

## **Journey of the Inner Witness: A Path of Development <sup>1</sup>** **Paula C. Sager**

*The word 'becoming' moves, it is the movement aspect of eternity.  
Being is the essence; becoming is the movement of the essence.*  
(Whitehouse 1999: 62)

In 1969, Mary Starks Whitehouse reflected on what she called her 'metamorphosis' from being a dancer to being a teacher of a movement process that represented a new approach to human development (Whitehouse 1999: 58-62). In her classes and lectures, she encouraged her students and listeners to rediscover the body and experience self-emergent movement as the creative impulse by which human beings can allow and realize growth. Such self-realization, she writes, is the source for creative production, because 'what we create first is ourselves and it is out of ourselves that the producing comes' (40) Whitehouse's legacy continues to provide the foundation for all who teach and practice Authentic Movement. Turning attention inwards, listening, waiting for an inner impulse to move, is a way of knowing self, a way of knowing the world and others, and is a reclaiming of our first language, the truly universal language of movement, of life.

### **Creative Will and Birth of the Inner Witness**

Three decades earlier, Viktor Lowenfeld, while teaching art to blind, near-blind, and sighted children became profoundly interested in the activity of a creative impulse arising through kinesthetic and tactile experience. In his research he describes two creative types—visual and haptic—each corresponding with a different cognitive 'style' of perception, not necessarily sight- or age-dependent (Lowenfeld 1939: 87—94). According to Lowenfeld, the visual type seeks subjective experience beyond his or her body in the surrounding environment and through the process of drawing, brings the outer world closer to self. In contrast, the haptic type seeks subjective experience through

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his or her body sensations along with a felt sense of space and through the process of drawing, is able to project and make visible his or her inner world (89).

Before a clear tendency toward the haptic or visual type becomes evident, the very young child's first activity of drawing is pure impulse; there is no conscious intention to represent anything. Creative will unfolds effortlessly through the child (Lowenfeld and Brittain 1987: 189). As the will, expressed through the physical action of early scribbling, unites with the young child's power of attention, the child comes to recognize the marks on paper as 'separate from me but still related to me.' A felt relationship between the action, the self who performs the action, and what arises from the action, makes it possible for the child to know self in a new and spontaneous way. The experience lights up as an intuitive sense: 'I did this.' It is a remarkable moment. To understand the significance of this moment we have only to imagine the consequences of its absence.

Prior to meeting and studying with Mary Whitehouse, Janet Adler spent ten years working with autistic children. For Adler, as a young dance therapist, it was this *absence* of self-recognition in the child, the inability to experience him or herself in relation to others that was so apparent. Adler describes her work with the children as the source of her experience of the phenomenon of the inner witness (28). Over the next four decades, working with students individually and in groups, in studios on the east and west coasts of the United States and in Europe, Adler deepened her exploration of the inner experience of the mover, the inner experience of the outer witness, and the dynamic of relationship between the two. She continues to work and teach in Western Canada, refining and articulating the dynamics of witness-consciousness through the Discipline of Authentic Movement (Adler, 2014).

### **Authentic Movement Roles of Mover and Witness**

To envision the practice and intention of mover and witness, we can begin by picturing the mover in a studio, in the presence of an outer witness. With eyes closed, the mover turns to the phenomenon of darkness, asking: *What is here that I cannot see? What am I feeling in sensation, in emotion? What is my body doing? Where am I in space?* Opening

to an emerging impulse, the mover attends to and follows, in movement or stillness, the arising of his or her own experience. Here is the mover, inwardly asking, *Will I be seen as I am?*

Before any of these questions though, is the wordless longing, the human longing to know: *Who am I?* It is here at the threshold of not knowing that, in the role of mover, we may first find ourselves, waiting...listening... following. Here, we discover and perhaps recognize in some way we can experience even if we do not understand: our existence belongs to the invisible. This mystery is ours to enter. It is at such a threshold that the longing for a witness arises.

A *witness* is a person who acts as an important presence at threshold moments, such as birth, death, and major life transitions. In many indigenous cultures the witness was and continues to be an assigned role during ritual ceremony. The witness is the one who participates by seeing the shape of the whole, whose presence helps create a safe containment of the energies and spirit to be invoked and worked with. The inwardly attentive and outwardly aware witness helps to maintain the sacredness of the work (Tsang, Kazeroony, Ellis, 2013: 29).

