

SPIRITUALITIES, TRUE PROFESSIONALISM AND ALIGNED ACTION - 26 OCTOBER 2019

Regenerating Nature’s Inclusional Dance

Louie Gardiner, Founding Director: Potent 6 and PIA Collective CIC

Setting the scene for my conference contribution

While the earth keeps spinning, we as human beings find ourselves flailing and roiling in self-made messes that threaten not only our own extinction but the potential destruction of a planet that sustains all of life. We have separated ourselves from it; and elevated our species to a god-like status under the mistaken illusion that we are grand masters who control the world. How can this be possible when most of us can barely control what happens in our own lives and relationships?

Earth responds in her own way to the ravages we inflict upon her. But what can we do to revert the degenerative cycling we have catalysed into one that can once again become regenerative for her and for each and all of us? **Re-incorporate our full Selves in all we do wherever we are.**

“We are here because there is no refuge finally from ourselves; until we confront ourselves in the eyes and hearts of others, we are running. Until we suffer them to know our secrets, we can know no safety from them. Afraid to know ourselves, we can know no others...” (Phoenix House)

Through Presence in Action, we can release ourselves from our own destructive patterns. This praxis opens us up and brings us back into relationship, moment-to-moment; day-to-day; interaction-by-interaction. It illuminates and frees us from the delusions that knock us to our knees, and the reactivity that break us apart. In recovering and coming home to ourselves, we grow our capacity for [Symmathesic Agency](#), reconnecting to others and re-incorporating ourselves in our wider world - we **become** nature in tune with itself.

In this contribution, I hope to give you a glimpse of the origins and potency of Presence in Action demonstrating the basics of our simple Acuity Practice using three elements of the P6 Constellation framework.



THE TEXT I PREPARED YET **DID NOT SAY** IN MY CONTRIBUTION AT THIS CONFERENCE!

As I launch into my contribution, I am mindful this event is coming to a close. I was surprised to have been invited along with such a diverse and respected group of speakers. And I am grateful for the opportunity to stand alongside you all.

We have heard diverse contributions from these people who have shared something of their thinking, their lives, endeavours, contributions and achievements. We will have felt stuff and made meaning of what they have said... whether or not we are aware of all the feelings we may have felt and all the meanings we will have made.

But what has been alive in me over these last weeks and months is rage! Rage at what we as human beings are doing to each other, ourselves and the world! Where is the true, good and beautiful! We seem to be destroying it.

I’ve found it extraordinarily challenging to contemplate what I could possibly share in these 20 minutes that might make a difference to you, to us, to our world. I was stuck until I realised I was setting myself up! I was taking on an impossible task borne of the very mindset I allude to in the shaded preamble above:

“We have elevated our species to a god-like status under the mistaken illusion that we are grand masters who control the world. How can this be possible when most of us can barely control what happens in our own lives and relationships?”

And I would add to this... often we barely notice – let alone can control - what goes on in our minds and bodies. And it takes bold, humbling work to develop our capacities to do so – as anyone who has attempted and failed to be more physically active; to eat or drink less; to stop smoking or using drugs; to be kinder to themselves or others.



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It is as a fallible, struggling human being that I learned to attend to myself first – to deal with my shit – seeking to change within, rather than trying to change others so I would not have to! I use myself to illuminate my message.

Self-centering is NOT self-centred

I am but one individual. I have done stuff. I have written stuff. I have played and worked; lost and gained; loved and learned; struggled and overcome my own mental health challenges. I have striven to make change happen in communities, organisations, teams, relationships. And in every presumptive external intervention, I failed at 'God's' game; yet succeeded in changing the only thing I can - though not because I set out to do it! I was changed by reflecting on myself and my failed attempts to change others.

I have been told by many that they've benefitted from what I did with them – but, I recognise now that that was because of what **they did with what I offered** into the space between us, and not because I was some omnipotent presence capable of changing them on my command!

So where and how did my reflective journeying start; and what does my past have to do with my here and now?

When I was a little girl living in Lusaka, Zambia I remember thinking:

"When I grow up I want to be the heroine who saves everyone from danger!"

