

Chapter Seven

My facilitative practice

The discomfort [of speaking for the lives and realities of 'our' subjects without them being actively present in that process] propelled many of us to shift from being the deemers and certifiers of Truth, to becoming the facilitators of inquiry processes for others to come to their own truths-for-the-purposes. (Wadsworth, 2001:420)

In this chapter I aim to illustrate my understanding of the role I played in the YoWiM inquiry process. This account communicates how my facilitative practice shaped the inquiry process, both within the YoWiM inquiry group (for individual members and collectively as a group) and in the wider P&G context. I build depth into my story - illustrating my ideas with extracts of conversations with YoWiM members. I use this 'data' as it illustrates how I worked with three key questions I held throughout the time spent working with the YoWiM group, and how I shaped my practice to generate data around those questions:

- **What effect am I having?** Inviting feedback on my practice to check out how other people perceive it.
- **What is my intention?** Comparing feedback to my own belief of what I am aiming to do.
- **How can I respond to what I am hearing, and use it to build inquiry skills in my self and others?** Acknowledging any gaps between intention and effect, and learning how to open these as opportunities for inquiry (at predominantly first- and second- person level).

It feels important to mention that in writing this Chapter I feel it somewhat naïve to suggest that 'I did this', 'I had this effect', 'this is how I shaped the process of inquiry'. On the one hand, as I wrote in 'Chapter One, YoWiM: an overview', our commitment within the YoWiM group to each other's voices being heard means that it is valid for me to represent my own account of my practice. I can encrust it with the jewels of other's stories of my practice, but it is still my account. On the other hand, my embodied sense of my practice is that it is relational - what I do is what I am joined in doing, what I have created permission for. This permission may well be emergent, rather than explicit at the beginning, but it has to be there for me to 'do myself' in a way that feels authentic. So, my story is a story of facilitation practice co-created, with all parties creating 'what is possible here'. As Wadsworth (2001) states:

... the task of 'facilitation' of inquiry may also be understood as more shared, and the nature, extent and quality of the sharing in turn determining the nature of the outcome. (Wadsworth, 2001:420)

There is obviously a third hand too - one that says what I have just written is rubbish, that by definition the second hand is just part of the story that needs to be told by the first hand - that co-created practice is just my version of what my practice is/should be about. I haven't figured out how I feel about this throughout the past four years - I don't know if there is a difference between referring to this account as 'my facilitative practice' as if I facilitate in a particular way, as if it is an approach that I 'own', and referring to it as 'my co-created practice' as a way of doing inquiry that is possible only in particular types of contexts. I neither intend nor imagine that this Chapter will provide an answer to this and I wonder if one is necessary. I do know however, that context shapes inquiry as much as inquiry shapes context. I have experienced relationships where I cannot 'do myself' in ways that feel most authentic. This inadvertently creates the following questions:

- Do I need to create particular types of (permission giving, receptive...) spaces/contexts to enable me to do myself authentically?
- If so, how does this limit/enable my inquiry practice and that of others?

In the following, I have used Wadsworth's (2001) Six Key Facilitation Capabilities as a framework upon which to build my discussion, adding to this with ideas from Heron (1999) on Dimensions and Modes of Facilitation and accounts from the YoWiM group - the latter by way of grounding this account. I close with a reflection on my account and a discussion of the questions I am left holding.

Wadsworth on 'facilitation'

I first came across Wadsworth's work in draft form for the then yet to be published Handbook of Action Research, at the beginning of my PhD work in 2000. Her ideas made sense to me and resonated with themes I was picking up from my, at that point, limited experience of facilitation practice. Four years later, they still make sense and offer insight to what I need to attend to as I work - that's why I use them here. I begin with an overview of Wadsworth's rationale and then detail and illustrate each of the six capabilities.

Overview

Wadsworth (2001:420) suggests that the greater access provided to the processes of inquiry for 'all who are relevant or have an interest' the greater the likelihood that facilitation will be collectively undertaken, formed as a result of the interactions of the group and the attention of all members to the process engaged in. We might refer to this as the group engaging in 'on-line' reflection (Rudolph

et al, 2001) about their process – seeking to attend to the quality of their practice in the moment of acting.

She goes on to suggest that we might conceptualise two kinds of facilitation; ‘the first where we carry out these things [observing, discussing, developing proposals for action] for ourselves, and a second where we ‘keep watch’ and take actions to ensure that things are happening for others individually and collectively’ (Wadsworth, 2001:420).

This idea of double-tracked attention in facilitation practice makes sense to me. If we think in terms of how groups develop, for example the ideas discussed by Srivastva, Orbert and Neilsen, (1977) and Randall and Southgate (1980), there are needs and questions we all hold as we consider becoming members of the group and in how we create our position in it over time. For example, we have needs to belong and to be liked, to find similar others. These may be evident in facilitative interventions such as asking questions of the group that seek confirming data (about being liked for example). These are the things we do ‘for ourselves’, as Wadsworth suggests. There are also interventions we make, Wadsworth suggests, ‘for others’. An example of this might be asking the opinion of someone who hasn’t said much, to help them to feel included. In so doing we might imagine that we are ‘ensuring that things are happening for others ‘individually’ as well as ‘collectively’ – by sending a message to the group that ‘we should include everyone’s voices here’.

I am not sure how clear we can be, when considering interventions in groups, as to whether we are acting ‘for ourselves’ or ‘for others’ – my above example ‘helping others to feel included’ could be as much about helping the process of inclusion in the group, though I appreciate Wadsworth’s distinction. From my own perspective I find them practically indistinguishable as, for example, inviting in the voice of a quiet group member is on one level acting for others (encouraging more voices to be heard/valuing the contribution of others) but at another level it is about acting for my self (perhaps I want to hear from them as I

believe they know something that could help me, perhaps I feel I should include them as if I don't others will think I am not doing a 'good job' of facilitating). Furthermore, people often 'carry' particular issues for the group as a whole, with or without awareness of this being the case.

Even so, as a way of thinking about facilitation practice, I do think this approach has value in helping us, in the moment, to consider where our attention lies.

Wadsworth's Six Key Facilitation Capabilities

Wadsworth identifies six key areas as 'crucial to the success of facilitating collaborative inquiry' (2001:425). It is perhaps important to note this - the particular appropriateness of the skills highlighted to collaborative/co-operative inquiry. I say this because although Wadsworth does not tell us what successful facilitation is, except by implication that it is 'doing' all six capabilities (though again there is no suggestion as to how we might know we are doing them 'well'), she is suggesting that that in order to facilitate an inquiry of this nature successfully we need to pay attention to the capabilities she suggests. The practical and tacit nature of her suggestions seems to concur with Reason and Rowan (1981) who state;

Validity in new paradigm research lies in the skills and sensitivities of the researcher, in how he or she uses her self as a knower, as an inquirer. Validity is more personal and interpersonal, rather than methodological. (Reason and Rowan, 1981:244)

This goes some way to explaining why the absence from Wadsworth's account of how we might know we are 'doing' the capabilities 'well' could be understood as irrelevant. How valid our exhibited facilitation skill is, may well be for the group with whom we work to decide - at the personal (first-person) and interpersonal (second-person) level. In this case we might see Wadsworth's suggestions as just that - suggestions - rather than a method that leads to 'facilitation done well'.

