

Learning to Swim with Stanley: A Formative Collaboration

Clifford Goldenberg, MS, MFT

Abstract

The author discusses the Formative process as it applies to his creative collaboration with Stanley Keleman.

Keywords

Formative – Creative Process – Porosity

A number of years ago, Stanley asked me if I wanted to help him make videos that would be used to teach people how to see from a Formative perspective and would simultaneously make a visual statement of how Stanley views the life process. As a Formative therapist myself, with no experience making videos, I agreed to embark on this creative journey with Stanley. This voyage proved remarkable as much for the actual documents we have produced as for the extraordinary things I have learned about the creative/Formative process and the nature of collaboration.

When we are in the midst of creating these videos, we enter a semi porous state in which ideas and possibilities are explored in a non-linear shape. The exchange of ideas and the creative attempt to translate them into visuals expands our imagination and we find extraordinary ways to stretch the limits of the video editing equipment we use to embody Stanley's vision. The process takes hundreds of hours of phone calls, conversations and experiments to produce videos of no more than 15 minutes duration.

While Stanley is a sea creature, perfectly at home in his own creative ocean, I am a land lubber who appreciates the depth of others' art but have rarely ventured into the depths of my own creative impulses. Stanley has artfully guided me in the ability to swim inside myself even when I wanted to stubbornly cling to the rocks I call home. As I am chiefly responsible for the technical side of our endeavor, I tend to want to solidify our ideas quickly. Stanley has taught me the necessity of letting things remain liquid long enough for possibilities to emerge and to let things gel slowly. This mimics the Formative process of the body in which the organism goes through stages of porosity, motility, rigidity and density. As we rigidify our experiments into a storyboard and ultimately settle on a sequence, the less formed becomes more formed and the video becomes itself.

And despite my love of land, it isn't long before I am eager to dive into the next project.

Biography

Clifford Goldenberg, MS, MFT, is a Formative therapist in private practice at the Center for Energetic Studies in Berkeley, California. He has collaborated with Stanley Keleman in producing 15 videos about Formative Psychology since 1999.