When I let in what I witness playing out across the world today, that little girl with her dreams of being the saviour, returns to me in full force. On the face of it, she wants to save the day. To save you. To save the world.

Through my childhood and on into my early adult life, this drama played me over and over again... until, after years and years of recycling introspection, I began to recognise that my wanting to "save you and the world" was not really about you or the world – it was about me being desperate to prove that I was worth having around... and if I could do that, then I would be protecting myself from facing beliefs I believed were FACTS: that "I was ALL wrong" and that "everyone I loved left me behind and never came back" because of this. None of this was an objective reality - although there is a kind of illogical logic at play that is grounded in some of the facts of my early life as a colonial kid born and living in Africa. If you want more of an insight into the context behind what I am saying, do check out this link: [A mask is the sign of a dead soul](#).

My meaning-making was non-conscious. I did not engage in a rational thinking process that led to decisions which I then choice-fully enacted. To suggest we human beings process like this is a myth that was sold to us by Descartes and has been promulgated in the name of so-called 'good' science ever since!

Beyond dualist delusions

What was happening within me in the context of my relationships and wider world, was simultaneously way more complex and way more simple than the Cartesian delusion where it is held that reductionism and cause-effect thinking can augment man's abilities to bend nature to his will. I suggest we must be alert to how this illusion sets us up for the binary game of bad/good; wrong/right; ugly/beautiful; lose/win; friend/foe.

I am cautious about being drawn into championing the true, good and beautiful – as this too could have us slide into the binary trap. To elevate these states as the 'must-haves', is potentially to separate ourselves from what is. Such notions are the fruits of meaning-making made by some about other people, actions or things. For example, some people believe Donald Trump is a good and [trustworthy](#) individual because they AGREE with him and what he says and does. The same is true of Boris Johnson with regard to the Brexit debate in the UK. Who says any of us has the right to be the arbiter of what and who is good, fair, just and right? This is tricky territory.



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Now I am not advocating an ‘anything goes’ mentality that will have us all fall into the black hole that is fake news - where just because you utter something somehow means it’s true! Far from it. I am saying that we messy, muddled, emotion-fuelled, meaning-making, relational beings have personal work to do. We are living in a world which seems to be straining to maintain its equilibrium with the consequences of our actions. I am making a case for recognising that we ARE nature and that when we act in ways that are not coherent with being nature, we harm ourselves first... and this ripples out into our relational realm and wider world. If we remain blind to our own agency and impact – we separate ourselves and turn our attention onto others, blaming them for all that we judge as wrong, bad, ugly, irresponsible etc. In separating ourselves we are suggesting that they did the bad things and we - who **never** would do what they have done - are the righteous victims ... which means it is they - not us - who have to put right the wrongs. We maintain that we are not culpable in any way.

It took me years to recognise that in many challenging situations I found myself in, I had neither recognised nor accepted responsibility for the part I had played. Over years, I came to reveal my internal dynamics and discovered that anytime I fell into making another person wrong or bad, this was awakening me to what was awry and off-centre in me! When I opened up to what I was noticing and started attending to my own sense-making, something rather amazing happened... I came home to myself free of judgement, full of compassion and with a renewed ability and commitment to engage with others I had been blaming, with loving, accepting, bold humility. When I embraced my own internal dissonance, I returned into relational, natural flow.

Gaining such awareness does not come easy - at least it did not for me. And to imagine we can be fixed once and for all, is to fall again into the Cartesian trap. While ever we are alive, our (need for) personal processing will never be ‘done’ which of course affords abundant opportunities for learning and continual transformation!

But what do I really mean by ‘personal work’?

As I alluded to earlier, I struggled emotionally for many years and over the decades of my life I sought explanations and solutions to fix the me who, back then, I believed was broken and all wrong. I discovered myriad models, theories and lenses some of which were so abstracted from my lived experience as to be useless; others afforded useful insights; yet most were largely impractical in helping me cope with what was going on in me moment-to-moment. More and more, I found myself using my own experiences and my reflective processing to comprehend my destructive and stuck patterns. Weaving insights from other sources over decades, I finally found my embodied knowing coalescing into the praxis of Presence in Action (PIA) – brought into being when I used a framework called the P6 Constellation along with a simple Acuity (noticing) practice.