In the Discipline of Authentic Movement, the witness with eyes open, sits quietly on the periphery of the space in the presence of the mover. The witness is opening to the phenomenon of light, asking: *What is here to be seen? What is my experience in the presence of another? What is my relationship to what I see?* The witness attends to his or her own inner experience while attentive, at the same time, to the journey of the mover through time and space. To witness is to practice containing assumptions, projections, and judgments in order to be as present, as welcoming and affirming as possible to the mover's own experience. Here is the witness, opening to the longing to be present, to see clearly, to know self, to see and know the other, her thread of attention stretching in two directions.

The core principles honoring the intention of mover and witness to practice in relationship and out of individual autonomy can be seen 'embedded throughout Adler's (1987, 2002) and Whitehouse's (1979) teaching, which unite the various permutations of

this practice' (Lowell 2007: 52). In the wider field of Authentic Movement, consisting of students of Whitehouse and others who come to this work out of their own embodied experience of movement and inquiry, the roles of mover and witness are considered central to the practice.

### **The Discipline of Authentic Movement**

Adler's focus on understanding the experience of duality and unity consciousness in the developing inner witness is one way of distinguishing her work from other important perspectives in the field. She describes the Discipline of Authentic Movement as 'mysteriously, deeply developmental' (personal communication). In her essay, 'The Mandorla and the Discipline of Authentic Movement', Adler writes that 'because of the development of witness consciousness, an inherent order is evident in all that happens between the experience of duality and unity consciousness' (Adler, 2014: 8). The 'inherent order' made visible and manifest through the experience of mover and witness, leads her to call the discipline a mystical practice. In the discipline, the evolution of individual consciousness, in both mover and witness through the phenomenon of their relationship, is grounded in the development of an embodied inner witness. For both solo and group work, Adler describes the studio work of mover and witness as two forms of sequential ritual practice: *moving and witnessing* followed by *speaking and listening*.

The individual's journey begins as a single mover in relationship to a single outer witness, a beginning encounter that acknowledges the duality of separation. It is a journey that will reveal the divided nature of awareness and over time offer a conscious experience of the 'distinction between inner and outer experience...between self and other, between mind and body, and between cerebral knowing and the knowing of sensation and emotion as experienced through the physical body' (Sager 2008: 3-4). At first, for the mover, the light and dark of personal history may be *merged* with the spontaneous experience of egoic life. It is in the context of interpersonal relationship that the mover discovers and deepens into an intrapersonal relationship with his or her own self-awareness—the inner witness.

The mover, now actively engaging the *dialogic* dynamics of relationship, opens to

the challenge of being in relationship to others without losing conscious connection to self. Thus begins the work of the collective—of embodied relationship to other movers and perhaps more than one witness.

Through committed practice over time, the individual, both as mover and now increasingly as outer witness, experiences energetic and non-dual states of awareness—moments of grace—‘in which the boundaries describing all relationships, within and without, dissolve’ (Adler 2002: xix). The personal self is no longer experienced as separate from the transpersonal realm. The experience of ‘empty-mover, empty witness’ is guided by clear silent awareness and a quality of presence, reflective of *unitive* consciousness. Instead of a narrative relationship to experience, Adler describes how an ‘embodied relationship with imaginative and associative phenomena moves toward direct experience of energetic phenomena integrating, becoming intuitive knowing’ (Adler 2014: 1).

In the roles of mover and outer witness, two separate faculties of human experience reflect two different ways of knowing self and other. What Lowenfeld identified as two styles of perception, haptic and visual, can be seen embodied in these two roles. The relationship between the two ‘frees each member to embrace a half of the whole of the mover/witness dynamic’ and it is the inner witness that is the ‘bridge between mover-consciousness and witness consciousness’ (Adler 2002: 62). In fact, from this developmental perspective, growth toward the role of witness and the potential integration of unitive states of consciousness begins in the self-witnessing practice of the mover. For both mover and witness, each on their own path of development, the discipline becomes an opportunity to consciously experience the aspect of self that perceives inner experience. In the words attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, ‘What you are looking for is what is looking’.

### **Development of the Inner Witness: An Inquiry**

Ten years after I first began to study with Janet Adler, and after more than a decade of editing submissions to *A Moving Journal*, a publication focused on Authentic Movement,

I was longing to deepen my own inquiry, to understand more fully how the inner witness develops in both mover and witness through the phenomenon of their relationship—this ‘woven reality’ (Adler 2002: *xix*). On the pages of *A Moving Journal*, the diverse voices from the field of Authentic Movement express a wide range of ways that practitioners apply its principles to their work in the world. I wanted to understand how a developing inner witness is of service to this work and how an embodied practice of witness consciousness is relevant to contemporary life and social issues, particularly in the field of education.