This however does somewhat disagree with her position that the capabilities are crucial to the success of facilitating collaborative inquiry. Another conundrum.

For the purpose of my own work, I use Wadsworth's list of capabilities as a reminder of what I might pay attention to. As discussed above, I see myself as an instrument of inquiry (Heron, 1996) and I take the position of being pro-active in finding out what I need to know about my practice – I check the validity of what I do with those whom I work (as touched upon in Chapter Four), in this case the YoWiM group, and colleagues experienced in facilitation.

I also want to point out clearly here that I set out with the intention of facilitation becoming the shared task that all involved in the doing of and writing about co-operative inquiry state that it should be. However, from my experience this has not become about 'someone else doing the facilitating', it has been about all of us in the YoWiM group joining each other to see what kinds of inquiring behaviours we can engage in with each other. And this is a task that needs facilitation. I suggest that after joining a group as a facilitator, there will always be an element of facilitation to our practice, not least because the group will always 'know' that we were the facilitator and will either look to us for guidance, or expect that we are looking at their facilitation practice through the eyes of a facilitator rather than a participant (as I certainly find myself doing). This suggests what Heron (1999:8) refers to as 'the autonomous mode of facilitation' where the total autonomy of the group is respected, without meaning that responsibility for facilitation is abdicated, rather 'it is a subtle art of creating conditions within which people can exercise full self determination in their learning'.

I shall now go through Wadsworth's Six Key Facilitation Capabilities, evidencing my own practice as I do so. In order to keep track of these whilst reading, they are numbered one through to six.

- 1. Knowing self, knowing others:** The primary capability is, I think, the extent and ways in which we can know others and know our own selves (including surfacing what is conscious and unconscious, discussable and undiscussable)... Not only does this now seem to me to be the way of ensuring our enquiry efforts are well-grounded, but also I think it marks the boundaries of the extent – and limits to our facilitation efforts. In a way our work on the ‘outer projects’ rests on how far we get with our ‘inner project’. (Wadsworth, 2001:425)

The mutually necessary nature of first-, second- and third-person forms of inquiry (Torbert, 2001) discussed in the previous Chapter, is again evident in the above. It seems reasonable to suggest that we cannot invite others to undertake inquiry at the first-person level, and to bring this into the second-person arena if we are not prepared to do the same. There are obviously some careful choices that need to be made when deciding how much of our selves to bring to the group, and this may well shift over time as we consider the effect of this as shifting. As the questions I detailed earlier indicate, in my practice I try to give attention to the range of actions I could take and how I feel these may impact upon the group (though obviously we never really know what effect we will have, unless we ask after the fact).

What is more possible for one group will be less possible for another, and sometimes the boundaries Wadsworth refers to will be established initially on the very physicality of the facilitator. Some of the women in the YoWiM group have told me that our closeness in age and the fact that I am female enabled a different kind of interaction than they would have engaged in with for example, an older man. Other members disagree, saying:

Your age didn't matter, except on first sight when I thought how unusual it would be to in a group where we were all the same age (and gender)! But after that I wanted to work with you because you plainly came here to facilitate and not direct, and that has been an important part of my wanting to be here. (YoWiM, October 2001)

Even so, knowing the shoes we walk in – having an awareness of our own physicality and presence and what others might expect given this, needs to be attended to. The expectation of ‘what we can do together’ based on the physical, needs to be balanced with an awareness brought about by ‘inner work’. My interest in working with young women was to create spaces where they might fully come to know their experience, with the aim of raising awareness that this experience could change. I would have been undoing myself and my intention had I fallen into the role of ‘young inexperienced researcher giving all of her power away’ which would have been easy to bearing in mind the extent to which my intentions for how we would work together were so counter-cultural. My agenda could have been hijacked.

This is where there seems to be some useful combining of Wadsworth’s ideas with those of Heron (1999) on dimensions and modes of facilitation¹⁵. Wadsworth’s attention to the relationship between inner and outer work and how this can inform the boundary of inquiry is given a more rigid framing by Heron who suggests that in the early days of the inquiry group we might opt for hierarchical facilitation (Heron, 1999:10). This may well draw tighter boundaries around what we share with the inquiry group, but this will be done in the service of making people feel safe and taken care of – quite possibly in the sense of all six of Heron’s facilitative dimensions. There are of course implications for voice when working in the hierarchical mode, both of self and of other.

Wadsworth’s assertion that the level of our inner work ‘limits’ how far we get with the outer work has resonance for me in my practice. Perhaps this has been particularly true as I began to work with the YoWiM group barely a year into my PhD studies and therefore had only been working with the practices of first-person work for this amount of time. The degree to which I had ‘come to know myself’ when I was immersed in facilitation practice was, with hindsight, not so

¹⁵ Heron details six dimensions of facilitation - planning, meaning, confronting, feeling, structuring and valuing - describing them as “...different basic issues in relation to which the facilitator can influence the learning process.” (Heron, 1999:6) He further describes three modes of facilitation – hierarchy, co-operation and autonomy – describing them as “...the different ways in which the facilitator can handle decision making within each dimension.” (Heron 1999:6)

great. I had very basic questions about what my role would/should be in the inquiry group that I had no way of answering due to my lack of experience. As the below from my notes at the time evidences:

How I establish myself as caller of the group and how that role will develop over time is something which both intrigues and concerns me. Reason comments that the role of the facilitator is in flux as it meets the different needs of the group as they progress through time, that they need more structure at the beginning and that this will diminish over time as they come to understand the methodology. In relation to 'inquiring for the first time', how this will be manifest, I don't know. And part of me sometimes wishes that I had a bag full of 'facilitative tricks gathered through experience' from which to draw the 'answer'. I'm not sure how I will manage my 'multiply-positioned self', but further to this, I'm not sure how the group will manage it. (My notes, April 2000)

My supervisor Peter responded helpfully to my wishing that I had a bag full of 'facilitative tricks gathered through experience' from which to draw the 'answer', with:

Sometimes I wish I did too. I suspect that really good facilitators have a very small repertoire of tricks but are increasingly good at seeing what is happening in the moment from several different frames, and good at seeing their own frame as they make sense of what is going on. This means that they will also make messes. (Reason, personal communication, March 2000)

In Chapter Five, I discussed the first time we engaged in conflict in our group. Quite a straight-forward process of checking out the degree to which two of our group members were committed to the YoWiM inquiry, became a 'critical incident' in the group's life that acted as a catalyst for the two members to leave

the group, and for Ann to miss two inquiry cycles before she felt able to be with us again. Reflecting back on this, perhaps I had not explored my responsibilities as a facilitator far enough to prepare me to 'deal better' with the situation in the moment. Had I been able to assume a hierarchical mode on the meaning and feeling dimensions 'giving meaning to events, judging what methods of managing feeling and emotion will suit them best' (Heron 1999:16-17) perhaps we might not have 'descended into chaos' as I discussed it. Rather, my more limited approach meant that I didn't give myself the option of considering what I might best do from a range of facilitative interventions, I continued in my most 'natural' mode, which I would describe as co-operative, 'prompting group members to give their own meaning to what was happening in the group, discussing with group members different ways of handling feeling and emotion' (Heron, 1999:17).