Nowadays, I am one of a growing number of PIA Practitioners. We engage regularly in our community-in-practice to free ourselves from our own non-conscious deceptions and in so doing, we deepen and extend our acuity, agility, fluency and artistry in this praxis in our daily lives. We do our personal processing; support each other 1-1 and in triads; we engage in supervision and support new people to experience this work as practice partners; and we participate in up to four community-in-practice gatherings each year. All this has co-evolved amongst us through insights arising in the bumps between us – each bump revealing new ways for us to organise and take action alone and together in different configurations. In January 2019 we established ourselves as a Community Interest Company – PIA Collective to bring PIA to people wherever we are. Our economic exchange model is based on what we call a Sufficiency Principle. Through this we are redefining the principles and practice of ‘Corporate Social Responsibility’ and the way in which we as practitioners undertake our work within PIA Collective.

Through our incrementally expanding, diverse community, we are re-shaping what it means to be in relationship as friends, partners, peers, parents, colleagues, siblings, supervisors, artists, mediators, managers, musicians, coaches, therapists, teachers, learners, facilitators, hosts. We are equipping ourselves to act with more responsibility in the heat and immediacy of everyday encounters. And in so doing, we are liberating ourselves into engaging more freely, joyfully, responsibly and coherently with others and in all we do in our lives, everywhere we are, whatever the context.





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I am aware that my knowing about this way of being is deeply embedded and embodied and my talking about it can only give you a glimpse of what it is, how it works and what it might bring to you. However...

...Let's see if I can open the space for you to get a taste of PIA

I would like to invite you to walk into the shallows of this way of engaging and illuminating the content and dynamics that run within us. To do this, I shall introduce you to some distinctions about a few words used in the P6 Constellation. There are seven key words but I am going to introduce the foundational four that open the space for us to play here:

PRESENCE: being present to what is 'present' and 'current' within and beyond us, in any given situation in which we find ourselves. Imagine standing in the 'still point' at the centre of a vortex like a hurricane, seeing all that is spinning around you, yet remaining free of the turbulence. Presence, to some affords a sense of being connected to the Divine. In the P6 Constellation, we understand Presence as a state of being in which we may be free of attachment yet wholeheartedly connected to all that is in and around us. This portal represents a place in which we invite ourselves or another into a receptive state of 'acuity' – invoking our capacity to 'notice', using all the faculties known and, as yet, unknown to us.

The Presence portal invites us to notice what we notice and to use the surrounding portals of the framework to illuminate the content and nature of what is showing up within us. Through our simple acuity process aided by the diagrammatic representation and a receptive, nonlinear way of working, we find ourselves experiencing state-shifts in which a presence-ful state of coherence comes upon and becomes us. We call this Presence in Action.

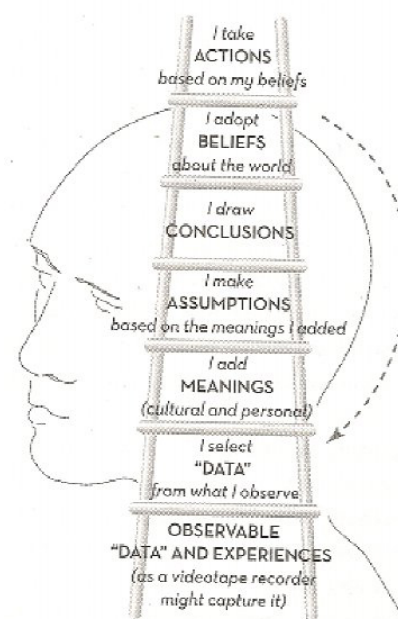
The 3 Fs within the P6 Constellation include: **FACTS**, **FEELINGS** and **FICTIONS**. The distinctions we make between these are crucial. Everything that has a place within the P6 Constellation is considered data – whether or not it is tangible or intangible:

FACTS: Past and present events/happenings - including what was said or done or not said/done and by whom. This is a type of data which is available to all of us; only some of which is accessible to each of us. Accessibility is limited by our proximity to what is happening; our perspective in relation to what we witness; and by the way in which we 'filter' what we notice, which is affected by our past experiences and what we make of those experiences. Put simply – we find what we are looking for, thereby proving it is there!