I enrolled in a graduate program designed to integrate academic research with contemplative practice and inquiry. The Barfield School was founded by Arthur Zajonc and fellow colleagues in higher education who sought to bring together two central parts of their lives—the academic and the contemplative—two ways of knowing kept separate for much of their own professional careers. Contemplative practices can enhance one’s capacity to be awake, compassionate, responsive, and engaged in the world. Contemplative Inquiry is an approach to research that uses these capacities and seeks to understand the relationship between the object of research and the researcher’s subjective experience.

At our first meeting to discuss how we students would each define our research, Zajonc urged us to: ‘Plant your staff, the staff of what you’re most interested in. Plant it and be faithful’ (personal communication). The ground of my question would be the Discipline of Authentic Movement; my staff would be the inner witness. The challenge would be to study something as subjective and immaterial as a developing inner witness, to document how an inner capacity for awareness can change over time. Since the inner witness is an experiential phenomenon, the research involved a three-part phenomenological study that included a survey of in-depth written responses from 40 Authentic Movement practitioners; a six session Authentic Movement group series; and my own contemplative inquiry (Sager 2008a: 29-36). In the process I discovered a kindred discipline, phenomenology.

The early Greek philosophers understood phenomena (*phainein*), as that which brings to light and causes something to appear, to ‘flare up’ or ‘show itself’ (Moustakas 1994: 44). This understanding of that which appears implies that there is a perceiver, one to whom appearance reveals itself. The calling of the ancient philosophers was to seek knowledge of reality—the way things really were, not just how they appeared. Their task was to inquire, from their own inner state of wonder and love (*philo*), into the nature of a phenomenon that it may reveal itself in its wisdom (*sophia*).

Modern phenomenology as articulated by Edmund Husserl, allows and presupposes the interweaving of objective and subjective knowledge. Husserl states that, ‘The object is not actually given, wholly and entirely as that which it itself is. It is only given ‘from the front,’ only perspectively foreshortened and projected’ (Husserl 1970: 712). In other words, our perception of an object in any moment is subject to our perspective at that time. Nonetheless, maintains Husserl, ‘the object, as it is *in itself*...is *not wholly different* from the object realized, however imperfectly, in the percept’ (713). The methodology of phenomenological research requires a self-aware inquiry into the phenomenon of perception, beginning with calling into question the limitations of a single perspective and by ‘bracketing’ preconceived ideas. Husserl describes the practice of abstaining from presupposition and habitual ways of seeing as the *Epoche* (Husserl 1931/2002: 59), inspired by the ancient Greek philosophical meaning of the word: *to suspend judgment*.

What results is a way of looking that precedes reflection, interpretation, and conclusion. The *Epoche* is a process of preparation to enter ‘a pure internal place, as an open self, ready to embrace life in what it truly offers’ allowing the subject of inquiry to ‘stand as it appears, from many angles, perspectives and signs’ (Moustakas 1994: 86). Zajonc describes the experience of perceiving phenomena as ‘the doorway to the inside of what we at first can only see from the outside’ (Zajonc 2007). The phenomenological reduction of discerning and distinguishing phenomenal characteristics, and ‘horizontalizing’ the resulting data—the horizons being ‘the perceptions that emerge from

angles of looking’—further extend the process toward a textural description of the essential nature of the phenomenon (Moustakas 1994: 53).

### **Researcher as Witness**

The practice of the phenomenological researcher is much like the practice of witness consciousness in the Discipline of Authentic Movement. Both require an open receptivity to not know what will happen and a commitment to track one’s own inner experience in the presence of another person or an outer phenomenon. Both practices cultivate the capacity to think and perceive through movement, time, relationship, and presence. The outer witness practice of attending to, containing, and not acting upon inner reactive impulses, judgments, and associations is mirrored in the *Epoche*. Drawing the connection between phenomenology and somatic practices such as Authentic Movement, somatic studies educator, Don Johnson, notes how these practices ‘slow down the rapid pace of thinking, draw attention into experience, weaken the tenacity of preconceived idea and emotional self-interest to the point when, after long practice, the ideas and biases wither in the face of the vitally pulsing things themselves’ (Johnson 2000: 118).