I am not sure I would operate in a different way in terms of intent – I would still want group members to create meaning for themselves, but I might be clearer about *why* we would create meaning together. Perhaps the thing that I have learnt most clearly about myself from my first-person inquiry practice, is that whatever the issue, I believe there needs to be space for a conversation about it, in which people feel they can contribute freely and without risk (of ridicule, of not being heard). I need for there to be space for conversation around issues and for people to listen to each other and in so doing, figure out why they are taking the current course of action. In lots of instances I have no care about what their course of action is, I just want for them to be clear on why they are taking it. And as evidenced by the amount of energy around discussing our 'descent into chaos' as we closed our inquiry (Chapter Eight), I believe members of the group would still remain unclear as to why they reacted the way they did to the 'conflict' we experienced. The emails I received from the two group members who left the group following this suggested that they were avoiding 'dealing with' what had actually gone on. Again, on a one to one basis I may now choose to be more hierarchical in confronting mode, with the aim of helping them to learn from what they were choosing to do. But at the time, I too was confused by how messy it had all become and was concerned to attend to the people who chose to remain in the inquiry group.

I am struck by my learning from this one incident and how it encouraged me to further attend to my practice. This illustrates the point made by Reason and Marshall (1987):

The motivation to do research is personal and often expresses needs for personal development, change and learning. So we must look at academic research as an educative process, and at the enormous potential it holds for personal growth. (Reason and Marshall, 1987:112)

I knew at the beginning of my PhD work, as I know even more vividly now, that my ongoing motivation to do this research/this life is born of this need to live in a way that respects my voice and the voice of others, to be involved in mutually nourishing relationships. And I consider the type of practice Wadsworth is encouraging – a practice where we are working on the inner and outer projects – is about developing a capacity in ourselves to enable us to engage fully in such relationships.

An example of this from my work with the YoWiM group is found in how I frequently processed the first-person inquiry I had undertaken off-line at a later point with the group, by way of opening it up for inquiry with them. This is the ‘effect’ and ‘intention’ check in I discussed at the beginning of this Chapter and is in Wadsworth’s above schema a way of linking the inner and outer projects:

I was thinking when I got home last time, about something that happened and whether I should have done it or not. When I was driving home I thought about something Sarah had been talking about [in the group], [discusses and clarifies what this was], and I wanted to talk more with her about it, so I called her on my car-phone, and we talked for ages. And as soon as I put the phone down I was like ‘Should I have done that? Should I be talking about stuff we’ve done together in a way that excludes everyone else from the conversation? I even told my supervisor about it and asked him what he thought...

And I just felt it was what made sense for me to do at the time. And then I got all worried about it and started thinking things that seem ridiculous about some of you thinking I like you less than Sarah because I've not called you, and then I thought that it may not even register... So, I'm coming here today holding all of this and wanting to tell you what I'm holding. I guess I'm just wanting to be as open as I can - to tell you that I've thought about this, worried about it, sought advice on it, wondered what it means about how I do facilitation - and to ask you all what you think. (Kate, YoWiM meeting, February 2001)

The above is far from an elegant articulation of what I was attending to - but it is how it happened on the day. And my jumbled words probably indicate the jumbled nature of my thoughts on it all. But I believe it is evidence of how I often attempted to bring my own first-person work into the second-person space and make it material for inquiry. Though the methods by which we may come to know 'others and our own selves' are not alluded to by Wadsworth, engaging in inquiry with the YoWiM group has taught me that the space we made together was key in shaping the possibilities of 'coming to know'. By (at times elegantly, at times falteringly and uncarefully) making the space safe, honest, respectful, edgy, challenging - whatever our needs were when we were together (and these were sometimes not shared needs), we 'got to know' the methods by which we may 'get to know' each other. So to use Wadsworth's phrase, I was doing the 'inner project' and evidencing this in the 'outer project'. In so doing, I sought to model that all and any kinds of questions that had our individual (first-person) attention, however elegant or otherwise we were in voicing them, were welcome in our space. In modelling this and having it received in ways that were neither silencing nor threatening we created understanding about what was possible for us to do together. This links to Wadsworth's second capability.

- 2. Real-izing inter-connectedness:** The second capability is to make real, in numerous ways, the existing and the potential ways in which our own inner and outer diverse and grounded natures are related to one another. This includes our being able to connect with each other in shared

experience, breathing life, or an *esprit de corps* into each other and our collective inquiry. (Wadsworth, 2001:426)

Wadsworth suggests examples of this include identifying and bringing together all relevant participants or stakeholders through processes of 'organic recruitment'. One of my clearest intentions when embarking upon calling the inquiry group was to enable as far as possible, for whomever wanted to join to be able to (providing they were female and in the first three years of a graduate career)¹⁶. I wanted for an inquiry group to form of people who all wanted to be there. To this end I made it very clear to my sponsors, prior to beginning my work with P&G, that I did not want them to 'suggest to' nor 'encourage' anyone that they should join the group, nor 'select' anyone, despite their offers to do so. I remember clearly one occasion when my junior sponsor, when clearly trying to help, told me 'I'll tell Marie to do it, she'd be really good' (!!!). So one way I determinedly began to 'breathe life' into the yet to be formed group, was to protect it from having members who had been told to be there by their boss, or those who might be there for any other reason other than them wanting to be, including a sense of responsibility to me.

Because I was trying to structure our process to enable those who were interested to join to do so – to enable recruitment to the group to be as 'organic' as possible – I waited until the January meeting, (the third time we met) to close the boundary. This timing was done with full awareness and collaboration with the other group members, but with hindsight it is clear that the boundary to our group remained too flexible as three group members were notable by their absence in February (after which two of them decided not to join) and it was March before we finally got clear that the third was not able to join. I raise this here as it evidences again steps I took to breathe life into the inquiry firstly by keeping the door open (for two women who had expressed an interest in joining but who had not been able to attend the two December sessions), secondly by closing it (deciding with the group during the January session that we needed to

¹⁶ I have written about this in some depth, both in my thesis (Chapter 4) and in my paper 'Establishing a co-operative inquiry group; the perspective of a 'first-time' inquirer' (McArdle, 2002. See Appendix One).

'know' who was in our group), and thirdly how I participated, and quite probably was largely responsible for a process that sucked life out of our group (not getting clear sooner why the three absent 'members' were absent).