FEELINGS: a simple, catch-all term that includes our physical and physiological sensations i.e. somatosensory (muscles, connective tissue, skin); proprioceptive (movement and posture) and interoceptive (our internal organs e.g. heart, lungs, guts); AND what we ordinarily call 'emotions' such as anger, joy etc. Only the person feeling the feelings knows what their feelings feel like!

And finally

FICTIONS: "what my mind does with...." This is about the meanings we make of what we notice, feel and experience. In the P6 Constellation we use this catch-all term for all the labels which refer to 'different types' of meaning-making e.g. assumptions, conclusions, interpretations, myths, stories, beliefs, values, memories from the past, future imaginings.



Why use the term **FICTIONS**? In our super-fast internal processing (see Daniel Kahneman's book 'Thinking Fast and Slow'), we do not (have time to) differentiate between numerous sub-divisions and abstractions such as we

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might find in philosophy and academic disciplines; nor indeed in practice-oriented offerings such as those identified in Peter Senge's Ladder of Inference (image opposite - building on the work of Chris Argyris).

We also do not internally process in the progressively linear, seemingly objective manner as is implied by Senge's representation – which you might note, makes no reference to emotionality. In the P6 Constellation, the middle five steps of this ladder are scooped up into the Fictions portal.

Our inner processing is chaotic and nonlinear, with recursive interdependencies over which we have no fundamental control. We filter what we notice and make meaning of what we see, hear and feel even though we are usually unaware of the details of what we have noticed and what we have missed.

So – we react to the complex interplay between: our past-influenced, filtered noticings (partial FACTS); the FEELINGS we feel amidst our noticings; our meaning-making (FICTIONS) of our filtered noticings; and our meaning-making of our meaning-making (more FICTIONS)!

As you can see, we are not reacting to WHAT factually happened or is happening in the here and now. The more these patterns replay, the more they become locked in. Our fast-thinking patterns persist until we slow down sufficiently to become aware of the content and dynamics keeping them in play. What we have found through the praxis of PIA, is that our stuck patterns of meaning-making substantively change only WHEN we illuminate new or unnoticed 'data' which, through its revelatory appearance serves to disrupt our previously locked-in patterns of meaning-making. This all is simply and elegantly represented in the nonlinear representation of the P6 Constellation which helps us practice, access and become Presence in Action.

Within the context of the P6 Constellation, we accept FICTIONS, FACTS and FEELINGS as 'raw data'. These simple data-types keep us as close as is possible to our experiences – made accessible to ourselves and others in the words, gestures and representations we adopt as we attempt to comprehend what is manifesting; and as we attempt to communicate with each other about it all. In using, sharing and witnessing what unfolds as we deploy the P6 Constellation, people come to recognise that all three types of data (the 3 Fs) are necessary for a clear, clean, coherent message to pass between us¹. When we omit one or more of them, the listener fills in the gaps which increases the likelihood of our being misinterpreted and misunderstood.

Now let's put these distinctions to work...

Overleaf, I am going to share some quotes. I invite you to discern Facts, Feelings and Fictions in these statements. As you use your cognitive faculties to identify the 3Fs distinctions, notice what begins to show up within you.

- What is present and absent in the quote?
- What feelings do you notice in YOU as you read these quotes?
- What meanings do YOU make of what is said and who said it?

¹ The other three types of internal contents in the P6 Constellation come into play alongside the 3 Fs. They are harder to access as they run more deeply in our subconscious processing, linking what is present in the here and now, to past experiences and future projections. Surfacing all that is running in us initially requires being supported by experienced hosting, but with practice becomes accessible to us all.