The full phenomenological study of a developing inner witness in practitioners of Authentic Movement included a triangulation of the three data sources (Sager 2008a: 82 – 90). The survey, as one source of data, was designed to encourage Authentic Movement practitioners to express in their own voice, their experience as mover in relation to their own inner witness *and* in relation to the outer witness, and also as outer witness in relation to their own inner witness *and* in relation to the mover. The respondents represent a diverse range of backgrounds in terms of teachers they studied with and how long they had been practicing (Sager 2008b).

As preparation before beginning the process of coding the data of each survey, I would take time to clear my thoughts, impressions, and expectations with the intention of emptying out and opening my mind. Witnessing the transition between each survey, I would look up or get up from my chair, walk a bit, or look out the window before returning to the next survey, again giving time to bracket preconceptions, associations, and expectations in order to arrive with a clear, open, and curious mind. Through this



practice, I found myself listening more deeply into or through the words, feeling moved by the content and appreciative of every response in a more nuanced way.

I learned, as researcher, to trust that meaning would reveal itself through the data, through ongoing devotion to the practice of discerning my own bias, my own judgments and projections, my own habits of thinking and perceiving. Paying close attention to the written responses in the surveys and journals of the research participants, I would engage in self-observation, noting what the responses evoked inwardly through sensation, emotion, image, as well as time and space references. Just as one can begin to see different facets of a person from different perspectives, I began to see different aspects of the phenomenal experience of the inner witness through repeated viewings of the coded data, teasing apart descriptive content, beginning to see patterns, anomalies, units of meaning. I kept track of what became perceptible in this way, coding units of meaning out of which a narrative ultimately took shape.

I am indebted to the thoughtful and generous contributions of the respondents to my research questions about the inner witness. We are collaborators in seeking something that cannot be seen in a singular viewing. Only by observing a phenomenon, displayed over time, are aspects and attributes of its hidden nature revealed. ‘Whatever appears in the world must divide if it is to appear at all’, wrote Goethe in relation to his scientific studies of natural phenomena. It was through his own engagement of contemplative inquiry that he could then observe that, ‘What has been divided seeks itself again, can return to itself and reunite’ (Goethe 1988: 156). My hope is that the process of teasing apart the layered and phenomenal life of the inner witness has ultimately rendered it whole again.

### **The Developing Inner Witness: Phase One**

The 40 survey responses represent a thirty-year span of practice, revealing a three-phase maturation process of the inner witness for both mover and outer witness—Phase One: 1 - 10 years; Phase Two: 10 – 20 years; Phase Three: 20 – 30 years. The data reveal a distinct voice for each of these three subsequent decades of practice (Sager 2008a: 37-51, 108-109).

In the first phase of development, the mover discovers two very different experiences of self-awareness. One is a more familiar inner presence, a voice that tends to be judgmental, chatty, and often self-critical. The other is quieter, more benevolent, a ‘warmer, more compassionate presence that notices, observes, and helps remember’. Many respondents observe that over time, the *inner critic* is becoming a more compassionate, accepting *inner witness*, becoming softer, wiser, and steadier.

Many of these respondents also describe a greater sense of awareness of the distinction between body and mind, between thinking, moving, and feeling. One person writes, ‘Body speaks and mind gets quiet’, another discovers that the inner witness ‘speaks to me in images and sounds rather than words’ and many notice that the feeling quality of the inner witness is more relaxed, responsive, fluid, and more sensitive.

A sense of separation is also experienced in relation to the outer witness. While appreciative of the safe space and containment that the witness offers, many beginning movers express curiosity and sometimes concern about what the witness is seeing and thinking. In their early experiences of Authentic Movement, movers are dependent upon and highly aware of the presence of the outer witness, expressing a range of feelings in response to the phenomenon of being seen, from relief to uncomfortable self-consciousness.

While most of the respondents in this first phase of development have experience as a witness, they express a lack of comfort and confidence in taking responsibility in this role and in their readiness to speak as a witness. One person reflects on the importance of learning from more experienced witnesses by observing how their offering of verbal witnessing to movers seems ‘amazingly rich and insightful, and also compassionate’. This respondent realizes that, ‘I did not have that same sense in my witnessing work and had a difficult time conceiving of how I could develop such faculties, though I wanted very much to develop them’.

### **The Developing Inner Witness: Phase Two**

In the second phase of development, the inner witness of the mover is experienced as clearly distinct from an inner critical voice and in many ways has become a more

mysterious phenomenon. More available and associated with the ‘ability to sustain presence on many levels’, the inner witness poses riddles that movers at this stage of development are eager to ponder and engage. They speculate on the spatial orientation of the inner witness: ‘Is it within me? Behind me?’; ‘Is it part of me, or a comprehensive whole?’; It’s ‘an aspect of myself connected to the universe’; It’s ‘there and not there’.