I include below 'exploring absence' - a two column analysis (Rudolph et al, 2001) I constructed following a telephone conversation with one of the 'absent' women discussed above - a woman called Stella. I include this as an illustration of my practice from which to consider the following ideas:

- 'Organic recruitment' is important - that the people who want to be there should be the only ones there. This links to Wadsworth's third capability regarding energy - those who are driven to be there, it seems to me, are the ones who 'breathe life into the inquiry' and inadvertently enable the task of facilitation to be a more collaborative effort, as discussed earlier.
- In the role of facilitator, there is the very real possibility of using the power we hold (particularly early on in the life of the group) unwisely - in encouraging or discouraging people to join when the decision is really theirs. We might encourage them to join to 'keep the numbers up' or discourage them because we 'don't like them'. This kind of 'facilitation' might be described using Wadsworth's phrase as 'carrying out facilitation for ourselves' rather than that in which we 'keep watch' for others. And my suggestion is that we should be attempting to do both simultaneously.

Exploring absence

Stella had expressed interest via email to my invitations to both of the open sessions in December, but had told me that she could not make the dates. We had agreed that she would come to the January session. She participated in the January session - she had been very serious and spoken a lot about 'her stuff', had talked across others and had repeatedly brought the discussion back to her agenda very forcefully. My attention had been spent trying to involve others and to encourage them to keep talking when she interrupted them. I had also used

up a lot of energy wondering why Stella could not see how destructive she was being to others in the group. Stella had later confirmed via email that she would be joining the group. She did not attend the February session and had not been in touch to let us know why. So, a couple of days later, having still not heard from her, I telephoned her. The following is two-column analysis of our conversation:

(Begin by reading the box on the left, then the corresponding box to the right).

My thoughts and feelings	What Stella and I said
I wonder why Stella didn't turn up the other day. I am wondering if she no longer wants to work with the group - she did decide after only one session, not after three sessions like the others. I think she's rude for not bothering to be in touch with any of us about not being able to attend. I don't want to just let this drift. I need to talk to her about it and find out what she thinks.	Stella: Hello, Stella speaking.
Stella might not remember my name, I better say where I'm from.	Kate: Hi Stella, it's Kate McArdle here from the University of Bath.
	Stella: Oh, yeah, yeah, um hi. I was supposed to be at your thing the other day wasn't I.
This kind of confirms what I thought. She doesn't get this. When she participated in the January session, she talked incessantly and focussed everyone on her agenda, despite attempts I made to shift the focus. Now she sounds like she has some responsibility to me to attend. This is all wrong.	Kate: Well, I'm calling because we were expecting to see you at the YoWiM group session, and as you hadn't let us know you wouldn't be coming, and given that you've not been in touch since, I thought I'd call you and see if you are okay.

My thoughts and feelings	What Stella and I said
<p>That's not exactly true, but I'm wanting for her to raise the issue of membership if it is there for her - I need to take this gently.</p>	<p>Stella: Oh yeah, yeah I'm fine. It's just that I was really busy and work right now is very hectic for me so it's difficult for me to plan stuff in.</p>
<p>She's trying to say that she doesn't want to join. What am I doing to make it not possible for her to say that? Why doesn't she just tell me? It sounds like she thinks she'd be doing me a favour if she could be there - the last thing I want is to create that kind of dependency.</p>	<p>Kate: I can understand that - it must be tough trying to fit everything in. I guess it's about deciding what you can commit to and what you can't.</p>
<p>So, tell me and what you can and can't commit to!</p>	<p>Stella: Yeah I mean with your group thing, it's going to be difficult.</p>
<p>We're getting there...</p>	<p>Kate: My intention with the YoWiM group is that it is established as a useful space - somewhere that those who decide to join want to be and find they get a lot from. It loses all possibility of being that if it feels like another meeting to cram in.</p>
<p>I am really wanting for Stella to confront what she wants to do. I don't want to ask her outright. And the more we talk the more I realise that I don't think she should become part of our group.</p>	<p>Stella: Yeah. Being this busy and everything, maybe I should give it a miss.</p>

My thoughts and feelings	What Stella and I said
And then I wonder if I am just helping her to get to where I want her to go... am I just trying to turn away someone I've not warmed to?	
I feel physically relieved. And I also want for Stella to own what she wants to do. I really feel that though she says 'maybe I should give it a miss' that actually means 'I do not want to join the group'. I'm not going to push her on this. I'm going to save my energies for the people who want to be in the group.	Kate: You need to decide what's right for you.
I can imagine Stella's not joining to be the right thing for all of us, I am even finding this conversation frustrating and boring and draining, but I know I'm joining her in not confronting/not being straight.	Stella: Yeah. I mean I'd like to [join the group] and everything, but it just doesn't work out.
I think that's as near to owning it as we're going to get. So, I'm going to assume she doesn't want to join. I am wanting for her to tell the others though - I feel that's the least she could do after coming to a session, taking all their energies into her agenda, and then just deciding to leave without telling us. I wonder if she would have said anything had I not called her today.	Kate: Okay - I think it's important for you to do what feels right. Do you want to email the others, or call in at the start of the next session and let them know that you won't be joining? I'm sure they'd like to be kept in the loop.
I could just tell them, but then I'm doing the caretaking work (just like I am right now) and I want Stella to take responsibility for her choices and to give the others chance to respond.	Stella: Um, yeah. Could you let them know for me? I'm just really busy.

My thoughts and feelings	What Stella and I said
<p>I'm not surprised by this. The group isn't important to Stella, so she probably feels that she doesn't want to waste more time on it. I still think her approach is disrespectful to the others, and manages to avoid owning her stuff and hearing back from everyone else. I'm not going to push this. Let's just call it quits.</p>	<p>Kate: If that is what you would like me to do, no problem. Thanks for your interest so far.</p>
	<p>Stella: Ok. Thanks. Bye.</p>
	<p>Kate: Bye</p>
<p>Ownership really matters to me. I need to be careful to frame this well - why it is important to me - in the YoWiM group so we might come to understand it as being a developmental, skill-building process, rather than 'just something I think we should do'.</p>	

Wadsworth suggests:

While the spaces and places between us can separate us, it is these same spaces and places that are needed for 'arc-ing' (Goff 1998: 178-83) to take place across, for the purposes of connecting us. (Wadsworth, 2001:426)

Wadsworth says this was evident in a particular project she worked on by them 'finding a place...for every consumer and staff member who was interested, to maximise the energies' within the project. As is evident (particularly in Chapters Four and Five) I engaged in this type of on-going arcing (in recruiting and then with the group in choosing who we worked with at later stages) so that energy might be sustained. But I feel the counter point to the one Wadsworth makes is that sometimes arcs don't happen, and there's no point trying to force them. I think that was what I decided in the above. Stella was sapping my energy, and I firmly believed that she had done the same to others in the group (though at the

time of calling her, I had not checked this out with anyone – I felt there was no way I could). And I didn't want to deal with that in the group over time. I was so full of the energy I was feeling from everyone else for their being part of YoWiM that I felt annoyed (writing this makes me cringe, but that's how I felt) with Stella for bringing this destructive energy to our space.