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The Quotes

Quote 1: Nicola Sturgeon, 24.6.2016

“Yesterday, Scotland - like London and Northern Ireland - voted overwhelmingly to remain in the EU. We voted to protect our place in the world's biggest single market - and the jobs and investment that depend on it. We voted to safeguard our freedom to travel, live, work and study in other European countries. And we voted to renew our reputation as an outward-looking, open and inclusive country.”

What is present & absent in the quote?		
FACTS	FEELINGS	FICTIONS

What feelings do I notice in me as I read this quote? What meanings do I make of what is said and who said it?	
FEELINGS	FICTIONS

Quote 2: Ingrid Seward, 08.09.2019

“Harry has always rushed in without considering the consequences, unlike his brother William, who is now regarded as someone with statesmanlike qualities. If Harry and Meghan slowed down and took things more gently—instead of this frantic grappling for approval and attention—they might win public support.”

What is present & absent in the quote?		
FACTS	FEELINGS	FICTIONS

What feelings do I notice in me as I read this quote? What meanings do I make of what is said and who said it?	
FEELINGS	FICTIONS

Quote 3: Piers Morgan, 04.10.2019

“What’s she done for peace, exactly? She’s got just very, very angry about climate change, abused loads of adults & terrified millions of children.”

What is present & absent in the quote?		
FACTS	FEELINGS	FICTIONS

What feelings do I notice in me as I read this quote? What meanings do I make of what is said and who said it?	
FEELINGS	FICTIONS



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Quote 4: Katie Hopkins, 08.09.2019

"I think women are really vicious in the work place, they're really jealous, really competitive. Women are emotional, they cry in toilets. The sisterhood only extends as far as the kitchen door. Men talk in logic and rational terms, they don't squark and make a noise."

What is present & absent in the quote?		
FACTS	FEELINGS	FICTIONS

What feelings do I notice in me as I read this quote? What meanings do I make of what is said and who said it?	
FEELINGS	FICTIONS

Quote 5: Osama bin Laden, 2005

"Every Muslim, from the moment they realise the distinction in their hearts, hates Americans, hates Jews, and hates Christians."

What is present & absent in the quote?		
FACTS	FEELINGS	FICTIONS

What feelings do I notice in me as I read this quote? What meanings do I make of what is said and who said it?	
FEELINGS	FICTIONS

Quote 6: Reporter & Boris Johnson, 07.10.2019

"The prime minister has attacked the Extinction Rebellion activists protesting in London over the climate crisis, dismissing them as "uncooperative crusties" who should stop blocking the streets of the capital with their "heaving hemp-smelling bivouacs"."

What is present & absent in the quote?		
FACTS	FEELINGS	FICTIONS

What feelings do I notice in me as I read this quote? What meanings do I make of what is said and who said it?	
FEELINGS	FICTIONS





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Quote 7: Boris Johnson, circa 2014

“We should be helping all those who can to join the ranks of the super-rich, and we should stop any bashing or moaning or preaching or bitching and simply give thanks for the prodigious sums of money that they are contributing to the tax revenues of this country, and that enable us to look after our sick and our elderly and to build roads, railways and schools.”

What is present & absent in the quote?		
FACTS	FEELINGS	FICTIONS

What feelings do I notice in me as I read this quote? What meanings do I make of what is said and who said it?	
FEELINGS	FICTIONS

Do go to the Appendix if you want to check your levels of discernment of the 3Fs.

And the point of practising discerning the 3Fs?

You might well be asking what any of this has to do with this conference and my anticipated contribution? How will fluency in the 3Fs help us address climate change, Brexit, Fundamentalism? Spiralling Mental Health challenges?

To answer this I want to refer to the film “Karate Kid” – one of my favourite films. Daniel-San wanted to fight like his Teacher, Mr Miyagi. He wanted the end outcome FAST. My Miyagi knew that there was no fast-track to that level of artistry – the art of defence not offense. He set out Daniel-San’s learning path which the young boy, at first, resisted. His path to Karate artistry began with endless repetitions of “wax on; wax off.” Practice. Practice. Practice with a brush for painting the fence; and a rag for polishing the car – using both hands and arms and his entire body.

