the complexity and importance of applying it in the context of cross-cultural training workshops. The researcher reflects on her own experience of action inquiry and concludes that perhaps the greatest challenge for her is to find self-acceptance in the midst of the different currents and pressures inevitable in her work. She reaffirms her commitment to her practice, convinced by her research of its usefulness, as well as its difficulty, and inspired by the courage and wisdom of workshop participants.