Many write of the inner witness in a personified fashion, frequently as a ‘she’, occasionally as a ‘he’, once as a ‘He/She’, and once as a ‘we’. The beingness of the inner witness appears to be developing a more cogent form, perhaps a more human form, perhaps coming closer to the individual’s own sense of self.

One respondent asks a question that many in this middle phase are exploring: ‘Am I witnessing or is it my inner witness?’ Another person speculates, ‘I guess it is I who is witnessing, and my inner witness is witnessing me witnessing’. Many movers in this second phase are deeply interested in the phenomenon of awareness within awareness. Engaging these questions about their relationship to their own inner witness opens the participants to a world of paradox, one in which a sense of agency, the experience of *being moved*, is ascribed to something other than a self making the movement happen.

The mover’s increased interest in their own inner process of awareness corresponds with a growing interest in and awareness of other fellow movers and a decreased interest in and awareness of the outer witness, at least while moving. The mover is primarily focused on an engagement with his or her own inner experience as evidenced in statements such as: ‘I know I am being held’; ‘I don’t get attached to what the witness sees or doesn’t see’; ‘I can protect myself and my experience’; ‘I can make choices’; ‘I can play with being seen, or what it feels like not to be seen’. One respondent explicitly describes this development as ‘very liberating’ and one that allows her to ‘receive the support of the outer witness much more than when I am concerned about pleasing them. It’s really my own inner judgment that is suspended, and so I can be more of who I am’.

The question of what it means to be or become *more* of who one really is finds many of the respondents in new territory. They share their growing awareness of a distinction between the psychologically based experience of personal history and the phenomena of transpersonal experience. In the words of one respondent: ‘What’s really new, increasingly, is the tolerance for not knowing the immensity of what IS and the awareness that the transcendent is within and without’.

In the second phase of development, respondents notice growth in their own capacity to be an outer witness and an increased clarity ‘that while I witness the mover, I witness myself’. As the witness becomes more practiced, there is more confidence in having the ability to make choices, particularly during the verbal sharing time. There is a greater awareness of the phenomenon of projection and other potential hindrances to being present as an outer witness as well as more trust in the process of ‘sifting through and deciding what to share and what to hold’.

Witnesses in the second phase of development express greater awareness of the importance of supporting the mover than was expressed in the first phase. A deepening awareness of the witness’ connection with the mover is also evident in the following observations: ‘I have grown in the realization that the witnessing of another person is webbed profoundly within me’ and this ‘inner connection has a life of its own’.

### **The Developing Inner Witness: Phase Three**

What is most striking about the voice in the third phase of development is the degree to which Authentic Movement practitioners have relinquished the desire to figure out what is happening while, at the same time, retaining a commitment to clarity and discernment. Words like trust, love, presence, compassion, are frequently used to describe awareness of the mature inner witness. It is no longer perceived as a being but more as a place, ‘a wise place that feels like home in a deep cellular way’, it is ‘the center of me knowing/perceiving’ and there is ‘not a division or separation from inside and outside or otherness’. At times, movers still identify the inner witness in a relational context. One person writes that the inner witness ‘shines the light through her love of all of me...my

body, my feelings, my images, and whatever comes through me'. Another writes, 'I love it [my inner witness] very deeply'.

The phenomenon of opening to more love is described by some as being connected to a deepening sense of trust that comes with letting go of 'trying to get it all'. Instead, awareness comes 'from a lens that is wider and softer', less focused on every detail, more sensitive to how 'the qualitative experience along with the energetic experience speaks to me'. Many from this group of advanced practitioners recognize the impact of an inner witness that 'is stronger because it comes with me more into my life'.

Long-time practitioners express less need of affirmation from the outer witness: 'A brief acknowledgement through eye contact when I open my eyes is sufficient for me to feel that my outer witness was present for me during the movement'. The primary role of the outer witness, for these respondents, is to be a reminder for the mover 'to keep witnessing my self more and more often, more and more deeply'.

As in the second phase, an outer witness is not necessarily needed by the mover in the third phase but is still preferred and appreciated. Now, however, the mover-witness relationship has become more participatory and collaborative. Not only do these long-time practicing movers write of greater independence from the outer witness, they often describe an entirely different experience in which a sense of separation is no longer felt. Instead, their experience as movers is of 'a unified field'; 'a synergy of connection'; 'an inter-subjective field of the container'; 'the third thing'; 'the unified mover-witness'. One respondent writes how 'being seen by another and seeing myself becomes a seamless experience of being present'.