In PIA Collective our community-in-practice gatherings, supervision and triad practice sessions are our equivalent to “wax on; wax off.” They afford opportunities to practice personal processing; practice hosting each other; practice witnessing and holding the space for others as they practice our processing and hosting.

The joys and unanticipated benefits of our practising arise as we connect, open and expand in all our humanity together. We access the **true** that is raw and fallible in each of us. This liberates the **goodness** in each of us which finds its way out through humility, compassion and forgiveness for ourselves and each other. And we burgeon with the undeniable **beauty** of the life-force of Nature that cannot not express itself when we access acceptance of who we are and what IS. Yet – we unlock none of this when we choose to remain suffocating beneath the deluge of fake news that has us label and categorise – judge – ourselves and each other as somehow mad, bad or deviant; whilst desperately trying to prove ourselves otherwise.

When we practice PIA, we free and heal ourselves from our self-made messes. To some this may not look like a path to saving the world. It is certainly not the only one. But it is one we believe is within everyone’s reach. It is available to anyone ready to turn within to release the true, good and beautiful in themselves.

Possible next steps

Have a look at the following Appendix to see my analysis of these quotes.

Follow the links embedded in this document, and check out my [website](#) and this [accompanying prezi](#) which covers some of the above with additional material. If you want to explore and experience Presence in Action, then why not sign up for one of our [Power of Presence in Action](#) trainings or other [learning opportunities](#). And of course please do feel free to [email me](#) if you fancy meeting for coffee and conversation.

I look forward to hearing from you one way or another!

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Appendix: 3 Fs

Analysis of Quotes

Quote 1: Nicola Sturgeon, 24.6.2016

“Yesterday, Scotland - like London and Northern Ireland - voted overwhelmingly to remain in the EU. We voted to protect our place in the world's biggest single market - and the jobs and investment that depend on it. We voted to safeguard our freedom to travel, live, work and study in other European countries. And we voted to renew our reputation as an outward-looking, open and inclusive country.”

What is present & [absent] in the quote?		
FACTS	FEELINGS	FICTIONS
Yesterday, [a majority of people in] Scotland - like London and Northern Ireland – voted... to remain in the EU.		Overwhelmingly...We voted to protect our place in the world's biggest single market - and the jobs and investment that depend on it. We voted to safeguard our freedom to travel, live, work and study in other European countries. And we voted to renew our reputation as an outward-looking, open and inclusive country.

Quote 2: Ingrid Seward, 08.09.2019

“Harry has always rushed in without considering the consequences, unlike his brother William, who is now regarded as someone with statesmanlike qualities. If Harry and Meghan slowed down and took things more gently—instead of this frantic grappling for approval and attention—they might win public support.”

What is present & absent in the quote?		
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Quote 3: Piers Morgan, 04.10.2019

“What’s she done for peace, exactly? She’s got just very, very angry about climate change, abused loads of adults & terrified millions of children.”

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“Every Muslim, from the moment they realise the distinction in their hearts, hates Americans, hates Jews, and hates Christians.”

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FACTS	FEELINGS	FICTIONS
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Quote 6: Reporter & Boris Johnson, 07.10.2019

“The prime minister has attacked the Extinction Rebellion activists protesting in London over the climate crisis, dismissing them as “uncooperative crusties” who should stop blocking the streets of the capital with their “heaving hemp-smelling bivouacs”.”

What is present & absent in the quote?		
FACTS	FEELINGS	FICTIONS
		The prime minister has attacked the Extinction Rebellion activists protesting in London over the climate crisis, dismissing them as “uncooperative crusties” who should stop blocking the streets of the capital with their “heaving hemp-smelling bivouacs”.

Quote 7: Boris Johnson, circa 2014

“We should be helping all those who can to join the ranks of the super-rich, and we should stop any bashing or moaning or preaching or bitching and simply give thanks for the prodigious sums of money that they are contributing to the tax revenues of this country, and that enable us to look after our sick and our elderly and to build roads, railways and schools.”

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FACTS	FEELINGS	FICTIONS
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