- 3. Identifying the new growth and driving energies:** Next is a capability to be able to 'divine' (Wadsworth, in Fitzgerald and Wadsworth, 1996) accurately the sparks of life or the sources and currents of energy both in those who are in our collaborative inquiry field as well as within ourselves. It is these energies which are essential to commence and then drive the inquiry and the participation and action forward and prevent them losing purpose and direction... Facilitating an inquiry process in is many ways to be an 'energy-worker'. Working with the energies (and the blocked energies) by continuously responding to them is how we are able to get *movement* – the shifts, the insights, the expansion, and innovation to 'make the road by walking' (Horton and Freire, 1990). Or, when 'navigating' by embodied energy in the form of emotion... we can sense when people are 'jumping to proceed', 'fired up', or 'flat' and energy-sapped. (Wadsworth, 2001:426)

When beginning the inquiry work at P&G, I felt time and again that Wadsworth's notion of 'facilitator as energy-worker' had great resonance with how I experienced my own practice, in all of its breadth. I detail two themes on this below - 'the energy sapped energy worker', and 'changing pace'.

- **The energy-sapped energy worker:** Working with the energies of others, continually responding, feeling at an emotional level many of the different things that are going on for my self and for others uses a lot of energy. Particularly in the earliest days of the YoWiM group I found it all so engaging and exciting and I felt such responsibility for the process as I had initiated it, that I often, on arriving home, was utterly tired out, as shown below from my notes:

I got home last night feeling so full of the day with the group. The minute I walked in my energy crashed. Sandy, welcoming me home, looked at me and said 'oh, my poor dark eyed tired girl' [I have green eyes - he was referring to the dark circles that seemed to appear all of a sudden underneath them and the ashen appearance of my face!]. I got dressed for bed. Sandy said he'd make me some dinner. I got into bed and fell asleep immediately (it was only 7pm). He woke me up to eat, which I did in bed, without talking, then apparently fell back to sleep again. He told me this morning that I had eaten and fallen asleep with the plate on my tummy, from where he had retrieved it to wash it up. I slept for 13 hours. (My notes, 14/12/00).

The irony of working with the notion of my self as an energy worker, and then finding that I had no energy left myself was not lost! In the early days of the YoWiM work, I felt the huge pressure of questions I was carrying: What if I can't get access? 'What if no-one joins the group?' 'What if they all leave halfway through?' 'What will happen to my PhD?'

These kinds of questions were probably enough to take a huge amount of energy on their own! Later my questions changed to 'people have joined this group because of a possibility I have offered them (all that stuff on the original flyer about personal growth and development...) what if it doesn't happen?' All of the initial uncertainty, coupled with being present and working the energies within the group and the wider P&G context certainly left me tired out at the end of each session, and less than efficient in my work in the two days following.

As an energy worker throughout the project, I have considerable feedback of how I would 'get people's energy back up' - most usually by stepping into

hierarchical mode in the confronting dimension. I think the reason why this worked in picking people up when they were 'flat or energy sapped' was because it was such an obvious contrast to the more collaborative approach I usually adopted, as one member of the YoWiM group suggests below:

We had been going round in circles about the third-person inquiry workshop for a while, wanting to do it but not feeling ready and not knowing what we meant by 'feeling ready' or when this would happen, and encouraging each other to do it but no one leading it. And I noticed one time that Kate just sat there and let another of these circular conversations go on and then she just said 'right, you need to decide what to do and for some reason you are not doing that. Either you are all in this together and you get on with sorting this workshop out, or you aren't'. And we all kind of went, 'Um right, let's do it then'. And we never looked back. But no one else gave us the kick we needed. (YoWiM, September 2001)

There were other times when the group members described exercises I ran as being confronting - in Chapter Five I mentioned the empty chairs exercise and the standing/kneeling exercise. Both of these were about confronting things the group members were resistant to, but I confronted them through an exercise rather than through a voiced intervention. This can sound quite manipulative - knowing there is something group members are avoiding and deliberately inviting them to confront it through an exercise - but facilitatively, I notice that the things people are avoiding can be the very things that sap their energy, and these need attention if the inquiry group is to go on in its healthiest way.

Furthermore, encouraging members of the group to confront issues is a way of building inquiry skill, as discussed in the previous Chapter. The act of inviting others to confront, is in a way the main point, as it raises awareness

of the 'avoiding' behaviour. Taking this into confronting is a further step, which (as with the empty chairs exercise) is sometimes too difficult to take. But the invitation opens us up to acknowledging more of our modes of behaviour and builds foundations on which confronting may be possible in the future.

Sometimes though, working the energy in the group was about 'not doing something' to 'rescue' the group from itself. In the couple of cycles prior to the third-person workshop, energy was low and people weren't clear on what they wanted to do - there was some frustration about 'not making progress'. And I quite deliberately did not take responsibility for shifting the group out of that for some time. Instead, as they have described their experience of that period 'you let us get tough on ourselves'. Whilst this did not mean that the group found their way out of this dynamic (I was the one who finally stepped in to do this as discussed above), it did mean that they got into asking questions of why they were stuck, and to individually take some responsibility for feeling frustrated, rather than just 'blaming the group' or becoming dependent on me to make their experience 'not a frustrating one'. I illustrate below the shape this frustration took and how the group reflected back on it, during our final YoWiM meeting, our 'inquiry closing' (Chapter Eight). I mention several key points within the excerpt of what I notice about their reflections:

It's really easy to look back and say 'we could have done that and that, and so on, but actually we can never tell the value there was in us being frustrated and that frustration meaning we had to be committed to being here as it wasn't a free ride. We had a time when we were particularly frustrated that we felt we weren't doing enough, and experiencing that frustration helped us to decide what to do.

(Note: Spending time figuring out what it mattered to do required patience and commitment to each other whilst experiencing a range of emotions about the process. Sticking with it meant that the group devised their own agenda.)

It wasn't as far as a feeling of frustration for me at that point at all, it was just us beginning to question how we were working and why, and looking at how we were working and asking if it was working for us.

(Note: the above evidences the development of inquiry skill – the educative edge piece I discussed in the previous Chapter – this group member is talking about the ability developed in the group to engage in critical self-reflection on the practice and process of inquiry undertaken (Eikland, 2003)).

If you [Kate] had given us a plan for the year when we began, just handed it to us on a plate, the group may not have been as committed right from the start – we might have ended up with more people [in our group] but less people who were committed.

(Note: my earlier point about skill development within inquiry groups is dependent, it seems, on the participants' desire to engage in learning them. In small face-to-face groups this commitment is evident, as is the level of skill being attained. I wonder if this gets diluted in larger scale work that does not have the underpinning skills of first- and second-person inquiry).

We've needed to be passionate and committed to being here – we've made all the decisions together, consciously, for ourselves and that feels really important, looking back.

(Note: Back to skill-building and voice and the possibilities for these in second-person inquiry... having a sense that 'being able to do it this way mattered' with a sense of agency and awareness).

It's always been us that have had to do things as a group, or on our own, us that had to decide what we wanted to do and actually go and do it. I think [early on] we were sitting there expecting you [Kate] to actually say 'Okay, and now you are going to do 'this'.