There is a sense of 'belonging' to something larger than a separate mover and a separate witness. Instead, 'both are changed and the witness in both develops along a new continuum of experience'. Respondents in this group would likely agree with the observation of one:

*This is a practice of a lifetime, so simple, yet so profound, bringing me to the deepest understanding of relationship, inner and outer. It is ultimately a spiritual practice, which means we learn as we go and that completion of understanding the fullness of this form is impossible.*

The roles of mover and witness have become more fluid in this third phase of the developing inner witness. One respondent describes times of ‘seamless wholeness where we are separate but one, unitive’ and ‘there is no question that my experience as witness is the experience of the mover’. Such non-dual, unitive states are known ‘through the channels of body sensation, particularly energy. Sometimes there are images that resonate, and usually a feeling of awe—indescribable—openness in my heart’. These experiences are acknowledged as a new way of knowing in and of themselves. Percept and concept are unified as direct intuitive knowing. At such times, ‘my senses are alert and deep archetypal/human memories seem to be ever present, even if there is not an immediate naming. I have less words to describe the experience of the unnameable’. Both movers and witnesses note the challenge of finding words for unitive experience. As psychologist Michael Lipson writes, ‘the experiences in question are unitive, they cannot be put into words since words are tilted toward the world of duality’ (Lipson 2002: 74).

The witness in this third phase of development is no longer seeking to distinguish between different aspects of the perceiving and cognitive mind; his or her experience is a self-knowing: ‘I am aware of the inner witness as I witness others’. The statement is wholistic allowing for distinction between self-experience as an inner witness looking within and self experience as an outer witness looking out. The ‘I’ who is aware of ‘the inner witness as I witness others’ is the consciousness of wholeness.

### **Witness Consciousness in the Field of Education**

In the phenomenological picture that emerges through this study of the inner witness, a developmental arc of witness consciousness becomes visible. Over time, the developing inner witness becomes a more compassionate presence and guide, less merged with personal history, more tolerant and open to others, as well as to a wider spectrum of experience, including energetic and numinous phenomena. While the inner witness journey of transformative growth will be unique for each individual, these findings affirm Adler’s three-phase model for understanding the development of consciousness through a practice of embodied relational awareness.

What we see as the biological path of human development—from infancy through childhood, adolescence, and into early adulthood—can continue as transformative growth throughout a lifetime. As adults, the path of development is no longer given for free; we must take it up out of our own autonomous will and intentional commitment. It is to this very will, the realm of impulse, volition, and agency, the most unconscious of our soul capacities, that Authentic Movement leads us.

Looking beyond the movement studios and retreat centers where much of the study and practice of movers and witnesses takes place, opportunities for witness consciousness and applications to other relational dyads—parent/child, practitioner/client, teacher/student—may prove beneficial. Many long-time practitioners write that the practice comes with them into their life. In my own work, I am especially interested in how witness consciousness can serve teachers and administrators in the field of education. From early childhood to higher education, an international movement focused on contemplative pedagogy and practice is a growing field of inquiry, one to which Authentic Movement practitioners may have much to contribute (Barbezat, Bush 2013).

Voices from within the field of education recognize the importance of such heightened qualities of attention such as we see in the developed inner witness. Diana Chapman Walsh, past-president of Wellesley College describes the human process of *becoming* through teaching, learning, and research, as only truly possible through the generous gesture of relationship:

*It is when someone else sees us in our full potential, bears witness to that capacity, appreciates it in us, relates to it in a way that makes it real, it is then that we begin to trust it in ourselves. And this is the beginning of learning. Before we see, we must be seen. We learn when we can love. (Chapman Walsh 2014)*

Witness consciousness is a way of being that fosters becoming. Here, indeed, is the deepest meaning and purpose of education—the dynamic mystery of individual growth made possible through simple, respectful relationship between teacher and student, researcher and subject of inquiry. The love that undergirds our deepest learning, we discover, can be shared and experienced as presence. Zajonc describes such a change

in education as leading from an epistemology of separation to an “epistemology of love” (Zajonc 2009: 188).

In the developing inner witness, a knowing that extends beyond intellectual understanding, beyond feelings of antipathy and sympathy, beyond actions of self-interest, becomes available to serve. We are learning to cultivate compassion through embodied consciousness of relationship to self, to other, to the world.

*~end~*



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