I was expecting Kate to be the leader and kind of force us into doing something. And one day, I was like 'shit, that's not what it's all about really' and then I was like 'oh, right, if we want to do something then we do it and Kate's around and will help us develop the skill we need with each other, but [leading it is] not her role. A real light-bulb moment. (YoWiM, October 2001)

- **Changing pace:** The extended epistemology gave me great courage with which to explore different ways of 'doing' inquiry with the YoWiM group. I felt like I had a solid basis from which to initiate exercises such as body-sculpting, drawing, storytelling and collage-making – that they were not (only) ice breakers or energy raisers, but they were ways of tapping into different types of knowledge. Initially this 'academic framing' made the exercises an okay thing for group members to do – they weren't just 'being silly', they were 'exploring their understanding of their working life'. And if it's okay to do things there tends to be more energy for them and less resistance.

So I worked the energy with careful framing, and with introducing new ways of exploring things together. The newness of participating in such exercises (for example, no one in the group had created a drawing and then told the story of it before) also raised the energy for joining in. In responding to the energy I felt from the group, I feel I did indeed get the *movement* Wadsworth talks about – particularly into new insights about them selves and their role in creating the reality they individually experienced at P&G. Conversations ultimately shifted from 'this is what happens' to 'this is how I think I am

making it possible for this to happen'. The story of Sarah's bullying redescription in Chapter Five is a good example of this.

- 4. Resourcing the effort:** Every inquiry effort needs nutrition or fuel for growth: ideas, experiences, perceptions, notes, transcriptions, summaries, perspectives, concepts, new language, theories and creative ways of doing and being; questions (and a permissive culture of questioning and speaking), the responses of selves and others, other people's answers, models, hunches and intuitions... exercises... All of these can be sought out, foraged, collected, accumulated and offered for consumption by those with the driving energies. (Wadsworth, 2001:427)

In line with Wadsworth's earlier point – that facilitation might become a more collaborative and shared 'task', I considered in my work with the YoWiM group that I would instigate, from early on, a move to this type of space. Therefore the interpretation of 'resourcing the effort' that was evident in my practice was that of inviting the resources into our space, rather than generating them myself. I didn't want to own the role of 'forager, collector, accumulator, and provider of things for consumption'. I very much wanted instead to invite others to do these tasks as and when they felt like appropriate things to do.

An example of this would be the shift from me preparing the first draft of the summary paper of each meeting, circulating it for additions and comments and then preparing and distributing the final copy, to us taking it in turns to do so. My role in this was to suggest that doing so would honour a wider perspective and model a greater sense of shared responsibility for our work. I felt it would also call into question the validity, or usefulness, of the paper – working on the hunch that if you feel something is a waste of time but someone else is doing it, then it might not matter. If it's a waste of time and you have to do it yourself, chances are you might raise the question of how useful it is with others. Joining in this task I felt would enable us to co-author our practice as we went along, and ensure that all of our voices were heard. In this way the structuring dimension,

in relation to the summary paper, shifted from hierarchical mode to co-operative mode 'where [the facilitator] structures learning methods with the group members, co-operating with them in devising how learning shall proceed. They collaborate with you in designing the structured exercises and in supervising the running of them.' (Heron 1999:17)

However, one way in which I feel I really did resource the effort as Wadsworth suggests is in encouraging, helping to create and sustaining a culture where questions were welcome, rather than being seen as a sign of weakness. I think my role was key here, as I was creating and sustaining something that was counter cultural, so initially I was the only one who could hold this intention for the group. I further sustained this questioning space by helping the group to realise that when the organisation intervened, there was no need to switch back to the default mode of adopting 'Proctoid' behaviours.

An example of this is when our junior sponsor Anna told me that she was going to email the group a project brief to fill in. This is a document, which fronts up every activity a P&G employee is involved in, clearly states what their aims and objectives are, what they plan to achieve and how they will go about doing this. I had not contracted for our group to do this - in fact it seemed to be the opposite of the intentions we had agreed on in creating space for the group. I told Anna that I did not want her to 'tell the group to do this' but that I would be happy to offer it to them in our next session. Anna said that if I thought they would not want to do, then she would come to the next session 'with' me and explain why it was important. I resisted this, standing between the group and the organisation. I did offer it to the group at the next session by telling them that Anna was keen for each of them to complete the project brief, but that I was bringing this to them as an invitation, not as something they had to do. I encouraged them engage in thinking about what this request from Anna meant, and to choose individually if it was something they wanted to do. The briefs went back to Anna without being filled in.

5. **Shaping the Inquiry:**...there are times throughout the cycles of inquiry when there is a need *actively to go forward and shape*: to focus on the essential nub of the inquiry, to be selective and to cull extraneity... to intervene to make 'climbing frames' of linked conceptual 'namings', to make underlying logic or assumptions or explanatory theory-in-use explicit, and challenge new growth so that what survives is strong... (Wadsworth, 2002:427)

In the YoWiM group we seemed to quite easily get into a pattern, early on, of checking our understandings 'keeping on the same track and knowing what we were all up to'. This was assisted by our attention to making the methodology our own, really trying to understand theory and practice alongside each other so we developed a shared language initially by taking our practice to the methodology (particularly the extended epistemology), and later by taking the methodology to our practice as 'what we did' became the 'knowledge' part of the group's understanding and the theory became a way of looking at our knowledge. Attending to this understanding throughout was akin to 'house keeping' in the group, clearing up misunderstandings with each other when they became evident.

I want to attend here to a theme I developed in the previous Chapter 'Naming as Knowing'. Seen as a facilitative behaviour, it was a practice enacted by me (particularly in the early stages of the group). This began as intent to 'help each other to understand what is happening by saying/naming what is going on'. My perhaps naïve understanding of what I was intentionally both doing myself, and encouraging others to do has been re-understood by my developing ability to see what I bring to the practice of group work, both during our work as a group, and in my continually shifting awareness since our time together ended. This has been enabled by looking at my self as a facilitator and understanding the interventions I make as facilitative interventions, rather than 'just something I do' - the former being about valuing and validating the role I played, rather than 'disappearing' it (Fletcher, 1999).

From the very early stages, I noticed that I was openly encouraging our group members to 'be more specific', 'detail the behaviours you talk about', 'give examples of what you mean', 'tell us who you are talking about' - I was asking them to name with a sense of specificity. It is interesting that I didn't ask the group members 'to name' behaviours and so on, in the early stages of the group, though this was language I used outside of it - in my lecturing practice at the University of Bath, for example. Even so, I was aware that from our first session I was modelling a process of naming behaviours and feelings and asking that we all do this:

Last time there were quite a lot of process issues I just don't think got air space... I would have liked to... discuss what works and what doesn't, but not by depersonalising. It's a sense of saying 'I think X did this and I wasn't sure that was the way we needed to work', otherwise I could say 'well somebody was kind of like this' and you might be thinking it was someone other than the person I meant. I think we need to name these processes, just as we name the person. (YoWiM, February 2001)

As the inquiry group worked together over time, such interventions diminished in their frequency and rather than being explicit suggestions that we engage in particular types of behaviour befitting to 'a way of working that is new to us', they became more like gentle prods - reminders to pay attention to practices we were aware of but had somehow gotten sidetracked from, that I would make when I heard 'bits of the story were missing'. The below shows this, and additionally reinforces the notion of storytelling and group encouragement as being vital to developing individual inquiry skills and to becoming a community of inquiry:

I remember in the last session I was talking about how I appreciated my manager and Kate said, 'Oh, did you tell her that was really good and you really appreciated it?' and I was like 'No, I didn't actually', but

it would have been really good and really a strong thing to do to build a relationship. Similar things have happened and I've gone back and really tried to make it clear that I really appreciated that and from a personal point of view, I think a lot of the stuff from these sessions I'm taking away on a personal basis. OK, it's really only small things, but you know, it's like building small amounts of relationships around you, that is kind of really helping. (YoWiM, April 2001)

Naming has important implications from a relational aspect both inside and outside of group space. Fletcher argues that unless we have names for behaviours, those behaviours 'get disappeared' (Fletcher, 1999) – that they are not valued and that naming them makes them visible and value-able. The above story shows how naming behaviours outside the group was understood as a practice that would aid the building of relationships. But in this context of looking at my facilitative behaviour, developing a process of naming inside our group gave us a hook on which to hang our understanding of each other as people with developing inquiring attention – if fellow group members are noticing a lack of attention in your story, in this case to valuing others, this indicates to you that they are 'attentively listening' (Belenky, 1996 and Schweickart, 1996) as distinct from 'sitting quietly waiting for one's turn to speak'. Modelling behaviours we expect from each other 'names' that expectation.

Such expectation could be seen alongside Torbert's suggestion that framing is a form of naming (Torbert, 1991). He defines a frame thus 'the assumptions that bound the conversation', the 'name of the game', 'the purpose of speaking' (Torbert, 1991:233). The above could be seen as an example for how framing and naming intertwine and overlap. If framing could be understood as 'how I 'did' the naming and drew other's attention to this', then we might see how the boundaries between framing and naming in this sense could become blurry - in a sense by framing we are evidencing the types of practices we feel should be evident and saying so (naming).

I feel they have value in expressing why I make the facilitative interventions I do. This is perhaps developed by the below note from my journal – an entry I made after reading through the transcripts of our January session:

I see I make a lot of interventions which draw us back to method. I'm thinking I do this so the group explicitly see the value in why [we are doing this] and what we're doing and to give purpose and name-ability to what they do in action, and to be able to relate method to practice, and to locate us differently/explicitly in our time together as being in a learning space, and to help us value the stories. (My notes, January 2000)

There seems to be a lot of importance in this for me. Firstly, in terms of group development, the above note was made regarding the first non-open session (that which included only people who had 'signed-up' for the group) and suggests that to give confidence in and meaning to our practice at this early stage, I framed what we were doing in the context of the method. The 'name-ability' of what we were describing was aided by pinning this to the methodological terms - making the links between theory and practice and therefore aiming to locate our group in a learning space.

This was the very beginnings of 'wanting to make things nameable' and seems like an appropriately pitched idea – by providing the names for behaviours, for example 'on-line reflection', 'action phase', 'experiential knowing' we didn't need to search for a name when we had little 'paid attention to' experience from which to converse. We could instead notice which parts of our stories fitted into which part of a model, how we could name them, and discuss if this made sense. The emphasis here was on learning 'about' rather than learning 'from' – we were taking our experience to a model and seeing how things fitted together, as opposed to 'generating new knowledge' as we did later in the group.

6. **Accompanying the transformative moments:** The potential and actual moments of change that mark the move between the cycles of observation, questioning, inquiry and thought into new cycles of different action, observation, etc. call for thoughtful companionship. The requirements here are to assist in the making of space and time for deeper and more creative levels of individual and collective contemplation and dialogue to break out of single-loop into double-loop thinking (Argyris, 1993), to envision, imagine, invent, conceive and to have faith and trust in the possibility and probability of change...once the 'spaces' have been created, the task is to ensure they remain 'built in'. (Wadsworth, 2001:427)

The idea of one of the capabilities of facilitation being to 'companion' is an interesting one. There were times in the YoWiM group when I found myself creating space around something one of the group members was saying or doing as I had a sense that something important was going to come out of it. It is difficult to articulate what that sense was - but I knew for example when Ann began to talk very directly to Norma and Fiona about her perception of their commitment to the group (as discussed in Chapter Five) that I needed to create space for that conversation to take place, and to metaphorically stand beside the three of them encouraging Ann to say what she needed to say, making space to draw out a response from Norma and Fiona. I felt as though I needed to companion them in their process of getting heard.

In relation to Wadsworth's earlier ideas about facilitator as energy worker, part of sustaining the energies in a group is about encouraging people to go to their edges (energy need not be happy, relaxed energy - it can be nervous, anxious energy, or energy borne of a sense of being challenged). In creating the 'empty chairs exercise' I knew I would be pushing the boundaries of what was possible in our group, not least because I had created the exercise alone and it was nothing like anything we had previously done. In instances such as this, where we make the facilitative intervention of inviting people to go (beyond) an edge, I believe we owe them some companionship if they choose to go there.

A participant in Fletcher's study (Fletcher, 1999) suggested another way of talking about behaviour that Wadsworth refers to as companionship:

She pointed out that this assumption about "truth through conflict" might be counter productive, and she questioned the legitimacy of playing devil's advocate as the best way to discuss new ideas. She suggested that perhaps they should try being "angel's advocates" for each other when ideas were in the development stage, helping to draw out the positive implications of the suggestion and what elements they might want to preserve in the final product. (Fletcher, 1999:125)

As a facilitative capability, we might see companionship and being an angel's advocate as similar things - getting alongside the person who is thinking through their talking and exploring new territory, helping them to 'create and solidify thought' (Josselson, 1992 cited in Tarule, 1996:279) by making the space for dialogue. Companionship in this unexplored territory may well be a risky choice - the unexplored-ness means as a facilitator you 'don't know where this is going', and by companionship this type of dialogue I have felt as though I am 'putting myself out there', as in the above example. But it seems to me that it is important to try to remember that I am standing alongside someone in a moment of transformation, rather than necessarily agreeing with what they are doing or the way they are going about it (what and how they are talking and being).

It's necessary to get clear on process companionship and content companionship - something that I have had to do right there in the moment, not least so my own voice is heard in clarifying what my behaviours mean. In doing so it means that I can let people in the group know that my companionship is not an act of 'standing alongside this person because I agree with them (content companionship)' but an act of 'supporting them as they go to their edges (process companionship)'. This helps others to know that I can companionship them too in their times of 'process at the edges' and that I *will* join them. It gets everyone clear that my getting

alongside is not about my agreeing with or liking more any member of the group.

Though this may sound like an unnecessary level of 'getting clear' I find it helpful - not only does it stop me worrying about the interpretations others might be making of my behaviour ('they might think this is content companionship!'), it also makes me attend to what I am doing so that I can explain it to others. In processing this on-line, prior to speaking it, I get clear my self when I am not doing as I wish to do, ('I'd rather leave than explain what I am doing right now, so I better change it and do something different!'). Inquiry practice should take the companion and the companioned to their edges at some time - otherwise neither is fully immersed in inquiry, rather they are both avoiding, both staying safe, both shying away from the nub of the inquiry. Engaging in inquiry practice seems to generate a need for both of these roles. It is hard to go to an edge without a companion - as there is no boundary around the 'fall out' and the edge seems even more scary and uncontained. And you can't companion anyone anywhere they don't want to go - to do so is to bully and coerce. One of the many challenges of inquiry practice is to be up for the challenge, and this only seems possible in an inquiring community, as being 'up for it' is relational.

The inquiry process as a whole is one of exploring boundaries and edges and redefining them through the very process of inquiry. This can inadvertently mean, as with the YoWiM group, that a space is created that was not there before and that is in many ways counter cultural. This, coupled with questions over the extent to which facilitation becomes a shared task, and where energies for the inquiry really lie, raises the further question over how the inquiry might sustain itself when the contracted period of work ends. To refresh on the sixth capability, Wadsworth (as stated above) suggests:

Once the 'spaces' have been created, the task is to ensure they remain 'built in'. We constantly asked: How will this survive the end of the project? Who will carry this function? (Wadsworth, 2001:428)

When I first joined the PhD programme, I became very interested in this question. I was yet to begin working with an inquiry group and I was wondering how it might continue after I had left – it really mattered to me that it would, I saw it as a mark of the quality of my work – that if it ended when I left, it would mean I had not done something well enough. Bradbury and Reason (2001) suggest:

We must ask whether the ground on which the work proceeded was seeded in such a way that participation is sustained in the absence of the initiating researcher. We must create a living interest in the work. (Reason and Bradbury, 2001:449)

This matters less to me now through my experience of inquiry. As a facilitator, I do not see the continuation of any particular group beyond the involvement of the initiator as a marker of anything in particular. The YoWiM group contracted to work together for ten months (January through to October), and continued to work (in a less structured fashion) until February the following year. This was an important boundary for our inquiry in the context of the inquiry being funded - both financially and with 'work time' for participation, by the host organisation. It also enabled the women to know what they were buying into in terms of proposed time commitment and therefore enabled a balanced decision to be made over whether or not to participate. Further, as our attention was on the process we were engaged in, rather than hypothesising about whether it might outlive its planned time scale and how we could enable that, we were (I think) more able to engage with more energy in the time we did have together.

My bias is for creating in-powering spaces, which become spaces inside ourselves in which we carry and nurture our developing inquiring attention. If we have

done 'good work well' (Reason and Bradbury, 2001) then the in-powering space inside will be the space that we will be 'making sure [stays] built in'.

Thoughts on facilitation in co-operative inquiry

Given that I was the one driving the inquiry process initially, I remained in a role of structuring our sessions. I would usually arrive with flip chart refreshers on methodology, overviews of what had been done to date, plans that people had made for the action phase they had just engaged in. I have wondered about this and what it says about how we participated with each other.

In Liebow's (1989) writing about his experiences of participant observation in a community of black men, he comments "it seems as if the degree to which one becomes a participant is as much a matter of perceiving oneself as a participant as it is of being accepted as a participant by others" (p.44). We notice that we withdraw our emotional participation at times, distancing ourselves, while at others we are clearly participants ourselves experiencing many of the things the other women are and seeking an opportunity to write and talk about them. (Gatenby and Humphries, 2000:98)

The above is an important consideration when facilitating an inquiry group. I have ended my work with the YoWiM knowing that whilst we achieved 'companionship' (Wadsworth, 2001), the ideas of being 'co-facilitators' and 'co-inquirers' (Heron, 1996) remain unaccomplished. This is not because I was trying hard to be the only one facilitating (!) but because the fact of my being external initiator did place us in clearly different roles - I could not join the other YoWiM members in inquiry into experience of life in P&G, as it was not a life I shared. My intention in fact was never to become a co-inquirer as I considered that it was not possible, to do this genuinely I would need to be 'one of them'. I always considered myself to be engaged in inquiry, though being with the YoWiM

group was my action phase, and their reflection phase, as my inquiry was focussed on my practice in the group. I say our roles were 'clearly different' and I wince as I do so. Does this mean we were not a 'co-operative' inquiry group after all?

I have explored a range of experiences our group shared over time, and from sharing in them - from being there - I know that we were. Focussing on building the skills of inquiry, sharing decision making, sharing tasks, supporting each other in taking new actions, making new types of future imaginable and moving on to real-izing them all illustrate that this was the case. And I think acknowledging that the way the inquiry is established and the effect this had is part of being a truly 'co-operative' co-operative inquiry group. Knowing that we were differently positioned, and not kidding ourselves otherwise, meant that each of us could rely on the rest for the individual things we brought to the group, myself included. I was looked to for ideas and guidance on facilitation, for leadership in creating experiences through which we could 'tap into' the silent stories (such as those described in Chapter Five), for marking the beginning of each of our sessions and 'linking between ideas' - the latter being something 'I can just do', rather than something I consciously plan. Ann, Jemma and Angie were relied upon for their energy and their passion (wild anger, obvious upset, empathy, commitment), Lucy for her quiet determination, her resolve, her ability to sit and listen for ages then tip everything upside down by saying 'why don't we look at it this way instead...', Sarah and Clare for ensuring we 'kept it real' by bringing the 'organisational perspective' to bear on ideas and accounts.

Being co-researchers and co-facilitators in YoWiM was not about everyone being equally skilled in everything, and sharing equally in it all. It was about developing a critical inquiring attention so that we could give each other space to come to more fully know ourselves. Making this possible needs facilitation. Whilst acts of facilitation were shared, the facilitation of that sharing was predominantly undertaken by me. Penny Rosenwasser's experience (2002) of co-operative inquiry echoes this to an extent. YoWiM members described me as 'supporting them and the inquiry process' as 'having a holistic view of it all', as 'carrying it' (YoWiM, February 2002). Rosenwasser's group told her: 'You don't

have more power as much as responsibility', 'The content of what everyone says is heard equally. People concede to you around process, not content'. (Rosenwasser, 2002:59)

Heron's description of partial form co-operative inquiry (1996) fits with the shape YoWiM took, given that I was not part of the organisation. He states that this partial involvement as co-subject can take at least two different forms, with the external initiator researching something similar in their own organisation, or making occasional visits to the workplace of the inquiry group members for observation, interviews and dialogue (Heron, 1996). Obviously, the partial form of my co-subject status did not take this shape. I was not trying to map my experiences onto the group, nor to aim to know more about theirs during the action cycle. Instead I was fully immersed in developing my facilitative practice so that I may be better able to help them explore their experience more fully.

As with any opportunity to look back there are things I would do differently now, as suggested in this Chapter. However, the element of practice that strikes me as really important is that learning from what happens is what really matters, not getting it 'right' – even as defined by ourselves.